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## School Transformation: Reproducing Effective High School Leadership

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**School Transformation: Reproducing Effective High School Leadership**

**Christina D. Chambers**

Dissertation submitted to the  
College of Human Resources and Education  
at West Virginia University in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

Doctor of Education  
In  
Educational Leadership Studies

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Morgantown, West Virginia  
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## **Abstract**

### **School Transformation: Reproducing Effective High School Leadership**

**Christina D. Chambers**

This dissertation explores the distinctive and complex challenges that high school principals face. The demand to prepare students for college or the workplace requires a strong foundation built on relational trust, an adaptation of high school instructional practices, and an evolution of the professional development process. This study will use the characteristics of transformational leadership presented in the literature to determine if they exist in two high schools and how they manifest themselves. The high schools studied represent the very different socio economic aspects of their district. With focus on student achievement, high school principals and teachers can transform school norms to meet the challenges of a diverse group of learners.

### **Acknowledgements**

My mother has always taught me to use the talents I was given to the fullest and although I questioned whether or not I had the talent to complete this process, she never did, not one time. She was my sounding board, cheerleader and biggest supporter. Without her encouragement and willingness to listen to countless hours of why pursuing a doctorate was ridiculous I may have never finished. I want to thank and acknowledge my mother, Marilyn Chambers who always taught me not to be satisfied with being ordinary.

The job of principal is challenging. One must truly care about the well being of others much more than yourself. I want to thank the ultimate example of sacrifice, my father. I grew up with the perfect role model for the professional I wanted to become. My father, Ron Chambers, spent so much of his time making his school the absolute best place for students to attend. He was always striving to add programs, recognize students and be a productive member of the community. He seldom, if ever, focused on or did things for himself but throughout the years has earned something way greater than possessions. He has the loving respect of so many of the students he taught, coached or led. I can only hope that my students remember me in the same loving way that is expressed to him in phone calls, letters or visits. He epitomized what a principal and leader should be; caring, focused and forward thinking. I thank him for the example I strive to match every day.

About two months ago my brother welcomed my parents' first grandchild, my niece, Scarlett Nora Chambers. It was amazing to watch someone who I still see as a child hold his own daughter. I want to thank my brother Ashley Chambers for reminding me how precious life is and how important it is to appreciate what we are given. I love him and am so proud of his accomplishments. Ashley, you have not allowed your challenges to define your life nor do I

believe you understand how strong you are to navigate the rocky path you were given. I love and support all that you do.

I am not always a patient person; I am very focused on the end product so I can only imagine what it was like to be assigned as my chairperson. I want to sincerely thank Dr. Adriane Williams for her caring, supportive, and unwavering belief that I could complete this process. I cannot apologize for getting her off-track and engaging her in numerous conversations about education because from each meeting I learned so much. You, like me, believe in the power of education and want to right the wrongs. You are a great example of someone who is willing to challenge traditional thinking and battle the obstacles this creates. I respect you as a mentor and person. I can never thank you enough for your dedication to this process.

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To my college roommate, sorority sister, fellow educator and lifelong friend Susan Beck, your commitment to me and unwavering friendship has been a true blessing. You are the person I've known the longest and can depend on the most. I am often in awe of your professional accomplishments and share your passion for the purpose of public education; to educate all.

Finally, I want to thank the staff and children of the middle school I served for five years as principal. I never truly understood how privileged a life I led until I was given the wonderful responsibility of leading you. Your zest for life, your appreciation of all you were given, your commitment to learning and the extended family you provided are some my greatest memories. I realized my life's purpose while with you and promise I will continue to do all I can to support the students of our community.

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## CHAPTER ONE

Public education has been undergoing reform since its inception. Americans have distinct opinions about what schools should look like and what should be taught in classrooms. Deep structures are embedded within our society and are composed of values and assumptions about classrooms (Tye, 2000). These structural characteristics are also present in the thoughts and actions of some teachers who feel they have lost control over their day to day activities and school-related requirements.

Most reform movements have lost sight of the professional in attempts to produce higher outcomes. Teachers are constantly bombarded with why they must change, how they will change, and how they must produce more with fewer resources and a more diverse group of learners to serve (Ball, 2003). To develop teachers, it is critical to increase their confidence level as professionals. Professional learning communities (PLCs) provide this support built on relational trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001). It is through PLCs that the evolution of high school classrooms and implementation of professional networks can develop (Halverson, 2003).

The need for confident knowledgeable secondary educators is critical. The dropout rate in the United States is unacceptable. Recent local district statistics indicate that a student drops out every other day. National dropout trends push the U.S. further down the list comparing high school completion rates internationally. For our nation to compete in a global economy, it is imperative that schools produce students ready for the rigor of college and the demands of the workplace. Although teachers are now serving as mentors and counselors in addition to their primary duty, many in the public view schools in a negative light. In reality, teachers are actually producing greater outcomes with fewer resources in less time than ever before. An ever

growing diversity in learner needs is creating a downward shift in classroom outcomes (Tye, 2000).

### **Narrative Outline**

In Chapter One, I introduce the problem being addressed and the rationale of the study. I also present my perspective on the significance of this work. In Chapter Two, I describe the design of the study and explain the methodology and framework that guided data collection and analysis. In Chapters Three and Four, I present the cases of two high schools and their principals. In the final chapter, Chapter Five, I provide conclusions and implications for principal preparation, development, and evaluation.

### **Statement of the Problem**

High school principals are at a significant disadvantage when preparing for or implementing new policies or procedural changes. “High school principals must deal with pressures from multiple accountability sources such as parents, school districts, and state mandates. Each has a distinct impact on principals’ quest for leading change in their schools. Grand visions of reform are often subject to strong and competing demands” (White-Smith & White, 2009, p. 261).

The role of the principal is complex but the role of a high school principal is made more complex by the diverse social, emotional, and academic needs of students. To address these differences, high school principals must encourage teachers to focus on relevance of instruction, individual student skill deficits, and data. High schools principals should not be viewed as limiting professional creativity because “for too long, the siren song of ‘close the door and let me teach’ has led to a chasm between classroom practices and educational leadership. [Leadership is an] ethical imperative. Instead, leadership must establish assessment boundaries of accuracy,

fairness, and effectiveness. This does not constitute micromanagement; policy and daily classroom assessment practice that fail to meet these criteria are not reflections of professional creativity” (Reeves, pp. 8-9). Without instructional focus on the individual, learners will not receive the relevant instruction necessary to compete in today’s world. Although “fifty percent of our nation’s high school students found school dull and unchallenging” (Berry, 2010, p.1), student interest can be met and school outcomes increased when leaders address subpar or outdated instruction and provide substantial and ongoing professional development.

Adding to the building-level pressures of being a high school principal, state policy makers expect continual transformation and implementation of popular reforms. Local school systems further expect high schools to produce college or job ready graduates with skills to be competitive in a 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy. Our changing global dynamic is “characterized by the outsourcing of jobs, instant around-the world communication, and broader participation in the economy by a growing middle class in more countries than ever before. The new millennium seems to demand yet another ramping up of what is expected of all students and their teachers” (Seely, 2009, pp 20-21). Transformational leaders should team with teachers to meet this expectation and strengthen the school culture, build collaborative professional development time, and instill high expectations that encourage effective instructional practices to positively impact student learning.

Transformational leadership “provides intellectual direction and aims at innovating within the organization while empowering and supporting teachers as partners in decision making” (Marks & Printy, 2003, p. 371). A transformational leader will fashion the school culture to establish the foundation necessary for change; create a professional learning community for communication within the school; (Datnow & Castellano, 2001) and instill

instructional practices that focus on the relationship between the student and skill needs. The crux of the problem therefore is to acknowledge the challenges facing high school principals while holding them to high expectations. Transformational leadership promises a pathway to positive school outcomes even under the most challenging conditions.

In this study I compared two high schools in one district and looked for the presence of: 1) a positive climate and culture; 2) purposeful and ongoing professional development; and 3) the use of effective instructional strategies. Transformational principals lead schools with these three characteristics and demonstrate continuous growth (Datnow & Castellano, 2001).

### **Research Questions**

My primary question is how can a high school principal lead the transformation of school norms to be responsive to the ever changing needs of learners? This question focuses on leadership but requires attention to individual teachers and classrooms, departmentalized teams, and professional learning communities; the school as an organization; and the school as a subculture within a larger organization. This question also requires specific focus on instructional design, pedagogical practices and the beliefs, attitudes, and values of both teachers and administrators. It is important to understand how information is shared from central office staff to the principal; the manner in which the principal shares this information with staff members; and if these practices or philosophies are pressed into the classroom.

In order to address my central question additional questions are posed: (1) How do teachers understand the relationship between culture and climate and student outcomes?; (2) How do teachers describe the leadership style of their principals?; (3) How do principals and teachers understand the relationship between leadership and implementation of instructional changes?

### **Rationale**

Effective schools are led by effective leaders who indirectly impact student achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). Studies of schools with sizable improvements and implementation of current interventions that focus on teaching and learning credit leadership with considerable responsibility for success (Edmonds 1979; Maden, 2001). Instructional, distributed, and transformational leadership styles are prevalent in the literature and dominate research on educational leadership. Common to effective leaders are characteristics that statistically relate to student achievement: setting and maintaining order and discipline, fostering a collaborative community, securing financial resources, monitoring of instructional practices, and recognizing accomplishments.

Instructional leadership provides a learning climate free of disruptions, a system of teaching objectives and a high expectation of students (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan & Lee, 1982). Instructional leaders engage teachers in discussions on how the art of teaching impacts student learning. Distributive leadership reflects the division of labor that is present in organizations and enhances opportunities for the organization to benefit from the knowledge of several of its members. Individuals serving under this model understand how their participation and behavior impacts the organization as a whole (Leithwood and Mascall, 2008). “A distributed perspective offers an alternative way of thinking about leadership in schools by foregoing leadership practice and by suggestion that leadership practice is constructed in the interactions between leaders, followers and their situations” (Spillane, 2006, p. 26). Transformational leadership includes a commitment to a common vision that enables the organization to focus and transform by developing the capacity to work collaboratively to address challenges and reach goals (Robinson,

Lloyd & Rowe, 2008). A transformational leader focuses on the organization's goal and objectives to ensure student outcomes increase.

The choice to study transformational leadership emerged after reviewing research on climate and culture, professional development, and effective instructional strategies.

“Transformational leaders motivate followers by raising their consciousness about the importance of organizational goals and by inspiring them to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the organization” (Marks & Printy, 2003 p. 375). A transformational leader pays close attention to the climate and culture and provides productive, sustainable professional development to support and advocate for the implementation of effective instructional practices. A school can continuously improve its performance if the leader understands the organization, interactions among individuals, and how these impact classroom instruction.

Transformational leaders encompass the best of instructional and distributed leadership. The motivational, collaborative, and interpersonal skills that are large components of transformational leadership directly relate to the principal's ability to influence teaching and learning (Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe, 2008). A principal cannot lead transformation without a positive climate and culture that supports sustainable implementation of professional learning communities focused on student achievement. This yields effective instructional practices that ultimately impact student achievement.

Transformational leadership “focuses on improving organizational qualities, dimensions, and effectiveness” (Shields, 2010, p. 46) through emphasis on culture, professional development, and effective instructional strategies. Schools with a transformational leader demonstrate a culture of “unwavering belief in the ability of all of their students to achieve success, and they pass that belief on to others in overt and covert ways” (Muhammad, 2009, p. 13). A

transformational leader provides teachers ample time to focus specifically on student achievement through learning communities where professionals discuss data, instructional practices, how to modify curriculum, and develop common core assessments.

Under the guidance of a transformational leader, educators create effective instructional practices that support their belief in the ability of every student (Muhammad, 2009). Although the appearance of these characteristics vary, students attending schools that implement transformational practices are more likely to obtain mastery level of critical skills. “Researchers characterize the principal as the linchpin for success... principal leadership has a mediated positive effect on student performance outcomes” (White-Smith & White, 2009, p. 260).

The literature on school reform and leadership is vast. My focus will be on the characteristics of leadership and the dispositions of and accompanying attitudes of high school teachers. Researchers note that transformational leadership has distinct objectives: the leader sets directions and develops people to enhance the climate and culture, redesigns the organization through professional development, and manages the instructional program (Marks & Printy, 2003). Motivating all teachers to participate in new practices is not simple. Leaders who are working to transform schools must take risks, form alliances, and learn how to develop shared power within the context of a public high school setting (White-Smith & White, 2009). This research was not intended to further define transformational leadership, but as the analysis began it became clear that the categorical framework used by Shields (2010) was insufficient. It was then necessary to refine the ways in which transformational leadership is described.

Specific study on the primary question to be addressed here was examined in research completed by Carolyn M. Shields (2010) and reported in *Transformative Leadership: Working for Equity in Diverse Contexts*. A table provided by Shields presents the differences between

transactional, transformational, and transformative leadership. This table provides guidance on how to evaluate current leadership practices. Furthermore, her presentation of the transformative practices implemented by the two principals she studied guided my data collection process.

Existing literature does suggest that for a high school principal to lead transformation the following characteristics are necessary: a positive and supportive climate and culture; purposeful, ongoing professional development (Giles and Hargreaves, 2006); and instructional design (Heck, 1992). When these three characteristics are present, individual learner needs are supported and growth can occur.

Transformational leaders recognize that to sufficiently prepare all students, teachers must both understand and want to practice relevant, data driven, individualized instruction. Without this desire a school is not likely to meet the federal and state accountability standards nor the community expectations to produce the potential job-ready employees or college-ready students needed to support local businesses. A school with norms focused on the strengths of the individual student addresses specific academic deficits and recognizes that it is not *when* the student masters the content, instead *that* they master the content. A school that is conducive to learning for all provides just and equal opportunities. The answers to my research questions reflect the motivation level of the administration and staff to address specific learner needs and the desire of the staff to reach all students no matter the effort required. The findings of this study demonstrate how the characteristics of transformational leadership appear in practice.

### **Climate and Culture**

There is a large body of literature on the impact of climate and culture. Over the past decade, accountability has driven the efforts of school systems across the country. Schools are expected to produce improvements in the learning outcomes for all students despite gender, race,



and socio-economic background or language barriers. The climate and culture of schools is extremely important with ongoing change, reform, and increasing expectations. Schneider (2003) noted those interested in educational reform have come to realize the importance of understanding the social context in schools.

Important to this study is the examination of common leadership characteristics that support change. Transformational leaders maintain a culture and climate that impact teachers' individual and group outcomes. "[Transformational leadership] has been found to be associated with teachers' organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, and satisfaction (Koh, Steers, & Terborg, 1995) and with teachers' motivation and capacities" (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

Research shows that principals set the culture and climate of the school (Peterson & Deal, 2002) and that trust among principals, teachers, students, and families is fundamental to successful schools (Tschannen-Morrان, 2004, p. 184). A necessary component, when discussing high school climate and culture, is the recognition that the department structure of high schools can undermine reform attempts. "The current structure and traditions of high schools are not responsive to learners. Instead, teachers use curricula guided by dated and autonomous departmental priorities" (Lachat, 2001 p. 12). A positive working environment that values professionals but expects more from them will provide genuine time for development and collaboration. This will transfer directly to the implementation of effective instructional practices.

A transformational leader works to develop a level of trust and degree of quality in communication. It is through trust and communication that a school can grow and thrive. The health of an organization is dependent on how the leader is able to manage the culture and

climate. Bryk and Schneider (2002) wrote that relational trust exists when teachers feel respected as professionals and view their principal as someone with integrity and concern about their well being. The definition of trust in this study is derived from the theory of relational trust posited by Bryk and Schneider (2002) in *Trust in Schools*. The authors define relational trust as follows:

At its most basic (intrapersonal) level, relational trust is rooted in a complex cognitive activity of discerning the intentions of others. These discernments occur within a set of role relations (interpersonal) that are formed both by the institutional structure of schooling and by the particularities of an individual school community, with its own culture, history, and local understandings. Finally, these trust relations culminate in important consequences at the organizational level, including more effective decision making, enhanced social support for innovation, more efficient social control of adults' work, and an expanded moral authority to "go the extra mile" for the children. Relational trust, so conceived, is appropriately viewed as an organizational property in that its constitutive elements are socially defined in the reciprocal exchanges among participants in a school community, and its presence (or absence) has important consequences for the functioning of the school and its capacity to engage fundamental change (p. 22).

In this study I examined how leadership impacts climate and culture; how it influenced social support for innovation through professional learning communities; and whether the efficient control of adults exists. The characteristics of relational trust relate directly to Shields' characteristics of a transformational leader. According to Shields' study transformational leaders build a foundation on the need for the organization to run smoothly and efficiently, meet

complex and diverse needs, manage the instructional program and look for motive to develop a common purpose.

**Table 1**

**Comparison of relational trust to the characteristics of transformational leaders**

Bryk and Schneider (2002)	Shields (2010)
1. Effective decision making	Foundation of effective practices to help the organization run efficiently and smoothly
2. Enhanced social support	Meet complex and diverse needs
3. Efficient control of adults	Manages the instructional program and motivates toward common purpose
4. Expanded moral authority	Effective practices address individual learner needs

The need for the organization to run efficiently and smoothly is the starting point for transformational leaders (Shields, 2010). Creating an efficient high school is a difficult task, one that requires transformation of school practices. The layered complexity is well defined as follows:

“Leading is...actually bringing the best out of people, out of teachers and out of students. It is an intellectual task. It is about struggling over how you do things, how you solve problems, how you analyze, and how you come up with solutions that actually move the agenda forward. It needs to be felt as deeply personal and it needs to be understood as deeply intellectual because that’s what you have to accomplish in order to do this work” (Hubbard, Megan & Stein, 2006, p. 159).

An efficient organization is typically built upon a strong positive foundation that supports each individual. This foundation provides the means for effective professional development and effective instructional practices to flourish. Trust is the foundation of a healthy organization, without it individuals will not work together for the common good of the organization. If trust is

present the organization can begin to evolve and become more efficient, thus professionals and students benefit.

The leader must meet the needs of a diverse and complex set of individuals by ensuring social support for vastly different groups of people within the organization. For the transformational leader to do so, he must understand culture, set directions, develop people, redesign components of the organization and manage the instructional setting according to Shields. “Leaders are primarily responsible for creating clear strategic direction for the future of the organization. Leaders assume that some change is necessary to keep up with the marketplace so they forecast how the organization needs to operate to succeed in its environment. Leaders also keep a strategic eye on how well the organization is doing, set priorities, help solve strategic conflicts, and give parameters to the achievement of goals” (Anderson & Anderson, 2001, p. 182-184). Once the enhanced social support is present professional learning communities can address the needs of an entire staff of teachers. Ample time to plan, strategize, meet and discuss student achievement and instructional needs enhances and builds the organization through mutual trust.

Teachers are educated professionals who are beleaguered by political, economic, and social pressures while the students they teach vary in terms of race, socioeconomic status, language background, and instructional needs. The social structures that support teachers or fail to support them are crumbling. Teachers come to school with various levels of experience, prior knowledge, and expectations of student performance. The students they serve often come from different socio-economic backgrounds which can yield different (sometimes lowered) sets of expectations of themselves. The principal must assist teachers in implementing effective practices to address individual learner needs within an increasingly challenging environment.

The difference between teacher expectation and student output creates an environment that is complex and difficult to lead. This complexity is created by the clash of cultures. A school versus community culture clash occurs often in high schools. The teaching staff expects all students to learn, while the community may not recognize the importance of high expectations for all. The developmental stage at which adolescents find themselves and the varying and often conflicting messages from families can cause a number of conflicts that the high school principal must address. A high school principal bears the pressure to manage an environment in constant flux. The principal must manage the instructional program and motivate the staff toward a common purpose. Without the foundation of a trusting relationship with all of the different groups he manages, the leader cannot produce successful outcomes.

The transformational leader is inspirational and motivates people to develop a school wide common purpose that focuses on the organization's goals. In so doing, he is able to efficiently control the work of adults. To ensure a positive climate and culture, the school leader must be able to attend to the needs of and provide personal attention to individual staff members, help members think of old problems in new ways, communicate high expectations, and provide a model for behavior (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005). Relational trust provides the necessary means for teacher comfort when participating in professional learning communities. A transformational leader understands that if teachers trust him/her they will travel outside their comfort zone and engage in new professional opportunities.

As principals work to transform schools, climate and culture must remain a primary focus. Once professionals feel respected and valued, they can easily participate in collaborative efforts to improve student achievement. "Strong leaders should provide coherence for those [they] lead. [They] must understand where [they] are, where the system is, how [they] can

improve it, how [they] can relate professional lives to personal lives” (Hubbard, Mahan, and Stein, 2006, p. 157). Leaders must inspire those around them, develop a concept of teamwork and monitor practices to ensure implementation. Although leaders are individuals with their own values and identities, all should strive to mesh their skill sets with the needs of the organization to ultimately develop a climate of trust, and gain meaningful participation. Trust among colleagues begins with trust in the principal and the organization. It is because of this trust that professionals can risk change, focus on student achievement, and address the need to transform practices within the classroom.

### **Professional Development**

Current professional development practices are ineffective because they do not impact classroom instructional practices. This is because professional development is “often perceived by teachers as fragmented, disconnected, and irrelevant to the real problems of classroom practice” (Lieberman & Mace, 2008, p. 226). Teachers argue that traditional professional development sessions are short one-time opportunities that rarely become a part of classroom teaching practices. Teachers have little input on the content of job development and training programs. This practice does not yield optimal results in standardizing the efforts of teachers (Ingersoll, 2003). The three major goals of professional development are to change the 1) classroom practice of teachers, 2) change the attitudes and beliefs of teachers, and 3) learning outcomes of students (Guskey, 2002).

As the instructional leader, a principal is expected to understand what good quality instruction is, have knowledge of all aspects of curriculum, and ensure the appropriate content is delivered to all students (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). A principal is now responsible for the

quality of teachers' work. Ongoing, sustainable professional development is a critical element in ensuring all teachers deliver high-quality instruction.

Several common formats for professional development currently exist. Book studies provide teachers with opportunity to read current research on a topic pertinent to their school or students' needs. Teachers gather with a leader or instructional coach to discuss the content of the book and provide insight or receive guidance on how to implement the information into their current practice. Another format is the commonly used one-day session where teachers are removed from their classroom and travel to a centralized location to receive information on a specific topic, program, or concept. The extended version of this format is a summer academy which many counties engage in where specific topics pertinent to content areas or school wide focus are presented over a period of days. No matter the type of professional development, whether formal or informal, the key to application is the classroom in participation and interaction (Printy, 2008).

Gusky (2002) provided an alternative model to traditional formats listed above that are based on the assumption that attitudes and beliefs must be altered before acceptance is gained and teachers implement new practices. In the *Model of Teacher Change*, Gusky (2002) provided a different approach to professional development. Gusky argued that teachers must first learn the change expected, implement the change expected, see an increase in student learning outcomes then change their beliefs and attitudes. Gusky stated that professional development comes from seeing the change work. For sustainability to occur, teachers must receive feedback on their efforts or new practices are most likely to be abandoned.

As shared leadership practices emerge, teachers are now readily encouraged to participate in ongoing professional learning communities. Professional learning communities are

collaborative, sustained time for teachers to discuss student achievement (McLaughlin and Talbert, 2001). “Professional learning communities in schools emphasize three key components: collaborative work and discussion among the school’s professionals, a strong and consistent focus on teaching and learning within that collaborative work, and the collection and use of assessment and other data to inquire into and evaluate progress over time” (Giles and Hargraves, 2006, p. 126). PLCs respect professionals, encourage collaboration and promote trust among professionals which leads to the transformation of practices. A staff must hold as its fundamental belief that each child has the ability to learn while members organize their efforts to collectively support the singular focus of student achievement.

Trust is a significant component of professional learning communities. When teacher opinion is ignored, distrust of the system develops. Transformational leaders understand the importance of teacher support and shared decision making and therefore their schools have the potential to overcome challenges and meet expectations. Respecting teachers and giving them the space to practice professional judgment through PLCs contributes to a trusting environment where people are willing to take more risks (Ingersoll, 2003 p. 13). Time for professionals to collaborate will impact the high school setting.

Professional learning communities are the catalyst for the transformation of practices. Time is an element that must be a consideration when introducing this concept. It is a leader’s responsibility to recognize and remove as many barriers to transformation as possible. A transformational leader recognizes the scheduling challenge of continual professional learning communities. “Despite their apparent instructional autonomy, and despite the many ideas available to them, teachers have very little time to digest these proposals and make decisions about what to do in their classrooms. American teachers have less time away from their students



than teachers in many other countries. A collaborative approach will provide teachers an expectation of the future and motivate them to unite (Kennedy, 2005). Ample time to focus on student achievement will increase relational trust and sharing of ideas.

Professional learning communities are dependent upon the climate and culture of the organization, are built on relational trust and aid in student achievement. PLCs are a form of professional development where teachers can learn from each other, develop stronger interpersonal relationships, and build more collaboration within a school organization (Lieberman and Mace, 2008). Even with the benefits having been demonstrated PLCs are not embraced at all levels. High schools are the most difficult places to implement professional learning communities because collaborative relationships are hard to achieve in fragmented departmentalized subject-based communities (Giles and Hargraves, 2006). In this study, I collected data on the understanding and implementation of professional learning communities in high schools, the participation of the school leader in the communities, the reaction of high school teachers to the concept, and the impact on instructional practices.

### **Effective Instructional Practices**

The quality and effectiveness of the classroom teacher is the most influential factor in whether a child will succeed or fail. A poor teacher can cost a student at least a year of progress (Hanushek, 1992). Transformational leaders understand that to impact student achievement teachers must implement effective instructional practices. Transformation occurs through collaboration built on relational trust. Newmann and Wehlage (1997) found that “school wide teacher professional communities affected the level of classroom authentic pedagogy, which in turn affected student performance. School wide teacher professional communities affect the

level of social support for student learning, which in turn affected student performance” (p. 32). Teachers enhance their professional skills and techniques when they share information.

The relationship between teaching and student outcomes is known but vaguely understood. Teacher quality, a concept not easily defined, is known to be more influential than class size or resources, and has more impact on students in low socio-economic and minority groups. Having high-quality teachers for three or more years in a row will increase student achievement as much as 50 percentile points (Hanushek, 1992). Transformational leadership is not only about raising test scores but about creating rich and inclusive learning environments that meet the needs of all learners (Shields, 2010). The state framework goals, for the schools being studied, say that *all* students are expected to master a sequenced and prioritized curriculum that develops high level thinking skills. The state framework goes on to note that *all* students are to receive the support they need to reach mastery and beyond. Professional development that helps teachers to focus on the needs of individual learners will help teachers meet this challenge. Some current instructional reform practices have proven they can impact student achievement. In this study I focused on data informed instruction (Reeves, 2007 and Chenoweth, 2007), individualization (Hanushek, 1992, Metz, 1990), and the importance of relevance (Plank, DeLuca & Estacion, 2008) in high school instruction. Classrooms that support use of data, teaching to individual needs and applying learning to real life settings engage students and address varying depths of knowledge within the same learning environment.

Data informed classrooms assess what students know based on what they were taught. Effective assessments are an extension of the teacher’s instruction, aligned to the curriculum and serve as a source of information (Reeves, 2007). In *Academic Success in Unexpected Schools*, Chenoweth (2007) reported that good schools “embrace and use all of the data they can get their

hands on” (p.217). Understanding how to use data is now a vital part of today’s schools because of the accountability culture established by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. School leaders can use the requirements of accountability to their benefit (Chenoweth, 2007). Data driven classrooms identify individual student strengths and weaknesses, those who need help, and those who need a greater challenge. Professional learning communities give teachers time to talk through what they are learning from the data generated by on-going assessments and allow them to seek assistance from each other on how to address student needs.

Individualized instruction is common in special education programs, but the concept of addressing the needs of all learners is not yet implemented in all classrooms. Recent focus on literacy at the high school level challenges all content teachers to examine summative data, formative data and specifically lexile scores to modify instruction. Schools with transformational leaders work together to collect and analyze these data sources to continuously focus on individual students and constantly reexamine how teaching occurs (Chenoweth, 2007). Varying teaching style to allow students access to the content in different ways, in conjunction with understanding student capacity, (e.g., lexile scores), could be more effective than simply relying on a single didactic mode of instruction (Metz, 1990). Students are engaged when the instruction is accessible and relevant to their lives. For all students to be engaged, high school classrooms must connect learning to real life situations. Relevant instruction means that all students are engaged in learning that clearly relates to their own lives and aspirations (Berry, 2010; Plank, DeLuca & Estacion, 2008).

High schools can struggle to implement relevant instruction as they work to keep up with technological advances and a global job market. “By the time students get to high school, instruction becomes segmented and many students become less engaged in the learning process.

Their ability to investigate the interconnections between what they learn is stifled because the teacher has too much material to cover and not enough time” (Daggert, 2005, p. 1). Some students are fortunate enough to be exposed to relevant instruction through Career and Technical Education (CTE) programming. In CTE, students can demonstrate mastery of core academics through application or skill if the programs are developed properly. Transformational leaders recognize the importance of relevance and, when situated in the proper context, work to create a community where students are encouraged to enroll in CTE courses. CTE teachers may then collaborate with core academic instructors. This type of professional learning community can begin to bridge the gap between the two areas and develop collaborative, relevant instruction.

Although transformational leaders cannot realistically stay abreast of all content area curriculum, they should be well versed in effective instructional strategies and accessible to staff. Instructional leadership consists of behaviors designed to positively impact classroom instruction. Principals are responsible for providing exposure to new instructional strategies, technologies, and tools that will increase student learning outcomes. Professional learning community implementation will assist teachers when critiquing these practices to determine if applicable within the classroom (Quinn, 2002). The leader’s responsibility to monitor practices serves two purposes: 1) the leader can learn the strengths of the staff and use this to aide in collaboration and 2) the leader can address specific weaknesses in pedagogy. Embedded in the state framework is a system requirement for continuous progress and accountability of results, and the development of a curriculum monitoring process such as classroom walkthroughs and curriculum audits to gather information for continuous improvement. In schools that demonstrate strong outcomes, principals are a constant presence (Chenoweth, 2007). Transformational leaders are visible. Monitoring teacher practice is an essential piece to transforming schools.

Effective instructional practices are present in schools led by transformational principals who understand that it is not just what the teacher *knows*, it is what they *do* in the classroom with what they know that matters (Reeves, 2007). “What research shows is that it does not matter very much which school students attend. What matters very much is which classrooms they are in in that school. If a student is in one of the most effective classrooms, he or she will learn in 6 months what those in an average classroom will take a year to learn. Students in the most effective classrooms learn at four times the speed of those in the least effective classrooms” (Reeves, 2007, p. 183). Transformational leaders must be in classrooms and monitoring teacher practice to evaluate school professional development needs. As the transformational leader monitors effective practice implementation, s/he must then use the collected data to plan for school-wide improvement. “The task for schools is not simply to offer space and opportunity for individual teachers to teach. It is to organize human, technical, and social resources into an effective collective enterprise” (Newmann and Wehlage, 1997, pp. 36-37).

Principal visibility is important to implementing effective instructional strategies in all classrooms. Increasing the level of principal visibility in high schools can create resistance if the proper cultural changes have not occurred. Close monitoring of teacher practice by school leaders requires relational trust. Teachers need to know that although they *are* being evaluated, the evaluation is formative not summative.

### **Study Significance**

High school principals are expected to raise graduation rates while meeting the needs of an ever changing and diverse student population. The overwhelming number of dropouts in the U.S. is evidence that something needs to change in high schools. Many high school teachers do a wonderful job of educating every student who enters their classrooms but without

transformational leadership all teachers will not meet this challenge. This research will serve as a resource for education leaders, especially those in and around to research sites themselves.

Through deep description of the practices in place and the perspectives of leaders and staff, I show how transformational leadership looks in practice within a given state context. Although this work is not be generalizable to other states, and perhaps not beyond the school district being studied, the work may contribute to understanding among those interested in reproducing the characteristics and benefits of transformational leadership in high schools.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Methodology

My research question of “how” leaders transform school norms requires a qualitative approach. Qualitative research requires that I situate myself in a context and collect rich data through observation, interview, and document analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994). My desire to understand “how” leadership happens, what it looks like, and how it influences teacher practices requires that I spend time within a school context with the people I seek to understand.

Administrators and teachers are constantly in the process of making sense of their worlds and trying to understand how they function in larger social contexts (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Lofland & Lofland, 1984; Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). I sought to spend time in their context and help them to tease out the how they understand the processes at work.

The specific approach I chose is case study methodology. Case studies are situated in a given context and restricted by time and place. They are the preferred approach to asking “how” questions (Yin, 2003). They are particularly useful when attempted to understand how a given context influences human behavior (Vayrus & Bartlett, 2006). This study was always intended as a case study, but it was originally designed as a deductive analysis. Deductive analyses are typically about theory testing (Ragin, 1994). In this instance, no theory was to be tested, but like theory testing, I planned to use existing concepts and ideas about leadership characteristics to understand how leaders in two high schools work. This kind of study design required a conceptual framework to guide data collection and analysis because at each step I was to be tightly constrained by existing research. Ultimately, the analysis was inductive. The initial framework was too restrictive and that data called for a more nuanced approach. This was due both to the emergent design of study and the binary categorical nature of the original framework.

The concept of transformational leadership has been treated consistently in the literature. Existing research, therefore, provided a solid foundation on which to build. In the sections that follow, I describe the conceptual framework and its origins. I then detail the design and methods. I follow with the limitations of the study. I conclude this chapter by discussing how my identity as a researcher and practitioner contributed to the study and what steps I took to present trustworthy findings.

### **Conceptual Framework**

A high school staff expects the principal lead them to success; therefore the leadership style s/he exhibits will determine the climate and culture of the school, the level of teacher involvement in professional learning communities, and the implementation of effective instructional practices. Research indicates that principals in high-achieving schools are more effective than their counterparts in low-achieving schools, which suggests that leadership matters (Quinn, 2002).

The work of Shields (2010) contributed greatly to the frameworks within which I collected, analyzed, and compared the data collected for two high schools. Shields (2010) assessed how leadership theory guides the practices of educational leaders who want to effect both educational and broader social change. In this section I summarize Shield's study, describe the framework she created, and present the framework I began with; which is an adaption of Shields. I combined Shields work with evaluative definitions of instruction and assessment created by the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools (Marks & Printy, 2003; Newman & Wehlage, 1995). I conclude this section by presenting the final framework and discuss why the changes were made.



Shields' study examined three types of leadership: "transactional leadership which involves a reciprocal transaction; transformational leadership [which] focuses on improving organizational qualities, dimensions, and effectiveness; [and] transformative educational leadership which begins by challenging inappropriate uses of power and privilege that create or perpetuate inequity and injustice" (Marks & Printy, 2003 p. 46). Two of the theories examined by Shields will be used in this study: transformational and transactional. Instructional leadership, a type of leadership about which Shields (2010) and (Marks & Printy, 2003) disagree, focuses primarily on teaching and learning and is embedded in my framework. Although transformational leaders view themselves as instructional leaders, instructional leaders may not necessarily be transformational.

Leaders exhibit transactional skills to maintain the day to day function of the organization without focus on power, change, or progress (Shields, 2001). To thrive, leaders must take risks and move into the realm of transformation. Transformational leadership is both intellectual and interpersonal, creating a supportive environment (Conley & Goldman, 1994; Leithwood, 1994, Marks & Printy, 2003) and it "focuses on problem finding, problem solving, and collaboration with stakeholders with the goal of improving organizational performance" (Marks & Printy, 2003). Instructional leaders actively collaborate with staff on curriculum, instruction and assessment. In this model, the principal "seeks out ideas, insights, and expertise of teachers in these areas and work with teachers for school improvement" (Marks & Printy, 2001). In comparison, "transformative leadership begins with questions of justice and democracy, critiques inequitable practices, and addresses both individual and public good" (Shields, 2010, p. 1).

Strong leadership skills are critical when working to reform school practices (Datnow & Castellano, 2001). Although transformative leadership is a worthwhile aspiration, realistically,

high schools could be greatly served by a mesh of transformative and transactional styles. While transformative skill sets shape society, a more realistic expectation for principals to pursue is transformational practice, or the shaping of the school to develop an organization that thrives in the face of change and in the midst of challenges to enhance instructional focus. A school that adapts to change well will successfully implement new practices to meet the needs of all learners.

The data collected from two high schools was used to judge whether leaders were transformational. I wanted to determine if the two principals studied have a productive climate and culture, established professional learning communities, and if teachers use effective instructional practices. I proposed, contrary to Marks and Printy, that instructional leadership is a component of transformational leadership. Without changes in the classroom, a school cannot evolve and function optimally as an organization.

The purpose of Shields' work was to specifically identify transformative characteristics in comparison to transformational and transactional styles and to determine if the two selected principals were able to effect both educational and broader social change. Shields (2010) used a backward mapping approach and drew upon the work of Elmore (1979-1980), Odden and Odden (1984) and Dimmock and Walker (2004). Collectively, these researchers argued the need to study the control influencers had when creating policy. Elmore (1984) stated that "to implement a different process – one that begins with the need for a new policy or intervention" which causes one to focus on the "delivery mechanisms required for the effect to occur" (p.612). A study of school leadership requires a focus on the end. Shields used a longitudinal study of conceptions, practices, and the challenges to defining organizational operations that can be expected to affect behavior.

Shields also used a predetermined set of criteria to analyze findings from multiple interviews, confirmatory interviews with others, and observations to determine the presence of equity, deep democracy, and social justice within school administrations. Although both leaders sought to change the inequities within their schools, both perpetuated the privilege of some and exclusion of others, but simultaneously used their power to address the need to reallocate resources within the school structure. The author concluded that the transformative practices present supported a focus on individual needs despite background.

Shields analyzed data from the Illinois Department of Education to select the two principals. Potential principals had to meet specific criteria which included: currently led a school that meet the No Child Left Behind Annual Yearly Progress requirements, have a minimum of 25% of the student population qualify for free and reduced lunch, and has a leader who recognized a need for equitable change within schools. The interviews conducted by Shields provided qualitative data and lead her to select two principals who understood the relationship between leadership and social justice. The study proceeded to examine transformative leadership and explored practices of principals to determine their level of skill in creating a more inclusive environment that was socially just and academically successful.

Catherine and Amy were the selected principals; both were tenured principals serving their current schools 3 to 5 years with a predominately white enrollment until a recent change in the racial/ethnic population. Coincidentally, both principals experienced hardship and grew up in poverty which, according to the author, may have accounted for their commitment to students from low socio-economic backgrounds. Catherine lived in several foster homes and attended nontraditional educational settings while Amy's childhood was viewed as unstable with alcoholic parents with mental illness. Both principals had to work to deconstruct current

practices and knowledge frameworks that allowed inequity to continue. Catherine focused on her school as a community where she worked to unite students while, to achieve this task, Amy began with a unification of the staff through book studies and professional learning communities. Both principals shared the idea that doing things differently was not overwhelming but instead a challenge that was worth the effort.

Shields identified commonalities in the principals' desire, work ethic and outcomes. "In both cases, there was an explicit identification of a need to challenge current practices and to begin to do things differently. The optimism was cautious, as they recognized that teachers have to overcome deficit thinking and blame and take responsibility for the success of all children" (p. 575). The data collected indicated that the principals were creative in approach but not transformative. Both principals worked to deconstruct old frameworks and establish new norms but in Amy's school the culture, rituals and fear of change did not allow full implementation, thus the practices were transformed but not transformative because it was not a change in culture instead it was a followed mandate. In Catherine's school, the teachers did recognize the need to address students with skill deficits and worked to alter their practices to move from testing to learning thus a caring community of adults emerged but was not fully established as old frameworks were still being deconstructed.

The new approaches each leader instituted redistributed power so that educators were involved in the change process. Changes in pedagogical practices illustrated the relationship between equitable instructional practices and the development of democratic learning contexts. Shields determined that both principals demonstrated courage and were willing to take risks despite being met with opposition. In the end, both principals voiced that leadership is not about popularity but instead about creating a learning environment that served all students.

The presence of power and authority begins with questions regarding justice, democracy, and the dialectic between accountability and social responsibility (Shields, 2010). I sought to observe transformational practices and record the leader's setting of directions, development of people, and operational redesign of the organization and management of instructional practices as defined components of transformational leadership (Marks and Printy, 2003). I modified Shields framework by removing transformative leadership characteristics and adding specific characteristics of instructional leadership as a means to evaluate the current practices of two high school principals in a real life setting. High schools must produce students ready for college or the workplace. This outcome requires a focus on instructional practices that moves away from testing and into the realm of learning. Redesigning school norms to support practices that address the needs of all learners must be the focus of principals and the desire of teachers. The main argument of this study is that without consistent effective leadership a school cannot reach its maximum potential.

The principals in Shield's study noted, "... teaching what children have not had the opportunity to learn is the clear responsibility of the school community as a whole" (p. 582). In both schools, underlying culture issues did not allow for the entire implementation of transformational practices. I described how school staffs value climate and culture and implement professional learning communities and effective instructional strategies. As in the Shields research, I examined the role of the principal in terms of change within an organization and sought to determine means of success and barriers that exist. The leader models the behavior present in an organization that is transformed (Bolden, Gosling, Marturano & Dennison, 2003).

Table 2 is the from the original Shields framework (2010) and served as an initial guide for evaluating leadership style, the influence it had on student outcomes, and the functioning capacity of an organization.

**Table 2**

**Initial Conceptual Framework Adapted from Shields (2010)**

	<b>Transactional</b>	<b>Transformational</b>
Foundation	Basic organizational hierarchy	Relational trust, strong positive, characteristic leading to inspirational relations
Starting point	A desired agreement	Need for the organization to run smoothly and efficiently
Emphasis	Means	Organization
Processes	Immediate cooperation through mutual benefit and agreement	Understanding of culture, professional development, redesign of the organization, managers of instructional design
Key Values	Honesty, responsibility	Justice and equity
Goal	Agreement	Organizational change and effectiveness
Instructional Practices	Traditional	Relevant, individualized, monitored
Power	Mostly ignored	Inspirational
Leader	Ensures smooth operation	Develops a common purpose shared leadership, participates in learning communities, focused on organizational goals and development

**Methods**

In this study, I sought to determine if and describe how two high school principals implement transformational practices to create a positive climate and culture, ongoing sustainable professional development, and effective instructional practices. To answer my question “*How can a high school principal lead the transformation of school norms to be responsive to the ever changing needs of learners?*” requires a qualitative approach. It is only

through observation and open discussion will it be possible to ascertain how principal leadership practices translate into teacher practice.

Qualitative research is interpretive in nature and requires that the researcher be both the data collection and analytic tool. Interpretive work requires a strong knowledge base and relies on the integrity of the researcher to demonstrate trustworthiness. The design of this study is bolstered by my fifteen years of experience as an educator, including 7 years of experience as a secondary school administrator. I served two years as a high school assistant principal and 5 years as a middle school principal. I am in my fourth year as a central office administrator. My professional and academic knowledge come together to bolster my interpretive capacity.

This study was to be deductive. Although inductive work produces more data and allows for more meaning to reveal itself, this study was designed to be limited in scope. The original framework presented was to structure the data collection and inform analysis. The study did not proceed as expected. Attempts to fit data in the original framework failed. As I reviewed field notes and interview transcripts it became clear that the data required a new framework. The design shifted from deductive to inductive.

In the sections that follow, I describe the study sites and the participants, along with the data collection methods. I conclude with a description of my analysis.

### **Study sites.**

This study was primarily located in two high schools in the same school district for comparative purposes. Given the fact that the schools are located in the same district, they are subject to the same state and county policies and accountability pressures. Variations in the school populations created different school cultures; my focus was on principal leadership within a defined context.

The sample was a convenient but good sample. I currently reside and work in the district where the study was completed however the district provides an excellent backdrop for research. The two district high schools differ in free and reduced lunch percentages, community resources, professional communities, facilities, and course offerings, experience level of staff and turnover rates of teachers. The two high schools have distinctly different personalities and philosophies. The background of the individual principals is evident in school focus, one high school provides a wealth of fine arts courses while the other has a variety of special education settings where modifications to serve individual needs are the norm.

***Two high schools.*** Both schools are located in an area known for its hospitality, timber and coal industries. The geography can easily be described as a serene rural setting. A.C. High School is located in the southern end of the district with approximately 58 percent of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. The southern end of the district boasts tourist attractions, higher employment and higher income rates. A.C. High School is a recently renovated comprehensive high school that serves students in grades 9-12. The campus has two pre-kindergarten sites where students gain experiential learning credit, a professional kitchen, an auto technology shop and auto collision repair shop, a building construction facility, an LPN school, and state of the art agriculture facilities. The sports facilities are worth noting. Community organizations recently funded a one million dollar football turf field, built a wrestling facility, and installed a basketball floor that is a replicate of a National Basketball Association team's arena. The school welcomes guests with a huge electronic sign that shares information on students of the month, national merit finalists, sports events, and CTE competition winners.

H.C. High School is located on the northern end of the district that once flourished from the coal and timber industry; many business owners have vacated this area now. Approximately



67 percent of the students from the northern end of the district qualify for free or reduced lunch meals. HC High School is currently undergoing renovations afforded by passage of a 20 million dollar bond. Currently the school is in a state of construction with loud machinery, large dumpsters, and crews filtering in the hallways as students and teachers continue with the learning process.

***District central office.*** A principal must be able to articulate the goals and missions set by the superintendent and county board of education. It is for this reason that I have included the District Central Office as a third site for study. In addition to understanding the policies and practices promoted by the central office, it is be important to gather information from specific central office administrators and staff, particularly the Career and Technical Education Coordinator, the Superintendent, and the Assistant Superintendent. These individuals provided information about current district-level initiatives, county level professional development and resources available to schools.

**Data collection.**

Data for analysis will be collected in two ways: observation and interviews. Observation is a fundamental tool in qualitative research and provides data against which I can check for consistency with interview data. Observation allows me to see if people are doing what they say they are doing. Interviewing will be the last data collection effort and will be informed by the data collection activities which precede it.

***Documents.*** The following documents were gathered upon receiving permission from the superintendent of schools. I reviewed the contents of the reports and used the information in the opening sections of AC and HC High School to provide background information on status

and performance. The purpose of the data collection was to guide the observation and interview process with knowledge about adequate yearly progress indicators.

The documents collected were:

1. High school graduation rate report
2. High school drop out rate report
3. Report of schools with similar size and demographics
4. Free and Reduced lunch percentages
5. Student attendance rates
6. The principal evaluation form from Policy 5310
7. Individual high school and county strategic plans
8. Local school improvement council minutes and membership information

*Observation.* As provided in the framework, I analyzed and compared the data collected on leadership style to characteristics of transformational leadership. I began with a protocol derived from the original framework, but expanded my notes as the protocol began to seem insufficient. I analyzed field notes to determine common concerns, and overall effectiveness of the school principal in terms of leadership capacity. I examined the relationship between leadership and meaningful school change. Like Shields, I reviewed and studied outcomes and attempted to discern possible relationships. I also examined the role of the principal in terms of change within an organization and contributors and barriers to success.

Transformational leaders establish organizational norms like relational trust. I observed the presence of relational trust in the culture and climate of the school specifically in the comfort teachers had with the principal monitoring their instruction.

**Table 3**

**Observation Protocol**

	<b>School 1</b>	<b>School 2</b>
1. Intellectual leadership		
2. Established school goals and objectives		
3. Culture and climate		
4. Monitoring of instruction a. setting standards		

b. observing c. supporting d. encouraging		
5. School expectations		
6. Classroom expectations for special populations		
7. Shared leadership		
8. PLC participation		
9. Knowledge of classroom pedagogy		
10. Knowledge of school improvement process		

The observation protocol (Table 5) contained 10 items that were visible to the researcher after spending time with the principal, teachers and students. Items number 1, 4 and 9 were viewed by observing exchanges between principal and teachers and the presence of the principal within classrooms. Item number 2 was observed from posted documents in classrooms and in the student planner. Items 3 and 5 were observed during student exchanges in the hallways between classes and in the level of expectation on student behavior and outcomes in classrooms to included time on task. These observations provided information on whether the school mission was stated or embodied. The presence of item 6 came from the comparison of courses across classroom type; co-taught versus single instructor. Item 8 was observed through attendance in team meetings. Finally, item 10 was demonstrated during observation of practices present in county strategic plan. Additional data were also gathered beyond the limitations of the protocol.

**Interviews.** To identify teacher attitudes and beliefs along with their perspective on the style of their leader, I conducted semi-structured, open-ended interviews with a flexible protocol. In addition to questions developed, I used questions from the state school of excellence recognition program because the program established a framework of key criteria for school

effectiveness that assists schools in self assessment and planning. Successful schools are dedicated to learning and developing students. Such schools plan strategically and demonstrate a commitment to continual growth. I chose questions from this framework because it allowed me to determine the presence of transformational practices from the teacher perspective and provided me an opportunity to see how the participants view their involvement in the transformation process. Teachers, principals, and central office staff members were interviewed individually. I asked individuals to reveal information about themselves and their leadership. Without having the opportunity to establish the right level of trust, I wanted to ensure the best rate of participation by removing some of the perceived risk of group discussions. The primary research question was answered through the 1<sup>st</sup> level of interview questions from the school of excellence application packet. The interview questions were designed to reveal what teachers, administrators, and central office staff members believe and feel. Other questions were related to transformational leadership characteristics and embedded concepts.

***Interview participant selection.*** For these interviews I selected a diverse group of teachers based on content area taught, years of experience, and potential for literacy based instructional knowledge. I selected 11 teachers to represent AC High School and 6 teachers from HC High School for a total of 17 teachers; in addition, I interviewed 5 administrators. The total number of individuals interviewed is 22.

I used different protocols for teachers, principals and central office staff as I was seeking different kinds of information across job type. I asked all participants to talk about the role climate and culture plays in a school's overall success in terms of student outcomes and ability to change, overall understanding of professional learning communities, participation level and application to the classroom, and the role of the leader in the implementation of effective

teaching strategies. Administrators were asked specific questions about programs and county initiatives and level of support available to schools.

*Data preparation.* I worked with my observation field notes as the interviews progressed. As I collected observation data I compared it to the informal information collected from individual teachers, principals, and district office staff. My observation field notes informed my interviews. As I saw information occurring in the field I modified my questions and addressed items observed to support data collection efforts.

All the recorded interviews were prepared by a transcriptionist for accuracy of reporting. I listened to and documented common phrases, words, concepts and philosophies using the chart adapted from Shields' (2010) study to determine climate, professional development implementation, and use of effective instructional strategies.

*Analysis.* I developed a preconception memo and reviewed my observation field notes daily for disconfirming evidence. I read and checked the transcripts and listened to the recorded interviews and drafted a memo summarizing the story of the cases and how these interviews answered the research questions. I initially tried to fit the data into the framework adapted from Shields, but when led to the elimination of too much data, I created codes for what I saw in the data and developed a new transformational framework for each principal and teacher group. Finally I wrote summaries of the cases and summarized my findings.

The most vital part of the analysis was the discovering that the initial framework was insufficient. As I attempted to fit the data into the initial framework, I noted how much richness was being lost. I risked labeling leaders as transactional or not transformational without acknowledging where they were on a continuum between transactional and transformational. The

development of a new framework was itself a critical analytical turn independent of the findings and answers to specific research questions.

### **Challenges and Limitations**

Doing research in one's "backyard" can create dilemmas. How can I be honest about and/or critical of my colleagues? How can I separate my professional self from my academic self? I confronted these challenges by being honest and working toward the highest standards of trustworthiness in qualitative research. I found it was difficult when interviewing an individual I had known or worked with over an extended period of time because they would refer to my time as a principal as a comparison to the current practices. Additionally, the principals would refer to activities within the county that I was currently working on with them as a part of an answer provided. I was careful to ask follow up questions to make sure I was receiving an answer that included what the thoughts of the principal were instead of me reading into what I thought was implied based on my experiences with them.

The study is limited in that it is not generalizable to all high school principals, but research on leadership tends to be particularistic. The findings may not fit all leaders but the new framework may provide guidance to them. I had to stay focused on the answers provided at all times because although I knew exactly what the teacher was referring to, I had to be sure to ask follow up questions that would provide insight to an individual who had not been a part of the process the teacher or principal was referring to.

A unique aspect of my research was I had served as a principal at one of the two schools and had served as the principal of the feeder school to the other. During my time at one of the schools, three teachers became emotional as they referred to how the school used to be and voiced their concern about the changes in morale over the last 10 years. All of these comments

occurred after I had turned off the recorder and I was unsure how these played into the big picture of my research. I decided that the individuals released these emotions to me in my current administrative position, as their former principal, and as their friend instead of to me as a researcher and chose not to mention them within this document, but it did serve as a reminder to me that educators take their roles as professionals very seriously and want to work in effective schools. With that realization I was reminded of the importance of leadership.

While at the second school, I explained to students multiple times that I was not there as an employee of Greenbrier County schools but instead I was completing work for a class I was taking because most of them became confused when I referred to the program as a doctoral program. Many students wanted to discuss with me family, school, life, college hopes, etc. because of my relationship to them as middle school principal. I had a wonderful life changing experience while the principal of the middle school that these students had attended so I had to be extremely careful to not overly credit kindness or behavior in classrooms to my presence in that school. As their former principal, there is a built in sense of high expectations in behavior. I hoped the students performed as they would in the presence of any researcher and after my urging ignored my presence all together.

### **Researcher Identity**

The purpose of this section is to situate myself in this study. It is challenging to determine one's role in the research process because experiences can influence choices that are made during the data collection process. Any time data is collected bias and personal accounts can influence the outcomes. My professional identity does play a role in this process.

I am currently an administrator in the district for which I am employed. I am responsible for all activities in the district's four secondary schools. Previously I served as an administrator

in two of the four schools. I am not in any fashion the supervisor of secondary principals nor secondary teachers according to state policy and county practice. I am in essence the curriculum guide, the person who fields concerned calls about the four secondary schools and works directly with district office staff to best utilize funds within the programs I oversee. State policy dictates that the superintendent or his designee is the person who completes the evaluation of the principals while the principal or his designees completes the evaluation of the classroom teachers. Although I am in classrooms and do observe practices I use these to guide professional development planning.

It is important to note several specific identifiers because my career has been unique in terms of the district where I am employed. During the first year of adequate yearly progress requirements, the school of which I was principal was the only secondary school in the district to meet standards in all subgroups including special education. As a principal of a state-designated school of excellence, I used the questions that I asked of the participants to assess my own work.

My experience as a high school assistant principal and middle school principal are important to note. I believe the principal is the most important and powerful role in the public school system. Student success is dependent on the knowledge, social skill set, and drive of the principal. I viewed myself as the cheerleader, protector, supporter, and person with an unwavering opinion that my school was the best and my students' outcomes were contingent upon the atmosphere I could produce. I typically worked a 12 hour day unless I had to supervise a ballgame then it became a 15 hour day with Saturday and Sunday as musts if I were to move my school forward. I never shied away from disciplinary issues whether in the classroom, on a bus, or in the home of a student. I was responsible to make sure no one wasted a minute of my



students' time. Although I had incredibly high expectations of my staff, I had only 2 teachers transfer to other schools in 5 years.

I demanded effective and varied instructional practices and high student outcomes. I believed students would become what you told them they could be despite financial limitations; it was my job to provide the resources parents could not. If I saw a teacher who was not working up to expectation I addressed it, but I was also a principal who celebrated teachers. During the school of excellence interview process, the question was asked, why does this school deserve to be recognized? As I looked around the room, the superintendent, board members and parents sat quietly as I proceeded to address the question. I told the interviewers that this school was the home to many and a family to all. "Although many schools provide support to students this school recognized our responsibility to our community and took it very seriously." I specifically shared the story of a student diagnosed with cancer who told the *Make a Wish Foundation* that he wanted to return to school; that was his wish. Although too sick to do so, he tried for a few days but was too weak. When the music teacher learned that his desire to attend school was because he wanted to learn to play guitar in music class, he drove to the child's home every day during his planning period until the student passed, teaching him to do just that. "This school is much more than a support, it is a community of caring adults who are my second family and my family has earned this recognition." The role of principal is very personal to me and my expectation of anyone who holds the title is great.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Emergent Conceptual Framework

The work of high school principals is challenging and requires commitment and drive. High School principals are expected to meet the *No Child Left Behind* accountability component of adequate yearly progress and vocational federal indicators. They must increase graduation rates and decrease drop-outs. To help meet these student indicators, principals work to provide teachers with sustainable professional development, monitor their instructional practices, maintain social control and enhance climate and culture. Principals are also challenged to provide individualized educational opportunities for the young adolescents they serve to enhance the community in which they reside. This mix of responsibilities creates a need to identify leadership characteristics that breed success.

High schools need flexible leaders who are change agents willing to focus on the importance of the organization, and its employees, and most importantly, analyze student outcomes to inform the work of professional learning communities. It is only when effective leadership practices are implemented that a school can grow and begin to thrive. When asked in a recent interview for the January 30, 2011 issue of *Newsweek* about improving our nation's schools, Arne Duncan emphasized the importance of school leadership when he replied, "If we had 95,000 good principals we'd be done."

This study relied upon the analysis of approximately 45 hours of observation and the interviews of 22 teachers and administrators between the two high schools. During semi-structured, open-ended interviews the principals were asked to discuss their role as the instructional leader, the level of support they receive from the district office, what type of teaching occurs and what their role in climate and culture was. Teachers were asked about the

school improvement process, their teaching practices and the role leadership plays in school improvement. Members of the district office were interviewed to determine what district initiatives are, the district philosophy and expectations and the perception of how high school principals deliver the message.

During the first data collection phase, exchanges between principals and teachers, exchanges between teachers and students and instructional practices were observed. This research identified the components that limit principal effectiveness. The conceptual framework of Carolyn M. Shields (2010) guided my initial work. As I began reviewing the interviews I recognized components that were missing from Shields' work. I was unable to identify where the two principals studied would fall on the chart that reflected discrete categories of leadership. The characteristics listed for the leadership categories of transactional, transformational, and transformative were my only options. Shields' work was also limited in description. It was primarily focused on proving or disproving a principal's desire and ability to become transformative. From these limitations I recognized that my research findings would be incomplete unless a new framework was developed.

Unlike Shields, my research indicates that a principal does not fall into a specific category nor is it realistic to believe a principal can be only transformative in practice. The framework created during the analysis phase lists specific characteristics present in each step of a principal's progression from transactional to transformational. During my data collection phase I determined that my research design was not going to be about proving the value of Shields' framework, but instead about using the work of Shields to create a tool much more complex in design but more appropriate in terms of evaluating the work of high school principals in a time of high stakes accountability.

Using the existing framework of Shields (2010) did not allow me to explore the scope of leadership nor did it provide me the opportunity to identify the steps that must occur between transactional and transformational leadership. Leadership is an evolutionary process that requires focus on the end goal of learning for all students in an environment of support, trust, and accepted change. After completing field notes and reviewing interviews, I determined that the initial framework I proposed to use limited my ability to describe the fluid growth that occurs when a principal progresses toward transformational status. This realization is my first and most valuable finding.

### **Re-envisioning Transformational Leadership**

Aspects that define transactional and transformational leadership occur along a continuum that represents the principal's willingness to relinquish control. It is only as a principal allows for shared leadership that true change can occur. Although a principal cannot run a school without being transactional, he or she cannot remain transactional or the organization will stagnate or regress. As the principal begins the journey of change he becomes experimental. He dissects data, shares information and communicates his ideas to address deficiencies with staff. His efforts to include staff in effective decision making shifts the focus to school improvement. The principal becomes proactive in his approach and begins providing feedback to teachers on their efforts toward reaching a common goal. Teachers see the principal as a change agent and are inspired to work collaboratively and assume leadership roles.

Prior to demonstrating transformational leadership skills the principal must become a motivator of staff who efficiently uses resources and further emphasizes the importance of collaboration. The principal becomes a coach who participates in and supports staff to change practices to address individual student strengths and weaknesses. The final step prior to

becoming transformational requires the principal to fully embrace collaboration. Shared leadership encourages the creativity of teachers and requires focus on teaching strategies that yield high performance from all students. At this stage the principal has moved from departmental collaboration to school wide efforts.

A transformational principal will lead a school to become focused on student achievement with a culture built on effective decision making, enhanced social support, efficient control of adults, and expanded moral authority. The changes yield high student outcomes and the principal is supportive of shared decision making.

The organization now has the ability to guide the leadership style of a new administrator. If an organization is led by a transformational principal, then shared leadership and spirited compliance exists. A change in leadership should not fully change the practices of the organization because equality for all students and collaboration among adults exists in a professional community that is focused on continually adapting to improve student outcomes.

### **A New Framework**

Shields (2010) work indicated that a principal would demonstrate characteristics that fell into one of three categories: transactional, transformational or transformative. The work of Catherine and Amy indicated that although they wanted to employ leadership that was transformative they were mostly transformational in practice. That work was confined to one of three categories and with my desire to focus on transactional and transformation leadership, I was left with a binary framework. My data did not fit within that system.

The framework that resulted from and ultimately reshaped my research puts leadership on a continuum where transformational practices are optimum. Although impacting society and changing the culture of a community is desirable for today's principal it is almost unobtainable;

however transforming an organization will greatly impact student outcomes. As principals work to improve the organization, they begin to release control over management tasks, design, planning, curricular decisions and how to ensure social control. The organization works together to ensure that all aspects are addressed and common goals emerge. It becomes the principal's responsibility to monitor and guide the development of the organization and provide ample time for professionals to be able to collaborate.

### **Leadership components.**

The following section defines the components of leadership relevant to this framework and describes how a principal can evolve from transactional to transformational. As the leader's characteristics change from left to right as provided in Table 4, the principal releases control and the organization moves toward shared leadership and collaborative practices to efficiently meet the needs of individual learners and produce high student outcomes.

*Starting point.* Every principal has a leadership philosophy he works to establish within the context of the school. The principal defines how he will lead, what the focus will be, and what the expectations are. A principal who is transactional leads in a vacuum. Prior to the beginning of school, he develops school rules and regulations that he articulates to staff and students once school begins. As the principal begins to change, he identifies the needs on his own but becomes experimental by sharing data with staff and developing goals with members of the organization. Once a principal becomes a change agent, he works to organize teachers toward a common goal while the teachers develop confidence in the principal and are inspired as they work to implement plans, revisit them, and make adjustments.

While motivating the staff, the principal efficiently makes use of materials, resources, and people. Members of the organization collaboratively visit the plan and commit to making

the changes recommended. Leadership now collaboratively exists in a state of constant renewal. Once the leader reaches transformational status the school wide focus is student achievement.

**Foundation.** The foundation of the school culture is primarily a result of the relationship between the teachers and the principal with leadership style at the center. A transactional principal views the relationship between teachers and the administration as an exchange of needs for services. As the leader moves from transactional to experimental he defines the organization's initiatives and promises the staff that decision making will be effective. In attempts to become a change agent, he sets directions and serves as a role model for change prior to motivating the staff to fulfill the vision created. It is as the principal encourages the creativity of teachers and organizes collaborative efforts that enhanced social support exists within learning communities. Ultimately a culture led by a transformational principal is built on effective decision making and efficient control of adults with expanded moral authority.

**Emphasis.** No matter the type of leader every school focuses on student achievement. Leadership style dictates the level of emphasis that exists. Students of a transactional principal may meet minimum state required outcomes while existing in an orderly environment. As the principal becomes more experimental, he begins working to efficiently control adults and shift the instructional focus toward the common purpose of improving student outcomes. As this common purpose is realized subgroup performance improves. The principal becomes a change agent who organizes activities and learning communities to increase departmental interactions to further meet complex needs.

The principal motivates staff to address individual student strengths and weaknesses as he enhances social support between departments. This collaboration allows professionals to focus

on teaching strategies that yield high performance. Once a transformational principal emerges deep change occurs within the organization and all students can meet their potential.

**Process.** No matter the type of leadership present, teachers and principals must work together. The style of leadership frames how the two parties will do this. A transactional principal creates an agreement that dictates the level of effort expected from each party. This level and type of service yields cooperation and support. An experimental principal changes the process by developing an understanding of the culture and climate and can now provide a framework of expectations, assistance and support. The change agent furthers efforts by setting directions for the staff.

A principal who monitors practices develops people and encourages change. The principal supports and coaches the staff prior to collaboratively redesigning the organization's practices. In this collaborative phase the leader begins to delegate decision making. Once the principal is able to step back and simply monitor practices, transformation has occurred.

**Key values.** Teachers and the principal must place emphasis on what matters. The school's key values are related to culture and climate. As a transactional principal, the leader reacts to issues and promises to exchange goods for services. As the principal begins to experiment with transformational practices teachers exhibit fairness to all students. The transformation continues with the principal as a change agent who supports and encourages staff.

The motivating leader values honesty and works toward collaborative efforts that encourage teachers to demonstrate equality among students. At this stage, the staff begins to renew and redesign the organization with the principal. The final step in the transformation process is the maintenance of equality for all students so that effective decision making, social support, and expanded moral authority exists in a state of relational trust.



**Goal.** The goal of the organization is directly related to emphasis and key values. The goal of the organization will change based on data collection and leadership style. The goal of a transactional principal is to have agreement within the organization. As the principal begins introducing new ideas in the experimental phase, he provides timely feedback to teachers on the expectations set forth. As the change agent, the principal begins to share the leadership and focuses more on organizing learning communities so departments can discuss how to increase student achievement. As professionals work together the principal develops into a motivator working within the communities to mutually develop goals that are implemented during the collaborative phase. With the ultimate goal of effectiveness, the principal evolves into a transformational leader ready and willing to lead change.

**Power.** How the principal uses his authority demonstrates his understanding of his power. Principals are either proactive or reactive in style and choose to work in isolation or share responsibility for development of goals, emphasis, and key values. Power is important to a transactional leader. The principal's management is top-down and reactive. His willingness to support staff is relevant to what the employee is able to give within a hierarchy of staff. In contrast, the experimental principal implements proactive approaches as he works to become a change agent who develops shared leadership roles. This proactive approach continues through the motivator and collaborative phases where an evaluation component develops. In distinct contrast with the transactional principal, the transformational leader is supportive of team decision making.

**Leader.** The leader maintains the operational status and type of transactions that occur. The transactional leader is focused on the actual transactions between himself and teachers in order to yield sustainable operation of the organization. As the principal progresses through the

stages he operates within an organization that is efficient and conducive to operating smoothly. It is when the leader assumes the title of instructional leader that he becomes a transformational leader.

**Table 4**  
**Changes to Framework/Process of Moving from Transactional to Transformational**

<p><b>Leadership Style</b></p> <p><i>As you move to the right, the principal begins to release control</i></p>	<p><b>Transactional</b></p> <p>A leader must be Transactional prior to becoming Transformational</p> <p>An organization must change or outcomes will decline; leadership cannot remain transactional</p>	<p>The leader is <b>Experimental</b></p>	<p>The leader attempts to become a <b>change agent</b></p>	<p>The leader becomes a <b>motivator</b> of staff</p>	<p>The leader organizes <b>collaborative</b> efforts and learning communities</p>	<p><b>Transformational</b></p> <p>Culminating Process</p>
<p><b>Starting Point</b></p>	<p>School rules, regulations and rewards are developed by the principal</p> <p>Principal leads in a vacuum</p>	<p>Principal identifies needs</p> <p>Principal and teachers share Data review and goals are developed</p>	<p>Principal organizes people toward a common goal.</p> <p>Teachers develop confidence in principal and are inspired</p> <p>Principal and teachers revisit of Plan and make adjustments</p>	<p>Principal makes efficient use of materials, resources, people,</p> <p>Principal and teachers revisit of plan and follow through on changes recommended</p>	<p>Principal and teachers review of progress</p> <p>Continual renewal of plan</p>	<p>School wide focus on student achievement.</p>
<p><b>Foundation</b></p>	<p>Exchange of needs and services between teachers and principal</p> <p>Principal provides financial support and social control</p>	<p>Principal defines initiatives and promises effective decision making (RT)</p>	<p>Principal sets directions and serves as role model for change</p>	<p>Principal motivates staff to fulfill vision</p>	<p>Actions of principal support plan and further development of effective decision making and enhanced social support</p>	<p>Culture is built on effective decision making, enhanced social support, efficient control of adults and expanded moral authority (RT)</p>

					(RT) Principal encourage creativity of teachers	
<b>Emphasis</b>	Students will meet minimum state required outcomes  Perceived notion of orderly environment	Improving school wide student outcomes.  Principal efficiently controls adults to manage the instructional program toward a common purpose (RT)	Teachers improve subgroup performance  Activities and PLCs organized by the principal increase departmental interactions to meet complex needs of learners (RT)	Teachers begin to focus on individual student strengths and weaknesses.  Activities and PLCs organized by the principal who enhances social support between departments (RT)	Teachers focus on teaching strategies that yield high performance from all students  Activities and PLCs organized by the principal increase school wide social support of adults and expands the moral authority to address individual learner needs (RT)	Deep change in organization that yields high student outcomes for all
<b>Process</b>	Agreement between principal and teachers Services of principal and/or teachers yield cooperation and support	Principal develops understanding of the culture and climate of the school.  Leader provides frame work of expectations, assistance and support	Principal sets directions for staff	Principal develops people and monitors practices  Principal participates in change and supports staff  Coaching	Principal and teachers redesign the organization's practices  Leader begins to delegate leadership roles	Principal closely monitors instructional programs
<b>Key Values</b>	Principal is responsible to react to issues  Principal promises exchange	Teachers and Principal exhibit fairness to all students  Principal involves teachers in development of goals	Principal supports and encourage staff  Principal and teachers demonstrate commitment to students.	Principal demonstrates honesty with staff and students	Principal and teachers demonstrate equality among students.  Staff encouraged by principal to renew and redesign plan	Maintenance of Equality for all students.  Maintenance of effective decision making, social support and expanded moral authority (RT)

<b>Goal</b>	Agreement between Principal and teachers	Principal provides timely feedback to teachers on fulfillment of expectations	Shared leadership  Principal organizes departmental PLCs	Principal and teachers develop mutual goals	Mutual goals are implemented  Effectiveness	Organizational Change
<b>Power</b>	Principal management is top-down and reactive  If expectations are not met by teachers or students consequences occur  Principal values employees in a hierarchy; what the employee can offer principal affects level of value principal places on employee	Principal is Proactive  Principal trusts and involves key individuals in planning	Principal begins Shared leadership roles  Proactive	Principal continues developing shared leadership roles  Proactive	Principal and teachers share leadership and evaluate impact of shared leadership  Proactive	Principal and teachers share leadership  Principal is supportive of shared decision making  Proactive
<b>Leader</b>	Transactions between principal and teachers yield sustainable operation of organization	Efficient operation  Principal emphasizes importance of instruction  Concept of Instructional Leadership appears	Smooth operation  Activism  Teachers welcome monitoring of instructional practices  Instructional Leadership is developed	School Improvement  Instructional leader emerges	Effective operation  Instructional leader embraces role	Instructional Leadership exists  School reform

## CHAPTER FOUR

### AC High School

AC High School is situated on a beautiful site in the heart of the district's business community. The facility underwent renovations within the last 10 years with the assistance from the state school building authority. Students in grades 9-12 are filtered to the school from the middle school located directly beside AC High School. The students come into the middle school from five different surrounding communities. The school's first graduating class was in 1969 when the enrollment was 1400 in grades 9-12.

The study of AC High School relied upon approximately 23 hours of observation and 11 interviews of teachers and 1 administrator. During the observation phase, I attempted to observe the exchanges between principals and teachers, teachers and students and instructional practices. The desire was to determine if the mission and goals were stated or actual. Components present in AC High Schools were strong instructional practices and relational trust between students and teachers. During interviews, the teachers of AC High School referenced a desire for more effective social control, and follow through on initiatives. Classroom observations indicate that teachers are providing relevant, engaged, data driven classrooms. Teachers were able to articulate how their practices were beneficial to students and how classroom work was individualized to meet the varying needs of learners. Teachers relayed during interviews that there were multiple opportunities for students to develop relationships with adults and provided examples. The impact of instructional practices and teacher-student relationships are evident when reviewing the attendance rates, increasing state assessment scores and decreasing drop out numbers.

Under the current leadership teachers implement data driven, relevant, and individualized instruction. The teachers include relational trust with students as a component to successful teaching. As you enter the school's campus, the electronic sign welcomes visitors by recognizing student achievements and stating that "Academics are Job #1." Upon entering the school, one can observe recognition of student athletes who achieved all state honors. The pictures of student athletes wraps around to the hallway that leads to the gymnasium and auxiliary gym. There is also a board that recognizes the school's national merit finalists. The school mission statement is displayed in the commons and each student receives a school planner that gives students an overview of school rules and regulations. Based on the latest state data available, AC High School is ranked number one in comparison to schools of similar size and demographics in math and number three in reading/language arts with an 85% increasing graduation rate with only 31 drop-outs during the current school year as opposed to the 60 the previous term.

AC High School serves approximately 1140 students of which approximately 58% receive free or reduced lunch. The attendance rate for the school is 91% and the school was recognized as a distinguished school for the 5<sup>th</sup> year in a row. The school has a clearly defined student creed that is posted in all classrooms to remind students of the expectations placed on them and the values they must uphold. School level decisions primarily stem from meetings with the local school improvement council. Students participate in the council and make the school's presentation to the board of education members and superintendent each spring. My research at AC high school included 11 teachers from 6 different departments with varying degrees of experience and education and 4 administrators whose responsibilities varied from school level administration to the superintendent.

AC High School has a 285 to 1 student to administrator ratio. The school is classified in the top size bracket within the state. In the district where AC High School resides, the administrator to student ratio at the other three secondary schools is: 220 to 1; 165 to 1; 210 to 1. The AC High School campus is the largest campus in the district. It serves as a comprehensive high school, houses the district's Licensed Practical Nursing school, 2 Pre-Kindergarten classrooms, outdoor facilities for the Future Farmer's of America student organization, four career and technical education shops, weight lifting facilities, tennis courts, a football stadium and baseball complex.

***Starting Point.*** The principal and staff worked together to define school rules and regulations in August. The principal worked proactively to identify overall organizational needs and shared data with staff at the opening of schools. The principal collaboratively planned with staff for implementation of strategies that would improve student outcomes and together, the staff developed goals. The principal began the year with an organized staff, common objectives and efficiently planned for use of materials and resources.

The principal views himself as someone who must manage first. Although he would like to be the practicing instructional leader he finds that he is more likely after a few months into the school year to be reactive or resemble a transactional style when addressing issues and teacher needs. The principal is aware of the skill level of the professionals he manages and is appreciative of the high instructional standards teachers uphold.

During his unstructured interview the principal was asked to discuss his role as the instructional leader, the level of support he receives from the district office, what type of teaching he had observed and what his role was in terms of climate and culture. Teachers were asked about the school improvement process, instructional practices and how leadership impacts

school improvement. All those interviewed or observed noted that the principal works hard to establish a positive tone in August and is quick to respond to emails or address concerns that teachers present to him. The teachers do believe the principal has great ideas and that he demonstrates characteristics of a change agent in August as he reviews data and organizes people toward a common goal.

Principal: All of those measurements [Local School Improvement Committee minutes, parent surveys, student surveys] guide what we do every year. We do an exit survey with our faculty. I look at that very carefully over the summer. It determines the direction we need to go the next school year. LSIC is very very important as well as academic boosters [organization of teachers and parents who discuss ways to emphasize academics through incentive programs.] [We use state assessment] data, benchmarking, the data supplied from the board office as far as failure rates, passing rates, [and] dropout rate. [Additionally we] visit classrooms, look at lesson plans, speak to students, follow up, [and] speak to parents. It gives you a pulse of what's taking place.

Teacher: I think you have some strong teacher leaders. We were allowed to collaborate. We were allowed to have team time. We were given time in the summer for team building and making a plan and making a transition. I feel we were supported in that and given those opportunities.

Most staff expressed they have confidence in the principal and are inspired in August because they believe he has the best interest of students at heart but by December the great ideas planned and implemented have fallen by the wayside as the principal reverts to a transactional style. "School leadership remains a common force for bringing about short-term change but...



mainly fails to fulfill its capacity to secure sustainable improvement” (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006, p. 21). The teachers are willing to support and follow all school rules; however some of the more tenured teachers gave the impression that there is not a high level of relational trust.

Teachers express a belief that all students can learn with the emphasis on individual student strengths and weaknesses. Although teachers believe in what they do, they are unsure that plans developed with an opening of schools motivational leader will be followed through. The emphasis is not continuous. Instead, the foundation of the organization becomes an exchange of needs for services. “Principals must create and maintain a sense of trust in school; use positive micropolitics to negotiate between managerial, technical, and institutional arenas; and create a professional community and networks within the school. They must also maintain a momentum of continuous growth” (Datnow & Castellano, 2001, p. 221).

**Foundation.** The teachers understand the importance of a positive and safe working environment and can articulate their expectations of the administration and of the students. The teachers want the principal to share leadership and work to plan for organizational success and the change required to move toward transformation. The principal begins the school term in August by defining initiatives and promises effective decision making to hopefully build relational trust. As the school year continues the principal-teacher relationship becomes an exchange of services for needs as the principal is able to provide financial support and social control as the transactional leader.

Teacher 1: I think he’s actually been very (helping with curriculum, instructional or student engagement.) I had a class last year that the entire class overall was not doing homework, did not feel that they needed to perform there. He just came up and met with the whole class. I was at that point where I had done all that I knew to do in the

classroom. He brought them in told them that if we needed to bring all their parents in we could do that but the expectation was that they had to fulfill the expectation. I felt that was very supportive and responsive.

Like many other management tasks, the principal takes it upon himself to intervene in discipline matters as opposed to delegating to his assistants. His intervention does tie back to instruction because like the situation with the students noted above, discipline impacts learning. A proactive approach to social control could eliminate these occurrences and instead of reacting the principal could work with teachers to develop instructional practices.

The teachers at AC High School appreciated the work the principal did to design a schedule that supported collaboration. The teachers enjoyed working together and looked forward to collaborating with each other and the administration to develop a strong teacher-administration relationship. A lack of follow through played a role in collaboration ceasing to occur.

Teacher 1: Initially we had departmental meetings. I did attend and participate. The purpose was varied with what was going on with the school. Many things had the potential to be taken care of and covered. We began those by disaggregating data and looking at our weakness per grade level and what can we do. We went on to take the data and specifically look at intervention because that was coming. We were not there yet, but it was coming. Then lots of good ideas, lots of potential that fell apart.

I observed between classes that students were present in the hallways without planners although a violation of school rules. I did not observe students with cell phones however several teachers had “no cell phone” signs on the door to their classroom. Teachers were open about the frustration they felt about broken rules not having consequences.

Teacher: I think that we do everything we can to include kids but again I just think when we make policies and set rules it is like a parent. If we don't follow through with them teenagers know that and they start zippin' in on those weak spots. You know we make rules, like last year the big thing was we're going to get attendance improved and so if you don't have good attendance you're not going to the prom. Early on the kids figured out, really? That isn't happening.

Although the teachers noted that backpacks are not to be carried to class nor was food or drink allowed, I observed both. Teachers noted that at first they did write up students for carrying backpacks but did not feel it was followed through by the assistant principals. Teachers felt if they completed a discipline referral for this infraction it undermined their efforts in the classroom. The emphasis of the principal appeared transactional in form where there was a perceived notion within the environment.

Teacher 1: If there is not consistent expectation on discipline, then you're not going to have consistent behavior. I think that behavior is the start of the expectation of how we are going to behave in class and the expectation of how we are going to perform in class. If we have high expectations for behavior and it's consistently carried out I think we'll have an increase in our student performance level because everyone understands what's expected.

Teacher 2: My job as a teacher as you know is to insure that my classroom is safe and productive. I employ various means and try to be creative with this and ever vigilant on how to deal with that. If we don't have discipline or if discipline is lacking we just continue to have problems; so [discipline] goes hand in hand. We teachers come in

different shapes and sizes and I think we all have different beliefs on how discipline should be handled, but until we have students feeling that they're safe, until we have problem kids dealt with effectively and quickly, the educational mission really doesn't survive very well.

Teacher 3: You know administrator, teachers, all of us so you know from the time something happens to the time that it gets disciplined can be two weeks. By that time it's maybe been forgotten or whatever; the timeliness.

Teachers commented that the timeliness of response to discipline was a concern. The teachers of AC High School want to follow the rules and expectations set by the principal but question why follow through does not occur. As I observed within classrooms I noted that teachers handled behavior exceptionally. Teachers appeared to have good rapport with students and could redirect behaviors as they arose. Teachers did allow students to work together and talking was present with teachers reminding students that conversations were to be learning centered.

Teacher 1: I would like to see discipline be administered more promptly. I think it would do a lot for the culture climate at the school with the staff and the students. Again, discipline always sounds negative. You know the purpose of discipline is really to be corrective. It's another teaching learning opportunity for children. So I am not saying hammer them in the head and there's no opportunity and no this but when it's not handled swiftly like that day, what the students learns is there are no consequences for my behavior.

Teacher 2: I want to create an atmosphere in the classroom to where kids can be successful. Then I want to give them enough opportunity to be successful. If I have to change my role in there from straight up strictness to come in a different direction as you know to being like a comedian. If I have to put on different colors each day to try to get the results, I try to do that.

Although teachers question the timeliness of social control within the overall school, they do pride themselves on developing classrooms that are structured, rigorous and provide relevant instruction. “Teachers rely heavily on routines to create the kind of classroom community they want – one in which students are respectful of one another, where they take turns, share, defer, wait their turn and so for. By creating a social climate that is conducive to learning, teachers also hope to increase student willingness to participate and thereby prevent distractions” (Kennedy, p. 64).

***Emphasis.*** The teachers appreciate time to work toward a common goal, support the principal’s ideas, and want to see improvements. The school’s emphasis is on building positive relationships with students. AC High School is a very student focused school where second chances occur in most classrooms. After disaggregating data in August the staff works collectively with the administrator to focus on areas that need improvement. Although the teachers support the administration, plans lack follow through so great ideas never meet potential. The school year begins with a strong level of agreement. The teachers support the ideas and directives of administration. The teachers indicate through casual conversations in the hallways and during semi-structured interviews that they want to be the very best high school in the state and never want to become complacent in their efforts.

As noted numerous times previously, the administrator generates good ideas and is able to motivate his staff toward common goals. The school year is opened with excitement as the staff looks forward to improving the culture and climate, increasing academic and behavioral expectations and seeing an increase in student outcomes. The school's outcomes are high, attendance rates good, and dropout rates continue to decrease.

A majority of the staff at AC High School is committed to educating all students and demonstrated during observations that they use data, individualized instruction, and work to make learning as relevant as possible. The issue at AC High School is the lack of follow through of the great ideas defined during the opening of schools. Although the emphasis on student-teacher relationships remains throughout the school year, many programs and activities that are never implemented could have strengthened these relationships with a larger number of students.

A culture that allows adults to develop strong relationships with students can meet a complex and diverse set of needs. The teachers at AC High School implemented routines with flexibility to enhance the classroom atmosphere. "Teachers who students gain the most (from) during the school year are those who are most efficient. They move from one activity to another quickly, with little wasted time. They keep students on task, keep tasks moving along, keep transitions brief, and keep pages turning. Routines are important vehicles for achieving this efficiency by socializing students into coordinated roles. Routines prevent student misbehavior, encourage student cooperation and help teachers maintain the momentum of their lessons" (Kennedy, 2005, p. 83). All teachers referenced giving second chances and trying to motivate students to produce outcomes they did not know they were capable of doing. Teachers discussed how they used whatever means to attempt to help all students. Teachers discussed strategies they

used to address specific needs and as noted by Kennedy enhanced “emotional tranquility” by encouraging and reinforcing students, thereby increasing students’ willingness to participate.

Teacher: I think [relationships with students] was the best thing we’re doing here. I enjoy that I have the same homeroom students. I tell my students you need to find one or two persons within this school that you feel that you can go to. I know they do because they come and tell me who those people are.

The principal reverts to transactional because he relies on a tenured, skilled staff. He commented on how lucky he was to have such a great staff, knowledgeable of instructional practices and how to motivate students. The teaching staff worries about their students and prides themselves on the relationships they establish with students but they are concerned that there is only a perceived notion of an orderly conduct. “Having trust in a teacher may be particularly important when students interpret teacher cues. Students see themselves as cooperative – engaged with the course material and activities – in classes with teachers who focused on building relationships to reduce discipline problems” (Gregory & Ripski, 2008).

Teacher: That’s what my job is as a teacher. It wasn’t just academics. I wanted to do everything I could to take my students from where I got them somewhere in the forward direction. That included their English their academics but it also included social, emotional, developmentally and somewhere in the forward direction.

Several of the teachers when asked how they kept students as their day-to-day priority, strongly responded that it was their job, it was their responsibility to teach and to reach all; they spoke about having to motivate students but were willing to push the adolescents they taught to meet individual potential. “Relationship building may earn the trust of students who are socially

distanced from their teachers” (Gregory & Ripski, 2008). Teachers also used any means possible to reach students including seeking parental input, a practice uncommon in high schools.

Teacher 1: I said well you are going to and you’re going to try and I will help you if you need it but you are going to do it. They are and they are enjoying it. I do make accommodations if I need to but they never know and I think if you ask them, they will put forth the effort. They will do the best they can.

Teacher 2: I try to collaborate with my students but also with my student’s parents. I send a letter out in the fall that I keep and it’s private. I get their emails and their phone numbers. I find out if they have internet. I find out if their student likes to read. I ask them on there what I can do to help them through the year. What they would like to see their student learn? I also ask them to tell me something special about their child.

High student outcomes indicate that the relational trust between teachers and students does impact learning. Increasing this trust between teachers and administrators could only further benefit learners as morale impacts classrooms. The teachers at AC High School want to be respected and appreciated. Most teachers try to present a positive front to their students despite how they feel. A positive school wide atmosphere where teacher-administrator relationships were strengthened would eventually lead to a larger number of positive interactions between teachers and students.

Teacher: If the teachers are happy to come to work their personality is different in the classroom. It trickles down and the way the staff feels ends up the way the students feel.

The way the administrators treat the staff is the way the staff treats the students.

Teachers at AC High School focus on individual student needs throughout the school year while



the principal relinquishes his role as instructional leader and gives the perception that he hopes that the students meet state requirements as opposed to reaching full potential.

*Process.* The school year begins with high expectations of all staff. The principal works effectively to develop ideas through learning community opportunities. He monitors staff to ensure he participates in the change process and supports his staff. At the beginning of the second semester, the principal regresses from the motivation stage to experimental but does continue to provide a framework of expectations, assistance, and support. The mission of AC High School is stated but not embodied by all.

The transformation of school norms requires an understanding of hierarchy of job responsibilities. A principal's job responsibilities are vast and require attention to planning and more importantly implementation and maintenance. In order to build the foundation for a positive school community the principal must be visible in classrooms to monitor practices and ensure social control. The principal must share leadership and move toward a transformational approach.

I expected to observe dialogue between teachers and administrators within classrooms. Although I did not observe administrators completing walkabouts or observations; the school newsletter noted that teachers should be aware that principals would be in classrooms completing observations and evaluations during the final few weeks of the school term. Tenured teachers noted, during casual conversations, receiving varying numbers of walkabouts by the principal or assistants and newly hired teachers noted being formally observed according to state policy requirements.

Principal: Our goal at the beginning of the year is to do a certain number of walkabouts.

Unfortunately, the management, the student discipline piece [requires all your attention].

It doesn't take long for the train to go off of the tracks. I am not going to be pretentious about it. That piece just goes off the track real fast so that's a real problem. It really is. It goes back to someone being available and I love it if it's just me. If the assistant principals just did the management, student discipline, and I could go classroom to classroom to classroom. There [are] so many times you can't. This would be a more effective school, much more effective school. I would be a more effective educator. I would have a more realistic idea understanding of what's really going on but sometimes I just pray that everything's good.

The principal initially demonstrated aspects of the motivator phase as he developed people and monitored practices to participate in the change of the organization and to support the staff. Staff members voiced comfort with principal presence in classrooms.

Teacher 1: Nobody in our department has more than six years of experience. The person that thinks they know everything is set up to fail. I'm constantly, I am a workaholic. I'm always looking online for new things to try. I like structure and I don't mind being monitored. I can take constructive criticism it's not gonna hurt my feelings.

Teacher 2: If there were a big flaw in my teaching, I would like for it to be point out. I've never received negative feedback in my teaching. Now the little comments over the intercom about our teaching overall are very detrimental. If they (administrators) want to be sure that we are keeping kids in class or that we are on task bell to bell. There will be little snide comments that the kids will get.

The principal was able to articulate how important monitoring is to the improvement process and does complete all observation requirements in a timely fashion. The teachers of AC

High School recognize that the current process used in the state is very general in nature and does not provide teachers the feedback they want. The evaluation process does allow the principal to be experimental in implementation as he provides a framework of expectations, assistance and support.

Principal: I cannot tell you that I have a finger on everything that goes on. It's unfortunate. The old adage – don't expect what you cannot inspect. We're blessed with teachers who know what's important and do it.

Teacher: I think it's (monitoring) important but the experience that I've had with monitoring and evaluating it really has had very little meaning. There is going to be an actual rubric and you know where you are on the rubric and you know where you can improve and so forth. The evaluations in the past have been pretty general. You weren't really told how you could improve and strengthen yourself.

**Key Values.** A school with a focus on equality among students with teachers who focus on teaching strategies that yield high performance from all students would likely be led by a principal in the collaborative phase of leadership. As would be expected in a school led by a collaborative principal, teachers demonstrated skill in differentiating instruction. Teachers used a variety of instructional practices to assist students with mastering content. Teachers did not rely solely on lecture but instead altered methods of instruction within classrooms and engaged learners. Contrary to the research of Hargreaves and Goodson (2006) which credit a reason for lack of change and nonsustainability of school reform to the maturing lives and career of teaching staff; the majority of staff at AC High School are in the latter part of their careers but they appear to have developed practices according to student need.

Teacher 1: One of the things I use a lot is different games in my classroom; that way I can get them. Kids who normally wouldn't speak, I can put them on a team and get them to participate and evaluate if they're able to engage in the conversation or in the answers that for them it's fun. We're reviewing, but I also use it to see where I need to re-teach things.

Teacher 2: Some kids learn better hands on, some learn better by doing it in writing, some do better [when tested verbally]. So I try to use different options with everyone and then no one feels like they are being singled out. I think we've seen success with that.

Students appeared to be actively involved in the learning process and teachers understood it was not when the student learned the material but instead that they learned the material.

Teacher: I'm very flexible. If the kids need to come in during my planning or after school I make myself available. So they can have additional time or more one-on-one time. I try to be real flexible because they're why I'm here.

Students were allowed to discuss with others how they came to a solution while teachers checked for understanding consistently during the class. This open collaboration appeared to benefit learners.

Teacher 1: In my two programs there's a lot of, as I said before, hands on kind of things and project based learning and getting right down in the floor with the children and learning it first hand and seeing how they react to certain learning environments. I feel I believe in them and let them know you expect that of them.

Students were assessed in a variety of ways. They were asked to explain how they came to the solution, were administered quizzes and benchmarks and partners reviewed work.

Students were provided with consistent feedback on how to accomplish the task provided.

Teacher: This data is telling me you don't know what this is, so let's talk about this. Tell each other what is the author's purpose and then tell me. So then we discussed as a class, where are we breaking this down in the question? We are not getting this right so [I] just [teach] test taking strategies and skills.

A stable component of AC High School is the key value of commitment to students. The principal supports and encourages staff in a primarily reactive mode but his positive nature ensures that everyone on staff keeps students the primary focus for why they do what they do. The staff prides themselves in the fact they consistently develop and maintain relationships with students and gave the impression they believed this was the reason students performed at the level they did. The staff was greatly concerned about the level of social control. The principal's plans fell under the change agent realm of leadership but follow through prohibited the success the staff wanted.

**Goal.** The principal of AC High School attempts to be a change agent and motivator. In August the principal and teachers develop mutual goals but like many other components, this changes to a level of agreement between administration and teachers where basic needs are met. The principal did implement communities to support the superintendent's vision by providing professionals with ample time for collaboration. The goals of the organization are established but do not always materialize.

Teachers at AC High School recognize the need to transform norms and create a

community where sharing ideas is valued. The principal did follow the superintendent's initiative and implemented time for collaboration thus demonstrating the role of a change agent. Most teachers interviewed noted they wanted the amount of time to meet to increase and flow throughout the year. The hope of educational leaders is that teachers and leaders work in collaboration to create a more democratic and participatory school organization (Miller, 1998).

Teachers were assigned to read the book *Ahead of the Curve*. Teachers were assigned to groups of interdisciplinary teams to discuss how formative assessment can impact student outcomes.

Teacher 1: We had that book study that was at the start of the year, *Ahead of the Curve*. We got together that first day and we met in groups of 8 or 10 which was good. [During the] second semester [the plans] just kind of fsssh.

Teacher 2: Sometimes we started out with some really neat ideas as a school and some things that I think would have been really beneficial and teachers would maybe be excited. It doesn't always follow through. It doesn't always go for the time it should go. For instance, we started out the beginning of the year with reading time once a week. The kids have asked for months where that went. Yes, you're going to have a few students who are not readers but those of us the majority of people really enforce that we were stressing reading. I don't know. Every week we would talk about it. We're not sure why, but it just kinda stopped. It's like some other things. It was great for a little bit and then it disappears.

Teacher 3: I think that's very good to get together. Have something common that we're reading that's going to help us and then discuss. You know some teachers groan but you know even in my group even if someone groaned they still had effective things to say. You know which gets conversations started. Which helps the education grow. When you have a conversation going it helps what's happening to get bigger and bigger and bigger and create more success.

Principal: At the beginning of the school year when we had that day (Continuing Education Day focused on school wide Professional Learning Communities) and pretty much we evaluated where we are [using] data and what we needed to do. I heard many teachers say that was one of the best experiences they had had with professional development activity. We were dealing with our school. We [were able to] deal specifically with our school and to use the resources we have here. We have a lot of tremendous educators. We learned from one another. I think it was very valuable.

AC High School teachers commented on their desire to increase learning community time. They genuinely saw the value in learning communities but until the principal can join the learning communities, shared leadership does not truly exist. Marks and Printy (2003) found that without transformational leadership in schools instructional leadership suffered. Shared instructional leadership will not develop unless it is supported and nurtured.

Principal: I think we really promote that [collaboration] a lot. Is there a lot of room for improvement in that? Yes there is. We can improve [by] allowing, permitting more time; creating more time for that. I think we still find ourselves in the old traditional

model of high school the cellular approach. I teach in my room, I shut the door. I think we are seeing some changes but it's not where it needs to be.

**Power.** The principal has the desire to implement shared leadership practices in August. He commits to being proactive but at the end of the first semester the principal alters his style from potential change agent to a transactional leader who makes most decisions without input of staff. By December the principal has reverted to a reactive leadership style to address the immediate needs placed in front of him. Management issues become the priority. The principal stated that he would prefer that the assistant principals handle discipline and daily management issues to allow him the ability to meet with and plan with teachers. The principal's self-convicting urgency to become involved in management matters instead of delegating causes his focus on shared leadership to cease to occur. The principal has now become dependent on teachers to implement plans developed in August.

The foundation of shared leadership is relational trust. For relational trust to flourish, the principal noted he may need to redesign administrative assignments so that his primary responsibility is to be in classrooms and working directly with teachers. Leithwood (2010) stated that transformational leadership has four components: setting directions, developing people, redesigning the organization and managing the instructional program. The principal recognizes the need for transformation and could articulate how he would like to restructure the school's administration positions. The principal demonstrates some experimental characteristics and verbally indicates that he wants to become a change agent. This was apparent as he discussed the positive impact shared leadership would have on student outcomes and staff morale. He noted that being bogged down with day to day management or discipline tasks limited his ability to implement plans created at the beginning of the school year.



With the evaluation process being both general and sporadic, transformational practices occur by teacher preference instead of as a part of planned instructional change. Ultimately change does not occur because management tasks overshadow instructional leadership.

Teacher: I think the intention is to be the best school that [AC High School] can possibly be. He [the principal] is very child oriented and child centered. He does want what he feels is best for kids. He praises the staff a lot. "You are a fine staff." He praises students a lot. I think the intention is there for that to be the best school that it can possibly be.

The staff feels the principal is very student centered and truly cares about the school but is not an active part of the instructional changes occurring in classrooms. The principal himself views the title of instructional leader with respect and is concerned that he is unable to live up to all the requirements it holds given the current administrative assignments within the building. But in order for him to be a good administrator who is responsive to classroom needs, he has to play an instructional role (Datnow & Castellani, 2001; Frantz, 1998).

Principal: I feel that I can't really live completely up to that. The job I have with all of the management responsibilities doesn't permit me to be the so-called instructional leader. So sometimes I think its nice lip service that personally I can't and I've tried, I just cannot come through on that.

**Leader.** As with many leadership characteristics, the principal begins the year well on his way toward a transformational style as he works to be a change agent with a smoothly operating organization actively involved in the change process. The leader is able to organize and excite the staff to reform instructional practices and exudes a strong desire to be the instructional leader. In most capacities the school year transactions between the principal and his staff become more

focused on sustaining the day to day requirements such of general social control, financial aspects, facility needs and general management tasks instead of proactively maintaining a focus on teaching and learning.

Initially the principal gives the appearance of being a motivator of staff. He is very good at making plans, organizing staff toward a common goal and making efficient use of materials, resources and people. The principal does a thorough job planning for redesign of classroom practices and does respond to teacher needs or concerns appropriately in August. The principal talked about the concept of being the instructional leader and the daunting task of balancing that with the reality that an unexpected issue can consume days at a time. Although management tasks can be extremely time consuming, a principal must figure out how to focus on instructional leadership. “As the challenge of school reform demanded the principal to become an agent of change, the managerial role of instructional leader lost its centrality” (Marks & Printy, 2003, p. 391).

The principal of AC High School begins each year at the midpoint between transactional and transformational, but second semester he rests primarily in the transactional realm where, by his own admission, he is unable to move due to the management tasks that have become the priority. The principal of AC High School has a staff that wants an instructional leader. They report excitement for the potential academic growth outlined at the beginning of the year. The staff becomes disheartened by a lack of support and they do not understand why plans and activities are discontinued. Instructional leadership appears to become an after thought.

Principal: Unfortunately, I don't find enough time to do that [work with teachers to improve curriculum and instruction]. Sometimes I find myself just reacting to the issues, I'm being more reactive than proactive and that is the fallacy in it. Like perhaps this

morning, I knew there was a problem in a teacher's room behaviorally and instructionally. So we have this conversation well that already come and gone. That time has been lost for those students. It would've been best if I could have been proactive and that would've never happened. I am correcting things that have already taken place instructionally rather than guiding that would've never happened.

Principal: I do think for all teachers it [the academic success of students] is a priority. The reason is because every morning they line up outside the office and it's just one right after the other. The conversations are about why isn't this student doing well? I'm having problems with this class here, not behaviorally but they're not accomplishing what they need to do. That happens throughout the school day. There is a constant dialog and questions from teachers. Can I support them? Will I support them? I think there is a constant dialog. I know there is.

Observations of AC High included time in the hallway, cafeteria, main office and in classrooms. The transactions between principal and teachers yielded sustainable operation of the organization but did not provide for true school wide reform. Because the principal knows his instructors were highly skills with minimal in class social control issues he was not pressed to change his style or to push his assistants to meet with teachers to address what they viewed as concerns.

Principal: I think we've got to a point where we need to realize that in order to have effective high schools we've got to change how we approach the leadership. I think there needs to be individuals who just deal with manager responsibilities and business responsibilities that will allow the principal to be exclusively an educational leader.

Principal: The key to that is finding key people. Use the resources you have. You know the analogy of keeping the plates spinning. You keep plates spinning hopefully they don't crash to the floor and break. But just finding key people whether they're in the department or whatever departments there from to help initiate and follow through on the instructional leadership aspect of it.

Teachers were in the beginning steps of using learning communities as a means to improve instruction. Teachers discussed collaboration and were honest about how high schools have traditionally been a closed door society. The principal demonstrated characteristics of the motivator phase by establishing activities and learning communities as he worked to enhance social support between departments and increase departmental interactions to meet the complex needs of the school's learners. The principal secured the financial resources necessary for stipends and substitutes so teachers could meet and share. Teachers voiced their appreciation for the efforts but were not given specific directions on what the community should look like or accomplish.

Teacher: I have had other people tell me when you work with elementary teachers they cooperate, they collaborate, they share. Middle school they are about half way there. High school teachers go in and close the door and say I'm the best person here. I don't need anything you have to offer and I'm not giving you any of my secrets. We tend to be very territorial. I think this year having that opportunity to work with [two teachers] and work in another content area. That has really really helped me collaborate. I have always like sitting down with people. I like to sit down and talk about books read. [I] just [like to] have that discussion.

Some departments like social studies had individuals who took an active lead and created an agenda, focused on the school-wide goal of developing comprehension and vocabulary in all content areas and even utilized the instructional coach and individuals from other departments. Special project groups like the Career and Technical Education/ Reading Language Arts/Math collaboration teachers met monthly to develop plans because they developed goals and were given expectations.

During casual conversations the teachers noted a belief that the school’s academic potential is limitless but did not feel that all administrators completed their assigned tasks therefore they viewed the organization as stagnant. Building trust between administration and teachers could ultimately lay the foundation for a school wide professional learning community where teachers share resources and develop teaching skills to assist all learners.

**Table 5**  
**Process of Moving from Transactional to Transformational—AC High School**

<p><b>Leadership Style</b></p> <p><i>As you move to the right, the principal begins to release control</i></p>	<p><b>Transactional</b>                  A leader must be Transactional prior to becoming Transformational</p> <p>An organization must change or outcomes will decline; leadership cannot remain transactional</p>	<p>The leader is <b>Experimental</b></p>	<p>The leader attempts to become a <b>change agent</b></p>	<p>The leader becomes a <b>motivator</b> of staff</p>	<p>The leader organizes <b>collaborative</b> efforts and learning communities</p>	<p><b>Transformational</b></p> <p>Culminating Process</p>
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<p><b>Starting Point</b></p>	<p><b><u>School rules, regulations and rewards are developed by the principal</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Principal leads in a vacuum</u></b></p>	<p>Principal identifies needs</p> <p>Principal and teachers share Data review and goals are developed</p>	<p>Principal organizes people toward a common goal.</p> <p>Teachers develop confidence in principal and are inspired</p> <p>Principal and teachers revisit of Plan and make adjustments</p>	<p><i><u>Principal makes efficient use of materials, resources, people.</u></i></p> <p><i><u>Principal and teachers revisit of plan and follow through on changes recommended</u></i></p>	<p>Principal and teachers review of progress</p> <p>Continual renewal of plan</p>	<p>School wide focus on student achievement.</p>
<p><b>Foundation</b></p>	<p><b><u>Exchange of needs and services between teachers and principal</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Principal provides financial support and social control</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Principal is reactive to social issues</u></b></p>	<p><i><u>Principal defines initiatives and promises effective decision making (RT)</u></i></p> <p><i><u>Principal is reactive to social issues in timely fashion</u></i></p>	<p>Principal sets directions and serves as role model for change</p> <p>Principal works to implement proactive discipline measures</p>	<p>Principal motivates staff to fulfill vision. Social control permits staff to increase expectations while students are focused</p>	<p>Actions of principal support plan and further development of effective decision making and enhanced social support (RT) Social control is present</p> <p>Principal encourage creativity of teachers</p>	<p>Culture is built on effective decision making, enhanced social support, efficient control of adults and expanded moral authority (RT)</p> <p>Limited social control issues exist</p>

<p><b>Leadership Style</b></p> <p><i>As you move to the right, the principal begins to release control</i></p>	<p><b>Transactional</b> A leader must be Transactional prior to becoming Transformational</p> <p>An organization must change or outcomes will decline; leadership cannot remain transactional</p>	<p>The leader is <b>Experimental</b></p>	<p>The leader attempts to become a <b>change agent</b></p>	<p>The leader becomes a <b>motivator</b> of staff</p>	<p>The leader organizes <b>collaborative</b> efforts and learning communities</p>	<p><b>Transformational</b></p> <p>Culminating Process</p>
<p><b>Emphasis</b></p>	<p>Students will meet minimum state required outcomes</p> <p><b><u>Perceived notion of orderly environment</u></b></p>	<p>Improving school wide student outcomes.</p> <p>Principal efficiently controls adults to manage the instructional program toward a common purpose (RT)</p>	<p>Teachers improve subgroup performance</p> <p>Activities and PLCs organized by the principal increase departmental interactions to meet complex needs of learners (RT)</p>	<p><i>Teachers begin to focus on individual student strengths and weaknesses.</i></p> <p><i>Activities and PLCs organized by the principal who enhances social support between departments (RT)</i></p>	<p>Teachers focus on teaching strategies that yield high performance from all students</p> <p>Activities and PLCs organized by the principal increase school wide social support of adults and expands the moral authority to address individual learner needs (RT)</p>	<p>Deep change in organization that yields high student outcomes for all</p>
<p><b>Process</b></p>	<p>Agreement between principal and teachers</p> <p>Services of principal and/or teachers yield cooperation and support</p>	<p><b><u>Principal develops under-standing of the culture and climate of the school.</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Leader provides frame work of expectations, assistance and support</u></b></p>	<p>Principal sets directions for staff</p> <p>Principal monitors staff for presence of expectations</p>	<p><i>Principal develops people and monitors practices</i></p> <p><i>Principal participates in change and supports staff</i></p> <p><i>Coaching</i></p>	<p>Principal and teachers redesign the organization’s practices</p> <p>Leader begins to delegate leadership roles based on monitoring results</p>	<p>Principal closely monitors instructional programs</p>

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<p><b>Key Values</b></p>	<p><b><u>Principal is responsible to react to issues</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Principal promises exchange</u></b></p>	<p>Teachers and Principal exhibit fairness to all students</p> <p>Principal involves teachers in development of goals</p>	<p><i>Principal supports and encourage staff</i></p> <p><i>Principal and teachers demonstrate commitment to students.</i></p>	<p>Principal demonstrates honesty with staff and students</p>	<p>Principal and teachers demonstrate equality among students.</p> <p>Staff encouraged by principal to renew and redesign plan</p>	<p>Maintenance of Equality for all students.</p> <p>Maintenance of effective decision making, social support and expanded moral authority (RT)</p>
<p><b>Goal</b></p>	<p>Agreement between Principal and teachers</p>	<p>Principal provides timely feedback to teachers on fulfillment of expectations</p>	<p><b><u>Shared leadership</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Principal organizes departmental PLCs</u></b></p>	<p><i>Principal and teachers develop mutual goals</i></p>	<p>Mutual goals are implemented</p> <p>Effectiveness</p>	<p>Organizational Change</p>
<p><b>Power</b></p>	<p><b><u>Principal management is top-down and reactive</u></b></p> <p><b><u>If expectations are not met by teachers or students consequences occur</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Principal values employees in a hierarchy; what the employee can offer principal affects level of value principal places on employee</u></b></p>	<p>Principal is Proactive</p> <p>Principal trusts and involves key individuals in planning</p>	<p><i>Principal begins developing shared leadership roles</i></p> <p><i>Proactive</i></p>	<p>Principal continues developing shared leadership roles</p> <p>Proactive</p>	<p>Principal and teachers share leadership and evaluate impact of shared leadership</p> <p>Proactive</p>	<p>Principal and teachers share leadership</p> <p>Principal is supportive of shared decision making</p> <p>Proactive</p>



<p><b>Leadership Style</b></p> <p><i>As you move to the right, the principal begins to release control</i></p>	<p><b>Transactional</b> A leader must be Transactional prior to becoming Transformational</p> <p>An organization must change or outcomes will decline; leadership cannot remain transactional</p>	<p>The leader is <b>Experimental</b></p>	<p>The leader attempts to become a <b>change agent</b></p>	<p>The leader becomes a <b>motivator</b> of staff</p>	<p>The leader organizes <b>collaborative</b> efforts and learning communities</p>	<p><b>Transformational</b></p> <p>Culminating Process</p>
<p><b>Leader</b></p>	<p><b><u>Transactions between principal and teachers yield sustainable operation of organization</u></b></p>	<p>Efficient operation</p> <p>Principal emphasizes importance of instruction</p> <p>Concept of Instructional Leadership appears</p>	<p><u>Smooth operation</u></p> <p><u>Activism</u></p> <p><u>Teachers welcome monitoring of instructional practices</u></p> <p><u>Instructional Leadership is developed</u></p>	<p>School Improvement</p> <p>Instructional leader emerges</p>	<p>Effective operation</p> <p>Instructional leader embraces role</p>	<p>Instructional Leadership exists</p> <p>School reform</p>

RT = Relational Trust defined by Bryk and Schneider (2002) as indicated in research work of Shields (2010).  
 Italics/Underlined = August Bold/Underlined = December

**Summary**

The principal of AC High School demonstrates numerous characteristics that fall within the motivator and collaborative realm of the transformation process however, his approach to managing the organization places him primarily in a reactive, transactional mode by the midpoint of the school year. The principal can articulate what is necessary to become transformational but ultimately he feels he must intervene in discipline, facility maintenance and general school activities instead of focusing on student achievement which he states is his desire. Currently the principal is not pressured to move out of this mode given the skilled and effective teachers he employs.

The teachers at AC High School were primarily concerned about what they viewed as a need for consistent social control, while the principal of AC High School noted being bogged

down with management tasks. Some teachers at AC High School felt morale had suffered due to lack of follow through.

Some of the teachers at AC High School noted limited consistency in control over social issues within the school. The work of Ingersoll, (2003) indicates that the practices at AC High School are not uncommon. “In the case of determining the school’s discipline policy, a crucial part of student socialization, 24 percent of principals perceive their faculties to have major influence” (Ingersoll, p. 83). Teachers commented during informal conversations that rules were established but not implemented. Teachers felt they could go to the lead principal with specific discipline matters not addressed by the assistant principal but did not feel supported in enforcing school wide rules. This sense of losing control caused a lessening of relational trust. Trust is necessary for a school to meet its full potential. “The data clearly showed that there were fewer student behavioral problems in schools where teachers had more control” (Ingersoll, p. 199).

The teachers believe the principal of AC High School has great ideas. The teachers also believe that he has the best interest of students at heart. The teachers have the mission, goals, creed, and student code of conduct posted in their classrooms. The teachers are willing to support and follow all school rules. The teachers of AC High school referenced several items that are county initiatives such as the book study, sustained reading time, focusing on Lexile Scores to modify instruction, and use of benchmarking to guide instruction. Although the teachers were well versed in these items, they discussed how plans were developed at the beginning of the year but were phased out by second semester.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### HC High School

HC High School opened its doors in 1968 within the state's largest classification of triple A but now is a single A high school due to the change in economic development in the area. Where coal and timber industries used to thrive now exists a population of residents that must travel for employment or work in minimum wage positions. Approximately 420 students attend HC High School in a building suffering from severely delayed maintenance prior this school year. The school is the district's oldest secondary facility but will soon be the newest.

The study of HC High School relied upon approximately 23 hours of observation field notes and 6 interviews of teachers and administrators. During the observation phase, I was often amazed by the level construction occurring during the regular school day and the reaction by adults and students. The students and teachers were extremely positive and virtually ignored the massive building activity occurring around them.

Present in HC High School were strong instructional practices and relational trust between students and teachers and teachers and administration. During interviews, the teachers of HC High School talked about the level of monitoring that occurred by the principal. Casual conversations with staff yielded information about his presence in the school and his emphasis on teaching and learning. Classroom teachers provided relevant, engaged, data driven instruction. The impact of effective teaching practices and relational trust was evident. The current principal was the third administrator to undergo a visit from the state monitoring team. Three years prior to my observations, the team had prepared a report during the principal's second year at the school. The report indicated that the reading/language arts department had low expectations, leadership was lacking, facilities were subpar and students were not

challenged. The difference between outcomes and attitudes from three years ago and to present day classrooms and listening to conversations in the school is notable. All teachers reported submitting lesson plans, individualizing instruction, and working to increase high expectations for all students. The principal was completing his fifth year during the observation and a changed school philosophy was evident. Of the school's 30 teachers, 10 were completing their first year.

Changes at the school since the state monitoring visit include implementation of data review to guide instruction, use of relevant practices, and focus on individual needs. Based on the latest state data available, HC High School is ranked 6<sup>th</sup> out of 12 schools in comparison to schools of similar size and demographics. The school's test scores are increasing and curriculum offerings are now expanded to include four Advanced Placement courses and 12 Career and Technical Education concentrations. The teachers noted that they still work to increase the expectations they place on students and seek assistance from the school's instructional coach and technology integration specialist. The school has an increasing graduation rate with only 16 drop outs during the current school year as opposed to the 45 two years ago. The college going rate is still lower than AC High School and the state average.

HC High School serves approximately 440 students of which approximately 65% receive free or reduced lunch. The attendance rate for the school is 89%. The school has a defined mission and goals but it was not posted in all classrooms due to teacher relocation during the year to accommodate construction needs. The principal meets with the academic booster group and local school improvement council regularly to discuss needs and improvements. These two groups have implemented a motivation program to encourage students to strive for academic excellence and serves 400 parents, students and board members at an academic banquet held

each spring. My research participants at HC high school included 6 teachers from 5 different departments with varying degrees of experience and education and 4 administrators whose responsibilities varied from school level administration to the superintendent.

HC High School has a 220 to 1 student to administrator ratio. The school is classified in the smallest size bracket within the state. In the district where HC High School resides, the administrator to student ratio at the other three secondary schools is: School One: 285 to 1; School Two: 165 to 1; School Three: 210 to 1. HC High School campus was the oldest secondary campus in the district until the renovations began. It serves as a comprehensive high school, with three career and technical education shops, weight lifting facilities, a football stadium and a baseball complex.

*Starting point.* Three years ago a report evaluating HC high school was posted on the state's accountability website. The report indicated that the school lacked in leadership, student performance was significantly below the state average, students reported not being engaged in reading language arts classes and teachers could not articulate use of state standards to guide development of instruction. The principal was in the beginning of his second year. The monitoring group began visits due to special education student performance. This process began two principals prior to the current administration. There is an obvious change in administrator philosophy.

The state monitoring team report included recommendations for improvement. The principal of HC High School was able to take these suggestions and make them his own as he worked to lead his school in reform efforts. Casual conversations with the principal and staff indicate that the principal had to be very assertive in order to change many of the negative aspects HC High School. He had to function in a vacuum at first to establish basic rules,

regulations and expectations. Now in his 5<sup>th</sup> year, he is no longer simply transactional; he seeks recommendations from his staff, students and parents and makes changes based on data analysis. The principal uses the resources he has to best meet the curricular requests of his students and lobbies with central office for additional supports as needed.

Principal: I think that's (being the instructional leader) job one. I think the academic, the instructional leadership is emanating from the principal from the very beginning and if that does not occur then there's disorganization with the principals and the teachers.

The current principal is typically referred to as a collaborative leader. HC High School had marked increases in academic performance on the state accountability tests in both reading and math.

**Foundation.** During the past five years the principal has evolved his practices from a simple exchange of goods and services to leading by example. Actions of the principal at HC High School show his commitment to the established vision and his desire to further develop people. By encouraging the creativity and leadership skills of his staff the principal is able to build upon established relational trust within the school. The principal has the respect of his faculty and staff. This is primarily due to the foundation he established. The attitude of the staff and students encourages learning to remain the focus when it would have been very easy for negativity and toxic overtones to be present amidst chaos.

Today, there is a sense of pride in the school and the teachers support the principal. At the graduation ceremony students talked about the ongoing construction in their speeches, but not in a complaining way, instead they bragged about their ability to endure what the superintendent called "the mess in the middle." The students noted that they would forever be remembered because they were the class that would never benefit from the construction but were

impacted the most. I added a question to my protocol because I wanted to know why everyone was so positive when surrounded by dirt, dust, noise and confusion and all commented that at the beginning of the year the principal explained what would be happening and said we are going to continue with teaching and learning, we are going to make the best of it and our school will be better in the long run.

Teacher: Really we want our students to have the feeling that they want to be here.

Teachers have the responsibility to have an atmosphere within their room that they'll want their students to come. As a result when we know students have the desire to be there they're going to be more determined to learn.

The principal recognized the need to improve parental involvement. At a recent academic banquet a parent challenged the other adults attending to join the academic booster group to ensure that students would receive recognition and the resources they deserved. During semi-structured interviews teachers relayed frustration that some students and parents did not fully understand how important education was.

Teacher 1: There is a need for better communication. I'm not just talking with the administration it goes back to...the culture issue. We have a culture in our community to where we are separated from the vast majority of parents and we have got to close the gap. We have got to figure out how to engage our parents and close that gap.

Teacher 2: I think that the school itself enhances educational learning. At the same time I feel that the community does not. Mostly I've seen a lot of parents that don't push their kids. Don't check on their kids. Don't check their grades. But I think the teachers and

the principals work very hard to make this a learning environment and to do as much with the kids as we can while we have them in the building.

The teachers worked to establish high expectations for all students and want to have the support of all of their parents. The college going rate for the school is lower than the state average. The principal attempted to enroll a large number of students in college courses this year but only one student actually made the commitment. This could be due to lack of interest or because the percentage of students on free lunch indicates that families do not have the funds to support the effort.

HC high school has typical levels of parental involvement for a high school. As students progress from elementary to middle and from middle to high, the involvement tends to decrease with parents primarily involved in athletics if their children participate. The teachers want the parents to be more involved and the principal continues to seek avenues to make this occur.

Principal: The school culture begins with the principal and what his goals and objectives are for the school and the teachers. You can't do it in a week, a month or a year, then dealing with your aides, cooks, custodian, as well as teachers there begins to have a feeling that the emphasis is on academics. A couple of years, three years ago, we started our academic achievement group. That group has been an exceptional group and we just had a banquet and it was very complimentary from the board office. So we are putting emphasis on academics. I meet with the students prior to the test and I talk about the scores. I say, well you know it's important for you to do your best. If you don't do your best it reflects on you. Then we have some reinforcement activities for students that come all four days and give the appearance of doing their best.



Principal: I think [student assistance team meetings] are beneficial because that brings on the partner of parents. I think whenever the parents are involved we can make change. I had one parent to call me and say I just don't think Johnny needs that tutoring. I said ma'am we're doing everything we can for your son and I think it would be helpful to him and don't you want him to improve? She said yes, he will come.

A clear goal of HC High School is not only to increase parental and community involvement but to create an understanding of the importance of education in terms of future employment for students. As a change agent the principal can use his power to begin developing shared leadership roles and proactively address this need. The staff could work to incorporate planning for increase involvement into the bi-weekly learning communities. With a school wide focus on improvement, the motivator will emphasize social support between departments so that relational trust is further built and can extend to parents and community members alike.

The value of shared leadership activities is evident from casual conversations with teachers about the school improvement process. In the midst of chaos, communication from administration to teachers, administration to students and teachers to students was critical for day to day survival. The administration set the tone that despite construction behavior is expected to be at peak.

Teacher: I think that students need to understand where they are and what the rules are and that for them to be safe and be able to get the best education they need to realize that there are certain rules in our climate that have to be followed. I think that helps them in their learning because you can't have no rules that would be chaos. You have to have rules you have to have order and structure just like any other building in all of society. I think the way discipline is handled is very good. The students understand if they do

something they're not supposed to do then there will be a consequence and they need to keep up a certain standard of behavior so that they can learn. If there is chaos and everything is going all crazy they're not going to learn and they understand that.

**Emphasis.** The monitoring report referenced multiple times in this document included data on student assessment performance. The students of HC High School were not meeting minimum requirements defined by the state's department of education. Additionally, students reported that teachers demonstrated low expectations. This feeling was supported by data. A large percentage of students were required to take remedial courses during their first year of college. The principal of HC High School was able to lead change that progressed from just striving to meet state standards to learning how to instruct learners based on individual strengths and weaknesses. Activities and learning communities organized by the principal enhanced inter-departmental relationships. These relationships allowed teachers to build a knowledge base sufficient to meet the diverse needs present.

Principal: The first thing that we did was [in] the spring of 09. We began the professional learning community [concept] and that has been very beneficial. On ISE [Instructional Support Enhance] days we were using *Ahead of the Curve* as part of our Principal's meetings so then I decided to take a section of that. I [went] one step farther; we have core professional learning communities with which I require [each teacher] to take the role of the leader. They have to have an agenda.

The principal had only been with the school a little more than one year when the monitoring report came out. He had multiple opportunities to leave and take other openings in the district but remained at the school, worked with the state office for school improvement, addressed subpar instruction, praised teachers who had always been providing appropriate

instruction, developed an academic booster group and utilized his local school improvement council to gain community support as the school worked to improve. Although there was a significant turnover in the staff and the principal still remained and worked to shape the new employees so they would perform at the level of expectation established. When a multi-million dollar bond was passed to renovate the oldest secondary school the principal, despite knowing he would have to endure unbelievable construction issues, remained and continued to advocate for his school's needs.

The principal of HC high school organized collaborative efforts thru learning communities while supporting the development of teachers and enhancing social support systems that increased the relational trust between teachers and administration. The principal encouraged the creativity of teachers and demonstrated strong leadership skills that were on the verge of transformational status. If the principal continues to grow in his skill set the school's foundation will be further built on effective decision making and efficient control of adults with an expanded moral authority. Under the direction of a motivator, HC High School teachers were observed focusing on individual student strengths and weaknesses. Staff shared ideas with one another through activities and learning community time organized by the principal.

*Process.* The principal of HC High School serves as a motivator who coaches his staff to meet high expectations. The principal closely monitors instruction and student behavior in classrooms and hallways. Staff members also report that the principal participates in learning communities but through his design allows teachers to plan for and direct what occurs during these community meetings.

I observed the principal walking around the school constantly, usually with two or three people following him. Although he was frequently pulled into construction meetings his staff

reported that although it may only be for five minutes, it is common for him to be in the same classroom 2 to 3 times a day. A second year teacher noted that she is always teaching because the principal expects it and monitors it. More tenured teachers commented that they enjoy his visits to the classroom and look forward to them. The students at the school were extremely well behaved and appeared to have a positive manner about them.

Teacher 1: The departmental meetings are valuable. Often times we are so caught up with so many things. We all know that the teacher's the one who learns the most each and every day but it gives us the time to share and to glean from each other some new ideas and some new things that we can do that will improve our classroom climate [and] our relationship with our students. At times with our principal involved he doesn't take the lead role. He comes in as our leader but turns it over to the different departments and he too learns certain things as a result of these departmental meetings and just how well his staff is doing and working together.

Teacher 2: I have to admit in the beginning I wasn't a big advocate of that [book study on *Ahead of the Curve*] but we did learn some things and we were able to talk some things out. I think for the most part we have gleaned some things from the book.

Another thing, it once again brought us together as a group.

A teacher new to the school walked over to me with a smile on her face and said that she had found the school she wished to retire from. She shared with me she had taught in another state but there was no comparison to the experience she had at HC High School. I was somewhat surprised given the fact that a construction worker was pounding against a pole outside her room when she said this. Instead she returned to the front of the room to observe the

four different groups that were working in the class. The morale within the building is very positive. Teachers say over and over again that they want to teach at HC High School.

**Key Values.** The tenured staff of HC High School has endured a great deal of change. They have trusted a principal who promised change, exhibited fairness, included teachers in redesigning the organization and demonstrated a commitment that exceeds the work of the school's former administrators. His work as a motivator includes his ability to demonstrate honesty with those he works with.

The teachers at HC High School are dedicated to their students' learning and creating an engaging and supportive atmosphere where all students could thrive. As a motivator the principal works to develop people and monitor practices. He actively participated in the change process and demonstrates his coaching skills.

The staff at HC high school understands the importance of involving students in the change process and showing them that they are the focus of the efforts they make. Students were very friendly, smiled, exhibit no conflict with teachers and were respectful of adults. The teachers joked with, smiled at and carried on conversations with students during my observations.

Principal: The strategic plan is the guiding document for the school. We involved 10 to 12 members from the school. I have talked more with the president of the senior class than I have in recent years because I think the students need to understand why are we doing these things? Why is this changing? I think when you involve students in their part of the school it should be collaboration, the teachers, the students and the parents. I think whenever all of that works I believe that's your fourth pillar with community involvement and it makes a school effective.

Teacher: It's just caring about their day to day life. Kid just got a job at Ruby Tuesdays the other day. Just how's it going? What are you doing? Are you training this week? Whatever? Just showing that you have interest in their life. Sometimes kids have crisis that as adult are not crisis but a lot of times kids do have real serious crisis in their life and they at least need to know somebody cares.

With honesty as a key value, students will recognize the principal's efforts to lead teachers who demonstrate equality practices as they renew and redesign plans to increase student outcomes. The relationships at HC High School are very important and are a huge reason for the gains in student achievement and the attitude exhibited by staff.

**Goal.** Because of his efforts to create an atmosphere where shared leadership abounds, the principal works with his staff to develop mutual goals. Beyond the work of a change agent, the principal of HC High School is a motivator of his staff. The principal's ability to provide timely feedback to teachers on their fulfillment of expectations allows for trust to continue flourishing. A continued commitment to shared leadership and focused goals will provide the groundwork for the principal to become transformational.

Field notes collected from classroom observations include numerous references to relevant, individualized and data driven instruction. Teachers spent little time lecturing instead projects and collaborative grouping of students appeared to be the norm throughout the school. Teachers discussed how the schedule change allowed time for collaboration and sharing. In *The Model of Teacher Change*, Guskey (2002) paints a picture similar to what is occurring at HC high school. Teachers are changing their practices, student learning outcomes are increasing and because of the success there is a change in teachers' beliefs and attitudes. Relevance was

embedded in the curriculum of HC High School. Numerous career and technical education opportunities for students reinforced math and reading comprehension.

Teacher 1: I might use would be real life scenarios. Sometimes that helps students to really understand if you can actually try to put them in situations. Most students like that. They like to be able to try to figure out things. It makes them stronger.

Teacher 2: Why do kids need to care what they are learning? Why does it need to apply to their lives? Absolutely, in fact I get frustrated teaching stuff that I know does not and will never apply to their lives.

The principal discussed the impact his decision to employ new communication strategies with his staff had increased the level of valued relationships at HC High School. The principal discussed that he studied the style of other principals to help him collaboratively create an environment that best met the needs of the learners who attended HC High School. He noted that he expected teaching and learning all day and monitored it to ensure implementation and when problems arose he addressed them quickly and provided support and feedback to ensure future success.

Principal: They have to know what your expectations are. I think the second part is that you have to be visible and in the classrooms then you provide follow up and feedback. This allows the culture to mature and develop. I invite the teacher in. I offer ideas. I involve the board office. I involve instructional coaches. They come in and they observe. We sit down and we discuss how to improve their process. Overall I've been much happier this year with the engagement of the students and the bell to bell teaching.

I was at [the] principal academy and we were talking about professional learning communities. There was a gentleman and he presented the idea to our particular group. I thought what a way to bring the staff together; what a way to beginning to develop a culture of learning and plus the individual teachers they have a say so about it. It's not good to be dictatorial. [Teachers need to] feel like they are part of the learning. This year I've invited them in; we've talked about the schedule. What things do we need to change? What things do you want to teach? I've opened that up to [teachers] so they feel like they're part of the team; part of the learning process.

**Power.** The principal uses his power to influence instead of force objectives. His open and willing nature is welcoming to ideas from those he leads. The principal appears to be comfortable with his role in an atmosphere of shared leadership. The principal is typically proactive in his approach and shares leadership but his staff does seek more timely communication. His change agent status supports his efforts to continue defining shared leadership roles.

Casual conversations with teacher and observations of the principal talking with staff gave the perception that there are positive working relationships at HC high school. The staff references a high level of shared leadership. The staff did discuss wanting to increase their expectation of students and could articulate how they work to individualize instruction to meet the needs of all learners. The staff discussed that the principal has established a focus on teaching and learning with the expectation that all teachers teach from bell to bell. The teachers commented on how patient the leader has been in the midst of construction chaos.

The principal's willingness to listen to staff and address their concerns has added to the atmosphere in this state of construction. The principal has the respect of his staff. "Case studies



of “turn around” schools and of interventions into teaching and learning invariable credit school and district leadership with considerable responsibility for school and teaching effectiveness” (Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe, 2008). When asked about the qualities of a good principal, teachers noted aspects that are relevant to shared leadership.

Teacher 1: A good leader has to have a certain amount of compassion. Number one is a good listener.

Teacher 2: Your leader should be able to help you through the changes no matter what they are. He or she should be able to help you through whatever is going on no matter what. They should take initiative to help others through.

These comments are typical to how the staff at HC High School describes the principal. Conversations with staff and students revealed that the principal was a good listener, believed in the team concept, understood the economic background of his students and led with compassion. Teachers found the principal to be an extremely approachable leader. As a motivator, the principal demonstrated that he is moving toward the characteristics of a transformational leader. His school is improving greatly. Total school reform appears possible and in the near future.

Even with the best intentions and a level of shared decision making, sometimes communication is not timely enough for staff to be able to alter plans. Several of the teachers noted that the principal does communicate but the need for communication to be timely was a theme in conversations. The principal did not comment on his communication to staff. Due to the ever changing construction routine, he may or may not have always been kept abreast of the changes himself until last minute. Occasionally a principal can be held accountable for things he cannot control.

Teacher: I can prepare so I know what I'm going to have to do or if I have to move a classroom where I'm going to have to go for that day. Any changes that are happening, I think we need to know a little bit more in advance.

Teacher 2: One thing that's been difficult this year and it probably been because of the construction is communication. I can be part of the problem there myself because I'm bad sometimes about looking at my email. I know that he emails a lot of information and sometimes I'll get it the next day after it's over.

Despite the chaos, the interworking of HC High School appears to mesh well and a positive atmosphere exists. The teachers and principals work to address pertinent issues and remained focused on teaching and learning.

**Leader.** The principal's relationship with staff and students of HC High School has evolved over the past three years. The organization is now efficient, has instructional leadership and is focused on school improvement.

Principal: I expect to see an engaging enjoyable lesson. I do like to see bell ringers. I think it is important. I just think it's good when you begin the day; this is what we're going to be dealing with. I do like to see the instructional CSOs posted. I like to see differentiated instruction. It's different when you have 45 [minutes] and when you have 90 [minutes]. It's really best if you break it up into three things it's important to have two to three things in differentiated instruction.

The energy and commitment to a common vision transformed the organization. It developed the capacity to work collaboratively, overcome challenges and reach ambitious goals. HC High School underwent a transformation. The principal led the restructuring of the school so

that not only a select number of professional met students needs. A focus on teaching and learning is now the norm. The principal of HC High School motivated the staff by making efficient use of materials, resources and people. He collaboratively revisited the plans created and followed through on the changes that were recommended. The principal's actions demonstrated that he was moving toward full transformational status.

If relational trust is present, a school can maintain a focus on student achievement because of there is a commitment to school improvement. The construction for HC High School began last year. A majority of the change was underway during my observation. Students had to walk onto the football field as a detour to get from the main building that housed academic courses to the career and technical education portion of the facility. The students had to walk through a plywood tunnel that often had puddles and water simultaneously dripping from the ceiling. The superintendent hired several security guards to help the principal make sure students did not take advantage of the confusion and attended class in a timely manner. The superintendent also hired additional custodial staff to constantly mop hallways and clean the dust off lockers, computers, desks and tables.

The attitude of the staff at HC High school challenges the work of Kennedy (2005, p. 15) who argued that "circumstances place so many constraints to on teachers that they cannot arise above these circumstances to create the kind of practices that reforms want to see." Kennedy was referencing the daily details of teaching that could be interrupted by public address system, office personnel bringing questions or messages, cell phones or fire drills, assemblies or field trips, not the unbelievable amount of noise and dirt that surrounded the teachers at HC high school. The teachers' at HC High School attitude was amazing and unexpected given the chaotic

surroundings. Credit for the positive attitude was a key value of the motivator principal who demonstrated honesty with students and staff members.

Principal: I think first of all we've got good individual teachers. I think that is very important. The second thing is whenever we started this year, they actually began construction the last of June and I met with them and I said this is going to be a very difficult year. We're a team. We're going to pull together. We can see this thing through, but there's going to be many disruptions. There's going to be many days when there is noise, there is dust, there's dirt but I said we need to keep our eye on instruction and learning and the child which is the most important thing in our school. Each child is an individual we want them to learn and improve.

Central Office Administrator: If you don't have the right climate and culture in the school then student achievement is not going to be at its maximum level. I think instructional leadership is one of those things but if there isn't a climate and culture focused on student achievement, focused on learning and teaching then you're not going to have the success as you would in a school where the climate and culture is conducive to learning. I think so often you can walk in the school building and you can tell.

Teacher: I would like to see us continue to grow and to become a stronger group. A stronger staff and I think we are on the road to that right now. The morale would increase among the faculty. I think we are on the right path. The number one thing is to get the construction complete.

Given the attitude of the staff in the face of the great chaos, one can only believe that upon completion, relational trust will continue to flourish due to the commitment exhibited by all. HC High School is proof that a focus on instruction is possible in the midst of confusion. If the leader is active, efficient and focused, teachers will teach and students will learn.

**Table 6**

**Process of Moving from Transactional to Transformational--HC High School**

<p><b>Leadership Style</b></p> <p><i>As you move to the right, the principal begins to release control</i></p>	<p><b>Transactional</b></p> <p>A leader must be Transactional prior to becoming Transformational</p> <p>An organization must change or outcomes will decline; leadership cannot remain transactional</p>	<p>The leader is <b>Experimental</b></p>	<p>The leader attempts to become a <b>change agent</b></p>	<p>The leader becomes a <b>motivator</b> of staff</p>	<p>The leader organizes <b>collaborative</b> efforts and learning communities</p>	<p><b>Transformational</b></p> <p>Culminating Process</p>
<p><b>Starting Point</b></p>	<p>School rules, regulations and rewards are developed by the principal</p> <p>Principal leads in a vacuum</p>	<p>Principal identifies needs</p> <p>Principal and teachers share Data review and goals are developed</p>	<p>Principal organizes people toward a common goal.</p> <p>Teachers develop confidence in principal and are inspired</p> <p>Principal and teachers revisit of Plan and make adjustments</p>	<p><b><u>Principal makes efficient use of materials, resources, people,</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Principal and teachers revisit of plan and follow through on changes recommended</u></b></p>	<p>Principal and teachers review of progress</p> <p>Continual renewal of plan</p>	<p>School wide focus on student achievement.</p>

<p><b>Leadership Style</b></p> <p><i>As you move to the right, the principal begins to release control</i></p>	<p><b>Transactional</b> A leader must be Transactional prior to becoming Transformational</p> <p>An organization must change or outcomes will decline; leadership cannot remain transactional</p>	<p>The leader is <b>Experimental</b></p>	<p>The leader attempts to become a <b>change agent</b></p>	<p>The leader becomes a <b>motivator</b> of staff</p>	<p>The leader organizes <b>collaborative</b> efforts and learning communities</p>	<p><b>Transformational</b></p> <p>Culminating Process</p>
<p><b>Foundation</b></p>	<p>Exchange of needs and services between teachers and principal</p> <p>Principal provides financial support and social control</p>	<p>Principal defines initiatives and promises effective decision making (RT)</p>	<p>Principal sets directions and serves as role model for change</p>	<p>Principal motivates staff to fulfill vision</p>	<p><b><u>Actions of principal support plan and further development of effective decision making and enhanced social support (RT)</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Principal encourage creativity of teachers</u></b></p>	<p>Culture is built on effective decision making, enhanced social support, efficient control of adults and expanded moral authority (RT)</p>
<p><b>Emphasis</b></p>	<p>Students will meet minimum state required outcomes</p> <p>Perceived notion of orderly environment</p>	<p>Improving school wide student outcomes.</p> <p>Principal efficiently controls adults to manage the instructional program toward a common purpose (RT)</p>	<p>Teachers improve subgroup performance</p> <p>Activities and PLCs organized by the principal increase departmental interactions to meet complex needs of learners (RT)</p>	<p><b><u>Teachers begin to focus on individual student strengths and weaknesses.</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Activities and PLCs organized by the principal who enhances social support between departments (RT)</u></b></p>	<p>Teachers focus on teaching strategies that yield high performance from all students</p> <p>Activities and PLCs organized by the principal increase school wide social support of adults and expands the moral authority to address individual learner needs (RT)</p>	<p>Deep change in organization that yields high student outcomes for all</p>

<p><b>Leadership Style</b></p> <p><i>As you move to the right, the principal begins to release control</i></p>	<p><b>Transactional</b> A leader must be Transactional prior to becoming Transformational</p> <p>An organization must change or outcomes will decline; leadership cannot remain transactional</p>	<p>The leader is <b>Experimental</b></p>	<p>The leader attempts to become a <b>change agent</b></p>	<p>The leader becomes a <b>motivator</b> of staff</p>	<p>The leader organizes <b>collaborative</b> efforts and learning communities</p>	<p><b>Transformational</b></p> <p>Culminating Process</p>
<p><b>Process</b></p>	<p>Agreement between principal and teachers Services of principal and/or teachers yield cooperation and support</p>	<p>Principal develops understanding of the culture and climate of the school.</p> <p>Leader provides frame work of expectations, assistance and support</p>	<p>Principal sets directions for staff</p>	<p><b><u>Principal develops people and monitors practices</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Principal participates in change and supports staff</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Coaching</u></b></p>	<p>Principal and teachers redesign the organization's practices</p> <p>Leader begins to delegate leadership roles</p>	<p>Principal closely monitors instructional programs</p>
<p><b>Key Values</b></p>	<p>Principal is responsible to react to issues</p> <p>Principal promises exchange</p>	<p>Teachers and Principal exhibit fairness to all students</p> <p>Principal involves teachers in development of goals</p>	<p>Principal supports and encourage staff</p> <p>Principal and teachers demonstrate commitment to students.</p>	<p><b><u>Principal demonstrates honesty with staff and students</u></b></p>	<p>Principal and teachers demonstrate equality among students.</p> <p>Staff encouraged by principal to renew and redesign plan</p>	<p>Maintenance of Equality for all students.</p> <p>Maintenance of effective decision making, social support and expanded moral authority (RT)</p>
<p><b>Goal</b></p>	<p>Agreement between Principal and teachers</p>	<p>Principal provides timely feedback to teachers on fulfillment of expectations</p>	<p>Shared leadership</p> <p>Principal organizes departmental PLCs</p>	<p><b><u>Principal and teachers develop mutual goals</u></b></p>	<p>Mutual goals are implemented</p> <p>Effectiveness</p>	<p>Organizational Change</p>

<p><b>Leadership Style</b></p> <p><i>As you move to the right, the principal begins to release control</i></p>	<p><b>Transactional</b> A leader must be Transactional prior to becoming Transformational</p> <p>An organization must change or outcomes will decline; leadership cannot remain transactional</p>	<p>The leader is <b>Experimental</b></p>	<p>The leader attempts to become a <b>change agent</b></p>	<p>The leader becomes a <b>motivator</b> of staff</p>	<p>The leader organizes <b>collaborative</b> efforts and learning communities</p>	<p><b>Transformational</b></p> <p>Culminating Process</p>
<p><b>Power</b></p>	<p>Principal management is top-down and reactive</p> <p>If expectations are not met by teachers or students consequences occur</p> <p>Principal values employees in a hierarchy; what the employee can offer principal affects level of value principal places on employee</p>	<p>Principal is Proactive</p> <p>Principal trusts and involves key individuals in planning</p>	<p><u>Principal begins developing Shared leadership roles</u></p> <p><u>Proactive</u></p>	<p>Principal continues developing Shared leadership roles</p> <p>Proactive</p>	<p>Principal and teachers share leadership and evaluate impact of shared leadership</p> <p>Proactive</p>	<p>Principal and teachers share leadership</p> <p>Principal is supportive of shared decision making</p> <p>Proactive</p>
<p><b>Leader</b></p>	<p>Transactions between principal and teachers yield sustainable operation of organization</p>	<p>Efficient operation</p> <p>Principal emphasizes importance of instruction</p> <p>Concept of Instructional Leadership appears</p>	<p>Smooth operation</p> <p>Activism</p> <p>Teachers welcome monitoring of instructional practices</p> <p>Instructional Leadership is developed</p>	<p><u>School Improvement</u></p> <p><u>Instructional leader emerges</u></p>	<p>Effective operation</p> <p>Instructional leader embraces role</p>	<p>Instructional Leadership</p> <p>School reform</p>

RT = Relational Trust defined by Bryk and Schneider (2002) as indicated in research work of Shields (2010).

**Summary**

The principal of HC High School falls primarily within the motivator phase between transactional and transformational. The principal maintains a consistent approach to leadership through the school term and has clearly established relational trust with his faculty who support



him fully despite the chaos of construction occurring daily. The principal's demonstrated commitment to the school gives the perception of an unwavering desire to make HC High School the best it can be. The motivating principal created a culture that focuses on continually improving teaching and learning.

HC High School has a relatively new staff aware of the high expectations the principals has established and work together to meet them. Given the level of growth over the past three school years, relational trust appears to be high and a reason HC High School should continue to develop and improve. The teachers were willing to talk about the need to improve expectations of all students and parental-community involvement. It is this willingness to discuss perceived weaknesses that demonstrates the staff's commitment to improvement. The future of HC High School appears promising with students being the beneficiaries of a leader who is close to reaching transformational status.

The teachers at HC High School were working through a need for increased communication during the current renovation of the campus, while the principal of HC High School was working to address concerns noted in a previous state accountability report. The teachers at HC High School attributed the overall positive climate and culture to the principal's approach to leadership in the presence of chaos.

The teachers of HC High School believe the principal has a great deal of responsibility on his shoulders. The more tenured teachers do believe that he is responsible for many of the changes at the school. Given the condition of the school it was surprising how positive and upbeat everyone was. The teachers said the principal told them that despite the construction, we will continue to teach children and we will move forward. Teachers at HC High School were not supporters of the premise that students who live in poverty cannot learn, in fact they strongly

believe the opposite and to be successful they seek to develop relational trust with the community at large. The addition of a strong parental program could establish this. Guidance to parents on the importance of education, completion status and real life reading and math applications could assist with building a foundation on which this trust could grow.

There is a mutual respect at HC High School among students, teachers, and administrators. The staff was positive despite the disruptions. A majority of those interviewed discussed the principal's approach to maintaining an atmosphere of learning despite the construction noise. The teachers of HC High School understood the importance of a leader and that without one change could not occur. They felt it was important to share leadership responsibilities because there were layers of leadership.

The staff of HC High School recognized the importance of collaboration. The principal of HC High School designed learning community study groups led by different teachers. Each session teacher leaders were responsible for the agenda and creating questions for the group. The teachers discussed how much they enjoyed participating in learning communities and commented that the principal typically participated but never led the sessions. They also openly discussed the high level of monitoring that occurred. Numerous teachers commented that the principal stopped into their classroom two to three times a day and therefore they knew to be teaching at all times.

Ultimately, a principal can develop relational trust as he moves through the stages between transactional and transformational leadership status. To make change, he must be willing to release control to begin the evolution of practices.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Conclusions and Implications

The initial research questions posed by this study were answered and guided the development of the new framework. The central question is: “How can a high school principal lead the transformation of school norms to be responsive to the ever changing needs of learners?” This question does not require a leader to be transformational, but to lead the transformation. My findings suggest that a principal, who may not be transformational, can lead the transformation school norms if he is willing to release control and cease to lead in a vacuum. Once the principal becomes experimental and is seen as a change agent school improvement begins to occur. With a shift to shared leadership, the transformational leader becomes a motivator who encourages and participates in collaboration. Ultimately, a principal must be proactive and understand the importance of relational trust (Bryk and Schneider, 2002).

Although the climate and culture in the two schools differed, the second question posed, “How do teachers understand the relationship between culture and climate and student outcomes?” yielded similar responses. Climate and culture impacts the attitude of the staff. All interviewed felt that even when in a challenging climate and culture, they could still control most of what occurred in their classrooms. Teachers discussed that it was their responsibility to teach no matter what was happening outside of their window or walls. Teachers said that students perform better when a positive atmosphere exists school wide but even in the absence of one, classroom expectations could be maintained to varying degrees and relationships with students drive the learning process.

When asked specifically about the leadership style of the principal, the teachers interviewed were quick to respond. The teachers searched for one or two words to provide an

overall picture then typically would give an example of what they meant. It is interesting that at both schools, teachers overwhelmingly presented disclaimers before saying anything negative like, “I know he has a big job to do.” or “He is a really good man and tried hard.” which indicates teachers do understand the overwhelming task principals face. Neither school’s climate and culture impacted what teachers ultimately desired: leadership. Teachers at both schools demonstrated a true moral conviction to help their students and wanted constant and consistent feedback to help them develop as professionals. Teachers wanted the principal to lead them.

“How do principals and teachers understand the relationship between leadership and implementation of instructional changes?” Both principals indicated that genuine instructional change occurs when instructional leadership is present. It was the practice of this belief that differed greatly. The principal of AC High School produced strategic plans detailed steps to implement that were supported by staff; because of management tasks, few survived first semester. The principal of HC High School was collaborative in his approach to planning. He distributed leadership roles among staff members. He viewed his role as more of a monitor, supporter and when necessary the person who intervened and secured the proper resources to assist the teacher in need of professional guidance.

Study findings point to relational trust as a key component in principal effectiveness. In both district high schools teachers were implementing research based practices that support learning. All classrooms used relevance to hook students into the lesson, most used data to continually evaluate where their students were in terms of content mastery and individualized instruction in a multitude of ways. There was a similarity in the presence of teaching practices yet very different levels of morale. Teacher morale is directly linked to the style of the principal, his practices and approach. Teachers must be a part of the change process for true

transformation to occur. When teachers sense a toxic climate or culture they will cease to share, ignore some established rules and regulations and instead become very isolated in practices.

Positive proactive leadership enhances teacher performance and willingness to collaborate.

Ultimately, a principal can develop relational trust as he moves through the stages between transactional and transformational leadership status. This research proves that it is possible to transform norms without reaching transformational status. Leadership must evolve. The key to success is to share the leadership roles by determining and using the strengths of each individual to benefit the organization. To make change, a principal must be willing to release control to begin the evolution of practices. Observation in multiple classrooms within the district confirmed that teacher practices are evolving; therefore some transformation is occurring. Teachers implement county initiatives, and they provide relevant, individualized, and data driven instruction as defined within the state department's professional development, webinars and streaming video examples. Teachers at both high schools are proud of the relationships they had worked to develop with their students and the impact this had on the learning process. Although instructional practices were similar, the two sets of teachers interviewed had different perspectives of their schools.

This study relied upon the analysis of approximately 45 hours of observation and the interviews of 22 teachers and administrators. During semi-structured, open-ended interviews the principals were asked to discuss their role as the instructional leader, the level of support they receive from the district office, what type of teaching they observe and what their role in climate and culture is. Teachers were asked about the school improvement process, their teaching practices specific to this study and the role leadership plays in school improvement. Members of the district office were interviewed to determine what district initiatives are, the district

philosophy and expectations and the perception of how high school principals deliver the message.

During the first data collection phase, exchanges between principals and teachers, exchanges between teachers and students and instructional practices were observed. This research was intended to identify the components that limit principal effectiveness or enhance relational trust. The conceptual framework of Carolyn M. Shields (2010) guided my initial work. As I began reviewing the interviews I recognized components that were missing from the work of Shields. I was unable to identify where the two principals studied would fall on the provided leadership chart based on characteristics listed for the leadership categories of transactional, transformational and transformative. Shields' work was also limited in description. It was primarily focused on proving or disproving a principal's desire and ability to become transformative. From these limitations I recognized that my research findings would be incomplete unless a new framework was developed. Unlike Shields, my research indicates that a principal does not fall into a specific category nor is it realistic to believe a most principals can reach transformative practice. The framework created during the analysis phase lists specific characteristics present in each step of a principal's progression from transactional to transformational.

Specific findings were unique to both schools as provided in Table 6, however two common findings emerged during a review of the data:

1. Transformational leadership is fluid.
2. Managerial tasks must be under control before a principal can move toward transformation.

**Transformational leadership is fluid**

High schools need flexible leaders who are change agents willing to focus on the importance of the organization, and its employees, and most importantly, analyze student outcomes to inform the work of professional learning communities. It is only when effective leadership practices are implemented can a school grow and thrive. When asked in a recent interview for the January 30, 2011 issue of *Newsweek* about improving our nation's schools, Arne Duncan emphasized the importance of school leadership when he replied "If we had 95,000 good principals we'd be done."

To be effective high school staff members need to collaborate. "The distribution of control and influence in schools profoundly affects how well schools function" (Ingersoll, p. 13). Trust is necessary for a school to meet its full potential. Shared leadership would allow administrators and teachers to have ample input into all aspects. How well an organization's members and departments work together is a "critical aspect of organizational performance and is profoundly shaped by the organizational structure" (Ingersoll, p. 193).

An environment of sharing can result in a genuine commitment to follow through. "Schools that delegated more control to teachers had fewer problems among teachers and less conflict between teachers and administrators" (p. 202). Although instructional practices are strong and teachers report an appreciation of the administration trusting they know how to teach, "teacher control over instructional activities appears to count for little if teachers do not also have some control over socialization" (p. 206).

The district's CEO recognized the importance of a transformational principal who can adequately control adults. During his semi-structured interview the superintendent was asked to describe his expectation of the district's high school principals. The superintendent had

previously served as an award winning principal of a National Blue Ribbon School. The superintendent noted that communication with adults should be the primary focus.

Superintendent: My expectation is that they exert the leadership that's going to have a positive climate and culture. It gets back to again not being overly simplistic here but does the leader articulate a clear relevant vision as to where that school needs to be going. The principal needs first to communicate with the adults in the building. There is no more important position in the school system as that of the principal and the principal needs to understand the impact that they do have and should have.

The superintendent's desire to increase communication is evident through the county initiative to implement ongoing professional learning communities. Most of the teachers interviewed discussed reading *Ahead of the Curve*. Although not all teachers enjoyed the content of the book they all agreed that the book provided a starting point for discussions about common core assessments. The teachers were not grouped departmentally and during observation and interviews commented that this was the first time they had received an opportunity to work with individuals from other curricular areas and found this to be beneficial. There was a concern about the individuals who attempted to undermine the process of sharing.

Teachers at both schools recognized the need to transform norms and encourage a community where sharing ideas is valued. Both principals did follow the superintendent's initiative and implemented time for collaboration thus demonstrating the role of a change agent. Most teachers interviewed noted they wanted the amount of time to meet to increase and flow throughout the year. The hope is that teachers and leaders work in collaboration to create a more democratic and participatory school organization (Miller, 1998).



Teachers commented on their desire to increase learning community time. They genuinely saw the value in learning communities but until the principal can join the learning communities, shared leadership does not truly exist. Marks and Printy (2003) found that without transformational leadership in schools instructional leadership suffered. Shared instructional leadership will not develop unless it is supported and nurtured.

Fluid leadership implies that within the organization individuals identify how they can contribute and what role that entails. Transformational leadership supports the premise that a successful organization has different individuals who lead through different steps of the change process. Transformational leaders do not lead in a vacuum simply because they are the organization's identified head; instead they truly understand that every individual has unique qualities that can benefit the organization. When individuals are allowed to utilize their talents they develop confidence that will allow the organization to thrive despite whatever chaos or level of disagreement that may occur.

The work of high school principals is challenging and requires commitment and drive. High School principals are expected to meet the *No Child Left Behind* accountability component of *Annual Yearly Progress* and vocational federal indicators. They must increase graduation rates and decrease drop-outs. To help meet these student indicators, principals work to provide teachers with sustainable professional development, monitor their instructional practices, maintain social control and enhance climate and culture. Principals are also challenged to provide individualized educational opportunities for the young adolescents they serve to enhance the community in which they reside. This mix of responsibilities creates a need to identify leadership characteristics that breed success.

The teachers at HC High School were working through a need for increased communication during the current renovation of the campus, while the principal of HC High School was working to address concerns noted in a previous state accountability report. The teachers at HC High School attributed the overall positive climate and culture to the principal's approach to leadership in the presence of chaos. Although the overall performance of AC High School was higher than HC High School for the 09-10 school year, transformation appeared to be occurring at HC High School while a failure to handle management issues impacted AC High School morale. The changes that HC implemented were recognized in the 10-11 test score outcomes. For the first time, HC High School scored at or above the performance level of AC High School.

The teachers of both high schools believe principals have a great deal of responsibility on their shoulders. The more tenured teachers do believe the principal is responsible for the overall climate and culture. AC High Schools decline in some test score areas demonstrated that relational trust is fragile and that fluid leadership can both progress or regress on the continuum developed from this research. The August to December dynamic of AC High School actually caused teachers to question the goals of the organization. As the chart notes, a leader cannot remain transactional or the organization will decline. Teachers take pride in what they do but when an atmosphere begins to gather toxic aspects, they go into the classroom and focus on self.

Given the condition of HC High School school, it was surprising how positive and upbeat everyone was. The teachers said the principal told them that despite the construction, we will continue to teach children and we will move forward. Teachers at HC High School were not supporters of the premise that students who live in poverty cannot learn, in fact they strongly believe the opposite and to be successful they seek to develop relational trust with the

community at large. The addition of a strong parental program could establish this. Guidance to parents on the importance of education, completion status and real life reading and math applications could assist with building a foundation on which this trust could grow.

There is a mutual respect at HC High School among students, teachers, and administrators. The staff was positive despite the disruptions. A majority of those interviewed discussed the principal's approach to maintaining an atmosphere of learning despite the construction noise. The teachers of HC High School understood the importance of a leader and that without one change could not occur. They felt it was important to share leadership responsibilities because there were layers of leadership.

The staff at both high schools recognized the importance of collaboration. The principal of HC High School designed learning community study groups led by different teachers. Each session teacher leaders were responsible for the agenda and creating questions for the group. The teachers discussed how much they enjoyed participating in learning communities and commented that the principal typically participated but never led the sessions. They also openly discussed the high level of monitoring that occurred. Numerous teachers commented that the principal stopped into their classroom two to three times a day and therefore they knew to be teaching at all times. The staff of AC High School enjoyed the time to collaborate but after seeing the benefits of this were disappointed when the time ceased to occur second semester thus impacting relational trust. A shared or fluid approach impacts morale. Teachers who feel valued contribute to the overall success of the organization and enhance school-wide efforts.

### **Managerial tasks must be mastered**

The transformation of school norms requires an understanding of hierarchy of job responsibilities. A principal's job responsibilities are vast and require attention to planning and more importantly implementation and maintenance. To build the foundation for a positive

school community the principal must be visible in classrooms to ensure proper monitoring of practices and social control. To further enhance the culture, the principal must share leadership and move toward a transformational approach. Ultimately, the principal must understand his role as instructional leader.

School level observations included time in the hallway, cafeteria, main office and in classrooms. Both principals were visible supervising students between classes and at lunch. It appeared that both principals were accessible but in distinctly different ways. The Principal of AC High School was reactive in nature; he always had teachers or other personnel lined up outside his office waiting to talk to him throughout the day. He discussed how his role had become more reactive or transactional due to a number of managerial tasks like approving purchase orders, payroll, facility issues or addressing a severe discipline offense that could unexpectedly occur. The principal of HC High School was perceived as proactive; teachers discussed his presence in classrooms daily and his participation in PLCs and team meetings weekly. The transactions between principal and teachers yielded sustainable operation of the organization but did not provide for true school wide reform.

AC Principal: I think we've got to a point where we need to realize that in order to have effective high schools we've got to change how we approach the leadership. I think there needs to be individuals who just deal with manager responsibilities and business responsibilities that will allow the principal to be exclusively an educational leader.

Principal: The key to that is finding key people. Use the resources you have. You know the analogy of keeping the plates spinning. You keep plates spinning hopefully they don't crash to the floor and break. But just finding key people whether they're in the

department or whatever departments there from to help initiate and follow through on the instructional leadership aspect of it.

In order for a principal to be a good administrator who is responsive to classroom needs, he has to play an instructional role (Datnow & Castellani, 2001; Frantz, 1998). The two principals differ on philosophy pertaining to this responsibility. The principal of AC High School admitted that he relied on the fact that a majority of his staff was exceptional. The principal HC High school demonstrated a greater command of management tasks and thus was further progressed toward transformational status.

Although AC High School teachers question the timeliness of social control within the overall school, they do pride themselves on developing classrooms that are structured, rigorous and provide relevant instruction. “Teachers rely heavily on routines to create the kind of classroom community they want – one in which students are respectful of one another, where they take turns, share, defer, wait their turn and so on. By creating a social climate that is conducive to learning, teachers also hope to increase student willingness to participate and thereby prevent distractions” (Kennedy, p. 64). Counteractive to the transformational process, a failure to manage social control created an atmosphere where teachers were more focused on individual classrooms as opposed to enhanced school culture.

Like the teachers at AC High School, the teachers of HC High School wanted strong social control and referenced it during casual conversations and structured interviews. The component that was a major management issue at HC High School was a failure to communicate in what the staff viewed as a timely fashion. It is interesting to note that although the teachers were aware that the construction chaos limited the principal’s ability to share information, they still viewed this as a management task in need of improvement. From last minute information

about passing out midterms to not knowing about a new traffic route, the teachers discussed how last minute changes disrupted the flow of daily classroom life.

No matter the issue or the cause, teachers need a calm, structured school atmosphere with limited disruptions to daily routine and social control. Principals must always be aware that failure to maintain a managed climate can limit the actual fluid nature of transformation because individuals do not feel valued as partners in the change process.

Although the climate and culture in the two schools differed, the second question posed, “How do teachers understand the relationship between culture and climate and student outcomes?” yielded similar responses. Climate and culture impacts the attitude of the staff. All interviewed felt that even when in a challenging climate and culture, they could still control most of what occurred in their classrooms. Teachers discussed that it was their responsibility to teach no matter what was happening outside of their window or walls. Teachers said that students perform better when a positive atmosphere exists school wide but even in the absence of one, classroom expectations could be maintained to varying degrees and relationships with students drive the learning process.

When asked specifically about the leadership style of the principal, the teachers interviewed were quick to respond. The teachers searched for one or two words to provide an overall picture then typically would give an example of what they meant. It is interesting that at both schools, teachers overwhelmingly presented disclaimers before saying anything negative like, “I know he has a big job to do.” or “He is a really good man and tried hard.” which indicates teachers do understand the overwhelming task principals face. Neither school’s climate and culture impacted what teachers ultimately desired: leadership. Teachers at both schools demonstrated a true moral conviction to help their students and wanted constant and consistent

feedback to help them develop as professionals. Teachers wanted the principal to lead them but wanted to contribute their talents where appropriate to assist the principal. The higher the level of shared or fluid leadership, the stronger the relational trust.

“How do principals and teachers understand the relationship between leadership and implementation of instructional changes?” Both principals indicated that genuine instructional change occurs when instructional leadership is present. It was the practice of this belief that differed greatly. The principal of AC High School produced strategic plans detailed steps to implement that were supported by staff; because of management tasks, few survived first semester. The principal of HC High School was collaborative in his approach to planning. He distributed leadership roles among staff members. He viewed his role as more of a monitor, supporter and when necessary the person who intervened and secured the proper resources to assist the teacher in need of professional guidance. An important concept however is that until management tasks are controlled limited transformation can occur. Teachers may evolve but the organization is limited.

Study findings point to relational trust as a key component in principal effectiveness. In both district high schools teachers were implementing research based practices that support learning. All classrooms used relevant video clips, project based learning and real life scenarios to hook students into the lesson, most used summative and formative assessments to continually evaluate where their students were in terms of content mastery and individualized instruction in a multitude of ways to include use of lexile scores to group for article completion. There was a similarity in the presence of teaching practices yet very different levels of morale. Teacher morale is directly linked to the style of the principal, his practices and approach. Teachers must be a part of the change process for true transformation to occur. When teachers sense a toxic

climate or culture they will cease to share, ignore some established rules and regulations and instead become very isolated in practices. Positive proactive leadership enhances teacher performance and willingness to collaborate.

### **Implications for Principal Preparation**

Teachers want to have input into some aspects of the school day but ultimately they want to be led. Leadership is powerful. Principals who collaborate and monitor as opposed to leading in a vacuum will over time create a fluid atmosphere of sharing that positively impacts student performance. State education leaders and legislatures must begin to look at the realistic implications of day to day leadership decisions and style. It is critical to prepare new principals correctly.

Clear control of management tasks is a must. This study strongly suggests that principals cannot only establish rules, they must consistently implement and follow these rules or relational trust will suffer. A principal must be attentive to the importance of protecting instructional time. He must only allow limited disruptions to classrooms, follow through on programs developed and agreed upon, and closely monitor practices. By creating an example for productive and shared leadership, the principal will develop relational trust. The new framework created can be used as a tool to teach new administrators how to progress from transactional to transformational while understanding leadership is optimum when it is fluid or shared. Programs that prepare principals do not discuss how to evolve as a leader. It is important for first year principals to understand that management tasks can overwhelm even a seasoned veteran but proactive and collaborative planning creates an atmosphere in which a new principal can thrive.

Principal preparation programs currently exist in a variety of formats and are mostly graduate level courses. As Arne Duncan stated, we need good principals, but what is a good



principal? “Principals themselves are among the first to agree that they need to be more effectively prepared for their jobs. All but 4% of practicing principals report that on-the-job experiences or guidance from colleagues has been more helpful in preparing them for their current position than their graduate school studies. In fact, 67% of principals reported that typical leadership programs in graduate schools of education are out of touch with the realities of what it takes to run today’s school districts” (Farkas, Johnson and Duggett, 2003, p.3).

According to a recent report by Hess and Kelly (2011) “effective principal preparation ought to include significant attention to accountability, managing with data, and utilizing research; to hiring, recruiting, evaluating, and terminating personnel; to overseeing an effective instructional program; and to exposing candidates to diverse views regarding educational and organizational management” (p.3). Many current principal preparation programs are taught by individuals who are not practicing principals or who are unaware of the demands placed on administrators. Many programs are taught online or participants gather monthly to discuss syllabi content. Without actual hands-on experience and mentoring by current administrators, hopeful principals will not be prepared for the challenges that face them. In comparison to the content included in preparatory programs, the state school of excellence packet from which the initial research questions were developed reveals that principals are required to demonstrate how their staff uses data to guide instructions, uses 21<sup>st</sup> Century teaching techniques, implements technology, addresses specific needs of students with disabilities, fosters a climate and culture conducive to learning, and supports all students through guidance.

The state in which the two high schools reside is annually evaluated by an independent auditing office. State policy lists 13 components used annually to measure school accreditation status. These measures include 39 high quality standard indicators schools must uphold and 7

indicators of efficiency. When the principal of HC high school was new to the job, he was sited as not demonstrating leadership by vision, school culture and instruction, management and environment, community and professionalism. The principal's limited experience in the field was not taken into consideration. The expectations of the state accountability system are vast and few schools have all practices in place. Current principal preparation programs do not make future administrators aware of these requirements and therefore they are unprepared to meet these challenges upon entering the field. It is only through collaboration with other district administrators and central office staff members that new principals learn both the *what to do* and *how to do it* using the new framework as a guide. This framework provides details to new administrators on how to balance the change process that occurs over time in the position.

The state in which the two high schools reside also uses a data-based system for schedule creation, report card generation, attendance entry, documentation of specific student needs or concerns, and critical skills progression. The data entry system can provide reports on failure rates, GPA ranking, grade distribution by teacher and student transcripts. Although use of this data system is critical to managing the school effectively, preparation programs do not provide a course that teaches future users how to use data so they know what questions to ask and what data to request when introduced to various data systems across the country.

In addition to preparing principals to undertake current practices, and instructing them on state policy and accountability standards, preparation programs should require principals to complete supervision duties of athletics, participate in departmental meetings, lead a professional learning community, complete data disaggregation and develop a school wide strategic plan. Although there is no way to understand the pressures associated with being a principal until one becomes a principal, preparation programs can begin to focus on what accountability standards

schools are expected to meet and use the framework from this study to help guide future administrators. With turnover inevitable, it is critical that all schools have norms that are conducive to all students reaching mastery since change in administrators will occur.

### **Implications for Principal Evaluation and Development**

Leaders should view the evaluation process in a positive light. Just as an assessment of test scores allows teachers to see what content students did not master, an evaluation that includes teacher input could help leaders determine weaknesses that need to be addressed. This study implies that it is critical to reassess the administrative assignments of high schools. If the principal is to be the instructional leader, he must delegate the managerial responsibilities hereby maintaining a high level of expectations for assistant principals.

Administering a school wide survey to determine staff concerns and needs can mitigate frustration, fear, and anxiety if the process of integrating responses into school plans is transparent and expeditious. With the growing demands placed on teachers, school wide social control is critical. Creating a school climate and culture committee that can meet monthly to discuss social control issues and staff expectations will demonstrate a high level of shared leadership with discipline procedures implemented by all. The principal should spend each and every day in classrooms discussing teaching, learning and student motivation with staff. The principal should meet with departments to review curriculum and discuss practices. Sharing should become the priority if improvement is the desired outcome.

The current system for evaluating principals is very limited. Principals are asked to develop goals, create action steps on how to obtain those goals, and provide timelines. Principal evaluation conferences occur on varying timelines across the nation. In the state studies they occur twice a year. The first time is to establish and agree upon the goals with the

superintendent; the second is to review the data provided by the principals to determine if goals were achieved. For leadership to progress, principals should be closely monitored and evaluating themselves continuously. To evaluate one's self requires dedication, commitment and a desire to improve. The Southern Regional Education Board has identified 13 "critical success factors" essential to good leadership (Butler, 2008) that supplements the framework developed from this study: create a mission, set high expectations, encourage quality instruction, implement a caring environment, use data, keep focused, involve parents, understand change, use sustained professional development, organize time and resources, find and use resources wisely, find central office and community support for school, improvement and remain open to new information.

Accountability is huge part of a principal's responsibility. *No Child Left Behind* placed a great deal of emphasis on student performance. Ongoing evaluation could lead to greater student outcomes. Today's principals must be involved in assessment, instruction and data disaggregation to be prepared to make curriculum decisions. Evaluation is a tool for superintendents to discuss with principals the progress the school is making. If a principal is unable to articulate the types of instructional practices occurring in the building or what type of data is being used the superintendent can recognize that monitoring of practices is not occurring.

The framework created from this study outlines the leadership style characteristics of administrators. As the superintendent works with leaders to evolve practices, he should have open dialogue on a what the starting point is, the foundation, emphasis, the processes in place to achieve goals, the defined key values, the ultimate goal, how power is utilized and the how leadership is distributed. The superintendent can work with the principal to release control in order to share responsibilities and ultimately meet transformational status.

**Further Research Possibilities**

Studying the leadership qualities exhibited by effective high school principals will aide school districts in transforming norms and ensure learning for all students is a priority. Table 7 lists a few ideas that presented themselves at AC High School and HC High School. These findings are worthy of future investigation.

**Table 7**

**Individual Findings for AC and HC High Schools**

AC High School	HC High School
Transformational leadership does not have to be present for the implementation of strong instructional practices and relational trust between students and teachers.	A school will rally behind a leader who commits to leading them through the transformation process.
A leader must first master managerial duties before he can lead the transformation of school norms.	The monitoring of practices increases relational trust.
A leader can intuit parts of transformational leadership but failure to implement transformational practices impacts relational trust.	In the presence of uncontrollable chaos, attitude and communication can ease or compound the chaos.
	A leader and his staff can emphasize the importance of education but without a transformation of community understanding and support, students cannot reach their full potential.

If leadership is truly shared and a school is led by a transformational leader, then the organization demonstrates the following characteristics: school wide focus on student achievement, a culture built on effective decision making, enhanced social support, efficient control of adults and an expanded moral authority. This organization has undergone deep change and yields high student outcomes for all through collaboration. If the leadership at the school changes will the current transformation hold true? Since leadership was shared will the

teachers in the school continue the practices they worked with the principal to create? Turnover in administration does have effect on schools. Can a school led by a transformational leader transition into new leadership easier?

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**Appendix 1: Version 8 of Interview Protocols****Teacher Questions**

1. Do you feel your school's culture and climate enhances or hinders school improvement efforts?
2. What do you feel is the relationship between culture and climate and student outcomes?
3. Despite the classroom disruptions from construction, teachers and students appear to be upbeat and time on task optimum? How do you remain so positive?
4. Do you think how student discipline is handled is an important part of school effectiveness? Can you explain?
5. How does the academic success of all students remain your day-to-day priority?
6. Do you believe your school fosters a sense of cooperation and collaboration among adults?
7. Do you feel departmental meetings are valuable? Do you like that your principal attends? What is his role in these meetings?
8. Do you feel the principal involves the staff in school decisions?
9. Do you feel that being monitored or evaluated improves your teaching? Why?
10. What are the characteristics of an effective leader?
11. Do you believe your school's underlying values, beliefs and traditions help staff members resolve conflict and meet challenges?
12. Do you feel students have the opportunity to build supportive and caring relationships with teachers and other adults?
13. Do you establish high expectations for all students and ensure that students achieve at high levels? Can you provide an example?
14. What data or assessment do you analyze to judge the effectiveness of your teaching?
15. How has teacher professional development improved your teaching?
16. Do you feel your principal has developed a school-wide focus on teaching and learning? What is your principal's leadership style?
17. To what degree do you feel your principal works with teachers to improve curriculum, instruction and student engagement?

18. What instructional strategies and organizational methods do you use to actively engage students at high levels and assure students' deep understanding of content rather than coverage of material?
19. Do you think it is important to make learning relevant? Why?
20. How do you individualize instruction to meet the varied needs of learners?
21. Your school participated in a book study on ahead of the curve. What value was this PLC? What were you able to learn from others?
22. What do you think is the relationship between leadership and the implementation of instructional changes?
23. Does the principal motivate staff and students toward common purpose?
24. What would you like to see improve in your school?

### **Principal Questions**

1. How do you feel about being identified as your school's "leader of learning?"
2. Do you feel supported or receive organizational support to allow you to be the "leader of learning?" What resources would allow you to be an effective "leader of learning?"
3. How do you organize and lead the school toward collaborative continuous improvement processes?
4. How do you develop a school-wide focus on teaching and learning?
5. How do you work with teachers to improve curriculum, instruction and student engagement?
6. What data do you collect to determine effectiveness? Parent surveys? Staff surveys? LSIC minutes? How do you use this data?
7. Do you believe school culture enhances school improvement efforts? What do you view as your role in the school's culture?
8. What instructional strategies have you observed help teachers actively engage students at high levels rather than "coverage of materials?"
9. Do you believe that the academic success of all students remains a day-to-day priority for all teachers? Do you have examples?
10. How does your school foster a sense of cooperation and collaboration among adults and students?

11. What opportunities do teachers have to participate in professional learning communities?
12. Do you believe teacher professional development improves teaching? What types of ongoing PD does your school offer? Use of Instructional Coach?
13. What do you expect in lesson plans?
14. How does your school monitor practices to ensure the improvement process is continual?
15. What is your leadership style?
16. What is one thing you would like to see improve in your school?
17. Are county initiatives a priority?
18. How important do you think the strategic plan is?
19. Do you feel departmental meetings are valuable? What is your role in these meetings?
20. Do you involve the staff in school decisions?

### **District Office Questions**

1. How are principals informed of county instructional initiatives?
2. How do county initiatives see their way into the classroom?
3. What support is in place to ensure follow up?
4. What initiatives have taken place to ensure a “learning-centered” culture within the district high schools?
5. How is the five year strategic plan developed and how does it drive and target school improvement efforts? How do schools use the plan to guide their efforts?
6. Do you think climate and culture impact learning? What is your expectation of principals in managing the building? Hallways? Teacher recognition? Community Involvement?
7. What do you consider the major educational challenges high schools must face over the next five years and how do you plan to address them?
8. How do your high schools regularly collect and analyze data to determine the effectiveness of instruction?
9. What opportunities do teachers and other staff members have to participate in professional learning communities?
10. How do high school principals organize and lead their schools toward continuous improvement?
11. How do high school principals serve as leaders of learning?

12. What do you expect from your principals in terms of instructional leadership?
13. Research says that classroom instructors should provide instruction that is relevant, data driven and individualized... what importance do you see in these concepts?