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# Perceptions Of Leadership Capacity And Student Achievement

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PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP CAPACITY  
AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

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2009

## DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my parents; Mr. and Mrs. Neil C. Keith, whose character and experiences taught me the meaning of perseverance, sacrifice and the value of steadfast faith, dedication to purpose, and the spirit of resolve.

PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP CAPACITY  
AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

by

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Date of Dissertation Defense: August 3, 2009

# UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

## ABSTRACT

### PERCEPTIONS OF LEADERSHIP CAPACITY AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

The purpose of this research was to examine leadership capacity perceptions in high schools and their relationship to student achievement. The study explored perceptions of leadership capacity of principals, assistant principals and teachers on high school campuses in a border county. Correlation statistics were employed to investigate the existence of relational patterns between Lambert's (2003) Leadership Capacity Survey and student academic achievement. Results from the math, English-language arts and "all tests taken" portions of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests were analyzed and compared with survey results using Pearson  $r$  correlations.

Extant literature related to the purpose of this study was presented. It offered foundational information helpful to the understanding of results and conclusions, which will follow in chapters 4 and 5. With this in mind, a number of topics were addressed, including leadership capacity, historical backgrounds, the concepts of human and social capital and teacher and principal leadership. Equally important to this area of study is a discussion of leadership style, professional learning communities, professional accountability and the varying roles and responsibilities associated with the principal.

In an evaluation of the data reported, the partial correlations between principals, assistant principals and teacher perceptions of seven high school campuses suggests that each campus is individual and unique in its approach to constructivist leadership strategies and approaches, and that collective leadership capacity may not exhibit uniform coherence. Despite some of the correlations being relatively small, considering the context of accountability underpinning

mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), data suggests constructivist leadership fosters positive and calculable influence upon academic performance and achievement. Additional deliberation is required to address the extent perceptions of leadership capacity may be identified through other factors not considered in the survey.

Recommendations were made for future research in this area and suggestions for practitioners were offered based on the findings. These include the use of Lambert's (2003) Leadership Capacity Survey as a resource to identify areas of strength and weakness with those strategies employed at the campus level which aim to support specific characteristics or strategies listed within each quadrant of the survey. Efforts in school improvement can be supported when these characteristics are better defined, accepted and acknowledged daily by school personnel. Mechanisms to provide leadership opportunity to all staff members through a collegial approach are critical to enhancing constructivist leadership at the campus level.

Campus leadership, when shared across members, allows for increased constructive analyses and decision making which promote collegial awareness and responsibility for academic success. This study suggests that beyond the individual traits and behaviors of leaders, the perceptions of leadership capacity by principals, assistant principals and teachers can effectively be used to work toward increasing academic achievement. The salient approaches used by members in leadership reflect upon the strategies implemented to secure sustained academic improvement. These efforts aim to promote the development of shared visions that foster broad-based leadership practice and program coherence. These strategies stimulate opportunities for effective decision making capacities, reflective practice and professional innovation (Lambert, 2003).



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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### *Background*

The demands for school improvement and organizational change needed to address increased institutional accountability has driven educational systems across the nation to address leadership as one focal point for renewal and transformation. A Nation at Risk (1983), a watershed report in which “many credit with initiating current reform described the performance of America’s schools as a rising tide of mediocrity” (Schlechty, 2001, p.6). Goodlad (1992) maintains that most reform is targeted towards restructuring and further stated that “top-down, politically driven national movements have little to say about educating” (p.238). Initiatives through the 1980s fostered targeted discussion which geared efforts to support teacher professionalism through career incentives aimed at attracting outstanding individuals (Little, 1988; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). “The onset of career ladders for competitive performance soon became the backdrop for the educational system across America” (Little, 1988, p.348). Yet, over time, this too met with much resistance despite sponsorship by those within policy making realms.

Due to the inherent demands for educational change, as evidenced in the context of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), educator roles within educational systems across America today have been redefined. Central to its intent, NCLB addresses accountability mechanisms and their potential in elevating academic performance through enhanced teaching and learning. “In an ideal system, performance-based accountability focuses educational policy, administration, and practice directly on teaching and learning” (Adams & Kirst, 1999, p.464).

Underpinning the current reform enterprise is support for increased teacher professionalism fostering targeted efforts to establish teacher leadership capacities.

To support the context of leadership and its continual evolution, several leadership styles are mentioned to serve as a comparative backdrop throughout the study. Leadership has been defined in varying ways to elicit the intent of its purpose and subsequent association with other organizational members. Leadership dimensions, which can include leadership traits and behaviors, are salient and analytically diverse, and are generally interchangeable during practice (Firestone, 1996). Numerous studies on school leadership have been conducted which define the relationships of one or more of these elements of an organization with particular leadership styles.

School administrators are typically challenged to work concurrently at transformational and instructional tasks. They seek to foster and maintain higher levels of commitment from personnel as well as strive to establish avenues to develop organizational capacity. In a comparative review of transformational and shared instructional leadership, Marks and Printy (2003) stated,

Although the importance transformational leadership places on vision building can create a fundamental and enduring sense of purpose in the organization, the model lacks an explicit focus on teaching and learning. Instructional leadership, emphasizing the technical core of instruction, curriculum and assessment provides direction and affects the day to day activities of teachers and students in the school. Transformational leadership builds organizational capacity whereas instructional leadership builds individual and collective competence. (p.377)

Marks and Printy continue to add that “Integrated leadership, then, reflects the transformational



influence of the principal and the shared leadership actions of the principal and teachers” (p.377). Situational leadership, as noted by Fielder and Garcia (1987) assumes that different situations require varying approaches to leadership problems. Moral leadership maintains a focus upon the values and ethics maintained by the leader and is underscored by those things considered right and good (Hodgkinson, 1991). Participative leadership focuses its intent upon decision making capacities of the group (Yukl, 1994). Managerial leadership focuses upon leader functions while transactional leadership is focused upon rewards and sanctions (Bass, 1998).

Increased accountability standards within educational systems aimed to close apparent achievement gaps within student populations. Correspondingly, the level to which student performance improves implies that school systems must continue to support the sharing of levels of authority with teachers, enabling them to become leaders themselves (Harris & Muijs, 2002).

Adams and Kirst (1999) refer to an ideal system of accountability where alignment of processes exists to promote academic achievement. “Accountability accomplishes this alignment, in principle, by defining goals, allocating authority, managing incentives, building capacity, measuring progress, reporting results, and enforcing consequences, all related to student performance” (p.464). Essential components within NCLB, as enumerated by Adams and Kirst (1999), have become integral parts of both federal and state accountability systems.

The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (2003) validated the need for educational leadership to be distributed or shared among its members in order to foster an effective community of learners. Kouzes and Posner (1996) indicated that “fostering collaboration is the route to high performance” (p.106). Although reforms have a tendency to be driven externally, the intent of professional learning communities is to provide a framework for

transformation, an internal process aimed to assist teachers with the transition of focusing from teaching to learning (Bereiter, 2002). Sustainable reform is dependent upon the building of educator capacity to work effectively within professional learning communities. This concept is articulated by Schmoker (2004) when he stated: “We have invested heavily in such ‘reform’ at the expense of the best-known means by which we might achieve truly historic, wide-scale improvements in teaching and learning — that is, the structured, empirical work of ‘learning communities’”(p.432).

### *Rationale*

The increased demands of state and federal accountability systems provide on-going challenges for educational leaders to “assure that the culture of collaborative decision-making, school improvement, results-orientation, and professional conversation at all levels have the opportunity to continue” (Eaker, DuFour & DuFour, 2002, p.172). Schlechty (2001) affirmed the importance of culture and social structures during reform initiatives by stating:

Systemic reform of an organization does not simply attempt to bring about temporary changes in the behavior of the individual men and women and boys and girls who live out a substantial part of their biographies in the organization; it focuses instead on changing the patterned regularities that characterize the organization and that shape behavior with the organization more generally. (p.43)

Lambert (2003), addressing leadership, contended:

When we learn together as a community, toward a shared purpose, we are creating an environment in which we feel congruence and worth. Inherent to this view is the belief that all humans are capable of leadership, which compliments our conviction that all children can learn. (p. 4)

Central to its intent, leadership capacity fosters the opportunity for school based leadership to address strategies that contribute and support processes for student achievement. The intent of this research study is to identify correlations between perceptions of leadership capacity of high school principals, assistant principals and teachers to student achievement.

### *Theoretical Framework*

Toward the goal of establishing a more comprehensive account of leadership models, elements of both leader and follower that interact can be conceptualized as capacities (knowledge and skills), attitudes, values, goals, and practices and behavior (Marks & Printy, 2003). More specifically, organizational theory provides additional support to better conceptualize key elements such as mission, vision, procedural routines including mechanisms for decision-making, data gathering and processing, programming of instruction, strategies for change and policies and resources of an organization (Gailbraith, 1977).

The theoretical framework for this study embraces a constructivist leadership theory (Lambert, 2003) allowing for varied leadership styles or models to impact leadership and organization of a school as determined by student academic achievement. Although possibly considered as a “collective” leadership approach because of the wide applications of all leadership styles, the orientation to this study is focused upon the way in which individuals construct meanings. More specifically, the term constructivist leadership theory is used to denote the associations with learning theories that espouse a constructivist premise. Within this context, constructivist leadership identifies with “reciprocal, purposeful learning that allows participants in community to construct meaning and knowledge together” (Lambert, 2000, p.12). Constructivism is supported by various learning theories aimed to support the essence of

building leadership capacity in others (Preskill & Torres, 1999). Further describing their position, the authors stated:

Constructivism is concerned with how people process information in ways that affect their world view. It proposes that individuals continually create and recreate meaning as a result of their relationship with others in the social environment. Constructivism is particularly well-suited for understanding interpersonal relationships and how behavior is mediated by organizational environments. Constructivist learning theories are built on the belief that all knowledge is based on experience and the meanings are arrived at by continually seeking order in these experiences. (p.19)

Lambert (2003) stated, “How we define leadership engages and pulls others into the work of leadership” (p.424). Viewed as an organizational concept, Lambert further stated that “leadership defined as a form of learning situates that work within the context of teaching and learning” (p.425). Central to the theoretical framework is the connection between capacity building and learning and the structures used to support sustainable improvement. Leithwood and Mascall (2008) stated,

It is necessary to understand how learning occurs within different organizational units—the individual, the small group and the whole school. Learning within these units does not just happen naturally. It is stimulated by sources that must be better understood. (p.537)

### *Purpose of the Study*

Successful schools continually seek to establish sustained improvement to maintain academic progress and success. Central to this endeavor is the continual effort to establish structures that reinforce levels of trust, continuity, and a collegial approach that establishes a

well-defined sense of purpose through rituals and routines that effectively support teaching and learning. Addressing the concept of culture, Schlechty (2001) stated, “Structural change that is not supported by cultural change will eventually be overwhelmed by the culture, for it is in the culture that any organization finds meaning and stability” (p.136). Sarason, (1971) eluded to the essence of change and culture when he stated:

We have no good basis for comfort in regard either to the adequacy of our schools or to the beneficial effects of the major efforts to change them. That is to say, it is not a recognition that sees the problem primarily in terms of personality characteristics, motivation, resistances, the presence or absence of creative or imaginative individuals, or any other dimension along which individuals vary. It is rather a recognition that the problem inheres in the fact that history and tradition have given rise to roles and relationships, to interlocking ideas, practices, values, and expectations that are the “givens” not requiring thought or deliberation. These “givens” (like other categories of thought) are far less the products of the characteristics of individuals than they are a reflection of what we call the culture and its traditions. (p.227-228)

Additionally, leadership in successful schools promotes a collective responsibility in maintaining dialogue that focuses upon the values of the campus, processes that strengthen the sharing of knowledge, participation in decision-making based upon data and reflective discourse to enhance the instructional processes needed for continual improvement in student learning. With the importance of relationships, culture and participatory decision-making in mind, the ability to maintain renewal of these relationships is vital to sustainable improvement and growth. The ability to identify with processes that reinforce the cultural awareness and responsibilities help to establish professional perceptions. The focus of the study centers upon: (1) A

comparison of the perceptions of high school principals, assistant principals and teachers concerning school leadership capacity, and (2) Determining the relation between the perceptions of high school principals, assistant principals and teachers concerning school leadership capacity and student academic achievement.

### *Significance of the Study*

Leadership has long maintained a key position in educational administration research. Yukl (1981) contended that research on educational leadership has over the last century occurred without the acceptance of an unambiguous definition of leadership and affirmed:

It is neither feasible nor desirable at this point in the development of the discipline to resolve the controversy over the appropriate definition of leadership. For the time being, it is better to use the various conceptions of leadership as a source of different perspectives on a complex, multifaceted phenomenon. Whenever feasible, leadership research should be designed to provide information relevant to the entire range of definitions, so that over time it will be possible to compare the utility of different conceptualizations and arrive at some consensus on the matter. (p.5)

Despite a lack of consensus in leadership definition, Yukl (1981) acknowledged that,

... most definitions of leadership reflect the assumption that it involves an influence process whereby intentional influence is exerted by the leader over followers.

Differences between researchers in their conceptions of leadership lead to differences in the choice of phenomena to investigate and to differences in interpretation of the data obtained. (p.3)

Leadership, viewed from an organizational quality lens, is not a novel theme. Expanding the initial work by Ogawa and Bossert (1995), Pounder, Ogawa, and Adams (1995) maintained that

...most theory and research on organizational leadership are rooted in four basic assumptions: (a) the function of leadership is to influence the overall performance of organizations; (b) leadership operates within organizational cultures; (c) leadership is related to organizational roles; and (d) leaders are individuals who possess certain attributes or act in certain ways. (p.565)

Collectively, “these assumptions depict organizational leadership as the influence that individuals in high-level offices exert through their traits and actions on the culture and performance of organizations” (Pounder, et al., 1995, p.565). Referring to Barnard’s (1968) use of the term “authority of leadership” to denote organizational quality, Pounder, Ogawa and Adams (1995) indicated that leadership authority “is not confined to executives and thus implied that leadership may be exerted by any member of an organization” (p.565).

Viewed from this lens, Pounder (et al. 1995) indicated the total influence of leadership within schools has positive correlation to student academic performance. Leadership includes action from all constituents: parents, faculty, staff, and administrative personnel. Schools maintain social structures directly shaped by all individuals within the organization which in turn, assists with the shaping of structures that involve the coordination of work, managing the internal and external relationships and assists with the building of individual and collective commitment.

Further investigation is required to broaden the understanding of organizational ability to enhance leadership capacity within schools. Administrators today are charged with maintaining complex, multifaceted jobs that require them to be both visionary leaders as well as effective managers within traditional and transformational roles.

This study will expand the foundational concepts of leadership capacity by exploring the impact of practices on the broad-based skillful participation in leadership within high schools. It will also provide a vantage point from which schools can assess cumulative processes aimed to construct sustainable learning organizations. In addition, this study informs practitioners regarding the magnitude of leadership capacity building and subsequent organizational potential for making good use of structures associated with a professional learning community designed to improve academic achievement. This awareness can position educational leaders to better guide and facilitate the education of their school's community in order to create, employ and sustain best practices. Furthermore, the results of this research can help promote high levels of leadership capacity thus; impacting student achievement and assisting with reframing the intent and purpose of its organizational training.

In this study, campuses received a school profile report denoting the perceptions of leadership capacity of their principals, assistant principals and teachers who will collectively provide a "campus leadership capacity score" which will indicate areas of strength and areas to reinforce and improve upon. Profiles can assist administrators with developing professional development activities specifically aimed at improving leadership capacity on their campuses. Such activities may foster staff awareness in relevant areas, thus supporting sustainable school improvement through reciprocal and purposeful learning. This process will allow staff members in the school community to participate in broad-based skillful practices in leadership.

### *Research Questions*

The overarching question for this research study is: Does the perception of leadership capacity by principals, assistant principals and teachers impact student achievement on their campuses?



*Research Question 1a*

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of high school principals and assistant principals as measured by the Leadership Capacity School Survey?

*Research Question 1b*

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of high school principals and teachers as measured by the Leadership Capacity School Survey?

*Research Question 1c*

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of assistant principals and teachers as measured by the Leadership Capacity School Survey?

*Research Question 2a*

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of high school principals and scores in English language arts (ELA), Math, and All Tests Taken from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests administered from 2004- 2008?

*Research Question 2b*

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of high school assistant principals and scores in English language arts (ELA), Math, and All Tests Taken from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests administered from 2004-2008?

*Research Question 2c.*

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of high school teachers and scores in English language arts (ELA), Math, and All Tests Taken

from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests administered from 2004-2008?

### *Null Hypotheses*

The following hypotheses were examined in this study:

H<sub>1a</sub>: There are no significant relations between the leadership perceptions of principals and assistant principals as measured by the Leadership Capacity School Survey.

H<sub>1b</sub>: There are no significant relations between the leadership perceptions of principals and teachers as measured by the Leadership Capacity School Survey.

H<sub>1c</sub>: There are no significant relations between the leadership perceptions of assistant principals and teachers as measured by the Leadership Capacity School Survey.

H<sub>2a</sub>: There are no significant relations between the leadership perceptions of principals and scores in English language arts (ELA), Math, and All Tests Taken from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests administered from 2004-2008?

H<sub>2b</sub>: There are no significant relations between the leadership perceptions of assistant principals and scores in English language arts (ELA), Math, and All Tests Taken from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests administered from 2004-2008?

H<sub>2c</sub>: There are no significant relations between the leadership perceptions of teachers and scores in English language arts (ELA), Math, and All Tests Taken from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests administered from 2004-2008?

### *Definition of Terms*

Included are definitions of key terms which seek to promote clarity and provide a broader perspective of the critical concepts of the research study.

Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS):

A Texas formula employed to determine success of individual schools and public school districts to include attendance, student achievement scores and dropout rate (Texas Education Agency, 2003a).

Culture:

“Culture...represents the accumulated learning of a group— the ways of thinking, feeling, and perceiving the world that have made the group successful [or unsuccessful]” (Schein, 1999, p.21).

Expertise:

“Expertise is defined as (a) the possession of complex knowledge and skill; (b) its reliable application in actions intended to accomplish generally endorsed goal states; and (c) a record of goal accomplishment, as a consequence of those actions, which meets standards appropriate to the occupation or field of practice, as judged by clients and other experts in the field” (Leithwood & Steinbach, 1995, p.13).

Improvement:

“Change with direction, sustained over time, that moves entire systems, raising the average level of quality and performance while at the same time decreasing the variation among units, and engaging people in analysis and understanding of why some actions seem to work and others don’t” (Elmore, 2000, p.13).

Leadership Capacity:

“An organization’s capacity to lead itself and to sustain that effort when key

individuals leave; to the specific individuals involved; and to role groups, such as principals, teachers, parents and community members, and students” (Lambert, 2003, p.4).

#### Leadership Capacity Matrix:

A matrix used to describe varying states of leadership as based upon the extent of participation and skill. Descriptors provide conceptual frameworks that identify the “role of formal management, flow of information, relationships, and norms related to compliance and responsibility, degree of innovation in teaching and student achievement” (Lambert, 2003, p.5). Leadership capacity is characterized by four distinct quadrants.

#### Nonparametric Statistics:

“A technique often known as distribution-free since they make no assumption about the underlying distribution of the data. Nonparametric statistics are often applied to data sets where ranks rather than raw scores are used” (Boslaugh & Waters, 2008, p.207).

#### Pearson $r$ Correlation:

A statistical correlation that determines “the strength and direction of relationship between two variables” (Boslaugh & Waters, 2008, p.176).

#### Quadrant 1 Low Participation / Low Skill:

This quadrant exemplifies leadership capacity as having an autocratic principal, information flows in one direction; a lack of shared vision exists. Relationships

with staff are codependent; teaching and learning uses minimal innovation and academic achievement is marked by low to sporadic success (Lambert, 2003).

#### Quadrant 2 High Participation / Low Skill:

This principal is considered a “laissez faire” manager. Programs are unrelated and lack specific purpose. Information is fragmented and lacking in coherence contributing to greater levels of individualism without collective responsibility. Staff members do not have defined roles or responsibilities. Teacher innovation is minimal while student achievement is static (Lambert, 2003).

#### Quadrant 3 Low Participation / High Skill:

This quadrant exemplifies small leadership teams with a common purpose. Information flows within designated leadership groups although the use of school-wide data is limited. Designated leaders are efficient while other members serve in traditional roles. Resistance is limited to a few teachers. Teachers make good use of innovation and reflection to support excellence in teaching. Student success ranges from static to slight improvement (Lambert, 2003).

#### Quadrant 4 High Participation / High Skill:

This quadrant exemplifies a principal making good use of inclusive practice to involve all stakeholders, providing a shared vision within a coherent program. Use of data is inquiry-based and assists with subsequent planning, decision making, and procedures for the implementation of practice. Collaboration is extensive with shared responsibility for performance. Teacher innovation is supported by reflective practice while student success is consistently improving (Lambert, 2003).

Leadership Capacity Survey:

A survey employing items denoting characteristics of high leadership capacity in order to assess leadership capacity within schools (Lambert, 2003).

Learning Organization:

“An organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future” (Senge, 1990, p.14).

Professional Development:

“...learning opportunities that can be found in collegial conversations, coaching episodes, shared decision-making groups, reflective journals, parent forums, or other such occasions” (Lambert, 2003, p.22).

Professional Learning Community:

A conceptual framework that draws from the following: “(1) a solid foundation consisting of collaboratively developed and widely shared mission, values, and goals, (2) collaborative teams that work interdependently to achieve common goals, and (3) a focus on results as evidenced by a commitment to continuous improvement” (Eaker, DuFour & DeFour, 2002, p.3).

Sustainability:

“Sustainability does not simply mean whether something can last. It addresses how particular initiatives can be developed without compromising the development of others in the surrounding environment, now and in the future” (Hargreaves & Fink, 2000, p.34).

Texas Academic Knowledge and Skills (TAKS):

A state testing mandate enacted into law and implemented in 2003.

### *Delimitations*

Survey information was restricted to high school campus personnel. Selected response groups are limited to faculty members (teachers), assistant principals and principals. Finally, the selection of campuses was made to include high schools considered to be either rural or urban.

### *Limitations*

Limitations in this study center upon the degree of honesty and variance of opinion of those answering the questionnaire. The culture of individuals, age, gender and total years of experience are not controlled in this study. The study involved seven high schools within one border county positioned along the United States-Mexico Border. The researcher used the Leadership Capacity School Survey developed by Lambert (2003). Validity of Lambert's survey was previously established in research studies by Combs (2007) and Pierce (2007). The researcher was prudent in the selection of schools. A factorial analysis of the survey was not performed. The researcher's aim was not to address the degree of correlation between survey items creating a reduced form, but to use the existing survey in so much that it would provide campus principals with applicable information to support their efforts for sustaining school improvement. The results can not be generalized to other regions of the country.

### *Methodology*

The methodology used for this investigation will employ a questionnaire analysis within the context of survey research. Lambert's Leadership Capacity Survey (2003) was administered independently to teachers, assistant principals and principals on the seven high school campuses. Each school received a rating for each of the groups identified to include an overall campus wide rating. Analysis of each survey group will be conducted to identify similarities and dissimilarities of perceptions of school capacity. Relationships between perceived school

leadership capacity and student academic achievement will be explored. Inferential, non parametric statistics are used to investigate the existence of relational patterns between Lambert's (2003) Leadership Capacity Survey and student academic achievement. Results from the math, English-language arts and "all tests taken" portions of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests will be analyzed and compared with survey results using Pearson  $r$  correlations. Individually, the three groups completing the survey will contribute to a greater target population representing the school organization. The results of each survey scored by group will also be pooled and analyzed across all campuses participating in the study to identify possible relationships.

#### *Organization of the Study*

Five chapters are presented in this study. Chapter 1 consists of the introduction, the rationale, the theoretical framework, the purpose and significance of the study, research questions, definitions of terms, and the limitations and delimitations of the study. Chapter 2 presents a literature review including an historical background of educational leadership which addresses concepts of human and social capital, leadership, leadership style, leadership capacity, professional learning communities, teacher and principal roles and accountability. Chapter 3 provides the methodology employed in the study. Chapter 4 provides a presentation of results. Chapter 5 offers a discussion of results and findings. Included are recommendations for practice, policymakers and for future research. Chapter five also provides a discussion of how the results of this study relate to the relevant literature.



## Chapter 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### *Introduction*

This chapter will address extant literature associated to the purpose of this study. It will provide foundational information helpful to the understanding of results and conclusions, which will be presented in subsequent chapters. To this end, a number of relevant topics will be addressed, including constructivist leadership theory, leadership capacity, historical backgrounds, the concepts of human and social capital and teacher and principal leadership. Equally important to this area of study is a discussion of leadership style, professional learning communities, professional accountability and the critical roles associated with the campus principal.

#### *Theoretical Framework of the Study*

Concepts regarding leadership, whether characterized by theory or practice have evolved over time. Much has been written to support varying contexts for leadership. A multitude of definitions and characteristics have emerged to represent particular qualities that support timeworn postulates of leadership trait theory. In response to growing educational accountability, old assumptions regarding leadership traits, credited for the limited success in earlier reforms, are myopic and are sensitive to current realities that require the involvement of others outside the formal leadership boundaries. More contemporary views of leadership are framed by processes rather than skills of those in leadership positions. Constructivist leadership theory allows for a more comprehensive perspective of leadership. It considers more than the skills and styles of leaders. It widens the perspective to include the connection of processes among individuals embedded in the context and culture of the organization (Lambert, 2003).

This context, if viewed from a collective leadership lens, is centered upon a framework that situates teaching and learning within organizations and seeks to foster avenues to promote individual and collective leadership capacity.

### *Leadership Capacity*

Leadership capacity comprises a myriad of components and is defined according to its focus and intent. Leadership capacity, as Fullan (2005) contends, is having a shared and united influence within the organization that serves to amplify knowledge and related skills in order to support and motivate members to engage continually in improvement efforts. Central to educational arenas, leadership capacity involves the building of a shared purpose within a collegial atmosphere, also referred to as a professional learning community. Leadership capacity is defined as “broad-based skillful participation in the work of leadership” (Lambert, 2003, p.4). Furthering this concept, Lambert (1998) stated that “not all learning processes constitute leadership” (p.8). “Establishing a sense of connection, belonging, interdependence, and growth will make a group more cohesive and develop community” (Gabriel, 2005, p.108) which in turn aims to foster higher levels of leadership capacity. In support of this concept, Harris and Lambert (2003) provide five key assumptions that advance the theoretical leadership foundations needed to develop and maintain capacity:

- Leadership is not trait theory; leadership and leader are not the same. Leadership can mean (and does mean in this context) the reciprocal learning processes that enable participants to construct and negotiate meanings leading to a shared purpose of schooling.
- Leadership is about learning that leads to constructive change. Learning is among participants and therefore, occurs collectively. Learning has direction toward a shared

purpose.

- Everyone has the potential and right to work as a leader. Leading is skilled and complicated work that every member of the school community can learn. Democracy clearly defines the rights of individuals to actively participate in the decisions that affect their lives.
- Leading is a shared endeavor, the foundation for the democratization of schools. School change is a collective endeavor; therefore, people do this most effectively in the presence of others. The learning journey must be shared; otherwise, shared purpose and action are never achieved.
- Leadership requires the redistribution of power and authority. Shared learning, purpose, action, and responsibility demand the realignment of power and authority. Districts and principals need to explicitly release authority, and staff need to learn how to enhance personal power and informal authority. (p.20)

West, Ainscow, and Standford (2005) affirmed that leadership involves a collective belief or capacity in what could be achieved and maintains the collective responsibility to ensure subsequent goals are attained. The degree to which educators maintain focused in-depth learning and skillful application of leadership skills as a community has implications on the success of students, teachers, parents and schools as a whole.

Critical shifts in leadership theory and practice are fostering much needed change in schools in order to facilitate sustained educational improvement. School leaders are moving away from the dependency of system authority to make use of power and control. These efforts center upon practices that support the building of relationships through empowerment and self regulation (Caine & Caine, 2000). Educational literature continues to reference the importance

of teacher leadership in light of the framework of the current reform movements, namely increased educator accountability.

### *Historical Background*

Although viewed as a backdrop of school transformation, the Excellence Movement of the 1980s provided an agenda for continual development through reform. However, its impact, as referenced in A Nation at Risk (1983), served only to reinforce a framework for change that was lacking in terms of direction and focus. Additionally, the efforts of reform during the Excellence Movement focused on mandate driven state legislation, yet failed to allow for appropriate and much needed local control and autonomy.

In the early 1990s, the means to reform began to change. As indicated by the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools, “Avenues through which school systems were given purposeful autonomy through practices of site-based management addressing all areas of organizational management established a new framework that continued to provide a more viable response to comprehensive reform into the early 1990s” (DeFour & Eaker, 1998, p.7).

During this time, schools were provided greater levels of autonomy. However, this newly found sense of freedom to make creative decisions was still limited to peripheral considerations of school management and failed to address issues regarding qualities associated with effective teaching and most critical, the attributes of learning (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). Referencing Wohlstetter and Odden’s (1992) work on decision making and member engagement, Opfer and Denmark (2001) indicated,

...school-based decision making tends to (a) be a popular reform that results in little substantive change, (b) be created without clear goals for student learning, (c) lack any accountability mechanisms that assess its performance with respect to goals and

organizational improvement, and (d) be caught in a state-district policy context that often sends mixed signals or contradictory support to schools. (p.104)

Based on the work by Wholstetter, Smyer, and Mohrman (1994), Opfer and Denmark (2001) reaffirm that obtaining increased involvement with purposeful site based decision practices is directly influenced by several factors. These factors include the empowerment of others, the effective use of knowledge and skills which fosters greater contribution to the performance and success of the organization, and meaningful rewards for excellent performance.

The mislaid focus of both the Excellence Movement and Restructuring Movement fostered critical debate among educational theorists while additional criticism from the educational community attempted to define the parallel failures. Movement deficiencies were caused by numerous factors, such as the social conditions impacting students, political agendas translated into continued top-down mandates enforced with bureaucratic rules and regulations, and the failure of the school systems to maintain focused and targeted direction with long-term educational innovations. This array of failures led to general conclusions that American schools were incapable of sustainable transformation.

The increased disillusionment with public educator's ability to fulfill their responsibility, as reflected in President Bush's "Goals 2000," offered additional challenges to educational systems across the nation. It was an educational system considered to be conservative, bound by hierarchical operational constraints and limited by the quality of teacher training programs. Policymakers exacerbated this condition by enacting statutes and rules that preserved the status quo instead of facilitating meaningful change (Fullan, 1993). Murphy, Evertson and Radnofsky (2000) reinforce Fullan's sentiment by questioning if "change will stop at the classroom door leaving the teaching and learning process largely unaltered" (p.135).

The educational system, ever changing in its structure and intent, had fallen victim to a misplaced focus as evidenced by numerous failing reforms. Although reforms over the past two decades have had salient characteristics which have contributed to education, they have not maintained sufficient clarity and consensus, nor the critical structures and processes needed to be sustained over long periods of time. Program revisions and initiatives to support the change in educational practices were disconnected and patchy. This fractured attempt at reform ultimately left educators in a position to surrender to the next call for change with greater apprehension and hesitation.

School reform efforts in the 1980s as noted by Murphy (1990) and Rowan (1990) concentrated on “existing educational structures and practices, seeking to make them better through policies of prescription, intensification, and control” (Smylie & Hart, 1995, p.421). Referencing the work of Elmore, Peterson and McCarthey (1996), Smylie and Hart (1995), further stated that “The reform research strongly suggests that improving teaching and student learning has less to do with structural changes in schools than with changes in what occurs *within* those structures” (p.422). Extending the work of Bacharach and Mundell (1995) and Firestone and Bader (1992), Smylie and Hart (1995) further contributed that, “Our growing recognition of the importance of schools for both student and teacher learning has been accompanied by the emergence of professional community-oriented images that challenge traditional bureaucratic conceptions of schools as organizations” (p.421). The interactional perspectives associating human and social factors within school environments have gained recent prominence in educational research.

A growing consensus is emerging to support an educational reform pathway that purports schools must be anchored not only in the theoretical and practical applications that denote

improved models, “teacher preparation, organizational development, school improvement, professional development, effective schools and innovation but that schools actively secure avenues that embrace and embed a culture along with processes that create a community of commitment—a professional learning community” (DeFour & Eaker, 1998, p.15). Viewed from this organizational perspective, school leaders, particularly principals, are challenged with establishing those culture building tools or structures that foster an environment conducive to shared responsibility for academic achievement. Facilitating structures that support such organizational culture and subsequent accountability requires leaders to employ clear and concise goals sustained by rationale and appropriate direction (Leithwood and Riehl, 2003). Sarason (1996) echoed this perception of culture by stating, “If you want to change and improve the climate and outcomes of schooling both for students and teachers, there are features of the school culture that have to be changed, and if they are not changed, your well-intentioned efforts will be defeated” (p.340).

In their book, *Transforming Schools – Creating a Culture of Continuous Improvement*, Zmuda, Kuklis and Kline (2004) emphasized the importance of fundamental change. They asserted that successful schools have organizational cultures that maintain unwavering and strategic commitment to improvement. Central to these efforts, school leadership must be equipped to effectively address appropriate interventions when facing change. Fullan, (2001) stated, “Remember that a culture of change consists of great rapidity and nonlinearity on the one hand and equally great potential for creative breakthroughs on the other. The paradox is that transformation would not be possible without accompanying messiness” (p.31).

Given this context, the focus of change therefore, must be deep rooted beyond first order reform. Traditional structures in schools that proved ineffective must be changed to promote

organizational competence through sustained improvement, while garnering transforming capacities to fulfill goals of increased student achievement. Fullan (2001) affirmed the need for cultural reform:

Furthermore, it is a particular kind of reculturing for which we strive: one that activates and deepens moral purpose through collaborative work cultures that respect differences and constantly build and test knowledge against measurable results—a culture within which one realizes that sometimes being off balance is a learning moment. (p.44)

Based upon the underpinnings of research by Lambert (1998, 2003) on building leadership capacity, schools can begin to readdress organizational structures such that they embed salient characteristics that support a more constructivist approach to obtain school cultures that are strengthened by transformational leadership capacities.

#### *Human / Social Capital*

Central to the support for educational reform aimed to foster lasting improvement for learning is the need to provide effective levels of support for educators. “Student achievement depends fundamentally on the intellectual, dispositional, and ethical capacities of teachers to provide challenging and meaningful classroom learning opportunities” (Smylie & Hart, 1995, p. 421). The social context of schooling has continued to typify relational components as being crucial to the success of educational initiatives and subsequent classroom practices. More so, the relevance of relational constructs sustains theoretical implications for its importance in organizational leadership theory. Beck and Murphy (1993) stated:

Hierarchical, bureaucratic organizational structures that have defined schools for the past 80 years are giving way to more decentralized...and more professionally controlled systems...Traditional patterns in relationships are altered; authority flows are less



hierarchical; role definitions are both more general and more flexible; leadership is connected to competence for needed tasks rather than to formal position; and independence and isolation are replaced by cooperative work...[T]he structural orientation of industrial age schools...is being overshadowed by a focus on the human element (as cited in Smylie and Hart, 1995, p.421).

As evidenced by extant literature by Fullan (1995) and Richardson (1990), “changing structures is not synonymous with changing the beliefs, habits, knowledge, and skills that undergird teachers’ instructional practice” (Smylie & Hart, 1995, p.422). The philosophy of teacher leadership, once considered an attribute of hierarchical educational leadership composition has evolved into a professional learning community concept (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995) subsequently aiming to elevate the professional perspective of leadership as well as continue to reinforce aspirations of incoming professionals into leadership positions. Recapping Newmann and Wehlage’s (1995) position on reform, Smylie and Hart (1995) indicated that the initiation and effective implementation of novel school organization is reliant upon appropriate processes that educe dynamic teaching and learning. Building level leadership is critical for initiating and implementing efforts to secure avenues for collaboration.

The concepts of human and social capital are continuing to gain merit as being the underpinnings of leadership when considered as an organizational structure and when these considerations are actively transformed into processes that support professional interaction that is inclusive of all educational members within a community. Drawing from Bourdieu (1986), Smylie and Hart (1995) generally define capital as “resources available to individuals that can be accumulated and drawn upon to promote productive activity” (p.422).

According to Schultz (1961) and Strober (1990), human capital depicts the knowledge and appropriate skills associated with one's ability to accomplish industrious tasks. Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1990, 1998) conversely, affirmed that social structures have the capacity to promote relationships whereby abstract and elusive resources may be gained. These relationships, portrayed as a resource, are dynamic through which the actions of others are respected, encouraged and promoted.

Resources that Coleman (1990, 1998) identified as being supportive to enhancing social capital include norms, communal trust, expectations, sanctions, and available access to new information. Social trust refers to the degree in which individuals maintain reliability and integrity of relationship. Such relationships are based upon mutual beliefs and understandings such that intentions and subsequent obligations are sustained through appropriate behaviors. Social trust, according to Byrk and Schneider (1996), serves to foster assurance and cooperation shared by individuals. Trust is the foundational mechanism that fosters levels of mutual assistance, accountability and subsequently serves to reinforce and discourage particular behaviors.

Furthermore, Evans (1996) and Schein (1988) asserted that social trust is required to establish a framework of predictability, constancy and assurance which in turn supports a protected environment through which honest dialogue can be maintained, especially in situations where issues of change are being explored. Trust is considered as being both a personal and collective commitment among those individuals who commonly work together and ultimately provides support for interdependency and mutual obligation within all levels of a school's organization. Social capital is derived and maintained by the existence of organizational transparency as evident in the knowledge and practice of unambiguous goals, explicit collective

responsibility and obligation, and practice of disciplined and expected action. Coleman (1988) maintained that organizational success is in part, related to the extent novel information is acquired and used to facilitate member actions within a given social structure. This information whether gained internally or external to the social group allows constituents to engage in educative activity that promotes greater levels of engagement and increased productivity. Establishing rules, standards, and expectations to include sanctions, according to Coleman (1988), are used to assist with the guidance and control of individual behavior. In essence, they are used in relationships to foster certain action and to constrain others and must be monitored in so much as they can inhibit innovation that could benefit the social group, organization or community. Supporting Coleman's (1990) views regarding social capital theories, Opfer and Denmark (2001), indicated that the following three conditions must be met to ensure cohesiveness exists between the building of community and social capital: "a high degree of closure in the relationships among different kinds of actors in the school, stability among the actors in the school, and group norms that reinforce the public-good aspect of the school" (p.104).

Four frames have been identified by Bolman and Deal (1977) that illustrate varying approaches that leaders use when addressing organizational needs. Effective leaders are able to move within frames to address situations impacting the organization (Bolman & Deal, 1977). Referred to as reframing and situational in context, the leader's ability in identifying as well as making good use of a particular frame best fitting a given situation, allows for greater potential for effective decision making (Belenardo, 2001). Each frame centers upon a particular lens through which the leader can view various organizational structures. Framing constitutes the makeup of an organization's culture. Expanding upon the perspectives of organizational culture,

Evans (1996) stated “Organizational culture is both product and process, effect and cause. Once established, it not only shapes people’s behavior, perception, and understanding of events, it provides the template for organizational learning” (p.44).

The symbolic frame is a lens to view the accepted culture of the organization that may include traditions, expectations, rituals and routines and ceremonies. Ubben, Hughes, and Norris (2003) contended that “values shape the direction of leadership, provide the distinctive character of that leadership and determine the passion that influences others to follow” (p.6). Leaders maintain responsibility for the maintenance, support and continuity of culture during decision-making processes which directly impacts the levels of collaboration in schools. This responsibility extends to ensuring structures are in place to support teacher motivation and affirmation. Deal and Peterson (1990) asserted that meanings are derived by the assumptions and beliefs that characterize events overtime. Understanding comes from the interpretation of symbolic information and through actions that evidence their intent. Schein (1992) addressed the concept of culture from a problem solving lens indicating that meanings and understandings come from those assumptions that have been tested overtime and considered valid enough to be shared and taught to others.

Schein (1999) further indicated that culture is represented by the accumulation of learning by a group. This includes an organization’s orientation with thinking, processing of information and the manner in which member perceptions of success correlate to practice. The human resource frame stresses upon the responsibility of the leader to influence or mold the organization through individuals having expertise in given areas. Central to Bolman and Deal’s (1990) framework is the consideration that the human resource frame serves as the fulcrum of the organization. Individuals within educational organizations must recognize and understand

the purpose and inherent role of their careers under the overarching premise of instructional leadership (Ubben, Hughes & Norris, 2003). Additionally, leaders who make good use the behavioral components in supervision are more able to foster increased motivation and commitment of subordinates (Fidler, 1997).

The structural frame centers upon the awareness of the leader to manage the organizational relationships existing within the organization. These relationships are reflective of the formal and informal lines of communication and established levels of hierarchy that exist within the organization.

The political frame provides a lens through which a leader can view subordinate competition for resources and power and uses this understanding as an avenue to build coalition within the organization. Clearly, administrators, whether viewed as leaders or managers given the nature of each frame and given the situation and subsequent responsibility of action, are faced with issues related to efficiency. Despite the relational patterns that these four orientations maintain, individuals in managerial positions often relying on the use of one or two frames should rely on all four in order to become extremely effective leaders (Bolman and Deal, 1991a).

Given the recent context of school improvement as reinforced by the structures supporting components of the professional learning communities, social capital enhances development of human capital through processes supporting self-efficacy. Distinctive social contexts in professional learning communities facilitate opportunities that enable individuals to regularly interact, observe and learn from quality role models, experiment, reflect, and use creative individual capacities. These opportunities, in turn foster greater levels of efficacy.

Successful promotion of efficacy relies upon the degree of closure within a given social structure. Coleman (1988) refers to closure as the degree of interconnectedness that members

maintain. Closed systems are fully interconnected, whereby trust and the development of norms, expectations and commitments are shared and maintained. Closed systems also promote strength within the social structure, enhancing unity of purpose, direction, and cohesion. Although open systems have gaps in their interconnectedness, they do allow for external information to enter the social structure, providing educators with information that could be considered as vital to their practice. The degree to which closed systems can provide avenues for external information to be sought and used is in direct relation to those formal agreements maintained by all constituents. The strength of these formal agreements is reinforced by factors such as emotional intensity, member confidence, time and reciprocal action which collectively aid in defining purpose and scope of the relationship (Granovetter, 1973). The importance of social relations in schools has been widely accepted as a critical component to school improvement (Bossert, 1988, Purkey & Smith, 1983; Rosenholtz, 1989).

Furthermore, Schwahn and Spady (2002) provided a model characterizing the nature of leadership through leadership behaviors. In general, this model typified effective leaders adopting particular behaviors that will support the collective response to organizational challenges such that all members can contribute toward obtaining desired results. The depth of collegiality that exists within the social networks is pivotal for improving academic performance. These networks may be enhanced by support systems embedded within the school in order to assist with the collaboration of all organizational members to include external personnel. In addition, structures can ensure that staff development is viable, targeted and oriented toward overall changes which are deemed appropriate for increased student success. A review of literature by Rosenholtz (1986) and Elmore (2000) affirmed that substantial improvement in academic performance will not occur if the supports for collegiality and staff development are

not focused and directed toward instructional practice that reinforces a targeted direction. The context of school improvement change, as Rosenholtz refers to the word, can be further defined as vision. Kotter (1999) affirmed that a lack of vision contributes to the dismantling of efforts aimed to effectively transform an organization. Failing efforts cause misdirection with the intent of goals, programs and subsequent plans. Rowan (1990) suggested that “higher levels of commitment and satisfaction” (p.373) occur when teachers become involved in comprehensive roles, allowing them to gain knowledge and have subsequent problem-solving capacity through organizational networks.

### *Leadership*

Research continues to define leadership. Numerous authors continue to strive in developing frameworks that assist with redefining leadership. Reflecting on leadership function, Hargreaves and Fink (2006) offered that “Sustainable educational leadership and improvement preserves and develops deep learning for all that spreads and lasts, in ways that do no harm to and indeed create positive benefits for others around us, now and in the future” (p.17).

Studies have also alluded to the interrelatedness that is shared between leadership and leadership theories. An assortment of organizational theories exists to describe the conceptualizations specific to “organization,” as framed by those individuals serving in the capacity of managers, administrators, and or leaders (Bolman & Deal, 1997). Researchers, such as Bennis and Nanus (1989) and Owens (1995), have been instrumental in identifying attributes that help to uniquely define leadership. Robert Owens (1995) contended that leadership is achieving organizational goals from the results of working through others. Bennis and Nanus (1989) viewed leadership as the central element which drives and empowers workers and which

will ultimately prescribe success or failure within an organization. As Hogan, Curphy, and Hogan (1994) stated:

Leadership is persuasion, not domination; persons who can require others to do their bidding because of their power are not leaders. Leadership only occurs when others willingly adopt, for a period of time, the goals of a group as their own. Thus, leadership concerns building cohesive and goal-oriented teams; there is a causal and definitional link between leadership and team performance. (p.493)

The onset of the 20<sup>th</sup> century exemplified leadership as being centralized with hierarchical controls. From this venue, research was typically centered upon leader characteristics and became the framework which generated a new focus on this subject known as leadership trait theory. Additionally, through the 1960s the focus on leadership began to reveal the concept of style as being linked to the relational influence that leaders could establish and maintain with individuals through the development of a shared vision (Rost, 1991). In a review of extant literature, leadership definitions generally typify an area of focus. Burns (1978) provided example of this focus by defining leadership as a “reciprocal process of mobilizing by persons with certain motives and values, various economic, political and other resources, in a context of competition and conflict, in order to realize goals independently or mutually held by both leaders and followers” (p.425). Deming (1986) and Senge (1990) referred to leadership as a process of establishing a clear vision. Vital to successful school leadership is the ability of campus leaders to express and evidence in practice, a philosophy that centers activities, strategies and processes toward inherent goals. Often considered as an intangible construct, school leaders must be willing to take necessary steps toward demystifying time worn perceptions of vision such that all members of the organization have a clear and concise understanding of the schools’ purpose and



evolving direction. Portrayed as a quality of leadership, Senge (1990) asserted that managing involves those activities that focus decision-making through a process that guides planning, directing, and controlling. Furthermore, from an organizational perspective, Senge (1990) points out that organizational leadership, realizing each organization's purpose may be different, is the compilation of various capacities of personal mastery. Broader in context, systems thinking recognizes salient patterns and interrelationships and attempts to establish and maintain those relationships in more efficient and productive ways (Senge & Lannon-Kim, 1991). Gardner (1981) provides additional support for member engagement by stating:

In the case of an organization, much depends on the nature of the assets and commitments. Every manager of a large-scale enterprise knows the difference between the kinds of organizational commitment that limit freedom of action and the kinds that permit flexibility and easy changes of direction. But few understand how essential flexibility is for continuous renewal. (p.52)

Extending upon Senge and Lannon-Kim's position, Margaret Wheatley (1992) stated:

Innovation is fostered by information gathered from new connections; from insights gained by journeys into other disciplines or places; from active, collegial networks and fluid, open boundaries. Innovation arises from ongoing circles of exchange, where information is not just accumulated or stored, but created. Knowledge is generated anew from connections that weren't there before. When this information self-organizes, innovations occur, the progeny of information-rich, ambiguous environments. (p.113)

Similar to systems, organizations, each composed of salient characteristics, are alleged to function as interconnected webs (McRel, 2001). Fullan (2004), in sharing Senge's position of systems thinking offered the following:

Systems thinking means not only the individuals of the organization can appreciate and take into account the larger system but also that individuals and organizations can be engaged with others outside themselves in order to change the very system that surrounds them. (p.43)

Senge and Lannon-Kim (1991) affirm that organizational leadership is supported by the development of a shared vision, where each individual maintains responsibility for contribution and realization of common goals. In this context, Stolp and Smith (1994) affirm that the effectiveness of school organizational leadership is defined by its organizational culture and is directly influenced by historical associations. These associations include structures within schools that seek to provide purposeful meaning through traditions, values, and beliefs. Furthermore, Senge and Lannon-Kim (1991) affirm that systems thinking is a blending of systems thinking theory and associated conceptions. These conceptions are not viewed as individual steps or processes but more of interrelated disciplines or webs which involve constructing a shared vision, establishing and effectively working within mental constructs or models, team-learning, and personal mastery. The intent is that these elements will undergird and sustain capacity and assist in binding the institution together. Hence, with the recent influence and pressure of the current political landscape to improve performance and accountability in schools, educational leaders at all levels may find it advantageous to alter their overarching conceptions of vision, such that all members within the community maintain a connection and personal commitment to reaching such mandates for sustained improvement. Such visionary leadership serves to support the efforts of all members of an organization and ensures, along with effective decision making that structures are in place to improve academic performance. Further addressing organizational theory, Margaret Wheatly (1992) stated, “They

[organizations] have capacities for generating and absorbing, for feedback, for self-regulation. In fact information is an organization's primary source of nourishment; it is so vital to survival that its absence creates a strong vacuum" (p.107).

Citing several authors, Charlotte Danielson, author of *Enhancing Student Achievement* (2002), provided the following review of research to serve as a backdrop for the overarching perceptions involving educational leadership:

- All members of the school are responsible of helping students learn because they share a belief that all students possess the capacity to learn (Rosenholtz, 1985; Edmonds, 1984).
- Nanus (1992) has argued that vision is the key to effective leadership.
- According to Corcoran, Fuhrman, and Belcher (2001), developing school capacity requires strong leadership.
- Administrators will improve school performance by maintaining a focus on core instruction as well as on other aspects of the school program, such as scheduling, grading, grouping of students, and establishing a sense of community within the school (Newmann, Rutter, & Smith, 1989).
- Cohen, Raudenbush, and Loewenberg-Ball (2000) have pointed out that "Coordinating teaching and learning is less difficult in environments with coherent organization and learning is less difficult in environments with coherent organization and guidance for instruction and more difficult in those that lack coherence" (p.13).
- Unfortunately, consensus, collaboration, and cooperation between teachers and administrators are rarely found in schools (Barth, 1990).
- When administrators don't understand the nuances of school-improvement efforts, effective instructional practices, and professional community building, school reform

efforts fail (Conti, Ellsasser, & Griffin, 2000).

- Teachers who use their knowledge to solve school problems collaboratively tend to be particularly satisfied with and committed to their jobs. Reflection, dialogue, and inquiry can enhance teachers' collaborative efforts by helping them identify and resolve common challenges. Teachers who work collaboratively with peers, administrators, parents, and community members are better able to transform practice and thereby improve both their professional practice and student learning (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999).
- According to Fullan (2000), teachers demonstrate leadership by developing practices that move away from the undesirable norms, such as teaching in isolation and teaching as technical work.
- Teacher's roles must be developed in a way that changes the internal conditions of schools to better deal with problems associated with teaching and learning (Conti, Ellsasser, & Griffin, 2000). (p.26-27)

### *Teacher Leadership*

Katzenmeyer and Moeller (2001) reaffirm the essence of teacher leadership, situating it within an historical lens that characterizes its limited use. They stated,

Within every school there is a sleeping giant of teacher leadership, which can be a strong catalyst for making change. By using the energy of teacher leaders as agents of school change, the reform of public education will stand a better chance of building momentum. (p.2)

Within the changing backdrop of educational reform, teacher leadership continues to be an elusive concept, bearing long-term associations that have positioned traditional hierarchical school leadership responsibilities with the principal. Formal authority and power have long been

associated with bureaucratic conceptions of school leadership and subsequent roles through which leaders use their authority and power to enforce them. “Bureaucratic structure and administration are designed to recognize problems, to treat incoming questions and issues in a systematic way that will draw upon the minimum of human and material resources” (Hanson, 2003, p.17). The impact of escalating demands for responsibility within NCLB to include high stakes testing continues to pressure school leaders to realize their need in finding more effective organizational behaviors that rely on the leadership capacities of all stakeholders, most importantly teachers.

In a review of organizational theory, Hanson (2003) earmarks three key tenets that support the general views of Weber, a social theorist who provided significant information on bureaucratic systems. These tenets denote that hierarchical systems are characterized by an individual held responsible for subordinate actions; actions by subordinates are bound by organization rules aimed to support consistency and standardization; and that efficiency of task performance is greater supported when subordinates specialize their skills in given area. His view characterizes bureaucracy as an organizational structure portraying authority as a cogent behavior which subsequently allows for control and power based on knowledge. Disbursement of authority to include aspects of policy, processes and procedures that align with such authority is geared to controlling employee activity. This serves to capitalize opportunities in using the resourcefulness of human effort within the organization. Weber’s perspective fails to recognize recent attempts to legitimize the concept of authority as teacher leadership, whereby teacher expertise and creative approach to problem solving is viewed as an organizational value and norm, independent of long standing hierarchical structures. Teacher leadership is as diverse as the leadership conceptions typically associated with administrative positions.

Teachers are critical to reform efforts in that their skill and expertise are dynamic influences that can assist in effecting change. Teacher leadership has varying definitions. Teacher leadership can be thought of as skill sets employed by teachers who not only uphold their paramount responsibility of instruction, but extend expertise and experience to personnel throughout the entire school. Equally important is their ability to extend their expertise in order to mobilize, energize and engage others. This requires them to be well informed of the mission of the school, have learning as a priority focus and have knowledge of the procedural context needed to accomplish the mission. Teacher leaders are generally characterized by their ability to initiate and maintain open relationships not only with other teachers, but also with administration. Despite teacher-leaders lacking formal authority, their ability to communicate and establish collaborative discourse reinforces their potential for leadership roles (Donaldson, 2001).

An essential task of educational leaders, primarily the principal, is to facilitate and empower teachers to make good use of innovative programs and structures that support the building of capacity and that generate results. Sergiovanni and Starratt (2000) stated, “The work of leadership involves building, in partnership with teacher leaders, a critical mass of teachers who feel collectively empowered to engage in the slow but exciting work of transforming the school into an environment that promotes quality learning of all students” (p.159).

Despite reform efforts, the underlying influence of hierarchical organizational design continues to influence employee values, creativity, and individual expertise such that organizational behavior is considered more as a required level of compliance than a more rewarding and contributing effort of personal commitment. From an historical lens, Copland (2003) maintained that efforts to promote educational reform were bound to hierarchical

leadership models. The role of leadership was restricted to identified members held responsible for decision making and to ensure compliance by subordinates. This traditional approach served well to interfere with recurring requests for improvement across American educational systems.

Hierarchical authority has been viewed as a vehicle that fosters a sense of false compliance and until educational systems critically face the importance of teacher leadership, there will not be a fundamental change to organizational approaches that promote and maintain sustained improvement. Upon successful reform efforts aimed to foster improved organizational capacities, educational systems will be better positioned to address concerted efforts to improve teacher performance, elevate the prestige and attractiveness of the educational profession and to better make use of resources and expertise needed for school improvement (Lieberman et al., 1988; Little, 1988; Smylie & Hart, 1995).

As part of the School Leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Initiative (2001), a report entitled: Leadership for Student Learning: Redefining the Teachers as Leader, task force members reaffirmed the apparent need for strategic transformational leadership for teachers in order to support fundamental and sustainable improvement. Characterizing the sentiment regarding improvement, the report, according to Gabriel (2005), stated:

Mischaracterized though they often are as incompetent know-nothings, teachers are, paradoxically, also widely viewed as...indispensable but unappreciated leaders in the truest meaning of the word. It would be difficult to find a more authentic but unacknowledged example of leadership in modern life. (p.1)

Although principals are traditionally considered as having administrative influence in the guidance and direction of school efforts towards accomplishing goals, the teacher's understanding, support and execution of such decisions will ultimately influence the organization

to move forward (Gabriel, 2005).

Teacher leadership, most commonly seen in roles such as department chairs, vertical or horizontal team leaders, peer coaches or mentors, traditionally has been viewed as merely having a semblance of authority and lacking the ability to make spontaneous and cohesive decisions that may positively impact organizational change and academic success. Despite these myopic viewpoints, schools that use transformational leadership distinguish and recognize these roles. Administrators should provide opportunities to better support individuals in such positions to improve upon their development while recognizing their contributions to their departments and school as a whole (Weller, 2001).

Despite that not all teachers have goals to be in leadership roles, organizational culture that reinforces transformational leadership fosters an environment where teachers collaborate and develop learning partnerships. Each partnership intends to invest and maintain efforts to sustain trust with each other to support improvement in academic achievement. Blasé and Blasé (2000) provide reference to the importance of trust when they affirmed that:

Without trust, people are likely to close up, to keep to themselves, to even close ranks and form cliques or special interest groups. Without trust issues are seldom discussed and never resolved. Without trust schools cannot improve and grow into the rich, nurturing, micro society needed by children and adults alike. (p. 23)

Teachers can encourage quality in a culture that appropriately engages them and properly equips them with leadership skills which in turn can effectively influence learning. Serving further, teachers can provide additional support to those strategies employed to effectively address greater involvement with school improvement (Childs-Bowen, Moller, & Scrivner, 2000).



### *Principal Leadership*

The role of the principal is an ever changing concept. Leaders in today's schools are pressed with a multitude of concerns that center upon frequent and rapid change and increased demands of accountability as well as the ambiguities that these changes foster. Much has been written to underscore the shift in organizational leadership structures in educational systems. Bennis and Goldsmith (1997) maintained that the traditional context of the principal as manager is no longer considered as an effective approach considering the recent changes in the educational landscape of school leadership. The increasing demands that have been placed on principals have assisted with the contouring of the position currently professed as "an instructional leader, initiator of change, school manager, personnel administrator, problem solver and boundary spanner" (Portin, Shen, & Williams, 1998, p.2). McEwan (2003), using the term educator to assert the relatedness of leadership with that of the typically accepted term instructional leader, echoes the sentiment of Portin, Shen and Williams by adding that "to be an educator also means to be a facilitator who is a change master, culture builder, envisioner and producer" (p.23). Within this shifting context, principals find themselves trying to balance both internal and external demands in a wavering educational landscape that also mandates instructional improvement. In a review of research on the attributes contributing to successful schools, Daresh and Playko (1997) found that the most critical variable allowing some schools more success than others is "the leadership behavior of the school principal" (p. xi). Effective principals that share leadership responsibility are better equipped to disperse the weight of such responsibility and are better positioned to build trust and shared teamwork (Barth, 1990; Blasé & Blasé, 2000; Fullan, 2001; Sergiovanni, 1992). "Today's schools require leadership that is empowering, that invites participation, and that is flexible and responsive to the realities of life"

(Bennis & Goldsmith, 1997, p.2). Having all stakeholders involved in purposeful activity is essential to building effective visions that reduce misunderstanding and marginalization of organizational members (Brown & Moffett, 1999).

Leadership provides guidance and direction for instructional improvement provided collective commitment from teachers and those in administrative positions is focused upon student learning. Improvement, according to Elmore (2000), is:

...change with direction, sustained over time, that moves entire systems, raising the average level of quality and performance while at the same time decreasing the variation among units, and engaging people in analysis and understanding of why some actions seem to work and others don't. (p.13)

Educational systems are perplexed by competing definitions of how schools are to be governed. Educational leaders are obligated to continually rethink and work within managerial, technical and institutional spheres that influence and frame decision-making which ultimately defines our schools (Murphy & Louis, 1995). Seen as an important historical backdrop of leadership capacity, Selznick (1957) used the term institutionalization to help frame the essence of school leadership. He provided the following description:

Institutionalization is a process. It is something that happens to an organization over time, reflecting the organization's own distinctive history, the people who have been it, the groups it embodies and the vested interests they have created, and the way it has adapted to its environment. The degree of institutionalization depends on how much leeway there is for personal and group interaction. The more precise an organization's goals and the more specialized and technical its operations, the less opportunity will there be for social forces to affect its development. (p. 16)

Moreover, Murphy and Louis (1995) provided examples of the recent concepts of leadership redesign during the 1990s which transmitted alternative images and assumptions of a core technology that:

(a) reflects an interdisciplinary vision, (b) features a curriculum that is more vertical and less horizontal, (c) highlights higher order thinking skills for all students, (d) spotlights the use of technology and original source documents in lieu of textbooks, (e) underscores the use of a broadened evaluation system that highlights authentic measures of assessment, and (f) pushes service learning ever closer to the center stage (p.xxiii).

Capturing the “emerging trends within the educational, organizational and institutional domains of schooling” provided broader definition to the context of school leadership (Murphy & Louis, 1995, p.xxii). Vital to the success and maintenance of educational organizations, their administrations, including but not limited to principals, is the current need to support the effective decision making capacities that serve as foundations for moral leadership (Kidder & Born, 2002). Expertise in decision making involves those individuals having a compilation of complex knowledge, skills and abilities which promote subsequent dependable applications to accomplish targeted goals. Furthermore, it involves having other experts within the field or practice validate such actions in order to maintain given standards within the profession (Leithwood & Steinbach, 1995).

Horine and Bass (1993) affirmed a greater awareness of need from organizations seeking to improve in order to establish themselves as quality organizations. This attention has promoted a more focused leadership paradigm essential to fostering inspiration and commitment from employees. Conceptualizations of moral leadership share numerous themes, linking the core of educational leadership responsibilities to that of the underpinnings of social justice,

transformative leadership practices and ethical frameworks that attempt to elicit critical response to an increasingly challenging educational environment. The relationship or unity between moral and educational leadership extends beyond the assumption that leader actions are aimed strictly to address benefits of the organization. Moral leadership acts as a “guidepost” for educational leaders to address critical problems that impact upon human welfare, including the social structures in schools. In a paper entitled *Moral leadership: Too much of a good thing*, Bruce Suttle (1993) citing Colby and Damon’s (1992) findings on the images of moral leadership, ascertained that moral leaders are characterized by five salient characteristics:

- they have a long-term commitment to moral ideals, including a general respect for humanity;
- they are scrupulous in their effort to use morally justifiable means to pursue their moral goals;
- they demonstrate a willingness to risk their own self-interest for the sake of their moral goals;
- they tend to inspire others;
- they possess a sense of perspective about themselves, centering on being humble. ( p.2)

Often viewed as a construct for policy development, moral leadership also seeks to deconstruct existing systems and processes, aiming to address the critical need to move beyond theoretical boundaries and ensure effective recommendations and practices are in place to effectuate purposeful and sustainable change in educational leadership.

Leadership has frequently been considered as a primary element altering the course of educational systems, which subsequently has changed the way educators perceive the role of decision makers at all levels. Reform efforts of the 1980s focused not only on content in

classrooms but also began to focus upon the overall aspects of school leadership. Two reports provide historical perspectives of early attempts to assess the quality of leadership in American schools. The Task Force for Economic Growth (1983) centered upon the need for “effective educational management” (p.40). Specifically addressing various distinguishing characteristics of school leaders, The National Commission of Excellence in Education (1984) noted in particular, the differences between managerial skills and leadership. Subsequent reform, such as the Education Opportunity Act of 1984 (also referred to as House Bill 72), aimed to improve school leadership practices by mandating school administrators acquire training to improve general management skills and more importantly, to enhance instructional leadership.

Historically, educational leadership organizations have been equated with structured, bureaucratic frameworks (Bacharach & Mundell, 1995). During the era of industrial expansion, school leadership adopted the general principles of the scientific management model. Owens (1998) references Fredrick W. Taylor, an industrial engineer, as being credited with developing the “principles of scientific management” which continue to have influence upon school leadership today. Taylor’s perspective regarding the influence of scientific approaches to management and leadership, as well illustrating a hierarchical relationship between school leadership and subordinates, involved four general principles. These principles centered upon the development of scientific methods and practices for accomplishing tasks, creation of appropriate goals to coordinate with productivity, employment of incentives and rewards for accomplishing stated goals, and provision of ongoing training to personnel aimed at sustaining goal achievement for long periods of time.

Over time, public interest began to question the ideals of the scientific management

model. Greater emphasis was placed on schools to be vehicles for democracy and in turn, importance was given to the ideals associated with establishing more inclusive relationship between leaders and followers. Leadership frameworks throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century have used tenets that have generally continued to reinforce authority vested in a single person, role oriented context. Educational systems began to include tenets from social perspectives that attempted to underpin organizational structures to allow leadership capacity or capital to be used as an investment in securing a more professional, inclusive relationship.

In light of school improvement and associated accountability efforts and changes in instructional leadership practices aimed to promote student achievement and increasing sustainability, social and human capital reinforces a view in which school leadership is considered as an organizational property, shared among all constituents (Smylie & Hart 1995). The concept of leadership as an organizational property extends from active principal leadership intended to foster leadership capacity in others. Hence, principal responsibility for creating capacity must provide avenues through which social capital develops human capital. Youngs and King (2002) provided the following description of capacity in organizations:

An institution's capacity incorporates effective use of skills, knowledge, and disposition of individuals within its organization. Individual teacher influence can have tremendous impact on the organizational structures within a campus. Teacher competence, along with the impact of their skills, knowledge and disposition on academic performance has been noted in literature (Kennedy, 1998; Cohen & Hill, 1998; Ferguson, 1991, Darling-Hammond, 1998). Teacher competence must be exercised in an organized collective enterprise. (p.646)

School leadership must therefore, be distributed throughout the school, allowing for individuals

to assist in cultivating an interactive process that supports the organization, its processes and its goals. “Leadership becomes participative and inclusive. It is spread throughout the social system of the school, fostering collective responsibility, mutual trust and obligations, and joint accountability” (Smylie & Hart, 1995, p.435). Typically viewed as a product of the 1980s reform movement, school-based decision making brought further change to leadership roles associated with the principal. School systems found themselves having to address their use of centralized school governance and controls, since each was contributing to inefficiency and were ultimately prohibiting change that was mandated at the school level to address inadequate curricula, low levels of student achievement, and minimal graduation requirements.

Early studies by Cohen, McLaughlin, and Talbert (1993) and Little and McLaughlin (1993b) as cited in Smylie and Hart (1995), defined professional learning communities as having three dimensions of teacher social structure and interaction: “(a) relational intensity between teachers as related to professional practice and commitment, (b) inclusiveness of teachers’ collegial groups, (c) orientation, values, and depth of expertise concerning children, teaching and learning” (p.427). McLaughlin (1993) provided the following characteristics regarding professional community which are differentiated by having either high or low professional community. High professional community schools were characterized as having a “high level of innovativeness, high levels of energy and enthusiasm, and support for personal growth and learning” (as cited by Smylie & Hart, p.427). In schools with low professional community, teachers were characterized as having “strong norms of privacy” and “were less likely to innovate and find support for their own learning” (as cited by Smylie & Hart, p.427).

Additional characteristics that McLaughlin (1993) used to distinguish high and low community levels included “a shared focus on student learning; norms of collective

responsibility, mutual support, and obligation for teachers' practice and student learning; and high levels of professional, normative social controls" (as cited by Smylie & Hart, 1995, p.427). A critical point that underscores the concept of this professional relationship is the influence of social capital. The extent to which social capital influences relationships may vary for different teacher groups within schools.

### *Leadership Style*

Clearly, the roles and responsibilities have changed overtime for principals. Principals continually face a myriad of expanded responsibilities requiring them to maintain an extensive repertoire of skills and knowledge that are coupled with various leadership capacities or styles. From a traditional perspective, school leadership has been viewed as merely the day to day managing within a school. Moving from this context to fostering deeper change and transformation requires progressive efforts to redirect the philosophy of professional development for administrators. Reform required for sustained improvement requires that educational systems must be cognizant of those structures that will foster a formal change in leadership focus and ultimately provide foundations whereby schools can operate with more of a strategic-systemic approach, which stresses substance over technique. Evans (1996) stated:

Probably the most important flaws in traditional approaches to leadership are found in the excessive reliance on leadership style. Despite its apparent appeal, it ignores vital psychological realities. It can produce some success in individual encounters, but it is a weak foundation for the challenge of leading a group, especially when that group is being asked to implement sweeping change. (p.164)

To a great extent, literature suggests the primary function of transformational leadership is to bring forth progress with targeted orientations supporting overall educational reform.



Reinforcing change as a sustainable product results from leadership direction and guidance that infuses personal and professional collaboration, thereby fostering collective demands for committed relationships (Kotter & Cohen, 2002).

An abundance of significant literature orients the development of transformational leadership theory to James Burns (1978), whose initial research centered upon political leaders. He stated in his book, *Leadership* (1978) that transformational leadership emerges when “...leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation” (p. 20). Furthering this concept, he maintained that this style of leadership involves specific actions that center upon caring, inspiring and persuading others to act similarly in support of common goals which reflect organizational values and expectations. To the extent that these efforts afford success depends directly upon the extent that organizational members act upon personal and shared beliefs.

Moreover, Bass (1985) affirmed increased leader effect on subordinate personnel is contributive to transformation by sustaining them in activities that support goal setting and inspiring others to set aside personal needs and interests on behalf of the organization. Day (2000) indicated transformational leaders are effective change agents, actively managing the internal and external demands through efficient decision-making capacities. They are typically focused on achievement, values-based and utilize their skills to manage the tensions that accompany situations requiring change. Effective transformational leaders make good use of their skills in the area of managing change by supporting alternatives with social and cultural constructs that yield integrity, vision and which share the critical values and subsequent structures within their schools (Day, 2000). Central to current reform efforts is the effective use of transformational leadership to guide aspects of teaching and learning.

Transformational leaders are generally considered change agents in that they continually challenge the status quo, seeking to look beyond immediacy and strive to make effective decisions based on long-term goals and needs of their organizations (Leithwood, 1992; Starratt, 1995; Wilmore and Thomas, 2001). Covey (1989) affirmed that transformational leaders think and initiate action with the end in mind. Individuals having high levels of admiration, trust, respect and loyalty for their leader are inclined to accomplish more than they were initially anticipated to achieve (Bass, 1985). These leaders attempt to inspire the intrinsic motivation of others such that substantive change can occur. These attempts are characterized initially by efforts to develop collegial relationships among organizational members. Efforts aim to reinforce and acknowledge the importance of shared practices. Murphy (2002) affirmed that educational leaders must maintain focus on organizational core values that are just and that sustain fairness. Coherence of moral stewardship or reasoning with transformational leadership structures allows leaders to cultivate constructive levels of participation from all members of the learning community. From this coherence, Graham (1995) proffered the existence of an ethically elevating climate that frees participants from the need to guard self interest without regard to cost of others (in the manner of pre-conventional morality), or to subordinate self-interest entirely to groups interests of organizational goals (as is possible with conventional morality). Instead, participants encouraged by... [transformational] leaders, are responsible both for informing others of their own needs and interests, and for inquiring about those of others— the object being to serve in a balanced way all those needs and interests that do not violate moral injunction such as not harming others [in the manner of post-conventional morality]. The role of the transforming...leader is to envision, espouse, facilitate, and model this process. (p.48)

In view of transformational change processes, the focal point of effective transformational leadership centers upon the interrogation of traditionally accepted perceptions, policies, practices and understandings. These understandings are dependent upon reasoning processes that allow for the mutual respect of the values, beliefs and contributions of others (Grundstein-Amado, 1999). Jones and Bearley (1996) affirmed that effective leaders are concerned with creating environments that foster growth, creative thinking and increased productivity from subordinates. According to Kirby, Paradise and King (1995), “transformational leadership is development oriented for the purpose of change. The leader’s focus on the individual development of subordinates enhances their performance which in turn, leads to organizational growth” (p.303). Effective leadership allows for strategic decision-making that underpin organizational core values which are shared with all stakeholders of the organization (Kelleher, 2002; Kidder & Born, 2002). Green Bay Packers coach, Vince Lombardi, stated that “individual commitment to a group effort is what makes a team work, a company work, a civilization work” (as cited in Phillips, 2002, p.24). Within the context of leadership styles and the establishment of relationships, Burns (1978) made the following distinction between transformational and transactional leaders:

Most relationships between leaders and followers are initially established through transactional behaviors. These behaviors center upon the ‘exchange of one thing for another.’ Relationships established within a transformational orientation seek to understand the motives of followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower. (p.4)

Leithwood (1992) identified transformational leadership as having the capacity to influence followers and create change. Such leadership attempts to assure displacement of individual

interests and fosters a greater acceptance of core values which promote shared encouragement and support given to followers (Burns, 1978).

As evidenced through empirical research, Avolio and Bass (2004) indicated that transformational leadership enhances transactional leadership behaviors via five factors: (a) idealized influence (also referred to as attributed charisma), (b) idealized influence (also referred to as behavioral charisma), (c) inspirational motivation (d) intellectual stimulation and (e) individualized consideration. Idealized influence draws from the way in which subordinates perceive their leader. Inspirational motivation addresses the way in which the leader articulates critical factors that support common goals. A leaders' intellectual stimulation involves one's capacity to support colleagues in addressing their own beliefs to include the leaders' beliefs as they relate to solving problems and the manner in which decisions are made. Individualized consideration is the leaders' ability to better understand the positions of subordinates and their needs as well as provide support toward maximizing their development and potential. The essence of the leaders' ability to employ these traits directly impacts upon the fundamental nature and characterization of the organizations' culture, its shared beliefs, goals, sense of community and cooperation, and its core set of values. In addition, Gibson and Pason (2003) stated,

The most difficult challenge for leadership programs is not the development of specific skills, such as interpersonal communication, delegation, and conflict management.

Rather, it is the cultivation of attitudes and ethical codes that allows for the proper application of the common skills and talents developed by leadership programs. (p.23)

Central to transformational leadership is the requirement that those in leadership positions have the ability and insight to recognize the need for change (Handy, 1995). Furthermore, Handy

(1995) asserted greater complication in making changes exists when stated changes conflict with the established norms, beliefs and general assumptions of the organization. Given this, leaders must deeply understand their role as leader in order to effectively sustain the culture of the organization. House and Singh (1987) affirmed that routines are established more effectively when their organizations maintain collegial efforts in maintaining a focused vision and where leadership recognizes subordinate interest and efforts. According to Schein (1990), the underlying beliefs and relationships between people within an organization help to define the organization's culture. This can be a critical factor when the organization is facing substantive change. Changes in membership and in procedural aspects within organizational structures challenge cultural awareness and transparency. Schein (1990) provided the following eight factors that are critical to reinforcing culture:

- Communication: Norms reflect open discourse where values are communicated with levels of praise and where criticism is constructive.
- Reaction to crisis: Responses of the leader act to reinforce the development of organizational assumptions.
- Modeling: Actions are reflective of organizational values and beliefs. Actions underpinning the tenets that support organizational loyalty, unselfishness, and service positively promote the organizational assumptions. A leader who professes a value but fails in its application negatively impacts upon its value and purpose.
- Celebrations: The approach in which an organization awards exceptional performance reflects upon the values of its members.
- Selection, Promotion, and Dismissal of Employees: Leaders influence organizational culture through the implementation of processes and standards specific to the recruitment,

selection, promotion, and dismissal of employees.

- Policy and Procedures: Formal operational procedures are used to govern the organization and determine levels of autonomy and control and foster an understanding of order within the organization.
- Organizational Hierarchy within an organization is defined by both formal and informal lines of communication.
- Stories, Legends and Myths: Information about the organization's members and their experiences allow for the promotion of values and assumptions which aids in shaping culture. (p.109-117)

Leadership when considering the role of the principal in a standards-based environment, demands establishing instructional improvement practices that are more focused than other conceptions of school leadership. Similar to transformational leadership, instructional leadership uniquely implies that a direct focus of guiding instructional and academic improvement exists and ascertains that large scale improvement is determined by the distribution of expertise throughout the organization. Elmore (2000) defined distributive leadership as

... multiple sources of guidance and direction, following the contours of expertise in an organization, made coherent through a common culture. It is the “glue” of a common task or goal—improvement of instruction— and a common frame of values for how to approach that task—culture—that keeps distributed leadership from becoming another version of loose coupling. (p.15)

Elmore (2000) further stated “Improvement at scale is largely a property of organizations, not of the pre-existing traits of the individuals who work in them. Improvement occurs through organized social learning, not through the idiosyncratic experimentation and discovery of

variously talented individuals” (p.25). Elmore continued with his thoughts of different avenues of thinking in this regard:

The question is whether other school systems, operating in an environment of increased attention to student performance and quality of instruction, will discover that they need to learn not just different ways of doing things, but very different ways of thinking about the purposes of their work, and the skills and knowledge that go with those purposes. (p.35)

Distributive leadership, while focusing on instruction as a priority goal for sustained academic improvement, seeks to reinforce an institutional design that manages and organizes action such that at all levels, both campus and central office, work towards capacity building and extraordinary leadership. The principal’s ability to acquire moral purpose regarding learning and subsequently allocate leadership to teachers, establishes the climate for collaborative learning and increased academic performance (Conzemius & O’Neill, 2001; Fullan, 2001; Lambert, 2003). From this lens, distributive leadership and instructional leadership are interchangeable provided coherence exists to support instructional frameworks aimed to sustain academic improvement.

### *Professional Learning Communities*

Principals are now enduring increased accountability for student achievement due to the mandates of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Kaplan’s (2005) review of educational research of the last 20 years indicated that schools maintaining success have leaders who are vibrant, focused and knowledgeable. Their success in part, is associated with conceptual changes associated with leadership roles, primarily with the principal. Successful leaders are equipped to shift the importance of traditional duties associated with managerial tasks to the principal actively providing an atmosphere in which they create, in association with teachers, a

community of learners where all efforts capitalize upon learning opportunities for all students. Hargreaves and Fink (2003) contended that leadership was not individually focused but more on the connections made possible through professional relationships and the purposeful networking with others. From a broader lens, concepts of school leadership capacity include elements of individual competence, professional community, coherence of instructional programs, availability of resources to support instruction, including innovative approaches and effective leadership. Hausman and Goldring (2001), citing several researchers, provided four critical attributes that exemplify schools being communal or shared organizations:

- (a) shared values among organizational members that contain the “norms of schooling” (Bird & Warren-Little, 1986), (b) a common set of events that promote face to face interactions and social connections between school participants (Driscoll, 1995), (c) enhanced collegiality and collaboration among stakeholders in the school (Bryk & Driscoll, 1998), and (d) a greater commitment to the school and its decisions. (p.31)

Together, these definitions affirm the essence of efficacy through an established shared vision for the success of the organization or as commonly referred professional learning community.

Community of learners, otherwise referred to as purposeful community or intentional community, has recently become the buzz word of educational systems today. These terms, along with their associations to approaches used by leaders to secure collegiality and commitment, serve to underpin the conceptual orientations for reform efforts. Wagner (2002) provided further reference to its community origins:

Historically, most communities were created by accident. They were usually the result of some physical proximity or immediate shared need. Sometimes they furthered the goals, growth and development of their members; sometimes they didn't –as any long-time



resident of a small town will tell you. By contrast, an ‘intentional community’ is created for a purpose. In fact, the term ‘intentional community’ was first widely used to describe efforts of the nineteenth-century utopians to create communities whose goal was the intellectual and spiritual growth of its members. (p.148-149)

Learning is maintained as the essential focus within the professional community. The focus upon learning becomes intentional and routine for the organization and subsequently becomes habitual for the students (Louis & Kruse, 1997; Morgan, 1997; Senge, 1990). “The collective power of an entire faculty to strengthen student performance throughout their school can be summarized as school organizational capacity” (Youngs & King, 2002, p.645). Organizational capacity, according to Britton (1996) can be referred to as “pedagogy of engagement” (p.99). The implication suggests that each individual within the learning community contributes to the sharing of knowledge in an atmosphere that promotes sincere discourse. Although varied acceptance of “professional community” as a term exists in literature, an overall recognition exists that schools characterized as having high levels of community have higher organizational capacities which in turn, yield greater student achievement. Youngs and King (2002) contend that professional community is characterized by: “(a) shared goals for student learning; (b) meaningful collaboration among faculty members; (c) in depth inquiry into assumptions, evidence, and alternative solutions to problems; and (d) opportunities for teachers to exert influence over their work” (p.646). Additionally, Williams (2006) maintained that:

Leadership within a professional learning community requires that principals: a) accept and promote teacher competence by providing teachers with opportunities to lead; (b) deviate from the hierarchical model in matters related to teaching and learning, and most

importantly, c) maintain the school's social legitimacy by focusing staff efforts on the improvements of student learning. (p.4)

Reinhartz and Beach (2004) stated that "there is no recipe for developing a sense of learning community" (p.32). Efforts in building a learning community can be supported when an accurate and compelling vision for the campus exists, when staff members share common values, when personnel appropriately face conflicts, and when routines emulate core values (Reinhartz & Beach, 2004). Unique to establishing relationships, is the educational leader's ability to adjust their own leadership style to initiate and reinforce the philosophy of collaboration. Ogawa and Bossert (2000) contend that many schools continue to operate within the hierarchical management perspective, influenced by systemic processes which continue to be based upon technical-rational perspectives. Continued reliance on hierarchical systems promotes principal hesitancy in relinquishing authority to allow for greater levels of autonomy and collaborative processes (Jackson, 2000). Although various factors influence a leader's approach in the initiation and development of relationships, the significant and most impacting influence is use of the conception of community, whereby all members of the organization are considered effective contributors to achieving sustained academic improvement. Critical to this concept is its orientation to campus level improvement efforts directed specifically in the area of instruction.

Lambert (2003) clearly illustrated the foundation of the relationship between leadership and learning within a professional learning community by stating,

Leading and learning are deeply intertwined, and we need to regard each other as worthy of attention, caring and involvement if we are to learn together. Indeed, leadership can be understood as reciprocal, purposeful learning in a community. Reciprocity helps us build

relationships of mutual regard, thereby enabling us to become colearners. And as colearners we are also coteachers, engaging each other through our teaching and learning approaches. (p.2)

Kugelmass (2000) affirmed that school administrators can share the responsibility and role of creating a “culture of success... (among all members of the organization by)...providing staff development opportunities to empower teachers to create new organizational structures and encourage collaboration and...innovation” (p.26). Echoing The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future’s report (1996), Ingersoll and Alsalam (1997) stated:

The assumption is that achieving a professional-level mastery of the complex skills and knowledge required of a profession is a prolonged and continuous process of learning. Moreover, in addition to upgrading, this view holds that professionals must continually update their skills with advances in their field (as cited in Hausman & Goldring, 2001 p.35).

Unity within a professional learning community can be somewhat subjective. Strike (1999) emphasized that membership is generally declared through a personal identification with trust, constancy, feelings of acceptance and belonging, ownership and sense of loyalty. He further purported that individuals within the learning community including administrators, are held accountable for instruction. Shared levels of responsibility among members can influence the connectedness within an organization. The degree of relational congruence within the learning community to support a common vision and goals for sustained academic improvement is directly tied to structures that prioritize student learning. Leithwood’s et al. (2004) review of The Wallace Foundation’s Study, entitled *How Leadership Influences Student Learning*, contended that the two most critical factors related to student achievement involve high quality

teacher performance and leadership. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2003), in its policy statement entitled, "What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do," affirmed that,

Accomplished teachers contribute to the effectiveness of the school by working collaboratively with other professionals on instructional policy, curriculum development and staff development. They can evaluate school progress and the allocation of school resources in light of their understanding of state and local educational objectives. They are knowledgeable about specialized school and community resources that can be engaged for their students' benefit, and are skilled at employing such resources as needed. (p.4)

Central to the focus of professional learning communities (PLC's) is the belief and understanding through which members are considered as having shared levels of accountability. Responsibility is shared for academic improvement such that all members continually seek and share learning as a basis of decision making and subsequent action. "Forming a community of learners for teachers is a powerful strategy for enhancing teacher commitment" (Hausman & Goldring, 2001, p.44). This belief is evidenced through continued inquiry, collaboration, and consensus, together aimed to support academic improvement within schools. Educational systems that maintain high levels of leadership capacity are learning communities that stress leadership involvement from all members, effective learning for all students and maintain professional frameworks that allow for cohesive actions such as teaming, reflective dialogue and planning that involves the use of data to support decision making. Through such collaboration, members build upon shared knowledge foundations which directly support possibilities to enhance the school's vision. Barth (2006) noted that the quality of adult relationships is the most

influencing factor impacting the general character of a school, to include its academic achievement by students. These relationships assist in defining school culture and are responsible for the degree to which enrichment supports collegial interaction. The learning that typifies a professional learning community is intentional and deliberate, fostering a cohesive environment whereby all educators seek to improve effectiveness in their skill to increase academic achievement.

### *The Role of the Principal*

Sole responsibility for student success has been traditionally assigned to the campus principal. The vision and expectations for success are directly tied to principal's ability to effectively lead. Covey (2004) related leadership to the building of an atmosphere where people desire being a more inclusive, integral part of the organization. Principals must ensure that frameworks are established to support the development and maintenance of leadership capacity across the organization. Consideration should be given to principals examining their personal belief systems, subsequently identifying the essential elements which further support and steer their ideas. Equally important is the personal examination of decisions which will impact school leadership over time. Senge (1990) asserted that members of an organization possess at varying times, predominant images of their organization's future. He further noted that the images, overtime, will evolve and change. These images reflect upon the nature in which individuals actively participate in purposeful work. As an example, members taking part in decision making practices indicates a transparent value of shared authority (Weasmer & Woods, 1999). Moreover, principals must continually examine the multiple issues contributing to the academic performance of all students. Maintaining a high performing learning culture is critical for teacher and student success. Principals are held accountable for creating a sustainable

environment that promotes effective teaching and productive learning (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2003). Focus must be maintained on the language of learning such that expectations for instruction are understood and acted upon. Discussion related to student performance data, subsequent goal setting and instructional integrity must permeate the campus and be respected through collegial efforts to secure opportunities for academic improvement. Curriculum, data gathering and analysis, effective professional development and practices of monitoring within the campus need to be frequently reviewed by all stakeholders in an environment that supports a culture of trust. In her book, *10 Traits of Highly Effective Principals*, McEwan (2003) provided a perspective of leadership of Alan Jones, principal of 17 years at Community high school in West Chicago, Illinois. He stated:

Too often, school leaders adopt a new program and then immediately go back to the: ...buses, budgets, and boilers. But rarely is a program completely understood by staff members at the outset. That is not to say they aren't on board or eager to participate, but frequently they simply do not have a complete conceptual understanding to sustain what they are doing. The role of the leader then is to be in the right place at the right time, ready to engage staff members in various aspects of the inquiry process that will lead them to a deeper understanding of the beliefs, goals, and practices of a specific program. (p.32-33)

Professional learning communities serve as vehicles whereby educators can maintain open and honest discourse to address critical issues impacting learning. Skillful leaders must distinguish and make good use of those organizational features that will formally sustain continuous learning and ongoing academic improvement and organizational growth. In his review of successful organizations, Jim Collins (2001) stated,

To go from good to great requires transcending the curse of competence. It requires the

discipline to say, “Just because we are good at it—just because we’re making money and generating growth—doesn’t necessarily mean we can become the best at it.” The good-to-great companies understood that doing what you are good at will only make you good; focusing solely on what you can potentially do better than any other organization is the only path to greatness. (p.100)

Central to the effectiveness of the professional learning community, educational leaders must acknowledge that levels of school success is indicated in teacher and student performance and referenced to sets of beliefs, assumptions and expectations within their school’s culture.

Williams (2006), in an article entitled “Leadership for School Reform: Do Principals Decision-Making Styles Reflect a Collaborative Approach?” provided the following characteristics regarding leadership in the learning community:

- School leadership in a professional community is socially constructed and culture sensitive (Foster & St. Hilaire, 2003; Harris, 2003).
- Leadership evolves as administrators and teachers collaborate, support each other’s growth and redefine their systemic roles as professionals (Hoer, 1996).
- As leadership shifts from an individual to an organizational capacity, the focus of structures and policies shifts from prescribing roles and well-defined role relationships to maintaining social legitimacy and acquiring the resources necessary to provide quality learning opportunities, not only for students but for teachers and administrators as well (Ogawa & Bossert, 2000). (p.3)

DeFour and Eaker (1998, 1999) emphasized that effective professional learning communities are directly aligned with the actions of the principal. Critical to their success, is the degree in which principals are focused on results. As such, the accountability for results becomes the focal point

when leaders work with organizational members to develop cohesive and measurable goals. Furthermore, principals share a collective responsibility for embedding processes that continually monitor and assess instructional strategies and procedures. Evidence is used to foster changes in routines and practice and to identify those areas that require greater attention. Central to the professional learning community concept is the degree in which principals expand the capacity of others to establish levels of collective inquiry with continuous improvement. Lambert (2003) positioned leadership not as something new when considering its connection to creating organizations or the transformation of followers but orients a newer context of leadership as framed primarily by learning. Several beliefs serve to underscore the framework for institutional capacity within the context of teacher leadership.

Leadership is reciprocal, allowing all individuals to be held responsible for leadership (Lambert, 2003). Equally, adult learning environments are essential to characterize leadership for others and the provision of opportunity to participate assists in defining the context of leadership (Lambert, 2003). Complementing these beliefs are three priority goals intended to build capacity. Developing the school community to support reflective leadership, long-term improvement in student achievement, and establishing school districts to become sustainable organizations are foundational goals that serve to guide efforts in building leadership capacity (Lambert, 2003).

Leadership is dependent upon trust, requires the knowledge and acceptance of shared core values and requires that all organizational members review data. Equally important is the need for members to be reflective thinkers and acquire targeted professional development in order to gain increased levels of expertise over time. Leadership is collegial in processes involving the sharing of information and decision making. It involves one's awareness to



personal and professional barriers to change (Reinhartz & Beach, 2004). Furthermore, Reinhartz and Beach (2004) provided the following suggestions for those seeking to become transformational leaders: “(1) develop and articulate a clear and appealing vision; (2) describe the process for bringing that vision to reality; and (3) build confidence in other’s ability to achieve that vision” (p.37).

Substantive change for sustained improvement requires educational leaders to renew organizational structures that support re-culturing. Effective use of professional learning communities will better define and engrain a moral purpose to unseat the traditional practices that have molded schools for the past century. Leadership is not dependent upon a mystical ability but rather an acknowledgement of ones’ ability to effectively act in a reflective manner for self-improvement (Kouzes & Posner, 1999).

Hargreaves and Fink (2006) in a review of literature and research provided the following seven principles which depict leadership sustainability in educational change. Depth: “Sustainable leadership matters. It preserves, protects, and promotes deep and broad learning for all in relationships of care for others” (p.23). Length: “Sustainable leadership lasts. It preserves and advances the most valuable aspects of learning and life over time, year upon year, from one leader to the next” (p.55). Breadth: “Sustainable leadership spreads. It sustains as well as depends on the leadership of others” (p.95). Justice: “Sustainable leadership does no harm to and actively improves the surrounding environment by finding ways to share knowledge and resources with neighboring schools and the local community” (p.142). Diversity: “Sustainable leadership promotes cohesive diversity and avoids aligned standardization of policy, curriculum, assessment, and staff development and training in teaching and learning. It fosters and learns from diversity and creates cohesion and networking among its richly varying components”

(p.159). Resourcefulness: “Sustainable leadership develops and does not deplete material and human resources. It renews people’s energy. Sustainable leadership is prudent and resourceful leadership that wasted neither its money nor its people” (p.191). Conservation: “Sustainable leadership respects and builds on the past in its quest to create a better future” (p.225). The implications of sustained efforts to drive strategic reform initiatives aimed to foster sustainable leadership depends upon targeted and prescriptive strategies that support universal and widespread acceptance of such principles.

### *Professional Accountability*

Leadership is critical to guarantee accountability in educational organizations. New forms of accountability were seen during the 1990s. These reforms brought intensified strategies that were designed to address performance standards, accreditation, improvements in assessment that included value-added and portfolio assessments, along with high stakes testing that were driven by sanctions and rewards. Alternative options became available to acquire successful performance with the advent of magnet and charter schools. Accountability in educational systems, having shifted from district to school control, from compliance of district governance to student based performance with standardized assessments has become anchored in the educational landscape today, despite the initial political, technical and developmental conflicts that existed across the nation. “Accountability systems define relationships between principals and agents and establish the nature of the agent’s work, and can be used to transform relationships within or across organizations” (Adams & Kirst, 1999, p.473). Despite the demarcation in professional certification and standards of practice between principals and teachers, educators are orienting their work towards student outcomes and are using specialized knowledge to address the educational needs of students. Professional learning communities seek

to assist in reorganizing professional accountability through the allowance of autonomy, through structures that promote peer review and by the building of professional knowledge and competencies. They also establish structures that promote a greater commitment to unambiguous standards for student learning and a focus on learning that makes good use of data in decision making for instructional processes. Professional learning communities additionally allow for internal governance of school functions to better align instruction and learning to advance academic achievement and success. Driscoll and Kerchner (1999) as cited in Hausman and Goldring (2001), purported that successful schools maintain the concepts that reinforce schools as communities. They further stated:

When educational institutions and their communities come together around a set of activities...then the knowledge, trust, and obligations that result can have powerful effects. Key to understanding how these activities can be fostered is the belief that a sense of place matters. The particular connections between people and institutions are what form the strongest ties. (p.33)

Adams and Kirst (1999) maintained that “schools operate as learning centers in which moral individuals make faithful efforts to fulfill the expectations they and others hold for educators” (p.471). Moral accountability, although commonly viewed as a symbolic construct, is reinforced through educational policy in as much as it mirrors or is manifested as employment mandates that reinforce the use of moral standards of behavior to parallel performance requirements. Professional learning communities use formal and informal structures that secure obligations, since they “originate in social customs and norms of operation and help to define relationships and subsequent expectations between individuals and members of a group” (p.470).

Although once considered as a mere rhetorical target during the 1990s, educational policies have shifted their treatment of moral accountability to underpin the importance of teacher preparation and induction as well as teacher and principal professional development. This shift reinforces the ability of schools to build upon capacity and subsequently support accountability measures. Adams and Kirst (1999) extending upon research by Adams (1993); Lieberman and Grolnick (1996); Lieberman and McLaughlin (1992) indicated that:

Teacher networks have been the most influential professional development structure to positively affect teacher's attitude toward work, subject matter, and students. The positive role of teacher networks in crafting professional communities demonstrates the potential of policy incentives, administrative practices, and professional structures together to foster a deeper sense of professional obligation and individual accountability. (p.471)

Teacher networks generally operate more freely outside the boundary lines of authority, lending importance to the formal and informal processes involving acquisition of information and subsequent implementation of ideas, practices and procedures (Fullan, 2005). Critical to the level of professional accountability are those salient characteristics that individuals in formal lines of authority use to embrace a collaborative responsibility. When these characteristics are emulated as intentional behaviors by all employees, schools can move forward with promoting a culture of progressive interaction that is aimed to shoulder the educational demands of the 21st century.

### *Summary*

Success of educational organizations is anchored upon the ability of their leaders to develop and maintain cultural and social constructs (teams, study groups, reflective

conversations, and peer review) such that all members are involved with consistent and effective efforts aimed to secure academic success. All individuals need to share in the promotion and implementation of values that strive to reinforce a professional context with member ownership, the establishment of collegial relationships, goals, and processes that reflect upon agreement of purpose. Effective leaders who exhibit transformational leadership are challenged to continually provide quality environments that inspire passion and internal commitment. All players must embrace the long-term goals and the structures adopted to support the improvement of instruction and learning in order to raise inherent levels of leadership capacity. Schools' community core values must focus its priorities. Yates (2000) stated "good leaders must first be good people" (p.57). Yates implied that effective leaders are able to capture and share respect of others by imparting responsibility to all individuals within the learning community in such a way that yields integrity, commitment, and character. In a study of the decision-making styles and collaborative approaches used by principals in New Brunswick, Canada, Williams (2006) supported the need for profound sustainable change by stating that most principals, although open to collaborative aspects of leadership, "reflected a preference for the technical-rational approach" (p.10). He further denotes that the reasons for this "may stem from the fact that the current hierarchical system in education reinforces a directive, analytical approach. Principals are simply behaving in a manner that they perceive the system expects of them" (p.10). Referencing the Canadian Department of Education, Williams stated "If collaborative leadership and the transformation of schools into professional learning communities are essential to achieving the quality learning agenda goals, then the entire system needs to be reviewed and leadership behaviors at all levels must be re-examined" (p.11).

Campus leaders are often faced with mandates from state and federal agencies that may force them to abandon a myriad of traditional school management practices. Relinquishing obsolete practices and strategies in order to seek those tenets that are embedded within the professional learning community concept is sometimes difficult. The complex set of dynamics in professional learning communities intends to create avenues for organizational effectiveness and sustainability by creating opportunities for individual and group empowerment. Lambert (2002) reiterated that “Our lesson is clear; instructional leadership must be a shared community undertaking. Leadership is the professional work of everyone in the school” (p.37). Furthermore, Conger and Kanungo (1988), defined empowerment as “a process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organizational members through identification of conditions that foster powerlessness and through their removal by both formal organizational practices and informal techniques of providing efficacy information” (p.474).

The establishment of leadership norms and practices that support and enable collegial responsibility and ownership through collaborative efforts provide greater leverage for effective principals and teachers to foster learning to meet the educational needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Lambert (2003) stated “it is only when a school staff has undertaken skillful work using inquiry, dialogue, and reflection to achieve student performance goals that a school can be said to have achieved high leadership capacity (Quadrant 4)” (p.5).

Educational leaders are still faced with the daunting charge to ensure that substantive change beyond mere paradigm shifts brings forth true and lasting reform, extending from all levels of the organization. In particular, schools must be equipped with the appropriate tenets and subsequent skills to eliminate long standing dependency upon those frameworks and structures that reinforce the status quo. Schlechty (1997) stated that “structural change that is not

supported by cultural change will eventually be overwhelmed by the culture, for it is in the culture that any organization finds meaning and stability” (p.136). Seymour Sarason (1990) succinctly described the challenge for educational leaders including policy makers at all levels by stating:

Like almost all other complex traditional social organizations, the schools will accommodate in ways that require little or no change.... The strength of the status quo—its underlying axioms, its pattern of power relationships, its sense of tradition and therefore what seems right, natural and proper—almost automatically rules out options for change...(p.35)

## Chapter 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### *Introduction*

Administrators are currently operating within an evolving educational landscape that is increasing in challenge and demand. The socio-political fabric that encompasses the culture of schools today elicits leaders at all levels to respond to reform efforts that critically mandate greater levels of accountability for student academic achievement. With such increased pressure for results, principal leadership has become a central focus for assisting with a change in direction that will lead to sustainable progress and success. Essential to this effort is effective use of constructivist leadership which can promote a renewed sense of purpose and capacity for educators to ensure success. Organization of this chapter will include the purpose of the study, the research design, instrumentation, research questions, null hypotheses, setting, data collection and data analysis, and summary.

#### *Purpose*

The purpose of this study was to identify the overall perceptions among high school principals, assistant principals and teachers regarding school leadership capacity and to verify the correlation between these perceptions and student academic achievement. The intent of the study was to broaden the existing knowledge base of leadership capacity of high school personnel and explore the impact of broad-based skillful participation in leadership. Ultimately, schools will be able to evaluate and enhance organizational potential, thereby improving upon student academic achievement.



## *Research Design*

Quantitative survey research methods were employed to examine leadership capacity and its relationship to academic achievement. “Quantitative approaches generally include sampling of both individuals and situations in ways that attempt to maximize the generalizability of the findings to the widest possible population” (Jaeger, 1997, p.17). Survey research intends to illustrate and describe detailed “characteristics of a larger group of objects, individuals and or institutions” (p.449). Most survey research studies have similarities in defining characteristics such as, “(a) specific facts describing a larger group (b) the groups of interest are well-defined (c) concerns are aimed to address current conditions rather than explore what might happen if something was altered, and (d) individuals are specific in order to obtain desired information” (p.449). Questionnaires are highly efficient tools for data collection when seeking routine data in which quantitative analysis provides descriptive and inferential statistics regarding varying responses of designated sub-groups. Questionnaires allow researchers to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data in a timely and efficient manner (Anderson, 2001). Inferential statistical research provides an explanation of an existing phenomenon, being leadership capacity, and further describes the relationship between variables within a given situation or condition and within a given point in time (Yin, 1993).

Five district superintendents in a border county along the US-Mexican border provided approval for the researcher to disseminate the survey to high school principals. Principals were not mandated to complete the survey. Seven principals from four districts agreed to complete the survey. Of the seven high schools, four are smaller rural campuses composed of 298-956 students while three are larger urban campuses composed of 1480-2075 students. Copies of the approved IRB and consent letter were provided to campus principals, assistant principals and

their teachers. Respondents could not be new to the campus or have less than two years experience serving on that campus.

### *Instrumentation*

Lambert's (2003) Leadership Capacity School Survey (Appendix A) was employed to evaluate the perceptions of leadership capacity of the target populations consisting of principals, assistant principals and teachers on seven high school campuses. Each school or case considered, received an overall campus profile ascertaining the perceptions of the principal, assistant principals and teachers per campus. Pearson  $r$  correlations were employed to assess data to determine specific relationships that may exist among each group of respondents. The survey assesses the nature of six leadership characteristics required to identify and build upon leadership capacity. These attributes are related and characterized by features exhibiting high leadership capacity as noted by high participation and high skill. The survey (Lambert, 2003) clusters 30 items into the following six characteristics: (a) Broad-based skillful participation in the work of leadership (7 items); (b) Shared vision results in program coherence (4 items); (c) Inquiry-based use of information to inform decisions and practice (5 items); (d) Roles and actions reflect broad involvement, collaboration, and collective responsibility (4 items); (e) Reflective practice consistently leads to innovation (5 items); and (f) High or steadily improving student achievement and development (5 items).

Included with each characteristic were explicit skills and or standards (items) required for leadership capacity development. Scoring of the items included a Likert assessment with values of 1 to 5. These values are represented by the following range : “(1) We do not do this at our school; (2) We are starting to move in this direction; (3) We are making good progress here;

(4) We have this condition well established and (5) We are refining our practice in this area” (Lambert, 2003, p.110).

The commonly used Likert scale is a classical ordinal rating scale aimed to assess the strength of agreement of statements used to gauge particular attitudes, sets of beliefs and or reactions (Delaney, 2004). Data obtained by the Likert is ordinal and can be applied to translation of individual item scores. For instance, a 3-4 range indicates a level of strength while an item score of 5 reveals consummate work and serves to reflect the existence of a high degree of leadership capacity. Comparing the characteristic scores with the total possible scores for each of the characteristics indicates degrees of strength or weakness. Scores of 1-2 in a characteristic implies a need for growth. Since each characteristic is specific with stated skills, schools can be informed specifically of areas to address with the appropriate professional development. Responses from each campus principal, assistant principals and teachers were compared with the final analysis ascertaining an organizational perception of the leadership capacity within study sites.

### *Research Questions*

The study focuses upon perceptions of leadership and the degree to which these perceptions individually and collectively define leadership capacity. A compilation of survey data was submitted to each campus principal as a profile to provide awareness of the current perceptions from campus representative groups. Principals can use information from the profile to address organizational needs. Administrators and teachers can address existing instructional processes more effectively and provide avenue to implement alternative structures that target and support specific learning and instructional procedures. Given this, profile information can assist school personnel in learning “how to practice at progressively higher levels of accomplishment”

(Elmore, 2000, p.28) to include inform upon the specific needs for professional development and training. The following research questions focused the intent of the study:

Research Question 1a:

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of high school principals and assistant principals as measured by the Leadership Capacity School Survey?

Research Question 1b:

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of high school principals and teachers as measured by the Leadership Capacity School Survey?

Research Question 1c:

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of assistant principals and teachers as measured by the Leadership Capacity School Survey?

Research Question 2a:

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of high school principals and scores in English language arts (ELA), Math, and All Tests Taken from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests administered from 2004-2008?

Research Question 2b:

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of high school assistant principals and scores in English language arts (ELA), Math, and All Tests Taken from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests administered from 2004-2008?

## Research Question 2c

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of high school teachers and scores in English language arts (ELA), Math, and All Tests

Taken from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests administered from 2004-2008?

### *Null Hypotheses*

The following hypotheses were examined in this study:

H<sub>1a</sub>: There are no significant relations between the leadership perceptions of principals and assistant principals as measured by the Leadership Capacity School Survey.

H<sub>1b</sub>: There are no significant relations between the leadership perceptions of principals and teachers as measured by the Leadership Capacity School Survey.

H<sub>1c</sub>: There are no significant relations between the leadership perceptions of assistant principals and teachers as measured by the Leadership Capacity School Survey.

H<sub>2a</sub>: There are no significant relations between the leadership perceptions of principals and scores in English language arts (ELA), Math, and All Tests Taken from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests administered from 2004-2008?

H<sub>2b</sub>: There are no significant relations between the leadership perceptions of assistant principals and scores in English language arts (ELA), Math, and All Tests Taken from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests administered from 2004-2008?

H<sub>2c</sub>: There are no significant relations between the leadership perceptions of teachers and scores in English language arts (ELA), Math, and All Tests Taken from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests administered from 2004-2008?

*Setting*

The schools participating in this study are located in a county positioned along the United States-Mexico Border. This county is located in the western region of the state consisting of approximately 1058 square miles. According to the United States Census Bureau (2006), this county’s population is estimated at 736,310 of which 81.4% are persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, 14.2% white, 3.4% Black, 1.0% American Indian, while 1.2% is of Asian decent. The census indicates that 65.8% of persons age 25 or older are high school graduates while 16.6% of persons age 25 or older have a bachelor’s degree or higher. The median household income in 2004 was \$ 32, 046. Average median income in 1999 was \$13, 421. In 2004, 24.6% of the population was below the poverty line. Table 1 indicates the demographic data for the 5 districts which agreed to complete the survey.

Table1.

District Demographics

District	District Enrollment	Economically Disadvantaged	% Caucasian	% African American	% Hispanic	% Other
District 1	44,770	36,119 (81%)	2515 (5.6%)	972 (2.2%)	40,960 (91.5%)	323 (0.7%)
District 2	10486	8879 (84.7%)	355 (3.4%)	13 (0.1%)	10,014 (95.5%)	11 (.1%)
District 3	2510	2357 (93.9%)	35 (1.4%)	0 (0%)	2472 (96.5%)	0 (0%)
District 4	1248	1198 (96.0%)	3 (0.2%)	4 (0.3%)	1241 (99.4%)	0 (0%)

*Data Collection*

Data from high school principals, assistant principals and teachers was collected using the Leadership Capacity School Survey (Lambert, 2003). A letter of invitation introducing the researcher to school personnel was provided and further explained the purpose of the study, participant selection, noted information regarding possible risks and benefits of participation and

addressed factors of confidentiality and anonymity. Members of each campus received a copy of the survey (Appendix A) and IRB / Consent (Appendix C) required by the University of Texas at El Paso. Permission to use the survey was provided by ASCD (Appendix B) and included in the informational packet. The researcher met with campus principals, assistant principals, and teachers to review the survey and discuss administration protocol. Prior to meeting with teachers, the researcher met with department chairs to discuss the importance of the survey in order to obtain support and optimal return from each campus teacher group. Recipients were provided two weeks to complete the survey and submitted their survey in sealed envelopes. After one week, phone calls were made as reminders to principals of the deadline for submission. Sealed packets were picked up from each participating campus. Scoring of the survey was done by the researcher and validated independently. All surveys were anonymous and labeled alpha-numerically to discern each campus and position held. Respondents were instructed to select the appropriate answer per statement. Respondents were instructed not to tally numbers or transfer item summation to the scoring box to avoid possible bias as a result of low or high cumulative scores.

### *Data Analysis*

In this research study, Pearson  $r$  correlations were used to address ordinal data from the School Leadership Capacity Survey (Lambert, 2003) administered to principals, assistant principals and teachers on seven campuses representing four districts in this border county. Data from each survey was captured in an Excel spreadsheet and transformed into the SPSS (2006) file for further analyses. Data obtained from the survey were analyzed by each corresponding category or group: principals, assistant principals and teachers.

The single dependent variable in this study is academic achievement, as represented by total school results of TAKS scores in English language arts (ELA), Math, and for All Tests Taken (ATT) from 2004 through 2008. A total of 15 scores are included for each year. TAKS assessments were implemented in Texas beginning in 2004. The use of scores over a five year period provided opportunity to review changes in student academic achievement as potentially related to leadership capacity. Establishing reliability and validity is critical to survey research using statistical measurements. “These qualities are not absolutes, but are matters of degree and often specific to circumstances” (Boslaugh & Watters, 2008, p.8-9). Reliability is further defined by these authors as “how consistent or repeatable measurements are” (p.9).

Boslaugh and Watters (2008) defined validity as “how well a test or rating scale measures what it is supposed to measure. Some researchers define validation as the process of gathering evidence to support the types of inferences intended to be drawn from the measurements in question” (p.12-13). This research used face validity, a closely related form of content validity which is further discussed.

Face validity refers to a measurement that possesses face value, a fairness value accepted by the general public and or a person (s) who might be evaluated (Boslaugh & Waters, 2008). Face validity reinforces respondent effort in assessing the question or statement and serves to support a more accurate and honest reflection of their opinions. Before the survey was administered to personnel at the seven campuses involved in the study, it was administered at the researcher’s school site consisting of one principal, three assistant principals and 73 teachers. The survey was reviewed by staff and questions regarding survey process were addressed and clarified. Out of 76 respondents, 69 agreed that the 30 survey statements accurately depict the six quadrants found in the survey. This represented a 90% agreement that Lambert’s (2003) survey



maintains face validity in that it serves as a direct measurement made to address specific category membership. Other results from the survey administered at the researcher's site are not included in this study. Information gained from this survey dissemination was used to assist with the schools participating in the study. Studies done by Combs (2007) and Pierce (2007) also established validity and reliability of Lambert's Leadership Capacity School Survey. Within the scope of school assessment and reflective practice (Lambert, 2003), both studies indicated that the survey is highly reliable and valid.

Content validity aims to establish acceptance that a construct measures what it professes to (Boslaugh & Watters, 2008). "A construct can be described as a 'constructed variable' that is unobservable. It is a label that is attached to a consistent set of observable behaviors" (Jaeger, 1997, p. 472). Central to its acceptance is the quality of information defining the operational variable. Information detailing the variable must be clearly defined with appropriate focus. Cronbach (1971) noted that content validity affirms that an accurate relationship must exist between the information evaluated and the test items employed in the assessment.

Construct validity is based on two critical assumptions that promote substantive generalizations. Jaeger (1997) noted that "valid substantive generalization" (p.473) is supported by (a) "that respondents understood the questions that were asked in the survey and (b) that the respondents' interpretations of the questions were consistent with those intended by the survey researchers" (p.473). He further noted that "the act of responding, particularly to closed-option questions, is not a guarantee of understanding" (p.473). The respondents must be willing and able to answer the questions (knowledge and or opinion) posed to them. "Having the ability to respond to a question presumes that respondents know the answer or have the information needed to respond available to them" (p.473). Most central is the implied belief that respondents

are honest in their responses. As noted earlier, Pierce (2007) asserted that construct validity of Lambert's (2003) survey was established with a reduced form. Aristotle (1947b) asserted the relevance of validity when he stated:

Now each man judges well the things he knows, and of these he is a good judge. And so the man who has been educated in a subject is a good judge of that subject, and the man who has received an all-round education is a good judge in general (as cited by Jaeger, 1997, p.25).

### *Summary*

Chapter three provided a brief overview of the research design and methodology used in the research study. This study aimed to examine the perceptions of school leadership capacity in high schools and discern if any significant correlations exist between the perceptions of principals, assistant principals and teachers with student academic achievement, as measured by the results of TAKS results over a five year period. Pearson  $r$  correlations were employed to verify significant relationships existing in the perceptions of principals, assistant principals and teachers among campuses, based on Lambert's (2003) Leadership Capacity School Survey. Demographic information of the four districts was provided. A presentation of results follows in the next chapter.

## Chapter 4

### PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

A total of 473 surveys were distributed to principals, assistant principals and teachers on seven high school campuses in a border county along the US-Mexico border. A total of 418 surveys were completed representing an 88.3% return rate. All seven principals returned the survey. Of the assistant principals, 20 out of 22 completed the survey representing a 90.1% return rate. Of the teachers, 391 out of 444 completed the survey representing an 88.0% return rate. Table 2 provides a summary of district and campus qualified participants.

Table 2.

#### District Participation and Response Rate by School

District	School	Principal % Response	AP % Response	Teacher % Response
1	1	100	75	89.4
1	2	100	100	96
1	3	100	100	93.7
2	1	100	100	79.6
2	2	100	100	78.5
3	1	100	100	100
4	1	100	50	84

In Table 2, an overall return rate of 88.3% is represented by 7 principals, 20 assistant principals and 391 teachers. The research questions that focused the intent of the study are:

#### *Research Question 1a:*

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of high school principals and assistant principals as measured by the Leadership Capacity School Survey?

*Research Question 1b:*

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of high school principals and teachers as measured by the Leadership Capacity School Survey?

*Research Question 1c:*

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of assistant principals and teachers as measured by the Leadership Capacity School Survey?

*Research Question 2a:*

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of high school principals and scores in English language arts (ELA), Math, and All Tests Taken from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests administered from 2004-2008?

*Research Question 2b:*

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of high school assistant principals and scores in English language arts (ELA), Math, and All Tests Taken from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests administered from 2004-2008?

*Research Question 2c:*

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of high school teachers and scores in English language arts (ELA), Math, and All Tests Taken from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests administered from 2004-2008?

### *Null Hypotheses*

The following hypotheses were examined in this study:

H<sub>1a</sub>: There are no significant relations between the leadership perceptions of principals and assistant principals as measured by the Leadership Capacity School Survey.

H<sub>1b</sub>: There are no significant relations between the leadership perceptions of principals and teachers as measured by the Leadership Capacity School Survey.

H<sub>1c</sub>: There are no significant relations between the leadership perceptions of assistant principals and teachers as measured by the Leadership Capacity School Survey.

H<sub>2a</sub>: There are no significant relations between the leadership perceptions of principals and scores in English language arts (ELA), Math, and All Tests Taken from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests administered from 2004-2008?

H<sub>2b</sub>: There are no significant relations between the leadership perceptions of assistant principals and scores in English language arts (ELA), Math, and All Tests Taken from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests administered from 2004-2008?

H<sub>2c</sub>: There are no significant relations between the leadership perceptions of teachers and scores in English language arts (ELA), Math, and All Tests Taken from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests administered from 2004-2008?

### *School Survey Data*

The following tables represent school leadership capacity survey results from Lambert's (2003) Leadership Capacity School Survey administered to personnel on seven high school campuses and results from TAKS assessments for ELA, Math, and All Tests Taken (ATT) from 2004-2008. The survey is equal to 150 possible points. Possible points per quadrant are provided per quadrant listed. Scores per group represent an averaged score with the exception of the

principal and schools having only one assistant principal. The survey clusters 30 items into the following six quadrants. Item descriptors and possible points have been listed after each quadrant title. Quadrant A: Broad-based skillful participation in the work of leadership (7 items, 35 points possible); Quadrant B: Shared vision results in program coherence (4 items, 20 points possible); Quadrant C: Inquiry-based use of information to inform decisions and practice (5 items, 25 points possible); Quadrant D: Roles and actions reflect broad involvement, collaboration, and collective responsibility (4 items, 20 points possible); Quadrant E: Reflective practice consistently leads to innovation (5 items, 25 points possible); and Quadrant F: High or steadily improving student achievement and development (5 items, 25 points possible) (Lambert, 2003).

Table 3.

School 1 Leadership Capacity School Survey

Position	Quad A 35 Pts.	Quad B 20 Pts	Quad C 25 Pts	Quad D 20 Pts	Quad E 25 Pts	Quad F 25 Pts
Principal N=1	30	17	20	17	20	19
AP N=3	25	13	17	13	15	17
Teachers N=76	22	13	17	12	15	17
School Tot N=80	22	13	17	13	15	17

In Table 3 (School 1), the principal rating of leadership capacity is significantly higher in all quadrants when compared to assistant principals, teachers, and total score. Comparing assistant principals, teachers and school totals reveals equal response with exception for Quadrants A, D.

Table 4.

School 1 Percent of Students Meeting Minimum Expectations on TAKS

Year	ELA	Math	ATT
04	72	58	46
05	74	55	42
06	77	55	43
07	81	60	49
08	83	64	54

In Table 4 (School 1), academic gains were identified in each year for ELA. Results for math indicate a drop in scores for 05. Scores for all tests taken reveal a drop in scores for 05. Scores for math 05, 06 remained the same.

Table 5.

School 2 Leadership Capacity School Survey

Position	Quad A 35 Pts	Quad B 20 Pts	Quad C 25 Pts	Quad D 20 Pts	Quad E 25 Pts	Quad F 25 Pts
Principal N=1	32	18	22	18	24	21
AP N=5	27	16	20	17	19	21
Teachers N=117	20	11	15	11	13	15
Sch. Tot N=123	20	12	15	12	13	15

In Table 5 (School 2), the principal rating of leadership capacity is higher in all quadrants except for Quadrant F when compared to assistant principals. Comparing assistant principals and

teachers, assistant principals scored higher in all quadrants while teachers were lower in Quadrants B, D when compared to school total.

Table 6.

School 2 Percent of Students Meeting Minimum Expectations on TAKS

Year	ELA	Math	ATT
04	80	57	46
05	80	50	39
06	87	61	48
07	87	65	55
08	85	69	59

In Table 6 (School 2), academic gains were seen in 06 for ELA. Scores for ELA in 04, 05 and ELA 06, 07 remained the same. Both math and all tests taken reveal gains each year with the exception of 05.

Table 7.

School 3 Leadership Capacity School Survey

Position	Quad A 35 Pts	Quad B 20 Pts	Quad C 25 Pts	Quad D 20 Pts	Quad E 25 Pts	Quad F 25 Pts
Principal N=1	22	13	17	14	17	16
AP N=4	25	14	19	15	18	19
Teachers N=90	23	14	18	14	16	18
Sch. Tot N=95	24	14	18	14	16	18



In Table 7 (School 3), the principal rating of leadership capacity reveals lower scores in Quadrants A, B, C, and F. when compared to assistant principals, teachers and total score.

Assistant principal scores are higher in quadrants A, C, D, E, and F when compared to teachers and total score.

Table 8.

School 3 Percent of Students Meeting Minimum Expectations on TAKS

Year	ELA	Math	ATT
04	82	69	54
05	77	66	44
06	83	63	45
07	86	68	51
08	88	64	55

In Table 8 (School 3), academic gains were seen each year with the exception of ELA 05, math 05, 06, 08 and all tests taken 05.

Table 9.

School 4 Leadership Capacity School Survey

Position	Quad A 35 Pts	Quad B 20 Pts	Quad C 25 Pts	Quad D 20 Pts	Quad E 25 pts	Quad F 25 Pts
Principal N=1	17	6	14	8	12	10
AP N=4	20	12	21	15	18	20
Teachers N=43	19	11	16	12	13	15
Sch. Tot N=48	19	11	17	12	13	15

In Table 9 (School 4), the principal rating of leadership capacity reveals a lower score in all quadrants when compared to assistant principals, teachers, and total score. Assistant principal scores are higher in all quadrants when compared to teachers and school total.

Table 10.

School 4 Percentage of Students Meeting Minimum Expectations on TAKS

Year	ELA	Math	ATT
04	69	55	40
05	62	45	30
06	71	49	36
07	78	56	43
08	75	55	46

In Table 10 (School 4), academic gains were seen in all areas except for ELA 05, 08, math 05, 08, and all tests taken 05.

Table 11.

School 5 Leadership Capacity School Survey

Position	Quad A 35 Pts	Quad B 20 Pts	Quad C 25 Pts	Quad D 20 Pts	Quad E 25 Pts	Quad F 25 Pts
Principal N=1	24	13	15	12	16	16
AP N=2	28	15	22	15	16	18
Teachers N=33	20	13	19	21	15	18
Sch. Total N=36	21	13	19	14	15	18

In Table 11 (School 5), the principal rating for leadership capacity reveals lower scores for Quadrant C and F when compared to assistant principals, teachers and total scores. Assistant principals scored higher in all quadrants except for Quadrant D when compared to teachers.

Table 12.

School 5 Percentage of Students Meeting Minimum Expectations on TAKS

Year	ELA	Math	ATT
04	82	64	53
05	78	54	46
06	85	58	46
07	85	62	50
08	88	65	55

In Table 12 (School 5), academic gains were seen in all areas except for ELA 05, Math 05, and all tests taken 05. ELA scores for 06, 07 remained the same while all tests taken for 05, 06 remained the same.

Table 13.

School 6 Leadership Capacity School Survey

Position	Quad A 35 Pts	Quad B 20 Pts	Quad C 25 Pts	Quad D 20 Pts	Quad E 25 Pts	Quad F 25 Pts
Principal N=1	15	7	19	12	17	19
AP N=1	26	15	22	15	19	21
Teachers N=11	23	15	19	13	16	19
Sch. Tot N=13	23	15	20	13	16	19

In Table 13 (School 6), the principal rating for leadership capacity revealed lower scores for Quadrants A, B, and D when compared to assistant principals and total scores. Assistant principal scores revealed higher scores in Quadrant A, C, D, E, and F when compared to teachers and total scores.

Table 14.

School 6 Percentage of Students Meeting Minimum Expectations on TAKS

Year	ELA	Math	ATT
04	59	60	37
05	63	57	31
06	74	65	46
07	75	68	51
08	79	68	60

In Table 14 (School 6), academic gains were seen in all areas except for math (05) and all tests taken 05. Scores for math 07, 08 remained the same.

Table 15.

School 7 Leadership Capacity School Survey

Position	Quad A 35 Pts	Quad B 20 Pts	Quad C 25 Pts	Quad D 20 Pts	Quad E 25 Pts	Quad F 25 Pts
Principal N=1	32	15	24	19	24	23
AP N=1	31	16	25	16	20	22
Teachers N=21	24	13	17	14	16	19
Sch. Tot N=23	25	13	18	14	17	19

In Table 15 (School 7), the principal rating for leadership capacity revealed a higher score in Quadrants A, D, E, and F when compared to assistant principals, teachers and total score. Assistant principal scores revealed higher scores in all quadrants when compared to teachers and total score.

Table 16.

School 7 Percentage of Students Meeting Minimum Expectations on TAKS

Year	ELA	Math	ATT
04	76	55	46
05	73	51	38
06	80	61	46
07	80	70	57
08	81	75	62

In Table 16 (School 7), academic gains were seen in all areas except for ELA (05), math 05 and all tests taken 05. Scores for ELA 06, 07 remained the same. The following table represents principal responses among schools using the Leadership Capacity School Survey. The survey has 150 points possible.

Table 17.

Principal Scores on Leadership Capacity School Survey

Principal N=7	Quad A 35 Pts	Quad B 20 Pts	Quad C 25 Pts	Quad D 20 Pts	Quad E 25 Pts	Quad F 25 Pts
School 1	30	17	20	17	20	19
School 2	32	18	22	18	24	21
School 3	22	13	17	14	17	16
School 4	17	6	14	8	12	10
School 5	24	13	15	12	16	16
School 6	15	7	19	12	17	19
School 7	32	15	24	19	24	23

In Table 17, total survey points gained by each (school) in rank order are as follows: (7) 137 points, (2) 135 points, (1) 123 points, (3) 99 points, (5) 96 points, (6) 89 points and (4) 67 points. The results for School 4 may have been attributed to the transitioning of the latest principal and are further discussed in Chapter 5. The following table represents the results of assistant principal scores across schools using the Leadership Capacity School Survey.

Table 18.

Assistant Principal Scores on Leadership Capacity School Survey

AP N=20	Quad A 35 Pts	Quad B 20 Pts	Quad C 25 Pts	Quad D 20 Pts	Quad E 25 Pts	Quad F 25 Pts
School 1						
AP 1	23	11	20	11	14	14
AP 2	28	18	22	18	24	25
AP 3	24	6	8	7	9	10
School 2						
AP 1	29	15	23	17	21	20
AP 2	34	20	25	17	21	25
AP 3	31	20	17	19	25	23
AP 4	21	10	15	12	11	17
AP 5	21	10	15	12	11	17
School 3						
AP 1	26	15	21	17	21	22
AP 2	25	13	21	15	16	16
AP 3	26	13	17	14	17	17
AP 4	21	14	16	14	16	21
School 4						
AP 1	11	5	12	8	5	10
AP 2	29	8	23	16	24	25
AP 3	21	16	21	17	16	19
AP 4	19	12	15	12	15	15
School 5						
AP 1	24	13	21	14	14	18
AP 2	32	16	23	16	17	18
School 6						
AP 1	26	15	22	15	19	21
School 7						
AP 1	31	16	25	16	20	22

In Table 18, total survey points by each (school) in rank order are as follows: (7) 130 points, (6) 118 points, (2) 114 points, (5) 113 points, (3) 109 points, (1) 97 points, (4) 94 points.

Campuses with more than one assistant principal had scores averaged per quadrant.

Table 19.

Teacher Scores on Leadership Capacity School Survey

School Total N= 391	Quad A 35 Pts	Quad B 20 Pts	Quad C 25 Pts	Quad D 20 Pts	Quad E 25 Pts	Quad F 25 Pts
School 1 N= 76	22	13	17	12	15	17
School 2 N= 117	20	11	15	11	13	15
School 3 N= 90	23	14	18	14	16	18
School 4 N= 43	19	11	16	12	13	15
School 5 N= 33	20	13	19	21	15	18
School 6 N= 11	23	15	19	13	16	19
School 7 N= 21	24	13	17	14	16	19

In Table 19, total survey points gained by each (school) in rank order is as follows: (5) 106 points, (6) 105 points, (3, 7) 103 points, (1) 96 points, (2) 95 points, (4) 86 points. Teacher scores are averaged per quadrant.



Table 20.

School Total Scores on Leadership Capacity School Survey

School Total N= 418	Quad A 35 Pts	Quad B 20 Pts	Quad C 25 Pts	Quad D 20 Pts	Quad E 25 Pts	Quad F 25 Pts
School 1 N= 80	22	13	17	13	15	17
School 2 N= 123	20	12	15	12	13	15
School 3 N= 95	24	14	18	14	16	18
School 4 N= 36	19	11	17	12	13	15
School 5 N= 48	21	13	19	14	15	18
School 6 N= 13	23	15	20	13	16	19
School 7 N= 23	25	13	18	14	17	19

In Table 20, total survey points gained by each (school) in rank order is as follows: (6, 7) 106 points, (3) 104 points, (5) 100 points, (1) 97 points, (2, 4) 87 points. School total scores are averaged.

*Findings of Research Question 1a*

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of high school principals and assistant principals as measured by the Leadership Capacity School Survey?

To examine research question 1a, 36 Pearson *r* correlations were conducted to assess if relationships exist for principals and assistant principals between (a) broad based skillful participation in the work of leadership, (b) shared vision resulting in program coherence, (c) inquiry-based use of information to inform decisions and practice, (d) roles and actions reflect broad involvement, collaboration, and collective responsibility, (e) reflective practice

consistently leads to innovation, and (f) high or steadily improving student academic achievement and development. The results of the correlations are presented in Table 21. Results reveal significant positive correlation coefficients between (a) broad based skillful participation in the work of leadership with (e) reflective practice consistently leads to innovation, and (f) high or steadily improving student academic achievement and development to include (b) shared vision resulting in program coherence with (f) high or steadily improving student academic achievement and development. No other significant correlation coefficients were revealed for principals and assistant principals between the six quadrant categories. The null hypothesis was rejected on significant coefficients. No evidence was found to reject non-significant correlation coefficients.

Table 21.

Pearson Correlations of Survey Quadrants for Principals and Assistant Principals

Principals	Assistant Principals					
	Broad	Vision	Inquiry	Roles	Reflective	Academic
Broad	.606	.460	-.041	.223	-.033	.002
Vision	.565	.448	-.272	.127	-.188	-.191
Inquiry	.694	.662	.229	.350	.458	.495
Roles	.728	.619	.005	.233	.174	.178
Reflective	.755*	.735	.143	.419	.333	.362
Academic	.854*	.804*	.243	.301	.327	.360

Note. \*  $p < 0.05$

*Findings of Research Question 1b*

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of high school principals and teachers as measured by the Leadership Capacity School Survey?

To examine research question 1b, 36 Pearson  $r$  correlations were conducted to assess if relationships exist for principals and teachers between (a) broad based skillful participation in the

work of leadership, (b) shared vision resulting in program coherence, (c) inquiry-based use of information to inform decisions and practice, (d) roles and actions reflect broad involvement, collaboration, and collective responsibility, (e) reflective practice consistently leads to innovation, and (f) high or steadily improving student academic achievement and development. The results of the correlations are presented in Table 22, and reveal that no significant correlation coefficients exist for principals and teachers.

Table 22.

Pearson Correlations of Survey Quadrants for Principals and Teachers

Principals	Teachers					
	Broad	Vision	Inquiry	Roles	Reflective	Academic
Broad	.146	-.348	-.478	-.088	-.078	-.099
Vision	.154	-.203	-.346	-.035	-.008	-.072
Inquiry	.581	.054	-.319	-.402	.229	.230
Roles	.507	.008	-.298	-.224	.229	.184
Reflective	.433	-.063	-.359	-.255	.129	.130
Academic	.624	.261	-.038	-.121	.402	.429

Note. \*  $p < 0.05$

*Findings of Research Question 1c*

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of assistant principals and teachers as measured by the Leadership Capacity School Survey?

To examine research question 1c, 36 Pearson  $r$  correlations were conducted to assess if relationships exist for assistant principals and teachers between (a) broad based skillful participation in the work of leadership, (b) shared vision resulting in program coherence, (c) inquiry-based use of information to inform decisions and practice, (d) roles and actions reflect broad involvement, collaboration, and collective responsibility, (e) reflective practice consistently leads to innovation, and (f) high or steadily improving student academic

achievement and development. The results of the correlations are presented in Table 23 and reveal no significant correlation coefficients exist for assistant principals and teachers.

Table 23.

Pearson Correlations of Survey Quadrants for Assistant Principals and Teachers

Teachers	Assistant Principals					
	Broad	Vision	Inquiry	Roles	Reflective	Academic
Broad	.547	.364	.226	-.113	.325	.250
Vision	.304	.183	.083	-.361	-.009	-.081
Inquiry	.232	.084	.188	-.393	-.233	-.274
Roles	.371	.212	.331	-.076	-.342	-.341
Reflective	.515	.281	.236	-.291	.060	-.020
Academic	.610	.397	.434	-.184	.126	.085

Note. \*  $p < 0.05$

*Findings of Research Question 2a*

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of high school principals and scores in English language arts (ELA), Math, and All Tests Taken from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests administered from 2004-2008?

To examine research question 2a, 90 Pearson  $r$  correlations were conducted to assess relationships for principals between (a) broad based skillful participation in the work of leadership, (b) shared vision resulting in program coherence, (c) inquiry-based use of information to inform decisions and practice, (d) roles and actions reflect broad involvement, collaboration, and collective responsibility, (e) reflective practice consistently leads to innovation, and (f) high or steadily improving student academic achievement and development with math, reading and overall scores. The results of the correlations are presented in Table 24 and reveal significant positive correlation coefficients for principals on (c) inquiry-based use of

information to inform decisions and practice with math 08, all tests taken 07 and all tests taken 08, suggesting that as inquiry increases, math 08, all tests taken 07 and all tests taken 08 also increase. Significant positive correlation coefficients exist for principals on (d) roles and actions reflect broad involvement, collaboration, and collective responsibility with math 08 and all tests taken 07 and also between (e) reflective practice consistently leads to innovation with math 08, all tests taken 07 and all tests taken 08, suggesting that as roles and actions reflect broad involvement, collaboration, and collective responsibility increases, math 08 and all tests taken 07 will also increase. Significant correlation coefficients were revealed on (f) high or steadily improving student academic achievement and development with math 08, all tests taken 06, all tests taken 07 and all tests taken 08, suggesting as academic achievement and development increases, math 08, all tests taken 06, all tests taken 07 and all tests taken 08 increases. A positive correlation exists for (b) shared vision resulting in program coherence with ELA 05. No other significant relationships were revealed for principals between the six quadrant categories. The null hypotheses were rejected on significant coefficients.

Table 24.

Pearson Correlations of Survey Quadrants for Principals and ELA, Math and All Tests Taken.

Scores	Principals					
	Broad	Vision	Inquiry	Roles	Reflective	Academic
ELA 04	.580	.649	.020	.360	.289	.092
ELA 05	.738	.873*	.305	.636	.572	.443
ELA 06	.608	.739	.281	.545	.546	.449
ELA 07	.544	.695	.035	.375	.324	.127
ELA 08	.412	.641	.052	.393	.302	.292
Math 04	-.266	.010	-.405	-.167	-.279	-.172
Math 05	-.137	.125	-.035	.128	-.006	.150
Math 06	.072	.210	.487	.438	.479	.665
Math 07	.204	.237	.629	.550	.582	.728
Math 08	.576	.526	.859*	.800*	.853*	.952*
All Tests 04	.410	.556	-.104	.273	.141	.057
All Tests 05	.527	.700	.031	.417	.275	.237
All Tests 06	.462	.587	.599	.668	.710	.814*
All Tests 07	.659	.637	.854*	.850*	.901*	.928*
All Tests 08	.435	.440	.805*	.723	.789*	.932*

Note. \*  $p < 0.05$

*Findings of Research Question 2b*

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of high school assistant principals and scores in English language arts (ELA), Math, and All Tests Taken from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests administered from 2004-2008?

To examine research question 2b, 90 Pearson  $r$  correlations were conducted to assess if relationships exist for assistant principals between (a) broad based skillful participation in the work of leadership, (b) shared vision resulting in program coherence, (c) inquiry-based use of information to inform decisions and practice, (d) roles and actions reflect broad involvement, collaboration, and collective responsibility, (e) reflective practice consistently leads to

innovation, and (f) high or steadily improving student academic achievement and development with math, reading and overall scores. The results of the correlations are presented in Table 25 and reveal significant positive correlation coefficients for assistant principals on (a) broad based skillful participation in the work of leadership with math 08, all tests taken 06, all tests taken 07 and all tests taken 08, suggesting that as broad based skillful participation in the work of leadership increases, math 08, all tests taken 06, all tests taken 07 and all tests taken 08 also increase. Significant positive correlation coefficients exists for assistant principals on (b) shared vision resulting in program coherence with math 06, math 07, math 08, all tests taken 06, all tests taken 07 and all tests taken 08, suggesting that as vision increases math 06, math 07, math 08, all tests taken 06, all tests taken 07 and all tests taken 08 will also increase. No other significant relationships were revealed for assistant principals between the six quadrant categories. The null hypothesis was rejected on significant correlation coefficients. Evidence was not found to reject the non-significant coefficients.

Table 25.

Pearson Correlations of Survey Quadrants for Assistant Principals and ELA, Math and All Tests Taken

Scores	Assistant Principals					
	Broad	Vision	Inquiry	Roles	Reflective	Academic
ELA 04	.331	.265	-.099	.290	-.165	-.248
ELA 05	.537	.487	-.224	.240	-.217	-.273
ELA 06	.597	.661	-.027	.476	-.007	-.061
ELA 07	.244	.293	-.312	.316	-.196	-.282
ELA 08	.465	.411	-.264	.066	-.320	-.417
Math 04	.029	.018	-.296	-.179	-.279	-.441
Math 05	.165	.100	-.328	-.271	-.143	-.310
Math 06	.638	.760*	.227	.357	.448	.370
Math 07	.736	.777*	.430	.431	.617	.537
Math 08	.941*	.901*	.491	.434	.473	.492
All Tests 04	.336	.178	-.190	.000	-.349	-.464
All Tests 05	.442	.238	-.292	-.146	-.510	-.584
All Tests 06	.828*	.898*	.171	.407	.221	.201
All Tests 07	.905*	.919*	.392	.555	.500	.489
All Tests 08	.882*	.908*	.420	.420	.479	.487

Note. \*  $p < 0.05$

*Findings of Research Question 2c*

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of high school teachers and scores in English language arts (ELA), Math, and All Tests Taken from the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) tests administered from 2004-2008?

To examine research question 2c, 90 Pearson  $r$  correlations were conducted to assess if relationships exist for teachers between (a) broad based skillful participation in the work of leadership, (b) shared vision resulting in program coherence, (c) inquiry-based use of



information to inform decisions and practice, (d) roles and actions reflect broad involvement, collaboration, and collective responsibility, (e) reflective practice consistently leads to innovation, and (f) high or steadily improving student academic achievement and development with math, reading and overall scores. The results of the correlations are presented in Table 26 and reveal significant positive correlation coefficients exists for teachers on (a) broad based skillful participation in the work of leadership with math 07, suggesting that as broad based skillful participation in the work of leadership increases math 07 also increases. Significant positive correlation coefficients for teachers exists on (b) shared vision resulting in program coherence with math 05, suggesting that as vision increases math 05 will also increase. No other significant relationships were revealed for teachers between the six quadrant categories. The null hypothesis was rejected on significant correlation coefficients. Evidence was not found to reject the non-significant coefficients.

Table 26.

Pearson Correlations of Survey Quadrants for Teachers and ELA, Math and All Tests Taken

Scores	Teachers					
	Broad	Vision	Inquiry	Roles	Reflective	Academic
ELA 04	-.158	-.322	-.180	.401	-.099	-.147
ELA 05	.016	-.136	-.122	.302	.025	-.025
ELA 06	-.019	-.105	-.060	.370	.012	.014
ELA 07	-.233	-.314	-.235	.254	-.202	-.272
ELA 08	.112	.207	.269	.508	.277	.216
Math 04	.189	.546	.617	.491	.474	.371
Math 05	.586	.761*	.592	.190	.715	.565
Math 06	.671	.668	.416	.081	.636	.636
Math 07	.806*	.590	.303	.031	.691	.692
Math 08	.662	.331	.102	.063	.502	.570
All Tests 04	.042	.037	.180	.564	.220	.142
All Tests 05	.095	.121	.233	.556	.273	.204
All Tests 06	.441	.383	.238	.231	.417	.457
All Tests 07	.577	.199	-.043	.010	.383	.420
All Tests 08	.674	.450	.196	.037	.537	.599

Note. \*  $p < 0.05$

In Table 26, the null hypothesis was rejected on significant correlation coefficients.

Evidence was not found to reject the non-significant coefficients.

### *Summary of Findings*

A total of 473 surveys were distributed to principals, assistant principals and teachers on seven high school campuses in four districts along the United States-Mexico border. A total of 418 surveys were completed representing an 88.3% return. A total of 378 Pearson  $r$  correlations were performed to identify relationships existing among principals, assistant principals and teachers as evidenced by Lambert's leadership Capacity Survey (Appendix A) with results from Texas assessment exams from 2004-2008. A summary of demographics and district participation was presented. The leadership perceptions based on the summation of 30 descriptor

statements within 6 quadrants of the survey of principals, assistant principals, teachers and school totals were provided per campus. Results of each campus score indicated the variance in perception between corresponding groups.

The six quadrants of the survey (Lambert, 2003) are a) Broad based skillful participation in the work of leadership; b) Shared vision results in program coherence; c) Inquiry-based use of information to inform decisions and practice; d) Roles and actions reflect broad involvement, collaboration, and collective responsibility; e) Reflective practice consistently leads to innovation and f) High or steadily improving student achievement and development. State assessment exams involved English language arts, math and all tests taken categories from 2004-2008.

The following hypotheses were assessed in this study:

H<sub>1a</sub>. There are no significant relations between the total leadership perceptions of principals and assistant principals as measured by the Leadership Capacity School Survey. The null hypothesis was rejected on positive significant correlation coefficients. The significant relation coefficients for principals involve A with E, A with F and B with F for assistant principals.

H<sub>1b</sub>. There are no significant relations between the total leadership perceptions of principals and teachers as measured by the Leadership Capacity School Survey. Analysis revealed no significant correlation coefficients existing for principals and teachers.

H<sub>1c</sub>: There are no significant relations between the total leadership perceptions of assistant principals and teachers as measured by the Leadership Capacity School Survey. Analysis revealed no significant correlation coefficients existing for assistant principals and teachers. The null hypothesis was accepted among all correlation coefficients.

H<sub>2a</sub>: There are no significant relations between the total leadership perceptions of principals and 15 TAKS scores in English language arts (ELA), Math, and All Tests Taken from 2004-2008. The null hypothesis was rejected on positive significant correlation coefficients and accepted on non-significant coefficients. The significant correlation coefficients for principals involve (D) with math 08 and all tests taken 08. Additionally, significant correlations coefficients exists for (E) with Math 08 and all tests taken 07, 08. Furthermore, positive correlation coefficients exists for (F) with math 08, all tests taken 06, 07, 08 as well as (B) with ELA 05. No other significant relationships were revealed.

H<sub>2b</sub>: There are no significant relations between the total leadership perceptions of assistant principals and 15 TAKS scores in English language arts (ELA), Math, and All Tests Taken from 2004-2008. The null hypothesis was rejected on positive significant correlation coefficients and accepted on non-significant coefficients. The significant correlation coefficients for assistant principals involve (A) with math 08, all tests taken 06, 07, 08. Additionally, positive coefficients exists for assistant principals for (B) with math 06, 07, 08 and all tests taken 06, 07, 08. No other significant relationships were revealed.

H<sub>2c</sub>: There are no significant relations between the total leadership perceptions of teachers and 15 TAKS scores in English language arts (ELA), Math, and All Tests Taken from 2004-2008. The null hypothesis was rejected on positive significant correlation coefficients and accepted on non-significant coefficients. The significant correlation coefficients for teachers involve (A) with math 07 and (B) with math 05. No other significant relationships were revealed. The following chapter provides analyses and discussion of results.

## CHAPTER 5

### ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

#### *Overall Conclusions*

The purpose of this research study was to compare the perceptions of high school principals, assistant principals and teachers, regarding school leadership capacity, and determine the relationships between perceptions of school leadership capacity and student academic achievement. Campus principals, assistant principals and teachers on seven high school campuses representing four districts participated in this study. Eligible participants were required to have at least two years of experience being on their respective campuses. Participation was voluntary and dependent upon participants completing and returning the survey. An overall response rate for the survey was 88%. A total of seven principals completed the survey. Twenty out of 22 assistant principals, representing 90.1% completed the survey. Of the 444 surveys given to teachers, 391 were completed, representing 88% participation in this study.

The researcher provided the survey to school personnel and allowed two weeks in October, 2008, to complete and return the survey in sealed envelopes. Survey responses were accepted as being accurate and a true reflection of the perceptions held regarding the current leadership capacity on each campus.

Despite the overall results of state testing on the seven campuses improving from 2004-2008, statistical evidence correlates to the degree in which leadership, as noted by Lambert's (2003) survey criteria, is either directly or indirectly responsible for academic gains. The researcher found that use of the survey by those in school leadership positions, primarily the principal, can provide valuable information regarding the perceptions of leadership capacity of

all campus membership. This knowledge, when collectively translated into school structures and processes in an attempt to define the organizational culture, can lead to the transformation of individuals' knowledge, which may increase the potential for personal and professional growth. Lambert (2003) maintained that school culture is defined in part by the processes implemented to reinforce organizational inquiry. This context further supports the use of this theoretical approach which aligns constructivist principles to teacher leadership functions. The significance of the principal to bring forth collegiality and empowerment to teachers within this theoretical framework was not evidenced. An underlying assumption characterizes the culture on these campuses as being based upon autonomy and isolation. These norms, as represented by failing reform efforts throughout the past century continue to obstruct efforts to galvanize constructivist approaches as a viable leadership model. The ability of the principal to steer efforts to provide an environment that affords greater levels of leadership capacity through the identification of values, mission and goals is central to securing long term success.

Use of additional statistical analyses is required to better target and identify relational significance. Had the researcher employed additional data points involving longitudinal data of scale scores for students, the statistical information may have yielded more constructive information for those in leadership positions. Additionally, requiring two years of experience on a campus limited the number of available respondents. More important, use of the survey in its original form did not assure construct validity. Reliance on face and or content validity does not envisage construct validity and therefore, fosters varied interpretation of the data. Such interpretation may imply that leadership capacity, an accepted component of organizational quality and strength, may not be required for student academic achievement and success warranting additional empirical consideration.

### *Theoretical Framework*

Developments in organizational and leadership theory have positioned the role of the principal in varying contexts. As such, principals, to include assistant principals and teachers, are faced with integrating varying orientations with leadership foundations. “Leadership defined as a form of learning situates that work within the context of teaching and learning” (Lambert, 2003, p.425).

In review of the data, results are contrary to the intent of constructivist leadership theory. Teacher perceptions on seven high school campuses suggest that reciprocal action was not taking place with administrators. “Reciprocity helps build relationships of mutual regard, thereby enabling us to become colearners” (Lambert, 2003, p.2). The data suggests that leadership remains predominantly hierarchical and fails to provide the connection between capacity building and learning for teachers as related to leadership function. As noted earlier, leadership in successful schools promotes a collective responsibility in maintaining dialogue that focuses upon the vision and values of the campus, processes that strengthen the sharing of knowledge, participation in decision-making based upon data and reflective discourse to enhance instructional processes needed for continual improvement in student learning. Although principals and assistant principals were reflected as having similar perspectives of leadership capacity, the results indicated that this commonness was minimal and does not reveal to the extent required for sustained academic growth that constructivist leadership was a viable force in the attainment of overall academic gains. The degree that teachers maintained collegial efforts among themselves was not investigated and merits further review. This disjoint in perspectives may result from a lack of networking where “the development of teacher voice and self concept”

(p.427) are not supported by the formal and informal structures needed to promote cohesiveness within the learning community.

Leithwood and Mascall (2008) stated “The growing edge of the current conversation about educational leadership has shifted decidedly toward a focus on its sources” (p.529). Specific to Lambert’s (2003) survey (Appendix A) is the use of process to define leadership and to bind the concepts of capacity with approaches used to correlate to 6 leadership quadrants. Associations between leader and leadership have at length, focused upon the salient characteristics of the individual, lending much reliance to personal attributes, skills and styles. As noted earlier by Sarason (1996), the characteristics manifested by leaders are to some degree, a reflection of a given setting to which involves them. Constructivist leadership, as Lambert (2003) references the word, aims to draw parallel associations between learning and leading. These associations, when stretched across an organization, bring together multiple leadership schemas that contribute to defining culture, values and belief systems. More important, this collective or constructivist leadership effort, when aimed to construct meaning and knowledge, serves to reinforce member efforts to act in a purposeful manner. “When new experiences are encountered and mediated by reflection, inquiry and social interaction, meaning and knowledge are constructed” (Lambert, 2003, p.423).

Provision to change social constructs in schools demands collaborative relationships where learning is of primary focus. Acquisition of knowledge is critically related to the extent that social constructs support a collegial atmosphere. From a school perspective, creating avenues for collaboration is vital to the efforts for sustainable improvement. Given the context of state mandates and the increasing scrutiny on educational systems to increase academic achievement, inclusive of all student populations, the use of professional learning community



frameworks may be the only resolution to address these concerns. The concepts of professional learning communities, together with constructive leadership function may serve to effectively address the challenges of creating and facilitating shared knowledge, sustaining viable change and transforming the culture within schools (DeFour, Eaker & DeFour, 2005). The survey is composed of the following six quadrants:

Quadrant A: Broad-based skillful participation in the work of leadership;

Quadrant B: Shared vision results in program coherence;

Quadrant C: Inquiry-based use of information to inform decisions and practice;

Quadrant D: Roles and actions reflect broad involvement, collaboration, and collective responsibility;

Quadrant E: Reflective practice consistently leads to innovation, and

Quadrant F: High or steadily improving student achievement and development

(Lambert, 2003, p.110-113).

*Research Question 1a.*

Is there a relationship between the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of high school principals and assistant principals as measured by the Leadership Capacity School Survey?

To examine research question 1a, 36 Pearson  $r$  correlations were conducted to assess if relationships exist for principals and assistant principals. Results indicated that seven campuses had positive correlations between principals and assistant principals in the following areas: a) Broad based skillful participation in the work of leadership with reflective practice and with high or steadily improving student achievement and development; b) Shared vision results in program coherence with high or steadily improving student achievement and development. Daresh and

Playko (1997), as noted earlier, found that “the leadership behavior of the school principal” (p. xi) was most critical to ensuring school success. Effective principals that share leadership responsibility are better equipped to disperse the weight of such responsibility and are better positioned to build trust and shared teamwork (Barth, 1990; Blasé & Blasé, 2000; Fullan, 2001; Sergiovanni, 1992). This finding might suggest that principals and assistant principals, due to their more similar traditional roles when compared to teachers have greater opportunities to identify with administrative practice that results in a more cohesive awareness and approach to school needs. Moreover, Bass (1985) affirmed increased leader effect on subordinate personnel is contributive to transformation by sustaining them in activities that support goal setting and inspiring others to set aside personal needs and interests on behalf of the organization. Principals and assistant principals share much of the administrative responsibilities suggesting that because of the nature of their work, greater commonality may exist with their perceptions of leadership and those practices that support administrative practice.

#### *Research Question 1b*

Is there a relationship between the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of high school principals and teachers as measured by the Leadership Capacity School Survey?

To examine research question 1b, 36 Pearson *r* correlations were conducted to assess if relationships exist for principals and teachers. Results indicated that seven campuses did not have any positive correlations between principals and teachers. Youngs and King (2002) contend that professional community is characterized by: “(a) shared goals for student-learning, (b) meaningful collaboration among faculty members, (c) in depth inquiry into assumptions, evidence, and alternative solutions to problems, and (d) opportunities for teachers to exert influence over their work” (p.646). Sergiovanni and Starratt (2000) stated, “The work of

leadership involves building, in partnership with teacher leaders, a critical mass of teachers who feel collectively empowered to engage in the slow but exciting work of transforming the school into an environment that promotes quality learning of all students” (p.159). This finding might suggest that at these campuses the administrators had not fully involved teachers in “...shared goals for student learning...” (p.646) or effectively facilitated “...meaningful collaboration among faculty members...” (p.646) or had not provided sufficient “opportunities for teachers to exert influence over their work...” (p.646). The apparent disconnect between administrators and teachers as revealed in this study may be a function of the principal’s inability or unwillingness to relinquish hierarchical authority. Unique to establishing relationships, is the educational leader’s ability to adjust their own leadership style to initiate and reinforce the philosophy of collaboration. Ogawa and Bossert (2002) contend that many schools continue to operate within hierarchical management perspectives. Continued reliance on hierarchical systems promotes principal hesitancy in relinquishing authority to allow for greater levels of autonomy and collaborative processes (Jackson, 2000).

#### *Research Question 1c*

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of assistant principals and teachers as measured by the Leadership Capacity School Survey?

To examine research question 1c, 36 Pearson *r* correlations were conducted to assess if relationships exist for assistant principals and teachers. Results indicated that seven campuses did not have any positive correlations between assistant principals and teachers. As noted earlier in the study, hierarchical authority has been viewed as a vehicle that fosters a sense of false compliance and until educational systems critically face the importance of teacher leadership, there will not be a fundamental change to organizational approaches that promote and maintain

sustained improvement. Rowan (1990) suggested that “higher levels of commitment and satisfaction” (p.373) occur when teachers become involved in comprehensive roles, allowing them to gain knowledge and have subsequent problem-solving capacity through organizational networks. Assistant principals may have failed to engage their teachers in purposeful dialogue. Building level leadership is critical for initiating and implementing efforts to secure avenues for collaboration. The results suggest that assistant principals still may not be positioned to address this need effectively. Assistant principals may continue to defer their responsibility to the principal for teacher engagement and instructional developments.

To address research questions 2a, 2b, and 2c, the researcher collectively viewed academic performance with similarities common to principal, assistant principal and teacher findings as related to the six quadrants from the study. Questions are presented with a description of results per question followed by an overall discussion of results for academic achievement.

#### *Research Question 2a*

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of high school principals and scores in English language arts (ELA), Math, and All Tests Taken from 2004-2008?

To examine research question 2a, 90 Pearson  $r$  correlations were conducted to assess relationships. Results indicated that overall, seven campuses had positive correlations between principals and the following test categories: A) Inquiry-based use of information to inform decisions and practice with math 08 and all tests taken 07, 08; C) Roles and actions reflect broad involvement, collaboration, and collective responsibility with math 08 and all tests taken 07; E) Reflective practice consistently leads to innovation with math 08, all tests taken 07, 08; F) High or steadily improving student academic achievement and development with math 08 and all tests

taken 06, 07, 08. A total of four quadrants and 12 academic areas tested were found in the assessment of principal relationships. Academic areas found in common with all four quadrants were math 08 and all tests taken 07.

#### *Research Question 2b*

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of high school assistant principals and scores (15 results) in English language arts (ELA), Math, and All Tests Taken from 2004-2008?

To examine research question 2b, 90 Pearson  $r$  correlations were conducted to assess relationships. Results indicated that overall, seven campuses had positive correlations between assistant principals and the following test categories: A) Broad based skillful participation in the work of leadership with math 08; all tests taken 06, 07, 08; (B) Shared vision results in program coherence with math 06, 07, 08; all tests taken 06, 07, 08. A total of two quadrants and 10 academic areas tested were found in the assessment of assistant principals relationships. Academic areas found in common to both quadrants were all tests taken 06, 07, 08 and math 08.

#### *Research Question 2c*

Is there a relationship between each of the six leadership capacities (perceptions) of high school teachers and scores in English language arts (ELA), Math, and All Tests Taken from 2004-2008?

To examine research question 2c, 90 Pearson  $r$  correlations were conducted to assess relationships. Results indicated that overall, seven campuses had positive correlations between high school teachers and the following test categories: A) Broad based skillful participation in the work of leadership with math 07; B) Shared vision results in program coherence with math 05. A total of two quadrants and two academic areas tested were found in the assessment of

teacher relationships. Academic areas found common in both quadrants were math 05 and math 07.

### *Summary of Results*

In review of the results, (A) broad based skillful participation in the work of leadership and (B) shared vision results in program coherence were the only quadrants found common to all three category assessments. Results indicated that math 07 was the only academic area common to all three categories. Quadrants (C) inquiry-based use of information to inform decisions and practice and (D) roles and actions reflect broad involvement, collaboration, and collective responsibility are found exclusive to principal findings. (E) Reflective practice consistently leads to innovation, and (F) high or steadily improving student academic achievement and development were exclusive to assistant principal and principal findings.

Kouzes and Posner (1996) stated that "...fostering collaboration is the route to high performance (p.106)" and that integrated leadership, as noted by Marks and Printy (2003) "...reflects the transformational influence of the principal and the shared leadership actions of the principal and teachers" (p. 377). This finding suggests that administrative personnel on seven campuses are involved with processes that support collaborative involvement parallel to supporting academic achievement and development of students, yet this effort may be limited to the principal and assistant principals. Results indicate that administrators maintain shared visions that underpin program awareness aimed to support academic success. However, this too is limited to administrative levels. Lambert (2003) stated that "instructional leadership must be a shared community understanding. Leadership is the professional work of everyone in the school" (p.37) Adams and Kirst (1999) stated that "Professional learning communities make use of formal and informal structures that secure obligations" (p.470).

Equally, obligations help to promote "...subsequent expectations between individuals and members of the group" (p.470).

This finding suggests that structures that secure such obligations and expectant outcomes may not cohere between principals, their assistant principals and teachers on these campuses. While professional learning communities seek to aid in the reorganization of professional accountability through the allowance of autonomy and structures geared to promote a greater commitment to unambiguous standards for learning, results of this study may suggest that disparity exists in how those structures are defined and subsequently implemented. In as much as "...accountability systems define relationships between principals and agents" (Adams & Kirst, 1999, p. 473), these results may provide evidence that these relationships may not be defined in appropriate processes and procedures and may further suggest that internal governance of school functions to better align instruction and learning may not have been effectively established.

Overall, results of the study indicate that a greater relation exists between the perceptions of the principals with that of assistant principals and that the relation of principal perceptions with teacher perceptions were insignificant. No significant relation exists between assistant principal perceptions and teacher perceptions. This yields concern that leadership constructs impacting instructional strategies may be limited to school administration. It suggests that the roles allowing for broad involvement of teachers are not transparent to indicate support of an appropriate vision to sustain academic success, as demonstrated by all constituents. Results of the survey suggest that increased scores of state assessments may be primarily due to teacher efforts and that overall coherence to leadership constructs may be solely tied to instructional formats or programs and not from leadership enhancements.

Although significant relation for both principal perception and assistant principal perception exists with some categories of the TAKS results, data is inconclusive as to the specific strategies employed at each campus and collectively that would support a more defined cause for academic achievement increases. Equally, teacher relation to academic achievement was significant but was primarily limited to areas of math for 2005 and 2007.

### *Implications for Practice*

Although centered upon the tenet that constructivist leadership is foundational for sustained improvement, this research study aimed to identify correlations linking school leadership capacity perceptions and academic achievement. The skills and actions associated with the six critical components of Lambert's Leadership Capacity Survey (2003) lend well to support the inherent benefits which are parallel to numerous transformational leadership constructs in schools. Although educational systems have been bound by traditional hierarchical structures and since holistic change can be difficult and somewhat time consuming, the salient abilities of the leader to reinforce a new mindset required to move in the direction of constructivist leadership via professional learning communities is vital to sustaining successful schools.

Stressing upon the deep rooted collegial processes needed to assist with building a professional learning community, to include assisting in the transformation and renewal of an organization, Reinhartz and Beach (2004) provided the following six supportive leadership capacity qualities that depict the interactive nature of leadership:

- (a) The ability to create a culture that guides all members of the organization;
- (b) The ability to use interpersonal skills in building trust and working with others;
- (c) The ability to communicate and articulate the mission, goals, and strategies;
- (d) The ability to diagnose



problems, select protocols and procedures based on equity, and take risks and (e) The ability to unite forces with purpose to obtain results. (p14)

This interactive nature of a school's faculty to strengthen student performance is commonly referred to as school organizational capacity (Youngs & King, 1995). Notwithstanding the fact that reliance on leadership style alone to address sustained growth and improvement is grounds to be cautionary, educational systems must position constructive leadership reform such that the patterned regularities associated with transformational leadership truly characterize the culture and behavior within the organization. These regularities, also referred to as structures must be evidenced by those critical assumptions and processes that collectively define the culture of the campus and which are geared to promote ongoing academic success. Successful schools are determined to establish and maintain efforts to continually increase academic success. The ability of educational organizations to critically address leadership capacity and realize organizational potential in making good use of structures associated with professional learning communities in order to recognize academic success is vital for effective long standing reform. Current literature on reform efforts underscores the importance of the professional learning community concept and equally accepts this "transforming" model of leadership to have overarching influence upon school improvement efforts.

The concepts of professional learning communities, although unique to each campus, serve to provide a structural component whereby when effectively used by educators, strengthens a collective philosophy that supports broad based skillful participation in leadership. In as much as the extant literature points to the school being a focal point for change, and more to the incessant change of the principal's role, constructivist leadership, complete with myriad definitions and theoretical characteristics, serves to underpin a newer context of shared, collegial

responsibility for leadership. Central to this context are the perceptions within a school's membership that can promote a greater coherence between the principal, assistant principals and teachers to collectively support efforts for sustainable growth and improvement.

### *Implications for Policymakers*

The aim of this research study was to address the utilization of a school leadership survey to ascertain the perceptions of educators regarding leadership capacity and its relationship to academic achievement at the high school level. The researcher identified varying results with schools located within the same district and within like groups across districts. Central to district level efforts, approaches to school administration within a district may be enhanced if leadership was viewed uniformly throughout schools. Notwithstanding the importance of individual contribution, schools that fail to effectively translate and bridge leadership concepts and practices to teachers is concerning. Given that principals inherit ultimate responsibility for their schools' success, and since schools are generally considered as the focal point for change, the increasing demands from federal and state mandates will necessitate schools to critically address their professional training and subsequent practices to ensure more effective collaboration and decision making is taking place. Moral accountability, as indicated by Adams and Kirst (1999) "...is reinforced through educational policy in as much as it mirrors or is manifested as employment mandates that reinforce the use of moral standards of behavior to parallel performance requirements"(p.470). Educational policies that reinforce elements of moral accountability must continue to underpin the importance of advancing teacher preparation and educational leadership. Support at the university level to address leadership foundations may also reinforce the abilities of school

systems to effectively address meeting the needs of their campuses in light of state and federal mandates.

### *Implications for Future Research*

This research study established that a disparity exists between the perceptions of administrators and teachers regarding leadership capacity. The array of questions used in the study is broad and reflective of appropriate leadership tenets. Although use of the survey can be utilized by all campus administrators to review teacher sentiment related to leadership characteristics, further research is necessary to better ascertain the extent perceptions of leadership capacity may be identified through other factors not considered in the survey. Lambert (2003) maintains that constructivist leadership necessitates a reciprocal process for educators. Through reciprocal engagement, members within the educational community are enabled to construct meanings. These meanings forge a common purpose about schooling and are not confined to criteria that centers upon the individual, member roles and or associated behaviors. As such, empirical research identifying the types and affect of cognitive processes promoting specific mechanisms used by schools to establish a common purpose and perception within the local context of school community is needed. Equally important is the investigation of how processes are implemented within each school. This information, collectively, would provide an additional lens for administrators to view and define their own approaches in school leadership.

It was noted earlier that an apparent disconnect between administrators and teachers as revealed in this study may be a function of principals' inability or unwillingness to relinquish hierarchical authority. Results of School 4 clearly indicate a lack of cohesiveness in leadership perception and action. Other factors such as insufficient time, personnel turnover, and issues

related to transitioning of administrative staff may have contributed to low scores. It was also conjectured that administrators may have failed to engage their teachers in purposeful dialogue. Building level leadership is critical for initiating and implementing efforts to secure avenues for collaboration. The results suggest that building leaders still may not be positioned to address this need effectively. Assistant principals may continue to defer their responsibility to the principal for teacher engagement and instructional developments. The questions and suppositions which emerge from this finding represent another frontier for future research. Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches could be employed to guide inquiry into to these areas.

The researcher acknowledges significant limitations to the study. Clearly, more defined statistical analysis is required to better ascertain the level of correlation of quadrant descriptors to those practices found on campuses. Additionally, survey analysis by group across campuses may not have identified additional outcomes. To more effectively identify relation to achievement, the research study would have been more robust if additional data points were used. Having this information, educational leaders will be positioned to better make use of this survey to inform upon and address the critical needs for their students and teachers.

### *Conclusion*

Educational leadership is continuing to evolve as a concept and practice. Principals today are challenged to meet the increasing demands of state and federal mandates and have often seen the incessant call for reform to address these demands effectively. Overtime, as evidenced throughout the history of America's educational agenda, theoretical applications of varying leadership styles have allowed practitioners a wide menu of choice when looking for support to address campus leadership. The socio-political landscape of education today requires practitioners, primarily the principal, to be effective leaders, fostering an environment where

others equally share in the responsibility for the success of all students. Professional learning community concepts encourage practitioners to make good use of collegial approaches through which learning is of primary focus. The prompting of strategic educational change by state and federal mandates forces educators in schools across America, to rethink their own beliefs about leadership. From the lens of researcher and practitioner, the impact upon educational systems is evident. This study has provided new insight and numerous points of encouragement regarding leadership and leadership capacity with the hopeful intent of constructing a more purposeful long lasting reform.

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## Appendix A

### Leadership Capacity School Survey

## Leadership Capacity School Survey

This school survey is designed to assess the leadership capacity of your school. The items are clustered according to the characteristics of Quadrant 4 schools. Once each staff member has completed the survey, the results can be presented in a chart depicting schoolwide needs. The numbers on the 1–5 scale represent the following:

- 1 = We do not do this at our school.
- 2 = We are starting to move in this direction.
- 3 = We are making good progress here.
- 4 = We have this condition well established.
- 5 = We are refining our practice in this area.

Circle the rating for each item and tally the score for each column first, then add the results for each column together and transfer the results to the scoring box on the last page.

### A. Broad-based, skillful participation in the work of leadership.

In our school, we:

1. Have established representative governance groups	1	2	3	4	5
2. Perform collaborative work in large and small teams	1	2	3	4	5
3. Model leadership skills	1	2	3	4	5
4. Organize for maximum interaction among adults and children	1	2	3	4	5
5. Share authority and resources	1	2	3	4	5
6. Express our leadership by attending to the learning of the entire school community	1	2	3	4	5
7. Engage each other in opportunities to lead	1	2	3	4	5

Total (add circled numbers down and then across columns) \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix E: Leadership School Survey

B. Shared vision results in program coherence.

In our school, we:

1. Develop our school vision jointly	1	2	3	4	5
2. Ask each other questions that keep us on track with our vision	1	2	3	4	5
3. Think together about how to align our standards, instruction, assessment, and programs with our vision	1	2	3	4	5
4. Keep our vision alive by reviewing it regularly	1	2	3	4	5

Total (add circled numbers down and then across columns) \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

C. Inquiry-based use of information to inform decisions and practice.

In our school, we:

1. Use a learning cycle that involves reflection, dialogue, inquiry, and action	1	2	3	4	5
2. Make time available for this learning to occur (e.g., faculty meetings, ad hoc groups, teams)	1	2	3	4	5
3. Focus on student learning	1	2	3	4	5
4. Use data/evidence to inform our decisions and teaching practices	1	2	3	4	5
5. Have designed a comprehensive information system that keeps everyone informed and involved	1	2	3	4	5

Total (add circled numbers down and then across columns) \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

D. Roles and actions reflect broad involvement, collaboration, and collective responsibility.

In our school, we:

1. Have designed our roles to include attention to our classrooms, school, community, and profession	1	2	3	4	5
2. Seek to perform outside of traditional roles	1	2	3	4	5
3. Have developed new ways to work together	1	2	3	4	5
4. Have developed a plan for sharing responsibilities in the implementation of our decisions and agreements	1	2	3	4	5

Total (add circled numbers down and then across columns) \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

LEADERSHIP CAPACITY FOR LASTING SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

E. Reflective practice consistently leads to innovation.

In our school, we:

1. Make time for ongoing reflection (e.g., journaling, peer coaching, collaborative planning)	1	2	3	4	5
2. Encourage individual and group initiative by providing access to resources, personnel, and time	1	2	3	4	5
3. Have joined with networks of other schools and programs, both inside and outside the district, to secure feedback on our work	1	2	3	4	5
4. Practice and support new ways of doing things	1	2	3	4	5
5. Develop our own criteria for accountability regarding individual and shared work	1	2	3	4	5

Total (add circled numbers down and then across columns) \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

F. High or steadily improving student achievement and development

In our school, we:

1. Work with members of the school community to establish and implement expectations and standards	1	2	3	4	5
2. Teach and assess so that all children learn	1	2	3	4	5
3. Provide feedback to children and families about student progress	1	2	3	4	5
4. Talk with families about student performance and school programs	1	2	3	4	5
5. Have redesigned roles and structures to develop resiliency in children (e.g., teacher as coach/advisor/mentor, schoolwide guidance programs, community service)	1	2	3	4	5

Total (add circled numbers, down and then across columns) \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

*Appendix E: Leadership Capacity School Survey*

Scoring: Add totals for each section. Possible scores can be found by multiplying the possible number of scores for each category by the number of staff completing the survey; the results for your particular school can be found by adding the actual scores of the staff completing the survey in each category (see the following table). Sections with the lowest scores are those in greatest need of attention. A score of 1 or 2 in the survey represents areas of greatest need, 3 and 4 represent strengths, and 5 represents exemplary work that reflects high leadership capacity. When you have completed the survey, discuss each section and identify possible areas for growth.

	Possible Scores	School Scores
Broad-based, skillful participation in the work of leadership	35 x ___ = ___	___
Shared vision results in program coherence	20 x ___ = ___	___
Inquiry-based use of information to inform decisions and practice	25 x ___ = ___	___
Roles and actions reflect broad involvement, collaboration, and collective responsibility	20 x ___ = ___	___
Reflective practice consistently leads to innovation	25 x ___ = ___	___
High or steadily improving student achievement and development	25 x ___ = ___	___

## Appendix B

### Permission to Use Survey

**From:** Permissions [permissions@ascd.org]  
**Sent:** Friday, January 12, 2007 9:10 AM  
**To:** jkeith@seisd.net  
**Subject:** Leadership Capacity (Thread:240513)  
Dear Mr. Keith,

In response to your request dated January 11, 2007, ASCD grants you the one-time, non-exclusive right to reproduce pgs. 110-113 from "Leadership Capacity for Lasting School Improvement" for use in your dissertation. This permission covers the text portion of the requested materials only and does not extend to material that is separately copyrighted. Please note that it is your responsibility to secure permission for any photographs, illustrations, cartoons, advertisements, etc. appear on a page with the text that are referenced to another source. The reproduction of covers, mastheads, and logos of ASCD publications is strictly prohibited.

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We would appreciate your acknowledging the above by return email. Otherwise, thank you for your interest in ASCD publications.

Sincerely,  
Kat Rodenhizer  
Rights and Permissions Assistant  
ASCD  
[krodenhizer@ascd.org](mailto:krodenhizer@ascd.org)  
703-575-5443



## Appendix C

### IRB Informed Consent Form

**University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) Institutional Review Board**  
**Informed Consent Form for Research Involving Human Subjects**

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**Protocol Title:** "Perceptions of School Leadership Capacity and Student Achievement"

**Principal Investigator:** Joe Keith

**UTEP Educational Leadership and Foundations**

**Introduction**

You are being asked to take part voluntarily in the research project described below. Please take your time making a decision and feel free to discuss it with your friends and family. Before agreeing to take part in this research study, it is important that you read the consent form that describes the study. Please ask the study researcher or the study staff to explain any words or information that you do not clearly understand.

**Why is this study being done?**

The purpose of this study will be to compare the perceptions of the high school principal, assistant principal and teachers regarding school leadership capacity and to determine the relationship, if any, between perceptions of school leadership capacity and student academic achievement. This study was originally scheduled for completion in July of 2008 but due to unforeseen family medical emergencies, this study has been extended.

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Approximately 400-1000 respondents will be enrolling in this study consisting of up to 10 area high schools.

You are being asked to be in the study because you are a school principal, assistant principal or teacher at an area high school in El Paso, Texas.

If you decide to enroll in this study, your involvement will require completion of a brief survey that will involve approximately 20 minutes of your time.

**What is involved in the study?**

If you agree to take part in this study, the research team will: introduce the purpose of the study, explain the timeline for completion, clarify the procedure, if necessary, and distribute the survey. The Principal Investigator will then review responses and apply a matrix to describe varying states of leadership.

**What are the risks and discomforts of the study?**

There are no known risks associated with this research

**What will happen if I am injured in this study?**

The University of Texas at El Paso and its affiliates do not offer to pay for or cover the cost of medical treatment for research related illness or injury. No funds have been set aside to pay or reimburse you in the event of such injury or illness. You will not give up any of your legal rights by signing this consent form. You should report any such injury to Joe Keith at (915) 872-3939, ext. 3701 and to Lola Norton of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at UTEP at (915-747-8841) or lola@utep.edu.

**Are there benefits to taking part in this study?**

There will be no direct benefits to you for taking part in this study. This research may help us to understand the perceptions of school leadership capacity and its impact on the needs of a campus relating to staff development and student achievement.

**What other options are there?**

You have the option not to take part in this study. There will be no penalties involved if you choose not to take part in this study.

**Who is paying for this study?**

Internal Funding:

There is no funding for study.

External funding:

There is no funding for this study.

**What are my costs?**

There are no direct costs.

**Will I be paid to participate in this study?**

You will not be paid for taking part in this research study.

**What if I want to withdraw, or am asked to withdraw from this study?**

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You have the right to choose not to take part in this study. If you do not take part in the study, there will be no penalty.

If you choose to take part, you have the right to stop at any time. However, we encourage you to talk to a member of the research group so that they know why you are leaving the study. If there are any new findings during the study that may affect whether you want to continue to take part, you will be told about them.

The researcher may decide to stop your participation without your permission, if he or she thinks that being in the study may cause you harm

Who do I call if I have questions or problems?

You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may call insert Joe Keith at (915) 872-3939, ext. 3701 or [jkeith@seisd.net](mailto:jkeith@seisd.net).

If you have questions or concerns about your participation as a research subject, please contact Lola Norton of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at UTEP at (915-747-8841) or by email at [lola@utep.edu](mailto:lola@utep.edu).

**What about confidentiality?**

1. Your part in this study is confidential. None of the information will identify you by name. All records will be tabulated to determine a campus leadership capacity "score." Each participating campus will receive a school profile report.
2. All data collected will be reported as group profiles. Your individual responses will not be shared with any campus personnel. The principal investigator will secure all responses to ensure anonymity.

**Mandatory reporting**

If information is revealed about child abuse or neglect, or potentially dangerous future behavior to others, the law requires that this information be reported to the proper authorities.

**Authorization Statement**

I have read each page of this paper about the study (or it was read to me). I know that being in this study is voluntary and I choose to be in this study. I know I can stop being in this study without penalty. I will get a copy of this consent form now and can get information on results of the study later if I wish.

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Consent form explained/witnessed by (Signature):

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Appendix D  
Superintendent Consent Form

Informed Consent: Superintendent

I, (print name of superintendent or designee) \_\_\_\_\_ of the (name of district) \_\_\_\_\_, agree to allow high school principals, assistant principals and their teachers to complete a survey questionnaire under the direction of researcher Joe A. Keith to be conducted in the Educational Leadership Department at the University of Texas at El Paso.

I understand that the purpose of this study seeks to examine perceptions of leadership capacity within schools.

I understand that participation is completely voluntary and that I may end school participation at anytime with no consequences. I understand that there are no known risks involved the participation in this study. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions concerning the procedure and all questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that campus personnel will complete the survey questionnaire and information regarding this survey will be kept confidential and that I may request the results as it pertains to district schools. I understand the each campus principal will be given a school profile report.

I understand that every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality of campus results. I understand that individual and or group profiles will be identified by pseudonyms and or code number. I understand that I may speak with campus personnel regarding this study.

This project, (IRB # 2528 ) was reviewed by the University of Texas at El Paso. If I need to speak to someone about this study at the University of Texas at El Paso or if I have any questions regarding the conduct of the research, I may call Karen Hoover, IRB Administrator, at (915) 747-7939. I understand that if I desire I may contact the researcher, Joe A. Keith, at (915) 852-1998.

I understand that I will receive a copy of this consent form upon request. I have read and understand the above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent /Designee signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## CURRICULUM VITAE

Joe Keith was born on August 6, 1958 in El Paso, Texas. He is the fourth child to Neil C. and Ardell B. Keith. He has three brothers.

Upon graduation from Burges High School in 1976, he entered the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). At UTEP, he earned a B.S. in Education in 1981, with a concentration in secondary education. He earned his M.Ed. in the spring of 1991 from UTEP. This educator has been in the educational field since 1981. He has worked for the El Paso Independent School District, the Socorro Independent School District and the San Elizario Independent School District. Joe has been a teacher, coach, assistant principal, principal and author. He currently is an administrator for the San Elizario Independent School District.

Joe is married to an educator; Norma Estrada-Keith and has three children; Sara Neel; 28; Meagan Keith; 20; Caleb Keith; 5. Sara is pursuing a degree in San Antonio, Texas. Meagan is a high school graduate and is planning to attend UTEP in the fall of 2009. Caleb is in Pre-K and attends Surratt Elementary School in the Clint Independent School District. In the summer of 2003, Joe entered the doctoral program in the Department of Educational Leadership and Foundations at the University of Texas at El Paso.

Permanent address: 14000 Desert Song  
El Paso, Texas 79928