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Improving Instructional Leadership: A Multi-Case Study Of Principal Perspectives On Formal Evaluations

Brenda Chacon-Robles
University of Texas at El Paso, bchaco02@gmail.com

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IMPROVING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP: A MULTI-CASE STUDY OF

PRINCIPAL PERSPECTIVES ON FORMAL EVALUATIONS

BRENDA CHACON-ROBLES

Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership and Administration

APPROVED:

_____

David DeMatthews, Ph.D., Chair

_____

Julia Duncheon, Ph.D.

_____

Rodolfo Rincones, Ph.D.

_____

Elena Izqueirdo, Ph.D.

_____

Charles Ambler, Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate School

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the many students who resemble my background of being economically disadvantaged, English Learner, female and Hispanic. Overall, being labeled as at-risk of not being able to beat the odds and acquire a higher education degree. I was motivated to complete this study in your honor. The challenges of writing a dissertation compares to the perseverance and dedication you will need to be ready for the world that awaits you.

IMPROVING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP: A MULTI-CASE STUDY PERSPECTIVES ON FORMAL EVALUATIONS

by

BRENDA CHACON-ROBLES, BA, MA

DISSERTATION

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I am beyond grateful for my husband and little boy. They say children change your life forever, and Luis you have done that. It is also for you that I write this. One day, I hope you change the world the way you have changed mine. You inspire me to continue doing what I do in the best interest of kids and promote public education as being the best choice for the betterment of society. To my husband, the stars aligned when we met. I love you and thank you for your unwavering support in all that I do.

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Abstract

In a time when public schools continue to be scrutinized, school leadership never mattered more in order to exercise school reform. This qualitative study examined how five principals working in an urban school district perceived their evaluation and how it contributed to their practice. I applied a descriptive case study approach. Evaluations can be intended to find "the best way" to do things overall, to discover a better way to do things in a particular situation, or to develop practitioners' abilities to respond and adapt in different ways (Shaw, 2006). The instructional leadership piece provides insight to what it takes to be an effective principal based on practice. Most states follow a standards-based approach to define and describe the duties and best practices associated with the principalship. Accountability demands on principals have never been greater, especially as more rigorous federal and state accountability programs create intense interest among taxpayers and policymakers with regard to school-level performance. Principal evaluation is emerging as a national policy focus, although it has been largely overshadowed by controversial developments in teacher evaluation.

The findings from this study revealed that overall principals have a positive perception about the evaluation tool. Principal's attitudes and preconceived notions about evaluations contribute to the fact that regardless of the tool, evaluations continue to be seen as a compliance mechanism due to the polices and structures of K-12 organizations However, the findings show that principals believe the goal-setting and feedback components of the tool are of benefit to their practice. The findings from this study have implications for policy, school leadership, and future research. Policymakers must continue to include principals in the process and implementation of their evaluations in order for it to be relevant. Professional development in the area of school leadership needs to continue and aligned to their evaluation in order to promote growth. Additional research needs to be conducted on principal evaluations and the correlation to student outcomes. Furthermore, research also needs to be conducted on the principal's supervisors and the influence they have on the principal.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

I have been a school principal and currently I am an associate superintendent overseeing elementary school principals. I work closely with principals as well as develop policies, provide staff development, coach and mentor. In addition; I also evaluate principals using the Texas Principal Evaluation Support System (TPESS) adopted by the state and district. It is through my experiences that my interest in evaluations emerged. Like in most districts, some principals are effective while others are still learning, struggling, or ineffective. From my experience, some principals take the formal evaluation process seriously and as a tool for growth, while others participate without resistance as a form of compliance. I have reflected on the evaluations I implement as part of my job and I have come to believe there is little or no correlation between the principal's evaluation and their professional growth in future years.

In 2015, a unique opportunity presented itself in relation to principal evaluation. As a district, we were using an outdated evaluation called the West Principal Performance Tool that I will describe in detail in a proceeding section. However, after the state of Texas adopted new principal standards and a new principal evaluation tool, my school district decided to pilot the evaluation tool. The superintendent and school board believed piloting the evaluation was a great opportunity to support principals and create a new generation of effective leaders. As I began developing my dissertation proposal I was also learning about the new principal evaluation tool as part of my job and implementing the tool with my supervisees. I began to wonder what principals would think of the new evaluation tool while developing my research study. I was also curious to see if it would impact their leadership skills, help them improve their practice as instructional leaders, and support student achievement.

HISTORY OF PRINCIPAL EVALUATIONS

In Texas, the standards school districts follow are developed and implemented by the State Board of Education (SBOE) approved by the Texas Commissioner in the Texas

Administrative Code 19. The last time Texas updated its principal standards was 1999. Therefore, any principal evaluation used in Texas follows the standards as adopted by the SBOE. The three domains addressed in the standards are School Community Leadership, Instructional Leadership, and Administrative Leadership. Under each domain there are different competencies required for the principal to have knowledge of. In the West ISD they use the West ISD Performance Appraisal Campus Principal Evaluation Form as their evaluation tool. This tool was adopted during the 2004-2005 school year. However, the tool has been modified as the job description has changed over the course of the years by administration.

After almost 20 years of the same principal standards in place, the state of Texas adopted a new set of principal standards in 2013 to be implemented in June 2014. The Texas Education Agency (TEA), in conjunction with a committee of education professionals developed a new principal evaluation system called Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (TPESS). The TPESS evaluation system was piloted in several districts across the state in the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years. In a letter issued by TEA, they commented that TPESS would be used for improvement of instruction, evaluation of principals on a regular basis, guide professional growth and use a multiple of valid measures/data in determining performance levels. The new instrument includes the student growth results, which will count as 20 percent of the evaluation total.

The West ISD administration in collaboration with principals via focus groups and information sessions, decided to pilot the new standards and the TPESS evaluation instrument during the 2015-2016 school year. This would provide both the principal and the evaluator a year to learn to the instrument and provide professional development. I evaluated the state and district policy and procedures on evaluations. Unlike principal evaluations, all teacher evaluations used in districts across Texas must be board approved. For teacher evaluations, districts have had the option to adopt the old evaluation known as Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) or create their own without TEA approval. Recently, the state also rolled out a new teacher evaluation system called the Texas Teacher Evaluation and Support System (TTESS).

No longer do districts have the option of adopting their own without TEA approving the instrument. For most districts, teacher evaluation policies are located under DNA Legal and Local in school board policy manuals.

While teacher evaluations across the state must be conducted in line with Texas law, principal evaluations follow different standards and leave districts with wiggle room for their own interpretation. A district could implement any principal evaluation tool as they see fit without board or state approval, as long as it followed the standards in place and it did not have to be in board policy. However, a recent change suggested that if the district does decide to implement the TPESS, the state recommended for districts to adopt policy DNB (legal) and follow the procedures and implementation process for this appraisal system.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Researchers have concluded that principals have an important impact on student achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Blasé &Blasé 2003; Leithwood 2004; Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinback 1999; Marks & Printy, 2003; Neumerski, 2013). Although the ways principals influence student achievement are complex, instructional leadership practices that are adapted and applied to the unique context of individual schools and teachers do help to increase student achievement. A significant and historic body of research also exists on evaluations (Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Scriven, 1991; Stake, 1967; Patton, 1997). Evaluations were meant to promote growth and change (Schick 2003; Patton 2008; Scriven 1991). Yet, not enough research has been conducted on principal evaluation to examine the relationship between principal perceptions towards evaluations and improving principal practice. Therefore, I decided to study how principals experience evaluation. The study is guided by one overarching question: How do formal evaluations influence principal leadership? More specifically, I want to answer the following sub-questions:

1. What are principal perceptions of formal evaluation?
2. What roles do principals play in the formal evaluation process?

3. How, if at all, do principals perceive that formal evaluations contribute to their practice?

CONTEXT OF STUDY

I would consider myself to be an active practitioner in the field of educational administration. Being on this journey, my review of literature and practical experience in the field paved the way to develop this study, a path that I would like to compare to a roadmap of research in which every road led me to something new and I was able to make connections along the way. Three main bodies of research informed the development of this study: (a) evaluation significance and impact; (b) instructional leadership; and (c) principal evaluation. Each of these bodies of literature will be discussed in Chapter II. In this chapter, I will introduce evaluations, instructional leadership, and principal evaluations and their importance to this study.

Evaluations have been around since the late 1800's. Scriven (1991) refers to evaluations as the process of determining the merit, worth, or value of something or someone. A similar definition by Patton (2008) states that evaluations are the systematic collection of information about the characteristics and results of programs to make judgments about the program to further develop program effectiveness. The use of evaluations is critical to the impact they have. Evaluations are meant to influence change. Schick's (2003) work identifies that even though evaluations can impact change, evaluation information is only useful if the evaluator acts upon it.

The second body of literature I reviewed was on instructional leadership. Instructional leadership began to emerge in the US during the 1960's as practice-based approach to school improvement (Bridges, 1967; Erickson, 1967; Lipham, 1981). Since then, researchers have consistently sought to understand why some schools are able to reach high academic outcomes for all students and some are not. Edmonds (1979) found that schools that are consistently improving have an effective instructional leader. His findings led the way for additional research focused on the role of the principal and the principal's effect on student achievement (Bossert, Dwyer 1982; Hallinger 1996; Heck 1996).

Instructional leadership continues to evolve, especially after the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) and the current accountability regime. As a consequence of accountability standards, policymakers and reformers increased their attention to not only teacher evaluations, but also principal evaluations. Consequently, principal standards that could be used to develop evaluations became a greater policy emphasis. Many states follow a standards-based approach to define and describe the core duties and best practices associated with the principalship. NCLB and Race to the Top (RTTP) drove policy makers to demand accountability and a consistent evaluation practice of principal standards. The Every Students Succeeds Act (ESSA) has replaced NCLB. ESSA continues to promote the same accountability expectations, which impact principals. The ESSA was signed and approved in December 2015. Each state was responsible for submitting a state ESSA plan. In the Texas plan, it states that principals should spend at least 60% of their time supporting and coaching teachers (Texas Education Agency, 2016). In 1996, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) adopted the first standards to guide state education agencies and universities to develop principal evaluation systems. Recently in 2015, the National Policy Board of Educational Administration (NPBEA) most recently revised the principal standards now known as Professional Standards for Educational Leaders. These standards are currently being tailored to principal evaluation tools across the United States.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

I utilized a qualitative multi-case study approach to explore how five elementary school principals perceive principal evaluation and how it shapes their practice. The research site for this study is an urban public school district located in west Texas. The school district is one of the largest school districts in Texas with high percentage of low socio-economic students. Each case focuses on a principal's perceptions of evaluation and his or her instructional leadership practice and professional development. At the time of the study, the district implemented a new evaluation system to promote growth. The participants' perceptions and understanding of the

new tool are critical to this study. The participants were selected to maximize differences in backgrounds and experiences with the evaluation in order to offer unique insights into the impact of evaluations using the following criteria:

    a. Varying years of principal experience at their current school (i.e. 0-3 years, 3-5 years, 5 or more years)

    b. Total administrative experience combined

    c. Race

    d. Gender

    e. School demographics specifically focused on schools that have a high economically disadvantaged population, grade configuration, location, etc...,

In Chapter III, further detail will be discussed for the selection of the five principals.

SIGNIFICANCE

This study contributes to the field of educational leadership. There remains a lack of research on principal evaluations and the relationship between leadership and principal development. More importantly for the purposes of my study, it is clear that existing research has ignored how principals experience evaluation or whether or not they personally believe evaluation contributes to their practice.

It is my intention that this research will add to the small body of literature focused on principal evaluation (Anderson, 1989; Shipman & Murphy, 1996; Dornbusch & Scott, 1975; Hallinger, 1987; Hallinger & Murphy, 1983; Hallinger, Wang, & Chen 2013), and also connect with the larger body of research focused on teacher evaluation. However, the current body of research is more quantitative than qualitative which includes survey research and value-added models. This study is important because it closely examines the process and perceptions of principal evaluations first hand. In addition, it is my hope that the findings from this study can help improve the principal evaluation in the district while allowing me to share my findings with associate superintendents, superintendents, and other key stakeholders across the state of Texas.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Evaluation: the making of a judgment about the amount, number or value of something; assessment.

Evaluand: the subject of an evaluation, typically a program or system rather than a person.

Texas Principal Evaluation Support System: In June 2014, the state of Texas developed a new principal evaluation with the purpose of improving instruction, evaluating principals on consistent basis, guides professional growth, and use a multiple of valid measures/data in determining performance levels.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

I know of no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves; and if we think them not enlightened enough to exercise their control with a wholesome discretion, the remedy is not to take it from them, but to inform their discretion – Thomas Jefferson, September 28, 1820

In order to understand how evaluations influence principal perceptions of evaluations and contribute to the development of instructional leadership skills, it is important to understand the nature and history of evaluations as well as the construct of "instructional leadership" and how it relates to principal evaluation. This chapter begins with an overview of evaluations and includes how evaluations have evolved within organizations. Next, I provide a literature review of instructional leadership and how researchers have described best practices and adopted national standards for the field. Finally, I highlight the evolution of principal evaluations. Together, these three bodies of literature suggest that principal evaluations are complicated, often ineffective, but under the appropriate conditions can have a positive impact on leadership practice as measured by student achievement and teacher perceptions. More importantly for the purposes of my study, this chapter makes clear that existing research has ignored how principals experience evaluation or whether or not they personally believe evaluation contributes to their practice.

EVALUATIONS: AN OVERVIEW

Brief History of the Evolution of Evaluations

Guba and Lincoln (1989) describe evaluations as simply not appearing one day, but rather as the result of a developmental process of construction and reconstruction that involves a number of interacting influences over a period of three generations: measurement, objectives-oriented, and judgment. Each generation paved way for researchers to question, criticize, and

improve or expand evaluations. Table 2.1 provides a general description of each generation, examples of evaluations from the time period, and main purpose for each.

Table 2.1: Evaluation Generations

Generation	Examples	Purpose
Measurement (1890-1918)	Binet's IQ test	Measures intelligence levels of children and adults.
Measurement (1890-1918)	Army Alpha	Measures intelligence and emotional functioning of soldiers.
Description (1933-1950's)	Eight Year Study	Evaluate descriptors that lead to a gap in post-secondary education.
Judgment (1957-	Stake's Countenance Model	Aims to capture the complexity of an educational innovation or change by comparing intended and observed outcomes.
Judgment (1957- 1980)	CIPP – Daniel Stufflebeam	Evaluates context, input, process and product in judging a program's value.
Judgment (1957-1980)	Goal Free Evaluation	Evaluate the value of a program by examining what it is actually doing, not what it is trying to do.

The first generation (1890-1918) is defined as *measurement*. During this time, the Binet's IQ assessment, Army Alpha, and Darwin's thesis helped people to understand what the term measurement meant in context. For example, Binet's IQ test measured intelligence using five factors of cognitive ability and helped evaluate different levels of intelligence. Business and industry began developing and revising evaluations to measure and assess individual and organizational performance. Guba and Lincoln (1989) described the role of evaluation in an industrial period and in relation to a capitalist society emphasizing the profit margins and efficiency: "If human beings are the major element in the production of goods and services, the

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task of the manager is to make their work as effective and efficient" (p. 25). Thus, management used evaluations to increase worker productivity.

The second generation of evaluation is known as *description*. Shortly after World War I, U.S. secondary schools began to experience an influx of student enrollment. Many students were not prepared for the college–preparatory curricula. In response, the "Eight Year Study" was launched in 1933 with thirty public and private secondary schools. These schools were asked to develop a more responsive curricula to address the concern of students who were not "college and career ready." Evaluations were used to know if the curricula were effective. Ralph W. Tyler, an Ohio State University professor working on one of his famed studies utilized "linked tests," measuring whether or not students learned what their professors had taught. These tests are similar to the curriculum assessments that are used today to assess state standards such as the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR), Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS), End of Course Exams (EOC). Guba and Lincoln (1989) would later identify desired learning outcomes as "objectives." Program evaluation was born from the idea that the Eight Year Study was effective at evaluating and refining curricula. This included identifying descriptors using a pattern of strengths and weaknesses to pinpoint curriculum gaps leading to a description-oriented approach.

The third generation of evaluation is called *judgment*. During the post-Sputnik period, the description-oriented approach revealed weaknesses and was deemed inadequate by the National Science Foundation (NSF). The NSF found it necessary to systematically develop project objectives and include judgment in the act of evaluation, which marked the emergence of a third generation that was characterized by efforts to reach judgments, and in which the evaluator assumed the role of judge, while retaining the earlier technical and descriptive functions as well. New evaluations models continued to evolve, such as Robert Stake's Countenance Model (1967), the Context, Input, Process, Product (CIPP) evaluation model (1971), and Scriven's Goal Free Model.

Defining Modern Evaluation

As previously noted, definitions of evaluations have progressed over time. One of the earliest definitions came from Scriven (1991): "Evaluation refers to the process of determining the merit, worth, or value of something, or the product of that process" (p. 139). Terms often used to refer to this process include: appraise, analyze, assess, critique, examine, grade, inspect, judge, rate, rank review, study or test. The evaluation process normally involves some "identification of relevant standards of merit, worth, or value; some investigation of the performance of an individual or program on these standards; and some integration or synthesis of the results to achieve an overall evaluation or set of associated evaluations" (Scriven, 1991, p. 139). Scriven identifies the subject as the object of the evaluation which is being evaluated based on standards to determine the worth or value (Russ-Eft & Preskill, 2009).

Another definition used by many scholars and researchers today is from Patton (2008), which emphasizes the use of evaluation findings: "Program evaluation is the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and results of programs to make judgments about the program, improve or further develop program effectiveness, inform decisions about future programming, and/or increase understanding" (p. 38). Although Scriven and Patton's definitions are different, they have commonalities. Evaluation should be viewed as a systematic process and should not be developed and engaged upon after completion of a project or program. Evaluation should be a planned and purposeful activity and include collecting data in order to make a decision to improve or refine the program or organization.

The judgment aspect of evaluations is a difficult to control variable. Russ-Eft and Preskill (2009) state, "Evaluation constitutes a significant allocation of time and resources" (p. 16). Most organizations cannot afford to engage in evaluation activities unless the findings are used in some fruitful way. Ultimately, evaluation consists of asking questions about issues that arise out of everyday practice. It is a means for gaining better understanding of what we do and the effects of our actions in the context of society and the work environment (2009).

Why Evaluate?

Evaluations are a part of almost every organization. As human beings, we constantly evaluate everything around us from the food we eat to our daily performance at work. Evaluations in some manner are a part of our everyday life. We live in a society that demands immediate results. Results are a part of evaluation, but as I previously stated, the purpose of an evaluation is to learn and improve through a systematic approach. This purpose is generally ill suited for making specific claims outside the scope of the evaluation (e.g., consider the meaning of observing and evaluating a teacher based solely on a 30-minute observation rather than an entire academic school year).

Despite the fact that evaluation is often misused, evaluations clearly have the potential to add value in organizations. Russ-Eft and Preskill (2009) identified six reasons to evaluate: (a) evaluation ensures quality; (b) evaluation contributes to increased organization members' knowledge; (c) evaluation helps prioritize resources; evaluation helps plan and deliver organizational initiatives; (d) evaluation helps organization members be accountable; (e) evaluation findings can help convince others of the need or effectiveness of various organizational initiatives; and (f) experience with evaluation is a marketable skill.

An additional and often ignored perspective of evaluation is the idea of evaluation in a democratic society. Chelimsky (2006) discusses the use of evaluation for decision-making and public accountability. According to Chelimsky (2006), there are four intrinsic reasons for evaluation as part of a democratic government process. Evaluations report information about government performance, add data to the existing knowledge required for government action, support the development of analytical capability within agencies to move them from a territorial approach to a culture of learning, and help the government be more transparent about its performance. Based on my review of evaluations within organizations, I argue that the primary purpose of evaluation is to provide accountability for the merit and worth of policies and programs and generate knowledge in specific areas of public endeavor.

The Use of Evaluation

Evaluation can be an investment in people and progress, but the usefulness of evaluation is critical to ensure its value. Patton (1997) developed the *utilization-focused evaluation*, based on the notion that evaluations should be judged by their utility and actual use. From this perspective, evaluators should facilitate the evaluation process and design evaluations with careful consideration of how each aspect of the evaluation is completed, from beginning to end, will affect its results. The interesting part about utilization-focused evaluations is that it does not require a particular model, method, or theory. Instead, utilization-focused evaluations are processes for helping users select the most appropriate model, method, theory, or use for a particular situation to be evaluated.

A major theme of evaluation is how they can be used to influence change to improve areas such as policy, personnel, or programs. Modern organizations, such as school districts and state education agencies, demand quick and reliable information to drive fast-paced change. Organizations and evaluators want to be able to see change implemented in a visual or tangible way. Russ-Eft and Preskill (2009) call this type of evaluation use, *instrumental use*. Instrumental use refers to the direct application of what has been learned from the evaluation. The effects of use can be seen, heard, or felt in some way.

In many organizations, evaluations are also used in a more informal way. The purpose can be to evaluate an individual or group's conceptualization or perception of the evaluand. Evaluand is defined as the subject of an evaluation, typically a program or system rather than a person. The analysis of the evaluand is called *conceptual or knowledge use*. Conceptual or knowledge use usually is presented in a verbal presentation that includes listening or reading the evaluation report or executive summary. Unlike instrumental use, conceptual or knowledge use provides the evaluand a better understanding of the issues the evaluation raises. After processing, the evaluand can make a decision based on the additional information they received. This way of process thinking concurs with Patton's (2008) work called *process use*. He states that individual changes in thinking, attitudes, behaviors, program and or organizational changes in

procedures and culture, that occur among those involved in evaluation as a result of learning that occur among those during the evaluation process. In essence, the impact on a program does not just come from the findings, but going through the thinking process that an evaluation requires.

Challenges

Effective evaluations are complex due to the broad range of factors that influence evaluators, data collection, time constraints, and other relevant aspects of the evaluation process. Challenges impede the usefulness of evaluations in many different ways. Russ-Eft and Preskill (2009) identify 6 different challenges within an evaluation process or system.

- Changes in clients during the evaluation or limited involvement of these clients
  - It is important that those who will be evaluated be a part of the evaluation, to include the design and implementation.
- Changes in the process during the evaluation
  - Organizations are constantly changing. Therefore, when the situation changes, the evaluation changes.
- Evaluator's credibility is compromised
  - When the evaluator is ethical, knowledgeable, professional, and honest, the person being evaluated, trusts their evaluator. However, there may be times when the organization members question the evaluator's credibility. If the evaluator's creditability is questioned, organization members are less likely to have confidence in the evaluation and will be less inclined to use the findings.
- Changing political winds
  - Evaluations can be viewed as a political act; it is subject to a wide variety of internal and external political influences. The findings will less likely to be useful if at any point depending how the evaluator is viewed due to political forces.
- Insufficient communication channels within the organization

- Organizations must have open channels for communications and systems for disseminating and accessing the evaluation findings. They must be made available to all clients and relevant audiences in a variety of formats.
- Timeliness of the evaluation information
  - Timeliness is everything. All timelines must be followed in order to address the objective of the evaluation without losing its focus.

Frequently Used Models

Evaluation models and approaches were designed in response to the several issues around evaluations throughout the years. In Preskill & Russ-eft's book *Building Evaluation Capacity* (2004), the authors identify models and approaches that are frequently mentioned in the literature.

Table 2.2: Evaluation Models

Models	Definition
Behavioral Objectives Approach	This approach focuses on identifying the degree to which a program's goals and objectives have been met. The major questions guiding this kind of evaluation are 1). Is the program achieving the objectives, 2) Is the program producing? The primary methodologies used in this approach are achievement tests, and performance data.
Responsive Evaluation	This approach calls for evaluators to be responsive to the information needs of various audiences or stakeholders. This approach is primarily used in mixed methods specifically a case study approach using qualitative methods. The major question guiding this kid of evaluation is, "What does the program look like to different people?"
The Four-Level Model	The Four-Level Model style is most often used to evaluate training and development programs. It concentrates on four levels of training: reactions, learning, behavior, and results. This approach answers the question "What impact did training have on participants in terms of their reactions, learning, behavior, and organizational results?"
Goal-Free Evaluation	Goal-free evaluation accepts that the program's objectives and goals are unknown to the evaluator. Therefore, the evaluator has the least contact with the program manager and is unfamiliar with the program's stated goals and objectives. The major question addressed in this kind of evaluation is, "What are the anticipated and unanticipated effects?"
Utilization-Focused	According to Patton (1997), "utilization focused program evaluation is evaluation done for and with specific, intended primary users for specific,

Evaluation	intended uses" (p. 23). With this approach, stakeholders know what they need to know and the main emphasis is on the use of the findings.
Participatory/ Collaborative Evaluation	This approach is grounded on the decision making process. A process which includes all stakeholders for the purpose of them clearly understanding the program being evaluated and using the results to make a decision. Like the utilization-focused evaluation, the major focusing question is, "What are the information needs of those closest to the program?"

Improvement and Organizational Learning

Evaluations should inform organizational leadership and improvement. Schick (2003) states,

> One of the misconceptions of the performance movement is the notion that organizations are transformed by having information on how well they are doing. This optimism is rarely justified… It requires sustained political and managerial will to reorient an organization in response to information on what it is doing or hopes to accomplish. In fact, genuine organization change may be a pre-condition for effective use of performance information. (p. 83)

In other words, evaluation information is only useful if one acts upon it. The question then is: How can evaluation ensure actionable information is provided and acted upon? Organizations must pay attention to the different types of learning and the different approaches to learning. Considering learning types and approaches is key for stakeholders to know what to do with evaluation data in order to improve practice. Evaluation can be intended to find "the best way" to do things overall, to discover a better way to do things in a particular situation, or to develop practitioners' abilities to respond and adapt in different ways (Shaw, 2006).

Learning is essential to evaluation. In the book *The Sage Handbook of Evaluation* (Shaw, Greene, & Mark, 2006), three concepts are identified that are useful for evaluation: single-loop, double-loop, and deutero learning. Single–loop learning is a response to an observation or event that is based on a person's or organizations' existing set of values, beliefs, and norms. After observing the results, a person automatically takes in the feedback and tries a different approach. Double-loop learning involves re-evaluating and reframing goals, in light of experience. The first

loop consists of goal piece and the second loop enables their modification. In this situation, a person looks at consequences from a wider perspective. Deutero learning is also known as triple-loop learning, and is the combination of both single and double-loop learning. Deutero learning focuses on transforming organizational members by helping them learn how to learn to produce new strategies to develop their knowledge.

For many decades, researchers and theorists continue asking the question, "Are evaluations working?" According to Alkin, Daillak, and White (1979), no one expects evaluation to work every time, but there are far too many stories of evaluations that have failed. Hence, program decision-making continues to be uninfluenced by evaluation. The literature and research seems to have a consensus that evaluations have little impact on change. One can wonder why we still have evaluations if they seem to have no purpose. One explanation for the continuing presence of evaluation despite its "dismal failure" is the sheer nature of the bureaucracies, which crated formal evaluation requirements (1979). The last reason evaluations fail to be effective is the lack of accountability or the will to disrupt the status quo. Some people simply do not want to rock the boat with the data collected from an evaluation.

Goal Setting

Goal setting theory evolved largely on the basis of our empirical research conducted over nearly four decades. It was based on Ryan's (1970) premise that conscious goals affect action. Goal setting theory is a theory of motivation that explains what causes some people to perform better on work-related tasks than others. Locke & Latham believe that biology is what drives goal-directed action. They believe that all organisms engage in goal-directed actions in order to survive (2013). However, humans go a large extra step beyond animals. Humans make choices. We can appraise our performance relative to our goals, possessing varying levels of confidence to attain them, experience emotions regarding goal success and failure, and raise or lower their goals as a result.

The authors define the term goal setting theory as the object or aim of an action (Locke & Latham, 2013). They conducted research on 400 empirical studies that led goal -setting theory in 1990 that found two main findings. The first one is that there is a linear relationship between the degree of goal difficulty and performance. For example, the participant's performance with the highest goals was higher than those with easier goals. Secondly, difficult goals lead to higher performance than no goals as well as vague, abstract goals such as "do your best". Once these two findings were identified, the authors developed the mechanisms by which a specific high goal increases performance and the moderator variables that enhance the goal-performance relationship (Lock & Latham, 2002).

Table 2.3: Goal Mechanisms

Mechanism	Action
Directive Function	Goals direct attention and effort toward goal-relevant activities and away from goal irrelevant activities.
Energizing Function	High goals lead to greater effort than low goals.
Persistence	The time spent to attain a goal.
Knowledge or task strategy	High goals cue an individual to draw upon the extant knowledge/skill required to attain it.

Table 2.4: Goal Moderators

Moderator Variables	Action
Goal Commitment	Commitment is most important and relevant when goals are difficult.
Ability	Ability affects the choice of goal because people cannot perform without knowledge and skill.
Feedback	People need feedback that reveals progress in relation to their goals
Task Complexity	Tasks that are straightforward for people affect the goal-performance relationship.

Locke and Latham (2006) also wrote about new advances in goal-setting theory. For the purpose of this study, a specific portion was reviewed. The authors conducted a three-year study of people in managerial and professional jobs in Germany that revealed that only those adults

who perceived their goals as difficult to attain reported a change in affect. People with a learning goal orientation tend to choose tasks in which they can acquire knowledge and skill (2006).

Locke and Latham's 1990 book paved the way for scholars in the leadership literature to integrate major tenets of goal setting theory in the definition, development, and examination of varied leadership models. Goal attainment is a central and explicit characteristic of most popular definitions of leadership such as: Transformational Leadership, Servant Leadership, Empowering Leadership, and a few more. Furthermore, the scales used to assess leader effectiveness refer directly to major tenets of goal setting theory as identified in Table 2 and 3 (Locke & Latham, 2013). Indeed, effective leaders set challenging and specific goals, encourage followers to participate in goal setting, demonstrate commitment to personal and organizational goals, and provide feedback on goal attainment (Bass, 1985: Bono &Judge 2003).

Evaluation Conclusions

Change is inevitable, and everything in our field continues to evolve. One example can be how curriculum in the 1920's is very different from what it is now in 2016. Evaluations have evolved over time and each generation has improved and expanded evaluations (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Throughout this section we learn about the history and evolution of terms. Terms often used to refer to this process include: appraise, analyze, assess, critique, examine, grade, inspect, judge, rate, rank review, study, or test (Scriven, 1991). Modern evaluation is used to collect information, improve and learn from evauations. In addition, the resreach informs us that evaluation is an investment in people; quality evaluations should be judged by their utility (Patton, 1997). Like everything, evaluations also have their challenges. This is why: paying close attention to evaluations can be helpful. Evaluations should inform organizational leadership and improvement. Evaluations can be intended to find "the best way" to do things overall, to discover a better way to do things in a particular situation, or to develop practitioners' abilities to respond and adapt in different ways (Shaw, 2006).

Instructional leadership began to emerge in the US during the 1960's as a practice-based approach rather than a theory-driven construct (Bridges, 1967; DeMatthews, 2018; Erickson, 1967; Lipham, 1981). According to Bridges (1967), of the seven major task areas for which principals have responsibility, curriculum and instruction have generated the most attention. On the one hand, the principal has been exhorted to exert instructional leadership, while on the other hand it has been argued that such a role is beyond the principal capacity. In essence, research-based evidence about instructional leadership is vastly larger and more sophisticated in quality than it was 20 years ago. The question then is, what is instructional leadership and when and how did the role of the principal evolve from managerial towards instruction? Bridges' seminal paper 1967 article entitled, *Instructional leadership: A concept re-examined* signaled what will be a 50-year ongoing debate on the evolution of instructional leadership.

In the 1970's, Edmonds (1979) wrote the seminal article, *Effective Schools for the Urban Poor,* as a part of research focused on the "effective schools movement." Edmonds was interested in schools that seemed to beat the odds (e.g., neighborhood public schools in low-socioeconomic urban neighborhoods that performed well on reading and mathematics assessments in comparison to schools with similar racial and socio-economic demographics). Edmonds and other effective schools scholars were curious as to why some schools were able to reach high academic outcomes for all students despite being located in high poverty zip codes. Edmonds (1979) found that in the improving schools the principal was more likely to be an instructional leader, more assertive in his/her instructional leadership role, more of a disciplinarian, and perhaps most of all, assuming responsibility for the evaluation of the achievement of basic educational objectives. Edmonds' work prompted others to have a new interest in the field of instructional leadership, including policymakers.

In the early 1980's Steven Bossert, in collaboration with other scholars, developed the Far West Lab Instructional Management Framework (Bossert, Dwyer, et al.,1982). This collaboration brought to life previous notions about leadership's critical link between student

achievement and school effectiveness. Behaviors, patterns, characteristics, and trends of schools principals were identified in "effective schools." Most importantly, Bossert and colleagues claimed that a "conceptual foundation" for a productive program of research targeting principal instructional leadership was researchable and could be used to assess the impact of leadership on teaching and learning. They provided an avenue to investigate and conceptualize how instructional leadership is enacted in schools by not only researching schools but also developing principal leadership academies to test the theories with principal preparation.

During the early 1990's and into present time, instructional leadership became an increasingly popular term partly due to the interests of the business sector and their influence on policymakers in education. Policymakers began to focus on school restructuring and improvement through a standards-based reform and teacher accountability agenda. Hallinger and Heck (1996) seminal article, *Reassessing the Principal's Role in School Effectiveness: A Review of Empirical Research, 1980-1995* focused on the relationship between theoretical models, the role of the principals, and their effect on student achievement. One of the major findings from their research is how the principalship indirectly affects student achievement through supporting teachers and creating organizational conditions that allow teacher and student learning to take place. Hallinger and Heck (1996) argue that understanding the routes by which principals can improve school outcomes through working with others is itself a worthy goal for research. Most importantly with respect to this point, the research illustrates that these effects appear to compound as principals pursue school-level action. Those actions portray the importance of professionalizing education, empowering teachers as professionals, and building staff capacity as strategies for school improvement (Hallinger, 2015). During this time, a gradual shift began from "managerial" leadership to a more transformational/instructional approach. However, it is concluded that while substantial progress has been made over the past 15 years in understanding the principal's contribution to school effectiveness, the most important scholarly and practical work lies ahead (Hallinger & Heck, 1996).

As a consequence of increased accountability after the implementation of NCLB, the

spotlight shifted not only on teacher effectiveness, but also on principal effectiveness as it relates to student achievement and closing achievement gaps. As pressure for improving student performance in the current standards-based accountability environment swells and test results are increasingly scrutinized and used to remove so-called "ineffective" teachers and principals, school leaders are being urged to focus their efforts on the core business of schooling—teaching and learning (Normore & Brooks, 2012).

Defining Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership has many definitions. In order to understanding what effective principals do and how it relates to instructional leadership, I looked closely at six studies and literature reviews centered around instructional leadership and the principal's role in improving student achievement and teacher capacity (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Blasé &Blasé 2003; Leithwood 2004; Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinback 1999; Marks & Printy, 2003; Neumerski, 2013).

Hallinger and Heck (1996) identify the impact of leadership terms of category and in terms of mode of impact in their article *Exploring the Principal's Contribution of School Effectiveness: 1980-1995*. Hallinger and Heck conducted a meta-analysis of prior studies over a 15-year period to examine the school principal's beliefs and leadership behavior. In addition, the studies reviewed had to include explicit measure of school performance as a dependent variable and were interested in international perspectives on school improvement. Hallinger and Heck conceptualized the principal's role in school effectiveness using three models; direct, mediated, and reciprocal effects. The direct-effects model proposes that the leader's practices can have effects on school outcomes (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). Researchers adopting this model have been unable to produce concrete or consistent evidence of leadership effects on student outcomes. Mediated- effects model consists of principal's actions affecting outcomes indirectly through other variables. In essence, leaders are not alone in their practice and achieve results through supporting and helping other people. These findings are in line with other studies. For

example, Leithwood (1994) found that certain leadership practices contribute to the outcome desired by schools, but other people, events, and organizational factors such as teacher commitment, instructional practices, or school culture almost always mediate the contribution. A mediated-effects model combined with different variables produced either mixed or consistently evidence of positive effects of principal leadership on school outcomes.

Lastly, the reciprocal-effects model determines that the principal affects teachers and teachers affect the principal and through that relationship, outcomes are affected. Scholars have proposed that relationships between the administrator and features of the school and its environment are interactive (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). In this model, administrators are flexible and adapt to the environment, creating the ability to change their thinking and behavior over time based on the outcomes. In sum, Hallinger and Heck (1998) helped conceptualized the principal's leadership role into a framework with four areas through which leadership may influence the organizational system: purposes and goals, structure and social networks, people, and organizational culture.

Blasé and Blasé (2003) conducted an analysis of 800 USA teachers' accounts of their own principal's positive and negative characteristics, and their views of how those characteristics affected their performance as teachers. The teachers were graduate students working in public elementary, middle, and high schools. Each teacher answered open-ended questions based on descriptions of principals' positive and negative characteristics and how these characteristics affected their performance in the classroom. From this emerged three aspects of effective instructional leadership: talking with teachers, promoting teachers' professional growth, and fostering teacher reflection. They also found that principals who are good instructional leaders develop a deep appreciation for the potential artistry on an instructional conference with a teacher, that magical, creative, intuitive, and reflective talks as they discover the complexity and challenge of conducting an effective conference.

Blasé and Blasé (2003) also found that effective principals frequently provided formal staff development opportunities to address emergent instructional needs as well as the

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importance of principal and teacher reflection. In any field, reflection allows someone to think about and evaluate their actions or strategies. This study provided compelling evidence of the dramatic effects of principals' behaviors on the reflective capacities of teachers. These behaviors include modeling, classroom observation, dialogue, suggestion and praise. Effective instructional leaders realize that most teachers expand their teaching range only with carefully designed support and assistance. That vital interaction was seen to demand a range of expertise from the principal, from classroom observation and data gathering, to awareness of the teacher's stage of development, and reflective communication skills.

Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinback (1999) reshape the definition of instructional leadership by suggesting that "times change" in regards to the principalship. In other words, we should expect leadership to be mediated by time and context. The authors found that instructional leadership typically assumes that the critical focus for attention by leaders is the behaviors of teachers as they engage in activities directly affecting the growth of students. This definition emerged after a secondary school named Central Ontario Secondary School (COSS) was studied over a period of 10 years by the authors.

COSS is a large comprehensive school with a diverse population in central Ontario Canada. Many COSS students came from low-income families. Violence and crime were concerns in the community due to the lack of jobs. Every year since 1985, district administration changed and teacher morale was low. Most teachers were experienced teachers. In addition, the graduation rate was low at 50 percent. Over the course of the study, the principal remained in his/her position. Interviews were conducted with administration, 18 teachers, and students. Administration and teachers at COSS implemented a series of programs and policies. The authors found that one of most important lessons to be learned from the COSS case study is the relationship between the content and process of change. Things from attendance policies, to child care programs, to the implementation of cooperative learning strategies are all noted in the study. In sum, Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinback found that the stability of principal leadership and the principal's individualized support, intellectual simulation, and modeling for all teachers, staff

and students had a positive effect on student achievement. The administrators had vision, goals and high expectations of all.   What do we know about principal, teacher, and coach instructional leadership? Where should we go from here? Those are two questions posed by Neumerski (2013). The author takes on a unique approach of integrating all three areas to help uncover what has been discovered on the "how" of instructional leadership. Neumerski argues that instructional leadership literature remains overwhelmingly centered on the principal and that schools do not operate in compartmentalized ways. In addition, leaders do not work in isolation. Neumerski uses a distributive leadership perspective to show how instructional leadership is tied to the core work of schools: teaching and learning. Hence, instructional practice must include the connections between the principal, teacher, and coach. It is important to note the lack of literature on teacher leadership. The literature does state that teacher instructional leadership illustrates that teachers are sometimes placed in leadership positions because of a belief that "most of the knowledge required for school improvement must inevitably reside in the people who deliver instruction, not in the people who manage them" (p. 321). In addition, the coaching literature highlights specific traits that reflect what a good principal consists of such as strong interpersonal skills, tact, patience, good communication skills, and flexibility. Neumerski's (2013) work suggests there is a vital connection between leadership and learning. However the disconnection in the literature develops a sense of urgency to integrate these three bodies in order to develop a concrete understanding of the "how" of instructional leadership and the impact they have on student achievement.

Furthermore, Marks and Printy (2003) also focus on the relationship between principals and teachers. Their study examines their collaboration around instructional practices to enhance the quality of teaching and student performance. The authors conducted a study of 24 nationally selected restructured schools that consisted of eight elementary, middle, and high schools. They utilized theories of transformational and instructional leadership to analyze leadership practice. Transformational leadership is defined in this study by "providing intellectual direction and aims at innovating within the organization empowering and supporting teachers as partners" (p. 371).

Instructional leadership is defined in this article by a model of "shared instructional leadership" that replaces a hierarchal notion within an organization (p. 371). Therefore, the principal is not the sole instructional leader, but rather the leader of instructional leaders that promotes collaboration of principal and teachers on curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

From the schools analyzed in Marks and Printy's study, nine schools, 3 at each grade level, scored low on both forms of leadership. 6 schools, 2 at each grade level scored high on transformational leadership, but scored low on shared instructional leadership. Seven schools scored high on both transformational and shared instructional leadership. The nine schools that scored low on both leadership measures show that they do not benefit from the principal's leadership approach. Neither transformational or instructional leadership practices appeared to be in practice. These schools were without a principal, in transition with an interim principal, or had ineffective principals. In the six schools where principals demonstrated strong transformational leadership, but limited instructional leadership, the teachers showed similar behavior patterns as compared to the principals. In these schools, the focus was not on instruction, but focused on facilities, community engagement, and social reforms. Evidence of limited leadership is apparent in these 6 schools. Finally, the 7 schools that showed both transformational and shared instructional leadership between the principal and teachers had strong evidence of high quality teaching and learning. Thus, Marks and Printy found that the responsibility of student achievement is not reliant solely on the principal, but rather a mutual collaboration by all that a principal's leadership style and approach can help foster.

Instructional Leadership Practices in Context

From the studies and research reviewed above, one can conclude the work of the principal is highly complex. Due to its complexity, certain functions of instructional leadership are critical in the context in which school leaders work. Leithwood (2004) identifies two functions that are indispensable to leadership. They are setting directions and exercising influence. Setting directions allows leaders to help a group have shared understandings about the

organization to develop a shared vision or purpose. Practices within setting directions can include conveying a vision, creating high expectations, and cultivating goals. When leaders develop people, they significantly and positively influence them through intellectual simulation or providing individualized support.

Furthermore, Leithwood (2004) argues that leaders do much more than just the administrative and managerial work of the principalship. Instead, they are required to be extremely responsive to the unique contexts in which they work. Specifically, Leithwood (2004) identifies10 practices that are demanded in the daily context of the principal role (pg. 10-14):

1) Role-Related Leadership Practices

2) Capturing people's attention

3) Building capacity

4) Implications of state policies in schools and classrooms

5) Creating and sustaining competitive schools

6) Empowering others

7) Providing instructional guidance

8) Developing and implementing school improvement plans

9) Serving diverse populations

10) Being equitable

In another literature review, Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins (2008) conduct a large-scale experiential study structured around claims on successful school leadership. The authors conclude that there are seven strong claims about successful leadership. The seven claims are as follows:

1) Although school leadership matters, classroom instruction is the single most important factor next to school leadership due to instruction influencing student learning.

2) Most successful leaders pull from basic leadership practices. The synthesis of evidence provided by the authors conclude that four sets of leadership qualities and

practices such as building vision, developing people, redesigning the organization and managing teaching and learning programs capture what most successful leaders do.

3) Context is everything and it is all about the way the leader applies leadership practices and how they approach situations.

4) Good leaders build capacity with the people in the organization through coaching and supporting. The leader does not take a direct approach to improve teaching and learning, rather instruction is taken care of by the leader's ability to motivate and cultivate good working conditions.

5) The leader is inclusive is of all teachers, staff, parents, students in their leadership practices and approaches. Therefore, leadership has a greater impact on schools and pupils when it is universally dispersed.

6) Some patterns of distribution are more effective than others.

7) Certain personal traits explain the relationship between the variations in leadership effectiveness. Each leader has its unique traits, but some commonalities among successful principals are that they are open-minded, intelligent, learn from others, flexible, persistent, optimistic and have strong values. These traits help leaders push forward during obstacles to achieve student progress.

Instructional Leadership Conclusions

The instructional leadership piece provides insight to what it takes to be an effective principal based on practice. Instructional leadership started off as a theory from studying what happens in effective schools in high poverty areas as research by (Bridges, 1967; Erickson, 1967; Lipham, 1981) to more research conducted on instructional leadership by (Edmonds, 1979; Bossert, Dwyer, et al., 1982). The results of research on instructional leadership is now guiding policy makers interested in ensuring that schools have principals prepared to drive instructional and school improvement. The definitions of instructional leadership have also evolved from Hallinger and Heck's (1998) conceptualizing the principal's leadership role into a framework

with four areas through which leadership may influence the organizational system., to Neumerski's (2013) work on distributive leadership. Throughout this section, essential leadership practices are identified in order for a principal to be effective. Leithwood (2004) argues that leaders do much more than just the administrative and managerial work of the principalship.

PRINCIPAL STANDARDS

Most states follow a standards-based approach to define and describe the duties and best practices associated with the principalship. While these standards are based on research, they are still created by committees composed of policymakers, experts and others that can be subjective or ideologically driven. In 1996, the Council of Chief State School Officers adopted the list of standards for schools leaders provided by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC). Shipman and Murphy (1996) led this endeavor and observed the following:

> Forged from research on productive educational leadership and the wisdom of colleagues, the standards were drafted by personnel from 24 state education agencies and representatives from various professional associations. The standards present a common core of knowledge, dispositions, and performances that will help link leadership more forcefully to productive schools and enhanced educational outcomes. Although developed to serve a different purpose, the standards were designed to be compatible with the new National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) Curriculum Guidelines for school administration. as well as with the major national reports on reinventing leadership for tomorrow's schools. As such, they represent another part of concerted effort to enhance the skills of schools and to couple leadership with effective educational processes and valued outcomes. (p. 3)

In 1996, The ISLLC first developed 6 standards to guide state education agencies and universities to develop evaluation systems, educational leadership programs, and state standards. Each standard consists of the knowledge, performance and dispositions. The knowledge and

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performance pieces are needed in order for a principal to be able to implement the practices for school improvement. The dispositions identify the values, beliefs, and commonalities that seem most necessary for a principal to convert knowledge into performance that meet the standards (Sergiovanni, 2005).

The most recent revisions of the principal standards by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) came about in 2015 in the form of the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders. The standards below represent effective school leadership actions, skills, and orientations:

Standard 1 – Mission, Vision, and Core Values

Leaders implement a shared vision, mission, and core values that impact the success of all students.

Standard 2 – Ethics and Professional Norms

Leaders act ethically and professional at all times with all students for the interest of every child succeeding.

Standard 3 – Equity and Cultural Responsiveness

Leaders promote equitable and cultural opportunities for the success of all students.

Standard 4 – Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Leaders provide a system of rigorous curriculum and instructional practices to promote student achievement.

Standard 5 – Community of Care and Support for Students

Leaders provide a high quality-learning environment that cares and supports all students.

Standard 6 – Professional Capacity of School Personnel

Leaders support and hire highly qualified staff for the interest of student's well-being.

Standard 7 – Professional Community for Teachers and Staff

Leaders provide a community of professionalism for all teachers and staff.

Standard 8 – Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community

Leaders provide multiple and meaningful opportunities for the community to be involved in the success of their child's education.

Standard 9 – Operations and Management

Leaders facilitate school resources and operations to provide the best for all students.

Standard 10-School Improvement

Leaders consistently strive to improve and implement change for the best interest of the students.

The NPBEA Standards can be used as a reference point for leadership implementation within school organizations. In general, these standards are used to guide principal programs, principal development and principal evaluation tools. However, as previously noted, the challenge is in the way principals put "best practices" in place within their unique district and school contexts.

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION RESEARCH PAST AND PRESENT

Accountability demands on principals have never been greater, especially as more rigorous federal and state accountability programs create intense interest among taxpayers and policymakers with regard to school-level performance. Principal evaluation is emerging as a national policy focus, although it has been largely overshadowed by controversial developments in teacher evaluation. I searched to identify the research below through Google Scholar, and Proquest. In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act required states to adopt new methods for evaluating principals that included high-stake, summative measures of student performance while also addressing principal preservice and in-service quality improvements. The 2009 enactment of Race to the Top incentivized states to adopt high-stakes summative evaluation

measures based on student performance as part of principal and teacher evaluation. [1] In addition, the Texas State ESSA plan highlights the importance of modeling best practices for principals in terms of instructional leadership. (TEA, 2018).

The current context of high-stakes accountability has propelled principal evaluation to the forefront of conversations about school reform, although there is limited research focused on principal evaluations. Anderson (1989) describes two types of evaluation approaches for principals: formative and summative. Formative is defined as a means of improving performance with ongoing communication between the supervisor and the administrator. Summative evaluation is focused on the end result, which summarizes the participants' development at a particular time. A formalized approach to evaluate the principal began in the early 1980's when Dornbusch and Scott (1975) offered a four-stage evaluation system. It consists of a beginning of year conference by allocating tasks and setting criteria. The performance standards provide criteria that are to be met by the administrator and the tasks is referred to the job descriptions. This process culminates with an end-of-year appraisal conference that includes the administrator's performance throughout the year.

Hallinger and Murphy (1987), identify four conditions that school districts should consider as they plan and develop evaluations within the instructional leadership framework. The conditions are knowledge of curriculum and instruction, professional norms, district expectations, and role diversity. Arguably, if these four conditions are addressed, the principal exercises effective instructional leadership. The most striking claim made by Hallinger and Murphy (1987) was the importance of knowledge of curriculum and instruction. Hallinger and Murphy claim educators have long assumed that principals have the tools to provide instructional leadership because they were once teachers themselves. Unfortunately, preparation as a teacher does not ensure that a prospective principal is capable of evaluating teaching, helping teachers improve classroom instruction, or developing, coordinating, and implementing curriculum. They

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[1] Race for the Top is a competitive grant opportunity created to influence and reward innovations and reforms in school districts within teacher and principal evaluations, adopting common learning standards, turn-around schools,

suggest that school districts should use appraisal methods that not only serve accountability purposes, but also assist principals in their professional development. Hallinger and Murphy (1987) recommend assessing principals' skills through direct observation, interviews, document analysis, and questionnaires. The combination of the four methods calls for the need to use the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) (Hallinger, 1983). The revised PIMRS instrument contains fifty behavioral statements about principal instructional leadership behaviors and can be used as a self-assessment. In 2011, Hallinger, Wang, and Chen (2013) reviewed 135 empirical studies that used the PIMRS instrument and concluded that while the PIMRS had a solid reputation of being valid limited details were provided on the measurements results of the tool.

Current research on principal evaluation also suggests that many states and district evaluations do not reflect existing principal standards or proven practices, such as those provided by the NPBEA. In addition, many principal evaluation instruments are neither technically sound nor useful for improving principal performance—despite the proven importance of the principal to school and student success. In response to the Race to the Top competition, federal incentive programs, and ESEA flexibility requirements, many state legislatures have passed new legislation on principal evaluation or examined current principal evaluation policies for compliance with federal reform goals and assurances. In a 2012 report titled *A Practical Guide To Designing Comprehensive Principal Evaluation Systems*, Clifford, Hansen, and Wraight (2012) conclude that cultivating effective principal evaluation systems is challenging, particularly with the dearth of research-based models and measures currently available. In many states, principal evaluation is not widely or systematically practiced, aligned, with state or national professional standards or linked to state or data infrastructure.

Many states have taken it upon themselves to make changes to their evaluation systems. From these initiatives, new practices have emerged in the way principal evaluations are developed and conducted. In Murphy and Pimentel's (1996) work, they describe a better way to evaluate principal, to prevent it from becoming a compliance mandate. The new evaluation takes

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on a results-based evaluation and profit sharing system. Now in its fourth year of operation, the new evaluation system determines the effectiveness of a principal's actions. The evaluation tool works on carefully calibrated point systems that measure academic benchmark goals, patrons and clients' satisfaction, optimal conditions for learning, and standards of responsible and ethical administrative practices. Objective information rather than subjective opinions rule the day, and student learning is of primary importance. At the beginning of year, the principals set their goals based on what they think they can realistic accomplish. In addition, surveys are conducted with parents, teachers, and staff and are included in the point system. The profit sharing system provides bonus checks to principals and staff who increase student performance. The new evaluation system also lays the groundwork for regularly and accurately informing the public about the state of the schools. Parents are informed about their school's data, attendance, graduation rates, Advanced Placement rates, and other relevant data points.

In Helena School District, Montana, a new evaluation system was developed using the ISLLC standards called the Vanderbilt Assessment for Leadership in Education (VAL-ED). The process was designed to promote professional growth and providing a "360-degree perspective" that includes feedback through surveys from staff and supervisors (Keating, 2011). The principals and leaders of the district collaborated in developing the evaluation that was important, because as Keating (2011) notes, having leaders in the evaluation process to develop a sense of "ownership" of the evaluation. The VAL-ED framework focuses on the principal's attitudes and beliefs and how those behaviors impact student achievement. Ultimately, the instrument measures student outcomes and core components. A study conducted by Porter and colleagues (2010) found that the VAL-ED instrument was reliable for measuring principals' leadership skills. In a national field trial, more than 300 schools field-tested the assessment across the United States. Out of the 300 schools, 100 were elementary, 100 middle schools, and the final 100 were high schools. In total, Porter and colleagues used data from 218 schools that completed all sets of VAL-ED data and concluded that the VAL-ED instrument was reliable for measuring principals' learning-centered leadership.

New Haven Public Schools in Connecticut took a similar process by using surveys as a way to provide summative data. New Haven also worked together with the New Haven Federation of Teachers, which paved the way for agreements on revamped evaluation systems for teachers and principals. The reason they wanted to have a collaborative approach is because New Haven schools aligned the principal evaluation to the teacher evaluation system. According to New Haven Teacher's and Administrator's Guide, the "work" was guided by the core motivation of performance based professional evaluation, and respect for professional voice in the school and district decision-making.

In 2007, principals signed a landmark performance agreement called the Principal Performance Review (PPR) in New York City Department of Education. The instrument is closely aligned to the ISLLC standards and includes summative performance ratings based on assessment data. The new instrument includes a component that included student data from the New York state achievement tests, which is about 32% of the total PPR. The instrument also includes self-directed goal setting and surveys to all stakeholders.

Harper (2014) focuses on the principal evaluation as a means of renewal, reflection and growth. This study explores the use of principal portfolios to create active self-directed learners. Harper concluded that principal goal setting and reflection must be imbedded in principal evaluation processes. For Harper, in order for principal evaluations to be effective at improving practices, principals needed to be self-directed learners, develop the skill to be critically reflective, and continuously pursue their professional development goals.

Principal standards in place and as set forth by the ISLLC and the more recent PSEL are used to guide the development of principal evaluations. As those have transitioned and changed, so have principal evaluations. From this section, we can infer that the research of principal evaluations is relatively a "new" area. Starting with the work of Hallinger, 1983 with his work on the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) to Harper, 2014 focusing on the principal evaluation as a means of renewal, reflection, and growth.

In summary, there are numerous studies of personnel evaluation systems in education, but mostly all focus on evaluation of teachers. Based on what we learned about evaluations in the previous section, they were intended to matter in order to promote growth and attain results. However, when it comes to the subject of principal evaluation, studies show they do not matter. Lashway (2003) summed up the general state of traditional evaluation systems as "Little is learned and not much happens" (p.4). In a recent study of Tennessee's multiple-measure administrator evaluation system, the authors concluded that the evaluation process examined does not provide specific information to principals about their areas of strengths and weaknesses (Grissom, Blissett, & Mitani, 2018). Additionally, a nationwide survey about principal evaluations reported principal satisfaction with the alignment of the tool in relation to their job expectations, but fewer felt that the evaluation provided anything to assist them in improving their job performance (Reeves, 2005).

PRINCIPAL PERCEPTIONS

Few studies have investigated principal perceptions of their formal evaluations. However, many studies have sought to capture principal perceptions on a variety of subjects. For example, DeMatthews and colleagues have investigated principal perceptions of including students with disabilities in urban schools and addressing the racial discipline gap by applying theories of social justice and critical race theory (DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; DeMatthews, Carey, Olivarez, & Moussavi Saeedi, 2017). In this study, I rely on theories of instructional leadership to critically consider the perceptions of the usefulness of their evaluations for improving their professional practice. According to the Webster dictionary, perception means the way you think about or understand someone or something. Thus, for the purpose of this study, I will compare what principals think and understand about their evaluation to how scholars have described the purposes of evaluation and instructional leadership practices.

While I was unable to locate a study that considered principal perceptions of evaluations, I found several studies focused on principal professional development as well as examples of

principals' learning to deal with issues on the job. For example, a study by Spraque, Smith, and Stieber (2002), assessed principals' perceptions of risk and protective factors affecting school safety. They concluded that even though principals rated improvement of the academic program as their highest priority, it was followed by school safety and discipline improvement. Research also tells us that many principals have a limited understanding of how school library programs functions and they contribute to school quality (Harzell, 2002).

Regarding evaluations, teachers and principals both have their perceptions of teacher evaluations. Zimmerman and Deckert-Pelton (2003), conducted a study on teacher perceptions of their evaluation process and evaluators. They found that, "from a psychological stance, teachers who do not perceive their principals as competent and experienced, will not be as likely to accept and internalize principal-generated evaluation results (p. 30). The study also showed that teachers have a strong desire to be part of a collaborative feedback evaluation process. Feedback is useful, and consistency matters when it comes to how principals' evaluate them. Another study by Young, Range, Mette, & Hvidston Young, (2015), was to understand principals' perceptions about the reform efforts of teacher evaluation systems, including how accurate they were in rating teacher performance, their purposes, and how well they assessed teachers' behaviors and strategies. Overall, principals believed the purpose of teacher evaluations systems were to guide administrators in improving the practice of teachers, adopting a growth-oriented approach to teacher improvement and to provide formative feedback. From this research, one can observe that principals have strong beliefs about teacher evaluations, but we also need to know more about principals think about their own evaluations and the connections between teacher evaluations and principal evaluation beliefs.

From the articles above, one can conclude that principals' perceptions are important. Research in psychology and social psychology has established that the more difficulty it is to make a judgment when there is a shortage of time or when information is unfamiliar and complex, the more likely people are to rely on stereotypes rather than an educated understanding (Bodenhausen & Lichtenstein, 1987; Freund, Kruglanski, & Shpitzajzen, 1985; Kruglanski &

Freund, 1983). Principals' perceptions matter because the principal is a critical part of a school system, again, leadership matters. Therefore, if the principal is one of most indispensable factors to school improvement, their understanding and perceptions of the different aspects of a school and leadership are critical in order to continue to contribute to the principalship research.

CONCLUSION

A century of evaluation research highlights how evaluations can improve individual and organizational performance, but also suggests that evaluations are often ineffective and fail to provide actionable data that can be used to drive improvements. Similarly, research on instructional leadership has provided a broad base of knowledge and best practices that principals can draw from to improve their practices, yet few studies indicate that principal evaluations are effective at providing useable data to foster leadership development. Additionally, previous research on principal evaluation does not explore how principals experience evaluation, their perceptions on whether or not evaluations are helpful, and the manner in which the evaluation process can be improved to meet their needs.

In relation to this study, one can conclude the following. First, instructional leadership is generally defined as the management of curriculum and instruction by a school principal. Strong instructional leaders exhibit leadership skills and behaviors that effectively lead a school. Second, principal evaluations are developed with the intent to hold principals accountable for student achievement outcomes and leadership practices aligned to professional standards. The evaluations are based on professional standards and attempt to measure principal effectiveness and create means for providing principals with performance feedback,

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

In chapter 3, I discuss the research design and methods used in this study. I began by highlighting my research questions, the qualitative case study's design, and the participant selection criteria I planned to use. This chapter also describes the data analysis process, confidentiality, and limitations of the study.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Currently, the state of Texas is transitioning from district-created principal evaluations to a new evaluation system known as the Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (TPESS), which is an evaluation generated by TEA for all school districts. The school district at the center of my study has made the decision to become an early adopter of TPESS, which has prompted me to conduct research on TPESS and how principals experience this evaluation as opposed to the previous one. The main question I seek to answer is: How do formal evaluations influence principal leadership? More specifically, I want to answer the following sub-questions:

1. What are principal perceptions of formal evaluation?

2. What roles do principals play in formal evaluations?

3. How, if at all, do principals perceive that formal evaluations contribute to their practice?

RESEARCH DESIGN, RATIONALE FOR METHODOLOGY

The purpose of my study is to explore how evaluations influence principals because I believe it is imperative to provide principals with meaningful feedback they can use to improve their practice. As stated in Chapter 1, I reflected on the evaluations I implement as part of my job and I believe that historically, there is little or no correlation between the principal's evaluation and their professional growth in future years.

I began the process of developing this study by reviewing the literature on the purposes of evaluations and the efficacy of principal evaluations. Then, I began to target evaluations used

in the field of leadership with a focus on instructional leadership. Many studies surveyed principals on perceptions of instructional leadership, school improvement, and evaluations (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987; Anderson, 1989; Blasé & Blasé, 2003; Hallinger & Heck, 1996). As I analyzed this body of research, I realized I that what was missing was related to how principals experience their evaluations. Thus, I determined that a qualitative research approach would be useful to capture the experiential nature of evaluations because qualitative research is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations in the organizational context in which they are experienced.

I considered qualitative approaches from several qualitative research handbooks (Creswell, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Maxwell, 1996). The table below summarizes each author's definition of qualitative research:

Table 3.1: Qualitative Definitions

Author	Definition
Creswell (2014)	Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. Data is collected at the site where participants experience the issue or problem that is being studied. Qualitative researchers collect data themselves by observing, interviewing, or examining. Typically, different forms of data such as interviews, observations, documents, and audiovisual information are used rather than one single piece of data. In addition, the process for qualitative researchers is emergent, meaning that the process is not prescribed and will shift depending on data collected (p. 185)
Denzin & Lincoln (2005)	The best terms used to describe qualitative research according to Denzin & Lincoln are *Quilt Maker and Bricoleur*. It consists of being present in the world observing a series of images that are interconnected interpretive practices to get a better understanding of the subject at hand. The researcher then collects those materials, strategies, and empirical materials to make sense of a problem(s) in individuals' lives. (p. 4)
Maxwell (1996)	Maxwell provides an interactive model approach to qualitative research that consists of purposes, conceptual context, research questions, methods and validity. The qualitative study focuses on specific situations or people with a greater emphasis on words rather than numbers (pg. 4)

After reviewing the definitions of the qualitative research, I recognized the importance of drawing from multiple forms of data rather than one single piece, the importance of the problems of individual lives, and the importance of understanding the situations of principals rather than a statistical representation of their experience or belief.

CASE STUDY

Case study as a methodology can be qualitative in nature (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Yin, 2009). I selected the case study design, because I believe this approach is best suited to provide insight on the factual, personal, and ongoing aspects of the principal's evaluation experience and for its potential of generating new understandings of principal evaluation. When a case study method is used, the intent is to go beyond descriptive purposes in order to develop a deeper understanding of the processes that are occurring (Yin, 2009). For the purposes of this study, I will primarily focus on how five principals understand and perceive principal evaluations in relation to their leadership and professional development. These five principal responses will be compared with one another. According to Yin (2009), case studies are a preferred approach when attempting to answer "how" or "why" questions regarding a particular phenomenon. By understanding how the principals experience evaluation and the reasons for those experiences, I believe I will better understand and be able to provide recommendations for improving principal evaluation tools and practices.

Using the case study approach requires certain steps the researcher must consider. Berg (2007) identifies three case study design types: exploratory, explanatory, and descriptive. Exploratory case studies may be seen as an introduction to a large social scientific study used along with fieldwork and data collection methods before having a definitive research question. Explanatory case studies differ in the sense that they are more commonly used when conducting casual studies that examine a plurality of influences (Berg, 2007). Descriptive case studies compel the researcher to present a descriptive theory. All three types of case studies can be a single-case or multi-case study. A multi-case study is a case, which focuses on more than one

particular entity or event sometimes over different time periods (Yin, 2009). Based on the definitions, I conclude that for the purpose of my study, I will use a descriptive multi-case study.

Descriptive case studies describe the natural phenomenon, which occurs within the data in question, and my goal as the researcher is to describe the data as it occurs (McDonough & McDonough, 1997). Descriptive case studies may be in narrative form. Using a descriptive study for the purpose of this study is fitting. I will be able to describe the naturally occurring perceptions and other characteristics of a particular group of principals.

SITE SELECTION AND SAMPLE

West Independent School District (ISD) has a total of 40 schools and serves 35,000 students. The schools range from PRE-K – 12th grade and some specialty campuses. Of the 40, 27 are elementary schools, 7 middle schools, 3 comprehensive high schools, and 3 specialty schools. The district currently serves 11,000 elementary students. For the most part, the students are economically disadvantaged, and are from different racial backgrounds but primarily classified as Hispanic. The academic performance levels of schools vary from high performing to low performing. However, it is important to note that all schools met the state standard for purposes of accountability. Table 3.2 provides West ISD's student demographics for school year 2015-16.

Table 3.2: School District Demographics 2015-2016 School Year

Category	Percent
Hispanic	94%
White	3%
African American	1.5%
Economically Disadvantaged	75%
English Language Learners	26%
Special Education	11%

West ISD is located in a city along the U.S.-Mexico border. This study will concentrate on key aspects of the district's evaluation and in particular five elementary school principals within the district. The five elementary principals were selected using an initial survey regarding

the new principal evaluation tool. The survey was given to all forty elementary principals. Once the data was received from the initial survey, I deciphered the data and identified five principals to continue the study based on their responses. I looked for responses that range from a very positive perception of the evaluation to those who have a negative perception of the evaluation tool.

I currently work in the district, therefore access to the research sites and participants in the school district are accessible. I completed Institutional Review Board processes within the district. My study was discussed with my supervisor, the district's superintendent, and I have received outright support. Elementary leadership and pedagogy is my primary interest due to my expertise in this area. Another factor I believe is important is the positive relationships and rapport I have fostered with elementary school principals.

DATA COLLECTION

This study will require multiple data sources and will be guided by my case study methodology. I will rely on surveys, interviews, and document collection. Below is a brief description of how each element will be used.

To conduct this study, I used a variety of documents to help me understand the background of the district, previous evaluation tools, and the development and implementation of TPESS. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) webpage provided the majority of documents reviewed. The documents collected assisted me in building a strong background knowledge of principal evaluation documents. I used the TPESS evaluation documents along with district evaluation documents to add context to the study and gain a deep understanding of the evaluation tool. Policies DNA and DNB (legal) were reviewed to comprehend what procedures and laws districts follow for evaluations. Additionally, I collected the principal standards as defined by the State Board of Education.

    I.   All information was collected and gathered during the course of the new evaluation implementation.

    II.   In May 2017, a survey was sent to all thirty-eight elementary principals.

    III.   Once data was received, the data was disaggregated and it identified five principals with which to continue the study.

    IV.   In July 2017, I scheduled and conducted interviews with those selected five principals.

    V.   All the results from interviews and surveys were analyzed for themes and relationships.

PILOT SURVEY

A short pilot survey was sent to all the elementary principals of the district to inquire on their initial perceptions of the new evaluation system and gather data to examine perceptions on evaluations and their leadership. The survey was developed by drafting questions that would prompt the participants to provide an initial set of data around perceptions of the evaluation. The survey results assisted in selecting five participants based on both positive and negative feedback and helped me refine my interview questions. Appendix B is a draft of my pilot survey.

INTERVIEWS

I thought carefully about the interview process. Creswell (2007) describes three important steps associated with conducting interviews: (a) the preparation for the interview, (b) the constructing effective research questions, and (c) the actual implementation of the interview(s). I used a general interview guide approach in conjunction with a semi-structured interview process. According to McNamara (2009), the strength of the general interview guide approach is the ability of the researcher to ensure that the same general areas of information are collected from each interviewee. The general interview guide approach allowed me to have some flexibility within a structured context. The conversational approach allowed me to build trust with my

participants and allow a degree of freedom and adaptability in getting information from the interviewee. The interview protocol had some open-ended questions, but I strayed from the set questions depending on participant responses and emergent themes. The purpose of the five interviews was to have a better understanding of the principals' perceptions of the evaluation and what roles they play in the process in this multi-case study. The interview responses provided me a better insight of how evaluations contribute to their practice. With that in mind, I interviewed five principals to gather this information. The interviews ranged from 25 to 45 minutes long, depending on the interviewee. I also followed up with principals during the data analysis process to clarify meaning and follow up on certain themes. Appendix A is a list of my initial interview questions.

PARTICIPANT SELECTION CRITERIA

After securing IRB approval from UTEP and West ISD, I began the process of recruiting elementary school principals for this study. First, my dissertation chair and I sent an email to 38 elementary school principals soliciting their participation in a survey. In total we received 33 responses. Thirteen principals responded they would be interested in participating in the study. 20 principals responded that they would not be interested in the study. Therefore, I decided to select five from the thirteen who indicated their interest.

I utilized a strategic approach to select give principals after analyzing the results from the initial survey. Out of the 13 respondents, I eliminated all first-year principals due to their limited experience with the evaluation tool. Eight principals remained in which one of the criteria selection was years of experience. I wanted a range from 5 to 10 years of experience to support the literature, because principals get better at their jobs with every year of experience (Viadero, 2010). A strategic purposeful sample supports comparisons across cases (Creswell, 2007). I selected principals with different experiences to compare and contrast the possible influences their experience has on principal evaluations.

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Another criterion for selection was how principals rated the effectiveness of the previous evaluation system from a range of 1-4. I identified principals who had a broad set of beliefs about the effectiveness of the previous evaluation system. Next, participants were selected based on their experience of TPESS during its first year of implementation. The final criterion was based on their response on what they believed was the primary reason for conducting principal evaluations. These responses support the literature that evaluations were meant to promote growth and change (Schick, 2003; Patton, 2008; Scriven, 1991).

After my selection of the five participants, I made appointments with each principal in person to describe the study in greater details and answer any questions. The table below provides a profile of the five principals who participated in the study.

Table 3.3: Participant Profile Data

Principal/School	Interest in Interview	Effectiveness of previous Evaluation Tool	Primary Reason for conducting principal evaluations	Principal Experience
Ms. Chavez/Warrior Elementary	Yes	1	We look at data, set goals, and then decide how we will monitor progress towards our goal. Our supervisors give us feedback.	6 years
Ms. Sanchez/Valle Elementary	Yes	3	To have growth.	6 years
Ms. Vandez/Alameda Elementary	Yes	4	To grow principal's knowledge and skills to better serve and lead learning communities to achieve student success.	5 years
Ms. Mendoza/Park	Yes	1	Expectations on my evaluation	5 years

Principal/School	Interest in Interview	Effectiveness of previous Evaluation Tool	Primary Reason for conducting principal evaluations	Principal Experience
Elementary			when meeting with me. Utilize the TPESS goals to have meaningful. Reflective conversations and accountability that is both fair and practical.	
Ms. Price/Yarbrough Early Childhood Center	Yes	3	To continue growing as an instructional leader to build leadership capacity and student achievement.	7 years

DATA ANALYSIS

Data collected was analyzed using a qualitative approach. All the results from interviews, surveys, and document collection were analyzed for themes and relationships. According to Marshall and Rossman (1999), "Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to the mass of collected data" (p. 150). I used that approach to provide a road map to be able to generate interpretations and conclusions of the data. To begin, I reviewed the surveys to summarize findings and identify five principals. Second, after conducting initial interviews, I transcribed interviews and looked for key themes.

I used NVivo 9 software to store, organize, and analyze my data. I began by looking for themes related to how principals perceived the evaluation process and whether or not they believed formal evaluations support their professional development. I connected each principal's school demographics and performance data as well as their evaluation outcomes to better understand the challenges and feedback these principals receive. Next, I looked for any key

themes or emerging findings that might contribute to how principals understand evaluation and whether or not they use it as a tool to improve their practices. I used literature on instructional leadership and evaluations to identify key variables may shape principal perceptions.

Throughout the process of meeting with principals during the course of the new evaluation implementation, I kept a journal of the process as an analytic memoing strategy (Creswell, 2007). The journal started from the beginning of the TPESS process with the principals. It included staff development activities, training, feedback, coaching sessions with principals, and conference data. I continuously looked for key themes in the journal.

SUBJECTIVITY AND POSITIONALITY

I recognize that as a practitioner, former principal, and principal supervisor I have had certain experiences, biases, and understandings that have influenced this study and my interpretations of data. Those experiences have shaped me as a leader and how I work with principals on a daily basis in my current position. As a practitioner in the field, my position afforded me access to material, people, and trust that I believed supported honest participant comments and reflections. In addition, I believe the relationships that I have developed during my tenure provided a level of trustworthiness. Stephen Covey stated, "Trust is the glue of life. It's the most essential ingredient in effective communication. It's the foundational principle that holds all relationships." (p.203) I also maintained a journal to continually reflect on my positionality and interactions with participants.

During the study, it was important for me to remain focused on my interview protocol and not insert myself or my knowledge and expertise in ways that would bias the data collection process. For example, during the interviews I stuck to the questions and did not "react" to a comment based on my own thoughts and opinions. In addition, before I interviewed each principal, I clearly explained the purpose of the interview and also asked them for their complete honesty at all times.

This study had several limitations. First, the study was limited by its focus on a small group of principals in a large sized school district in the Southwestern United States. Second, although I planned to survey all principals in the district, this study primary focuses on the experiences of 5 elementary school principals and did not include the experiences of high school and middle school principals. Finally, I recognize that this study is limited by my participation in the study given that I am the associate superintendent in the same district. I do supervise and develop elementary school principals. My position in the district might make some principals feel they cannot trust me or give me completely honest feedback. However, being the supervisor as described above provides the subjectivity and positionality needed for this study. It should be seen as an asset rather than a liability to the research. I also believed principals would be more trusting because the new evaluation system was being piloted and principals would not be held accountable for their evaluation scores since the data collected for the purpose of this study was based on the pilot year.

Furthermore, as mentioned before, this is an area that I have a strong interest in due to my experience. My experience as an assistant principal and principal provided me first hand dealings with my own principal evaluations. I also have experience in evaluating teachers using their evaluation tools. From those experiences, I was able to learn about and develop some preconceived notions about evaluations. For example, I was able to witness how evaluations can help a teacher grow in his or her profession. However, I was also able to witness how an evaluation can be a compliance tool that does not have a purpose.

Chapter 4

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF TWO EVALUATION SYSTEMS

In this chapter, I describe two evaluations systems: a previous, district developed principal evaluation tool named West ISD Performance Appraisal and the state of Texas' newly adopted TPESS. In order to present these evaluations, I collected and reviewed outdated and current policy documents from the state of Texas and from West ISD. I concluded this chapter with a brief analysis to compare and contrast the two evaluation tools. This analysis is important because the principals surveyed and interviewed in this study have experience with both evaluations and may make judgments about the current TPESS evaluation based on their past experiences with the West ISD Performance Appraisal.

POLICY

In 2017, the Texas Association of School Boards adopted policy DNB- Performance Appraisal-Evaluation of Campus Administrators (Legal) on the Performance Appraisal Evaluation of Campus Administrators. This policy was developed in accordance with Texas Principal Evaluation Support System, TPESS. Historically, districts were allowed to develop their local principal evaluations without specific state approved criteria to follow or without board approval. A specific policy was not in place, therefore each district evaluated principals as they saw fit. The local development of principal evaluation is in contrast with previous policies on teacher evaluations, which are typically developed at the state-level. For teacher evaluations, the state has always had a policy in place to guide districts in terms of evaluating teachers. However, for the first time in 2016, the state required districts to use principal and teacher appraisals based on policy that have been created at the state-level, and are aligned to each other. The state's decision to align both appraisal systems creates a set of shared expectations and evaluation tools for both teachers and principals. A district still can develop an alternate principal evaluation system based on the standards, indicators, knowledge, and skills. However, their system must align with the training, appraisal, and professional development of principals as

outlined in Education Code 21.3541 and 19 Administrative Code 149.2001, 150.1026. In addition, the Texas Commissioner of Education and the School Board must approve the district created tool.

Policy DNB (Legal) breaks down the components of the evaluation tool, procedures to follow, calendar, appraiser qualifications, and improvement plans. According to the policy, the district's Board of Trustees requires a written evaluation at annual or frequent intervals of each principal or supervisor or any full-time certified professional employee as stated in Education Code 21.203(a). If an administrator is not evaluated within a 15-month period, district funds may not be used to pay them. Each school district is responsible to notify the executive director of its regional education service center in writing of the school district's choice of appraisal system and submit annually a summary of the evaluation scores from the TPESS. The policy also provides a summary of the standards and components of TPESS and how the overall rating is calculated. The appraiser must be certified by having satisfactorily completed the state-approved TPESS training and yearly recertification is required.

Policy DNB (Legal), also includes a local version and district regulation. The DNB (Local) states the district will appraise principals using TPESS in accordance with law and administrative regulations. West ISD did adopt a DNB Regulation that provides the calendar dates to adhere by. In addition, the regulation states a professional improvement plan may be initiated at the discretion of the supervisor or at the request of the employee.

EVALUATION COMPARISONS

West ISD Evaluation Tool

Like most districts across Texas, West ISD believes in the importance of evaluating its school leaders. An administrative regulation document collected for this study noted the following: All administrators will participate in a focused appraisal process, with clear and meaningful goals, identified priorities and realistic plan (DNB-R). In the West district they use The West ISD Performance Appraisal Campus Principal Evaluation Form as their evaluation

tool. This tool was adopted during the 2004-2005 school year. However, it has been modified as the job description has changed over the course of the years by administration.

Standards

The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), recently revised as the Professional Standards in Educational Leadership (PSEL), typically guides principal evaluation system in most states. Texas did not adopt ISLLC and did not adopt the PSEL standards. In Texas, the standards school districts follow are implemented by the State Board of Education (SBOE) approved by the Texas Commissioner in the Texas Administrative Code 19. Any principal evaluation used in Texas follows the standards updated in 1999 by the SBOE. The three domains addressed in the standards are School Community Leadership, Instructional Leadership, and Administrative Leadership. Under each domain are different competencies required for the principal to know.

The West ISD Performance Appraisal Campus Principal Evaluation Form consists of eight standards and thirty-five descriptors. The standards are: Instructional Management, School Climate, School Organization Improvement, Personnel Management, Administrative and Fiscal/Facilities Management, Student Management, Professional Growth and Development and School/Community Relations. The table below summarizes the descriptors in each standard.

Table 4.1: West ISD Principal Evaluation Standards

Standards	Descriptors
Instructional Management	Focuses resources and efforts to promote excellence by addressing deficiencies in student achievement and attendance. Monitors instructional and managerial processes to ensure that program activities are related to program outcomes and use findings to take corrective action. Provides appropriate time, resources and materials to support faculty and staff to accomplish educational goals. Evaluates and recommends improvement in the purposes, design, materials and implementation of the instructional and other support programs. Works with staff to plan, implement, and evaluate instruction on a systematic basis; includes students and community

Standards	Descriptors
	representatives as appropriate.
School Climate	Fosters collegiality and team building among staff members, encouraging their active involvement in the decision-making process. Assesses the school climate and uses resultant data to develop improvement; plans collaboratively with others. Promotes a positive, caring climate for student learning and deals sensitively and fairly with persons from diverse cultural backgrounds. Anticipates, manages and resolves conflict effectively. Establishes and maintains an environment which is conducive to positive staff morale and directed toward achievement of the school's mission. Employs an effective communication process that includes listening and active dialogue with the Superintendent, staff, students, parents and community.
School Organizational Improvement	Provides educational leadership and coordination for the campus. Establishes an effective means for development, review, monitoring, and/or revision of the Campus Improvement Plan. Regularly consults with campus level committee about planning, operation, supervision, and the evaluation of the campus educational program. Identifies, analyzes, and applies research findings to promote school improvement. Builds a common vision, plans activities, and implements programs collaboratively with staff to ensure attainment of school's mission.
Personnel Management	Makes sound recommendations relative to interviewing, selecting, and orientation of new staff, as well as their retention and dismissal. Demonstrates skill in coaching staff and peers, provides technical assistance to the instructional staff concerning the teaching and learning process. Delegates duties, responsibilities and functions effectively. Defines expectations for staff performance, with regards to instructional strategies, classroom management, and communication with the public. Observe employee performance, record observations, and conduct evaluation conferences with staff in a timely manner.
Administrative & Fiscal/Facilities Management	Develops campus budgets based on documented program needs, estimated enrollment, personnel, and other fiscal needs. Manages all school facilities effectively; efficiently supervises their maintenance to ensure clean, orderly, and safe buildings and grounds.

Standards	Descriptors
	Demonstrates responsible fiscal control over assigned budgets to ensure that fiscal resources appropriately address the needs and conform to the mission of the school district. Uses modern technology, as appropriate, to effectively manage facilities and fiscal resources. Complies with District policies, as well as state and federal laws and regulations, in pursuing the mission of the school.
Student Management	Ensures that school rules are uniformly observed and that consequences of misconduct are applied equitably to all students according to the Student Code of Conduct. Effectively conducts conferences with parents, students, and teachers concerning school and student issues. Effectively develops and communicates to students and parents school guidelines for student conduct. Works with faculty and students to develop a student discipline management system that results in positive student behavior and enhances the school climate.
Professional Growth and Development	Uses self-assessment to develop needed professional skills appropriate to job assignment. Demonstrates behavior that is professional, ethical and responsible and serves as a role model for all district staff. Seeks, accepts and responds to evaluative feedback, using this information to improve performance. Works with school staff and campus level planning and decision-making committees to create a comprehensive campus plan for professional development. Participates actively in professional activities, shares ideas and information with other professionals, and initiates action to confront problems facing the profession.
School/Community Relations	Projects a positive image to the school community/participates in community activities (to the extent possible and appropriate) that fosters a rapport and mutual respect between the school and the larger community. Demonstrates awareness of school-community needs and initiates activities to meet those identified needs. Emphasizes and nurtures two-way communication between the school and community. Ensures active parental involvement/facilitates the positive relationships needed to ensure student success with parents, guardians, and community members. Articulates the school's mission to the community and solicits its support in realizing the mission.

Evaluation Process

The West Principal Appraisal document consists of a rating scale, a formative and summative process. At the beginning of the year, the evaluation is given to principals for them to know how they will be evaluated for the school year. The principal is evaluated using a rating scale of numbers 1 to 5 as seen below:

- **N/A – Not Applicable**
- **5–Clearly Outstanding:** Performance is consistently far superior to what is normally expected.
- **4–Exceeds Expectations:** Performance demonstrates increased proficiency and is consistently above expectations.
- **3–Meets Expectations:** Performance meets expectations and presents no significant problems.
- **2-Below Expectations:** Performance is consistently below expectations and significant problems exist.
- **1-Unsatisfactory:** Performance is consistently unacceptable.

Then, during the mid-year or formative period, the evaluator estimates the administrator's effectiveness in meeting each criterion. Once the evaluator has given the principal a rating for each standard, a formative conference is conducted. During the formative conference with the principal, the evaluator can write comments or recommendations based on the principal's attainment of each criterion up to the mid-year point in the formative comments box under each standard. Thereafter, about 6 months from the formative conference, the evaluator follows the same steps for the summative process. Once again the evaluator rates the principal in each standard based on performance criteria as defined in the evaluation. The evaluator uses his or her knowledge of the principal's performance throughout the school year from the supervisor perspective. The principal and the evaluator establish some goals if needed for future development based on the ratings given. Below is an example timeline of the evaluation process.

Table 4.2: Steps in West ISD Appraisal

Steps in Evaluation	Actions
Step 1	Beginning of the Year – evaluation process beings.
Step 2	Mid- Year Formative Conference - appraiser discusses with the principal recommendations based on attainment of each criterion up to this point.
Step 3	End of Year Summative Process- appraiser discusses with the principal recommendations based on attainment of each criterion and provides ratings.

TEXAS PRINCIPALS EVALUATION AND SUPPORT SYSTEM (TPESS)

Background

After almost 20 years of the same principal standards in place, the state of Texas adopted a new set of principal standards in 2013, which were implemented starting in June 2014. The Texas Education Agency (TEA), in conjunction with a committee of education professionals, developed a new principal evaluation system called Texas Principal Evaluation and Support System (TPESS). The TPESS evaluation system was piloted in several districts across the state in the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years. In a letter issued by TEA, the committee noted that TPESS would be used for improvement of instruction, evaluation of principals on a regular basis, guide professional growth and use a multiple of valid measures/data in determining performance levels. Most importantly and in contrast to past evaluations, the new instrument includes the student growth results, which will count as 20 percent of the evaluation total.

West ISD administration in collaboration with principals, decided to pilot the new standards and the TPESS evaluation instrument during the 2015-2016 school year. The decision was a collaborative approach with district administrators and principals. They decided to be a pilot district and learn as much from the tool before the teacher evaluation tool had to be implemented. The new evaluation's implementation schedule determined by the district and board provided both the principal and the evaluator a year to learn to the instrument and provide professional development to all leaders. In June 2015, West ISD administration provided

professional development on the new tool. The professional development consisted of data comparison analysis of the previous evaluation tool compared to the TPESS. In addition, a balanced leadership activity was conducted to learn to the standards using McRel's Balanced Leadership Framework in collaboration with Waters and Cameron (2007).   The TPESS will continue to be used during upcoming school years as its appraisal tool for all administrators.

Standards

The TPESS consists of five standards and twenty-two indicators. The standards are: Instructional Leadership, Human Capital, Executive Leadership, School Culture and Strategic Operations. The table below will summarize the indicators in each standard.

Table 4.3: TPESS Standards

Standards	Indicators
Instructional Leadership	The principal implements a rigorous curriculum aligned with all state, college and career standards. The principal develops best practices to improve student achievement. The principal has a data monitoring system inform instructional decisions to close the achievement gap. The principal concentrates on student growth among all sub-groups to eliminate the achievement gap.
Human Capital	The principal hires, mentors, and retains highly effective teachers and staff. The principal provides individual feedback and professional develop opportunities to develop and mentor teachers and staff. The principal implements systems of collaboration and leadership opportunities for teachers and staff. The principal uses multiple data sources and provides clear expectations to conduct rigorous evaluations of all teachers and staff.
Executive Leadership	The principal supports the school and community through a continuous improvement plan that is solution –oriented. The principal consistently finds innovative ways to improve student outcomes by reflecting, growing, and acting on feedback. The principal communicates and promotes building relationships with all. The principal follows the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators to the fullest.

Standards	Indicators
School Culture	The principal has a shared vision of high expectations for all. The principal establishes and monitors adult and student conduct and provides social and emotional supports. The principal provides opportunities to engage all families and community members in student learning experiences. The principal creates a safe environment for all. The principal applies different behavior and academic techniques to meet each child's needs.
Strategic Operations	The principal tracks targets and strategies aligned to a vision to improve teacher effectiveness and student outcomes. The principal maximizes learning time for all. The principal aligns and monitors school resources to improve student achievement. The principal implements all policies and is an advocate for students and staff.

Evaluation Process

The TPESS evaluation consists of a seven-step process and uses an evaluation rubric with four ratings the principal can receive. Those four ratings are specified below:

- **Distinguished -** Principal consistently and significantly exceeded proficiency on standard(s) of performance.

- **Accomplished -** Principal exceeded proficiency on standard(s) of performance most of the time.

- **Proficient -** Principal demonstrated competent performance on the standard.

- **Developing -** Principal demonstrated adequate growth toward achieving standard(s) during the period of performance, but did not demonstrate proficiency on standard(s) of performance.

- **Not Demonstrated/Needs Improvement:** Principal did not demonstrate the competence on achieving standard(s) of performance.

Table 4.4 provides an abbreviated table that details each step. The first step of the TPESS is to conduct an annual orientation with all principals on the evaluation. During the orientation, each principal should receive a complete set of materials outlining the evaluation process and an explanation of how performance will be measured. A timeline that consist of review dates and

deadlines are reviewed with all principals. Unlike the previous West ISD Principal Evaluation, the TPESS requires a beginning of year conference or a pre-evaluation conference. Prior to this meeting, the principals complete a self-assessment using the Texas Principal Evaluation Rubric. The self-assessment serves as a basic for establishing professional growth goals.

Table 4.4: Steps in TPESS

Steps in Evaluation	Actions
Step 1	Orientation- each year the appraiser should ensure that an orientation is conducted for all principals.
Step 2	Self- Assessment and Goal Setting- reflect on their ability to fulfill the Texas Principal Standards and set professional growth goals that are related to identified areas for personal improvement.
Step 3	Beginning of Year Conference – provides the opportunity for the principal and the appraiser to discuss self-assessment results, goals, district priorities, etc.…
Step 4	School Site Visits- the appraiser should visit the schools of principals on an ongoing basis to add context and understanding of the principals performance.
Step 5	Mid-Year Conference – a time to focus on the status of goal attainment and help the principal adjust the plan as needed.
Step 6	Identify and Collect Artifacts and Evidence- principals will synthesize their collected artifacts and evidence and any additional information gathered to create a comprehensive view of their performance throughout the year.
Step 7	End- Of- Year Conference and Goal Setting- a time to meet to review and discuss the goal, rubric, evidence, and set goals for next year based on performance and data.

The appraiser discusses the results of the self-assessment, establishes a performance goal, and discusses any artifacts or other evidence the principal and appraiser believe are critical to understanding the principal's performance. Both the appraiser and principal agree on a goal that will be worked on all year during step 2, known as the Beginning of Year Conference. In addition, the principal and appraiser agree on data, evidence and documentation necessary to complete the evaluation process throughout the year to be able to confirm the principal's level of performance and completion of the goal.

Step 3 is called the data collection process. The principal collects artifacts to support each

standard on the rubric and their identified goal. The artifacts can include data, documents, and feedback from parents, student data, professional development completed and any other data to document achievement of performance. The appraiser is encouraged to visit the principal during this period to observe their performance in action. Data collection is expected to happen throughout the evaluation cycle.

A mid-year evaluation conference discussion is step 4. Principals will meet individually with the appraiser to discuss the principal's progress toward achievement on his or her goal. During this step, the main focus is on the status of the goal by reviewing artifacts and data. Based on the evidence presented, mid-year adjustments to the goal and action plans can be made to ensure the goal is achieved by the end of the school year. Step five is called the Consolidated Performance Assessment. During this step, the principal prepares a consolidated assessment or a comprehensive view of performance throughout the year. To do so, the principal collects the data and artifacts used to judge their performance prior to the final meeting.

Step 6 and 7 can be done congruently. Step six requires an end-of-year performance discussion on the progress made toward completing the evaluation process. Items to discuss during this meeting include the self-assessment, goal(s), consolidated assessment process and a final summary of the evaluation. Like in the previous steps, artifacts and data are to be presented as evidence of implementation. Finally, during step 7, final ratings are provided to the principal during the end-of-year conference. In addition, recommendations for the professional development plan are given to the principal to continue professional growth the next school year.

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

The West Principal Appraisal tool and the TPESS have more differences than similarities. Both evaluations are aligned to the leadership standards in place by the state and have a mid-year conference in place. However, the TPESS standards are more instructionally aligned to PSEL. The TPESS process includes an additional beginning of year and end of year conference where both the appraiser and principal review goals and artifacts of evidence. The

TPESS is scored using a rubric instead of a numeric 1 to 5 scale. With the TPESS tool, the principal is responsible for establishing one goal to work on throughout the school year based on their self-assessment. Most important, the TPESS includes a twenty-percent student growth results based on student assessment data.

Chapter 5

In order to answer my research questions, I relied on an initial principal survey and on more intensive and focused interviews with five elementary school principals. In this chapter, I briefly present findings from the survey given across the district to set the foundation for the interview findings. Then, I describe the five principals at the center of this study (Ms. Price, Ms. Vandez, Ms. Sanchez, Ms. Mendoza, and Ms. Chavez). I also provide a brief overview of their schools, which includes basic demographic and student achievement information.

SURVEY FINDINGS

The survey was sent to 38 elementary school principals soliciting their participation in a survey. In total I received 33 responses. Thirteen principals responded they would be interested in participating in the study. Twenty responded that they would not be interested in the study. Some of the common themes from the responses are TPESS has been an overall positive experience for the principals' surveyed. The survey also asks the effectiveness of the West ISD tool compared to TPESS. Twenty-nine participants believe TPESS is effective based on their ratings of question 1, compared to only 9 participants rating West ISD evaluation tool effective on question 2. Based on question 3, overall 29 participants have had a positive experience with TPESS. Twenty-five participants believed TPESS is effective in helping them to continue to develop their practice to mastery. Question 6.2 and 6.3 inquire about the goal setting and feedback component of the evaluation tool. Based on the responses for both questions, all the participants believe TPESS has an extensive or somewhat impact on goal setting and feedback. On question 6.13, all 33 participants answered that the evaluation extensively and somewhat helps them improve their performance. Two participants believed that the evaluation has no relevance to their job or that it will help them improve their practice as a principal. Question 6.14 had the most somewhat responses when asked if the evaluation has prompted them to make changes to their practice. Question 5 asked about principals their opinion on why evaluations are

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conducted. 33 participants provided an opinion ranging from professional growth, accountability, reflection, etc. The survey findings are summarized in the table below and provided an insight to the overall study.

Table 5.1: Principal Survey Key Findings

	Agree or Strongly Agree	Neutral	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
Question 1: Rate the effectiveness of the previous West ISD evaluation system on your leadership.	9	17	7
Question 2: Rate the effectiveness of the TPESS evaluation system on your leadership.	29	3	1
Question 3: Has the TPESS been an overall positive experience for you during its first year of implementation?	29	4	0

Scale of 1-3	Extensively (3)	Somewhat (2)	Not at All (1)
Question 6.1: The TPESS system is effective in helping me to continue to develop my practice to mastery.	25	8	0
Question 6.2: Evaluation data is used to set professional development goals.	30	3	0
Question 6.3 Feedback on professional growth towards mastery of practice is addressed in the principal evaluation process.	29	4	0
Question 6.6 I believe the evaluation system is relevant to my	29	2	2

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Scale of 1-3	Extensively (3)	Somewhat (2)	Not at All (1)
job.			
Question 6.7 I believe that working towards improving performance on the evaluation will help me improve my practice as a principal	30	1	2
Question 6.13 The evaluation process helps me improve my performance.	28	5	0
Question 6.14: The new evaluation has prompted me to make changes in practice.	23	10	0

CASES

Conducting the surveys was an essential component, in order to reach the purpose and intention of this study. Although the five principals interviewed serve different populations, grade spans, and each has their strengths and weaknesses, many of their survey results were similar. For the most part, they believed in the importance of evaluations and perceived this tool as something beneficial and positive. Within the same context, the principals believed the evaluation helped them improve their practice. All five agreed that the most powerful piece of the evaluation is goal setting. In addition, they stated that the goal-setting piece allows them to focus on one area of improvement despite their workload. During our conversations, all of them related their evaluation instrument to TTESS, the new teacher evaluation instrument.

Yarbrough Early Childhood Center and Ms. Price

Yarbrough ECC

Yarbrough Early Childhood Center (YECC) is located on Border St. West ISD has 1 Pre-Kindergarten (PREK) centers and this one is the newer facility in the district. Table 5.2 describes the school's demographics. Yarbrough Early Childhood Center has approximately 600 students,

18 teachers, and 12 support staff members. Of those 600 students, 89% are economically disadvantaged (ED) and 98% are Hispanic. Of the student population that YECC serves, 270 students are English Language Learners (ELLs) and 132 are Special Education students (SPED).

Table 5.2: Yarbrough Early Childhood Center (YECC) Demographic Data

Campus	Enrolled	EcoDis	SPED	ELL	Hispanic	White
Yarbrough Early Childhood Center (YECC)	600	553 (89%)	132 (22%)	270 (45%)	588 (98%)	6 (1.0%)

West ISD is a strong advocate of early childhood education. So much so, that they decided to launch a free PREK For All Program or Universal PREK. Currently, Texas law states that only children who qualify under seven eligibility criteria descriptors can attend PREK (TEA, 2018). The criteria is as follows:

- Be unable to speak and comprehend the English language;

- Be educationally disadvantaged;

- Be homeless, as defined by 42 United States Code (U.S.C.) Section 1143a;

- Be the child of an active duty member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who is ordered to active duty by proper authority;

- Be the child of a member of the armed forces of the United States, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who was injured or killed while serving on active duty;

- Be in, or have been in, the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS); and

- Be the child of a person eligible for the Star of Texas Award as: a peace officer under Section 3106.002, Government Code; a firefighter under Section 3106.003, Government Code; or an emergency medical first responder under Section 3106.004, Government Code.

The district decided to offer PREK services to any child that did not qualify under the criteria to attend school. This opportunity was well received with the community and is going on its third year. YECC follows rigorous curriculum following the states instructional PREK Guidelines.

Ms. Price

Ms. Price is a Mexican-American woman and a long-time resident of the region. In 2010, she was named principal of Yarbrough Early Childhood Center (YECC). She has been in education for 18 years. She started her career as a third grade teacher. After five years of teaching, she became a Literacy Leader at Mesa Vista Elementary. She learned how to coach and support teachers from grades Kindergarten- 5th grade. Ms. Price then decided to venture into administration and became the assistant principal of a Pre-Kindergarten PREK center. Ms. Price was passionate about her school and about being a school leader. She felt compelled to always think about her students when making decisions. She described wanting to create a school "where kids are the number one reason why we make decisions." Shortly after, she became an assistant principal at a PREK center. She knew it would be a personal challenge because she lacked PREK experience. However, she said she was excited for the challenge and took the position. She was motivated by what she described was her love for elementary school students: "It was a great learning experience because I was afraid of the little ones at first, but in the end I ended up loving it." She ended up enjoying the experience of a PREK center so much that she decided to start applying for principal jobs.

Ms. Price described her leadership approach at her school and how she adapted her practices to the needs of her school. She believes her greatest strength is building relationships with people and "walking the talk." Having a positive culture is important for her and she describes her school as having a "happy and safe environment where kids are the number one reason why we make decisions." She takes pride in that many people who walk into her school always give her compliments like, "It just feels so welcoming and all the teachers are so

supportive." She also stated that "it is a school with very high expectations." Ms. Price is a hands-on leader who likes to "roll up her sleeves." She described that in many instances she will model and try the different curriculum mandates she wants in place such as Bloom's Taxonomy in the teachers' classrooms. She stated that she tells her teachers, "I'm a principal, but I'm a teacher."

Ms. Price became the principal of Yarbrough Early Childhood Center and has been there for the past 7 years. She stated her greatest future challenge is that there are still lots of misconceptions that PREK is "still a lot of play, without a purpose." Parents not knowing the "depth and complexity" is also a challenge. Many times they have to provide clarity to many policies at first and then, they can proceed with teaching and learning at a faster pace. Ms. Price perceives the evaluation tool is contributing to her practice. She described how the tool has helped her. "It's a tool that gives you feedback, and as an instructional leader, I always want to make sure that I'm improving."

Ms. Price is a strong instructional leader that believes that all children can meet high expectations regardless of age, need, or life situation. In her own words, "It's a school with very high expectations." She has embedded the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) rigor matrix, Guided Reading, and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) into their instructional focus. The DOK is also known as Norman Webb's Depth of Knowledge. Depth of Knowledge categorizes tasks according to the complexity of thinking required to successfully complete them. YECC also has a character program in which she feels has added to the positive culture of her school. The school developed the program to foster the social and emotional development of students and to extend the school's impact beyond academics. For accountability purpose, YECC uses the CIRCLE Progress Monitoring Assessment to test early literacy skills (UT-Houston& CLI, 2018). Below is the overall data for the 2016-17 school year. Overall, the data shows growth in the different developing skills essential for an early childhood program.

Table 5.3: Yarbrough Early Childhood End of Year CIRCLE Data

Measure		Proficient	Emerging	Developing	Out of Range
Rapid Letter Naming		53%	46%	0%	0%
Rapid Vocabulary 3		45%	55%	0%	0%
Phonological Awareness	Syllabication	65%	35%	0%	0%
	Onset-Rime	62%	38%	0%	0%
	Alliteration	40%	60%	0%	0%
	Rhyming I	63%	37%	0%	0%
	Overall Measure	82%	18%	0%	0%
Math	Rote Counting	52%	47%	0%	0%
	Shape Naming	85%	15%	0%	0%
	Number Discrimination	84%	16%	0%	0%
	Number Naming	59%	40%	0%	0%
	Shape Discrimination	86%	13%	0%	0%
	Counting Sets	86%	14%	0%	0%
	Operations	38%	61%	0%	0%
	Overall Measure	81%	19%	0%	0%
Letter-Sound Correspondence		0%	0%	0%	0%
Story Retell and Comprehension		86%	14%	0%	0%
Book and Print Knowledge		86%	13%	0%	0%
Science		78%	21%	0%	0%
Social Studies		0%	0%	0%	0%
* Measure has no benchmarks.					

Alameda Elementary School and Ms. Vandez

Alameda Elementary

The consolidated Alameda Elementary has a total of 500 students, 34 teachers, and 11 support staff members. The school serves Kinder-6th grade students who are predominantly Hispanic. Ninety-four percent of the students are economically disadvantaged and thirty-nine percent are ELL. She has a total of 90 students who are identified Special Ed. Table 5.4 describes the school's demographics.

Table 5.4: Alameda Elementary Demographic Data

Campus	Enrolled	EcoDis	SPED	ELL	Hispanic	Black
Alameda Elementary	500	470 (94%)	90 (18%)	195 (39%)	495 (99%)	15 (3%)

Under the leadership of Ms. Vandez, Alameda Elementary made gains as indicated by STAAR in math and science. Science had the most significant gains with a 20-point increase. Math increased by two. The students performing at the Masters level also increased. However, the data did show a decrease in reading and writing of seven points.

Table 5.5: Alameda Elementary STAAR 16-17 Data

Standard	Reading	Writing	Math	Science
Approaches	68%	61%	78%	77%
Meets	38%	37%	38%	40%
Masters	18%	13%	18%	15%

When asked if she believed if the evaluation system is effective and accomplishing a purpose, Ms. Vandez states, "I think so, you know areas of where we are and where we need to go."

Ms. Vandez

Alameda Elementary is led by Ms. Vandez. She is of Hispanic decent and was new to the district in the 2016-17 school year. She is an El Paso native and decided to come back home after leaving to be a principal in East Texas. Ms. Vandez has been in education for a total of 17 years. Her career started as kindergarten teacher, but she also taught 4th grade. Then, she decided to become an administrator and served as an assistant principal. She has been a principal for a total of 6 years. When asked about her school's challenges, she stated, "There's always room for growth." She also talked about being at a new campus and her experience thus far. She stated, "With every new school, comes new challenges and new growth opportunities." Based on her responses, Ms. Vandez has a continuous improvement leadership approach.

In 2016, Ms. Vandez was appointed the principal of Alameda school, which was in a very unique situation. West ISD consolidated two schools into Alameda Elementary due to the declining enrollment in the area. However, a school construction bond was passed in 2015 and the community approved Alameda Elementary to be rebuilt into a beautiful, new 21st century environment that will open after the completion of this study. Ms. Vandez was challenged with combining two faculties, student bodies, and communities into one. She stated, "Consolidating two campuses was the great challenge." She believes her previous experience allowed her to "Just go in, dive in and know what to do to take it to the next place."

Consolidating the schools comes with many new challenges and opportunities. The temporary location of Alameda Elementary is located on a main street in the lower valley. The

building is about 80 years old and was built to accommodate 600 students. One major challenge was working with the community and developing a plan due to the extra flow of traffic the area has. Ms. Vandez felt that change was very difficult for everyone. Parents, students, and teachers from both previous schools adjusted to many new systems and procedures Ms. Vandez put in place. This took time and lots of communications from her in order to ensure all stakeholders were in safe and orderly environment and that kids were learning. She states, "It was a little challenging last year because of all the other issues we had such as not having that cohesiveness of one campus and one mascot." On a positive note, Ms. Vandez had the opportunity to set many new traditions, expectations and implement new ideas for all stakeholders. For example, she led her community, staff and parents through a process where the school selected one mascot and school colors that represent the new Alameda Elementary.

From an instructional viewpoint, Ms. Vandez had to unite two different sets of teachers to follow one vision and mission. Consolidating two schools required a special emphasis on culture and mission building. She stated, "We needed to make sure that we were all on the same page as far as our mission, what we're here for and do whatever it takes." Team building activities were a common activity in the consolidated school. Ms. Vandez felt that team building and "motivating teachers" was one of her strengths as a principal. She redefined the school's PLC goals, mission, and processes for planning purposes. She inherited a TIER 3 school as defined by district standards as a school that needs additional support due to their low academic test scores. To address the areas of concern, Ms. Vandez described a need to engage teach with the use of data. Prior to her arrival as principal, she described data usage as superficial. She described her actions leading teachers to collect and think more critically about data analysis. Ms. Vandez states that one of her greatest strengths is "Knowing instruction and modeling best practices to teachers, in order to make a difference for our students."

Valle Elementary School and Ms. Sanchez

Valle Elementary

Ms. Sanchez is the leader at Valle Elementary home of the Thunderbirds where students get "Thunderized." Ms. Sanchez explained how when students come from other schools, they can quickly tell who is new due to the practices they have in place for kids. Valle Elementary is a Prek-5th school located in the lower valley area of El Paso. Valle Elementary currently serves 650 students, of which 200 are PREK students. Last year, Valle Elementary was the dedicated PREK hub for that area due to the closure of West Learning Center. Table 15 describes the school's demographics. Forty-seven percent of the students are ELL and eighty-nine percent are economically disadvantaged. She has a total of 81 students who are identified as needing special education services. Valle Elementary currently employs 28 teachers and 11 support staff.

Table 5.6: Valle Elementary Demographic Data

Campus	Enrolled	EcoDis	SPED	ELL	Hispanic	White
Alameda Elementary	650	578 (89%)	78 (12%)	305 (47%)	637 (98%)	13 (2%)

Academically, Valle Elementary was struggling and was labeled a TIER 3 school. Science, Math, and English Language Arts were a concern due to declining historical STAAR data. In addition, Valle Elementary missed Index 2 in the state's accountability measures. Index 2 measures student growth. Therefore, the district worked with Ms. Sanchez and her leadership team to improve student outcomes in different areas. Their efforts paid off and the school was able to make sufficient gains to take the school from a TIER 3 to a TIER 2. Overall the school improved in 3 of the 4 subject areas. In writing and math, Valle ES had an increase of 13 points compared to last year. Science improved by 2 and reading stayed at 70%. Ms. Sanchez also increased the number of students who met the standard at the Meets and Masters level in all subjects.

Table 5.7: Valle Elementary STAAR 16-17 Data

Standard	Reading	Writing	Math	Science
Approaches	70%	72%	79%	64%
Meets	40%	41%	34%	28%
Masters	20%	12%	12%	6%

Ms. Sanchez

Ms. Sanchez has been in education for 27 years. She is a Mexican-American woman and a long-time resident of the region. In 2011, she was named principal at Valle Elementary. She started as an elementary teacher in from forth and first. She began transitioning into administration as an instructional coach, then assistant principal and eventually a principal. Ms. Sanchez has been a principal of Valle Elementary for six years.

Ms. Sanchez described her leadership approach at her school and how she adapted her practices to the needs of her school. She believes her greatest strength is building a positive climate and that her teachers embrace and nurture all kids. "They bring them on board and they begin to succeed." She leads with a positive approach and believes in the importance of staying positive no matter what, "I keep going."

When she arrived to Valle Elementary it was an elementary that was overcrowded. The district decided to build another elementary school in the area to alleviate the overcrowding. Once the school was built, the campus was split in half according to boundary lines. The teachers followed the students to Valle Elementary. She states that teachers who had the most seniority were afforded the opportunity to go to the "new school" and the rest remained. Therefore, because of the split, she states, "many of her teachers are novices, but at least I'm starting to see those levels come up." She used the term "levels" to describe teacher capacity to increase student achievement and implement high-quality instruction. Ms. Sanchez also states that one of her areas of growth is "trying to get the teachers and push them out of their comfort zone so that we don't become complacent." She ties that area of growth with the evaluation system by stating that "TPESS is a growth mindset tool, we have to grow".

Warrior Elementary School and Ms. Chavez

Warrior Elementary

Warrior Elementary is one of four blended learning elementary schools in the district. Blended learning is an education program that combines online digital media with traditional classroom methods. It requires the physical presence of both teacher and student, with some element of student personalized learning. Warrior Elementary has a total of 400 students, 25 teachers, and 11 support staff employees. The school serves Kinder-5th grade students who are predominantly of Hispanic descent. Ninety-one percent of the students are economically disadvantaged and 53% are ELL. She has a total of 64 students who are identified Special Ed. Table 5.8 describes the school's demographics.

Table 5.8: Warrior Elementary Demographic Data

Campus	Enrolled	EcoDis	SPED	ELL	Hispanic	White
Warrior Elementary	400	364 (91%)	64 (16%)	212 (53%)	392 (98%)	3 (0.7%)

The improvements at Warrior Elementary led to the school receiving all 6 state distinctions from the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Distinction designations are awarded to campuses based on their standing relative to a comparison group of schools. Designations can be awarded for progress, closing performance gaps, postsecondary readiness, and for academic achievement in reading, math, science, and social studies. Elementary schools are eligible for 6 out of the 7 awarded distinctions. They received a distinction in:

- Progress
- Closing Performance Gaps
- Postsecondary Readiness
- Academic Achievement in Reading
- Academic Achievement in Math
- Academic Achievement in Science

Raise Your Hand Texas (RYHT), an organization that works with Texas schools to promote 21st century learning, which includes blended learning, selected Warrior Elementary as an implementation site. The 2016-17 school year was the first year of implementation of the blending learning program. Her school picked the goal of improving literacy in grades K-5 through the process of blended learning.

Implementing blended learning was a challenge because it is not a program, but more of a mindset to leverage and personalize student learning with technology. They choose to use the station rotation model of blended learning in her classrooms. Most importantly, her teachers had to learn and analyze student data in order to personalize instruction for students. With blended learning, the goal was to make sure each child was learning at their level and that students would be able to have a choice in content to address his or her strengths and weaknesses in the area of reading. Although it has been a major mind shift for the teachers, they are making progress and instilling change to disrupt the traditional educational environment.

Table 5.9: Warrior Elementary STAAR 16-17 Data

Standard	Reading	Writing	Math	Science
Approaches	79%	67%	86%	85%
Meets	46%	31%	53%	45%
Masters	24%	13%	26%	18%

Ms. Chavez

Ms. Chavez is a Mexican-American woman and district alumni. In 2011, she was named principal of Warrior Elementary. Ms. Chavez has been a principal for 6 years all at Warrior Elementary. She described herself as a leader that "goes beyond the culture of nice." What she meant by that statement was she believes in the importance of accountability and high expectations. She has been an educator for 24 years and served in a variety of roles, including bilingual teacher and an instructional coach. She ventured into administration first as an assistant principal and eventually a principal. She believed that her previous time as a teacher and coach allowed her to keep a pulse on her school, especially concerning instruction. She stated, "That as

a leader I know instruction so they couldn't pull the wool over my eyes and put on a good show in the classroom."

Ms. Chavez brought with her an explanation of her approach to school leadership and to school improvement. Her slogan was, "no excuses, no explanations." What this slogan meant to Ms. Chavez and the school was that they do whatever it takes to ensure the success of all kids. West Elementary made some favorable academic gains according to Ms. Chavez and a review of the school's 2016-17 STAAR results. West Elementary made gains in 3 out of the 4 areas tested. A 22-point increase was accomplished in the area of science compared to the data from last year. The school had a 10-point gain in math and improved in reading by 4 percentage points from the previous year. However, there was a 12-point decrease in writing, which concerned Ms. Chavez. The students' meets and masters levels also increased in all subject areas with the exception of writing.

Ms. Chavez described her greatest strength as a leader as "having high expectations for self and others, and holding people accountable." She stated that as a whole, "the premise for TPESS is for us to reflect on our practice, and our areas of strength." Her sense of accountability, go hand-in-hand with perceptions of the evaluation tool.

Park Elementary School and Ms. Mendoza

Park Elementary

Park Elementary is located in Northeast El Paso. It is one of the district's newest facilities. Ms. Mendoza is the principal at Park ES and uses the slogan "every kid counts" as a motivational message to faculty and staff.

Park Elementary is one of our largest elementary schools in comparison to the other schools in this study. Table 5.10 describes the school's demographics. It has a total of 1,000 students. In the 2016-17 school year, that population included sixth graders. Park Elementary is a PreK-5th grade campus, but in the 2016-17 school year they kept their 6th grade students due to construction at the middle school. Eighty-one percent of the students are economically

disadvantaged. Park Elementary has 330 ELL students and 230 SPED students. Compared to the other four schools, Park Elementary has less Hispanics at 89%, 4.8% White, and 3.3% Black, and 0.6% of other races such as Asian, Indian, and Pacific. They have 40 teachers and 16 sixteen support staff members.

Table 5.10: Park Elementary Demographic Data

Campus	Enrolled	EcoDis	SPED	ELL	Hispanic	White	Black	Asian	Pacific
Park Elementary	1,000	819 (81%)	230 (23%)	330 (33%)	890 (89%)	50 (5%)	30 (3%)	10 (1%)	4 (4%)

Ms. Mendoza

Ms. Mendoza is a Mexican-American woman and has been in the district for 21 years. In 2012, she was named principal of Park Elementary. She was a teacher, instructional coach, and assistant principal. Currently, she has been principal at Park ES for 5 years. Ms. Mendoza enjoys and embraces the diversity of her community. She wants her school to be the highest performing. She is competitive and passionate about her school. She believes that Park ES can "compete with any other school to be the top in the area." Community building is a centerpiece to Ms. Mendoza's leadership. Ms. Mendoza believes in the importance of building a community. "It's going to have to be a partnership." She wanted to change the perception that the Park Elementary community was "below" other communities or schools in the area. She instilled more of a welcoming environment for parents. "I opened the doors to where we can have conversations whether they're a little bit uncomfortable, we're still able to have conversations and still focus back on the child."

Similar to Valle Elementary, Park Elementary was a TIER 3 campus due to their low academic scores. Based on their 15-16 school year data, the district and principal identified their areas of priority. Those areas were in science and writing due to low assessment scores in STAAR. The district worked and supported the instructional leadership at Park Elementary. Additional personnel were hired to assist in the science lab. District central office leaders attended Park Elementary's leadership meetings and staff development. Due to the efforts at Park

Elementary, in one year Ms. Mendoza was able to take the campus from a TIER 3 to TIER 2 status. She states, "We're going to do whatever it takes for student success whether it's small gains, we're going to get there." As noted in table 5.11, Park Elementary increased or maintained in the areas of math and science. Science had an increase of 14 points and maintained math at 82%. There was a slight drop in reading as well. Due to their gains, more students scored at the Meets and Masters level in all subject areas.

Table 5.11: Park Elementary STAAR 16-17 Data

Standard	Reading	Writing	Math	Science
Approaches	70%	66%	82%	82%
Meets	38%	32%	42%	47%
Masters	17%	7%	19%	18%

THEMES

After the interviews, each principal provided an insight into their background, school environment and leadership style. From their responses, I was able to identify themes that overall provide a good representation of their thoughts. Those themes are as follows:

- Goal setting

- Passive and compliant

- Trust and support

- Coaching Feedback

Each theme will be analyzed and discussed in detail below.

Goal Setting

Goal setting related to T-TESS was a common theme each principal discussed throughout the study. Ms. Vandez stated that evaluations have to happen and understands it is part of being accountable. When asked what role she played in the formal evaluation process, her response echoed her previous responses related to goal setting. She stated, "The role I play in the formal evaluation process was to understand my role and responsibilities." Furthermore she added, "This process included understanding the principal standards and self-reflection on progress or

attainment of performance goals." "So now it's really a process, " "Okay, you're on the right track or this is what we can kind of do and get that feedback either way," Ms. Sanchez explained how she felt in control by being able to control her own goal. She noted, "Well I think with me as a principal, it's like you're in control of what you wanna focus on." She elaborated and stated, "Uh, well not in control, but you… you come to the realization and so you are choosing your goal so therefore there is no excuse, and you commit to it, and there's buy in automatically." Ms. Sanchez briefly also discussed the role the teachers play in their evaluation by comparing it to her experience.

Ms. Chavez talked about the importance of using data to guide her evaluation. Ms. Chavez described the process she goes through with the tool that helps contribute to her practice. She stated, "Based on the data, you identify what your strengths are and what your weaknesses are. And so when you go to the goal setting, again, it already gives you an idea because you have a perception about what went wrong or what went well. And then, I think it gets you to look at specific things, uh, that you need to hone in on." This process, as she stated, helped guide her on what direction she needs take. "It's that reflecting on data and knowing it." She added, "You know, if they put me at this campus as a leader and I'm not helping the school progress in the right direction, then I'm not doing my job, you know." So I don't have another way to measure that, you know." Lastly, she stated, "I think the power of T-TESS is-is, uh, is reflecting on your data and setting your own professional goal." Furthermore, Ms. Mendoza identifies the goal-setting piece of the evaluation to be of the most value to her. She stated, "You're able to create your goal, where you've been and where you want to go as an educational leader." Like her colleagues, Ms. Mendoza also believes that there are connections between TPESS and TTESS. She added, "I go through the same process with my teachers as I go with my supervisor." As stated earlier, Ms. Mendoza believes the best part of the evaluation is the goal setting. She stated, "If we're all together about kids and we have leaders that are all different but we're aligned to something, we have goals; you're going to see that at the end we are going to have success." Therefore, the alignment of the evaluation systems is important as it helps come together as one.

Last but not least, Ms. Price believes that goal setting provides a purpose. "The strength is definitely that I get to focus on something and become and expert, and then eventually I can choose a different goal. It sets a purpose and you work towards that goal."

Passive and Compliant

It is a common practice for K-12 organizations to have evaluations to evaluate the majority of employees. Ms. Vandez stated, "I mean I think it's like anything, we have to have an evaluation system. Everybody has to be held accountable." She goes on to say, "Is it the best evaluation system? No, but I think that the piece of the self-reflection and the goal is crucial." Although she understands why evaluations are needed, she believes the feedback they receive from their evaluator is important in order to communicate the end in mind. Her approach is "What do I need to change and, or still continue to build on to take the campus to the next level for my students?" She adds that from her experience, she appreciated genuine feedback in her walkthroughs as a teacher. She stated, "So I think that evaluations could still be subjective to the evaluator, but I think if there's that trust, um, and there's that level of support, then… then you feel like, 'Okay, the feedback that I get is genuine.'" Ms. Sanchez simply stated, "It's something that you have to do to get it done." Ms. Chavez has very high expectations of herself and others. Accountability is something she believes in. Therefore, her response to how she perceived this evaluation tool is not surprising. She stated, "My perception is that we have to have some form of evaluation for leaders." Ms. Sanchez compared TPESS to her old evaluation and stated that, "I would say for me it was more of a compliance thing."

During the interview process, principals were asked, "How, if at all, do you perceive that formal evaluations contribute to your practice? Provide examples if any." Ms. Price responded "Absolutely yes!" She believed that evaluations do contribute to her practice. She stated, "It's a tool that gives you feedback, whether you are using a scale, open-ended, rubric, or whatever." Ms. Vandez stated, "I think it contributes in the sense that, um, you, you grow on the areas where you feel you need to." Ms. Vandez explained that even before the evaluation process begins,

self-reflection always needs to happen. Ms. Sanchez goes into more detail on this question. She stated, "I think evaluations contribute to your practice, but it also depends on the type of person that you are." Adding that, "We don't get paid a lot as teachers or administrators compared to you know the regular world. Um, so your reward is that you get recognized for the job that you do. I'm not somebody that needs to be praised constantly, but every once in a while when they tell you oh, they recognize your work and it's nice to hear that." Overall, she believes they do contribute and help. With TPESS, Ms. Mendoza had a different perception of how evaluations have helped her as a principal. She stated, "In this representation, TPESS allows you to be reflective, like lay off yourself a little bit but at the same time, you need to be able to reach attainable goals at the end of the year. I've always been a person that's a hard worker, I believe, and a person that's very hard themselves. So looking at the evaluations in the past has been what did I do wrong? What is the black and white issue?"

Trust and Support

As educators, we all understand the importance of trust, support, and building relationships. When I asked Ms. Vandez the question "Do you feel that your evaluation contributes to your practice?" she responded "Yes, but it also depends on the evaluator." She described how trust needs to be there and a level of support in order to feel comfortable to receive positive or negative praise. Ms. Vandez believes the district makes leadership development a priority including them as principals, "I think having the level of support from, you know, our associate superintendent, and that they understand the level of support that a principal will need and, that the support is immediate. I think that, that that shows a lot." Ms. Chavez believed the evaluation system is designed "for us to become better as professionals in our craft. It is less about being punitive and more, uh growth driven, depending on who is evaluating." Ms. Mendoza compared TPESS to her old evaluation and makes a point of how the old system did not lend itself to trust. "The last one was reverted back to just a straightforward evaluation system uhmm, that truly didn't go back to honoring a piece of personal growth or

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growth mindset or trust." In addition, Ms. Price mentions how she would only see her supervisor once in a while. With TPESS, "the support is constant. It also depends on how your supervisor uses it and how it's presented to you."

TPESS and TTESS are closely aligned, and Ms. Price recognizes those connections. "They are pretty much the same procedure; we set goals, have the pre-conference, it's ongoing and it's to grow." She stated, "It's a supportive system that is more formative." Ms. Price also added that her teachers like the pre-conference. "It forced us in a sense to talk constantly." Ms. Chavez also adds that she was going to see the power of TTESS more this year. "Now we're a little more familiar. We understand the purpose and how it can be very powerful because of the reflecting, goal-setting, and how we can support teachers." To some, they would feel intimidated before if they were coming to you." I think people are more comfortable to talk and seeing your teachers so many times a year."

Coaching Feedback

In order to continue improving, feedback must be provided and having a support system allows individuals to be coached for continuous improvement. Ms. Price explained that the way it is perceived also depends on how the supervisor uses it and how it is presented. "If it's levered in a sense where it's about making growth, I think any formal tool should be used for progress to continue improving. I think the conversations that we have, that it's ongoing, it's like a living evaluation that is, it's just ongoing." Even though Ms. Vandez strongly believed that evaluations primarily exist for compliance purposes, She references the importance of getting feedback from the evaluator. When connecting her experience to TTESS, she stated, "So, I think now with TPESS there's that consistency, that alignment with TTESS." Furthermore she stated, "I think it allows it to be more specific using the rubric and zoning in on the language to provide feedback." Before she believed teachers did not receive constructive feedback, instead they received more general statements like "you're wonderful and your students were on task." "You want to show to teachers exactly where they need to grow and the same for principals. We need to make sure

that teachers are growing, that we develop them and, that… it trickles down to the students and student performance."

Ms. Sanchez further elaborated on how she fills out the rubric when she self-evaluates herself. "In the progression, you're kinda debating whether you fit here or there." The TPESS rubric has the principals self-evaluate where they think they fall in the different dimensions /ratings. Ms. Chavez stated that "Overall, I think the most important piece is the face-to-face or that continuous feedback that we from our supervisors. I think we're in communication enough that I think you give me enough feedback about how I'm doing, throughout the year." Ms. Chavez believes that feedback is very important and that her role is to stay in communication with her supervisor. Ms. Mendoza sees she is able to get feedback in two pieces, one being self-feedback and other from the supervisor. "It lends itself to working with my associate superintendent, uhh, in two pieces. One, personally I get to evaluate myself and really look at my strengths and weaknesses and really say, okay, I'm not going to be all over the place. I get to pick one thing and see where I need to go and actually make it realistic and the other when meeting with my boss. We meet. We discuss our goals and my boss knows about what's going on in my campus."

PERCEPTIONS

The five cases I looked into provided a phenomenon about their overall perceptions of evaluations. During the interview process, one of the questions asked was "How do you perceive this evaluation?" Ms. Price's first response was, "at my first impression was like whoa, this is a lot." She elaborated and added, "It was a little overwhelming at first." Ms. Price expressed that the tool intimidated her. "It feels a little intimidating in the beginning as far as you think it's gonna be like, it's gonna be time consuming." Ms. Sanchez seemed surprised by this question based on her initial response, which was, "My perception?" I asked again and she simply stated, "It's something that you have to do to get it done and I think it's mostly positive, because it gets you thinking at what you need to do." Ms. Sanchez believed her evaluation was created to

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promote growth. She stated, "I think the purpose is for us to grow, and for us to define our areas of strengths, and our areas of need, and I think it is effective because it helps you to define and it helps set goals. Which is very important. I think evaluations contribute to your practice, but it also depends on the type of person you are. Because if you take pride in your work, your reward is in being recognized in your evaluation."

Similar to Ms. Sanchez, Ms. Mendoza stated, "That's exactly why it was created, for growth. If you're wanting to get better, you have to look at the bigger picture and see yourself, you know, yeah you have to have a growth mindset to be successful." Ms. Price also discusses how growth matters with TPESS. "As a leader I have to be very honest with myself in okay…If I know I'm strong in this area, why am I going to choose something I'm not strong… or whereas I can choose something that I need to continue growing." Ms. Chavez who is data driven stated, "It's that reflecting on the data and connecting our evaluations to student outcomes, in the end that's what it's about."

The principals also discussed the complexity of their job and how an evaluation cannot capture it all. Therefore, that is why they like the goal setting piece. Ms. Sanchez stated, "but it just comes with the job that there are so many other things that you have to deal with, but you can't just really concentrate on that goal." Ms. Vandez stated, "If we really go evaluated on everything, it would be pages and pages. So I think now with TPESS there's a consistency, that alignment to the profession." I asked if they believed the evaluation was purposeful. Ms. Price discussed how it focuses on specific points and areas to grow on. She stated, "I know that there is a lot of things that need to you know, and that I need to be monitoring and keep track of…. I mean from learning academics to the safety of the school operations, but it allowed me to grow in one area."

OVERALL

The overall perception of the evaluation is positive. The participants reported that the goals helped them focus on one aspect of the job and provided them with an opportunity to

improve in that area. The evaluation process is promotes growth. All five principals believed in the importance of focusing on goal setting and providing feedback. Two principals specifically referenced evaluations having to exist in the organization in order for improvement to occur. Similar to the saying, "It's what we've always done," three principals shared about the importance of positive relationships with their supervisor to promote genuine growth and value. Trust and support were key to genuine feedback that led to improved practices.

Chapter 6

The objective of this study was to answer the research questions: How do formal evaluations influence principal leadership? More specifically, I wanted to answer the following sub-questions:

1. What are the principal perceptions of formal evaluation?

2. What roles do principals play in the formal evaluation process?

3. How, if at all, do principals perceive that formal evaluations contribute to their practice?

The findings described in the previous chapter have important implications for practice and theory. In addition, the case studies that focused on 5 elementary school principals within the same district provide findings to support the literature. Altogether, the findings of this study make important contributions to evaluations, instructional leadership, and specifically principal evaluations.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Principal Perceptions

Like the saying goes, "your perception is your own reality." For the purpose of this study, principals' perception of their evaluation mattered in order to know if evaluations are of any importance or purpose. Previous studies about principals' perceptions regarding different aspects of their duties conclude that perceptions are important (Grisson &Harrignton, 2010; Harzell 2002; Odhiambo and & Hii 2012; Zimmerman & Deckert-Pelton, 2003; Young, 2015). Psychologists such as Bodenhausen and Lichtenstein (1987) conclude that if there is not a clear understanding of something or if something is too complex, people will rely on stereotypes rather than an educated understanding.

Five principals were interviewed and asked the question, "How do you perceive this evaluation?" Although their responses vary and provided light to other topics within the questions, overall their perceptions were positive. First impressions are difficult to overcome. When I asked Ms. Price, she stated that her first impression of the evaluation "was like whoa, this is a lot. It felt a little intimidating in the beginning." However, once she became familiar with the process, she stated "I started kinda like you know embracing it and filtering it, and I was like I can do this because of the goal." Another principal specifically stated, "It's something that you have to do to get it done and I think it's mostly positive, because it gets you thinking at what you need to do." Simply stated, when Ms. Mendoza was asked about her perception of the evaluation she states "very well". On a similar note, Ms. Chavez, states "My perception is that we have to have some form of evaluation for leaders." She noted that the most important pieces are the face-to-face and that continuous feedback from the supervisor. Lastly, Ms. Vandez also believes there has to be an evaluation. She stated, "everyone needs to be held accountable and is it the best evaluation system, no, but I think that the piece of the self-reflection and setting the goal, and the feedback that you get from your evaluator is crucial."

In this study, based on the responses above, it is evident that the principal's' perceptions are based on an educated understanding of their evaluation tool. In Young et al. (2015), the study was conducted to understand principal's perceptions about teacher evaluation systems. Overall the study concluded that principals believed the purpose of teacher evaluations systems was to guide administrators in improving the practice of teachers, adopting a growth-oriented approach to teacher improvement, and to provide formative feedback. These conclusions resemble the findings from the first question I asked the 5 participants. The principal participants believed their evaluation tool provided feedback and supported them in adopting a growth-oriented approach as they set goals.

After I analyzed the responses about their perceptions, a recurring theme amongst the 5 participants is the goal-setting piece of the evaluation. Locke and Latham's (2013) goal-setting theory concluded that goal setting theory has demonstrated more scientific validity to date than

any other theory or approach to work motivation. In addition, they state that goal setting increases interest and reduces boredom with a routine, repetitive task. Feelings of success in the workplace occur to the extent that people see that they are able to grow and meet job challenges by pursuing and attaining goals that are important and meaningful (Locke & Latham, 2006). In this instance of learning goals, Locke and Latham (2006) describe that the best results are attained if a learning goal is assigned –that is, a goal to acquire the requisite task knowledge. They believe that a learning goal facilitates or enhances metacognition-namely, planning monitoring, and evaluating progress toward goal attainment. Feedback is an important moderator of goal setting, both working hand-in-hand. One principal discusses the importance of getting feedback when she has set her goal. Locke and Latham (2013) agree that feedback allows people to decide if more effort or a different strategy is needed to attain their goal. When performance feedback is withheld, goal setting is ineffective for increasing performance.

Most of the principal's responses match what the research states about the importance of setting and successfully accomplishing goals. For example, Ms. Sanchez believes that if you don't set the goals, then it doesn't happen. She states, "So it's just about you know making sure that you identify your areas of need, strength, refine everything but you get your focus, create your goal and then work towards accomplishing that." Furthermore, Ms. Price talks about how you need to be very careful in choosing and selecting your goal. "As a leader I have to be very honest with myself. If I know I'm strong in this area, why am I going to choose something I'm not strong, whereas I can choose something that I need to continue growing?" Ms. Price provided insight that goal setting allows her to continue learning. Ms. Vandez also believes that the goal-setting piece of the evaluation is of value stating "just zoning in on and what is the road map to get there." She also adds that it's a goal that you develop together and it's great to have that feedback and being able to say okay, you're on the right track or this what we can kind of do and get that feedback either way."

Previous research had highlighted the importance of improvement and organizational learning. Schick (2003) believes that evaluations should inform organization leadership and

improvement. In fact, genuine organization change may be a pre-condition for effective use of performance information (p. 83). In this study, each principal provided their own perception of TPESS and shed light on how they believe evaluations help their practice, which will be further discussed in this chapter.

Principal Roles

With any evaluation, the evaluator has its purpose and roles and the person being evaluated also has its roles and follows a process within the evaluation. Therefore, what roles do principals play in the formal evaluation process? During my interviews, I asked two questions to provide more insight to the main questions. The first question was, tell me about the process of evaluation system. What do you like about it, if anything? What do you dislike? The last question asked was, what role did you play in the formal evaluation process?

The responses to these questions from the five principals vary and were somewhat vague. From the previous question, we know the principals liked the goal-setting process. However, overall the principals did not dislike the timelines and processes in place. They offered suggestions on what could be improved in the process. Ms. Vandez and Ms. Price felt the rubric was repetitive and vague, while others thought the format could be condensed and not so tedious at a glance. Each of the principals believed they played a role in the formal evaluation process with the exception of Ms. Vandez who was new to the district. Ms. Price states that she was part of the formal evaluation process and of the decision-making. She understood it would help them as instructional leaders. Ms. Mendoza responded, "I felt that I was part of it." The other two responses were also on the similar to Ms. Mendoza's.

Their limited responses and engagement in those questions took me back to the essential questions of why do a we evaluate? Under this section in chapter 2, it states that evaluations are a part of almost every organization with an understanding that we live in a society that demands immediate results. Educational organizations are no different. Russ-Eft& Preskill (2009) believe that evaluations clearly have the potential to add value to organizations. TPESS clearly can

correlate with Russ-Eft & Preskill's 6 reasons to evaluate: (a) evaluation ensures quality; (b) evaluation contributes to increased organization members' knowledge; (c) evaluation helps prioritize resources; evaluation helps plan and deliver organizational initiatives; (d) evaluation helps organization members be accountable; (e) evaluation findings can help convince others of the need or effectiveness of various organizational initiatives; (f) experience with evaluation is a marketable skill.

Nonetheless, evaluations have its challenges and preconceived notions as noted by Russ-Eft & Preskill (2009). Based on the responses, one can make the assumption that while the principals are relatively pleased with TPESS, evaluations are still something of compliance. They know evaluations need to exist in the organization. Therefore, their role is somewhat passive and compliant. They understand that due to their experience in the K-12 everyone needs to be evaluated yearly. In regards to TPESS, the principals also understand that this instrument was developed by TEA, which could also add to their passive acceptance of the tool, and limits their engagement in the role and process they play due to it already being defined.

Feedback and Trust

Leadership matters, and the research on instructional leadership proves how important the principal is. Understanding what effective principals are tasked to do is critical as they put theory into practice (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Blasé &Blasé 2003; Leithwood 2004; Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinback 1999; Marks & Printy, 2003; Neumerski, 2013). In relation to instructional leadership, the last question I asked is "How, if at all, do principals perceive that formal evaluations contribute to their practice?" As I analyzed the responses from the interviews and correlated them with the research, TPESS does contribute to their practice. Furthermore, in many of the responses trust and feedback are critical components in order for the principals to feel comfortable and more accepting of the tool.

We can start with the responses from Ms. Vandez and Ms. Price. When asked, Ms. Vandez believes evaluations contribute in the sense that you grow on the areas where you feel

weak in. She also adds that evaluations contribute to your practice depending on the evaluator. She states, "I remember getting certain walkthroughs on PDAS where it was exceeds, and I appreciated it, but if there was any question about something negative which could be still subjective to the evaluator, if there's that trust and level of support, then you feel the feedback is genuine and not seen in a negative connotation." Ms. Price also made the connection to how important the evaluator is to the evaluation process and her instructional practice. "Absolutely yes!" was her response to the question. She adds, "because it's a tool that gives you feedback. As an instructional leader I always want to make sure that I'm improving. So you know, it also depends on how your supervisor uses it and how it's presented to you. If it's used as this who you are and this is how you did, well you know it's kinda like a dead end evaluation. But it's levered in a sense where it's making you grow, any formal tool should be used for progress, to continue learning." Their statement coincides with the research from Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins (2008) on successful school leadership. They believe that good leaders build capacity with the people in the organization through coaching and supporting. Ms. Vandez and Ms. Price believe in the importance of coaching and being coached through support and trust. In addition, Neumerski's (2013) work suggests there is a vital connection between leadership and learning. Most of the knowledge required for school improvement must reside in the people. The principals sense of wanting to keep learning, adds to their instructional practice skills on an ongoing basis.

Certain personal traits explain the relationship between the variations in leadership effectiveness (2008). Having certain traits help leaders to attain student progress and become a stronger instructional leader. Ms. Mendoza states, "to my practice, definitely" when asked if the evaluation contributes to her practice. Furthermore she goes on to say, "But then again, I am going to talk in a personal matter. I've always been a person that's a hard worker I believe and a person that's very hard on themselves. So looking at evaluations in the past has been, what did I do wrong? What is the black and white issue? And kinda indecisive whether I hit the mark. In this representation of TPESS allows to lay of yourself a little bit but at the same thing you need

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to be able to reach attainable goals at the end of the year." On a similar note, Ms. Sanchez responds, "I think evaluations contribute to your practice, but it also depends on the type of person you are. Because if you take pride in your work, your reward is in being recognized in your evaluation." Some of the traits that Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins identify for successful leaders are open-mindedness, persistence, confidence, being optimistic and reflective. Both principals demonstrate how important those traits can be in order to be an instructional leader. Their ability to reflect on their leadership practices using the evaluation is of importance. Blasé and Blasé (2003) reinforce the notion that in any field, reflection allows someone to think about and evaluate their actions and strategies. The principals in this study fit that statement.

Connections to TTESS

In addition to TEA adopting a principal evaluation (TPESS), the state also adopted a teacher evaluation called Texas Teacher Evaluation & Support System (TTESS), (TEA, 2014). Both evaluations have commonalities such as the goal setting, student outcome goals, and rubrics for formative and summative areas. Through the interviews, principals were able to make connections between both evaluations due to their similarities and how TTESS also contributes to their instructional leadership practices. The research on instructional leadership also connects the critical role principals play with teacher development to improve academic achievement (Blasé &Blasé 2003; Leithwood 2004; Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinback 1999; Marks & Printy, 2003; Neumerski, 2013).

As previously stated, the principals believed one of the most powerful components of TPESS was the goal setting section and the feedback. When asked and as they related TPESS to TTESS, responses such as; "It connects", "It's pretty much the same thing, same procedure, we set goals, conference, it's an ongoing system" or "I go through the same process with my teachers." More specifically Ms. Chavez states, "It's that reflecting on the data and connecting our evaluations to student outcomes, in the end that's what it's about." Teacher growth is important to Ms. Vandez and Ms. Price stating that TTESS allows it to be more specific and

again zoning in on… you want to show teachers exactly what they need to grow and the same for principals. Ms. Price states how conferencing with her teachers has really made them grow as well. Blasé and Blasé (2013) discuss the importance of three aspects of instructional leadership: talking with teachers, promoting teachers' professional growth and fostering teacher reflection. The principals in the study were able to see how the teacher evaluation has provided a venue for these aspects to take place and in turn enhance their instructional leadership. Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinback 1999; Neumerski, 2013; Marks & Printy, 2003 research focuses on the relationship between principals and teachers. Furthermore, the principal is not the sole instructional leader, but the leader of instructional leaders that promote collaboration of principal and teachers on curriculum, instruction and assessment. Hence, there is a vital connection between leadership, teaching and learning that is evident in the interviews as the principals related their evaluation to the teacher's evaluation. These connections will further allow them to become stronger instructional leaders as they support their teachers by using a formal tool.

MENTORING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A recent study conducted by Vanderbilt University and Mathematica Policy Research, looked into the implementation of the first three years of a four-year principal supervisor initiative in six urban schools systems funded by the Wallace Foundation, (Goldring, Grissom, Rubin, Rogers, Neel & Clark, 2018). The authors discovered the importance of quality vs. quantity when it comes to principal supervision. Most principal supervisors were in charge on average of 25 principals or more, which provided less time for them to effectively coach and build capacity to improve the principalship. Principal supervisors spent the bulk of their time ensuring that principals complied with district rules and regulations and less time on evaluating and coaching them and helping them become better at their jobs (Goldring, Grissom, Rubin, Rogers, Neel & Clark, 2018). Based on the changes the districts did to alleviate the principal supervisor, 63% of their time was spent in schools or principal groups meetings providing feedback and coaching. Another notable finding (2018) was that principals said they trusted their

supervisors to be both evaluators and coaches. Principals described coaching as a process to support them through inquiry rather than directives. "Principals receiving more frequent, more intensive coaching often reported close working relationships and familiarity with their supervisors" (p.39).

For decades, states and districts have focused on the importance of teacher professional development while assuming that the principal does not need to continue learning. Principals' continuous improvement and learning is important for student and teacher learning, policy implementation, and cultivating healthy and supportive school communities (Rowland, 2017). Experts at the School Leaders Network (2014) encourage districts and states to invest in professional leadership development beyond recruiting, engage principals in peer networks where principals can learn from other principals, and provide one-to-one coaching support for principals.

In conclusion, how do formal evaluations influence principal leadership? Principals' practice, roles, and perceptions provide evidence that evaluations can influence leadership. According to Alkin, Daillak, and White (1979), no one expects evaluations to work every time, but there are far too many stories of evaluations that have failed. The literature and research seems to have a consensus that evaluations have little impact on change. While the principals had a compliant, passive attitude about evaluations in general, they were engaged in certain components of the TPESS tool to include the goal setting and feedback piece. Leadership and goal setting appear to have a reciprocal relationship (Locke & Latham, 2013). These pieces provide them the ability to specifically focus on one aspect of their evaluation to in turn improve their leadership practice.

IMPLICATIONS

Future Research

At the time of this study, only a limited amount of case study research on principal evaluations had been conducted (Anderson, 1989; Dornbusch & Scott, 1975; Hallinger &

Murphy, 1987; Hallinger, 1983; Clifford, Hansen, & Wright, 2012; Murphy & Pimentel, 1996; Harper, 2014; Keating, 2011). Studies on principals' perceptions of (Browne-Ferrigno, 2013; Canto & Stronge, 2006; Grissom & Harrington; Odhiambo & Hii, 2012; Harzell, 2002; Spraque, Smith & Stieber, 2002), had been conducted, but not on principal evaluation. The potential for contributions of future principal evaluations studies are endless. Researchers should look into perceptions theory, impact, and goal setting to expand on the findings of this study in the area of principal evaluation. Additionally, researchers should look to use other methods of research and collection tools.

Researchers may benefit from looking to student outcomes data and correlating with principal evaluations. Future research should investigate the correlation of academic achievement with principal evaluations. This study focused only on the perceptions of 5 urban school principals. The findings from the study identified specific roles, processes, instructional impact, and perceptions, not specific academic achievement data. Generally, teacher evaluation research has been conducted in correlation with student outcomes, but not principal evaluations.

School districts are generally overseen by state education agencies. Future research should investigate the process and implementation of principal evaluations at the state level. Previous research has highlighted the lack of principal participation in implementations of evaluations and policy. The Texas Education Agency recently implemented two evaluations systems known as TPESS and TTESS, one for principals and the other for teachers. One could measure the effectiveness of the similarities of the tools. In addition, policies can be reviewed and studied on how they impact principals and assess principal knowledge in order to identify possible relationships with policy and practice.

Finally, future research on principal evaluations should also include the relationships with their supervisors. In this study, it was noted that the 2 out of the 5 principals interviewed felt the relationship with the supervisor was important and influenced the perception of the evaluation process to either be seen positive or negative. Research needs to be conducted on principal's supervisors to understand the impact they have on principals' practice.

Policy and Practice

A number of recommendations for policy and practice emerged from this study. These recommendations are particular relevant to state agencies, superintendents, administrators and principals. This study found that the school district initiated and implemented the new state approved evaluation system known as TPESS. Principals noted that evaluations have to exist regardless of their opinions, but did find some pieces of the evaluation of value such as goal setting. Additionally, principals noted that processional development from the district was helpful. I offer the following two recommendations to central office administrators attempting to implement a new evaluation process and policies within a school district:

1. Principals in this study believed evaluations would always have to exist due to compliance. Evaluations for the most part are often misused or have little impact; evaluations clearly have the potential to add value to organizations. As mentioned in this study, the five principals saw value in the goal-setting process. In an effort to continue making principal evaluations worthwhile, a district or state level agency can implement and attempt to change the culture to a growth-mindset. This will allow principals to have a less passive or compliant attitude towards evaluations. In addition, the district can focus on goal-setting theory to want to drive self-efficacy and performance at higher levels. Habits of the mind are important for change. Principals need to be reflective and understand the power of setting more difficult goals. Here the supervisor can provide initial feedback on the goal through a continuous feedback approach in order for the principal to experience success in the end. Once a difficult goal is attained, the principal will continue pursuing challenging goals to experience success.

2. Continue providing quality professional development for principals in the areas of instructional leadership. The professional development can be correlated to specific areas of the TPESS evaluation. Data can be collected to identify strengths and weaknesses patterns within the principals and that data can drive professional

development decisions. In order to continue enhancing their instructional leadership, the district should also consider professional development in the areas of conferencing and feedback to promote teacher growth.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study focused on a sample of five elementary school principals in one urban school district. The principals differed in expertise, experience, and knowledge. Each school had different student populations, academic levels, and backgrounds. The variation between principals and schools enabled me to understand how principals perceived evaluations within their principal experience and instructional background, but the findings of this study cannot be said to represent any principals outside of this group.

West Independent School District provided opportunities and constraints for this study. The school district context with a diverse population, demographics, increased accountability for principals, and the change of evaluations all created a unique school district. Thus, these findings may not be transferable to another school district or to West ISD in the future. The small sample of principals in this study and the limited duration of data collection posed limitations to the study. The findings are an incomplete snapshot of the how the principal perceived their evaluation at a given time. This in a sense may have changed since the data collection process was only for a limited time.

A further limitation of this study is on the perspectives in this study. Principals were the sole unit of analysis. Supervisors and other level principals were not included in the study. I relied exclusively on interviews with the principals and how they perceived evaluations. I did not seek out other perspectives that might have confirmed or disconfirmed the way principals perceive evaluations and the impact on their instructional leadership practices.

Finally this study was limited by me. I am sure that my position unintentionally aided the data in ways that reflected what I wanted to hear instead of what was actually there or influenced. My analysis was limited by own researcher limitations and experiences as a

researcher. As an insider in the school district, that could also be a setback. As I noted in Chapter 3, I acknowledge these challenges, but my best efforts were in place to remain impartial, influential, or biased.

CLOSING REMARKS

In this study, the principals shared their experiences and perceptions about their evaluation tool. In most instances, the principals had a positive outlook about TPESS and how it has helped them in their practice. The principals acknowledged the challenges the principalship has and the never-ending amount of duties and responsibilities they take on daily. Each principal and campus has a unique story. They identified their strengths and weaknesses about their leadership philosophy. Also noting that each school has its pockets of successes and struggles. For example, one principal stated, "We have some bumps and are working hard to build a culture of trust and collaboration for the greater cause of academic achievement."

Some of their perceptions, stories, and opinions varied from leader to leader, but ultimately all understood that in the end, it is about student outcomes. This study was not about right or wrong. This study was about how principals perceive evaluations and the impact it may or may not have on their practice. The data showed that principals accept evaluations because of the structure and bureaucracies of K-12 institutions. Evaluations have always existed and will probably never go away. Yet, they did find some value in the newest evaluation tool to some extent contributing to their practice. It could be seen as making the best of or seeing the positive in an institutionalized practice.

I offer thanks to each one of the participants in this study for their participation, but also their honesty, passion, and dedication to their schools and students. I also have to acknowledge their instructional leadership role in improving and building teacher capacity. I am proud of these five individuals for having the courage and persistency to change the trajectory of our students. As people read this dissertation, I hope they understand how complex the principal role is, will realize the impact each supervisor can make, and how much leadership matters in times

when public education is being scrutinized. Our principals do their best at educating America's future.

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Appendix A

Introduction: Tell me a bit about your professional background in education.
1. How long have you been in education?
    a. What subjects/grades did you teach? How long were you a teacher?
2. How long have you been a school administrator? (either as an AP or Principal)?
    a. How long have you been a principal, and how long in your current position?
3. Describe your school.
    a. What are your school's greatest strengths and weaknesses?
    b. Tell me about your staff and their capacity to provide high quality instruction.
    c. Tell me about your students (demographics, challenges)
    d. Parental engagement
    e. Academic achievement
4. What do you feel is your school's greatest challenge moving forward?
5. What do you believe is your greatest strength as a leader?
6. What do you believe is your greatest area of growth as a leader?

General Evaluation Questions:

1. Describe your current evaluation system.
2. Share your knowledge of how the evaluation system was developed, and the history behind it?
3. How is information about your evaluation communicated to you?
4. What is the purpose of your evaluation system? Do you believe it is effective in accomplishing that purpose? Please explain.
5. What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the principal evaluation in your district?
    a. What would you consider to be best practices in principal evaluation?
    b. How do you think those practices compare to the old evaluation system we had?
6. Tell me about the timelines in place. What do you like about them? Would you change them?
7. Tell me about the process of the evaluation system. What do you like about it, if anything? What do you dislike?
8. What role did you play in the formal evaluation process?
9. Describe how your district makes leadership development a priority. In what ways?
10. From your experience, explain if the evaluation system supports leadership development. In what ways?
11. What type(s) of professional development does your district support for your principals? How is it aligned if at all, to the feedback from your evaluation?
12. How do you perceive this evaluation?
13. How, if at all, do you perceive that formal evaluations contributes to your practice? Provide examples if any.
14. Do you see any connections between the TPESS and TTESS evaluation system? If so, how?
15. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your principal evaluation system that we haven't addressed?

Appendix B

Survey questions- a short pilot survey will be sent to all the elementary principals of the district to inquire on their initial perceptions of the new evaluation system and gather data on the impact of this evaluation on their leadership

1. How many years have you been a principal?
2. Rate the effectiveness of the previous principal evaluation system on your leadership using a scale of 1-5.
3. Rate the effectiveness of the piloted TPESS evaluation system on your leadership using a scale of 1 -5
4. Has the TPESS been an overall positive experience for you during its first year of implementation?
5. In your opinion, what is the primary reason for conducting principal evaluations in your district? Please indicate the extent to which you believe the current TPESS has an impact on using a scale of 1-3:
   1- Not at All   2- Somewhat   3- Extensively
   a. The TPESS system is effective in helping you continue to develop your practice to mastery.
   b. Evaluation data is used to set professional development goals.
   c. Feedback on professional growth towards mastery of practice is addressed in the principal evaluation process.
   d. Coaching is used to support your professional growth.
   e. You have been involved in the development of the evaluation process of your performance.
   f. You believe the evaluation system is relevant to your job.
   g. You believe that working towards improving performance on the evaluation will help you improve your practice as a principal.
   h. The evaluation describes the kind of principal practice the principals in the district should strive for.
   i. You understand the evaluation process.
   j. You understand the purpose of the evaluation.
   k. You understand the standards and/or performance rubrics in the evaluation system.
   l. The evaluation system supports your school's effort to improve student achievement.
   m. The evaluation process helps you improve your performance.
   n. Trying to do well on the evaluation has required you to make changes in your practice.
6. Any additional feedback on the TPESS?

Vita

Brenda Crisitna Chacon-Robles was born and raised in El Paso, Texas. She graduated high school in 1999. She earned her Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies degree from The University of Texas at El Paso in 2005. In 2007, she received her first Masters of Reading Education degree from the University of Texas at El Paso. In 2009, she received her second Masters of Educational Administration also from The University of Texas at El Paso. From there, she pursued her doctoral degree.

Brenda Chacon-Robles has presented at regional and state conferences. Her most recent presentation was on Dual Language at the SLI Conference in Dallas. In addition, Ms. Chacon-Robles has presented on technology practices, leadership development, and instructional practices.

Brenda Chacon-Robles is currently working as an Associate Superintendent in the Ysleta Independent School District. She has been serving the district since 2014. Prior to that, she worked for Socorro Independent School district as a teacher, instructional technologist, and administrator. She was the proud principal of Hueco Elementary. In total, Ms. Chacon-Robles has been in the public education field for 14 years. Her long-term goals include continuing her research in educational administration, and continue working in public education at any administrator capacity.

Contact Information: bchaco02@gmail.com

This dissertation was typed by the author.