SCHOOLS OF EXCELLENCE *AND* EQUITY: CLOSING ACHIEVEMENT GAPS THROUGH ACADEMIC EMPHASIS

Jen Benkovitz

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the School of Education.

Chapel Hill
2008

Approved By:

Advisor: Dr. Kathleen Brown

Reader: Dr. Stan Schainker

Reader: Dr. James Veitch

ABSTRACT
JEN BENKOVITZ: Schools of Excellence and Equity: Closing Achievement Gaps Through Academic Emphasis
(Under the direction of Dr. Kathleen Brown)

Currently, the debate in public schools centers on the achievement gap and is politically bathed in the language of equity and excellence. While research continues to suggest that our schools are plagued with inequities that perpetuate this gap and maintain the status quo (Darling-Hammond; 1994; Jenks & Phillips, 1998; Kozol, 1991; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004), there are some schools that play a key role in raising student achievement for all students and in closing the achievement gap across socio-economic and racial lines (Comer, 1994, Ladson-Billings, 1994, Reyes et al., 1999, Skrla & Scheurich, 2001). This study explored how K-5 elementary school principals of state recognized "Honor Schools of Excellence" are (or are not) pursuing, supporting, and achieving excellence *and* equity and sought to offer school leaders specific strategies for attaining this goal.

For the purpose of this study, data were analyzed through the lens of Academic Emphasis (Hoy, Tarter, and Hoy, 2006). Schools with high levels of academic emphasis are characterized by high but achievable academic goals for all students, a belief that all students are capable of achieving these goals, an orderly and serious school environment, and an overall pursuit for academic success (Goddard et al., p.684). Research demonstrates that academic emphasis is positively related to student achievement even after controlling for the socio-economic status of students (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991; Lee & Byrk, 1989).

Drawing from this research, the Academic Emphasis framework used to analyze the data was organized according to the components of policies, practices, and beliefs. With these components as a template, three major themes emerged from the data – one regarding policy, one regarding practices, and one regarding beliefs. Within each of these themes, a number of sub-themes emerged. Each of these sub-themes is further divided into data from the small gap schools (SGS) and data from the large gap schools (LGS) to allow for a comparison and to shed light on policies, practices, and beliefs that result in both excellence *and* equity. The data analysis revealed similarities and differences among the small and large gap schools, each offering lessons for school leaders.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation represents four years of work, the collective support and encouragement of my many people, and the completion my childhood dream of attending and graduating from the University of North Carolina.

First and foremost, I have many people to thank at UNC, many of whom began instilling faith in me six years ago when I first entered the Master's Program. I would especially like to thank Dr. Kathleen Brown, my committee chair, for her constant support and encouragement. I would also like to thank my dissertation committee, Dr. Schainker and Dr. Veitch, whose professional feedback and support will last a lifetime. Finally, a special thank you to A.J. Muttillo and Thad Urban, the graduate students with whom I worked to complete this study.

My friends and family also played a large role in the completion of this study. To my father, I would like to express my appreciation for his ongoing support and inspiration; this dream started in our living room twenty-four years ago when, upon watching UNC beat Duke in the ACC Championship, he educated me about the rigor and prestige of UNC and made me believe I could get here. I also want to thank my grandmother for listening to me talk about this study each and every morning and for always believing in my ability to "get it done." To my friend and colleague, Dara Butler - thank you for believing in me and for pushing me to believe in myself when you intuitively sensed my need for your support. I also thank you for the chair that got me through chapters 5 and 6; I plan to keep it. To Denise Young - thank you for listening and for encouraging me to finish. To Linda Taylor – thank you for recognizing my talent and

for inspiring me to “dream big.” Finally, I would like to thank Chris Scott, the only person I know who may be a little more competitive than I am; thanks for pushing me to the finish line, Chris.

I must also recognize the amazing staff, students, and families with whom I have the privilege to work. Thank you for your patience and for the inspiration you offer me as I aspire each day to be a better leader.

I would also like to thank the members who participated in this research study; each willingly shared his/her time and insight with me and their contributions are immeasurable.

Lastly, I dedicate this work to Ellen Pritchett – thank you for guiding me toward the leadership position I am in today and for watching over me so that I may work every day toward achieving excellence *and* equity through my practice as a school leader.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

I. INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

Although studies have examined schools that make a difference in the lives of marginalized children (Oakes, Quartz, Ryan & Lipton, 2000; Riester, Pursch & Skrla, 2002), there is an absence of literature regarding principals as the unit of analysis and the process of principals serving as leaders for social justice. Related to this is an absence of documented strategies that principals who are leading for equity and excellence use to advance their work in the face of countervailing pressures of public schools.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this two-phase empirical inquiry of "good" schools was to explore "how" K-5 elementary principals of state recognized "Honor Schools of Excellence" are (or are not) pursuing, supporting, and achieving both academic excellence AND systemic equity in their schools. Furthermore, the researchers shed light on a flawed accountability system that touts excellence while ignoring glaring inequities among student subgroups. Although the state's accountability system, unlike the Federal system, accounts for student growth, many children are still left behind. A school is deemed a "School of Excellence" regardless of whether subgroups meet *or* exceed the targeted proficiency level. While some subgroups consistently outperform others with regard to proficiency, many schools boast the title of "Excellence" despite hidden inequities that reinforce the achievement gap. By definition in the selected county, "Honor Schools of Excellence" have at least 90 percent of their students perform at or above grade level (i.e. achieved a level 3 or 4 on state exams) and the school meets expected growth and federal No Child

Left Behind (NCLB) proficiency requirements for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). This accountability system conflates excellence and equity, therefore offering a narrow definition of student achievement and perpetuating the current achievement gap that separates many minorities from their white counterparts.

In Phase One, quantitative data were collected through equity audits to scan for equities and inequities across multiple domains of student learning and activities. The purpose was to document and distinguish between "good schools" (i.e. those that are both excellent *and* equitable) and those that are not and to uncover practices in the "good schools" that lead to both excellence *and* systemic equity. In Phase Two, through the use of semi-structured interviews with principals, assistant principals, teachers, and parent leaders, qualitative data were collected to document the specific strategies that principals of "good schools" used to confront and change past practices anchored in open and residual racism and class discrimination. "Good leaders" committed to excellence *and* equity find a way "for all students to achieve high levels of academic success, regardless of any student's race, ethnicity, culture, neighborhood, income of parents, or home language" (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003, p.1).

For the purpose of this study, the researchers rank ordered and then separated the identified schools into two categories. The 12 more equitable schools that recorded achievement gaps of 15% or less between their White students and their minority students were labeled SGS for "small gap schools." The 12 less equitable schools that recorded achievement gaps of more than 15% between their White students and their minority students were labeled LGS for "large gap schools" (see Chapter 3 for Methodology). Categorizing the schools by the size of their achievement gap allowed the

researchers the opportunity to compare and contrast leadership styles with the hope of identifying specific practices that support both excellence *and* equity.

Research Questions

The following question focused the research study: How are principals of K-5 public "Honor Schools of Excellence" pursuing, supporting and advancing social justice, excellence, and systemic equity in a suburban southeastern county? The sub-questions include the following: a) What are principals of K-5 "Honor Schools of Excellence" doing to ensure the success of all of their students? b) What similarities do school leaders who are successful in creating equity and excellence have in common? (c) What findings can connect to and build upon the literature related to leadership for social justice and systemic equity? (d) What can be learned from "Honor Schools of Excellence" that could benefit other schools with similar demographics?

Background

The historical marginalization of underprivileged students often results in a school culture that perpetuates the status quo and ignores the social injustices that permeate our schools. As a result, the fate of many of our students is a pre-determined mold designed for school failure and social inequity. A school culture that does not embrace the responsibility of responding to the needs of these students and their families simply perpetuates hegemony and leaves these students behind—without hope, without vision, and without equal access to the excellent education to which *all* children are entitled. School-based administrators can attempt to resist hegemony by making social justice the primary focus of their administrative agendas.

Social justice, due to its historical roots, carries various, contextual meanings and is therefore an elusive term to define. "In Latin, justice comes from the word *equitas*, which means fairness, and social derives from the word *socius*, meaning companion. Combining these Latin roots produces a literal definition of social justice as being fair to one's companion" (Shoho, Merchant & Lugg, 2005, p.47). Social justice has roots in fields such as sociology, history, law, social work, and theology. While there appears to be no single definition for social justice, there has been wide consensus with regard to the guiding principles of equality, fairness, acceptance of others, and inclusiveness (Shoho et al., 2005).

Recently, many prominent scholars in the field of education have offered definitions of social justice (Bogotch, 2002; Furman & Gruenewald, 2004; Riester, Pursch, & Skrla, 2002; Shields, 2004). Scheurich and Skrla (2003) equate social justice in schools with equity and excellence in schools whereby "literally all students achieve high levels of academic success, regardless of any student's race, ethnicity, culture, neighborhood, income of parents or home language" (p.1). Moreover, Theoharis (2004), in a paper entitled "Toward a Theory of Social Justice Educational Leadership," goes a step further by attributing social justice [in schools] to school leadership by stating:

> I define social justice leadership to mean that [these] principals advocate, lead and keep at the center of their practice and vision issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other historically and currently marginalizing conditions in the United States. (p.3)

In tandem, the definitions from Scheurich and Skrla and Theoharis served as a guide to explore strategies employed by school-based administrators who are committed to supporting and advancing social justice—leading schools in which *all* students achieve high levels of academic success.

Historical Roots

Spring (2005), in his book, *The American School: 1642 – 2005*, suggests that hegemony is a central theme in educational history. Spring lays the foundation beginning with the English invasion of North America in the 16th century, eventually leading the U.S. government to aim for a national culture to preserve, honor and maintain Protestant Anglo-American values. He reveals that one reason for the 19th century development of public schools was to "ensure the dominance of Anglo-American values that were being challenged by Irish immigration, Native Americans and African-Americans" (p.3). Spring explains that public schools, as a result, became "defenders of Anglo-American value with each new wave of immigrants" (p.3) and, in the following century, served to assimilate minorities and therefore perpetuated hegemonic practices. Although educators have preached equality of opportunity, schools have been repeatedly plagued with acts of religious intolerance, racial segregation, cultural genocide, and discrimination against immigrants and non-whites. Spring argues that hegemony (this quest for cultural and racial domination) persists today in the debate over multiculturalism and is evident as schools perpetuate and reproduce the dominant cultures and values in society.

Although many lawsuits have addressed the issue of equality of opportunity, none has had a greater or more lasting impact on public schools than the landmark *Brown vs. The Board of Education* decision (1954). Among one of the most significant rulings in the history of the U.S. Supreme Court, state imposed racially segregated schooling was declared unconstitutional and was described as depriving "minority children of equal education opportunities in violation of their rights under the "equal protection clause" of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution" (Brown & Harris, 2004, p.239).

Although *Brown* sparked four major educational developments (Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title I and Title VII, funding equity and adequacy, affirmative action, and multicultural education), "improvement has been mixed, slow in coming, insufficient in impact, and with a few backward steps" (Valverde, 2004, p.377).

Present Issues in Education

Currently, the debate in public schools centers on the achievement gap and is politically bathed in the language of equity and excellence. Despite decades of efforts to provide an equitable education to all of our nation's students, significant gaps in achievement remain between White students, students of color, and students living in poverty. A gap also exists for middle class students of color in suburban schools. This achievement gap has been reported and discussed extensively in the research on student achievement (Kozol, 1991; Jencks & Phillips, 1998; Williams, 2003).

Recent data compiled by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) indicate that this achievement gap persists. Using data from the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) fourth grade math tests, researchers found that the average scale score for White students was 246 while the average score for African-American students was 220, and the average score for Hispanic students was 226. The size of the gap for all subgroups of students was similar on the reading test. White students had an average scale score of 229, while African-American and Hispanic or Latino students scored 200 and 203, respectively. Similar gaps were found when the data were disaggregated by socioeconomic levels. Students who received subsidized lunches scored 23 scale score points lower on the math section of the NAEP than students

who were not eligible for subsidized lunches. The gap between the same subgroups was 29 scale score points on the reading section of the NAEP.

McKenzie and Scheurich's (2004) research of the current educational achievement gap reveals the following:

> There is an abundance of data and research that show that students of color not only are performing at lower achievement levels than their White counterparts but, also, are overrepresented in special education and lower level classes, dropping out of school at higher numbers, frequently educated by teachers who do not believe they can learn or who are actively negative in their attitude toward these students, underrepresented in gifted and talented and higher level classes, often times educated in schools with less resources and with the least experienced teachers, and more likely to be suspended or expelled. (p.602)

These data reflect an inequality with regard to student achievement, program accessibility, teacher expectations of students, instructional delivery, curriculum implementation, and resource allocation. There is no question that minority and socio-economically disadvantaged children are being left behind and, as a result, this growing disparity has gained national attention.

Many researchers have attempted to explain why this gap exists. Some (Jensen, 1969; Herrnstein & Murray, 1994) believe that the gap exists due to the genetic inferiority of African-Americans in comparison to Whites. Although the validity of their studies has come into serious question, many still subscribe to this genetic deficiency line of thinking. Other scholars, such as Slavin (1986), have pointed to class differences, families, and the access to learning opportunities at home as a major cause of the achievement gap. Slavin, and others who believe as he does, postulates that, if students of color or students of poverty were raised in White middle-class homes, they would achieve greater levels of academic success, and the gap would be reduced or eliminated.

These same authors, however, do not address the many examples of students who are successful but were not raised in White middle-class homes.

Valencia (1997) called the views of individuals such as Slavin, Jensen and others *deficit thinking*. Those who believe in these views blame poor school achievement on the deficits of the students and their families. When blame is placed on the student, it simultaneously exonerates the school. As King, Houston, and Middleton (2001) state, "Individual characteristics emerge as most responsible for poor school performance. Such discussions render invisible schooling practices that contribute to school failure" (p.434). However, many schools exist that have been successful educating students of color and students of poverty (Comer, 1994; Johnson & Asera, 1999; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Reyes, Scribner, & Scribner, 1999; Skrla & Scheurich, 2001). Considering the evidence from these schools, it is impossible to ignore the role that the school system plays in providing an excellent and equitable education for all students.

The problem then becomes that overwhelming evidence suggests the school system is responsible for providing an excellent and equitable education for all students, yet has failed to do so. Specifically, schools have missed opportunities to provide all students with an equitable opportunity to learn. This is evidenced by the unequal representation of subgroups of students in academically gifted education and special programs. Another factor that deprives students of an equitable and excellent education is the inequitable access that students have to the schools most talented teachers. These lack of opportunities, coupled with the prevailing deficit view that schools often take towards students, contribute heavily to the inequities in schools. It is the deficits of the school system, not the individual students and their families, that are responsible for the gap in

achievement that exists in our nation's public schools. Granted, this is not an easy problem to solve, but as Skrla, Scheurich, Johnson, and Koschoreck (2001) conclude, "… the fact that, broadly speaking, our children experience differential levels of success in school that is distributed along race and social class lines continues to be the overridingly central problem of education" (p.239).

The standards based movement, along with the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, proposes criteria for how to eliminate the achievement gap between minority students and their peers. "The broad goal of NCLB is to raise the achievement levels of all students, especially underperforming groups, and to close the achievement gap that parallels race and class distinctions" (Darling-Hammond, 2004, p.3). Across the country, school systems are required to publish "report cards" that report disaggregated data regarding students' results on standardized tests. This information is then used to advertise the quality of teaching within a school, the performance of individual groups of students and, in many cases, leads to the dismissal of school leaders and/or the involvement of a team of people (often without educational experience) who "take over" the school to ensure equity and excellence.

As English (2002) points out, discriminatory practices, although banned by law, "continue in other guises" (p.298), and result in the resegregation of our schools. Among the most insidious of practices, prevalent in schools throughout our nation, is the use of standardized tests to "discriminate and separate students for purposes of instruction" (p.298). Furthermore, Darling-Hammond (2004) explains that NCLB fails to address the blatant and disturbing systemic inequality regarding the provision of education offered in the United States. Students in our wealthier schools and districts, for instance, receive up

to ten times greater funding than that of students in our poorer districts. Kozol's (1991) research, documented in his book, *Savage Inequalities*, elaborates upon these funding inequities and paints a sad, disheartening picture of the impact they have upon the education of poor and minority children across our nation. Regardless, there is still hope that the United States will move forward with a socially just agenda of providing all children with equal access to quality, desegregated public education (Brown & Harris, 2004).

Despite funding inequities that favor the wealthy and ignore the disadvantaged, despite federal mandates that conflate measuring schools with fixing them, and despite societal norms and values that often serve as impediments to equality and excellence, our schools can serve as vehicles for social justice. We must first turn our attention to what is happening within our schools; we must uncover and expose hegemonic practices, identify socially and morally just strategies for how to respond, and must insist and ensure that all children receive the equitable and excellent education to which each is entitled. The success of our schools relies upon leadership that upholds and advocates equality of opportunity for all of our children.

Conceptual Framework

This research study was analyzed through the lens of academic optimism (Hoy, Tarter, & Woolfok Hoy, 2006), a construct developed by the authors to explain student achievement while controlling for socioeconomic status, previous achievement, and urbanicity. The notion of optimism as a factor related to success was suggested by Seligman (1998). He argued that optimism influences achievement as much as talent and motivation and that optimism can be learned and developed (Hoy et al., 2006). The

structural model of academic optimism supports and builds upon Seligman's model of learned optimism. Hoy and his colleagues outline three underlying components: (1) academic emphasis; (2) collective efficacy; and (3) faculty trust, and suggest that collectively, these components enhance learning, improve student achievement, and shape school norms and behavioral expectations.

Limitations

One of the central limitations of this study is that "excellence" in the selected county is defined solely by students' attainment of a target score (AYP) on a standardized test. The "target" score, as defined and measured by NCLB, conflates excellence and equity, therefore offering a narrow definition of student achievement and perpetuating the current achievement gap that separates many minorities from their white counterparts.

Another limitation to this study is its focus on a single school district. Furthermore, this district is unique in its focus to keep most schools balanced by subgroups of students identified under NCLB. As a result, most of the schools in this study have a population of African-American and Hispanic students that ranges from 20% to 40% of the total school population. This is not representative of many districts or many schools in these districts that essentially remain segregated. Despite the limitation, it is an opportunity to add a unique district to the research on equity in schools. Also, the site selection process did not include factors and/or variables such as Title I status, budgets, etc. that may have had an impact upon the findings.

An additional limitation lies in the definition of "good" schools and "bad" schools in this study. Some of the schools where African-American, Hispanic, and Economically Disadvantaged students are achieving at the highest levels still have achievement gaps

between 10 and 20%. Admittedly, these schools are not perfectly equitable. However, it further illustrates the need for this research and the importance of not only learning from, but also building on, the success of the more equitable schools in the district.

A final limitation is a result of the large quantity of interviews (80 in all) that were conducted by multiple researchers. As a result, a broad semi-structured interview protocol was used, which did not allow for specific probing. In addition, data was self-reported in interviews but not verified through observations. To counter this limitation, data was collected and triangulated through multiple sources.

Definition of Terms

- Academic Optimism: A conceptual framework adopted by this study that consists of three sub-components. The sub-components include:
    - Academic emphasis: The extent to which a school is characterized by a press for academic achievement (Hoy, Tarter, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2006).
    - Collective efficacy: Includes self-efficacy beliefs of students, self-efficacy beliefs of teachers, and teachers' collective efficacy beliefs about the school (Hoy, Tarter, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2006).
    - Faculty trust: A willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open (Hoy, Tarter, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2006).
- Deficit Thinking: Students who fail in school do so because of alleged internal deficiencies (such as cognitive and/or motivational limitations) or shortcomings socially linked to the youngster—such as familial deficits (Valencia, 1997).
- Hegemony: Racial and cultural domination (Spring, 2005).

- Leadership for Excellence and Equity:
    - Schools in which all students achieve high levels of academic success, regardless of any student's race, ethnicity, culture, neighborhood, income of parents, or home language (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003, p.1).
    - Schools in which principals advocate, lead and keep at the center of their practice and vision issues of race, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and other historically and currently marginalizing conditions in the United States. (Theoharis, 2004, p.3).
- Systemic Equity: The transformed ways in which systems and individuals habitually operate to ensure that every learner—in whatever learning environment that learner is found—has the greatest opportunity to learn enhanced by the resources and supports necessary to achieve competence, excellence, independence responsibility, and self-sufficiency for school and for life (Scott, 2001).
    - Achievement Equity: Having comparably high performance for all groups of learners when academic achievement data are disaggregated and analyzed.
    - Opportunity to Learn Equity: Equal access to a rigorous curriculum for all students.
    - Resource Distribution Equity: Equal distribution of funds and human resources to all schools and students who populate those schools
    - Treatment Equity: The belief and expectation that literally all students can learn and achive academic success at the highest levels

Significance

Many people, including educators, still believe that factors such as genetic deficiency, class differences, families and access to learning opportunities at home are the most reliable predictors of school achievement. With this view, schools excuse themselves from any accountability for inequities among student subgroups. However, with this study of schools that teach similar populations of students from the same geographical region, it is impossible to ignore the reality that the school plays an important role in the achievement of all students. This study gives leaders data to support the notion that the school plays a significant role in the achievement of students. More importantly, educational leaders who read this study will learn strategies that will facilitate excellence and equity from the principals who lead the most equitable schools in this district.

Although studies have examined schools that make a difference in the lives of marginalized children (Oakes, Quartz, Ryan & Lipton, 2000; Riester, Pursch & Skrla, 2002), there is an absence of literature regarding principals as the unit of analysis and the process of actually leading for excellence and equity. The rationale of this two-phase empirical inquiry of leadership for excellence and systemic equity was to document how schools, and leaders in particular, can and are pursuing, supporting, and achieving both goals. They decide they can create both equitable and excellent schools and then use their time and energy to figure out how to do so. This research and review of the literature uncovered strategies that principals can use to achieve both excellence and equity in their schools.

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

Efforts to provide an equal education for racially and economically diverse students can be traced back to 1849 when an African-American father sued the city of Boston for mandating that his child walk beyond a White school to attend a school established for Blacks only. In Roberts v. City of Boston (1849), the court concluded that the school committee was within its power to separate the White and Black students, especially if the education was equal (Gooden, 2004). Gooden points out that the struggle to achieve equality in education gained national prominence in 1954 with the landmark court case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*.

Since *Brown*, authors such as Edmonds (1979) have documented schools that do provide an equal education to students regardless of their race or family's socioeconomic status. Edmonds noted that student performance did not derive from family background, but rather it derived from the school's response to family background. While this discussion of providing an equitable education for all students has continued for well over a century, our current educational system remains inequitable.

Our current discussions of equity in education are centered around the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) that was signed by President Bush on January 8, 2002. The stated purpose of this law is to close "the achievement gap between high- and low-performing children, especially the achievement gaps between minority and non-minority students, and between [economically] disadvantaged children and their more [economically] advantaged peers" (Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2005,

p.1). NCLB defines non-minority students as White students and divides minority students into the following subgroups: African-American, Hispanic, and Native-American students. To remain consistent with the terms defined by NCLB, the literature refers to subgroups of students such as African-American, Hispanic, White, economically disadvantaged, and non-economically disadvantaged. It is important to recognize that an achievement gap exists between these *subgroups* of students; this does not mean, for example, that *all* African-American or Hispanic students are low-achieving compared to their White counterparts. Although the manner in which the discussion of equity is framed has changed over time, our schools have not. They remain systemically inequitable.

The following review of the literature describes the current research on the three components of Systemic Equity: (a) Achievement Equity; (b) Programmatic Equity; and (c) Teacher Quality Equity. After broadly discussing these three components, the review moves into the literature on the role leadership plays in creating schools that are systemically equitable. Specifically, the authors review the literature on characteristics of leaders for social justice, equity, and excellence. The conceptual framework of Academic Optimism is then described in detail.

Systemic Equity

This persistent inequity has prompted Skrla, Scheurich, Johnson, and Koschoreck (2001) to conclude, "… the fact that, broadly speaking, our children experience differential levels of success in school that is distributed along race and social class lines continues to be the overridingly central problem of education" (p.239). Since equity remains the central issue of education, the review of the literature will focus on the

research that centers around systemic equity (Scott, 2001). Scott defines systemic equity as:

> The transformed ways in which systems and individuals habitually operate to ensure that every learner—in whatever learning environment that learner is found—has the greatest opportunity to learn enhanced by the resources and supports necessary to achieve competence, excellence, independence responsibility, and self-sufficiency for school and for life. (p.2)

The literature review is based on Scott's four components of systemic equity: (a) achievement equity; (b) opportunity to learn equity; (c) resource distribution equity; and (d) treatment equity. The researchers have combined Scott's four components into three sections titled: (a) Achievement Equity; (b) Programmatic Equity; and (c) Teacher Quality Equity. The review begins with achievement equity and evidence that it is possible to create schools that are excellent and equitable. Next, the literature on programmatic equity is presented and specifically addresses students in special and academically gifted programs, inequities in the disciplining of students as well as offering a rigorous curriculum for all students. The following section addresses teacher quality equity and includes sections on teacher certification, years of experience, National Board Certification, and teacher quality formulas.

Achievement Equity

Introduction

According to Scott (2001), achievement equity means having comparably high performance for all groups of learners when academic achievement data are disaggregated and analyzed. This section provides examples of schools that have attained achievement equity.

In answer to his own question, how many schools one would have to see in order to be persuaded of the educability of poor children, Edmonds (1979) answered, "If your answer is more than one, then I submit that you have reasons of your own for preferring to believe that basic pupil performance derives from family background instead of school response to family background" (p.23). Unfortunately, many educators still believe, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary, that the school system cannot impact student achievement as much as family background. However, researchers have found schools that are both excellent and equitable (Comer, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Reyes, Scribner, & Scribner, 1999; Skrla & Scheurich, 2001).

Exemplars of Achievement Equity

In a study of high-performing, high-poverty elementary schools, Johnson and Asera (1999) found nine schools that were excellent schools. One school in their study was 100% African-American, with 87% of the students receiving subsidized lunches, experienced a rapid growth in test scores over a short period of time. For example, fourth grade students passed the state's reading test at a rate of only 22.4% in the spring of 1994. However, in the spring of 1998, fourth grade students passed the test at a rate of 65%. This was better than the state average of 58.6%. Although the success of the nine schools in the study was similar, Johnson and Asera reported that the methods by which each school achieved success were varied.

Noblit, Malloy, and Malloy (2001) also found several examples of high-performing schools when they studied schools with a population of predominantly African-American students. They report improved student achievement on indicators such as a greater representation of minority students on the honor roll and in accelerated

classes. The schools compare favorably with schools that serve mostly students from middle class surroundings. Perhaps the most significant finding is that "the distribution of achievement is becoming more equitable" (p.74). Although these schools were part of the Comer Process and the School Development Program where they were reformed using particular strategies and resources, that does not discount them as exemplars of the fact that all students, regardless of their background, can (and should) achieve academically.

In a study of school districts, Skrla, Scheurich, Johnson, and Koschoreck (2001) found evidence of entire districts that were successful with all students. One district in their study, with an African-American population of 36% and a Latino population of 47%, raised test scores for both subgroups of students from 45% to 76% passing and 56% to 81% passing respectively. With evidence of highly successful schools that serve large groups of economically disadvantaged and minority students, it seems impossible to ignore the role that schools play in student achievement.

In their study of five high performing, high poverty schools, Ragland, Clubine, Constable, and Smith (2002), studied five elementary schools that had at least 60% of their students receiving subsidized lunches. Two of the five schools had 92% of their students receiving subsidized lunches. All five of these schools received Exemplary or Recognized status, which means 80% of all subgroups of students passed the reading, writing, and math sections of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills.

HiPass Model

Scheurich (1998), in his article, "Highly Successful and Loving, Public Elementary Schools Populated Mainly by Low-SES Children of Color," provides a research-based description of the "type of school that is needed to provide both a loving

environment and strong academic success for low-SES students of color" (p.452). This grassroots model, developed and implemented by school-level administrators, is known as HiPass (High Performance All Student Success Schools). Scheurich documents the importance of five core beliefs and seven cultural characteristics that are common to each of the identified (HiPass) schools and attributes each to the vision, commitment and practice of the school leader. The five core beliefs include: (1) All Children Can Succeed; (2) Children or Learner Centered Schools; (3) All Children Must Be Treated With Love, Care Appreciation and Respect; (4) The Racial Culture, Including the First Language of the Child is Always Valued; and (5) The School Exists for and Serves the Community, and the seven cultural characteristics are: (1) A Strong, Shared Vision; (2) Loving, Caring Environments for Children and Adults; (3) Strongly Collaborative – We Are a Family; (4) Innovative, Experimental, Openness to New Ideas; (5) Hardworking but Not Burning Out; (6) Appropriate Conduct is Built Into the Organizational Culture and (7) School Staff as a Whole Hold Themselves Accountable for the Success of All Children. The principals included in the study each stated that these core beliefs and cultural characteristics serve as a prerequisite for high achievement. According to Scheurich, these principals, while retaining 80% to 90% of teachers, transformed these schools within about a 3- to 5- year period into schools that were academically competitive with some of the higher performing schools in the state. One high school principal, for example, was able to take a "predominantly low-SES African-American school with less than 20% of the African-American students passing the state math test and, within five years, have more than 60% of these same students passing the math test" (p.458). It is clear that the HiPass metaphor extends beyond academic success as it is traditionally

measured solely by student scores on standardized tests; HiPass is an embodiment of the espoused and enacted beliefs and values of the schools' leaders. Under the leadership of these principals, the HiPass schools are "highly collaborative and democratic, with all participants, including parents, empowered; they do not treat the student as a passive consumer of knowledge; and they deeply value the racial culture and language of the child" (p.455).

Effective Schools Research

The quest for more effective forms of schooling has traditionally been synonymous with the quest for greater educational equity across racial and socioeconomic levels. Beginning with the Coleman Report of the mid-1960s (Coleman, 1966), the past 40 years have witnessed a growing number of research studies aimed at reducing the gap in quality between the school experiences of economically disadvantaged and more affluent youth. Concluding that the strongest predictors of achievement across all racial groups were social characteristics of the student's home environment (e.g., parents' education, income), Coleman proposed that children from economically disadvantaged families and homes, lacking the prime conditions or values to support education, could not learn, regardless of what the school did—in essence, absolving schools of the responsibility for student achievement. Through the "effective schools research," Edmunds, Brookover, Lezzotte, and others (see Rosenholtz, 1985) set out to find schools where children from low income families were highly successful and thereby prove that schools can and do make a difference and that children from poverty backgrounds can learn at high levels. Many of these process-product studies identified samples of high-performing schools, documenting certain school, classroom and

leadership practices that are critical to enhanced student achievement and school productivity, regardless of family background. These unique characteristics and processes within the purview of schools are correlated with high and equitable levels of student learning.

Summarizing these findings, Odden and Odden (1995) noted that effective teachers maximize instruction time; are well prepared; maintain a smooth and steady instructional pace (especially during the first few weeks of school); focus on academic learning; and emphasize student mastery of material. With regard to organizational characteristics, effective schools evidence strong instructional leadership, usually provided by the principal; consensus on academically focused school goals; realistic but high expectations for student learning; regularized monitoring of progress toward academic goals; ongoing staff development; and an orderly and secure environment (Odden & Odden, 1995).

School Climate and Community

Other studies found similar characteristics of a school's climate associated with improved student learning. For example, in 1988, Bryk and Driscoll expanded the notion of school commonality, arguing that "communally organized" schools evidence: (1) a consensus over beliefs and values; (2) a "common agenda" of course work, activities, ceremonies, and traditions; and (3) an ethic of caring that pervades the relationships of student and adult school members. On the basis of analyses of a national sample of schools and students, Bryk and Driscoll found that schools with higher levels of commonality (as measured by an array of survey items representing each of the three core components) also evidenced higher attendance rates, better morale (among both students

and teachers), and higher levels of student achievement. Shouse's (1996) follow-up study separately examined the achievement effects of commonality (measured along lines similar to those of Bryk and Driscoll's study) and "academic press" (measured in terms of an assortment of survey items reflecting school academic climate, disciplinary climate, and teachers' instructional behavior and emphasis). The findings revealed that academic effectiveness among low-SES schools was significantly tied to academic press and to an integrated culture of academic press and commonality. Achievement in low-SES schools having high levels of both academic press and commonality rivaled that of schools serving more affluent students. Conversely, the least academically effective low-SES schools were those that combined strong commonality and weak academic press. Although these findings reveal the tensions between meeting students' social and academic needs, they also reveal the tremendous potential of school social networks that are supportive, cohesive, and academically oriented to greatly enhance the quality of educational experiences for disadvantaged students (Shouse, 1996).

School Restructuring

Similar to the effective schools movement, the school restructuring movement also denotes a fairly specific array of prescriptions for improving organizational effectiveness and student achievement. The tenets offered by this movement center around three basic areas: (1) shifting the thrust of school governance to a more "bottom up" direction through decentralization, site-based management, staff professional development, teacher empowerment, and greater parent involvement; (2) refocusing curriculum and instruction toward cooperatively organized, mixed-ability classrooms with a greater emphasis on higher-order learning and the use of performance-based

student assessment; and (3) reducing school size, typically through the creation of "schools within schools." Research evidence links the collective adoption of these areas with significant gains in high school achievement. A study by Lee and Smith (1994), for example, contrasted achievement gains in three types of school: (a) those with no reform or restructuring; (b) those that had sought to improve on their traditional, more bureaucratic practices; and (c) those that had engaged in some level of organizational restructuring. Although students in traditionally oriented schools that were seeking improvement outgained those in non-reform schools, students in restructured schools (those having adopted at least three out of 12 restructuring practices) significantly outgained those in both other types of schools. More important, the achievement gap between more economically advantaged students and less economically advantaged students was narrowest within restructured schools.

Also significant, the collective involvement of teachers appears to be a key to effective school restructuring. Researchers found that school effectiveness and student learning were enhanced when schools took on the qualities of "professional communities" (Louis & Kruse, 1995; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). Such communities had the following three basic features: "Teachers pursue a clear shared purpose for all students' learning. Teachers engage in collaborative activity to achieve the purpose. Teachers take collective responsibility for student learning" (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995, p.30). In effective schools, which typically operate as strong professional learning communities, Fullan (2000) found that teachers systematically study student assessment data, relate the data to their instruction, and work with others to refine their teaching practices. Louis and Kruse (1995) concur, claiming that reflective dialogue,

deprivatization of practice, and collaborative efforts all enhance shared understandings and strengthen relationships within a school. Barth (1990) added that a "good school … is a place where everyone is teaching and everyone is learning—simultaneously, under the same roof" (p.163). He writes that the adults enter into a collaborative relationship and create an "ecology of reflection, growth, and refinement of practice" (p.162). Such communities of teachers, administrators, and parents promote purposeful and collaborative classrooms to improve instruction, create a climate of care, and use accountability to continuously scan for inequities across multiple domains of student learning and activities.

In recent years, a revival of effective schools research has surfaced, most likely due to widespread national concerns about student achievement. Such research has shifted in emphasis over the years, from economic to structural and on to social models of urban school effectiveness, from highlighting school funding and physical resources to teachers' instructional behaviors and on toward a school's sense of community and academic culture. For example, a recent study of highly effective schools in New York City (Teske & Schneider, 1999) suggests that within these schools, there is a culture defined and sustained by a combination of strong, consistent leadership and strong community support. Another study by Taylor, Pressley, and Pearson (2002) summarized findings from five large-scale research studies on effective, high-poverty elementary schools (Charles A. Dana Center, 1999; Designs for Change, 1998; Lein, Johnson, & Ragland, 1997; Puma, Karweit, Price, Ricciuiti, Thompson, & Vaden-Kiernan, 1997; Taylor, Pearson, Clark, & Walpole, 2000). The six recurring themes that emerged from these five studies support and extend the earlier research on effective schools: (1) putting

the students first to improve students learning; (2) strong building leadership; (3) strong teacher collaboration; (4) focus on professional development and innovation; (5) consistent use of student performance data to improve learning; and (6) strong links to parents. Such research stresses the importance of educators (teachers and principals) learning and changing together over an extended period of time, as they reflect on their practice and implement new teaching strategies (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996).

While the effective schools movement has been influential among researchers, educators, and policymakers, questions persist regarding its various recommendations, particularly the direction of causal effect. In other words, although certain characteristics might produce higher-achieving students, the reverse might also be the case. That is, schools may maintain these characteristics because they are fortunate enough to have greater numbers of high-achieving students. That some schools identified as effective at one point in time were found not to be so a few years later might, for example, suggest the latter possibility. Thus, although "effective schools" clearly share important practices, it has never been consistently established that ineffective schools could become more effective by adopting these features. Still unattained and perplexing is the crucial research goal of establishing a reliable set of techniques for transforming ineffective schools into effective ones. As such, the next section emphasizes the critical role of programmatic equity as a vehicle for attaining systemic equity.

It is not only important to know that these excellent and equitable schools exist, but also to know what these schools did in order to become excellent and equitable. A common thread throughout all of these schools was the belief that all students could be successful. The staff at these schools accepted shared responsibility for making this belief

a reality and spent the majority of their time focusing on strategies to help all students be successful. Perhaps the most prevailing theme that arose from all of these studies was that of a collaborative environment. Educators at these schools worked together to ensure the success of all students. If schools that serve high populations of minority students and poor students are highly successful, one cannot argue that a student's background is the sole predictor of school-achievement. It becomes the duty of educators then to create schools that are equitable and serve literally each child well (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003). The next section reviews the literature on equity as it relates equal access to educational programs. It is divided into three sections: (a) Students in special and academically gifted programs; (b) Inequities in discipline; and (c) Access to a rigorous curriculum.

Programmatic Equity

Students in Special and Academically Gifted Programs

The two largest programs that schools offer to students include special education and academically gifted education. Both programs tend to label and exclude students in different ways. Special education has historically excluded students in a negative way by grouping struggling students together, excluding them from their non-disabled peers, and giving them limited access to the regular and advanced curriculum. In contrast, students who are selected for academically gifted education have had a more positive experience being grouped with other students of high ability and given access to the most advanced curriculum. In terms of programmatic equity, it is essential that all students be equally represented in both of these programs.

However, it has been documented that African-American and Hispanic students are over-represented in special education classes and under-represented in academically

gifted classes (Donovan & Cross, 2002; Ford, 1998; Ford & Harris, 1999; Obiakor, 2007; Patton, 1998; U.S. Department of Education, 2001). For example, according to a 2001 U.S. Department of Education report, White students make up 67% of the general population but only 43% of the special education population. While White students are under-represented, African-American and Hispanic students are over-represented. African-American students make up 16% of the general education population but that percentage climbs to 20% of the special education population. The numbers for Hispanic students are more inequitable with Hispanics making up only 4% of the general education population but 14% of the special education population.

Donovan and Cross (2002) further illustrate these inequities in their analysis of data taken from a 1998 Civil Rights Compliance report. Donovan and Cross found that African-American students were more than twice as likely to be identified as mentally retarded than their White and Hispanic peers. Inequities in the identification of students as emotionally disabled also existed. The percentages were approximately 1/2, 1, and 1.5 for Hispanic, White, and African-American students respectively. If the system were equitable, enrollment numbers for general education and special education would be equal.

Donovan and Cross (2002) also found inequities in the percentage of students in academically gifted programs. While 6.2% of the overall student population is identified as academically gifted, White students are over-represented at 7.47%, and African-American (3.04%) and Hispanic students (3.57%) are under-represented in the academically gifted population. This disproportionate representation has led to inequitable access to curriculum. Students in academically gifted classes are held to high

standards, while students in special education classes are held to much lower standards. Logically, this contributes to inequity in schools. However, it is not necessarily the intelligence of the students that places them in academically gifted education or special education.

Davis and Rimm (1997) report that 90% of schools continue to use intelligence or achievement tests as the sole measure of "giftedness." Since these tests can be culturally biased, fewer African-American students are selected for gifted programs. Another reason for the disproportionately low numbers of African-American students in academically gifted programs is the teacher referral practice. Ford (1996) found that even African-American students who had high test scores were not referred for screening. Since the teacher is often the only referral point, this severely limits the number of African-American students being referred for academically gifted programs.

In order to increase the number of students in academically gifted programs, Harris, Brown, Ford, and Richardson (2004) recommend two critical changes. First, the authors recommend using a more culturally sensitive instrument by which to identify students. Tests such as the Naglieri Non-Verbal Abilities Test and Raven's Matrix Analogies Tests, are considered to be less culturally biased than traditional tests like the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (WISC-R). The authors also recommend greater multi-cultural preparation for all school personnel. As teachers learn to implement multicultural strategies, all minority students will have a greater opportunity to be successful, which will make them less likely to be identified for special education classes and more likely to be selected for academically gifted classes.

Although curricular opportunities are limited in the special education classroom and abundant in academically gifted classrooms, the opportunities within regular education classrooms are also inequitable. The next session will focus on the literature surrounding inequities in discipline.

Discipline

In response to recent acts of violence in schools, many schools and systems have become focused on creating a safe and orderly school culture. One example is the implementation of zero-tolerance policies. Verdugo (2002) contends that such policies, however, have a profound implication in our schools, especially with regard to race and social class relations. It is also noted that zero-tolerance policies are more prevalent in minority and poor communities. In fact, little research exists to support the implementation of these policies. Although these policies are implemented with the intention of creating a safer learning community, Verdugo concludes that zero-tolerance policies result in an overwhelmingly disproportionate number of minority suspensions and seemingly appear to be "inequitably directed at ethnic/racial minority students" (p.59). In addition to the disproportionate number of minority suspensions, this study also revealed that minority students are suspended for ambiguous reasons such as threatening appearance or disrespect, whereas White students are suspended for clear violations such as guns, weapons, or drugs. Verdugo concludes his study by calling for more equitable, culturally responsive, and child-centered ways of achieving safety in our schools.

Scheurich, Skrla, Garcia, and Nolly (2005), conducted a study in 2001-2002 to analyze discipline referrals in a small-town high school of 1,300 students. It was concluded that African-American males were disciplined at a rate nearly three times their

proportional representation in the student population and that for Latino males the rate was nearly four times disproportionate. As the authors point out, this school, like many others nation-wide, is characterized by a glaring inequity with regard to student discipline.

Watts and Erevelles (2004) argue that school violence stems from socially unjust social conditions that perpetuate individual blame rather than address the inequitable social context of our schools that are rooted in oppressive beliefs and practices. The authors contend that the social context of our schools "normalize structural violence in the daily lives of oppressed peoples" (p.294). We must, according to the authors, address the system, rather than place blame on individuals who are merely victims of an oppressive social context. Watts and Erevelles call for schools to "define alternative modes of practice that will enable both students and their communities to advocate for social transformation and social justice" (p.294).

Scheurich and Skrla (2003) promote the use of equity audits to ensure systemic equity within schools. This process involves gathering and analyzing data to identify inequities that serve as barriers to academic achievement. Equity audits can be implemented to address issues of discipline and identification for services such as special and gifted education. With regard to discipline, Skrla and Scheurich (2001) conducted a number of studies highlighting a disproportionate number of referrals for minority students and argue that rather than blame the students for their behavior, we must seek to understand our minority students' cultures and must acknowledge that disproportionalities in discipline are directly related to inequities in student achievement.

Students who spend less time learning in the classroom are not afforded an equitable opportunity to learn.

Another important aspect of programmatic equity is the availability and access to a rigorous curriculum. In other words, it is essential that all students, regardless of their NCLB sub-group, have equal opportunities to learn.

Rigorous Curriculum for All Students

Our country has a history of tracking students by perceived ability. These practices have resulted in the racial and socioeconomic segregation of students (Oakes, 1985). In other words, the majority of students identified in the NCLB subgroups of African-American, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged have been disproportionately represented in the lower track classes where they cannot access higher-level courses. This has helped create inequity in schools. This inequity is reflected in racially separate programs that provide minority children with restricted educational opportunities and outcomes (Oakes, 1995). Recent research indicates that as schools enroll more students in rigorous courses, the percentage of students passing state exams and entering college will increase (Gamoran & Hannigan, 2000; Luce & Thompson, 2005). Although definitions of academic rigor vary, for the purpose of this study, academic rigor will be defined as the most challenging courses a school has to offer. Specifically, this usually means honors and advanced placement courses.

According to a 1997 report published by the North Carolina Manpower Development Center (MDC), a group that has launched several projects to assist middle and high schools increase educational and career options for low-income minority youth, a more rigorous curriculum will lead to higher achievement on test scores. MDC

developed a project entitled, Alliance for Achievement. The Alliance project is an effort to improve the academic preparation of all students. The report describes a Louisville middle school where only 2% of its students were achieving "proficient" or "distinguished" on state math tests in 1992. At the same time, only 25% of eighth graders studied algebra. By 1995, all of the eighth grade students studied algebra. As a result of providing access to a rigorous curriculum for all students, the percentage of students scoring "proficient" or "distinguished" increased from 2% to 18%.

Stone High School, located in Stone County Mississippi, experienced similar results when a team decided to allow most of its students to enroll in Algebra in eighth grade. In the same previously mentioned report, the MDC (1997) found that the number of students scoring in the top two quartiles of state math tests increased from 52% in 1992 to 77% in 1995 for White students and from 22% to 62% for African-American students. These increases in test scores corresponded with the increase in access to rigorous courses. This finding is particularly significant in that gains achieved by African-American students doubled that of their White peers. If schools are looking to reduce the achievement gap and provide a more equitable education, providing all students with access to rigorous curriculum appears to be a useful strategy.

In a different report, Bottoms and Carpenter (2003) found the same correlation between the access to higher levels of mathematics and higher standardized test scores. According to the authors, "Access to rigorous mathematics coursework in the middle grades is measured by whether or not students take algebra—the gateway to higher mathematics" (p.4). In their study, Bottoms and Carpenter found that students who took at least one semester of algebra in the middle grades scored a 160—the midpoint of the

Basic range. However, students who did not take algebra scored a mean of 141—two points below the Basic level.

Although much of the research on the effects of rigorous courses is measured by math achievement, Carbonaro and Gamoran (2002) found improvements in English achievement data as well. Using the National Longitudinal Survey of 1988 (NELS), the authors looked at over 8,000 students in various academic tracks named general, academic and honors. They found that, "students who have more intellectually challenging content in their English classes tend to have higher levels of achievement" (p.819).

Recent reform literature (Anfara & Waks, 2000) focuses on the need for increasing academic rigor in the middle schools. A 1998 article in *Education Week* characterized middle schools as "the wasteland of our primary and secondary landscape" (Bradley, 1998 as cited in Anfara & Waks, p.47). In order to improve that wasteland, reformers recommend following the suggestions in *Turning Points* (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989). Although less of the research focuses on the updated version, *Turning Points 2000,* school leaders should consider the recommendations in this revised edition. These recommendations include using instructional methods designed to prepare all students to achieve higher standards, staffing middle grades schools with teachers who are experts at teaching young adolescents, organizing relationships for learning to create a climate of intellectual development, governing democratically, providing a safe and healthy school environment, and including parents and communities in supporting student learning.

Turning Points 2000 emphasizes the untracking of students. The book cites numerous studies that point to repeated overrepresentation of minority and economically disadvantaged students in lower tracks. As Oakes (1995) has found, this overrepresentation is flawed. Even when students of varying ethnic backgrounds score the same on placement tests, minority students are less likely to be placed in higher-track classes. Specifically, Oakes found that while only 56 percent of Latinos scoring between 90 and 99 on placement exams were placed in accelerated classes, 93 percent of White students gained admission to these classes. Jackson and Davis (2000) also cite research that instruction in the low track classes is far from excellent and causes gaps in achievement between the two groups to widen. However, schools that implement *Turning Points* seem to diminish these achievement gaps. Felner and Jackson (1997) studied 93 schools and over 15,000 students who attended schools that implemented the *Turning Points* recommendations. When analyzing achievement test scores for schools with "full implementation," the authors found scores of 298, 315, and 275 on mathematics, language, and reading tests. These scores compared favorably with students from non-implemented schools, who earned scores of 248, 254, and 247 on the same tests.

Although programmatic equity and achievement equity are strong beginnings to improving equity in our schools, they alone are not sufficient. In addition to establishing systems that give all students an equitable opportunity to learn, all students must be afforded that opportunity to learn from high quality teachers. The next section concludes systemic equity by reviewing the literature related to Teacher Quality Equity.

Teacher Quality Equity

Research has shown that teacher quality is a strong predictor of student achievement. This data should be encouraging in terms of improving systemic equity in our nation's public schools. If stronger teachers taught students who have been historically marginalized by our public schools (e.g., minority students and students living in poverty) then the achievement of those students should increase. The research tends to view stronger teachers as those who are traditionally and fully certified, experienced, and score higher on teacher quality formulas. Alarmingly, however, recent research has indicated that less competent teachers are more likely to teach minority students and students living in poverty (Borman & Kimball, 2005; Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002; Shen, Mansberger, & Yang, 2004). The following section reviews the extent to which different indicators of teacher quality impact student achievement, as well as the distribution of quality teachers to students of varying characteristics. The indicators include certification, years of experience, National Board Certification, teacher quality formulas, and other related studies.

Certification

The literature suggests that teacher certification is a significant predictor of student achievement (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000; Felter, 2001; Lazco-Kerr & Berliner, 2002; Wayne and Youngs, 2003; Fuller & Alexander, 2004; and Croninger, Rice, Rathbun, & Nishio, 2007). Although research shows this strong link between teacher certification and student achievement, our country's most impoverished schools are populated by an alarming percentage of under-certified teachers. States such as Arizona, California and New York report under-certified teacher rates of 20-50%. The percentages

of under-certified teachers are typically higher in impoverished and urban schools (Go, 2002; Lankford, Loeb and Wycoff, 2002). As a result, students who have historically underachieved have the least access to certified teachers.

Goldhaber and Brewer (2000), using data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988, found that the certification status of teachers impacted achievement in 12th grade math scores. The mean score for students who were taught by a traditionally certified teacher was 51.52 compared to only 41.93 for students of probationally-certified teachers and 43.74 for students with emergency-certified teachers.

Felter (2001) also found that students who were taught by teachers with emergency certification scored lower on standardized tests. Felter analyzed student data (approximately 300,000 students in grades 9-11) from California's Stanford 9 Math Achievement Test. The data showed a statistically significant negative correlation between teachers with emergency certifications and lower student test scores. Felter's findings are consistent with the other studies regarding teacher certification and emphasize the findings that students who are taught be fully-certified teachers out perform students who are not. An underlying reason behind the success of traditionally-certified teachers is the emphasis of content specific course work. In California, as in many other states, one can earn an emergency certification as few as nine content-specific graduate hours. A traditionally-certified teacher will earn many more credits in addition to receiving specific pedagogical training.

Lazco-Kerr and Beliner (2002) also studied the achievement differences between students of certified teachers and students of under-certified teachers. The authors defined under-certification as an emergency or temporary certification given by the state of

Arizona (with requirements similar to that of California). The study included 293 certified and under-certified teachers from five low-income districts in Arizona. After comparing students' scores on the SAT 9, Lazco-Kerr and Berliner found that students of certified teachers significantly outperformed students of under-certified teachers. As an example, the mean score of the reading section of the SAT 9 for students of certified teachers was 36.52, in comparison to 30.67 for students of under-certified teachers. While the mean difference in math scores was not statistically significant, it followed a similar trend with students of certified teachers outperforming students of under-certified teachers (38.8 v. 35.82). It is important to note that the study was replicated the following year. In addition to finding similar results, the researchers also found the scores on the math section to be statistically significant. As Fuller and Alexander (2004) concluded, the data are similar for non-certified teachers.

Fuller and Alexander (2004) performed multiple regressions on data from four Texas districts (including 578,123 students). The researchers found that students with certified teachers performed better than students who were taught by non-certified teachers on the 1999 TAAS (Texas' standardized math test).

Analyzing 1998 data from the National Center for Education Statistics, Croninger et. al. (2007) found a statistically significant positive correlation (.078) between a teacher's type of degree and students' cognitive reading achievement score. Specifically, the researchers found that the students of teachers who held an elementary degree outperformed other students. Although this finding does not specifically address certification, one could make the connection that teachers with an elementary education degree typically earn a traditional certification.

However, students in poverty tend to be exposed to more uncertified teachers than the rest of the student population. Using data from the Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study 1993-1997, Shen, Mansberger and Yang (2004) found that in schools where 20-49% of the students were living in poverty, only 8.5% of the teachers were non-certified. However, the number nearly doubles to 16.9% when over 50% of the students attending the school live in poverty.

Knoeppel (2007) also found inequities in teacher resource distribution. Even after the state of Kentucky reformed their finance system to focus on vertical equity, "the least experienced teachers with the least training are found in schools with greater student need" (p.437).

Years of Experience

Research indicates that novice teachers are less effective than experienced teachers (Felter, 2001; Hanushek, Kain, O'brien, & Rivkin, 2005; Clotfelter, Ladd, and Vigdor, 2006; Croninger et. al., 2007). In a previously mentioned article, Felter (2001) studied the impact of teachers' years of experience in addition to certification. Felter analyzed the impact that years of experience has on mathematics achievement as well as student dropout rates. Using data from the Stanford Nine, Felter found a positive correlation (.36-.39 depending on the grade level) between test scores and years of experience. That is, more experienced teachers had higher passing rates on standardized tests than less experienced teachers.

Using statistics from the California Basic Education Data System, Felter (2001) also concluded that, "The average number of years of teacher education and experience are negatively correlated with the dropout rate" (p.162). Of particular note is the finding

that years of teaching experience had a stronger correlation (.20) than the poverty level of the student (.13), a reminder that the school system's response to family background is more powerful than the background alone.

For example, Clotfelter, Ladd, and Vigdor (2006) found that highly experienced teachers increase student achievement in math by close to a tenth of a standard deviation when compared to novice teachers. With half of the achievement effect being attributable to teachers in their first few years, the authors conclude, "Regardless of how effective (first year teachers) may eventually become, during their first year of teaching they are clearly less effective than more experienced teachers" (p.18).

Results achieved in a study by Hanushek, Kain, O'brien, and Rivkin (2005) were similar to Clotfelter, Ladd, and Vigdor (2006). Using teacher data from the Texas Schools Microdata Panel data from 1989-2002 and student data from the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills, Hanushek et. al. found that a new teacher lowers student achievement growth by .12-.16 standard deviations. The authors' findings are significant when coupled with the fact that African-American students are more likely than their White peers to encounter first-year teachers. Using 2001 data from 7th grade teachers across North Carolina, Clotfelter, Ladd and Vigdor (2005) found that African-American students were 54% more likely to have a novice math teacher than their white peers. The authors also found that African-American 7th grade students across North Carolina were 38% more likely to have a novice English teacher.

National Board Certified Teachers

The research on National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) impacting student achievement is sparse. In a recent review of the literature, Goldhaber and Anthony (2005)

find only four studies (Bond, Smith, Baker, & Hattie, 2000; Cavalluzzo, 2004; Stone, 2002; & Vandevoort, Amrein-Beardsley, & Berliner, 2004) that investigate the effectiveness of NBCTs in comparison to non-NBCTs.

Stone (2002) studied the 16 of Tennessee's 40 NBCTs who had value-added teacher reports. A value-added teacher report is a summary of annual achievement gains exhibited by each teacher's students. Student achievement is estimated on the basis of how much students gain in comparison to their achievement increases in previous years. Stone defined exceptional teaching as that which brings about an improvement in student achievement equal to 115% of one year's academic growth in the local school system (Stone). When taken collectively, the 16 teachers received 123 teacher-effect scores as a result of multiple subjects taught over multiple years. Only 18 of these scores, or 15%, reach the exemplary level and 13 of the scores would be designated as "deficient." In summary, Stone's study did not find that NBCTs had a positive impact on student achievement.

In contrast to Stone (2002), Bond, Smith, Baker, and Hattie (2000) did find that NBCTs taught students who "differ in profound and important ways from those taught by less proficient teachers" (p.x). The study included a 65-teacher comparison of 31 teachers who earned National Board Certification and 34 teachers who attempted but did not earn National Board Certification. The teachers were analyzed on 15 dimensions of teaching. Most of the 15 dimensions were literature-based attributes of excellent teachers. The evidence of these dimensions was gathered through reviewing lesson plans, student work, observational visits and scripted interviews. Although this study appears encouraging, it is important to note that the authors did not take measures to ensure that students in the

study all entered at the same ability level. The absence of the data calls into question the validity of the study, especially since other studies have already indicated that higher performing students tend to be assigned to NBCTs more than lower performing students.

Cavalluzzo (2004) also found that students with NBCTs outperformed students who did not have NBCTs. Using data that included 108,000 individual student records from the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Cavalluzzo's results indicated that students with NBCTs "gained 12 percent of a standard deviation more than others on the end-of-grade exam in mathematics, all else equal" (p.25). However, to the author's own acknowledgement, all else is not equal. The students in Cavalluzzo's study are not distributed equitably among teachers. She found that NBCTs were less likely to teach students who receive subsidized lunches, were minority, had attendance problems, and were suspended throughout the year. These are all characteristics of students who have historically underperformed in schools. This is a significant limitation, since it is unclear whether the gains these students are making are a result of the certification status of their teachers or other factors. It is also important to note that Cavalluzzo's study was funded by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Vandevoort, Amrein-Beardsley, and Berliner (2004) studied 35 NBCTs from 14 Arizona school districts. They analyzed four years of results from the Stanford Achievement Tests in reading, mathematics, and language arts in grades 3-6. In the 48 comparisons based on this data, the researchers found that students in the classes of NBCTs surpassed students in the classrooms of non NBCTs (to a statistically significant level) in almost one-third of the comparisons. Although Vandevoort, Amrein-Beardsley and Berliner use their findings in support of NBCTs, it is important to note that, in almost

67% of the comparisons, no statistically significant difference between NBCTs and non-NBCTs was found. Another limitation includes the small sample size of the study. The authors only included 35 of the 80 available NBCTs in the 14 Arizona school districts.

To date, Goldhaber and Anthony (2005) present the most comprehensive study of the effectiveness of NBCTs. Using teacher records from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction from the years 1996-1999, the sample included 390,449 students and over 300 NBCTs. The authors found that while the NBCT process is successful in identifying effective teachers, the process itself does not increase teacher effectiveness. Related to systemic equity, Goldhaber and Anthony found, "that schools with NBCTs receive substantially more educational benefits from having their NBCTs teach low-income students in earlier grades" (p.26). Cavalluzzo (2004) reported a similar finding in her study in Miami-Dade. However, within North Carolina schools, Clotfelter, Ladd, and Vigdor (2006) found the more privileged students (defined by the authors as not receiving subsidized lunches and whose parents are college graduates) have more access to Nationally Board Certified teachers than less-privileged students.

Teacher Quality Formulas

Characteristics of good teachers, such as certification, years of experience, National Board Certification and type of degree earned, are all important factors when attempting to quantify good teaching. Additional research has been done that attempts to combine these qualities into one teacher quality variable.

For example, Provasnik and Young (2003) created a teacher quality variable that consisted of a teacher's college degree, area of certification, and years of experience. Using 8th grade mathematics data from the 2000 administration of the National

Assessment of Educational Progress, the authors found that students from schools that had high concentrations of special programs students, American Indian students, and high poverty students were less likely to be taught by high quality teachers.

In another study, Borman and Kimball (2005) attempted to determine the extent to which teachers with higher standards-based evaluation ratings close student achievement gaps. After rating teachers based on classroom observations conducted by school administrators, Borman and Kimball found mixed results. For example, fourth-grade teachers with higher ratings made progress in closing the achievement gap, but in other grade levels the progress was not statistically significant.

Milanowski (2004) used a Cincinnati district's teacher performance score to analyze the relationship between teacher performance and student achievement. The district's teacher performance score is comprised of scores on four domains: planning and preparation, classroom management, teaching for learning, and professionalism. Milanowski combined those scores to create a composite evaluation score. Student achievement was measured by district and state tests in reading, mathematics and science. Results indicated a substantial test score variance at the teacher level. The variance ranged from 6% to 28%, with an average variance of 16.3%. In addition, the teachers with higher composite evaluation scores correlated with higher student achievement. In other words, Milanowski findings suggest that good teachers make a positive difference in student achievement.

Other Studies

Nye, Konstantopoulos, and Hedges (2004) studied the impact of teachers on student achievement through a unique perspective. Instead of attempting to identify the

qualities of a good teacher or study what specific teacher characteristic impacts student achievement, the authors investigated the degree to which a teacher in general impacted student achievement gains, using data from the Student-Teacher Achievement Ration (Project STAR). Project STAR involved students in 79 elementary schools in 42 different districts in Tennessee. Participating districts allowed the researchers to randomly assign students to different kindergarten classes and randomly assign teachers to those classes. The cohorts of kindergarten classes moved together through the third grade, where they received a randomly assigned teacher at each grade. Since the classes were initially equivalent, the authors argue that differences in achievement must be due to teacher effectiveness.

Variance component estimates indicated no statistically significant differences for achievement within classrooms. However, for both between classrooms and between schools, achievement differences in each grade level for both mathematics and reading showed a statistically significant difference in achievement. In summary, Nye, Konstantopoulos, and Hedges (2004), found that teachers make a difference in student achievement. Even more profound is the finding that the, "between-classroom-within-schools-and treatment-type variance component (the teacher effect) is always larger in the low-SES schools" (p.250). Taking into account previously mentioned research that less qualified teachers tend to populate low-SES schools, systemic equity could be improved if more qualified teachers taught in low-SES schools.

In concluding the review of systemic equity literature, it is important to emphasize that schools that are equitable for all students exist. The achievement equity section of this review documents this. These equitable schools exist as a result of equity

in the programs they offer for students and the teachers who educate these students. However, systemic equity cannot be achieved in the absence of strong leadership. Effective leadership becomes paramount to schools as they answer the call for systemic equity. As such, the next section emphasizes the critical role of principal leadership in creating schools that are excellent, achieving both social justice *and* systemic equity.

Leadership for Excellence and Equity

The Principal's Role in Promoting Student Achievement

According to ERS (1998), the United States is experiencing a dearth of *interested, willing and qualified* school leader candidates because the principal today is confronted with a job filled with conflict, ambiguity, and work overload. Given this, it is understandable that fewer and fewer qualified people aspire to the principalship, that good people *are* becoming increasingly harder to find, and that "bright, young administrators aren't appearing on the horizon" (McCormick, 1987, p.4). What are the realities of the job? Charged with the mission of improving education for all children (i.e. universal proficiency embodied most recently by the No Child Left Behind Act), the principalship has become progressively more and more demanding and fraught with fragmentation, variety, and brevity (Petersen, 1982). The role of school leadership has broadened from performing customary administrative and managerial duties—such as budget oversight, operations and discipline—to include emphasis on other responsibilities such as curriculum development, data analysis, and instructional leadership. According to Murphy and Beck (1994), principals fill a role replete with contradictory demands. They are expected to "work actively to transform, restructure and redefine schools while they

hold organizational positions historically and traditionally committed to resisting change and maintaining stability" (p.3).

Although current school reform efforts use different approaches to improve teaching and learning, all depend for their success on the motivation and capacities of local leadership. According to Fullan (2003), "Leadership is to the current decade what standards were to the 1990s for those interested in large scale reform. Standards, even when well implemented, can take us only part way to successful large-scale reform. It is only leadership that can take us all the way" (p.16). A review of the literature on school reform and restructuring confirms the notion that the school principal is indeed the key player in all successful school reform efforts and that good teaching is not the only predictor of student success—leadership becomes an important lever for improving student achievement.

The belief in the principal's influence on student achievement goes back to the research of the 1970s and early 1980s. Two decades ago, *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Educational Excellence, 1983) specifically recommended strong leadership as a means for school improvement. Effective schools research also recognized the importance of quality leadership by consistently identifying strong instructional leadership as instrumental in creating a positive school climate and as a correlate of high-achieving schools (Edmonds, 1979). In schools where students performed better than expected based on poverty and other demographic characteristics, a "dynamic" principal was at the helm. These studies suggested that specific actions by principals could directly influence student achievement. Even though this is an assumption, there is little evidence to support the idea that student achievement has

increased as the result of principals' direct actions in instructional supervision. Current theory and research evidence points toward principals affecting student achievement indirectly, through teachers and staff members. As with any manager or leader, principals influence performance through others, and the influence includes a broad spectrum of behaviors.

Characteristics of Effective School Leaders

Although it is difficult to demonstrate a direct link between school leadership and student achievement (the most tangible and publicly accepted measure of school success), a model of what makes a good leader is emerging. A recent forum of the National Institute on Educational Governance, Finance, Policymaking, and Management (1999) developed a comprehensive description of an effective school leader. Consistent with the observation that the job of a school leader is multidimensional, the forum identified areas in which school leaders must have skills: instructional leadership; management; communication, collaboration, and community building; vision development, risk taking, and change management.

In other studies that document the importance of strong building leadership (Designs for Change, 1998; Lein, et al., 1997; Puma, et al., 1997), principals worked to redirect people's time and energy, to develop a collective sense of responsibility for school improvement, to secure resources and training, to provide opportunities for collaboration, to create additional time for instruction, and to help the school staff persist in spite of difficulties. While their style and roles may be different, effective leaders create a culture for school improvement. They understand that "although leadership can be a powerful force toward school reform, the notion that an individual can effect change

by sheer will and personality is simply not supported by research" (Marzano, 2003, p.174). As a result, they promote the involvement of teachers and parents in the decision-making process and are not threatened by, but rather welcome, this empowerment.

Research conducted by Andrews and Soder (1987), Bender Sebring and Bryk (2000), and Hallinger, Bickman, and Davis (1996) found that high-performing schools that demonstrate better student achievement possess a climate that focuses on student learning. Principals in these schools provide clarity to the school's mission, which influences everyone's expectations. Such leaders (a) have a vision that they allow staff and parents to shape; (b) hold teachers and themselves to high standards; (c) recognize student achievement; (d) communicate academic achievements to the community; and (e) encourage teachers to take risks in trying new methods and programs. They also found that schools with effective principals exhibit a sense of teamwork and inclusiveness in planning, enabling, and assessing instruction. Principals in these schools (a) involve teachers in instructional decisions; (b) provide opportunities for staff members and parents to assume leadership roles in charting instructional improvement; (c) protect staff members from the community and central office; (d) act as facilitators for the instructional staff, helping staff members succeed; (e) serve as an instructional resource for staff members; and (f) create a feeling of trust through cooperative working relationships among the staff in the school. And, according to these research studies, staff members must receive the necessary materials, equipment, and opportunities to learn in order to be successful. Principals in these schools get things done by providing the resources and staff development needed to support the staff's efforts to improve. These leaders are visible in classrooms, departmental or grade-level meetings, and in the

building. They readily provide the social support needed by students so that class time is devoted to learning (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Bender Sebring & Bryk, 2000; Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996).

Since 1998, Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) researchers have been engaged in what they refer to as "third generation" effective schools research, distinguishing it from the efforts during the 1980s to implement the research findings of the 1970s (see Waters & Grubb, 2004). Recently, they reviewed over 5,000 studies through a series of meta-analyses of research on the student characteristics, school practices, and teacher practices associated with student achievement. The third meta-analysis focused on the effects of principal leadership on student achievement and involved 70 empirically-sound research studies, 2,894 schools, over one million students, and 14,000 teachers, representing the largest sample of principals, teachers, and student achievement scores ever used to analyze the effects of educational leadership. The results show a significant, positive impact of instructional leadership on student achievement (i.e. the study found the average effect size, expressed as a correlation, between leadership and student achievement is .25). The analysis also identified 66 leadership practices embedded in 21 leadership responsibilities, each with statistically significant relationship to student achievement (see Table 2.1 for the top ten principal responsibilities).

Therefore, leadership not only matters, but according to the Wallace Foundation's "Learning from Leadership Project" (Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2005), school leadership is second only to teacher quality among school-related factors that effect student learning. In a five-year study involving 180 schools, in

Table 2.1: Top Ten Principal Leadership Responsibilities: Average *r* and Associated Practices

Responsibility	Definition The extent to which the principal …	Avg r	Associated Practices	N schools	N studies
Situational awareness	… is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems.	.33	▪ Is aware of informal groups and relationships among teachers and staff ▪ Is aware of issues in the school that have not surfaced but could create discord ▪ Can predict what could go wrong from day to day	91	5
Intellectual stimulation	… ensures that faculty and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices and makes the discussion of these a regular aspect of the school's culture.	.32	▪ Stays informed about current research and theory regarding effective schooling ▪ Continually exposes teachers and staff to cutting edge ideas about how to be effective ▪ Systematically engages teachers and staff in discussions about current research and theory ▪ Continually involves teachers and staff in reading articles and books about effective practices	321	5
Change agent	… is willing to and actively challenges the status quo.	.30	▪ Consciously challenges the status quo ▪ Is comfortable leading change initiatives with uncertain outcomes ▪ Systematically considers new and better ways of doing things	479	7
Input	… involves teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies	.30	▪ Provides opportunities for input from teachers and staff on all important decisions ▪ Provides opportunities for teachers and staff to be involved in policy development ▪ Involves the school leadership team in decision making	504	13
Culture	… fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation	.29	▪ Promotes cooperation among teachers and staff ▪ Promotes a sense of well-being ▪ Promotes cohesion among teachers and staff ▪ Develops an understanding of purpose ▪ Develops a shared vision of what	709	13

			the school could be like		
Monitors/ evaluates	… monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning.	.28	▪ Monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the curriculum ▪ Monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of instruction ▪ Monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of assessment	1071	30
Outreach	… is an advocate or spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders.	.28	▪ Advocates on behalf of the school in the community ▪ Interacts with parents in ways that enhance their support for the school ▪ Ensures that the central office is aware of the school's accomplishments	478	14
Order	… establishes a set of standard operating principles and procedures.	.26	▪ Provides and enforces clear structures, rules, and procedures for teachers, staff, and students ▪ Establishes routines regarding the running of the school that teachers and staff understand and follow ▪ Ensures that the school is in compliance with district and state mandates	456	17
Resources	… provides teachers with the material and professional development necessary for the successful execution of their jobs.	.26	▪ Ensures that teachers and staff have necessary materials and equipment ▪ Ensures that teachers have necessary professional development opportunities that directly enhance their teaching	570	17
Ideals/beliefs	… communicates and operates from strong ideals and beliefs about schooling	.25	▪ Holds strong professional ideals and beliefs about schooling, teaching, and learning ▪ Shares ideals and beliefs about schooling, teaching, and learning with teachers, staff, and parents ▪ Demonstrates behaviors that are consistent with ideals and beliefs	526	8

Note. From "Balanced Leadership: What 30 Years of Research Tells Us About the Effect of Leadership on Student Achievement," by T. Waters, R.J. Marzano, and B. McNulty.

45 districts and nine states, this study attempts to clearly understand the links between student outcomes and the work of principals and other educational leaders. As a precursor to the project, a publication entitled "How Leadership Influences Student Learning" has been produced. The authors provide an overview of existing research and present the basics of successful leadership. They suggest that, across many different settings, three sets of practices make up the basic core of successful leadership: (1) setting direction; (2) developing people; and (3) redesigning the organization. These authors conclude that "The total (direct and indirect) effects of leadership on student learning account for about a quarter of the total school effects" (Leithwood et al., 2005, p.3). They also found that leadership's demonstrated impact tends to be considerably greater in schools where the learning needs are most acute. In essence, the greater the challenge, the greater the impact of a leader's actions on learning.

Reminded by Crawford (1998) that "almost all educational reform efforts have come to the conclusion that the nation cannot attain excellence in education without effective school leadership" (p.8), principals automatically become essential figures in terms of schoolwide change, priorities, and vision (Blackmore, 2002; Fullan, 1993; Riester et al., 2002; Shields, Larocque, & Oberg, 2002). Strong, outstanding leadership is necessary for any significant transformation of any organization, schools included (Glickman, 2002). As such, exemplary leadership helps point to the necessity for change and helps make the realities of change happen (Bell, Jones, & Johnson 2002; Bogotch, 2002; Grogan, 2002; Rapp, 2002; Solomon, 2002). Leaders for excellence and equity leverage changes in daily practice, making small changes in the structure that begin to transform the system.

Leadership for Social Justice, Equity and Excellence

Leaders committed to excellence find a way "for all students to achieve high levels of academic success, regardless of any student's race, ethnicity, culture, neighborhood, income of parents, or home language" (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003, p.3). In their schools, there is no discernable difference in academic success and treatment among different groups of students. Leaders committed to excellence insist upon both social justice and systemic equity. Bogotch (2005) suggests that the beliefs and values of our school leaders serve as an impetus to support and advance social justice. We cannot, as Bogotch (2002) boldly reminds us, "separate educational theories and practice from social justice… the leadership task is to make these connections transparent and tangible to all" (p.141). Bogotch (2002) contends that, "[Here] social justice emerges from the heroic (capital *H* or small *h*) efforts of an individual – someone with a vision and a willingness to take risks to see that vision enacted. It is the responsibility of educational leadership to translate visions into socially and educationally just actions" (p.142). In this context, it is clear that the school leader's role must be socially constructed and must extend beyond the traditional, managerial tasks associated with school leadership that simply perpetuate the status quo. Research also emphasizes that leaders for social justice have deeply embedded belief and value systems that serve to inform the leader's actions. Riester, Pursch and Skrla (2002), for instance, state that the leadership of the school principal is "paramount in creating the conditions for success in schools that serve children predominantly from low-income homes" (p.283), and attribute the success in these schools to the principal's belief and value system. In both contexts, these principals are aware of current social, political and economic factors that contribute to hegemony,

understand the danger of perpetuating that injustice in our schools, and are therefore committed to school leadership that advocates social change. The next section of the literature review highlights qualities of leaders for both social justice and systemic equity.

Challenging the Status Quo

Rather than accept the status quo and allow schools to mirror social injustices, leaders for social justice advance change, often times in situations that are politically and professionally charged, resulting in personal and/or professional ramifications. Research suggests that leaders who are successfully advocating social justice can be characterized by an insistent disposition (Garcia & Guerra, 2004; Rapp, 2002; Riester, Pursch & Skrla, 2002; Scheurich, 1998; Solomon, 2002; Theoharis, 2004; Valencia, 1997). Riester, Pursch and Skrla (2002) refer to this mentality as a "stubborn persistence" (p.292), while Rapp (2002), acknowledging that these leaders are often recognized as "mavericks," credits these leaders for their "oppositional, rebellious imaginations" (p.226). These leaders, according to Rapp, "resist, dissent, rebel, subvert, possess oppositional imaginations, and are committed to transforming oppressive and exploitative social relations in and out of schools" (p.226).

Scheurich (1998) applies this insistent disposition in the context of the all too familiar rhetoric, "all kids can learn" and argues that leaders for social justice "are fiercely committed, not just to holding out high expectations for all children but for achieving high levels of success with all children" (p.461). According to Scheurich (1998), these leaders, for example, "disposed of the bell or normal curve as a guiding principle for academic success and replaced it with what statistics calls an extremely negatively skewed distribution, meaning many scores are near the high end" (p.461).

These leaders achieved this, however, not by lowering standards or watering down the curriculum, but by "reconceptualizing what is possible for all children and by refusing any other result" (p.461). These leaders know that it in addition to believing that all children can learn, they must also insist upon it and obtain the necessary resources to ensure that rhetoric becomes a reality.

Understanding Policy

School leaders for social justice must have an understanding of how policy impacts education and, furthermore, must exercise their voices in the political arena. As stated earlier, Skrla et al. (2004) promote the use of equity audits in schools and suggest that these audits are "vital in linking accountability policy intent to equity outcomes in local contexts…" (p.134). In a 2001 study conducted in Texas, Scheurich, Skrla and Johnson (2001) reported that the Texas Assessment of Skills (TAAS) accountability system was successful in "driving significant improvements in academic achievement for children of color and low income children, and thus these systems are increasing equity" (p.296). As Valencia, Valenzuela, Sloan, and Foley (2001) point out, however, although the Aldine, TX district (one of the four in the Scheurich et al. study) TAAS pass rates increased for all students from 1994-1999, data from the U.S. Department of Education reveals that, in 1997-1998, Aldine had one of the lowest graduation rates in the state and in the nation (p.320). The research by Valencia et al. (2001) refutes Scheurich et al.'s (2000) previous claim that accountability in the name of high stakes tests results in equity and, more importantly, is another reminder that school leaders should be wary of using test score data as a sole determinant of systemic equity. Instead, school leaders must utilize an accountability model that accounts for "input (the adequacy of resources),

process (the quality of instruction) and output (what students have learned as measured by tests or other indicators)" (Valencia et al., p.321).

School leaders that are knowledgeable about policy are more effectively able to collaborate with various stakeholders in the school community and are less likely to be blinded by political mandates that undermine the pursuit of social justice. All too often, policy such as NCLB is offered (mainly by politicians with little or no educational experience) as a method for reducing inequities and therefore "leveling the playing field." In the meantime, such policy in effect ignores the systemic equities that have perpetuated the historical marginalization of students who live in the shadows cast by those who are privileged. School leaders cannot simply succumb to policy that reinforces the status quo and ignores the social injustices that permeate our society, leaving many of our children behind. In fact, Marshall and Oliva (2006) state that leaders for social justice must be able to "argue and demand that inadequate policies and programs be reframed… and must be able to present arguments that educational excellence means moving beyond test scores and working with parents and communities to build inclusive, safe and trusting spaces" (p.196). It is unfair to assume and misleading to suggest that a school's scores on standardized tests reflect systemic equity.

Resisting Deficit Thinking

Another challenge that leaders for social justice are faced with is what Valencia (1997) refers to as *deficit thinking*, the "dominant paradigm that shapes U.S. educators explanations for widespread and persistent school failure among children from low-income homes and children of color" (p.235). This paradigm falsely suggests that students who fail in school are victims of internal cognitive or emotional deficiencies or

social or economic shortcomings. “The popular ‘at risk’ construct, now entrenched in educational circles, views poor and working class children and their families (typically of color) as predominantly responsible for school failure” (p.235). McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) share this belief about deficit thinking and expanded upon it by coining the term “equity trap,” which they describe as “the conscious and unconscious thinking patterns and behaviors that trap teachers, administrators and others, preventing them from creating schools that are equitable, particularly for students of color. According to McKenzie and Scheurich (2004), a common result of deficit thinking (and equity traps) in schools is that an inordinate number of minority students are overidentified for special education, are subjected to segregation because of language barriers, receive stricter disciplinary actions, drop out of school, and are “immersed in negative and ‘subtractive’ school climates” (p.236).

A number of studies have been conducted to further explore deficit thinking as well as to determine the principal’s role in confronting and replacing this mindset. Skrla and Scheurich (2001) conducted a study of four high-achieving districts in Texas to analyze the displacement of deficit thinking. Their findings uncovered five ways that accountability displaces deficit thinking, therefore suggesting that decreased deficit thinking can be linked to state and national accountability systems and implying that school leaders can use disaggregated data to expose and address areas of inequity. McKenzie and Scheurich’s (2004) equity trap study proposed a number of strategies for removing equity traps, including: helping teachers reframe their thinking by engaging in neighborhood walks or by collecting oral histories; engaging in dialogue to address the notion that racism would cease to exist if everyone would just forget about race and see

one another as human beings; expose situations in which teachers conceal deficit thinking and/or try to norm other teachers who disagree with child-negative views; and have teachers visit classrooms and schools where teachers are successful with a similar demographic of students. Finally, Garcia and Guerra (2004) present a conceptual framework for the deconstruction of deficit thinking through staff development and illustrate how deficit thinking can be challenged and reframed. The authors suggest that staff development aimed to unravel deficit thinking forces participants to grapple with and often reject their previously held deficit views and to acknowledge their personal role in student achievement, therefore leading to more culturally responsive and respectful instructional practices (p.164).

Research clearly suggests that a substantial amount of inequity in our schools is linked to the assumptions, beliefs, and behaviors of teachers and administrators. The research also suggests, however, that deficit thinking and/or equity traps can be deconstructed by systematically exploring, exposing and addressing commonly held assumptions. According to McKenzie and Scheurich (2004), "The best route to influence current teachers is through the principal, who, research repeatedly shows, is the key to school change" (p.628). For a principal to change not only her or his own beliefs and assumptions, but also those of the staff, it is imperative that the principal be able to understand, expose and address issues and beliefs that serve as barriers to equity.

Moral Leadership

Leaders who promote and support social justice and systemic equity are keenly aware of their beliefs and values and thoughtfully explore and expose these ideologies as they advocate change and challenge the status quo. Research suggests that these

principals espouse beliefs and values that are tied to moral leadership. Dantley (2005) states, "The whole notion of moral leadership moves educational administration from the realm of minimum competencies and high stakes testing, which are grounded in a modernist frame, to a position of influence where the broader society is concerned" (p.40). This postmodern view of education reinforces the need for leaders to stop looking for one-shot answers and, instead, to begin asking questions that will uncover the hegemonic practices that leave our schools morally bankrupt, socially unjust, and politically corrupt. Dantley, in his essay entitled "Moral Leadership," supports this postmodern framework of school leadership by stating that, "It is actively immoral for school leaders to attempt to embrace any genre of administration without first grappling with the social, political, and cultural contexts in which their schools exist" (p.40). It is unacceptable for school leaders to turn a blind eye to internal or external practices, policies or mandates that perpetuate hegemony. School leadership for social justice requires leaders who are deeply committed to repairing the social injustice that permeates our society. Educational leaders must consistently uncover, question, and challenge the status quo in pursuit of equality and excellence for all of our children; to not do so would be immoral.

Critical Reflection

In writing about developing an alternative pedagogy aimed at developing transformative leaders for social justice, Brown (2004) explains that learners must engage in critical self-reflection in order to change their *learning schemes*. The aim of this type of reflection is to "externalize and investigate power relationships and to uncover hegemonic assumptions" (p.84). Kose (2005), in his study of the principal's role in

advocating social justice through professional development, supports Brown's (2004) argument for on-going learning, grounded in critical reflection, and further emphasizes that the principal's commitment to learning is paramount. Kose calls for principals to continuously "*deconstruct and reconstruct* their educational philosophy as it relates to student learning" (p.33). It is important to note here that the principal's learning must be an ongoing, discursive process that begins with higher education institutions and continues contingent upon the school leader's willingness to grapple with tough questions regarding one's own cultural identity and to influence and inspire teaching practices and beliefs that lead to equitable learning outcomes for *all* students. Dantley (2005) expands on this notion of critical reflection, stating that leaders must "grapple with meanings of what is just and right" (p.42). This development of an *idiographic morality* stems from how leaders "personally see or evaluate themselves in actualizing those definitions" (p.42). Leaders that undergo the process of "critical reflection" and develop an "idiographic morality" are better equipped to clearly and consistently articulate and enact a vision for learning that responds justly and accordingly when confronted with situations that perpetuate hegemony, preserve the status quo and threaten democracy.

Leadership for Transformation through Community

"There is significant research that indicates there is a positive relationship between leadership and student achievement" (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004, p.603), and many scholars have conducted empirical and theoretical research about the principal's role in supporting and advancing social justice. Shields (2004), in her research on leadership for social justice, links moral leadership with transformative leadership. "Transformative educational leaders, as described by Astin and Astin, believe that the

value ends of leadership should be to enhance equity, social justice and the quality of life" (p.123). Shields draws from Bogotch's definition of educational leadership as "a deliberate intervention that requires the moral use of power" and insists that these deliberate interventions of educational leaders must "develop meaning that is socially just, build a deeper understanding of dialogue, and help educators to critically examine their practices" (p.110). Shields elaborates by stating that, "Rather than trying to balance numerous competing programs and demands, one of the central interventions of school leaders must be the facilitation of moral dialogue… transformative leadership based on dialogue and strong relationships, can provide opportunities for all children to learn in school communities that are socially just and deeply democratic" (p.110). Inspired by the school leader, it is this co-construction of knowledge that unites the entire school community in pursuing the common goal of ensuring that all children receive equal access to an excellent education.

Community and social activism is an essential component of transformative leadership for social justice. Furman and Gruenewald (2004), believe that "… the entire community must be seen as central to the school's curriculum" (p.70) and propose a *pedagogy of place* in which educators work with the community members to conduct a needs-assessment, to gather support, and to, for instance, "identify individuals who could serve as curricular resources, providing oral histories of the community…" (p.70). Scheurich (1998), in his study of the HiPass model, states that the fifth core belief essential for socially just schooling is the belief that the school exists for and serves the community. The HiPass schools, according to Scheurich, erased the traditional separation between school and its community and replaced it with "a community of commitment"

(p.466). These schools have creatively woven the school and the community; they "experience themselves as being in union with the community -- the community's needs and dreams are their needs and dreams and vice versa" (p.466). Scheurich cites examples of school practices that promote community and social activism: parents working with teachers in the classrooms, school meetings that take place at community sites, teachers riding buses to meet and greet families at the beginning of the school year, and schools that serve as community centers to incorporate non-school related activities that support the community. "Consequently, these schools have developed the six qualities that Raywid contends are key features of building community: respect, caring, inclusiveness, trust, empowerment, and commitment" (p.467).

Another key component with regard to community and social activism is inherent within school practices that promote and support a collaborative school climate, reflected by the staff members' willingness to learn with and from one another. Meier (2002), reflecting on her service as a principal, emphasized the importance of shared decision making. As a result, Meier established a supportive structure at Mission Hill that provided built in time for peer planning and observation and, most importantly, centered on "particular students, student work, and curriculum" (p.68). Furthermore, "regular House meetings, involving the four or five adults who shared responsibility for the approximately eighty kids belonging to the House, became an instrument for pushing the issues of feedback and accountability" (p.67). Scheurich and Skrla (2003) also argue the importance of community and collegiality and suggest forging networks with other schools and systems that are accomplishing success in achieving both excellence and equity.

Instructional Leadership

Many studies on leadership for social justice and systemic equity emphasize that the principal must serve as an instructional leader who promotes an empowering school culture, uses disaggregated data to drive decision-making and advocates best practice instruction and policies for *all* students. The research reveals, for instance, a need for a postmodern perspective and approach regarding school size and scheduling. Meier (1995), founder and former principal (*lead teacher*) of several alternative public schools in New York and Boston, for instance, advocates for smaller, self-governing (autonomous) schools. According to Meier, "It doesn't depend on new buildings, just using the ones we have differently" (p.107). Meier gives six reasons that small schools are essential for "ensuring that all children can and shall learn to use their minds in ways once reserved for a small elite" (p.107). These reasons include: an opportunity for deep, ongoing discussion; accessibility to one another's work (accountability); knowing one's students – especially those who are the hardest to know; physical safety; increased accountability for student learning; and a school culture that is compassionate. "In short, smallness makes democracy feasible in schools, and without democracy we won't be able to create the kind of profound rethinking the times demand" (p.110). Scheurich and Skrla (2003) also advocate for an alternative approach when grappling with how to meet the needs of every student. If, for instance, data reveal that "33% of students do not meet expectations for success, it may even require after-school or Saturday work, or it may require changing the structure of the day to serve this final 33% of students" (p.70).

Research also highlights the importance of opposing the traditional structure as it relates to the process of teaching and learning. With regard to an alternative structure for

staff development, Kose (2005), in his dissertation entitled "Differentiating Professional Development for Social Justice," proposes that, in order to surmount oppressive practices in schools, the leader must: differentiate professional learning opportunities; explore his/her own identity and be able to relate to other's struggles with this concept; and must consider non-traditional school resources and structures. Finally, with regard to a postmodern view of curriculum, Shields (2004) argues that,

> We need to open our curriculum (formal, informal and hidden) and create spaces in which all children's lived experiences may be both reflected and critiqued in the context of learning. Over-coming the silence about class differences is a way of ensuring that our schools and classrooms are more inclusive, enabling fuller and more democratic participation by people. It helps to legitimize and validate the realities of more students and hence to provide a basis for the development of more meaningful relationships and deeper sense making. When we engage in conversations in our schools and classrooms, they must not be based solely on middle-class experiences and continue to exclude or pathologize the lived experiences of the rest of society. (p.123)

Riester, Pursch and Skrla (2002), in a study that examined the role of principals in highly successful elementary schools serving primarily students from low-income homes, identified two factors considered essential for a socially just school: (1) development of an early literacy program, and (2) avoidance of over-identification and inappropriate placement in special education classes. These researchers concluded that the development of literacy skills prepares students to be successful in a democratic society, serves as a tool for emancipating the oppressed by building critical awareness and leads to cultural empowerment and economic survival. Another conclusion drawn from this study was that school leaders must "create school cultures that serve to empower teachers to enact specific practices that lead to learning for all" (p.283); this means that the school leader must hire teachers who are competent, reflective and culturally responsive practitioners. McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) suggest that principals devote a significant amount of

time to recruiting and hiring teachers and recommend forming a hiring committee to develop and implement a hiring protocol for interviewing teacher candidates. Furthermore, Meier (1995), with regard to hiring, states five qualities to look for in prospective teachers:

> (1) a self-conscious reflectiveness about how they themselves learn and (maybe even more) about how and when they don't learn; (2) a sympathy toward others, an appreciation of differences, an ability to imagine one's own "otherness"; (3) a willingness, better yet a taste, for working collaboratively; (4) a passion for having others share some of one's own interests; and (5) a lot of perseverance, energy, and devotion to getting things right. (p.142)

"There is growing consensus among researchers and practitioners that teacher quality is the prime determinant of students' opportunities for academic success" (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003, p.95), and the principal therefore plays an essential role in ensuring that our students are taught by culturally responsive, competent, caring teachers.

In closing, the principal's role in leading for social justice, equity, and excellence is multi-faceted and includes key characteristics such as: challenging the status quo, understanding policy, resisting deficit thinking, reflecting critically and providing moral, transformative, and instructional leadership. Perhaps these qualifications explain why our educational system as a whole remains an inequitable institution. However, the research continues to point to the reality that equity exists in many schools, and the common denominator in all of these schools is a strong leader.

Conceptual Framework: Academic Optimism

The researchers will utilize the latent concept of academic optimism as a theoretical framework by which to analyze the data. Academic optimism is comprised of three interrelated components: (a) academic emphasis; (b) collective efficacy; and (c) faculty trust (Hoy, Tarter, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2006). Although the three components are

interrelated, each of these three areas is specifically defined and grounded in theory and research. Each researcher chose a different one of these three interrelated components through which to analyze the data.

Academic emphasis, the first of the three sub-components of Hoy's academic optimism construct, has been examined extensively as a factor that contributes to student achievement (Goddard, Sweetland, & Hoy, 2000; Hoy et al., 2006, Lee and Byrck, 1989; Murphy, Weil, Hallinger, & Mitman, 1982; Shouse, 1996). Other terms in the literature for academic emphasis include: academic rigor, academic push, academic excellence, and environmental press. For this research study, academic emphasis is defined as "the extent to which a school is characterized by a press for academic achievement (Hoy, Tarter, & Hoy, 2006).

Collective efficacy is grounded in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986, 1997) and self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is an individual's belief about his or her capacity to execute the actions required to produce a given level of attainment (Bandura, 1997). Building on self-efficacy, collective efficacy is, "the judgment of teachers that the faculty as a whole can organize and execute the actions required to have positive effects on students" (Hoy, Tarter, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2006). Collective efficacy contains four components: (1) mastery experience; (2) vicarious experience; (3) social persuasion; and (4) affective state. Research has shown that collective efficacy is the key variable in explaining student achievement—even more so than socioeconomic status (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000; Hoy, Sweetland, & Smith, 2002).

The last component of academic optimism is the faculty's trust in parents and students. Just as academic emphasis and collective efficacy have been found to be

positively related to student achievement, faculty trust has also been found to be related to student achievement (Hoy, 2002). Hoy, Tarter, and Woolfolk Hoy (2006) define faculty trust as "a willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that that party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open" (p.429).

The importance of academic optimism as a theoretical framework is its inclusion of cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains. According to Hoy, Tarter, and Woolfolk Hoy (2006), "Collective efficacy is a group belief or expectation, it is cognitive. Faculty trust in parents and students is an affective response. Academic emphasis is the push for particular behaviors in the school" (p.431). These three domains will serve as a useful tool in exploring the academic achievement in the schools in this study.

Academic Emphasis

As mentioned earlier, academic emphasis has been researched and studied extensively as a major factor contributing to increased student achievement (Hoy, Tarter, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2006). In schools with high academic emphasis "teachers set high but achievable goals, they believe in the capability of the students to achieve, the school environment is orderly and serious, and, students, as well as teachers and principals, pursue and respect academic success" (Goddard et al., 2000, p.684). Academic emphasis therefore becomes a way of characterizing the instructional climate and culture of the school. While climate characterizes the school's impact on students, culture refers more to the manner in which the teachers and other staff members work together (McBrien & Brandt, 1997). Schools characterized by academic emphasis focus on and insist upon student achievement.

Research demonstrates that academic emphasis is positively related to student achievement even after controlling for the socioeconomic status of students (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottcamp, 1991; Lee & Bryk, 1989). Shouse (1996) concludes that "all schools, particularly low-SES schools – can increase student achievement by placing their academic mission at center stage and allowing their social mission to play a supporting role" (p.18). Shouse further argues that educational equity can be attained in low-SES schools by utilizing both "human and social capital in more academically focused ways" (p.19). A school culture and climate that espouses these beliefs sends a consistent message to the school community conveying that the academic success of *all* students is both possible and critical. Instead, for instance, of offering minority students a watered down version of the curriculum, all students would be afforded equal access to a rigorous, challenging, and authentic course of study. Schools with high academic emphasis have equally high demands for *all* of their students and offer strong, individualized support in ensuring that every student achieves at a high level.

Murphy, Weil, Hallinger, and Mittman (1982) researched policies and practices that influence academic press. The authors distinguish between school-level policies and classroom level practices and behaviors, and suggest that, "academic press can be maximized when school level policies and enforcement practices form the framework for classroom-level activity" (p.26). According to the authors, school policies that maximize academic press include policies that communicate high expectations, offer clear and measurable goals, promote the belief that all students can achieve grade-level standards, protect instructional time, foster an orderly and safe environment, emphasize mastery of

grade-level skills, and closely monitor student performance. The authors also identified five categories of teacher practices that contribute to academic press:

> (1) establishing an academically demanding climate; (2) conducting an orderly, well managed classroom; (3) ensuring student academic success; (4) implementing instructional practices that promote student achievement; and (5) providing opportunities for student responsibility and leadership (p.25).

It is important to note here that the authors emphasize the importance of relationships with regard to the above policies and practices. The authors emphasize that academic press is futile if teachers do not show a genuine interest in the students' lives and if teachers, themselves, do not model behaviors that support and reflect academic emphasis.

Hoy, Tarter and Kottkamp (1991) developed a tool known as the Organizational Health Inventory (OHI) and used this tool as a method for measuring a school's level of academic emphasis. The elementary school OHI consists of eight scale items (see Table 2.2) and, for the purpose of Goddard, Sweetland, and Hoy's study (2000), was analyzed using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree.* In the analysis of their data, Goddard and colleagues concluded that academic emphasis was a significant predictor of student achievement in reading and in math for poor and minority students. It was noted, for instance, that "an increase in academic emphasis of 1 standard deviation is associated with a gain of nearly 40% of a standard deviation in student achievement in math and more than one third of a standard deviation in reading achievement" (p.698). The researchers were able to conclude from their study that schools with a higher academic emphasis had higher levels of student achievement. To

support this statement, it is worthy to note, for instance, that, "Although students receiving a free or reduced-price lunch scored on average 2.41 points below their schools' mean reading scores, the school means averaged 11.39 points higher where there was a strong academic emphasis" (p.698). The analysis of this research clearly emphasizes that a school climate and culture characterized by high levels of academic emphasis results in high, more equitable levels of student achievement regardless of the students' race, gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. It is therefore important to emphasize that academic emphasis must be synonymous with the school's climate and culture. The norms (practices, policies, structures, etc.) of a school with high levels of academic emphasis should support, reflect, and foster a collective effort to focus on student achievement.

Table 2.2: Academic Emphasis Scale Items

Students respect others who get good grades
Students try hard to improve on previous work
The learning environment is orderly and serious
Teachers in this school believe that their students have the ability to achieve academically
Students neglect to complete homework
Students make provisions to acquire extra help from teachers
Students seek extra work so they can get good grades
Academically oriented students are not ridiculed by their peers

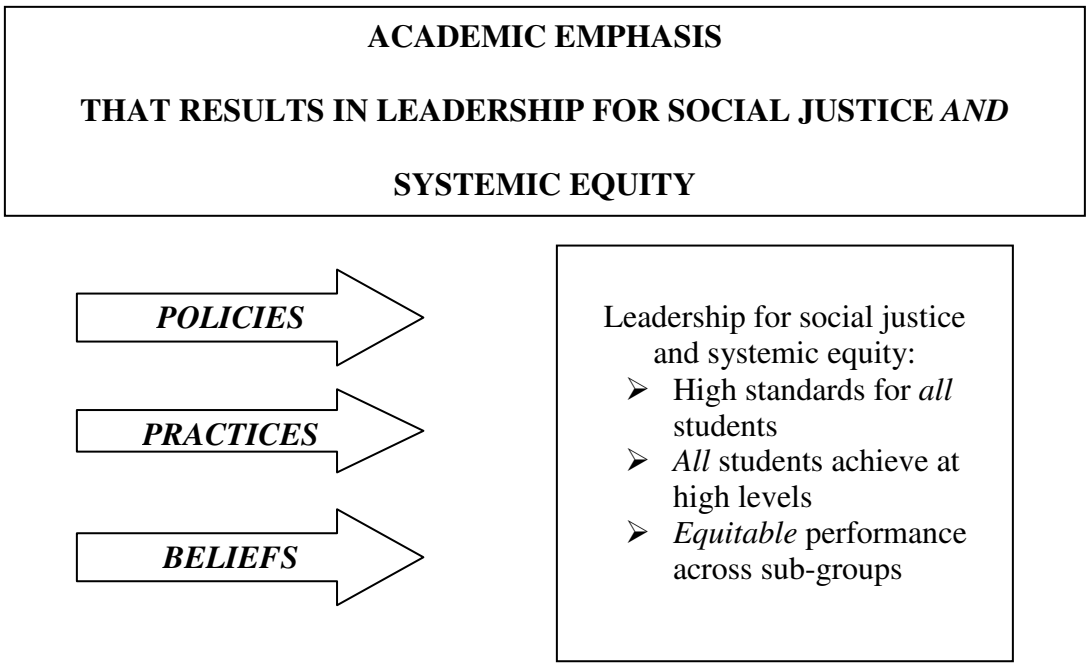
Note. From "Academic Emphasis of Urban Elementary Schools and Student Achievement," by R.G. Goddard, S.R. Sweetland, and W.K. Hoy, 2000, Educational Administration Quarterly, 36.

Shouse (1996), in a study of 398 schools, offers a framework for academic emphasis that highlights the separate and collective effects of academic emphasis and school community. He introduces three separate components, each contributing to the academic emphasis of the school: (1) academic climate; (2) disciplinary climate; and (3) teachers' instructional practices and emphasis. The first component, Academic Climate, refers to the school's emphasis on offering students access to a rigorous curriculum as well as an emphasis on recognizing and honoring outstanding performance. The second component, Disciplinary Climate, refers to the school's emphasis on establishing appropriate and effective attendance and discipline policies. In explaining the third component, Teachers' Instructional Practices and Emphasis, Shouse expresses the need for teachers to "establish objective and challenging standards for student performance" (p.4), that they assign work that is authentic and relevant, and that they provide frequent, purposeful, ongoing feedback for students and parents. Shouse's study suggests that the most successful schools are those in which "a sense of community emerges as a positive result of a strong sense of academic purpose…" (p.19).

As this research seeks to explore the achievement gap from the perspective of what school leaders can do to achieve equity and excellence, a focus on academic emphasis could be a promising strategy. As Goddard, Sweetland, and Hoy (2000) note, "The greater the academic emphasis of a school, the more capable is the school of facilitating student learning" (p.687). The review of the literature regarding academic emphasis reveals a common thread of the importance that policies, practices, and beliefs have upon student achievement. Using the principal as the unit of analysis, academic

emphasis will be utilized as a theoretical framework (see Figure 2.1) to explore leadership strategies that promote and support social justice and systemic equity.

Figure 2.1: Theoretical Framework



Roots

As previously noted, the collective efficacy component of academic emphasis is grounded in Bandura's (1993) notion of self-efficacy. He postulates that self-efficacy is a mechanism of personal agency by which people make causal contributions to their own functioning. According to Bandura, "Among the mechanisms of agency, none is more central or pervasive than people's beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over their own level of functioning and over events that affect their lives" (p.118). Self-efficacy beliefs influence how people think, feel, and act through four different processes: (a) cognitive; (b) motivational; (c) affective; and (d) selection processes.

According to Bandura (1993), human behavior, which is purposeful, is regulated by cognitive processes. As he stated, "The stronger the perceived self-efficacy, the higher the goal challenges people set for themselves and the firmer is their commitment to them" (p.118). This commitment tends to beget positive results. Collins (1982) confirms this theory in her study of students of varying mathematical abilities and different perceived self-efficacy. She found that within similar ability levels, students with stronger perceived mathematical self-efficacy outperformed students with weaker perceived mathematical self-efficacy. Also of note, Collins found that positive attitudes toward mathematics were better predictors of mathematics achievement than actual ability. Bandura (1993) would explain this by theorizing that, "those who have a firm belief in their efficacy, through ingenuity and perseverance, figure out ways of exercising some control, even in environments containing limited opportunities and many constraints (p.125).

The second process of self-efficacy is motivational. According to Bandura (1993), motivation is governed by expectations that behaviors will lead to outcomes of performance. In other words, people are more motivated to complete a certain task if their self-efficacy beliefs are higher. Although motivation and self-efficacy are personal beliefs, leadership can impact teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and motivation. In their study of 218 schools in two large districts in Canada, Ross and Gray (2006) found that transformational leadership (fostering growth and enhancing organizational commitment in teachers) has a positive statistically significant impact on teacher's sense of efficacy. Recent empirical evidence also links motivation to student achievement on tests (Brookhart, Walsh, & Zientarski, 2006). In their study of 8th grade students, the

researchers found that motivational variables positively correlated with student performance on classroom assessments.

Bandura's (1993) third process is affective. Naturally, beliefs in self-efficacy impact how much stress is experienced in threatening or difficult situations. People with stronger perceived self-efficacy beliefs exercise more control over the stress, giving them a better opportunity to be successful. Conversely, people with weaker perceived self-efficacy beliefs feel they cannot exercise control over the stress associated with difficult tasks. Stipek, Salmon, Vinnin, Kazemi, Saxe, & Macgyvers (1998) linked affect with math achievement and found that a positive affective classroom climate is a powerful predictor of student motivation and self-efficacy. The study conducted by Stipek, et. al has implications for practice as the researchers found that teachers can impact students' affect by expressing positive emotions and enjoyment of their subject matter, showing sensitivity and kindness towards students, and utilizing humor.

These three previous processes lead to the most influential process of self-efficacy—selection processes. While cognitive, motivational, and affective processes create the conditions for a beneficial environment, selection process is the component through which people make the decision to undertake a challenging activity. According to Bandura (1993), "People avoid activities and situations they believe exceed their coping capabilities. But they readily undertake challenging activities and select situations they judge themselves capable of handling" (p.135). Simply put, an individual will undertake and persevere through a task they perceive they are capable of handling. Most of the research in this area focuses on student selection processes. For example, Dalgety and Coll (2006) studied 126 first-year chemistry students and found a statistically

significant difference in chemistry self-efficacy between students intending to enroll in a second-year chemistry course. In other words, students with higher self-efficacy beliefs chose to continue their chemistry education. This finding should be applicable to K-12 education. As students advance through secondary school, they begin to have more choices to make about their education. If their self-efficacy beliefs are stronger, they may tend to choose a more academically rigorous class.

Theoretical Background

The remainder of this literature review will focus on the research surrounding collective efficacy. Although distinct from self-efficacy, collective efficacy is related as it also has underpinnings in social cognitive theory. Goddard and Goddard (2001) also linked self and collective efficacy empirically as they found that collective efficacy was a significant predictor of differences in teacher efficacy. The authors found that teacher efficacy was higher in schools where collective efficacy was higher. Goddard, Hoy and Woolfolk Hoy (2004) define collective efficacy in schools as, "the judgment of teachers in a school that the faculty as a whole can organize and execute the courses of action required to have a positive effect on students" (p.4). Bandura (1986,1997) conceptualized four sources of collective efficacy: (a) mastery experience; (b) vicarious experience; (c) social persuasion; and (d) affective state.

For mastery experience, when the group perceives that a performance has been successful, efficacy beliefs tend to raise (Goddard, Hoy, Woolfolk Hoy, 2004). Goddard and Goddard (2001) found that past school achievement was a stronger predictor of perceived collective efficacy than race and socioeconomic status. Britner and Pajares (2006) also found that mastery experience was a strong predictor of student self-efficacy.

In their study of science students in grades 5-8, Britner and Pajares found a statistically significant correlation (.49) between mastery experiences and self-efficacy. This finding has important pedagogical implications for teachers. Teachers can impact student self-efficacy by providing mastery experiences such as authentic inquiry-oriented science investigations based on students' developing abilities. Additionally, it is important to provide novice teachers with opportunities for mastery experiences. Mulholland and Wallace (2001) noted that achieving mastery experiences while teaching is an important source of self-efficacy. The researchers found, "the experience of teaching science a powerful influence on (a teacher's) confidence and perception of confidence. When mastery experiences occurred in the form of successful lessons they seemed an important source of science teaching efficacy belief" (p.258).

Vicarious experience refers to skill modeling by another person. According to Goddard, Hoy, and Woolfolk Hoy (2004), "When a model with whom the observer identifies performs well, the efficacy beliefs of the observer are most likely advanced" (p. 5). According to Brand and Wilkins (2007), vicarious experiences exist when, "individuals are inspired by the success of individuals with whom they personally identify" (p.304). Although there is limited research documenting the impact that vicarious experiences have on self-efficacy and teacher effectiveness, Brand and Wilkins suggest that vicarious experiences (as well as social persuasion and affective status) impact mastery experiences, which does significantly impact self-efficacy.

In explaining social persuasion, Goddard, Hoy, and Woolfolk Hoy (2004) cite examples such as encouragement or specific performance feedback, discussions in a teachers' lounge, or community discussions. The authors note that social persuasion is

essential when assimilating new teachers. With positive social persuasion, new teachers learn that extra effort and a focus on high achievement for all students is the norm. Social persuasion is also important in terms of encouragement and specific feedback. Hoy and Spero (2005) found that efficacy rises during teacher preparation and student teaching, but tends to fall during a teacher's first year of actual experience. The authors link this finding to a lack of perceived support compared to the university and student teacher experience.

The final source of collective efficacy—affective state—refers to the level of excitement or anxiety that adds to the organization's sense of collective efficacy (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2004). An example of this stress might include the pressure from high stakes accountability testing. Schools with high collective efficacy are able to channel this anxiety and focus on the academic achievement of students. Brand and Wilkins (2007), in a study of pre-service teachers, found approximately one-third of the participants indicated that sources of stress reduction impacted their ability to effectively teach math and science.

The Significance of Collective Efficacy

As Gibson and Dembo (1984) found, teachers who have a high sense of instructional efficacy devote more classroom time to academic learning, help students who are struggling, and praise them for their accomplishments. Of particular importance for our study, Bandura (1993) linked schools where all kids are successful with schools that have a high sense of perceived collective efficacy. Specifically, Bandura found:

> … with staffs who firmly believe that, by their determined efforts, students are motivatable and teachable whatever their background, schools heavily populated with minority students of low socioeconomic status achieve at the highest

> percentile ranks based on national norms of language and mathematical competencies (p.143).

As this study began to explore the achievement gap from the perspective of what leaders can do, a focus on collective efficacy was seen as a promising strategy.

In a study of 97 diverse high schools in Ohio, Hoy, Sweetland, and Smith (2002) found a positive correlation between the collective efficacy of the school and school achievement in mathematics. Not only was there a positive correlation, but the authors also found that collective efficacy was more important than socioeconomic factors in explaining school achievement.

It is important to note that collective efficacy is not a variable dependent solely on school-context and teacher-demographic variables. In a recent study of diverse K-8 schools (student demographics averaging 88% minority and 76% economically disadvantaged), school-context and teacher-demographic variables only explained 46% of the variance in collective efficacy (Goddard & Skrla, 2006). This finding led the authors to suggest that, "There is more to perceived collective efficacy than the social demographics and contextual conditions that characterize organizations" (p.229). In other words, although it would be unlikely to change the student and teacher demographics of a school, it is possible to improve upon collective efficacy since demographics comprise less than half of a school's collective efficacy.

In closing, there has been a call (Goddard, Logerfo, & Hoy, 2004) for more research regarding collective efficacy and the extent to which teachers believe their work can achieve goals for social justice. The authors go so far as to say that efforts to expand the base of knowledge of collective efficacy "might be quite useful to understanding how schools meet challenging goals for educational equity" (p.420). By using collective

efficacy as a theoretical framework for this current study, the researchers will be able to explore the discrepancies in systemic equity and add to the body of research on collective efficacy. The following section of this literature review focuses on Faculty Trust, the third component of Hoy's Academic Optimism framework.

Faculty Trust

As stated previously, the final component to academic optimism is faculty trust, which is defined by Hoy, Tarter, and Woolfolk Hoy (2006) as "a willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that that party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open" (p.429). Faculty trust is an essential ingredient to create the culture necessary to initiate, implement, and institutionalize long-lasting change designed to promote excellence and equity throughout the walls of a school. For it is within trusting relationships that collaboration and problem solving can yield creative solutions. If the achievement gap is the largest problem facing the American educational system, then creative solutions will come through meaningful collaboration, and collaboration requires trust. When the faculty trusts parents, teachers can insist on higher academic standards with confidence that they will not be undermined by parents; and high academic standards, in turn, reinforce faculty trust (Hoy et al., 2006). Faculty trust can turn the most toxic of school cultures into that of academic optimism, radiating a belief that all students can learn, and teachers and parents can make a difference.

As previously stated, faculty trust (the extent that a faculty as a group is willing to risk vulnerability) is a collective property. The definition that Hoy, Tarter, and Woolfolk Hoy (2006) provides readers (and the definition that the researcher will also use) to assist in clarifying this complex term is multi faceted.

1. Benevolence-the confidence that the one's wellbeing will be protected by the trusted party.
2. Reliability-the extent to which one can count on another person or group.
3. Competency-the extent to which the trusted party has knowledge and skill.
4. Honesty-the character, integrity, and authenticity of the trusted party.
5. Openness-the extent to which there is no withholding of information from others.

This type of trust is thought to be cultivated through meaningful relationships and a common commitment. The principal has the power to create the conditions necessary to support the five facets of faculty trust.

Many studies have concluded that it is in the student's best interest to establish a strong link between home and school. Numerous child development, social work, psychology, and education studies have provided empirical evidence that supports the notion that parent-school partnerships are a determining factor in a student's cognitive and psychosocial development. Epstein (1994) states, "student learning, development, and success, broadly defined, not just achievement test scores, are the main reasons for school and family partnerships" (p.42). Brofenbrenner has urged educators and policy makers since 1979 to create these links and metaphorical bridges throughout all levels of a student's perceived world to have the greatest impact on his or her human development.

Perhaps the largest and best-known current study of trust in schools is Bryk's and Schneider's (2002) analysis of the relationships between trust and student achievement. Based on a 10-year case study of more than 400 Chicago elementary schools, Bryk and Schneider's data provide the first evidence directly linking the development of relational trust in a school community and long-term improvements in academic learning. The

researchers concluded “trust fosters a set of organizational conditions, some structural and others social-psychological, that make it more conducive for individuals to initiate and sustain the kinds of activities necessary to affect productivity improvements” (p.116). Trust and cooperation among students, teachers, and parents influence regular student attendance, persistent learning, and faculty experimentation with new practices.

Hoy and Tschannen-Moran developed a Trust Scale to measure the level of trust in schools and examined the interrelationships of faculty trust in students, teachers, principals, and parents (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). Following development, their Trust Scales were used and tested in three large-scale studies in elementary, middle, and high schools in Ohio and Virginia. Findings suggested that a greater perceived level of trust in a school also indicated a greater sense of teacher efficacy (i.e., teachers' belief in their ability to affect actions leading to success). Hoy and Tschannen-Moran's studies also suggest that faculty trust in parents predicts a strong degree of parent-teacher collaboration. Distrust, on the other hand, causes people to feel uncomfortable and ill at ease, provoking them to expend energy on assessing the actions and potential actions of others (Fuller, 1996).

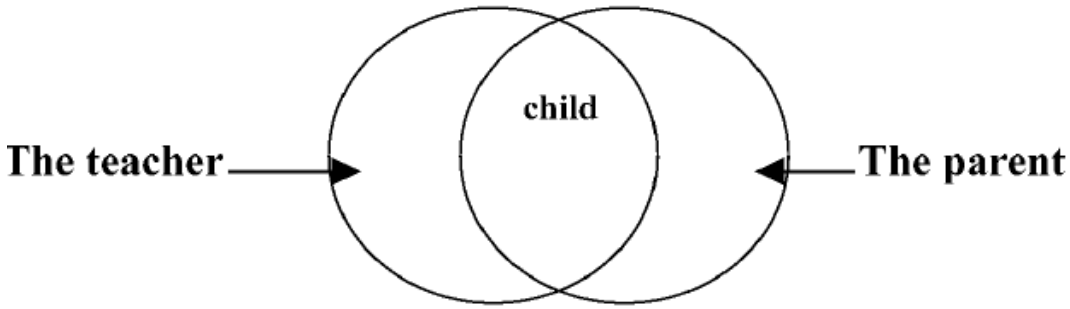
When social exchanges and experiences between and within role groups are supportive and mutually beneficial, individuals and groups are willing to risk vulnerability and to work together to achieve desired outcomes (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Effective collaboration between parent, teacher, and student cannot exist without trust and respect. Friend and Cook (1990) write, “collaboration is a style of interaction between at least two co-equal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision-making as they work toward a common goal” (p.72). Perhaps this type of collaboration was best

explained by Henry's (1996) empirical study in which one teacher referred to this relationship as a metaphorical dance, where the individual must be conscious to the most subtle of communications that lets the other know what his or her needs are and how he or she can also help. Research also reveals that it is essential for the teacher to work towards developing this type of relationship because "teachers are really the glue that hold the home/school partnerships together" (Patrikakou & Weissberg, 1999, p.36).

Collaboration within a social system is not feasible without two unifying processes of decision-making: involvement and influence (Tschannen-Moran, 2001). "Mutually responsive relationships seem more likely to flourish if such efforts focus more on the interconnectedness of parents and teachers through their mutual commitment to children and on exploring ways to enhance and celebrate this connectedness" (Sumsion, 1999, p.11). Figure 2.2 displays the simple yet powerful blueprint for constructing trusting relationships between teacher and parent. Regularly engaging in a dialog, which focuses on their shared wants for the child/student allow for both parties to recognize the dedication and obligation associated with both roles. One must also recognize and respect differences in either party's culture and values (including their backgrounds, race, ethnic group, socioeconomic class and educational level and communication style) when attempting to build such a relationship (Keyes, 2002).

Trust among parent, student, and teachers has also been linked to increasing the achievement of "at-risk" students. The term "at risk" is as complex as searching for the solution to assist these students. There are several definitions, perspectives, and identified risk factors. Davis (2004) states that contemporary research is now focused on the student in context, "conditions both in the child, and in the nature of the environments in which

Figure 2.2: Parent-Teacher Relationship Model (Summison, 1999)



the child lives" (p.6). Environmental factors are linked to substantial risk to drop out of high school, i.e., the school context, family conditions, SES, and educational attainment of parents (Davis, 2004; NCES, 2004). Thus, in order to increase achievement in at-risk students one must take a systemic approach and involve the home environment in the remedy.

Educational research has also documented that `teachers' collaborative relations with parents and work in a family context do not come about naturally or easily (Powell, 1998, p.66). Many teachers find themselves struggling in working with families. Some have ethical concerns; others just lack knowledge, skills and strategies (Powell, 1998; Keyes, 2002). Professional stakeholders have repeatedly challenged the field to provide both teacher and administrator training in working with parents (Epstein, 1989; Powell, 1998). This professional request to learn how to construct relationships with parents, supports the notion that trust is essential in raising student achievement and success. Faculty trust helps instill a universal belief that all students can learn and teachers and parents can make a difference.

Systems can devote much of their budget to improving achievement for minority students and helping bridge the gap between majority and non-majority students. Systems

can create new curriculum manuals, provide staff development opportunities that address minority achievement, and bureaucratic improvement goals. However, this will have little to no effect on minority achievement unless teachers recognize that there is a problem in their individual classrooms and understand that they have the power to fix the inequities that are plaguing our schools. However, they cannot do this on their own. School leaders must involve both the parent and student, and he or she must openly provide them with the data to fully understand the complex and ugly truths about inequities in our schools. "When people of good faith see disparities in outcomes for learners, they immediately desire and do undertake to correct the deficiencies in systems and in individuals who operate those systems, as well as the practices those systems and individuals produce" (Scott, 2001, p.6).

Conclusion

There are principals who are striving for social justice and systemic equity every day. Despite countervailing pressures, they resist, survive, and transform schools (Riester, et al, 2002; Scheurich, 1998). They enact resistance against the historic marginalization of particular students and resist the pressures pushing schools toward a deceptive caring versus academic culture, or possibly a defeatist apathetic culture. These leaders, according to Rapp (2002), are willing and able to "leave the comforts and confines of professional codes and state mandates for the riskier waters of higher moral callings" (p.233). They understand that "Leadership is the enactment of values" (Miron, 1996), that leadership depends upon relationships and shared values between leaders and followers (Burns, 1978). They also understand that not reflecting on, discussing, and/or

addressing issues of race, poverty and disability only further perpetuates the safeguarding of power and the status quo (Larson & Murtadha, 2002; Larson & Ovando, 2001).

Given the strong connection between quality principals and high-performing schools, Scheurich and Skrla (2003) claim that "good leadership, the bodies and spirits of our leadership, is crucial to the justice of our cause for equity and excellence in schooling" (p.99). Effective instructional and administrative leadership helps point to the necessity for change and is required to implement the change processes (Blackmore, 2002; Bogotch, 2002; Fullan, 1993; Rapp, 2002). Effective leaders are reflective, proactive and seek the help that is needed. They nurture an instructional program and school culture conducive to learning and professional growth. They model the values and beliefs important to the institution, hire compatible staff, and face conflict rather than avoid it (Deal & Petersen, 1994). They make the shift from personal awareness to social action (Freire, 1973), realizing that respect for diversity entails advocacy, solidarity, an awareness of societal structures of oppression, and critical social consciousness.

Leaders committed to this agenda decide they can create both excellent *and* equitable schools and then use their time and energy to figure out how to do so. They find a way "for all students to achieve high levels of academic success, regardless of any student's race, ethnicity, culture, neighborhood, income of parents, or home language" (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003, p.3). In their schools, there is no discernible difference in academic success and treatment among different groups of students. They believe that excellence *and* equity are the same.

Although studies have examined schools that make a difference in the lives of marginalized children (Oakes, Quartz, Ryan & Lipton, 2000; Riester, Pursch & Skrla,

2002), there is an absence of literature regarding principals as the unit of analysis and the process of actually leading for social justice. Related to this is an absence of documented strategies that principals who are leading for excellence and equity use to advance their work in the face of countervailing pressures in public schools. The purpose of this study was to examine how K-5 principals, who are dedicated to and passionate about social justice and equity, actually carry out their work in the face of resistance. This research studied principals who lead schools that are both excellent and equitable; principals who create schools in which the dream of equity comes alive on an every day basis through the work of ordinary, everyday people; principals who have narrowed and will eventually eliminate the achievement gaps; principals who create schools, educational methods, programs, and expectations that have significantly advanced the educational achievements of all students; principals who study and challenge the very beliefs, attitudes, and practices that keep all children from learning; principals who no longer tolerate inequities of achievement in their schools.

Scheurich and Skrla (2003) promote the use of data to uncover and erase systemic inequities. Rather than focus on external causes of the achievement gap, Scheurich and Skrla suggest that school leaders focus on internal or *systemic* inequities "because they are built into the processes and procedures of the system that is the school" (p.80). Scott, (2001), as cited in Scheurich and Skrla (2003) defines systemic equity by stating,

> Systemic equity is defined as the transformed ways in which systems and individuals habitually operate to ensure that every learner – in whatever learning environment that learner is found -- has the greatest opportunity to learn enhanced by the resources and supports necessary to achieve competence, excellence, independence, responsibility, and self-sufficiency for school and for life. (p.6)

Scheurich and Skrla (2001) recommend conducting *equity audits* "to identify patterns of inequity for the purpose of addressing those patterns and creating new patterns of equity" (p.80). Equity audits are a tool that can be used to address inequities surrounding teacher quality, program accessibility (which includes teacher attitudes, assumptions and practices) and, finally, student achievement. The notion of systemic equity is important because it reinforces the need for a more holistic approach to identifying and addressing internal inequities and the equity audit can be used to determine "whether all student groups are represented in reasonably proportionate percentages (p.146).

For the purposes of this study data were analyzed from one component of academic optimism: collective efficacy. Collective efficacy is defined as, "the judgment of teachers in a school that the faculty as a whole can organize and execute the courses of action required to have a positive effect on students" (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2004, p.4). Chapter 3 describes the research design for this study, including equity audits, site visits, and semi-structured interviews.

III. METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design and methods used throughout this study. It begins with a summary of the research purpose and theoretical lens. It then identifies the rationale for a mixed methods design, role of the researchers, the protocol used for site selection, and procedures used for data collection.

Research Purpose

Today's schools are currently subjected to an onslaught of high-stake tests at the federal, state and local levels. One may hear parents, students, and teachers complain about these new testing procedures and requirements, which are designed to hold teachers and school leaders accountable for student learning. However, no one can dispute that these tests are not initiating reform and change in the American educational system. No Child Left Behind and the accountability tests designed by the states have alerted the public to the unfortunate truth that our schools are failing to meet the needs of our non-majority population. High-stake testing illuminated the massive gaps between middle-to-upper income White students and students of color and poverty. In America, we boast "all men are created equal," but things change quickly when these Americans become students in our schools.

The massive gaps between majority and non-majority students are great cause for alarm because they reveal that our schools appear to be racist institutions. It is hard to dispute this observation when sixty percent of Black males in the United States fail to graduate from high school (Sturgeon, 2005). In order for schools to receive positive recognition, under the No Child Left Behind and North Carolina's ABC Program, school

leaders must address the lack of success experienced by non-majority students. Systems/schools that fail to change to accommodate the diversity within their classrooms will soon be branded as failing along with their teachers and students. This pressure is fueling reform. Without this pressure, many of these school systems would effortlessly continue to manage the status quo and continue to fail to meet the needs of students of color and students from a lower socio-economic status.

Some schools have experienced considerably more success than others in reducing the achievement gaps between majority and non-majority students. The purpose of this study was to ascertain/explore how K-5 elementary principals of state recognized "Schools of Excellence" are (or are not) promoting and supporting both excellence and systemic equity in their schools. Principals, assistant principals, teachers, and parent leaders were interviewed and the specific strategies that principals use to advance their work in the face of countervailing pressures of public schools were documented. Under North Carolina's system of accountability (i.e., ABCs), "Honor Schools of Excellence" have 90-100 percent of students score at or above Achievement Level III (score needed to be considered proficient), make expected or high growth, and satisfy all Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) indicators required by the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. The research group selected these state recognized elementary schools with a traditional calendar from the largest and fastest growing school system in North Carolina.

An achievement gap existed between majority and non-majority students in all but two of the selected county's thirty-three elementary schools that were recognized by the state as an "Honor School of Excellence" during the 2004-2005 academic year. However, less than twelve percent of the students in these two schools were of color, thus

lacking critical minority mass. Some of the other award-winning schools actually had achievement gaps as large as thirty percentage points. If the “best schools” are evidencing obvious achievement differences between majority and non-majority students, one can only imagine the enormous inconsistencies in student performance in the schools that did not achieve this top honor by the state. This study also supported the researchers’ assumption that the state’s formula to identify the “best schools” is institutionally flawed. Sixteen of these distinguished schools may boast 90% of their student population is considered proficient, but their students of color performed considerable lower than their White counterparts.

Rationale for Mixed Methods Research Design

A dominant-less dominant mixed method research design is the most appropriate approach for attempting to reveal how leaders can successfully promote equity and excellence in today’s schools. This research design refers to research in which "one paradigm and its methods predominate, with a smaller component of the overall study being drawn from an alternative design" (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p.44). The dominant-less dominant is the most popular mixed method designed utilized by researchers in fields where purist approaches to positivist and/or naturalistic forms of research predominate and where criticisms about the absence of paradigmatic and theoretical grounding persist (Morse, 1991). This study predominately utilized qualitative data gathered through semi-structured interviews (the dominant design) and the researchers, armed with the quantitative data collected through equity audits (the less-dominant design), scrutinized these results.

Studies that utilize the dominant-less dominant design allow for qualitative and

quantitative data to be collected, analyzed (qualitatively and quantitatively), and reported. These procedures are often used sequentially to: (a) triangulate or seek convergent findings; (b) provide insights that will inform subsequent data collection and analyses; and (c) enable expansion of the breadth and scope of the research (Greene et al., 1989). Mixed methods offers researchers alternative study designs that can leverage the strengths of the various methods and apply the findings appropriately within their respective fields (Mactavish & Scleien, 2000). "Qualitative researchers believe that rich descriptions of the social world are valuable, whereas quantitative researchers, with their etic, nomothetic commitments, are less concerned with such detail" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p.10). Quantitative assessment will, by nature of its goal for increased precision, continue to overlook potentially meaningful explanatory constructs. By combining both quantitative and qualitative designs for both the independent and dependent variables, and integrating those findings during some specific, deliberate stage, researchers will increase both precision and discovery in the field (Mactavish & Scleien, 2000). Mixed methods designs can and often do expand content-based theories addressing both generalizability (best achieved through quantitative assessments and analyses) and discovery (best achieved through qualitative strategies). "Mixed methods designs provide logical options for creative approaches in all areas of management research by combining the best that each has to offer in terms of depth and breadth, and in terms of precision and discovery" (Mactavish & Scleien, 2000 p.158).

As Denzin and Lincoln (1998) point out, "researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry" (p.8). Qualitative researchers

also look for "answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p.8). Looking for answers regarding social experiences is accomplished by gathering thick, rich description from the participants, which is not a goal of the quantitative researcher. By utilizing a mixed methods research design, the researchers can provide this rich descriptive detail and subtle nuances and examine this information with the quantitative results gathered through equity audits. This mixed methods design makes this goal plausible because it enables the researchers to triangulate or validate the findings, which will ultimately allow one to expand the breadth and scope of the research (Greene et al., 1989).

Role of the Researchers

The purpose of this study was to ascertain/explore how K-5 elementary principals of state recognized "Honor Schools of Excellence" are (or are not) promoting and supporting both excellence and systemic equity in their schools. The research team consisted of three University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill doctoral candidates in the Educational Leadership Department along with their advisor. Two of the four members of the research team are current administrators in North Carolina's public school, another is a former administrator in North Carolina's public schools, and the final member is a former principal and current chair of the Educational Leadership department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The researchers have not worked in any of the schools selected for this study. However, two of the members are current employees of the school district selected and these professional relationships enabled the researchers to gain access to the schools and members of the learning community. This access allowed the team to conduct a series of semi-structured interviews with principals,

assistant principals, teachers, and parent leaders, in an attempt to locate/examine specific strategies that principals use to advance their work in the face of countervailing pressures of public schools. These professional relationships and familiarity with the district have the potential to make the researchers appear biased to present the data in a more than favorable manner. One may also argue that the two researchers working within the district were likely to yield guarded responses from their interviewees. The researchers were committed to remain unbiased in nature and reported their findings in the most accurate manner possible. Informal, collective cross-analysis of the data helped ensure an unbiased analysis. Fortunately, the district leaders supported this research project fully and were eager to be provided with an impartial and objective look into their "Honor Schools of Excellence" and their corresponding leaders to see if they are truly excellent in nature.

Data Collection Procedures

Numerous studies reveal that the principal/leader is one of the most important factors in introducing, implementing, and institutionalizing positive school reform. "Almost all educational reform efforts have come to the conclusion that the nation cannot attain excellence in education without effective school leadership" (Crawford, 1998, p.8). Given this strong connection between quality principals and high-performing schools, it is critically important to research, study, and document "good" leadership at the site level. "We all know that good leadership, the bodies and spirits of our leadership, is crucial to the justice of our cause for equity and excellence in schooling" (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003, p.99). In fact, many would say that strong, outstanding leadership is necessary to any significant transformation of any organization, schools included (Glickman, 2002). After

all, we have evidence of programs that, either in part or in their entirety, are working for diverse learners. The greater challenge, however, is to reproduce these successes in a nation full of millions of learners, on hundreds of thousands of school campuses, in thousands of school districts (Scott, 1998).

Although studies have examined schools that make a difference in the lives of marginalized children (Oakes, Quartz, Ryan & Lipton, 2000; Riester, Pursch & Skrla, 2002), there is an absence of literature regarding principals as the unit of analysis and the process of actually leading for excellence and equity. The rationale of this two-phase empirical inquiry of leadership for excellence and systemic equity was to document how schools, and leaders in particular, can and are pursuing, supporting, and achieving both goals. They decide they can create both equitable and excellent schools and then use their time and energy to figure out how to do so.

Federal, state, and local mandates are now charging schools and their leaders to ensure the academic success of all students. This paradigm shift in the way schools and leaders are measured has resulted in the realization and the empirical evidence that there are alarming gaps in achievement throughout the student body. Leaders committed to excellence and equity find a way "for all students to achieve high levels of academic success, regardless of any student's race, ethnicity, culture, neighborhood, income of parents, or home language" (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003, p.1). The purpose of this two-phase empirical inquiry of "good" schools was to research and document leadership practices that are contributing to schools of excellence *and* equity.

Research Questions

The following question focused the research study: How are principals of K-5

public “Honor Schools of Excellence” pursuing, supporting and advancing social justice, excellence, and systemic equity in a suburban southeastern county? The sub-questions include the following: a) What are principals of K-5 “Honor Schools of Excellence” doing to ensure the success of all of their students? b) What similarities do school leaders, which are successful in creating equity and excellence, have in common? (c) What findings can connect to and build upon the literature related to leadership for social justice and systemic equity? and (d) What can be learned from “Honor Schools of Excellence” that could benefit other schools with similar demographics?

Two-Phase Research Design

The purpose of Phase One was to look, not just at test scores, but to delve more deeply into the data associated with state recognized “Schools of Excellence.” How is “excellence” defined and operationalized in these schools? Are these schools “excellent” for ALL students? Can a school be “excellent” and still have significant “gaps” and disparities? Through the use of equity audits, these and similar such questions were explored. School data was used to identify systemic patterns of equity or inequity internal to the school (e.g., patterns that promote, prevent, or form barriers to schools being equally successful with all student groups).

The purpose of Phase Two was to explore “how” principals are (or aren’t) promoting and supporting both excellence and systemic equity in their schools. What are leaders who are committed to excellence and equity actually “doing” to ensure the success of *all* their students? How do these findings connect to and build upon the literature related to leadership for social justice and equity? Through the use of semi-structured interviews with principals, assistant principals, teachers, and parent leaders, the

specific strategies that principals use to advance their work in the face of countervailing pressures of public schools were documented.

This mixed method (dominant-less dominant) study was conducted using qualitative research methods with a grounded theory approach along with quantitative equity audits from each school. Procedures for a grounded theory approach outlined by Creswell (2002) include collecting interview data, developing and relating themes of information and constructing a visual model that portrays a general explanation. Using this approach, the explanation was "grounded" in the data from the participants. Since the purpose of this study was to examine the process of how principals facilitate excellence and equity, it closely matches the methodology offered by Creswell, which is used to explain, "an educational process of events, activities, actions, and interactions that occur over time" (p.396). This study looked at the actions of the principals, as well as the interactions between several groups of people, such as principals, teachers, students, and their families. Several other studies have been successful in utilizing qualitative methods to study equity in schools (Johnson & Asera, 1999; Ragland, Clubine, Constable, & Smith, 2002; Skrla & Scheurich, 2001). Johnson and Asera (1999) were able to interview school administrators, teachers, parents and other personnel at nine different schools. From there, the researchers looked at how these schools were able to transform themselves into excellent and equitable schools. By using similar methods, the researchers added to the literature on equity in schools successfully. The goal of this study was to focus on how principals are facilitating excellence and equity in their schools.

Site Selection

"The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth" (Patton, 1990, p.169). For the 2004-2005 school year, the state of North Carolina awarded over 50 schools in one large school district with the title "Honor School of Excellence." Through purposeful sampling, twenty-four (24) elementary schools were eventually selected from this list using the following predetermined criteria:

(1) K-5 "Honor School of Excellence" during the 2004-05 school year (no middle schools or high schools included);
(2) Regular, traditional calendar school (no magnet, charter, or year-round schools included);
(3) Principal has been in place for at least three years (no school with a new principal included); and
(4) A student population in which at least 18% of the total school population is comprised of "minority" students.

For this study, minority is defined as those students who fall under the NCLB subgroups of African-American students, Hispanic American students, Native American students, and multiracial students. The researcher's rationale for selecting schools with at least 18% minority population was to ensure that the data gathered were from a large enough sample size to ensure statistical validity to reveal a true pattern of achievement. The majority of social scientists, educators, and policy makers recognize the 20 % figure as an accepted benchmark for achieving "critical mass" for the effective integration of schools (Hawley, Crain, Rossell, Smylie, Fernandez, Schofield, Tompkins, Trent, &

Zlotnik; Schofield, 2001). In order to have a large enough sample size for this research study, the researchers agreed to lower the benchmark to 18%.

All 24 traditional K-5 "Honor Schools of Excellence" identified during the 2004-05 academic year recorded proficiency rates of achievement (i.e., scoring at or above a level three on the state's end-of-grade test) of 95% or above for all of their White and Asian American students. The proficiency rates for minority students in these same schools ranged from 64.6% to 87.1%. Based solely on minority achievement, the schools were rank ordered and then separated into two types of schools. The twelve more equitable schools that recorded achievement gaps of 15% or less between their White students and their minority students were labeled SGS for "smaller gap schools." The twelve less equitable schools that recorded achievement gaps of 15% or more between their White students and their minority students were labeled LGS for "larger gap schools" (see Table 3.1 for demographic data for SGS and LGS). While any gap, especially a gap of 15%, still indicates inequity, it also illustrates the need for this research and the importance of learning from and building on the success of the more equitable schools in the district.

The district involved is unique in its focus to keep most schools balanced by subgroups of students identified under NCLB. Around twenty years ago, the school board modified its racial-desegregation plan by replacing racial considerations with a new student assignment plan based on a combination of socioeconomic status and academic performance. Accordingly, no school may have more than 40 percent of its children eligible for subsidized lunches or more than 25 percent of its students scoring below grade level on standardized tests. This approach actively resists the demographic trends

Table 3.1: Demographic Data for Small Gap Schools (SGS) and LargeGap Schools (LGS) – Complete data set for 2004-05

School	# of students	# tests taken	% of minority students	***% of F&R*** students	% of L.E.P. students	% of students w/disability	# of AYP Goals (100% met)
SGS1	777	416	60%	49%	6%	16%	25
SGS2	836	384	18%	14%	13%	15%	17
SGS3	673	324	18%	13%	NA	15%	19
SGS4	621	302	38%	38%	13%	23%	21
SGS5	1061	528	23%	15%	9%	14%	23
SGS6	601	242	43%	32%	NA	20%	21
SGS7	765	347	32%	19%	NA	12%	19
SGS8	860	341	33%	29%	4%	15%	21
SGS9	777	327	42%	35%	11%	10%	17
SGS10	576	281	47%	36%	8%	18%	21
SGS11	642	270	42%	36%	5%	15%	19
SGS12	549	270	51%	41%	7%	13%	17
Range	549-1061	242-528	18-60	13-49	4-13	10-23	17-25
Average	728	336	37%	30%	8%	16%	20
LGS13	717	338	52%	42%	9%	14%	25
LGS14	685	259	33%	29%	5%	15%	17
LGS15	606	251	41%	38%	7%	20%	21
LGS16	561	191	35%	38%	5%	16%	15
LGS17	921	416	29%	21%	NA	16%	21
LGS18	742	333	43%	41%	6%	17%	25
LGS19	661	345	26%	26%	7%	19%	21
LGS20	565	248	41%	37%	5%	15%	17
LGS21	756	343	18%	14%	5%	14%	15
LGS22	672	248	21%	22%	7%	24%	19
LGS23	862	369	31%	21%	NA	19%	21
LGS24	845	420	24%	19%	8%	16%	21
Range	561-921	191-416	18-52	14-42	5-9	14-24	15-25
Average	716	313	33%	29%	6%	17%	20
District	656	295	38%	31%	6%	NA	80%

toward high-poverty and low-performing schools by making decisions based on students' need rather than their race.

As a result, the schools in this study had a population of minority students that ranged from 18% to 60% of the total school population. While this demographic trend is not representative of many districts or many schools in districts that essentially remain segregated, it did provide a unique opportunity to study and compare what is actually happening (or not happening) in schools that are similar demographically. This study's findings could be deemed as essential data to either support or dispute the need for school leaders to take into consideration balancing socio-economic status when drawing attendance lines for schools within a district.

Many people, including educators, still believe that factors such as genetic deficiency, class differences, families and access to learning opportunities at home are the most reliable predictors of school achievement. With this view, schools excuse themselves from any accountability for inequities among student subgroups. However, with this study of schools that teach similar populations of students from the same geographical region, it is impossible to ignore the importance and impact of schools. This study provides leaders with data to support the notion that the school plays a significant role in the achievement of all students. More importantly, educational leaders who read this study will learn strategies that facilitate excellence *and* equity from the "good leaders" who lead the truly "good schools" in this district (i.e., the most excellent *and* equitable schools).

For Phase Two (i.e., qualitative data collection), the researchers gained access into two-thirds (i.e., 16 of 24) of these "Honor Schools of Excellence." Four of the

twenty-four schools were eliminated because the socio-economic status of the students did not meet the equity audit criteria, and four were eliminated when a fifth researcher withdrew from the study. Multi-site qualitative research studies address the same research questions in a number of settings using similar data collection and analysis procedures in each setting. The intent was to optimize description utilizing cross-site comparisons and increase the potential for generalizing findings beyond a particular case.

Data Collection

Phase One: Equity Audits

Through the use of equity audits, quantitative data was collected to scan for and then document systemic patterns of equity and inequity across multiple domains of student learning and activities within the selected twenty-four "Honor Schools of Excellence" (i.e., patterns embedded within the many assumptions, beliefs, practices, procedures, and policies of schools themselves that promote, prevent, or form barriers to schools being equally successful with all student groups). All of the data collected for these audits is public knowledge provided by the state department of instruction and posted on the district's website.

The data provided by the North Carolina Department of Instruction allowed the researchers to analyze information in regards to testing performance according to race, gender, economic status, disability, language proficiency, and parents' educational status. Teachers, administrators, school board members, community members, and policy makers may be aware of inequities in various aspects of their schools, but they rarely have systematically examined these areas and then devised ways to eliminate the inequities. To achieve social justice and systemic equity and have a more productive

orientation, one that is not deficit based or focused on issues external to schools, educators need practical tools in recognizing that there are substantial and persistent patterns of inequity internal to schools (i.e., embedded within the many assumptions, beliefs, practices, procedures, and policies of schools themselves). In response to these daunting challenges, practical tools that make intuitive sense to educators and are easy to apply, while getting beyond old biases, can be highly useful.

The research questions and interview protocols for this study of twenty-four state recognized "Honor Schools of Excellence" were modified from goal four of Scott's (2001) Equity Audit, which deals with equitable opportunity to learn. Equity audits are a research tool that can (and will) be used to guide schools in working toward equity and excellence. Equity auditing is a concept with a respected history in civil rights, in curriculum auditing (English & Steffy, 2001), and in some state accountability systems (Scheurich & Skrla, 2003). Equity audits utilize district, school, and classroom data to identify (uncover) and address (understand) systemic patterns of equity or inequity internal to the school (e.g., patterns that promote, prevent, or form barriers to schools being equally successful with all student groups). The goal is to create "challenging learning opportunities such that every child, regardless of characteristics and educational needs, is given the requisite pedagogical, social, emotional, psychological and material supports to achieve the high academic standards of excellence that are established." The qualitative data collected during Phase Two of the study (i.e., over sixty-four in-depth, semi-structured interviews with multiple sources including principals, assistant principals, teachers, and parent leaders) served to "supplement, validate, explain, illuminate, or reinterpret" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.10) the quantitative data gathered

via equity audits from the same "Honor Schools of Excellence" during Phase One of the study.

In this study, the researchers began with a manageable set of demographic, teacher quality, programmatic, and student achievement indicators that together form a straightforward, delimited audit of equity. Demographic equity for each of the SGS and LGS was explored by means of the following descriptive statistics:

(a) number of students;

(b) number of 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders who took the reading and math tests;

(c) percentage of minority students (defined for this study as African-American, Hispanic, Native American, and multiracial students);

(d) percentage of economically disadvantaged students (defined for this study as students eligible for free or reduced lunch);

(e) percentage of limited English proficiency (L.E.P.) students;

(f) percentage of students with disabilities (tested and labeled);

(g) number of AYP goals (subgroups identified under the federal NCLB Act); and

(h) actual geographic location.

Because high quality teachers are key determinants of students' opportunities to be academically successful, evidence of teacher quality equity in each of the SGS and LGS involved four variables:

(a) teacher education (percentage of teachers holding an advanced degree at the master's or doctoral level);

(b) teacher credentials (percentage of fully licensed teachers, percentage of classes taught by highly qualified teachers, and percentage of teachers with

national board certification);

(c) teacher experience (number of years as a teacher; 0 to 3 years, 4 to 9 years, or 10+ years of experience); and

(d) teacher mobility (percentage of teachers leaving or not leaving a campus on an annual basis).

Equally as important as teacher quality is the quality of the programs in which students are placed (or from which they are excluded) and in which teachers work. Because there are large variations of quality among different placements and working conditions within schools and school districts, indicators of programmatic equity for this study involved data gathered on the following resources:

(a) student space (percentage of school crowding and number of mobile units);

(b) student discipline (number of acts of violence and number of student suspensions per 100 students per school year);

(c) student access to books and technology (number of library books per student, number of students per computer, and number of students per Internet connection);

(d) teachers' time;

(e) facilities and resources;

(f) teachers' empowerment;

(g) school leadership; and

(h) opportunities for professional development

Indicators of achievement equity in each of the SGS and LGS expanded the traditional attention on nationally normed achievement test results and included such

evidence of student attainment as growth rates, academic levels, parent education, and AYP goals met. Adequate Yearly Progress standards are used to determine success under the federal No Child Left Behind legislation involving incremental growth from certain starting points in reading and mathematics. With a goal of closing achievement gaps, there are nine categories of students that are potentially identified as subgroups. They are: (1) White; (2) Black; (3) Hispanic; (4) Native-American, (5) Asian/Pacific Islander; (6) Multiracial; (7) Economically Disadvantaged; (8) Limited English Proficient; and (9) Students with Disabilities. A school must achieve 100 percent of its targets (subgroups) in order to be deemed to have made Annual Yearly Progress. In each of the twenty schools, 95% or more of the White and Asian/Pacific Islander students were proficient on the End-of-Grade reading and mathematics tests. The achievement audit for this study disaggregated the following available data based on the NCLB subgroups:

(a) state achievement test results (from a state accountability program, focused primarily on average growth, designed to improve student achievement, reward excellence, and provide assistance to schools that need extra help);
(b) growth rates;
(c) academic levels;
(d) parent education (proficiency rate of students whose parents do not have a college education);
(e) number of AYP goals met

Phase Two: Semi-Structured Interviews

Qualitative data was collected by the researchers through a variety of methods (including in-depth semi-structured interviews, site visits, informal observations,

document analyses, and field notes) and from multiple sources (school principals, assistant principals, teachers, and parents). The intent was to optimize description utilizing cross-site comparisons and increase the potential for generalizing findings beyond a particular case. According to Glesne (1999), the special strength of interviewing is that it allows the researcher to "learn about what you cannot see and to explore alternative explanations of what you do see" (p.69). Since it would have been impractical to log enough observation days to "see" what goes on in a school throughout the course of a year or more, interviewing provided rich data from a span of several years. It also provided alternative explanations of the persistence of inequitable schools.

Within each of the 16 schools, five semi-structured interviews lasting approximately one hour each were conducted—one with the principal, an assistant principal, two teachers and one parent (see Appendices A,B,C, and D for a copy of the Interview Questions). Each of the four researchers conducted five interviews at two small gap schools (ten interviews) and five interviews at two large gap schools (ten interviews), resulting in eighty total interviews. The principal was selected as a participant because he or she served as the unit of analysis, while the other members of the school and community offered valuable information regarding the impact of the principal's leadership on excellence and equity in the school. Two teachers from each school were interviewed (teacher 1 was an Initially Licensed Teacher in year 2, 3 or 4 of service and teacher 2 was a teacher leader, as determined by the principal, with preferably more than seven years of experience and above standard evaluations). The researchers also interviewed a parent leader that was actively involved in the Site Based Management Team, school improvement team, or a parent organization (see Table 3.2 for the participants'

demographic information). The research questions, which served as the foundation on which the protocols were formulated, also served as the cornerstone for the data analysis. It should be mentioned that the principal selected the four other individuals that the researchers had access to interview, thus allowing the principal to select individuals that are more like to speak in a favorable manner (the researchers acknowledge that this was a limitation). However, each of the 16 principals (8 LGS and 8 SGS) had the same opportunity, which allowed for the results from the two groups to remain equal.

The researchers divided the schools to allow each researcher to enter 4 schools total (2 LGS and 2 SGS) and conduct all 5 interviews. Equally dividing the LGS and the SGS was a conscious effort to assist in keeping the collected data impartial in nature. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed for purposes of analysis. The researchers shared all transcripts to allow each researcher the opportunity to analyze each and every interview through his or her specific lens of academic optimism. Each of the four researchers then generated a separate and individual chapter that detailed his or her findings after applying his or her specific lens of the framework (academic emphasis, collective efficiency, and faculty trust) to the collected data generated from this collaborative effort.

Methods of Verification

The study utilized a concurrent triangulation approach, which uses two complementary research methods to confirm, cross-validate, or corroborate findings within one study (Creswell, 2002; Greene et al., 1989). According to Greene et al. (1989), "[W]hen two or more methods that have offsetting biases are used to assess a given phenomenon, and the results of these methods converge or corroborate one another, then the validity of inquiry

Table 3.2: Principals' Demographic Information

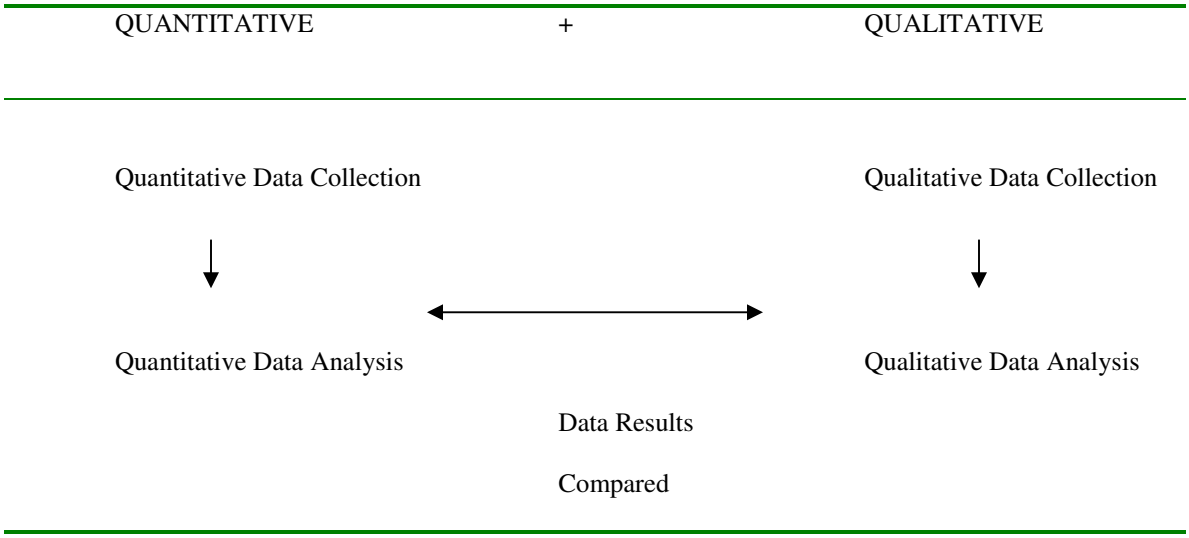
	Gender	**Age**	**Race**	**Years at School**	**Years of Educational Experience**
SGS1	F	48	W	3	26
SGS2	M	51	W	7	30
SGS3	F	59	W	7	27
SGS4	F	45	W	3	21
SGS5	F	41	W	4	14
SGS6	F	61	W	9	39
SGS7	M	32	W	3	12
SGS8	F	35	W	2	15

	Gender	**Age**	**Race**	**Years at School**	**Years of Educational Experience**
LGS1	M	60	W	25	30
LGS2	F	48	W	8	25
LGS3	F	58	W	4	36
LGS4	M	55	W	14	29
LGS5	M	34	W	3	11
LGS6	F	53	W	14	28
LGS7	F	49	W	8	24
LGS8	F	52	B	6	30

findings is enhanced" (p.256). During the data analysis and interpretation stages, data from the interviews were recorded and transcribed, and results were then compared using informal, collective cross-analysis as a strategy to further reliability and validity of the findings (see Figure 3.1). Because of the interpretive and descriptive nature of the study,

coupled with the intent to identify school-wide relationships, a mixed-methods (dominant-less dominant) approach was preferable to a single methodology. The use of interview data from all principals, assistant principals, teachers, and parent leaders coupled with the data obtained through equity audits supported the identification of generalizeable trends across the organization (i.e., broad relationships that are true at aggregate organizational and sub-group levels), while interview data allowed for the identification of individual experiences within the larger organizational context.

Figure 3.1: Concurrent Triangulation research design (Creswell, 2002, p.214)



This mixed method approach provided the researchers with the opportunity to confidently and accurately address the research questions at both the macro (i.e., organizational) and micro (i.e., individual) levels, drawing a conclusion that was both valid in its interpretations and rich in its descriptions (Graham, 2006). To ensure trustworthiness for this study, triangulation was used to incorporate multiple methods sources, investigators and theories to interpret the data and peer debriefing was

implemented to guard against bias and to review and discuss the interpretation of the data (Glesne, 1999).

Limitations of the Study

In addition to the previously mentioned possible limitations (2 of the 4 researchers actively working within the district and the principals selecting the other participants), there are two other limitations to this study. Focusing exclusively on elementary schools prohibits the researchers' findings to offer conclusive evidence that could be used to assist the reform efforts in middle and high schools, which are sadly the areas that many researchers report in need of the most reform and plagued with the most inequities. The decision to focus on elementary schools was a conscious attempt to retrieve results on student performance and achievement, as it relates to school leadership, as pure in nature as possible. These students have limited experiences and their successes cannot typically be attributed to different schools and leadership. Many researchers conclude that reform efforts are most successful at the elementary level for the same reason (Murphy & Datnow, 2003).

This study is missing the insight from some great principals leading for excellence and equity as a result from the researcher's limited and highly structured selection process. The researchers acknowledge that much could and should be learned from these leaders.

Finally, while conducting a group analysis allowed the researchers to compare and contrast strategies across 16 schools, an individual school level analysis may have allowed for a more in-depth analysis of the implemented practices at a single school through artifact collection and ongoing observation.

Outcome of the Study

Many people, including educators, still believe that factors such as genetic deficiency, class differences, families and access to learning opportunities at home are the most reliable predictors of school achievement. With this view, schools excuse themselves from any accountability for inequities among student subgroups. However, with this study of schools that teach similar populations of students from the same geographical region, it is impossible to ignore the importance and impact of schools. This study provides leaders with data to support the notion that the school plays a significant role in the achievement of all students. More importantly, educational leaders who read this study will learn strategies that facilitate excellence and equity from the "good leaders" who lead the truly "good schools" in this district (i.e., the most excellent *and* equitable schools).

IV. QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Audit Findings

Skrla, Scheurich, Garcia, and Nolly (2004) proposed the simple formula of teacher quality equity plus programmatic equity equals achievement equity. In part, this study began to test that assumption. According to Scott (2001), a school cannot have systemic equity if even one part of the system is inequitable. For example, offering a high quality and challenging curriculum is not effective if the staff does not have high expectations that all students will be successful with that curriculum. The following findings seem to raise more questions than answers.

Audit of Demographics in Small Gap Schools (SGS) and Large Gap Schools (LGS)

Demographically speaking, the schools involved in this research study are very similar. All twenty-four are regular K-5, traditional calendar "Honor Schools of Excellence" in the same large school district of over 128,000 students. All twenty-four schools are located within a twelve mile radius of each other, house an average of 722 students, and boast an average daily attendance figure of 95 to 97%. Approximately one-third of the student population in both the SGS and LGS is comprised of minority students (defined as Black, Hispanic, Native American, and Mixed-Race students for this study). The SGS and LGS also both serve approximately the same number of economically disadvantaged students (@ 29.5% for SGS and LGS), same number of limited English proficiency students (@ 7% for SGS and LGS), and same percentage of students with disabilities (@ 16.5% for SGS and LGS). As a result, both sets of schools also have the exact same number of AYP goals to meet (i.e., 20). See Table 4.1 for a

Table 4.1: Demographic Data for Small Gap Schools (SGS) and Large Gap Schools (LGS) – Average data set for 2004-05

	# of students	# of tests taken by 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students	% of minority students	*% of F&R* students	% of L.E.P. students	% of students w/disability	# of AYP Goals (100% met)
SGS	**728**	**336**	**37%**	**30%**	**8%**	**16%**	**20**
Range	549-1061	242-528	18-60	13-49	4-13	10-23	17-25
LGS	**716**	**313**	**33%**	**29%**	**6%**	**17%**	**20**
Range	561-921	191-416	18-52	14-42	5-9	14-24	15-25
District	656	295	38%	31%	6%	NA	80%

[Note. National experts report that about 10% to 12% of a school's student population probably requires special education designations. Both types of schools in this study report higher than average classifications resulting in over-assignment (Artiles, 1998).]

snapshot of the demographic data for SGS and LGS.

Audit of Teacher Quality in Smaller Gap Schools (SGS) and Larger Gap Schools (LGS)

Although defining teacher quality and then measuring it is a complicated task (Rowan, Correnti, & Miller, 2002), pursuing it is vitally important in raising student achievement. Research indicates that having a critical mass of licensed, experienced teachers with advanced degrees is directly correlated with students' academic success (Darling-Hammond, 1999). An audit of teacher quality revealed that teachers' credentials, education, experience, and mobility are also very similar in both the SGS and the LGS. For this study, fully licensed teachers means the percentage of classroom teachers with clear initial or clear continuing licenses in all license areas (@ 90% for SGS and LGS). Classes taught by "highly qualified" teachers involves the percentage of classes taught by "highly qualified" teachers as defined by federal law (@ 89.5% for SGS and LGS). Teachers with advanced degrees includes the percentage of teachers who have

completed an advanced college degree, including a master's or doctoral degree (@ 25% for SGS and LGS). National Board Certified teachers is the average number of school staff, including teachers, administrators and guidance counselors, who have received National Board Certification (@ 8.5% for SGS and LGS). Years of teaching experience delineates the percentage of teachers who have taught for 0 to 3 years, 4 to 10 years, or over 10 years. Although small, an interesting difference was noted in that half (51%) of the teachers in the SGS had 10+ years of experience compared to 43% of the teachers in the LGS. The LGS schools seem to employ more teachers in the 4 to 9 year range of experience (34%) compared to the SGS (29%). Overall, both types of schools seem to employ an appropriate balance of new teachers, mid-career teachers, and very experienced veteran teachers. Lastly, teacher turnover rate is defined as the percentage of classroom teachers who left their school staff from the start of the prior year to the start of the current year (@ 19% for SGS and LGS). See Table 4.2 for a snapshot of the teacher quality data for SGS and LGS.

Audit of Programmatic Issues in Small Gap Schools (SGS) and Large Gap Schools (LGS)

Programmatic issues involve a number of concerns including resources, physical space, student discipline, and access to books and technology. Once again, an audit of the SGS and LGS revealed some striking similarities. For example, while the SGS are 5% over capacity and the LGS are 10% over capacity with regard to school crowding and both sets of schools have approximately 7 mobile units on their properties, the average class size for all twenty-four schools involved is still 21 students. School safety issues involve the number of acts of crime or violence per 100 students, which includes all acts occurring in school, at a bus stop, on a school bus, on school grounds, or during off-

Table 4.2: Teacher Quality Data for Small Gap Schools (SGS) and Large Gap Schools (LGS) – Average data set for 2004-05

	# of teachers	% of teachers fully licensed	% of classes taught by highly qual	% of teachers with advance degree	% of teachers with national board certif	% of teachers with 0 to 3 years exper	% of teachers with 4 to 9 years exper	% of teachers with 10+ years exper	% of teachers who turnover
SGS	**50**	**91%**	**87%**	**26%**	**8%**	**20%**	**29%**	**51%**	**19%**
Range	42-66	85-98	72-97	17-38	2-21	6-32	21-41	33-71	6-26
LGS	**49**	**89%**	**92%**	**24%**	**9%**	**23%**	**34%**	**43%**	**19%**
Range	38-66	87-94	77-100	7-38	3-28	9-37	26-45	24-56	7-26
District	49	95%	88%	27%	10%	25%	31%	44%	23%

campus, school-sponsored activities. While the LGS reported one more act per 100 students than the SGS, the SGS reported one more short-term (10 days or less) or long-term (more than 10 days) out-of-school suspension or expulsion per 100 students than the LGS. Students in both the SGS and LGS have access to approximately the same number of library and media center books (@ 17 books for SGS and LGS) and the same number of Internet-connected computers (@ 4 to 1 student/computer ratio for SGS and LGS).

Another way to assess programmatic equity is to examine the results of the governor's Teacher Working Conditions survey. The goals of the survey are to (1) hear from teachers and administrators about what they identify as areas in need of improvement; (2) understand what school characteristics appear to affect those perceptions; and (3) provide data on working conditions to local school leaders and state policymakers. Research and focus groups with teachers were conducted to develop 30 statistically sound working conditions standards for schools in five broad categories — time, empowerment, professional development, leadership, and facilities and resources.

The online survey sent to every licensed public educator in the state solicits responses on 72 statements regarding working conditions in these five domains. Educators are asked to respond to each of the statements with a value of "1" through "6" with "1" representing "Strongly Disagree" and "6" representing "Strongly Agree." All statements are written to indicate a positive description of the school environment (e.g., "The principal is a strong, supportive leader" and "Adequate and appropriate time is provided for professional development"). Therefore, higher scores always indicate a more positive opinion of the school environment. In 2004-05, surveys were completed and returned voluntarily by 42,209 educators from 1,471 schools in 115 of the state's 117 school districts. Seventy-six percent (76%) of the schools had a response rate of 50% or higher.

The domain of time ensures that teachers can work collaboratively and focus on teaching all students. Empowerment is meant to ensure that those who are closest to students are involved in making decisions that affect them. Facilities and resources ensure teachers have the resources to help all children learn. Leadership ensures schools have strong leaders who support teaching and learning. And, opportunities for professional development ensure teachers can continually enhance their knowledge and skills. The Southeast Center for Teacher Quality (see Jacobson, 2005) found all five variables to be significant and meaningful predictors of student achievement.

Interesting findings emerged regarding the return rate, range of returns, and actual ratings on the surveys. First, 20% more of the teachers in the SGS actually completed the survey (total of 88%) compared to teachers in the LGS (total of 68%). Second, the range of returns for the SGS was considerably smaller at 29 (between 71% and 100%) versus the LGS at 65 (between 35% and 100%). And third, the teachers in the LGS actually

rated each of their working conditions slightly higher than the teachers in the SGS (the SGS responses were more aligned with the district average). See Tables 4.3 and 4.4 for a snapshot of the programmatic data for SGS and LGS. These differences certainly speak to different cultures within each of the schools and may be explained in a variety of ways (positive and/or negative). Unfortunately, without more data (qualitative and/or quantitative), it is difficult to identify precise reasons for these results (e.g., culture on non-participation in some schools, pressure from the leadership to close gaps in other schools, only contented teachers completed the survey, etc.). Likewise, information needed to disaggregate the exceptional children's classifications, including cognitive and behavioral disabilities and gifted and talented, by race and income was not readily available. The researchers intend to continue to mine for this data and the possibility of unequal representation in certain programs.

Audit of Achievement in Small Gap Schools (SGS) and Large Gap Schools (LGS)

According to Scott (2001), achievement equity means having comparably high performance for all groups of learners when academic achievement data are disaggregated and analyzed. Although demographic, teacher quality, and programmatic audits all indicated a fair amount of equity between SGS and LGS, the achievement audit between both types of schools indicated great disparities. Across the board, at-risk students in the SGS outperformed their LGS counterparts (and the district for that matter). The 11.2% difference between minority student proficiency was used to separate the schools initially. Interestingly, the trend continued for disadvantaged students (9.4% difference), limited English proficiency students (7.2% difference), students with disabilities (4.9%), and students of parents with no college education (13.3%). Even

Table 4.3: Programmatic Data for Small Gap Schools (SGS) and Large Gap Schools (LGS) – Average data set for 2004-05

	% of crowding	# of mobile units	# of acts of violence (per 100 students)	# of student suspensions (per 100 students)	# of books per student	# of students per computer	# of students per Internet connection
SGS	**105%**	**7.0**	**1.4**	**6.8**	**16.78**	**3.82**	**3.89**
Range	92-132	0-21	0-5	0-17	8.94-27.77	2.09-6.89	2.33-6.89
LGS	**110%**	**6.5**	**2.3**	**5.3**	**17.65**	**4.01**	**4.21**
Range	90-132	0-16	0-9	0-12	11.28-23.28	2.31-6.54	2.31-8.24
District	105%	NA	0	6.0	14.47	3.09	3.15

Table 4.4: Working Condition Data for Small Gap Schools (SGS) and Large Gap Schools (LGS) – Average data set for 2004-05

	# of surveys completed	% of surveys completed	Time	Facilities and Resources	Empower-ment	Leadership	Professional Development
SGS	**50**	**88%**	**2.92**	**3.69**	**3.45**	**3.59**	**3.33**
Range	30-74	71-100	2.5-3.18	3.18-4.27	2.68-4.09	2.66-4.33	2.79-4.03
LGS	**33**	**68%**	**3.22**	**3.94**	**3.73**	**3.90**	**3.51**
Range	19-51	35-100	2.83-3.55	3.38-4.53	3.3-4.21	3.58-4.22	3.26-3.88
District	NA	76%	3.05	3.74	3.45	3.58	3.36

though 95% of all students were tested in all twenty-four schools and each school noted some growth, a six-year analysis of growth indicated a greater difference of 6.3 percentage points for students in the SGS versus the LGS. 9% of the students in the LGS scored below proficiency at a level one or two, while only 6% of the students in the SGS scored at a level one or two. See Table 4.5 for a snapshot of the achievement data for SGS and LGS.

Table 4.5: Achievement Equity Data for Small Gap Schools (SGS) and Large Gap Schools (LGS) –Average data set for 2004-05

	% of minority students profic	% of F&R students profic	% of L.E.P. students profic	% of students w/disab profic	% of students w/parent w/no college profic	% of all students profic in 2000	% of all students profic in 2005	Growth from 2000 to 2005 (6 years)
SGS Range	**83.2%** 80.5-87.1	**80.1%** 65.0-85.7	**72.1%** 42.9-91.7	**72.8%** 54.3-91.8	**75.1%** 57.1-90.0	**82.3%** 70.5-89.4	**94.1%** 91.3-96.8	**+ 11.8** 4.1-21.7
LGS Range	**72.0%** 64.6-78.4	**70.7%** 59.2-82.2	**64.9%** 28.6-93.2	**67.9%** 59.0-79.1	**61.8%** 42.9-93.3	**86.6%** 80.5-91.5	**92.1%** 90.3-94.1	**+ 5.5** 0.7-11.8
GAPS	**11.2%**	**9.4%**	**7.2%**	**4.9%**	**13.3%**	**NA**	**NA**	**+ 6.3**
District	76.9%	68.8%	56.2%	61.1%	NA	NA	90.4%	NA

[Note: 95% of all students in all twenty-four schools were tested.]

Concluding Discussion

By controlling for and/or eliminating some of the external variables (e.g., demographics) and internal factors (e.g., teacher quality and programmatic issues) often cited for the achievement gaps between White middle-class children and children of color or children from low-income families, the findings from this study raise more questions than answers. Do the principals and teachers who work in Larger Gap Schools (LGS) truly believe that all students can be successful? If so, why do equity audits in these schools reveal significant achievement gaps across multiple subgroups of students? If not, what are the reasons behind and/or the causes of these beliefs? Conversely, do the principals and teachers who work in Smaller Gap Schools (SGS) truly believe that all students can be successful? If so, what are the reasons behind and/or the causes of these beliefs?

Although improving teacher quality continues to be a leading national priority, "the fact that, broadly speaking, our children experience differential levels of success in school that is distributed along race and social class lines continues to be the overridingly central problem of education" (Skrla, Scheurich, Johnson, & Koschoreck, 2001, p.239). Changing demographics of the student population in the nation's schools, the stable demographics of the teaching force (i.e., White, middle class, females), and the growing contrast between the two sets of demographics support the need for all educators to increase their knowledge and social responsibility toward diversity and equity related issues. In serving increasingly diverse student populations from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, many of whom experience poverty, neglect, or other negative situations that can seriously affect their physical, cognitive, and emotional development, Villegas (1992) argued that educators in a multicultural society need the following: (1) an attitude of respect for cultural differences; (2) knowledge of the cultural resources their students possess, and skills in tapping these resources in the teaching-learning process; (3) a belief that all students are capable of learning, evidenced in an enriched curriculum for all pupils; and (4) a strong sense of professional efficacy when evaluating students. Unfortunately, beliefs, attitudes, and mindsets do no not lend themselves easily to empirical investigation (Pajares, 1992).

As the results from Phase One of this research indicate, equity audits are a practical, easy to apply tool that educators can use to objectively identify educational inequalities. By studying schools that teach similar populations of students from the same geographical region, it is impossible to ignore the impact that schools play in the achievement of all students. Data is powerful; it separates personal agendas from

organizational necessities. By collecting, analyzing, and then exhibiting data in a transparent way, it is difficult for teachers, parents, and even school board members to deny certain disparities in practices, certain deficiencies in systems, and certain gaps in outcomes.

Actually addressing and then removing such systemic patterns of inequity requires more than awareness though, it requires action. Igniting reform for true excellence necessitates the will to do so; it requires both a close examination of personal beliefs coupled with a critical analysis of professional behavior. While convincing research suggests that beliefs are the best predictors of individual behavior and that educators' beliefs influence their perceptions, judgments, and practices, research also states that beliefs are hardy and highly resistant to change (Bandura, 1986; Dewey, 1933; Pajares, 1992; Rokeach, 1968). Understanding the nature of beliefs, attitudes, and values is essential to understanding educators' choices, decisions, and effectiveness regarding issues of diversity, social justice, and equity. Assessing beliefs in an effort to make them known and subject to critical analysis is an important initial step in the process (see Brown, 2004 for a review of measures, instruments, inventories, and studies that assess educators' personal and professional beliefs, attitudes, perceptions and preconceptions.). For, it is assumed that, the more critically conscious educators become, the more prone they are to behave appropriately and constructively in actual educational situations involving students of diverse cultures, ethnic groups, backgrounds, abilities, economic levels, etc. and the more attentive they will become to redressing social injustices and developing enduring educational practices embodying equity.

According to Scheurich and Skrla (2003), "The success of our society will soon

be directly dependent on our ability as educators to be successful with children of color, with whom we have not been very successful in the past" (p.5). These alarming gaps challenge us to dig deeper inside the schools for more subtle causes. Scott (2001) calls these internal causes of inequity systemic inequities because they are built systematically into the processes and procedures of the system that is the school. A school culture that perpetuates the status quo and turns a blind eye to the social injustices that permeate our schools is not really "excellent." As such, excellence and equity must be pursued concurrently to assure that all students are served well and that all are encouraged to perform at their highest level. Excellence without equity is not excellence—it is hypocrisy. Phase Two of this research was needed to document the specific strategies that principals of "excellent, equitable schools" use to confront and change past practices anchored in open and residual racism and class discrimination.

V. QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The data from this study were analyzed through the lens of Academic Emphasis. Schools characterized by Academic Emphasis focus on and insist upon student achievement. Murphy, Weil, Hallinger, and Mittman (1982) indicate that school-level policies and practices play a critical role in influencing a school's academic emphasis. The researchers expand upon this by stating, "Together, these forces constitute the academic environment experienced by students and press them to respond in particular ways, specifically to work hard in school and to do well academically" (p.23). Shouse (1995) added to this research by emphasizing that academic emphasis is characterized by a school culture that espouses the belief that the success of all students is both possible and critical. Research demonstrates that academic emphasis is positively related to student achievement even after controlling for the socio-economic status of students (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottcamp, 1991; Lee & Byrk, 1989). Drawing from this research, the Academic Emphasis framework used to analyze the data was organized according to the components of policies, practices, and beliefs. With these components as a template, three major themes emerged from the data – one regarding policy, one regarding practices, and one regarding beliefs. Within each of these themes, a number of sub-themes emerged. Each of these sub-themes is further divided into data from the small gap schools (SGS) and data from the large gap schools (LGS) to allow for a comparison and to shed light on policies, practices, and beliefs that result in both excellence and equity. See Tables 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3 for a summary and verification of findings. For each of the

Table 5.1: Emergent Themes Regarding Policies, Practices and Beliefs

Academic Emphasis Framework
Policies: Principal Sets the Stage • Student Achievement is a Collective and Collaborative Effort • Recruit Highly Qualified (HQ) Teachers Who Share Your Vision • A Safe and Orderly Environment
Practices: Close Monitoring of Teaching and Learning • Recognition, Encouragement and Celebration of Academic Achievement • Data Driven Decision-Making • Principal Offers Instructional Feedback and Support
Beliefs: High Expectations • Excellence is Expected • The State's Curriculum is Non-Negotiable

sixteen schools, findings were characterized as *Strong (S), Moderate (M), None (0), or Negative (N)*. Findings were delineated based upon quantity *and* degree across multiple interviews. Schools were characterized as *strong*, for instance, if three or more interviewees in the respective school spoke in depth with regard to a particular sub-theme. Anything less, however, was marked as moderate, while schools that made no mention of a sub-theme were marked as *none*. A *negative* ranking *(N)* was reserved for data that, as a whole, refuted the sub-theme. While these sub-themes apply to both small gap and large gap schools, it is important for the reader to note the differences in application that are highlighted in the following analysis and outlined in Chapter 6.

Table 5.2: Template Analysis of Small Gap Schools (SGS)

ACADEMIC EMPHASIS IN SMALL GAP SCHOOLS	SGS 1	SGS 2	SGS 3	SGS 4	SGS 5	SGS 6	SGS 7	SGS 8
Policies: Principal Sets The Stage								
• Student Achievement is a Collective and Collaborative Effort	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
• Recruit Highly Qualified Teachers Who Share Your Vision	S	S	S	S	M	M	M	M
• A Safe and Orderly Environment	S	S	M	M	S	S	M	S
Practices: Close Monitoring of Teaching and Learning								
• Recognition, Encouragement, and Celebration of Academic Achievement	S	S	0	M	S	S	0	S
• Data Driven Decision-Making	S	S	S	S	S	S	M	S
• Principal Offers Instructional Feedback and Support	S	S	S	S	S	S	M	S
Beliefs: High Expectations								
• Excellence is Expected	S	S	S	S	S	M	S	S
• The State's Curriculum is Non-Negotiable	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S

S = Strong M = Moderate 0 = No Evidence N = No Evidence

Table 5.3: Template Analysis of Large Gap Schools (LGS)

ACADEMIC EMPHASIS IN LARGE GAP SCHOOLS	LGS 1	LGS 2	LGS 3	LGS 4	LGS 5	LGS 6	LGS 7	LGS 8
Policy: Principal Sets the Stage								
• Student Achievement is a Collective and Collaborative Effort	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
• Recruit Highly Qualified Teachers Who Share Your Vision	M	M	M	M	M	M	S	S
• A Safe and Orderly Environment	M	M	S	M	M	M	M	M
Practice: Close Monitoring of Teaching and Learning								
• Recognition, Encouragement, and Celebration of Academic Achievement	0	M	M	M	0	0	0	M
• Data Driven Decision-Making	0	S	M	M	S	M	0	M
• Principal Offers Instructional Feedback and Support	N	M	S	N	N	N	S	M
Belief: High Expectations								
• Excellence is Expected	M	M	S	N	M	M	S	N
• The State's Curriculum is Non-Negotiable	M	S	S	M	M	S	S	M

S = Strong M = Moderate 0 = No Evidence N = No Evidence

Policy: The Principal Sets the Stage

The first theme, Principal Sets The Stage, refers to the importance of the principal serving as the primary voice for school-wide expectations and policies. Sub-themes that emerged within this theme pertain to a collaborative and collective effort to support student achievement, the recruitment of highly qualified teachers aligned with the principal's mission and vision, and a safe and orderly environment that supports teaching and learning. According to Murphy, Weil, and Hallinger, and Mittman (1982), "academic press can be maximized when school-level policies and enforcement practices form the framework for classroom-level activity" (p.26).

Student Achievement is a Collective and Collaborative Effort

Small Gap Schools

The first sub-theme that emerged from the data relates to a collective and collaborative effort to support student achievement. It was evident that the small gap school principals valued and expected a collective and collaborative approach. Parents and community members in seven of the eight small gap schools offered support for student learning.

> He (the principal) really encourages us to use our money and tools for educational purposes… He's got a policy that every child can succeed with the right tools. Part of his mission is to get more parents in the school… encouraging as much extra-curricular stuff as we can so we can affect student performance. (SGS2-PL)

> We try to supplement what they (teachers) can't get for the kids. We do books for the library. We supplement the library quite a bit… We've replaced all computers in the technology lab… bought a keyboard for the music program. As far as our money goes, we supplement her (the principal's) budget and do things for the kids and teachers. (SGS5-PL)

> Our relationship with the PTA has definitely changed since I've been here. Now we have more of a shared vision, a goal, you know. If I need something I know I

> can go to them and vice versa. They actually did a grant with IBM this past year and replenished our computer labs. (SGS4-P)
>
> We have an awesome PTA. They always make sure there is a parent volunteer in every classroom… We (teachers) get gift certificates for learning stores that help us out. We get extra parental support in the classroom and parents will tutor kids and come up with after school learning programs. Last week, we had a math and science night where they had all these people come into the school and set up shop on whatever they were doing. We had a dinosaur room, a math room, something about lifecycles of caterpillars… It was all hands-on and the kids got to come for free. (SGS7-NT)
>
> We have a lot of what I would say are more volunteers… business sponsorships where people are giving money or providing services to the school at no cost. Our guidance counselor probably has 11 or 12 businesses that have sponsored classrooms and they give one hundred and fifty dollars to the classrooms for the teachers to use for materials and supplies. And there are always people in our hallways working with the kids – primarily on reading. We also have a strong core from NCS STATE that are in the ROTC program that actually come in and mentor some of our students. (SGS8-AP)

In each of the examples stated above, it is clear that the parents and communities are involved in supporting student achievement. In most cases, the principal was specifically referenced for serving as an influence in this capacity. With exception of SGS5, participants at each school talked about parent or community support related to teaching and learning. While the principal at SGS5 mentioned the challenge of having so many families that live far from the school, the others came up with alternative ways of supporting the school's instructional program. While some schools boasted about their active PTA volunteers, others that faced geographic or socio-economic challenges talked about their community's effort to support student achievement through business alliances and partnerships with universities. Seven of the small gap schools were characterized by strong parent/community support for student achievement.

A collective and collaborative approach for ensuring student achievement was also referenced in almost all of the small gap schools when participants talked about

decision-making. When asked specifically about decision-making, participants at each of the small gap schools referenced their Leadership Team, comprised of grade-level and/or area chairs. Principals at the following schools not only mentioned their Leadership Team conversations, but also indicated the importance of using these opportunities to express their guiding principles regarding teaching and learning.

> I have a great leadership team. We will consider what teachers teach, but we've got to consider our kids. All the decisions are made (through the Leadership Team)… anything that affects children in the classroom – unless it's a no-brainer or a policy or procedure that I'm adamant about. (SGS3-P)
>
> I'm really big into shared decision-making. This year we have co-chairs who are staff members and it isn't just the assistant principal and myself. Any big decisions are run through our Leadership Team. And I have to be honest… sometimes I do have an agenda. It's all in the timing and presentation of it. You know, I think it's important for them to hear and know my vision. (SGS4-P)
>
> I'm the type of administrator who uses her staff to make decisions. I utilize my Leadership Team a great deal when making decisions… They are a liaison if you will for communication… to go back about and talk with the staff and then come back. We make decisions a lot that way here. However, in the same breadth, I want to say that I'm also the type of administrator who feels that there are decisions that have to be made by administration and I'm not going to act like I need your opinion on if it's something I just need to decide and move on with life. (SGS5-P)

Whether the Leadership Teams in this school met once a month or on a more frequent basis, the members worked together to make decisions that impacted the entire school. Most of the small gap school participants referenced Leadership Team discussions that supported student achievement. In addition to Leadership Teams, the small gap schools also utilized smaller committees such as grade-level teams or "professional learning communities" to discuss student achievement and to support and encourage collaborative planning.

> There is a real emphasis on collaboration. Our (grade-level) teams plan together at least twice a week. And in that planning we recognize that every teacher won't be doing the same thing in the same way. But they're talking about instruction, they're talking about lesson plans, they're talking about student achievement, and they're looking for ways to help each other be successful, and they're sharing resources. But everybody doesn't have to do the same work alone because we share the instructional planning, we share looking for resources, and we share looking at assessments. Then you can build on everything. (SGS1-P)

> So they know that they can take a half-day as a (grade-level) team to sit down and do some planning. And we've figured out about how much that would cost us substitute-wise and have the PTA fund it this year. (SGS2-P)

> And with planning we do that together once a week, every morning for an hour we plan in the morning as a team, and we get together and have a meeting … we're all on the same page … we plan writing and reading. (SGS3-NT)

> We collaborate on ideas and strategies that teachers can use in the classroom to make sure that those kids are learning and they are getting what they need on their level. (SGS8-NT)

Each of the small gap schools has collaborative systems and structures in place to promote and support student achievement. Regardless of whether the principal is directly involved, it is clear that the system in place is a reflection of the principal's instructional vision. In each of these small gap schools, student achievement is a collective effort supported by an active PTA, a local business or university, a school's Leadership Team, or, in many cases, a grade-level that works together on a regular basis to plan instruction.

Large Gap Schools

Much like the small gap schools, it was also evident that the large gap school principals valued and encouraged collaboration. Although it was not as prevalent, parent and community involvement in the large gap schools also supported student learning.

> The families here are involved. We have math and science night where we have parents come in and we have students come in from State to kind of guide the students through math and science activities…. We have curriculum nights where we invite the parents in to talk about what the grading program looks like and those kinds of things. (LGS1-AP)

> Our parents aren't as involved as we'd like but we have excellent partnerships with Cary Academy and Cary High School. It's expanded just this year to include Cary High School. There are 18 students who want to come and tutor our ESL students. Part of our school improvement plan is to try and figure out how to get the community more involved. I think some of it (the challenge) has to do with our location. (LGS2-AP)

> The PTA has all kinds of committees. At the younger grades you'll almost always have a parent in there at center time. You'll see people working in the media center. You'll see people in and out. There are a lot of them who read to our special education students. They also bring things in if the teacher asks… you know, that kind of stuff. (LGS3-P)

> Our parent involvement is pretty high. The low-income parents aren't as involved… We have one parent who picks up about 9 kids after school with a bus and takes them to her church and does tutoring… so she picks up one of my lowest kids and takes him to work on homework. It's a huge help. (LGS5-AP)

In each of the examples stated above, it is evident that the parents and community members of the large gap schools are involved in supporting student achievement. Unlike the small gap schools, however, it was not as evident that this effort was a direct reflection of the principal's leadership. While the school-parent-community partnership was referenced in each of the eight small gap schools, it was only mentioned in approximately half of the large gap schools. The large gap schools did not seem as insistent upon parent and community involvement as a method for supporting student achievement.

Much like the small gap schools, a collective and collaborative effort was also referenced in almost all of the large gap schools when participants were asked about decision-making. All schools with exception of LGS1 suggested that the Leadership Team served as somewhat of a vehicle for decision-making.

> He's (her grade-level chair) on the leadership committee with all the other grade chairs, and then the principal and the assistant principal. They discuss the big issues, the curriculum issues, the school issues, and then he brings them back to us at our grade-level meeting once a week. (LGS3-NT)

> The Leadership Team is our main decision making body. We take feedback from our grade-level team and meet as a leadership team – each of the grade chairs, and

> along with those grade chairs we have our IRT and the our assistant principal and principal… How is going to best suit students? That's always our focus. It's the students. It's not about "Well, this schedule would work better for me. I really want this schedule. No, it's what's going to work best for the students. (LGS4-ET)
>
> We have a Leadership Team, and we have team members rotating on and off of that each year. But we try to run most decisions through the Leadership Team. If we're talking about things that are more relevant to a specific grade level, then we try to involve all the teachers at that grade level (LGS5-P).

Leadership Teams were used for decision-making at both the small gap schools and the large gap schools, and both types of schools seemed to use this structure as an avenue for discussing issues related to student achievement. While each of the small gap schools also utilized smaller committees such as grade-level teams or "professional learning communities" to discuss student achievement and to support and encourage collaborative planning, this was only described in detail in about half of the large gap schools.

> First grade has gone through the writing curriculum and they have established an incredibly sufficient benchmark for the end of each quarter – where they want them (the students) to be and what it looks like. It's much more detailed than the rubric that you might see from the county … so that's one of the things that they have been doing as part of their professional learning communities. (LGS1-AP)
>
> We are trying to form more coherent and more cohesive professional learning communities so that we can examine the data and make sure that the curriculum is covered accurately every nine weeks… so that they don't get to the end of grade test in the spring and realize that they still have half of the curriculum goals left. (LGS2-P)
>
> I'm the team leader, so my goal for my team and for myself professionally is to create a collaborative community and to make sure that we're working together to reach the same end point. (LGS4-ET)
>
> We pulled in all the 4th and 5th grade teachers, got coverage for them, and used that whole afternoon to, you know, number the papers and put them in folders… and actually sit and use the rubric and understand what was accepted. And then we even graphed and targeted everything and put it on the chalkboard. (LGS5-P)

The discussions in the large gap schools' grade-level and "professional learning community" (PLC) meetings did not seem to support student achievement to the same extent that it did in the small gap schools. In the large gap schools, this time was dedicated to ensuring curriculum coverage, instructional consistency, and teacher preparation, while the small gap school meetings were rich with dialogue about planning, the examination of student work, various assessments, and instructional methodology and resources. This discrepancy with regard to small gap school and large gap school implementation of grade-level and PLC meetings is illuminated by the principal of SGS1, who, when talking about PLC meetings, stated, "We do a lot of those things without the namesake." While these meetings clearly serve the purpose of supporting student achievement in the small gap schools, they seemed to function as more of a "namesake" in the large gap schools. This topic is further examined later in this chapter.

Recruit Highly Qualified Teachers Who Share Your Vision

Small Gap Schools

The second sub-theme that emerged from the data is the recruitment practices of the school principals. In each of the small gap schools the principals actively sought out highly qualified teachers who shared their vision for teaching and learning. "My job is to take care of those children and to make sure they get the finest education I can provide them. And to give them that, I've got to give them the finest staff I can get" (SGS3–P). This same principal continues to recruit teachers even when she doesn't have positions available at her school. She simply collects resumes and keeps them on file for future reference.

Participant's remarks from each of the small gap schools revealed a specific skill set or character trait that was sought out by the school principal. The principal of SGS7 emphasized the importance of reflection and growth, while the principal at SGS6 noted

the importance of finding a "team player." The principal at SGS4 also mentioned the importance of finding someone who values teamwork and was further described by a parent as someone who searches for a "strong skill set" to accompany that trait. The assistant principal at SGS1 recalled an interview with her principal in which the principal refused to hire a teacher because of her inability to talk about her current students' test scores. When debriefing with the assistant principal after the interview, she said, "It just bothered me that she didn't know those scores…" (SGS1–AP). This same principal asks a number of probing questions about instructional practices and delivery when interviewing teacher candidates and also considers whether the candidate will mesh well with the grade-level. The principal at SGS2 also asks a series of probing questions to uncover instructional practices and beliefs. He looks for a willingness to share, someone who thinks "out of the box" and goes the extra mile, and expects best practice that involves hands-on, inquiry-based learning. The principal at SGS4 described hiring as a "two-way process," allowing the principal the opportunity to determine whether the candidates' beliefs and practices are aligned with those of the principal. Most small gap school principals shared a desire for someone who worked well with the grade-level team, presented him/herself as a learner, *and* embodied a strong skill set with regard to instructional competency and/or delivery.

The principals in the small gap schools were consistently described as hiring "the best" candidates. A parent at SGS4 recalled an instance in which the principal kept her 5th grade at 28 students per class simply because she could not find the "right" teacher for the position. "She will not just fill the slot." The parent continued by explaining that, after being dissatisfied with a number of candidates, the principal chose to hire an assistant to

help the 5th grade rather than hire a teacher who did not meet her level of expectation. This is a clear example of insisting upon highly qualified staff. Interviewees at two of the schools boasted about their "highly qualified" staff when talking about seeking out the best candidates.

> The expectations here are very high. We've got eight national board-certified teachers. Many of our teacher assistants even have higher education degrees. So they are very over qualified, and that's the teacher assistants. Then you move up from there to the teachers and they are very qualified too. (SGS2–AP)

> This is a highly qualified staff. I didn't know anything about being board certified until I came to this county. A lot of the teachers in this school are board certified. (SGS3–NT)

In addition to seeking out the "best" candidates, the small gap principals also talked about hiring practices. In some cases, recruitment practices such as team interviews, principal networking, and in one instance, out of state job fairs (SGS8) were mentioned. Almost every small gap school employed a team approach to hiring. Some involved the administrative team along with the instructional resource teacher while others also included members of the respective grade-level. "He (principal) kind of scans resumes but shares them with us. He allows us the opportunity to interview people" (SGS2–ET). This teamwork approach was evident in many of the small gap schools.

> We interview through teams. The team that has the opening is a part of the interview staff, and usually when somebody comes in and meets the team, the thing that they pick up on is the energy of and the ability of the teachers sitting in on the interview, and they want to be a part of that (SGS1-P).

> I think the key to that is to involve the staff in the hiring process. We've got, for instance, today we've got a 1st grade interview, and we'll have two of our 1st grade (teachers) on that team, and I tell every candidate who comes in that this is a two-way interview" (SGS2-P)

> What we do is interview as a team. So whoever or whatever grade level we're interviewing for, that grade level participates in the interview" (SGS4-P).

> Even when we had a year and a half ago to hire an assistant principal, you know, we used a team. You know, I interviewed first of all the folks that came in, and then dwindled it down to 4 or 5 people and then we had some team interviews, and I really took into consideration what they had to say, and what they were needing, it felt like we were needing at this school (SGS5-P)

Regardless of the approach or skill set that was sought out, there was a heavy emphasis in each of the small gap schools with regard to the recruitment of highly qualified teachers who shared the principal's vision and mission for teaching and learning.

Large Gap Schools

As with the small gap schools, the data from the large gap schools also revealed that the principal actively recruits teachers who share his/her vision for teaching and learning. While specific reasons in the small gap school data also seemed to be more tightly aligned with the principal's philosophy about teaching and more about the candidate's openness to learning, reasons offered in the large gap schools had more to do with personality.

> I'm sure in her interviews she (principal) listens to what they are saying and how they feel about children and how they feel about education. And it's those people who are looking for very positive things and who are really excited about what they are doing and about where they are going and who have a vision for a school that is very supportive of everyone and everything. (LGS2–ET)

> I'm always looking for, you know… that enthusiasm, that kind of little bit of creativity, that willingness to go the extra mile kind of… and for somebody basically who knows what they know and knows what they don't know… people that are open to learning… enough confidence to say, "I don't know how to do this. Help me." (LGS3–P)

> Flexibility, willingness to sit down and take some pretty blunt feedback from teammates and understand that it's done professionally… a desire to get better, to try new things. We ask some specific questions about their philosophy of teaching different content areas, and how they would handle certain situations, and we can get a good feel for the person. (LGS5–P)

> We look to see whether they're knowledgeable… we look at experience. We want the best. We look at how they would fit in with the team too… we don't want everybody alike. (LGS6–AP)

These responses show that many of the principals of the large gap schools focus on personality and style versus a skill set, whereas answers from small gap members reflected both. Two large gap members even explicitly stated a preference for one over the other, revealing a fairly big discrepancy between the hiring practices of small and large gap schools.

> He was very careful about who he picked to place strategically on those teams, and those personalities we saw. And I could tell that, because even sitting in on the interviews, which I got to, even though we felt sometimes there might have been somebody that was a little stronger, we went with the other person because of personality and style. (LGS 5 – ET)

> I don't care if you know any of the answers because I can train you. I can send you to literacy training, to math training… I want to know, "Are you a positive person?" That's all I really care about… Or are you a psycho? So… that to me is the most important thing. (LGS 8 – P)

Unlike the small gap schools, very few large gap school members talked about a variety of recruitment practices and a little over half referred to a team approach to hiring. This does not necessarily mean that they did not employ a team approach; it simply was not supported by strong evidence in the data that was collected. Two large gap school participants, however, did explicitly state that they do not use a team approach. It is important to note that these two large gap schools also had the largest achievement gaps.

Both small and large gap school principals sought out teachers who were aligned with their vision for teaching and learning. There did, however, seem to be more substantial evidence apparent in the data collected from the small gap schools. Similar approaches were employed at small and large gap schools, although the team approach was employed less frequently at the large gap schools. While the small gap school principals focused primarily on instructional competency and considered it a vital

characteristic, data from the large gap schools revealed that instruction was secondary to personality when it came to teacher recruitment.

A Safe and Orderly Environment

The second sub-theme within the policy component highlights environmental conditions that have been put in place by the principal to support learning. Murphy, Weil, Hallinger, and Mittman's (1982) research suggest that school policies that maximize academic press include policies that protect instructional time and foster an orderly and safe environment. While the protection of instructional time only came up in two small gap schools and three large gap schools, the notion of a safe and orderly environment came up in nearly every one of the schools in the study.

Small Gap Schools

Each small gap school environment was characterized as safe, caring, and orderly. This includes individual classrooms and school-wide environments. Common threads across each of the schools included clear expectations from the principal and school-wide systems or programs that support and encourage positive behaviors.

When talking about the absence of discipline issues at her school, the assistant principal at SGS8 commented, "I go weeks and do not see a discipline problem. That's pretty much been the case." The principal at SGS5 conveys very high expectations for behavior and ensures a safe and orderly environment by requiring her teachers to provide her with a classroom behavior plan at the beginning of each school year.

> We turn that into the office at the beginning of each year so they know what is expected of each student in each class, and so if we send a child up, they know that we've gone through our whole list of rules, we've going through our whole list of consequences, and we're at the end. They're very supportive about discipline. (SGS–ET)

The assistant principal at SGS8 attributed the safe and orderly environment at her school to school-wide high expectations for behavior along with strong support from the parents. The principal at this school suggested that strong parent support is a factor that contributes to minimal discipline issues at this school. The principal at SGS1 also emphasized the importance of parent support when she explained that she urges her teachers to involve the parents in working as a team with the school to curb disruptive behaviors. As noted by the assistant principal at SGS1, this is modeled by the administration. "We brought five children in once and spent the whole day investigating. The principal brought everyone in… every parent." This example reveals the importance of having the administration model the expectation for how discipline should be handled and also suggests the importance of relationships as well as teamwork. A new teacher at SGS7 further supported this notion of teamwork by stating, "We collaborate with other teachers to address the 3-5% who struggle behaviorally." This suggests a collaborative approach to addressing behaviors that impede learning.

Members at each small gap school indicated that discipline matters were very rare at their respective schools and that most matters were handled in the classrooms. The assistant principal at SGS1 commented, "We do not have a lot of discipline issues. Teachers are very adept at handling it in the classroom." The principal at the same school agreed that behavior issues were minimal and also added that teachers reserved the office as a last resort consequence for major disruptions (e.g. fighting vs. not doing homework). "The students sent up to the office are usually for safety type situations." At this school, teachers and administrators mentioned the strategies of redirecting behaviors, helping children discover alternatives to off task or unsafe behaviors, and the importance of being

proactive by placing students with teachers who are likely to be responsive to individual student's unique behavioral and/or emotional needs. Handling the majority of behaviors in the classroom suggests the importance of the teacher-student relationship.

Some schools made mention of school-wide expectations, systems or programs. The principal at SGS7 described his school's implementation of a school-wide behavior intervention system known as Positive Behavior Support (PBS), a system that emphasizes the teaching and reinforcing of desired behaviors. While PBS is a county level program employed at many of the schools in this school system, the staff at SGS6 opted instead for a system similar to in-school suspension for handling behavior issues. In this system, students are actually removed from the classroom environment for a time-out period so that they can reflect upon their behavior with the assistance of another adult. Much like the PBS system that is implemented at SGS7, however, this principal has also implemented a system for encouraging and rewarding positive behavior through the use of incentives and contracts. Whereas SGS6 has had success with their in-school suspension system, the assistant principal at SGS1 mentioned that, although teachers at her school seem to want an in-school system in place, the administration is not willing to use an instructional assistant for that purpose.

In almost all of the SGS schools, it was noted that the principal plays a supportive role, sets a clear expectation for behavioral procedures and, through classroom observations, holds teachers accountable for teaching these behaviors. These examples also highlighted the importance of setting clear and high behavioral expectations, building relationships with students and parents, and encouraging and rewarding desired behaviors through both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. It was also evident that the

principals in each of these schools did not tolerate behavior that jeopardized the learning and/or safety of others.

Large Gap Schools

As evidenced in the small gap school data, the large gap school interviews also revealed that the schools' environments could be characterized as both safe and orderly. All but one interviewee agreed that their school was safe and orderly. "We do have some discipline issues here… mostly related to anger (LGS7–NT). It is important to note, however, that the principal and the parent leader at LGS7 felt that discipline did not interfere with teaching and learning and attributed that to the principal's expectations. With exception of this one comment, the remaining data suggested that, much like the small gap schools, discipline at each of the large gap schools was minimal.

> Our discipline issues are way below average for a school this size. I mean… we need to concentrate on getting their behavior where it should be and getting their focus on the purpose of being her to learn. We've been very successful with that here. (LGS1–P)

> I currently do not have any discipline issues here… nothing major like I've heard about in other schools, but we do have the appropriately inappropriate. (LGS1–NT)

> You don't see many discipline issues here… especially disrespect. Some of the most loving teachers will really get tough when needed… very proactive stance. There are adult monitors in bathrooms, on the playground, and in the hallways. (LGS7–PL)

Much like with the small gap schools, reasons suggested for minimal discipline issues in the large gap schools included: clear school-wide expectations for behavior, parent involvement or a team approach, and an emphasis on classroom management. Almost every school showed evidence of a school-wide set of expectations and two have a specific program that is in place.

> We're doing PBS this year so that we can have a consistent, cohesive, and fair behavior management system throughout the school. It has really opened my eyes to the fact that I thought we were consistent and I thought every body was on the same page but realized… wow… there are so many different methods being used across the school. (LGS2–P)

> We have implemented a school-wide discipline system based on Glaser's Control Theory. We teach the kids starting from when they come here in kindergarten. They learn about their basic need, and basically, overall, learn that they're in charge of their behavior. That they make choices… some good and some bad… and that there are consequences when you don't make good choices… but part of being here is to learn choices… (LGS3–P)

While these are two different behavior support programs, both focus on teaching the child accepted behaviors and both promote school-wide consistency with regard to how behavior issues should be handled. While the principal at LGS4 does not have a school-wide behavior program in place, he makes his expectations clear at the beginning of the year by "meeting with the 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders to set the tone for behavior." This principal goes on to explain that he sends the same message every time he has an audience. In addition to having school-wide expectations in place, the large gap schools also showed evidence of a teamwork approach to addressing discipline.

> He (principal) is very pro-active in his approach to handling student behavior. He constantly communicates with families… will drive to a child's house if necessary. (LGS4–PL)

> The principal expects every child to be involved and on task. She will do home visits if a child is struggling behaviorally. (LGS2–P)

While the small gap schools involved both parents and colleagues to address student behavior issues, the large gap schools only showed evidence of working with the parents. This does not mean, however, that staff members do not collaborate at these schools to address behavior issues. This simply means that the data did not reveal a teamwork approach among staff with regard to student behavior. Another difference

among the schools was with regard to administrative oversight and expectation. While administrators in small gap schools made it clear that classroom management was expected and monitored, the large gap school administrators, with exception of one (LGS5), did not tend to state this explicitly.

With regard to policy, the small gap school principals and the large gap school principals both set the stage by encouraging a collective and collaborative approach, by recruiting candidates who were aligned with their vision and mission for teaching and learning, and by maintaining safe and orderly environments. Policies in the small gap schools, however, were much more tightly aligned with the principal's focus on student achievement. The next section explores the principal's practice of closely monitoring teaching and learning.

Practice: Close Monitoring of Teaching and Learning

The second theme, The Close Monitoring of Teaching and Learning, includes three sub-themes, each related to practices that support a focus on student achievement. Sub-themes that emerged within this theme include the recognition, encouragement, and celebration of academic achievement, data driven decision-making, and instructional feedback and support.

Recognition, Encouragement, and Celebration of Academic Achievement

Small Gap Schools

Shouse (1995), in a study of 398 schools, suggested that the practice of recognizing and honoring outstanding performance leads to higher, more equitable levels of student achievement. Most of the small gap schools have practices in place to recognize and/or celebrate academic achievement. While SGS1 offers quarterly rewards

to recognize student growth, other schools employ less conventional approaches. The principal at SGS2 "knows most of the kids by name… probably all… and encourages the kids because he is so involved" (SGS2–PL). Similarly, the principal at SGS6 "offers lots of positive reinforcement to the children and it carries into the classroom" (SGS6–ET). In each of these examples, it is clear that the principal values student achievement and supports and encourages the recognition of student success. Other specific practices in the small gap schools include phone calls to parents, the use of student data notebooks to monitor learning, and postcards from the principal to highlight specific academic achievements.

> The assistant principal and I look at every report card in the school… we always make comments to every student in the school. "Love the way you're doing." Or "Let's get going in math. If there's anything I can do, come see me." I think that providing that kind of support for a kid academically is encouraging. I have these Purple Panda Postcards that I send out too. I tell the teachers that when someone is doing a great job I want them to jot something down and we'll pay for the postage. (SGS2–P)

> She (the principal) knows the children in this school. She's seen walking in the hallways every morning, speaking to children by name. She writes notes on the bottom of every child's report card. I think she's very much a child's advocate. (SGS5–PL)

> Every child has a data notebook. We conduct at least one student-led conference per year, usually in the spring from kindergarten up through fifth grade. Children keep charts and graphs on… behavior, attendance, reading performance… and they keep it in this notebook. In the spring, the child sits down with the parent and the child conducts the conference. (SGS8–AP)

While SGS8 is the only school employing the student led conference approach, 6 of the 8 small gap schools are employing the other practices mentioned, each one encouraging and honoring academic achievement.

Large Gap Schools

With regard to the recognition, encouragement, and celebration of student achievement, there is a significant gap between the small and large gap schools. A parent at LGS7 commented, "I do wish there was more of a recognition of academic achievement in some way" (LGS7-PL). Only one of the schools (LGS2) fully employs student-led conferences as a school-wide practice. The principal is highly supportive because of its impact upon parent involvement, but says nothing about the role that this practice plays in encouraging or celebrating student achievement.

> We really advertise that if the parents don't come then we get a surrogate parent to take over. Sometimes that's all you need to say. Parents don't want their kids to talk to anyone else other than themselves or other family members. So that has increased our conference attendance when the parents know that someone else is going to step in their shoes. (LGS2-P)

Three of the schools (LGS3, LGS4, and LGS8) were piloting student-led conferencing at individual grade-levels, and LGS4 was also piloting the use of data notebooks. These practices did not appear to be deeply embedded in the schools' instructional cultures, nor did the principals at these schools seem to have a plan for school-wide implementation of these practices. When asked if her principal planned to support this initiative, a teacher at LGS4 commented:

> She (the principal) really liked seeing them (student-led conferences), so we had some of the kids conference with her… But she just respects each grade-level and what they want to do. We (a teammate and I) tried to get more people to do it but they won't let go of that power. (LGS4-ET)

The data did not reveal that the principals at any of the LGS schools wrote notes on report cards, sent letters of encouragement to parents, or made phone calls to parents to celebrate academic achievements. While the principals of the small gap schools stood firmly behind these practices that recognized, encouraged, and celebrated studen

tachievement and, in many cases, were directly involved, the principals in the large gap school seemed to take on more of a passive role and did not advocate for school-wide implementation of data notebooks or student-led conferencing. This is not to say that these practices are absent at these schools, but only means that there is little or no evidence in the data.

Data Driven Decision-Making

Small Gap Schools

In each of the small gap schools, data driven decision-making is a practice that is deeply embedded in the school's culture. Decisions are not made unless there are data evident to support them. This can include decisions regarding every instructional component of the school including hiring, resource allotment, professional development, and teaching practices.

> As far as the data, that's me driving the school. We look of course at data that's provided by the state and the end of grade test scores… but we also look at on-going data from assessments that we give and from performance measures that we take throughout the year to assess what kind of job we're doing… and to look at how successful the children are being toward benchmarks that we've set up for them. It also helps us determine how we need to allocate our resources… human and material… we do look at gaps but you have to look beyond gaps to the individuals… You have to look beyond the group to see what individuals accomplish. (SGS1–P)

The assistant principal at SGS2 shares the same belief about looking at both group and individual data to drive decision-making. She explained that her principal shares this belief and that they spend a lot of time talking about how important it is to focus on "how the kids are actually learning and retaining knowledge… and how we're measuring that." The principal at SGS2 added that he is committed to looking more closely at students' residual scores and learning more about how to create "quality formative assessments…

not just multiple choice tests" to illustrate a clearer picture of individual student's needs. A parent from SGS4 recalled a phone call from the principal in which enough data were analyzed to determine that her child should be moved to the next grade-level. In this case, the school worked to collect a plethora of *individual* student data that illustrated the child's academic, social, and emotional readiness and supported the decision to promote the student. The principal at SGS3 expects assessment on a "regular basis" and is careful to distinguish between testing and assessing; she shared an article with her teachers entitled, "Test Less, Assess More." All of the small gap school principals seemed to agree that data were most useful when used to determine *individual* student performance and needs. Almost all of the small gap schools shared examples of data being used to determine needs with regard to human and material resources for the purpose of intervention and/or instructional support for *individual* students.

> We sit down in January and go through all of our data. Who do we have that's struggling, who do you think is not going to make it, who are we really worried about at this point, and what resources are they getting. We went to each grade-level to determine which 12 or 15 children were performing at level 2 and could be bumped up to level 3. The principal just dies if she knows they don't qualify for Title I support. When we have enough money, we hire intervention teachers to work with these students. (SGS1–AP)

> Resources are allocated accordingly… and by looking at all the data. So now we're building up our resources… setting up a guided reading library and our books and things like that. (SGS4–NT)

> We have to have data to back up our decisions… to prove to her (principal) why it would be better. Our grade-level was doing flex-grouping, which is basically ability grouping… and while for some students it's probably really good, for others it gives a false impression of themselves. We really wanted to change but we had to sit down with her with our pros and cons. We actually wanted to change the practice two years ago but at that point the data didn't show… and now this year was the first time that she's like, "Ok, now you have enough data." That's what I mean when I say she wants us to follow through… not for a week but for a year or two! (SGS5–ET)

> We use data to look at student growth primarily. We use the data to determine what we need to focus on as far as the learning goes, which of course will determine the resources that you need as well. We look at it individually with teachers in their grade-levels… your class is doing this on this, her class is doing this… What's going on? We need to support each other so that both classes are doing that. We try to focus on those needs for our Cougar time when we offer enrichment and remediation. We also offer an accelerated learning program after school and we use the data to select students for that. (SGS7–AP)

> We look at previous experiences with particular events or staff development sessions to determine what we need to do… we do a review process after each event or activity… we sit and do a plus-delta. We really use that information to future planning. (SGS8–AP)

While most schools used a combination of formative and summative assessments such as teacher made tests and state end of grade tests, one school, SGS6, has implemented the use of Success Maker, a software program that provides teachers with individualized feedback regarding student performance.

> We have a lab where we have Success Maker and that gives us constant reports about our 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders, where they are in reading and math. This software program is totally individualized and gives us a grade equivalent. (SGS6–P)

Each of the small gap schools indisputably used data to drive decision-making as modeled by the principal. Some schools used data to determine needs for resources such as literacy specialists, tutors, and staff development, while others used their data to determine needs for material resources or tools such as technology programs or additional leveled books to individualize instruction. In each case, the motivation behind the data collection was to identify and support *individual* student performance and needs and to use this information to modify instruction accordingly.

Large Gap Schools

Interviews for the large gap schools also revealed that data were used to drive decision-making. These practices, however, did not seem to be as prevalent in the large

gap schools and did not seem to have quite as strong of an influence upon decision-making. Whereas the teacher at SGS5, for instance, spent two years trying to convince her principal about the ill effects of flex-grouping, a teacher at LGS5 was given immediate permission to opt out of ability grouping when her colleagues made the grade-level decision to implement that practice.

> The whole grade-level wanted to ability group last year and I didn't. I just don't feel like it's beneficial for my kids to not get reading and writing and all the other things from me. I feel like I need to know what they're doing. He (principal) took my concerns right away… He let me opt out. My reading scores were really good and now we're all self-contained… they came to me to see what I was doing! (LGS5–NT)

Regardless of which practice is best for kids (ability grouping vs. self-contained classes), this example portrays a significant difference with regard to data being used to drive decision-making. Had this teacher been in SGS5, she would never have had to worry about pressure from her colleagues with regard to changing her instructional practice because the SGS5 principal would not have even given consideration to ability grouping without data to back it up. This example also suggested that data were not being collected, analyzed, and/or shared throughout the year because the decision to remain self-contained as a grade-level was not made until the end of year assessment was completed. At many of the large gap schools, data were used to "get teachers talking" and learning from one another.

> We look at data all the time. We look at … who does the best job… you know… who has the highest percentage. Eventually they say… I need to know this because I can improve and I see where I'm weak… let me go down there and work with a colleague to see if I can learn some techniques or teaching methods that will help my kids be more successful. (LGS1–P).

> We have common assessments that we came up with on our own. We look over the results and if we notice everyone struggled with question 10, which might have been about inferences, we work together to reword it and to look for more trends. (LGS3–BT)

> There has been a big push in looking at data, discussing it with your team, using the data to decide what we are going to do with the kids who aren't getting it and with the ones who are… looking at how we can push them further. (LGS4–NT)

Data are also used in these schools to determine additional resources for students. Most of the large gap schools showed evidence of using data to remediate students in both after school and pull-out programs. There was not evidence of whether these data were used to evaluate those services or programs. The use of data in the large gap schools did not seem as influential when it came to decision-making, with the exception of identifying which students needed additional resources due to below grade-level performance. There was also less evidence with regard to using data to discuss individual students performance and their unique needs. Finally, data driven decision making seemed to be emphasized more by the principal in the small gap schools than in the large gap schools. According to the data, the principals in the small gap schools were more involved in the process and also modeled their expectation on a more consistent basis. The next section explores instructional feedback and support.

Principal Offers Instructional Feedback and Support

Small Gap Schools

In each of the small gap schools, the principal is directly involved in offering the teachers instructional feedback and support. These principals seem to view teaching as a continuous learning endeavor and even model this by participating alongside teachers in staff development or by using staff meetings as a forum for staff development.

> I sit side by side with them and learn with them in staff development here at the school. I know a lot of administrators, you know they'll have staff development at the school and they'll go back to their office. That's not the answer. We have to model. (SGS2–P)

> She (the principal) has taken a very different approach to staff meetings than we've had in the past. We have staff development as well as just a meeting to be told… She brings that staff development piece right into our staff meetings… and she's even pulled people from within the staff to do the staff development. (SGS4–ET)

> We don't have faculty meetings where we just go over items. We use most of our meetings for staff development. A lot of it has centered on technology this year. (SGS6–P)

Because their principals model the importance of learning, it is an expected practice at each of these schools.

> Teachers are constantly going to workshops, seeking professional development, they're learning all the time. You don't teach in this school and sit idly by and not attend staff development. And certainly the principal… he'll push you out the door. "Go, go. How is it linked to…?" And if you can give him a valid reason, then you're going… you're there. And if the money is not in our staff development fund, he has a magic little pot somewhere he taps. (SGS2–AP)

> A group of us went to him (principal) and said, "You know… my kids are really having trouble with problem-solving. You know, we need some help, we need some professional development on that." So starting next week, we have a six-session course on cognitively guided instruction… he listens to us to help us with what we need. (SGS7–ET)

In these small gap schools, teacher evaluations are another tool used by the principal to offer instructional feedback and support. The principals in these schools not only offer specific written feedback but also offer additional support such as human or material resources.

> She spends a lot of time on evaluations. She makes really good comments… Like last year for one of our really new teachers was teaching reading and she said it was way too easy. Her suggestion was that once she figured out they all knew how to do it she should have just moved on instead of teaching the same thing. She tries to give good advice about how to help them. And we try to make sure they go to workshops that will be valuable. (SGS1–AP)

> She's (principal) very into teachers performing best practice in the classroom. She looks for that when she goes in. She's not afraid on an observation to write down an area of improvement. Actually, I don't know anybody who gets an observation that doesn't have some area in which they don't need to grow. So I think she's really good about, you know, diplomatically pointing out what area it is that you need improvement in. (SGS5–ET)

> She (principal) approaches evaluations in a very positive way. And she sees that as a learning experience. If there were something that needed to be… you know, handled, and she would provide that teacher with support and let that person go and observe another teacher that does it in a really great way… and provide a substitute to watch her class so that she could go. (SGS6–ET)

> Evaluations are a wonderful tool to assist with growth and any new ideas. I know when I bring my teachers in I ask them, "Now look back on that lesson. Is there something else that you could have done differently and if there was what would that be and how would you have done that?" (SGS8–P)

In each of these examples, the evaluation process is viewed by administrators as well as teachers as a "springboard for discussion" (SGS2–P) regarding continuous improvement. Another strategy for instructional support used in the small gap schools pertained specifically to new and/or struggling teachers. While all of the schools made mention of the beginning teacher mentor program that is mandated by the county, the principals in some of the small gap schools had strategies in place that went beyond the county's requirements. Not only was the extra support offered in the form of a mentor, the principal, once again, was directly involved in ensuring that the process centered on instructional support.

> Whether she's been teaching five years or two… it doesn't matter. We've got some excellent teachers here… so the one thing I do is find her a mentor. I find somebody who is willing to really take some time helping this person. The other thing that I do is that I try to get her out to see what other teachers are doing. The best learning experience for teachers is to see how other teachers teach (SGS3–P)

While the county's mentor program only requires a mentor for probationary teachers, it is important to note that this principal (SGS3) puts the system in place to support any teacher who is struggling to meet the needs of her students. Some principals (SGS2, SGS3, SGS4, SGS5) expressed that they are very deliberate about who they assign as mentors and also spoke about working closely with the mentors to ensure

continued growth and support for the assigned teacher. Quotes from two teachers at SGS5 reflect their principal's less conventional method for working with a mentor.

> She's very good about how she sets up the mentor program here when she assigns the mentors. Having been her administrative intern, I was able to see why she puts certain teachers with certain teachers. And it's because if she's got a new teacher that she know is just excellent… but a veteran who may not be doing all that well… she pairs them up so that they can learn from each other. And when she's got a brand new teacher who is just overwhelmed, clueless, needs a lot of support, she'll pair them up with somebody who is doing best practice, who has it together. (SGS5–ET1)

> If there are issues that she happens to see in your classroom, especially like with the first-year teachers, she will have that discussion with the mentor and the teacher, and how can we work together, and what can we do for you to help you in these areas. And so it's not all on our backs. (SGS5–ET2)

The principals in each of the small gap schools clearly make instructional feedback and support a priority, therefore making it clear that continuous improvement is expected. Whether they are modeling their expectation by participating in staff development, devoting time during staff meetings to teaching and learning, offering specific feedback on an evaluation, or working closely with mentors to ensure instructional improvement, the principals in these schools are sending clear and consistent messages about the importance of learning.

Large Gap Schools

While each of the small gap school principals viewed teaching as a continuous learning endeavor and even modeled this by participating alongside teachers in staff development or by using staff meetings as a forum for staff development, there was much less evidence of this practice in the large gap schools. Members of two LGS schools (LGS4 and LGS6) made reference to on-site staff development such as book clubs in which the principal participated with the teachers, and the principal at LGS5 talked about

sending school representatives to district-wide trainings and offering coverage for opportunities like that as much as possible. Overall, discussion about professional development as a tool for instructional feedback was very minimal at most of the large gap schools.

The use of evaluations as a tool for offering instructional feedback and support from the principal was also much less evident in the large gap schools than in the small gap schools. In fact, comments from four of the schools actually refuted the notion that the principal is directly involved in providing instructional feedback and support. In these schools, the principal tends to be more laid-back with regard to instructional feedback or, in some cases, simply delegates the responsibility to another staff member.

> I would say he spends less of his time in the classroom than maybe some principals do. He does the evaluations as per the county requirement, but… for teachers who are doing well and we know what's going on, he tends to not be in there very often (LGS1–AP)

> This is an area that I have honestly delegated more to my Instructional Resource Teacher and my Assistant Principal because I don't have a background in elementary teaching. I never taught in elementary school. All of my experience in education was in the secondary level until I became an elementary school principal. (LGS4–P)

> Well, curriculum… our Instructional Resource Teacher's main role is to support the classroom teachers, whether modeling for a new teacher or working with mentor coordinators to arrange for new teachers to see things… and looking at what else they can do to support what's going on in the classroom. (LGS5–P)

> You know, we have an IRT (Instructional Resource Teacher). She really does wonderful things for people like me because I don't have to be that up to date. (LGS6–P)

The above comments suggest that the principals in these two large gap schools are more hands-off when it comes to instructional feedback and support. Furthermore,

whereas in the SGS schools, principals offered specific feedback and suggestions for evaluations, the principal of LGS6 said the following with regard to observations:

> Uh, with guided reading I'm looking to see if they're giving a guided reading and see if they're with the group. I'm looking to make sure… obviously I don't want to see someone doing something that's 7th grade. I'm looking obviously for that. Were they enjoying the lesson? (LGS6–P)

Not only did this comment reveal a lack of knowledge about instruction, it also implies that the feedback was likely more geared toward student enjoyment and on-task behavior rather than teaching and learning. This was supported in a comment by the experienced teacher at the school when she stated, "I think they're (administrators) looking for whether we're teaching our curriculum, how we manage our time (LGS6–ET). Again, compared to the comments from teachers at the SGS schools, this teacher's comment suggested that the principal did not offer specific or helpful input with regard to instructional improvement. When the principal at LGS8 was asked to talk about the role that teachers' evaluations play, she answered, "Not much of one. You know why? I think teacher evaluations are about having the opportunity to tell your teachers thank you and you're doing a good job." An experienced teacher at LGS3 explained that her principal offers non-threatening and positive feedback, while the new teacher at the same school suggested that the principal "picks up on differentiation." This seems to suggest that the principal is more hands-off with the experienced teachers than with the new teachers, but there are not enough data to draw a definitive conclusion. Regardless, the feedback in these instances is much less specific than what was shared by teachers in small gap schools. Data from one of the large gap schools did, however, suggest that the principal consistently offers specific and helpful feedback with regard to instructional practices.

> Giving really good feedback is the only way that any of us get better at the job we do. So it cannot be viewed as the principal coming in, writing up what they see, and saying, "You're doing an okay," or "You're not." It needs to be an ongoing discussion on how we're doing, how the children are doing. "What do you need? What can I help you with?" It should be more of a reciprocal activity than I think that it is sometimes. (LGS6–P)

> She (principal) would approach them as a learning tool. I mean, she wanted to bring very constructive criticism, and bring out positives, and she would even leave a note on your desk before she left, just so you knew some highlights that she noticed. (LGS6–NT)

While it is evident from the data that the principals in the small gap schools play a large role in offering instructional feedback and support, the data reveal little evidence of this practice with regard to principals in the large gap schools. While the small gap school principals made instructional feedback and support a priority by setting and modeling clear expectations and by holding teachers accountable through evaluations, the large gap school principals seemed much more hands-off in this regard. The large gap school principals were often viewed as laid back in this area or, in some cases, delegated the responsibility to someone else.

With regard to practices that support academic emphasis, the principals in the small gap schools were actively and directly involved. These principals played a key role in recognizing, encouraging, and celebrating student achievement, they modeled and expected data driven decision making to individualize instruction, and they offered their teachers valuable instructional feedback and support. The next section introduces the third and final theme, the belief that high expectations have a positive impact on student achievement.

Beliefs: High Expectations

The third theme, High Expectations, reveals the impact that beliefs have upon student achievement. Two sub-themes that emerged pertain to beliefs about excellence and beliefs about the state's curriculum.

Expecting Excellence

Small Gap Schools

Data collected from each of the small gap schools revealed a general consensus that excellence is characterized by having high expectations for *all* students, regardless of background. Both teachers and administrators shared this sentiment.

> I have high expectations with academics… The higher your expectations, the more the child's going to rise to that. Because if you give them just a mediocre, average expectation and they meet it, they're never going to perform higher than that. (SGS3–NT)

> We have extremely high expectations… I believe in equity. It is important for all children to have access and have the opportunity to do well in school. (SGS5–AP)

> Our expectation is that every child will succeed. It think that's a high aspiration, but one that's attainable. (SGS6–P)

> I think high expectations should exist for everybody regardless of where you come from. I have never seen anybody rise to low expectations. If they're gonna rise, then you have to keep them high and have them reach for them… but we must be supporting them along the way. (SGS8–AP)

As mentioned before, each of the small gap schools can be characterized as having high expectations for student achievement; excellence was expected. In each of these schools, it seems that the high expectations for student performance begins in the office and then permeates into the classrooms. It is important to note that members of these schools specifically referenced the ability of *all* children regardless of what some may perceive as barriers to learning. In addition to having high expectations for all of

their students, the staff at these schools emphasized that excellence is characterized by growth and not just by grade-level proficiency. In fact, with the exception of SGS6, this notion of growth versus proficiency was prevalent throughout the collected data and is best represented in the following quotes.

> We really try to constantly challenge the students. We want to make sure that they're showing growth and that's our goal, if we can show that magical year's growth with every student… (SGS4–P)

> We're looking for each child, regardless of what his/her background is, to show growth. We want them to meet the benchmarks and the expectations… regardless of disability, or background or race, or whatever it might be. (SGS4–ET)

> Excellence is any time a person can maximize their potential. I think one of the most faulty problems with No Child Left Behind is that it ignores the growth factor. I think that every child deserves a year's worth of growth in the standard course of study - and that's at a minimum. So that means that kid that already walks in knowing the third grade curriculum when their in second grade still deserves to grow. (SGS7–P)

> Our expectations here are at a minimum to make a full year's growth no matter where they come in. She (principal) and I share a lot of the same ideals. We are very much optimistic about "all kids can learn." (SGS8–NT)

It is clear from these quotes that excellence in these schools is about more than grade-level proficiency; every child, regardless of background, is afforded access to excellence as defined by high expectations as well as a year's growth. As one administrator put it, "Excellence is more than just a banner" (SGS4–AP). This quote further supports the belief that political mandates and expectations are not enough. To truly honor excellence, it begins with a sense of optimism, insists upon growth, and ensures equity.

Large Gap Schools

While the small gap schools showed strong evidence related to high expectations and growth, the large gap school interviews revealed some inconsistencies. Excellence, in

the large gap schools, was often described in more vague terms and also centered more on facility cleanliness, a positive climate, and a cohesive staff. This difference of belief is reflected in the quotes below made by some of the LGS principals when asked to talk about what makes their school a School of Excellence.

> The staff… and it's a beautiful building. The staff is really committed to excellence… and shares ideas. They're always looking for ways to improve. (LGS3–P)

> Oh, the scores make it a School of Excellence… but I think excellence is in every aspect of the environment for the children. I don't think it's necessarily just the grades, but that would make a program work. (LGS4–P)

> Excellence. We try to look at students and progress they have made and I think what makes it an excellent school is not just test scores but how the children feel about the day they spend here. (LGS5–P)

> It's making sure that everyone is happy… If people believe we're great, we're great… So… a school of excellence is about… teachers being a real collegial team, and they've got to trust each other, and they've got to be talking nice to each other. (LGS8–P)

While it is clear that excellence is defined in more ambiguous terms in the large gap schools than in the small gap schools, there are two large gap schools that happened to share the same sentiments about growth as the small gap schools.

> I'd rather be recognized for making high growth than for making a composite score of passing the End of Grade Test (EOG). You can make a level three (proficiency) on the EOG two years in a row… make a lower score than the year before… actually go backwards… and still have a level 3. So… what you want to do is have a child that shows at least a year's growth. (LGS1–P)

> I want our instructional program to be one of excellence. I want it to be one where the kids are instructed at the level that they need to be instructed at so that they can excel and grow at least a year to a year and a half every year. (LGS2–P)

While these two principals shared with the small gap school principals the belief that excellence includes high expectations and goes beyond proficiency to include growth, two other large gap school principals shared quotes that actually refute this notion.

> I don't think we can guarantee that every child is going to be successful. But we need to provide them the opportunity to be successful. (LGS4–P)

> And it's a goal. I mean it's not 100 percent all the time with all the kids. It's not even 100 percent with… you know what I'm saying. It's not even 100 percent with a portion of them all the time. It's hit or miss. (LGS8–P)

While each school in this study is labeled an "Honor School of Excellence," there are both similarities and differences with regard to how excellence is defined by the staff members who were interviewed at the different types of schools. While in the small gap schools, excellence is inclusive of high expectations, growth, and equity as measured by individual student performance, the large gap schools seemed to portray a much more narrow and inconsistent definition. The next section explores the required use of the state's curriculum.

The State's Curriculum is Non-Negotiable

Small Gap Schools

Whether it was stated by the school's principal or by another member of the school's community, the state's curriculum was described as non-negotiable in each of the eight small gap schools. For instance, although the principal of SGS7 never explicitly stated that the state's curriculum was mandated, the experienced teacher who was interviewed explained that the teachers are expected to use the county's pacing guide, a document that aligns and sequences the state's curriculum to ensure quarterly coverage of each objective. A beginning teacher at the same school added, "She does expect us to teach everything in there." At another school (SGS5), the principal referenced the use of curriculum maps to ensure coverage and consistency with regard to the curriculum. Although this principal did not directly mention the required use of the state's curriculum, the implementation of curriculum mapping was referenced as a tool for ensuring coverage of the state's curriculum. Although never stated in quite the same way,

the state's curriculum was described as non-negotiable in all of the small gap schools. Principals in these schools expected their teachers to adhere to the state's objectives as outlined in the state's curriculum.

> She (principal) just expects that you are sticking to that curriculum, that you know your curriculum… that you're not going off on some tangent that doesn't have anything to do with that. (SGS1–AP)

> We expect the curriculum to be taught. If you're going to do well on the End of Grade Test (EOG), you've got to teach the North Carolina Curriculum. It's as simple as that. There is nothing on that test that isn't in the curriculum. And when teachers ask me how do I prepare my kids for the EOG, I simply say, "Teach the curriculum." And so we're constantly looking at it when we go in to do observations… Teachers know that I look at that and sometimes I'll ask them to tell me where their objective is in the curriculum. (SGS3–P)

While each principal clearly expressed the expectation that all teachers adhere to the state's curriculum, six of the eight small gap schools also allowed for flexibility and creativity with regard to instructional delivery.

> I'm looking to see that children are active, that children are engaged, that groups are going on… that it's student centered in that they are active learners and as engaged in the process that's occurring as the teacher is. (SGS1–P)

> I want the students to be engaged. I want that because engagement equals success. If the teacher is inspiring to the kids, they're going to be right on. And if you go in there you can see… you just see that look in their eyes, something special. And you can tell right away when you go in that type of class. For instance… I had a teacher… I went in her classroom and the shades were turned down and it's dark in the room. And as my eyes adjusted I saw all these sleeping bags all around the room and everybody lying down… And I see this little flashlight that is passed from student to student and they're reading their story. That's instruction. It's action. (SGS2–P)

> We have a lot of diversity here and really do pull that into our teaching… I think that's her (principal's) main philosophy… that we're here to care and look out for children in a developmental way. It's not a traditional textbook page by page… it's the whole child learning. Inquiry-based learning. (SGS3–ET)

> I don't walk in there and say, "Everybody needs to be on page 93 at 10:00 a.m." We all know that we're at point A and need to get to point B. How you get there,

> you know, I think that's the fun thing about teaching. Everyone has their own style. (SGS5-P)

> Kids deserve to grow within the context of the standard course of study. In that, teach it to depth, you know, not just surface level. So we work really hard with kids enriching them with the concepts of that standard course of study (SGS7–P)

While the state's curriculum was certainly non-negotiable in the small gap schools, these principals allowed for creativity with regard to instructional delivery and encouraged and valued a more holistic view of the curriculum.

Large Gap Schools

As with the small gap schools, the expectation for teaching the state's curriculum was also evident in each of the large gap schools. In fact, at least one administrator in each of the large gap schools referenced the importance of adhering to the state's curriculum. Although the principal of LGS5 was the only principal who didn't explicitly state the importance of adhering to the state's curriculum, he did mention that it was important for all teachers to have time to collaborate about the "sequences of the curriculum." Most large gap schools had at least three interviewees comment on the principal's philosophy regarding the standard course of study and the principal in each of the remaining seven large gap schools stated explicit expectations.

> The state sets the goals and objectives and it is our job to provide an instructional program that supports those goals and objectives, but realizing that those goals and objectives change and that as knowledge increases and as information increases that we change our delivery system so that we incorporate the most recent and most up to date knowledge in what it is that we are teaching. (SGS1–P)

> We want to make sure that we are following the state's curriculum using our county's pacing guides. Every year we make sure our grade-levels are updated, as well as the specialists so that we can tweak it if we need to and continue to follow it so that by the end of the year we know we have covered it and we are not rushing through goals and objectives. (SGS2–AP)

> We are expected to follow the state's curriculum… and make sure that if I'm teaching something that other kids are being taught the same way in other classrooms. (SGS2–BT)

> The standard course of study guides what the teachers do… The expectation is that the teachers talk together about the instructional planning. Then they take that planning and, based on the state's curriculum, adjust it to the individual needs of the children. (LGS7–P)

Another similarity between small and large gap schools with regard to the state's curriculum and its implementation was evident in the use of curriculum maps and pacing guides. While pacing guides ensure consistency with regard to when each objective is taught, curriculum maps ensure consistency with regard to which curriculum objectives are most essential. Regardless, both practices ensure coverage and consistency and support the notion that the standard course of study was non-negotiable in each school.

While both the small gap schools and the large gap schools operated under the belief that the state's curriculum is non-negotiable, a difference emerged with regard to instructional delivery of the curriculum. While six of the eight small gap schools revealed evidence that supported creativity as well as a more holistic approach, only two of the large gap schools revealed strong evidence that supported a more student-centered methodology.

> My philosophy is that every child has a gift and a talent. It may not be in a specific core area, it may be in the arts, it may be in athletics or it may be in the academics. I thin it is important to bring all of those thoughts into the classroom and into the learning process so kids can feel good about what they are doing so that they can build on their strengths and from the strengths of their peers (LGS2–P)

> We teach the child. And that's what's so critical in making sure that a school is a School of Excellence… that you don't teach a test… you teach the child. The standard course of study guides what we do… teachers have to adjust based on the individual needs of children… pull small groups of children while the others are working on relevant tasks that will keep them engaged in learning. (LGS7–P)

Although small gap school and large gap school data revealed an expectation of adhering to the state's curriculum, practices in the small gap schools seemed more flexible with regard to instructional delivery. While the large schools remained focused on coverage and consistency, the small gap schools emphasized depth, built upon students' strengths, and referenced the use of more holistic and responsive approaches such as inquiry based and hands-on learning.

With regard to beliefs that support academic emphasis, the small gap school principals demonstrated high expectations when it came to their beliefs about excellence as well as their beliefs about the delivery of the state's curriculum. In contrast, the large gap school principals revealed a narrow definition of excellence and shared a minimalist view with regard to delivery of the state's curriculum.

Summary

In applying the components of policies, practices, and beliefs within the theoretical framework of Academic Emphasis, the data analysis revealed similarities and differences among the small and large gap schools included in this study. With these three components as a template for analysis, three major themes emerged from the data, each respective of one of the three components. Within each of these themes, a number of sub-themes emerged. Each of the sub-themes was further divided into small gap schools and large gap schools to allow for a comparison and to offer insight with regard to policies, practices, and beliefs that result in both excellence *and* equity.

Related to policies, the first theme pertained to the principal setting the stage and included sub-themes including collaboration, hiring practices, and a safe and orderly environment. The principals of the small and large gap schools implemented systems and

structures such as leadership teams and professional learning communities that facilitated a collective and collaborative approach and fostered a shared sense of ownership for student achievement. In the small gap schools, the principals were directly or indirectly involved and the dialogue at these meetings clearly supported student achievement. While both small and large gap school principals sought out candidates who were aligned with their vision and mission for teaching and learning, the principals in the small gap schools tended to focus more on skills directly related to teaching, while the large gap principals focused more on personality traits such as teamwork and reflection. Principals in the small gap schools also more frequently employed a team approach to hiring than did the large gap school principals. Furthermore, although small and large gap schools both revealed very minimal issues related to discipline, differences included more of a teamwork approach in the small gap schools than in the large gap and more administrative oversight with regard to expectations in the small gap schools.

Related to practices, the second theme pertained to the close monitoring of student performance and included sub-themes related to the recognition, encouragement, and celebration of academic achievement, data driven decision-making, and the principal's role in offering instructional feedback and support. The small gap schools revealed strong evidence related to the recognition, encouragement, and celebration of student achievement while the large gap schools showed little evidence. With regard to data driven-decision making, small and large gap school used data to identify and support individual needs. There was more data evident to support this practice in the small gap schools and principal participation in the process was also more evident in the small gap schools. Finally, with regard to the third sub-theme, the principal's role in offering

instructional feedback and support, this practice seemed to be much more of a priority in the small gap schools. Principals were directly involved in this process, whereas the task was often delegated in the large gap schools.

Related to beliefs, the third theme explored high expectations and included sub-themes related to excellence as well as the implementation of the state's curriculum. While excellence in the small gap schools was synonymous with individual growth and ensured equity, excellence in the large gap schools portrayed a much more narrow and inconsistent definition. With regard to the second sub-theme, which pertained to the state's curriculum, both the small and large gap schools placed a heavy emphasis on the required implementation of the state's curriculum. Practices in the small gap schools, however focused on depth, built upon students' strengths, and honored teacher autonomy, while practices in the large gap schools simply focused on curriculum coverage and instructional consistency.

VI. CONCLUSION

Introduction

In accordance with the federal No Child Left Behind legislation, school systems across our nation are held accountable for providing all students with an equitable and excellent education. No Child Left Behind challenges our schools to increase student achievement for all students, particularly underperforming groups, and to eliminate the achievement gap that continues to parallel race and class distinctions (Darling-Hammond, 2004, p.3). While research continues to suggest that our schools are plagued with inequities that perpetuate this gap and maintain the status quo (Darling-Hammond, 1994; Jenks & Phillips, 1998; Kozol, 1991; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004), there are some schools that play a key role in raising student achievement for all students and in closing the achievement gap across socio-economic and racial lines (Comer, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Reyes et al., 1999; Skrla & Scheurich, 2001). Our ability to increase student achievement for all children and to eliminate the achievement gap relies upon school leadership that promotes and endorses excellence *and* equity. Although studies have examined schools that increase student achievement for all students (Oakes, Quartz, Ryan & Lipton, 2000; Reeves, 2000; Riester, Pursch & Skrla, 2002), there is an absence of literature regarding the principal as the unit of analysis and the process of serving as a leader for both excellence *and* equity.

As noted in the literature review for this study, there is some research that indicates a positive correlation between leadership and student achievement (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004). Research also indicates that leaders for social justice have deeply embedded belief and value systems that serve to inform the leader's actions. Riester,

Pursch and Skrla (2002), for instance, state that the leadership of the school principal is "paramount in creating the conditions for success in schools that serve children predominantly from low-income homes" (p.283), and attribute the success in these schools to the principal's belief and value system. Scheurich and Skrla (2003) support this argument and add that leaders committed to excellence find a way "for all students to achieve high levels of academic success, regardless of any student's race, ethnicity, culture, neighborhood, income of parents, or home language" (p.3).

This study explored how K-5 elementary school principals of state recognized "Honor Schools of Excellence" are (or are not) pursuing, supporting, and achieving excellence *and* equity and sought to offer school leaders specific strategies for attaining this goal. In the selected county, an "Honor School of Excellence" is one in which the school has at least 90 percent of its students performing at or above grade-level, has met or exceeded the state's requirement for expected growth, and has met or exceeded federal requirements for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). For the purpose of this study, data were analyzed through the lens of Academic Emphasis (Hoy, Tarter, and Hoy, 2006). Schools with high levels of academic emphasis are characterized by high but achievable academic goals for all students, a belief that all students are capable of achieving these goals, an orderly and serious school environment, and an overall pursuit for academic success (Goddard et al., p.684). These schools focus on and insist upon student achievement. Research demonstrates that academic emphasis is positively related to student achievement even after controlling for the socio-economic status of students (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991; Lee & Byrk, 1989). Shouse (1995) supports this argument and adds that educational equity can be achieved in low-SES schools by utilizing both "human and social capital in more academically focused ways" (p.19).

Murphy, Weil, Hallinger, and Mittman (1982) indicate that school-level policies and practices play a critical role in influencing a school's academic emphasis.

Drawing from this body of research, the Academic Emphasis framework used to analyze the data was organized by the components of policies, practices, and beliefs. With these components as a template, three major themes emerged from the data – one regarding policies, one regarding practices, and one regarding beliefs. Within each of these themes, a number of sub-themes emerged. Each of these sub-themes was further divided into data from the small gap schools (SGS) and data from the large gap schools (LGS) to allow for a comparison and to shed light on policies, practices, and beliefs that result in leadership for both excellence *and* equity.

Some researchers have contributed to the field by suggesting policies, practices, and beliefs that correlate high levels of academic emphasis in schools with increased and equitable student achievement (see chapter 2). Murphy, Weil, Hallinger and Mittman (1982) distinguished between school-level policies and classroom level practices and behaviors and subsequently identified five categories of teacher practices that contribute to academic emphasis. Hoy, Tarter and Kottkamp (1991) developed a tool known as the Organizational Health Inventory and used this tool as a method for measuring a school's level of academic emphasis. Finally, Shouse (1995) argued that "all schools, particularly low-SES schools, can increase student achievement by placing their academic mission at center stage and allowing their social mission to play a supporting role" (p.18). While these studies offer methods for identifying and measuring academic emphasis, none offer school leaders a model by which they can assess the impact that their policies, practices, and beliefs have upon student achievement in their respective schools.

Small Gap School and Large Gap School Similarities: Achieving Excellence

Knowing that each of these schools is characterized as a School of Excellence, it came as no surprise when a number of similarities emerged from the data. Overall, policies in both small and large gap schools seemed to build upon the principle belief that student achievement is a collective effort. To some extent, the principals of these schools implemented collaborative structures and/or systems such as leadership teams, professional learning communities (a county wide initiative), and school improvement committees to foster a sense of shared ownership and purpose. Another similarity that surfaced related to hiring practices. Principals in both small and large gap schools seemed to have strong convictions regarding candidate selection and sought out teachers who were aligned with their vision for teaching and learning. The small and large gap schools were also similar with regard to behavioral climate; in general, both were characterized as safe and orderly. Reasons offered for minimal student behavior issues in both types of schools included: clear school-wide expectations and/or a behavior support program, parent involvement or a team approach, and a strong emphasis on classroom management. Participants at each of these schools emphasized the importance of teaching the children acceptable behaviors and of promoting school-wide consistency with regard to how behavior issues should be handled. A final similarity relates to the principal's expectation with regard to the state's curriculum. The principals of both the small and large gap schools emphasized that the state's curriculum was non-negotiable. Implementation in each was evidenced by the use of tools such as curriculum maps and pacing guides. While pacing guides ensure consistency with regard to when objectives are taught, curriculum maps ensure consistency with regard to which curriculum objectives are most essential. Regardless, both practices support the notion that the state's curriculum was non-negotiable in both small and large gap schools. Whereas the above

policies, practices, and beliefs support academic emphasis and shed light on similarities among small and large gap schools, there were also many differences that emerged from the data.

Small Gap School and Large Gap School Differences: *Honoring* Excellence

Excellence without equity simply reinforces and reproduces the hegemonic practices that plague so many schools across our nation. Without accounting for equity, excellence is merely a title that fulfills a flawed political mandate. In a nation that prides itself in *Liberty and Justice for All* and bathes itself in political claims to *Leave No Child Behind*, we have to honor excellence by embracing equity. The differences noted between the small and large gap schools bring to light strategies for how school leaders can leverage academic press in pursuit of excellence that is inclusive of equity. While each of the schools in this study boast the title "Honor School of Excellence," only the small gap schools have achieved results that are more equitable across race and class; these schools have honored excellence by accounting for *every* child. There are many lessons offered by the leadership in the small gap schools. These findings support and add to the literature review and research questions that guided this study and also lend themselves to recommendations for future research.

A Teamwork Approach

When using the component of policy to analyze the data, the value of teamwork emerged as an underlying factor that influences academic emphasis, thereby fostering a shared sense of purpose and ownership with regard to ensuring student achievement. While both the small gap schools and large gap schools emphasized a team approach to decision-making through structures, such as Leadership/School Improvement Teams and Professional Learning Communities, the small gap schools placed a much greater

emphasis on identifying individual student's performance and needs. A team approach was also evident in both types of schools when it came to hiring practices, although this collaborative approach was employed much more frequently in the small gap schools. The use of a team hiring approach possibly served as a subtle message to the candidate about the principal's expectation for collaboration and also helped establish a collective sense of purpose and ownership among the interviewers.

Teamwork emerged again when the participants in the small gap schools talked about discipline. When these participants referenced teamwork, it was in a very broad sense, drawing from the strength and support of colleagues, administrators, and parents to address matters related to student behavior. This team approach supports the principle belief stated earlier; student achievement is a collective effort. In the small gap schools, this sense of collective purpose started with the principal and was carried out by the staff as a whole. This also carried out into the community to involve parents and businesses. Partnerships with parents, businesses, and community members in the small gap schools focused specifically on student achievement and were evidenced through tutoring/mentor programs and a variety of events that encouraged academic achievement. Although absent from the literature about academic emphasis, teamwork did emerge from these data as a factor that greatly affects the principal's ability to rally the staff toward a collective press for student achievement.

A Balanced Approach

By using policies, practices, and beliefs as components for analyzing the data, it became clear that the schools with the smallest achievement gaps were strong across all three components. This suggests that the cognitive domain of leadership is equally important as the affective domain. The belief "all children can learn" is merely a cliché

unless it is supported by practices and policies that enact that value, therefore resulting in student achievement that is excellent *and* equitable. With regard to student discipline, for example, the small gap school principals set clear and high expectations for behavior and also held staff and students accountable for maintaining a safe and orderly environment by monitoring teacher and student practices through classroom observations and by encouraging and rewarding desired behaviors. It was very clear that the small gap school principals did not tolerate behaviors that jeopardized the learning and/or safety of others. When it came to student discipline, these principals *walked the talk*.

A balance of espoused and enacted values was also evident when it came to the principal's role in offering instructional feedback and support. In each of the large gap schools, the principal was directly involved in offering teachers very specific and helpful instructional feedback and support (written and material), whereas many of the small gap principals delegated this task to an instructional resource teacher. The small gap principals seemed to view teaching as a continuous learning endeavor and even modeled this by participating alongside teachers in professional workshops or by using staff meetings as a forum for staff development. In addition to offering specific feedback and support through evaluations and professional development, these principals worked closely with teachers' mentors to support any teacher who struggled to meet the needs of individual students and to ensure continued growth and support for the assigned teacher. These small gap principals sent clear and consistent messages about the importance of learning. Their beliefs about teaching and learning were made evident by how they chose to spend their time.

Finally, these principals also modeled their expectations with regard to the use of data to drive decision-making. This area is explored further in the next section, but is important to note here because of the role that the small gap principals played in modeling their expectations for how data was used. These principals shared data with their staff and parents on a fairly regular basis. One teacher (SGS5) even reflected about her principal's refusal to make a decision until she had enough data to back it up.

> We have to have data to back up our decisions… to prove to her (principal) why it would be better. Our grade-level was doing flex-grouping, which is basically ability grouping… and while for some students it's probably really good, for others it gives a false impression of themselves. We really wanted to change but we had to sit down with her with our pros and cons. We actually wanted to change the practice two years ago but at that point the data didn't show… and now this year was the first time that she's like, "Ok, now you have enough data." That's what I mean when I say she wants us to follow through… not for a week but for a year or two! (SGS5–ET)

This principal made her message about data very clear by requiring data to drive her decision-making. In each of the above examples, it is evident that the small gap school principals backed up their beliefs with actions and this sent a strong and consistent message to the school community and also emphasized a press for beliefs and behaviors that support academic emphasis.

Guided by a Strong Sense of Purpose

It should also be noted that the small gap school principals could be characterized by a strong, unwavering sense of purpose, influencing behaviors and decisions that would improve student achievement. One example relates to the recognition, celebration, and encouragement of academic achievement. This particular area actually revealed the greatest gap between the small and large gap school principals. These small gap principals knew and encouraged the students through active and purposeful involvement; this went beyond knowing a name, wishing a happy birthday, or giving a hug, and

instead, included specific recognition or praise for academic success. Six of the eight small gap schools have practices in place such as student led conferences and data notebooks to monitor growth and phone calls, quarterly rewards, notes on report cards, and personalized postcards to parents to recognize student achievement. While principals in both small and large gap schools were described as visible, visibility in the small gap schools was directly related to student achievement.

Another area in which the small gap principals could be described as purposeful is with regard to data driven decision-making. As stated in Chapter 5, each of the small gap principals indisputably used data to drive decision-making. In each case, the motivation behind the data collection in the small gap schools was to identify and support individual student needs. Some of these small gap schools used data to determine needs for human resources such as literacy specialists/coaches, tutors, and staff development, while others used their data to determine needs for material resources or tools such as technology programs or additional leveled books to individualize instruction. These small gap schools had systems in place not only for using data to determine student needs and services but also for evaluating and improving the systems put in place to support these students. Discussions about data in the small gap schools was two-fold with regard to purpose; teachers were given the opportunity to collaborate and share ideas, and the data were also used to drive decision-making in the best interest of student learning. This sense of purpose that is illustrated by the small gap principals supports the academic emphasis framework by suggesting strategies for how principals can model a clear and consistent message about remaining focused on student achievement.

An Insistent Disposition

A final lesson that emerged from the small gap school principals is one of moral character. Rather than accept the status quo and allow schools to mirror social injustices, leaders for social justice advance change, often times in situations that are politically and professionally charged, resulting in personal and/or professional ramifications. Research suggests that leaders who are successfully advocating social justice can be characterized by an insistent disposition (Garcia & Guerra, 2004; Rapp, 2002; Riester, Pursch & Skrla, 2002; Scheurich, 1998; Solomon, 2002; Theoharis, 2004; Valencia, 1997). Riester, Pursch and Skrla (2002) refer to this mentality as a "stubborn persistence" (p.292), while Rapp (2002), acknowledging that these leaders are often recognized as "mavericks," credits these leaders for their "oppositional, rebellious imaginations" (p.226). These leaders, according to Rapp, "resist, dissent, rebel, subvert, possess oppositional imaginations, and are committed to transforming oppressive and exploitative social relations in and out of schools" (p.226). This section illustrates examples in which the small gap principals serve as advocates for instructional practices that are both respectful and responsive, regardless of expectations or mandates that could otherwise serve as barriers to student achievement.

The first example relates to hiring practices in the small gap schools. Small gap school participants often referred to the principal's commitment to hiring the "best" candidates. It was noted by a parent at SGS4 that her daughter's principal even left an entire grade-level over capacity because she could not find a teacher with the desired skill set. "She will not just fill the slot." The parent continued by explaining that, after being dissatisfied with a number of candidates, the principal chose to hire an assistant to help the grade-level rather than hire a teacher who did not meet her level of expectation. This

is a clear example of insisting upon highly qualified staff. The assistant principal supported this notion of an insistent disposition when asked about teacher recruitment at her school.

> The expectations here are very high. We've got eight national board-certified teachers. Many of our teacher assistants even have higher education degrees. So they are very over qualified, and that's the teacher assistants. Then you move up from there to the teachers and they are very qualified too. (SGS2–AP)

The small gap school principals seemed to truly embrace the growing body of research related to teacher quality and its positive impact upon student achievement (see Chapter 2). These principals sought out highly qualified candidates, regardless of class-size or other pressures to "fill the slot."

The small gap school principals could also be characterized by an insistent disposition with regard to how they viewed the state's curriculum. As noted in Chapter 5, although small gap school and large gap school principals all agreed that the state's curriculum was non-negotiable, six of the eight small gap school principals also allowed for flexibility and creativity with regard to instructional delivery.

> I'm looking to see that children are active, that children are engaged, that groups are going on… that it's student centered in that they are active learners and as engaged in the process that's occurring as the teacher is. (SGS1–P)

> I want the students to be engaged. I want that because engagement equals success. If the teacher is inspiring to the kids, they're going to be right on. And if you go in there you can see… you just see that look in their eyes, something special. And you can tell right away when you go in that type of class. For instance… I had a teacher… I went in her classroom and the shades were turned down and it's dark in the room. And as my eyes adjusted I saw all these sleeping bags all around the room and everybody lying down… And I see this little flashlight that is passed from student to student and they're reading their story. That's instruction. It's action. (SGS2–P)

> We have a lot of diversity here and really do pull that into our teaching… I think that's her (principal's) main philosophy… that we're here to care and look out for children in a developmental way. It's not a traditional textbook page by page… it's the whole child learning. Inquiry based learning. (SGS3–ET)

> Kids deserve to grow within the context of the standard course of study. In that, teach it to depth, you know, not just surface level. So we work really hard with kids enriching them with the concepts of that standard course of study… (SGS7–P)

While the state's curriculum was certainly non-negotiable in each of these schools, the principals not only allowed for flexibility with regard to instructional delivery, but also encouraged and valued a more holistic view of the curriculum. As a result of the principal's instructional leadership and conviction, these small gap schools emphasized depth versus breadth, built upon students' strengths, and utilized much more holistic and responsive approaches such as inquiry based and hands-on learning. In these small gap schools, instructional programs and procedures took a back seat to student needs and teacher autonomy.

A final area in which the small gap school principals could be characterized by an insistent disposition surfaced when they were asked to speak about what makes their school a School of Excellence. Each of the small gap schools can undoubtedly be characterized as having high expectations for student achievement. As noted in Chapter 5, it seems that the high expectations for student performance in each of these schools begins in the office and then permeates into the classrooms. It is important to note that members of these schools specifically referenced the ability of *all* children, regardless of what some may perceive as barriers to learning. In addition to having high expectations for all of their students, the staff at these schools emphasized that excellence is characterized by growth and not just by grade-level proficiency. In fact, with exception of SGS6, this notion of growth versus proficiency was prevalent throughout the collected data and is best represented in the following quotes.

> We really try to constantly challenge the students. We want to make sure that they're showing growth and that's our goal, if we can show that magical year's growth with every student. (SGS4–P)
>
> We're looking for each child, regardless of what their background is, to show growth. We want them to meet the benchmarks and the expectations… regardless of disability, or background or race, or whatever it might be. (SGS4–ET)
>
> Excellence is any time a person can maximize their potential. I think one of the most faulty problems with No Child Left Behind is that it ignores the growth factor. I think that every child deserves a year's worth of growth in the standard course of study. And that's at a minimum and so that means that kid that already walks in knowing the third grade curriculum when their in second grade still deserves to grow. (SGS7–P)
>
> Our expectations here are at a minimum to make a full year's growth no matter where they come in. She (principal) and I share a lot of the same ideals. We are very much optimistic about "all kids can learn." (SGS8–NT)

It is clear from these quotes that excellence in these schools is about more than grade-level proficiency; every child, regardless of background, is afforded access to excellence as defined by high expectations as well as a year's growth. As one administrator put it, "Excellence is more than just a banner" (SGS4–AP). This quote further supports the belief that political mandates and expectations are not enough. To truly honor excellence begins with a sense of optimism, insists upon growth, and ensures equity. A thorough review of the data reveals answers to the research questions that guided this study and also generates recommendations for future research.

Answering the Research Questions

Based upon the data analysis, the next section will answer the Research Questions that guided this study.

The first research question aimed to determine what the principals of K-5 "Honor Schools of Excellence" are doing to ensure the success of their students. The principals of these schools establish and enforce policies, practices, and beliefs that support student

achievement. This includes the principle belief that student achievement is a collective and collaborative effort. To some extent, these principals implemented collaborative structures and/or systems to foster a sense of shared ownership for student achievement. These principals recruited teachers who were strongly aligned with their vision, set clear and high expectations for behavior, and emphasized that the state's curriculum was non-negotiable.

The second research question aimed to determine similarities among school leaders who achieve equity *and* excellence. To answer this question one must first consider the contrasting ways in which the small gap school and large gap school principals responded when asked to define excellence. While many of the large gap school principals referred to test scores (as measured by AYP sub-group performance), the small gap school principals specifically referenced the ability of *all* children regardless of what some may perceive as barriers to learning. These small gap school principals also emphasized that excellence is characterized by growth and not just by grade-level proficiency as measured by AYP. As a result of this belief, these small gap schools were able to more closely narrow the achievement gap. The data revealed subtle, yet vital, differences in the small gap school leadership. The small gap principals were able to foster a collective sense of ownership for student achievement and this was evident in their approach to hiring, student behavior, decision-making, and instructional planning. Achieving excellence that is inclusive of equity begins with the principal, but includes all members of the school community. Principals would benefit from employing school improvement committees, leadership teams, data teams, hiring committees, etc. to garner a shared sense of ownership for the academic achievement of all students. These principals also walked the talk. This balance of espoused and enacted values was evident

in every aspect of the principal's leadership, including behavior management, instructional feedback, and support, and the use of data to drive decision-making. The small gap principals could also be characterized by a strong sense of purpose; all of their actions related to student achievement, whether it was a specific note on a student's report card or a decision about whether to purchase an instructional resource. Finally, with regard to the state's curriculum, these principals not only expected that every student be afforded equal access, but also emphasized the importance of depth versus breadth (consistency versus coverage) and encouraged and valued teacher autonomy with regard to instructional delivery. While schools across our nation respond to the current accountability system by "teaching to the test," thereby resorting to programmatic and prescribed methods of teaching, this study should serve as an example of how school leaders can promote practices that allow for student engagement and teacher autonomy, while still accounting for excellence and equity. Principals must be willing to stand up for what is truly best for children and must be knowledgeable in the area of curriculum and instruction.

The next question sought to determine what findings could connect to and build upon the literature related to leadership for social justice and systemic equity. As stated in Chapter 1, the purpose of this study was to explore how K-5 elementary school principals of state recognized "Honor Schools of Excellence" are (or are not) pursuing, supporting, and achieving both academic excellence and systemic equity in their schools. This study connects to and builds upon the existing research on equity in schools (Comer, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Reyes et al., 1999; Skrla & Scheurich, 2001) and the research on academic emphasis in schools (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991; Lee & Byrk, 1989; Shouse, 1995) by identifying specific strategies that principals use to achieve excellence

and equity in their schools. The role of the principal as the unit of analysis was very limited in the existing literature. Also, although there was some research related to academic emphasis and its impact upon student achievement, there was an absence of literature regarding the principal's role in promoting and supporting academic emphasis. This study builds upon the literature base for academic emphasis as well as the literature base for systemic equity by identifying specific strategies that principals use to achieve excellence *and* equity in their schools through academic emphasis.

The last Research Questions aimed to determine what could be learned from Honor Schools of Excellence that could benefit other schools with similar demographics. Leaders in schools with similar demographics could greatly benefit from learning how the small gap school principals utilized academic emphasis to ensure excellence and equity. Most importantly, the principals of these schools clearly communicate their expectation that every student will learn, regardless of perceived academic barriers. These principals solicit and support parent and/or community involvement that supports student achievement, implement collaborative structures or systems to facilitate dialogue about individual student performance, establish a shared sense of purpose, recruit teachers who have a strong instructional skill set, play a key role in maintaining a safe and orderly environment, provide purposeful instructional feedback and support, and emphasize the whole child when stating expectations for the state's curriculum. These principals are able to accomplish results that are both excellent *and* equitable because they strike a balance between their espoused and enacted values; their mission is lived out because their actions support their beliefs. Student achievement that is both excellent *and* equitable is a reflection of the principal's ability to balance the cognitive and affective

sides of leadership. The principal's beliefs are only words unless they are modeled, shared, and scrutinized on a daily basis.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based upon the data analysis, the next section will offer implications for future research.

Conduct a case study at SGS1 to take a closer look at the leadership practices in place. In addition to talking to administrators, teachers, and parents, this could also involve students. This study could involve interviews as well as observations and surveys. This approach would allow the researcher more of an opportunity to take a closer look at the school with the narrowest achievement gap.

It may also be helpful to take the three schools with the smallest achievement gaps and the three schools with the largest achievement gaps to conduct a more in depth contrast between small and large gap Honor Schools of Excellence. Using fewer schools, and only those with the smallest and largest gaps, may allow for a closer look at specific leadership practices and beliefs that result in student achievement that is both excellent *and* equitable. Specifically, the use of fewer schools would also allow the researcher the opportunity to collect artifacts (eg., evaluations, budget, etc.) and to log on-going observation data.

Rather than compare data across various members of the school community, a secondary data analysis could be conducted to compare one set of interviewees. By only looking at teachers, for example, one could more closely examine the impact of the principals' influence on achieving excellent and equitable results.

Although each of the researchers analyzed the data through different frameworks, each found that the small gap schools focused on individual students rather than on sub-

groups of students. A future study analyzing the impact of focusing on individual students (vs. sub-groups) may be helpful in determining the criteria analyzed through AYP and NCLB requirements.

The importance of relationships is vaguely referred to in the literature related to academic emphasis. In fact, it is somewhat stated as an afterthought. While relationships came up in the data with regard to teamwork and collaboration, it would be interesting to conduct a secondary data analysis to look at this more deeply to determine the impact that relationships have upon student achievement and to explore how relationships support, complement, or enhance academic emphasis. One framework that could be applied is the Rigor, Relevance, Relationships Model (http://www.leadered.com/lrrrkit.shtml), a framework introduced by the International Center for Leadership in Education.

This study suggests that there is a flaw in the No Child Left Behind Legislation with regard to assessment and accountability, therefore resulting in a flaw within the state's system for rewarding and recognizing schools. While each school in the study earned the title of Honor School of Excellence, half were plagued by significant achievement gaps across race and socio-economic status. The federal government may want to review the promises offered by the NCLB legislation, and the state might want to reconsider the requirements for school recognition. Differences among the small and large gap school principals' beliefs about the state's curriculum seem to imply that the large gap schools may be solely influenced by the state's accountability system. While most of the large gap school principals focused solely on adhering to the state's curriculum, most of the small gap school principals emphasized the importance of teaching the whole child in addition to adhering to the state's curriculum. This difference may be significant because it suggests that whereas the large gap school principals are

more driven by excellence as measured strictly by AYP, the small gap school principals are guided by a more holistic view of curriculum and instruction that takes the whole child into consideration. This more holistic approach, embodied by the principals of the small gap schools, seemingly results in excellent *and* equitable student achievement results. A study examining how the present accountability model impacts school leadership and instructional practices would be helpful as principals, policy-makers, and other stakeholders strive to promote excellence *and* equity in our schools.

References

Andrews, R., & Soder, R. (1987). Principal leadership and student achievement. *Educational Leadership*, *44*, 9-11.

Anfara, V.A., & Waks, L. (2000). Resolving the tension between academic rigor and developmental appropriateness. *Middle School Journal, 32*(2), 46-51.

Artiles, A.J. (1998). The dilemma of difference: Enriching the disproportionality discourse with theory and context. *Journal of Special Education, 32*(1), 32-36.

Bandura, A. (1986). Social *foundations of thought and action.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Bandura, A. (1993). Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning. *Educational Psychologist, 28*(2), 117-148.

Banks, J. (1997). *Educating citizens in a multicultural society.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Barth. R. (1990). *Improving schools from within: teachers, parents, and principals can make a difference.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Bell, G.C., Jones, E.B. & Johnson, J. F. (2002). School reform: Equal expectations on an uneven playing field. *Journal of School Leadership, 12*(3), 317-336.

Bender Sebring, P., & Bryk, A. (2000). School leadership and the bottom line in Chicago. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *81*, 440-449.

Blackmore, J. (2002). Leadership for socially just schooling: More substance and less style in high risk, low trust times? *Journal of School Leadership, 12*(2), 198–222.

Bogotch, I. (2002). Educational leadership and social justice: Practice into theory. *Journal of School Leadership, 12*(2), 138–156.

Bogotch, I. (2005). *A History of Public School Leadership: The First Century, 1837-1942*. In Fenwick English (ed), The SAGE Handbook of Educational Leadership (pp.7-33). Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Bond, L., Smith, T., Baker, W., & Hattie, J. (2000). The certification system of the national board for professional teaching Standards: A construct and consequential validity study. Greensboro, NC: Center for Educational Research and Evaluation.

Borman, G.D., & Kimball, S.M. (2005). Teacher quality and educational equality: Do teachers with higher standards-based evaluation ratings close student achievement gaps? *The Elementary School Journal, 106*(1), 3-20.

Bottoms, G., & Carpenter, K. (2003). Factors affecting mathematics achievement for students in rural schools (Report No. RC-024-082). Atlanta: Southern Regional Education Board. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 377284).

Bottoms, G., Presson, A., Han, L. (2004). Atlanta: Southern Regional Education Board. Rigor, Relevance, and Relationships Improve Achievement in Rural High Schools. Retrieved February 4, 2008, from www.sreb.org.

Brand, B.R., & Wilkins, J.L.M. (2007). Using self-efficacy as a construct for evaluating science and mathematics methods courses. Journal of Science Teacher Education, 18(2), 297-317.

Britner, S.L., & Pajares, F. (2006). Sources of science self-efficacy beliefs of middle school students. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching, 43*(5), 485-499.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The Ecology of Human Development: experiements by nature and design.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Brookhart, S.M., Walsh, J.M., & Zientarski, W.A. (2006). The dynamics of motivation and effort for classroom assessments in middle school science and social studies. *Applied Measurement in Education, 19*(12), 151-184.

Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

Brown, K. (2004). Leadership for Social Justice and Equity: Weaving a Transformative Framework and Pedagogy. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 40 (1), 77-108.

Brown, F, & Harris, J. (2004). Introduction: Did Brown Fulfill the Dreams of the Second Reconstruction Congress? *Education and Urban Society 2004 36: 239-244.*

Bryk, A. S., & Driscoll, M. E. (1988). *The school as community: Theoretical foundations, contextual influences, and consequences for students and teachers*. Chicago: University of Chicago, Benton Center for Curriculum and Instruction.

Bryk, A.S., & Schneider, B. (2002). *Trust in schools: A core resource for improvement.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Burns, J.M. (1978). *Leadership.* New York: Harper Row Publishers.

Carbonaro, W. J., Gamoran, A. (2002). The Production of Achievement Inequality in High School English. *American Educational Research Journal*, 39, 801-827.

Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development. (1989). *Turning points: Preparing American youth for the 21st century*. New York: The Carnegie Corporation.

Cavaluzzo, L.C. (2004). Is national board certification an effective signal of teacher

quality? Retrieved May 13, 2007 from http://www.cna.org/documents/cavaluzzostudy.pdf.

Charles A. Dana Center, University of Texas at Austin. (1999) Hope for urban education: A study of nine high-performing, high-poverty urban elementary schools. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Planning and Evaluation Service.

Clotfelter, C.T., Ladd, H.F., & Vigdor, J.L. (2005). Who teaches whom? Race and the distribution of novice teachers. *Economics of Education Review, 24*(4), 377-392.

Clotfelter, C.T., Ladd, H.F., & Vigdor, J.L. (2006). Teacher-student matching and the assessment of teacher effectiveness. *Journal of Human Resources, 41*(4), 778-820.

Coleman, J. SL. (1966). *Equality of educational opportunity*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

Collins, J.L. (1982). *Self-efficacy and ability in achievement behavior.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York.

Comer, J. (1994). Home-school relationships as the affect the academic success of children. *Education and Urban Society, 16*(3), 323-337.

Crawford, J. (1998). Changes in administrative licensure: 1991-1996. *UCEA Review, 39*(3), 8-10.

Creswell, J.W. (2002). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches,* 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Croninger, R.G., Rice, J.K., Rathbun, A., & Nishio, M. (2007). Teacher qualifications and early learning: Effects of certification, degree, and experience on first-grade student achievement. Economics *of Education Review, 26*, 312-324.

Dalgety, J., & Coll, R.K. (2006). The influence of first-year chemistry students' learning experiences on their educational choices, *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education,* 31(3), 303-328.

Dantley, M. E. (2005). Moral leadership: Shifting the management paradigm. In Fenwick English (Ed.). The Sage Handbook of Educational Leadership: Advances in Theory, Research and Practice. (pp. 34-46). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Darling-Hammond, L. (1999). *Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence.* Seattle, WA: Center for the Study of Teaching and Learning.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2004). What happens to a dream deferred? The continuing quest for equal educational opportunity. In J. A. Banks & C. A. M. Banks (Eds.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education* (2nd ed., pp. 607–630). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Davis, G.A., & Rimm, S.B. (1997). *Education of the gifted and talented*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Davis, W. E. (2004). *Students at risk: Analysis of major issues involving identification, effective pro-gramming, and dropout prevention strategies.* Institute for the Study of Students at Risk, COEHD, University of Maine.

Deal, T. & Petersen, K. (1994). *The leadership paradox: Balancing logic and artistry in schools.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (1994). Handbook of qualitative research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Designs for Change. (1998). Practices of schools with substantially improved reading achievement [On-line]. Available: www.dfc1.org/summary/report.htm. Chicago: Chicago Public Schools.

Dewey, J. (1933) *How We Think. A restatement of the relation of reflective thinking to the educative process.* Boston: D. C. Heath.

Donovan, M.S. & Cross, C.T. (2002). Minority students in special and gifted education. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

Edmonds, R. (1979). Effective schools for the urban poor. *Educational Leadership, 37*(1), 15-24.

Educational Research Service. (1998). *Is there a shortage of qualified candidates for openings in the principalship: An exploratory study.* Arlington, VA: Author.

English, F. (2002). The Fateful Turn: Understanding the Discursive Practice of Educational Administration. NCPEA Yearbook.

English, F.W., Steffy, B.E. (2001). *Deep curriculum alignment: Creating a level playing field for all children on high-stakes tests of educational accountability*. Boston: Scarecrow Press.

Felner, R.D., & Jackson, A.W. (1997). The impact of school reform for the middle years: Longitudinal study of a network engaged in turning points-based comprehensive school transformation. *Phi Delta Kapan, 78*(7), 528-542.

Felter, M. (2001). Student mathematics achievement test scores, dropout rates, and teacher characteristics. Teacher *Education Quarterly, 28*(1), 151-168.

Ford, D.Y. (1996). *Reversing underachievement among gifted black students: Promising practices and programs*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Ford, D.Y. (1998). The under-representation of minority students in gifted education: Problems and promises. *The Journal of Special Education, 32*, 4-14.

Ford, D.Y., & Harris, J.J., III (1999). Multicultural gifted education. New York: Teachers College Press.

Freire, P. (1973). *Education for critical consciousness.* New York: Continuum.

Friend, M., and L. Cook. 1990. Collaboration as a predictor for success in school reform. Journal of Educational and Psychological Consultation 1(1): 69-86.

Fullan, M. (1993). *Change forces: Probing the depths of educational reform.* London: Falmer.

Fullan, M. (2000). Change forces: The sequel. London: Falmer.

Fullan, M. (2003). Change forces with a vengeance. London: Falmer.

Fullan, M., & Hargreaves, A. (1996). What's worth fighting for in your school. New York: Teachers College Press.

Fuller, E., & Alexander, C. (2004). *Does teacher certification matter? Teacher certification and middle school mathematics achievement in Texas.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, April 12, 2004: San Diego, CA.

Fuller, E.J., (1996, April). *Conflict or congruence? Faculty, parent, and student trust in the principal*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York.

Furman, G. & Gruenewald, D. (2004). Expanding the landscape of social justice: A critical ecological analysis. Educational Administration Quarterly, 40(1), 49-78.

Gamoran, A., & Hannigan, E.C. (2000). Algebra for everyone? Benefits of college-preparatory mathematics for students with diverse abilities in early secondary school. *Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 22*(3), 241-254.

Garcia, S. & Guerra P. (2004). Deconstructing Deficit Thinking: Working With Educators to Create More Equitable Learning Environments. *Education and Urban Society*, 36 (2), 150-168.

Gibson, S., & Dembo, M. (1984). Teacher efficacy: A construct validation. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 76*(4), 569-582.

Glesne, C. (1999). *Becoming qualitative researchers.* New York: Addison Wesley Longman.

Glickman, C. (2002). *Leadership for learning: How to help teacher succeed.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Go, K. (2002, July 31). 1 out of 6 teachers in Arizona lacks certification. Arizona Republic. Retrieved July 26, 2007 from http://www.arizonarepublic.com/news/articles/0731emergency31.html

Goddard, R.D., & Goddard, Y.L. (2001). A multilevel analysis of the relationship between teacher and collective efficacy in urban schools. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 17*, 807-818.

Goddard, R.D., LoGerfo, L., & Hoy, W.K. (2004). High school accountability: The role of perceived collective efficacy. *Educational Policy, 18*(3), 403-425.

Goddard, R.D., & Skrla, L. (2006). The influence of school social composition on teachers' collective efficacy beliefs. Educational *Administration Quarterly, 42*(2), 216-235.

Goddard, R.G., Hoy, W.K., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2000). Collective teacher efficacy; Its meaning, measure, and impact on student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 37, 479-508.

Goddard, R.G., Hoy, K., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2004). Collective efficacy: Theoretical development, empirical evidence, and future directions. *Educational Researcher*, *33*(3), 3-13.

Goddard, R.G., Sweetland, S.R., & Hoy, W.K. (2000). Academic emphasis of urban elementary schools and student achievement: A multi-level analysis. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *36*(5), 683-702.

Goldhaber, D., & Anthony, E. (2005). Can teacher quality be effectively assessed? National board certification as a signal of effective teaching. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED490921)

Goldhaber, D.D., & Brewer, D.J. (2000). Does teacher certification matter? High school teacher certification status and student achievement. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 22*(2), 129-145.

Gooden, M.A. (2004). A history of black achievement as impacted by federal court decisions in the last century. *The Journal of Negro Education, 73*(3). 230-238.

Graham, P. (2006). Reconceptualing professional learning communities: A case study of professional learning community activities and teacher improvement in a first-year middle school. (Doctoral Dissertation: School of Education, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill).

Greene, J.C., Caracelli, V.J, Graham, W. F. (1989). Toward a conceptual framework for mixed-method evaluation designs." Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 11, 255-74.

Grogan, M. (Ed.). (2002). Leadership for social justice [Special Issue]. Journal of School Leadership, 12(2).

Hallinger, P., Bickman, L., & Davis, K. (1996). School context, principal leadership, and student reading achievement. *The Elementary School Journal*, *96*, 527-549.

Hanushek, E.A., Kain, J.F., O'brien, D.M., & Rivkin, S.G. (2005). The market for teacher quality. Cambridge, Mass: National Bureau of Economic Research.

Harris, J.J. III, Brown, E.L., Ford, D.Y., & Richardson, J.W. (2004). African Americans and multicultural education: A proposed remedy for disproportionate special education placement and underinclusion in gifted education. *Education and Urban Society, 36*(3), 304-341.

Hawley, W. D., Crain, R. L., Rossell, C. H., Smylie, M. A., Fernandez, R. R., Schofield, J. W., Tompkins, R., Trent, W. T., & Zlotnik, M. S. (1983). Strategies for effective desegregation: Lessons from research. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, D. C. Heath.

Henry, M. (1996) Parent-School Collaboration. Feminist Organizational Structures and School Leadership (Albany, NY, SUNY Press).

Herrnstein, R.J., & Murray, C. (1994). *The bell curve: Intelligence and class structure in American life*. New York: Free Press.

Hoy, W.K. (2002). Faculty trust: A key to student achievement. *Journal of School Public Relations, 23*, 88-103.

Hoy, W.K., Gage, C.Q., & Tarter, C.J. (2006). School mindfulness and faculty trust: Necessary conditions for each other? *Educational Adminstration Quarterly, 42*(2), 236-255.

Hoy, W.K., & Spero, R.B. (2005). Changes in teacher efficacy during the early years of

teaching: A comparison of four measures. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 21*(4), 343-356.

Hoy, W.K., Sweetland, S.R., & Smith, P.A. (2002). Toward an organizational model of achievement in high schools: The significance of collective efficacy. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 38*, 77-93.

Hoy, W.K., Tarter, C.J., & Kottkamp, R.B. (1991). *Open schools/healthy schools: Measuring organizational climate.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage

Hoy, W.K.; Tarter, C.J., & Woolfolk Hoy, A.(2006). Academic optimism: A force for Student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal, 43*(3), 425-446.

Hoy, W. K., & Tschannen-Moran, *M.* (2003). The conceptualization and measurement of faculty trust in schools. In W.K. Hoy and C. Miskel (Eds.), Studies in leading and organizing schools (181-207). Greenwich, CT: Information Age.

Jackson, A.W., & Davis, G.A.(2000). *Turning Points 2000: Educating adolescents in the 21st century.* Williston, VT: Teachers College Press.

Jacobson, L. (2005, March). States scrutinize teacher working conditions. Education Week, 24(29), 1, 16-17.

Jencks, C., & Phillips, M. (1998). *The Black-White test score gap*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Jensen, A.R. (1969). How much can we boost IQ and scholastic achievement? *Harvard Education Review, 39*, 1-123.

Johnson, J.F., & Asera, R. (1999). Hope for urban education: A study of nine high-performing, high-poverty, urban elementary schools. Austin, TX: Texas University, Charles A. Dana Center.

Keyes, C. R. (2002). A way of thinking about parent/teacher partnerships for teachers. *International Journal of Early Years Education. 10(3) pp. 177-191.*

King, K.L., Houston, I.S., & Middleton, R.A. (2001). An explanation for school failure: Moving beyond black inferiority and alienation as a policy-making agenda. *British Journal of Educational Studies, 49*(4), 428-445.

Knoeppel, R.C. (2007). Resource adequacy, equity, and the right to learn: Access to high quality teachers in Kentucky. *Journal of Education Finance, 32*(4), 422-442.

Kose, B.W. (2005). Professional development for social justice: Rethinking the end in mind. Journal of Research in Teacher Education, Umeå, Sweden, 12(3), 78-102.

Kozol, J. (1991). *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's schools*. New York: Crown.

Ladson-Billings, G. (1994). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American children.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2002). Teacher sorting and the plight of urban schools: A descriptive analysis. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 24*(1), 37-62.

Larson, C. & Murtadha, K. (2002). Leadership for social justice, In J. Murphy (Ed.) *The educational leadership challenge: Redefining leadership for the21st century*

(pp.134 –161). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Larson, C.L. & Ovando C.J. (2001). *The color of bureaucracy: The politics of equity in multicultural school communities.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Thomson Learning.

Lazco-Kerr, I., & Berliner, D.C. (2002). The effectiveness of "Teach for America" and other under-certified teachers on student academic achievement: A case of harmful public policy. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, (10)*37, Retrieved [July 26, 2007] from http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v10n37.

Lee, V. E., & Smith, J. B. (1994). Effects of high school restructuring and size on gains *in achievement and engagement for early secondary school students*. Madison: University of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Center for School Research, National Center on Effective Secondary Schools.

Lee, V., & Bryk, A.S. (1989). A multilevel model of social distribution of high school achievement. *Sociology of Education, 62*, 172-192.

Lein, L., Johnson, J. F., & Ragland, M. (1997). Successful Texas schoolwide programs: Research study results. Austin, TX: Charles A. Dana Center, University of Texas at Austin.

Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, St., & Wahlstrom, K. (2005). *How leadership influences student learning.* New York: The Wallace Foundation.

Louis, K. S., & Kruse, S. (1995). Professionalism and community in schools. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Luce, T., & Thompson, L. (2005). *Do what works: How proven practices can improve America's public schools.* Dallas: Ascent Education Press, Inc.

Mactavish, J. B. & Scleien, S. J. (2000). Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Data Linking: An Example From A Mixed Method Study of Family Recreation. *Therapeutic Recreation Journal, Vol.34, No.1,*154-163.

Marshall, C. & Oliva, M. L. (2006). *Leadership For Social Justice*. Allyn & Bacon.

Marzano, R.J. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

McBrien, J.C., & Brandt, R.S. (1997). The language of learning: A guide to educational terms. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

McCormick, (1987, December). The school executive shortage: How serious is it? *The Education Digest, 55*, 2-5.

McKenzie, K.B., & Scheurich, J.J. (2004). Equity traps: A useful construct for preparing principals to lead schools that are successful with racially diverse students. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 40*(5), 633-662.

Meier, D. (1995). *The Power of Their Ideas*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Meier, D. (2002), The power of their ideas: Lessons for America from a small school in Harlem. Boston: Beacon Press.

Milanowski, A. (2004). The Relationship Between Teacher Performance Evaluation Scores and Student Achievement: Evidence From Cincinnati. *Peabody Journal of Education*. 79 (4), 33-53.

Miles, M.B., & Huberman, M. (1994). Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Miron, L. (1996). *Resisting discrimination: Affirmative strategies for principals and teachers.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

Morse, J. M. (1991). Approaches to qualitativequantitative methodological triangulation. Nursing Research, 40, 120-123.

Mulholland, J., & Wallace, J. (2001). Teacher induction and elementary science teaching: Enhancing self-efficacy. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 17*(2), 243-261.

Murphy, J.F., & Datnow, A. (2003) Leadership lessons from comprehensive school reforms. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin

Murphy**,** J. F., Weil, M., Hallinger, P., Mitman, A. (1982). Academic Press: Translating High Expectations into School Policies and Classroom Practices. *Educational Leadership*, 40 (3), 22-26.

Murphy, J., & Beck, L. (1994). Restructuring the principalship: Challenges and possibilities. In J. Murphy and K.S. Louis (Eds.), *Reshaping the principalship:*

Insights from transformational reform efforts. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

National Center for Education Statistics (2004). Dropout rates in the United States: 2001. US Department of Education. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov. on July 30,2007.

National Commission on Excellence in Education, (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform,* April 1983.

National Institute on Educational Governance, Finance, Policymaking, and Management, (1999). *Effective leaders for today's schools: Synthesis of a policy forum on educational leadership*. Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education.

Newmann, F. M., & Wehlage, G. G. (1995). *Successful school restructuring*. Madison: University of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Center for Educational Research, Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools.

No Child Left Behind Act (2002). Retrieved February 4, 2008, from http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/107-110.pdf

North Carolina Manpower Development Center, Inc. (1997). *Alliance for achievement: Preparing every child for college and career* (Report No. CG-028-460). Chapel Hill, NC. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED419204).

Noblit, G.W., Malloy, W.M. & Malloy, C.E. (2001). *The kids got smarter: Case studies of successful comer schools*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, Inc.

Nye, B., Konstantopoulos, S., & Hedges, L.V. (2004). How large are teacher effects? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 26*(3), 237-257.

Oakes, J. (1995). Two cities' tracking and within-school segregation. *Teachers College Record, 96*(4), 681-690.

Oakes, J. (1985). *Keeping track: How schools structure inequality*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Oakes, J., Quartz, K.H., Ryan, S., Lipton, M. (2000). Becoming good American schools. *Phi Delta Kappan, 81*(8), 568-576.

Obiakor, F.E. (2007). Multicultural special education: Effective intervention for today's schools, *Intervention in School and Clinic, 42*(3), 148-155.

Odden, A. R., & Odden, E. (1995). Educational leadership for America's schools. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Pajares, F. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct. *Review of Educational Research, 62*(3), 307-332.

Patrikakou, E.N. & Weissberg, R.P. (1999) The Seven P's of School-Family Partnership, Education Week, 18, pp. 34-36.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods (2nd ed.)*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Patton, J.M. (1998). The disproportionate representation of African Americans in special education: Looking behind the curtain for understanding and solutions. *The Journal of Special Education, 32*, 25-32.

Petersen, K. (1982). Making sense of principals' work. *The Australian Administrator, 3*(3), 1-4.

Powell, D.R. (1998) Reweaving Parents into the Fabric of Early Childhood Programs, Young Children, 53, pp. 60-67.

Provasnik, S.J., & Young, B.O. (2003, April). *The relationship of teacher quality to student mathematics achievement at the 8th-grade: Findings from the national assessment of educational progress (2000).* Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago Illinois.

Puma, M. J., Karweit, N., Price, C., Ricciuiti, A., Thompson, W., & Vaden-Kiernan, M. (1997). Prospects: Final report on student outcomes. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Planning and Evaluation Services.

Ragland, M.A., Clubine, B., Constable, D., & Smith, P.A. (2002). Expecting success: A study of five high performing, high poverty schools. Austin, TX: Texas University, Charles A. Dana Center.

Rapp, D. (2002). Social justice and the importance of rebellious imaginations. *Journal of School Leadership, 12*(3), 226-245.

Reyes, P., Sribner, J.D. & Scribner, A.P. (1999). Lessons from High Performing Hispanic Schools: Creating Learning Communities. New York: Teachers College Press.

Riester, A.F., Pursch, V. & Skrla L. (2002). Principals for social justice: Leaders of school success for children from low-income homes. *Journal of School Leadership, 12*(3), 281-304.

Roberts v. City of Boston, 59 Mass. 198 (1849).

Rokeach, M. (1968). Beliefs, attitudes, and values: A theory of organization and change. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Rosenholtz, S. J. (1985). *Effective schools: Interpreting the evidence. American Journal of Education*, 93 (3), 352-388.

Ross, J.A., & Gray, P. (2006). Transformational leadership and teacher commitment to organizational values: The mediating effects of collective teacher efficacy. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 17*(2), 179-199.

Rowan, B., Correnti,R., & Miller, R.J. (2002). What large-scale, survey research tells us about teacher effects on student achievement: Insights from the prospects study of elementary schools. *Teachers College Record 104*(8),1525–1567.

Scheurich, J.J. (1998). Highly successful and loving, public elementary schools populated mainly by low-ses children of color. *Urban Education, 33*(4), 451-491.

Scheurich, J.J., & Skrla, L. (2003). Leadership for equity and excellence: Creating high-achievement classrooms, schools, and districts. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.

Scheurich, J., Skrla, L., Johnson, J. (2000). Thinking Carefully About Equity and Accountability. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 82 (4), 293-299.

Schofield, J.W. (2001). Maximizing the benefits of student diversity: Lessons from school desegregation research. In G. Orfield with M. Kurlaender (Eds.), Diversity challenged: Evidence of the impact of affirmative action (pp.99-109). Cambridge, MA: The Civil Rights Project, Harvard University.

Scott, B. "Who's at the Table? Or Is there Room Enough for All?" *IDRA Newsletter* (San Antonio, Texas: Intercultural Development Research Association, October 1998) pp. 13-14.

Scott, B. (2001, March). Coming of age. *Intercultural Development Research Association Newsletter,* 1-8.

Seligman, M.E.P., (1998). Positive Social Science. *APA Monitor,* 29 (2).

Shen, J., Mansberger, N.B., & Yang, H. (2004). Teacher quality and students placed at risk: Results from the baccalaureate and beyond longitudinal study 1993-*Educational Horizons, 82*(3), 226-235.

Shields, C. M., (2004). Good intentions are not enough: Leadership for social justice academic excellence. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Leadership, 19,* p. 7-20.

Shields, C., Larocque, L., & Oberg, S. (2002). A dialogue about race and ethnicity in education: Struggling to understand issues in cross-cultural leadership. *Journal of*

School Leadership, 12(2), 116-137.

Shoho, A.R., Merchant, B., Lugg, C.A. (2005) Social justice: Seeking a common language, in *Handbook on Educational Leadership*, F. English (ed.). Sage.

Shouse, R. C. (1996). Academic press and sense of community: Conflict, congruence, and implications for student achievement. *Social Psychology of Education*, 1(l), 47-68.

Skrla, L., & Scheurich, J.J. (2001). Displacing deficit thinking in school district leadership. *Education and Urban Society, 33*(3), 235-259.

Skrla, L., Scheurich, J.J., Garcia, J., Nolly, G. (2004). Equity audits. In C. Marshall & M. Oliva (Eds.), Leadership for social justice: Making it happen. New York: Allyn & Bacon.

Skrla, L., Scheurich, J.J., Johnson, J.F., & Koschoreck. (2001). Accountability for equity: Can state policy leverage social justice? *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 4*(3), 237-260.

Slavin, R.E. (1986). *Educational Psychology: Theory into practice*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Solomon, R. P. (2002). School leaders and antiracism: Overcoming pedagogical and political obstacles. *Journal of School Leadership, 12*(2), 174-197.

Spring, J. (2005). The American school: 1642-2004 (6th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.

Stipek, D., Salmon, J.M., Givvin, K.B., Kazemi, E., Saxe, G., & Macgyvers, V.L. (1998). The value (and convergence) of practices suggested by motivation research and promoted by mathematics education reformers. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education, 29*(4), 465-488.

Stone, J.E. (2002). The value-added achievement gains of nbpts-certified teachers in tennessee: A brief report. Retrieved May 6, 2007, from http://www.education-consumers.com/oldsite/briefs/stoneNBPTS.shtm.

Sturgeon, J. (2005). Little boy lost: The truth about achievement numbers for black males. District Administration. Retrieved November 30, 2006, from http://www.districtadministration.com/page.cfm?p=1312.

Sumison, J. (1999) A Neophyte Early Childhood Teacher's Developing Relationships with Parents: An Ecological Perspective, Early Childhood Research & Practice, 1, p. 1. Retrieved from http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v1n1/sumsion.html on July 30, 2007.

Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (1998). Mixed methodology: Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches. In L. Bickman & D. J. Rog (Series Eds.), *Applied Socia Sciences Research Methods Series (Vol. 46). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.*

Taylor, B.M., Pressley, M., Pearson, P.D. (2002). Research-supported characteristics of teachers and schools that promote reading achievement. In P.D. Pearson and B.M. Taylor (Eds.), *Teaching reading: Effective schools, accomplished teachers* (pp.361-373). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Taylor, B. M., Pearson, P. D., Clark, K., & Walpole, S. (2000). Effective schools and accomplished teachers: Lessons about primary grade reading instruction in low-income schools. Elementary School Journal, 101, 121-166.

Tennant, M. (1996). *Psychology and adult learning.* London: Routledge.

Teske, P., & Schneider, M. (1999). *The importance of leadership: The role of school principals*. Arlington, VA: The Price Waterhouse Coopers Endowment for the Business of Government.

Theoharis, G. (2004). *Toward a Theory of Social Justice Educational Leadership*. Paper presented at UCEA Conference Proceedings, Kansas City.

Tschannen-Moran, M. (2001). Collaboration and the need for trust. Journal of Educational Administration, 39(4), 308-331.

U.S. Department of Education (2001). 23rd annual report to congress in the implementation of the individuals with disabilities act. Washington, DC: Author

Valencia, R.R. (1997). *The evolution of deficit thinking: Educational thought and practice.* London: Falmer.

Valencia, R., Valenzuela, A., Sloan, K., & Foley, D.E. (2001). Let's treat the cause, not the symptoms: Equity and accountability in Texas revisited. *Phi Delta Kappan, 83*(4), 318-326.

Valverde, L. A. (2004). Equal educational opportunity since *Brown*: Four major developments. *Education and Urban Society, 36*, 368-378.

Vandevoort, L.G., Amrein-Beardsley, A., & Berliner, D.C. (2004). National board teachers and their students' achievement. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 12*(46), 1-117.

Verdugo, R. (2002). *Race-Ethnicity, Social Class, and Zero-Tolerance Policies: The Cultural and Structural Wars*. *Education and Urban Society, 35*(1), 50-75.

Waters, T, & Grubb, S. (2004). *The leadership we need: Using research to strengthen the*

use of standards for administrator preparation and licensure program. Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning.

Watts**,** I.E., Erevelles**,** N. (2004). These Deadly Times: Reconceptualizing School Violence by Using Critical Race Theory and Disability Studies. *American Educational Research Journal*, 41 (2), 271-299.

Wayne and Youngs. (2003). Teacher characteristics and student gains: A review. *Review of Educational Research, 73*(1), 89-122.

Williams, B. (Ed.) (2003). *Closing the achievement gap: A vision for changing beliefs and practices* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for PRINCIPALS

1) Describe _____ K-5 Elementary School. What makes it a "School of Excellence?" Has it always been a "School of Excellence?" Why/why not? How? How do you define excellence? What are your goals? Values?

2) Describe YOUR philosophy of education and schooling and how it impacts YOUR leadership style. What is your focus? Mission?

3) How do you recruit, retain, and support good teachers and good teaching? What are your expectations for your school's curriculum? What are your expectations for your school's instructional program? For professional development? Evaluations?

4) Talk about your students and your expectations for their success (academic achievement and personal development). Any discipline issues?

5) Are parents/families involved in your school? Why/why not? How? Is the community involved? Why/why not? How?

6) What are some of the major challenges facing your school community and how do you go about addressing them? How are decisions made? How are resources allocated? Do you use data? How?

7) Do you ever discuss issues of race, class, and/or diversity with the teachers, parents, students, and/or community members? Why/why not? How? ? Do you discuss gaps?

8) Is there anything else we should know about _____ K-5 Elementary School and what makes it a "School of Excellence?"

Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS
(@ 60 minutes each)

1) Describe _____ K-5 Elementary School. What makes it a "School of Excellence?" Has it always been a "School of Excellence?" Why/why not? How? How do you define excellence? What are your goals? Values?

2) Describe your principal's philosophy of education and schooling and how it impacts his/her leadership style. What is your principal's focus? Mission?

3) How does your principal recruit, retain, and support good teachers and good teaching? What are his/her expectations for your school's curriculum? What are his/her expectations for your school's instructional program? For professional development? Evaluations?

4) Talk about your students and your expectations for their success (academic achievement and personal development). Does your principal share these ideals? Why/why not? How? Any discipline issues?

5) Are parents/families involved in your school? Why/why not? How? Is the community involved? Why/why not? How?

6) What are some of the major challenges facing your school community and how does your principal go about addressing them? How are decisions made? How are resources allocated? Do you use data? How?

7) Do you and/or your principal ever discuss issues of race, class, and/or diversity with the teachers, parents, students, and/or community members? Why/why not? How? Do you discuss gaps?

8) Is there anything else we should know about _____ K-5 Elementary School and what makes it a "School of Excellence?"

Appendix C*: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for TEACHERS*
(@45 minutes each)

1) Describe _____ K-5 Elementary School. What makes it a "School of Excellence?" Has it always been a "School of Excellence?" Why/why not? How? How do you define excellence? What are your goals? Values?

2) Describe your principal's philosophy of education and schooling and how it impacts his/her leadership style. What is your principal's focus? Mission?

3) How does your principal recruit, retain, and support good teachers and good teaching? What are his/her expectations for your school's curriculum? What are his/her expectations for your school's instructional program? For professional development? Evaluations?

4) Talk about your students and your expectations for their success (academic achievement and personal development). Does your principal share these ideals? Why/why not? How? Any discipline issues?

5) Are parents/families involved in your school? Why/why not? How? Is the community involved? Why/why not? How?

6) What are some of the major challenges facing your school community and how does your principal go about addressing them? How are decisions made? How are resources allocated? Do you use data? How?

7) Do you and/or your principal ever discuss issues of race, class, and/or diversity with the teachers, parents, students, and/or community members? Why/why not? How? ? Do you discuss gaps?

8) Is there anything else we should know about _____ K-5 Elementary School and what makes it a "School of Excellence?"

Appendix D: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for PARENT LEADERS
(@ 45 minutes each)

1) Describe _____ K-5 Elementary School. What makes it a "School of Excellence?" Has it always been a "School of Excellence?" Why/why not? How? How do you define excellence? What are your goals? Values?

2) Describe your principal's philosophy of education and schooling and how it impacts his/her leadership style. What is your principal's focus? Mission?

3) How does your principal recruit, retain, and support good teachers and good teaching? What are his/her expectations for your school's curriculum? What are his/her expectations for your school's instructional program? For professional development? Evaluations?

4) Talk about your children and your expectations for their success (academic achievement and personal development). Does your principal share these ideals? Why/why not? How? Any discipline issues?

5) Are parents/families involved in your school? Why/why not? How? Is the community involved? Why/why not? How?

6) What are some of the major challenges facing your school community and how does your principal go about addressing them? How are decisions made? How are resources allocated? Do you use data? How?

7) Do you and/or your principal ever discuss issues of race, class, and/or diversity with the teachers, parents, students, and/or community members? Why/why not? How? ? Do you discuss gaps?

8) Is there anything else we should know about _____ K-5 Elementary School and what makes it a "School of Excellence?"

OFFICE OF HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS
Institutional Review Board

APPLICATION FOR IRB APPROVAL OF HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH
Version 27-Jun-2005

For IRB Use
Behav Bio Dent Nurs PH
IRB Study #_____
Rec'd_____
Full Expedited Exempt

Part A.1. Contact Information, Agreements, and Signatures

Title of Study: ***Good Schools, Good Leaders: Portraits of Excellence AND Equity!*** **Date:** 9/30/05

Name and degrees of Principal Investigator: Kathleen M. Brown, Ed.D.
Department: School of Education Mailing address/CB #: CB #3500
UNC-CH PID: 7063-83456 Pager: NA
Phone #: 843-8166 Fax #: 962-1693 Email Address: BrownK@email.unc.edu

For trainee-led projects: __ undergraduate __ graduate __ postdoc __ resident __ other
Name of faculty advisor: NA
Department: Mailing address/CB #:
Phone #: Fax #: Email Address:

Name, phone number, email address of project manager or coordinator, if any: NA
List **all other project personnel** including co-investigators, and anyone else who has contact with subjects or identifiable data from subjects:

1) Jennifer Benkovitz, Co-PI (Doctoral student in Educational Leadership, School of Education)
2) Nakia Hardy, Co-PI (Doctoral student in Educational Leadership, School of Education)
3) Anthony J. Muttillo, Co-PI (Doctoral student in Educational Leadership, School of Education)
4) Thad Urban, Co-PI (Doctoral student in Educational Leadership, School of Education)

Name of funding source or sponsor:
XXX not funded __ Federal __ State __ industry __ foundation __ UNC-CH
__ other (specify): **Sponsor or award number**: NA

Include following items with your submission, where applicable. Check the items below and **include in order listed**.

X This application. One copy must have original PI signatures.
X Consent and assent forms, fact or information sheets; include phone and verbal consent scripts
• HIPAA authorization addendum to consent form
X All recruitment materials including scripts, flyers and advertising, letters, emails
X Questionnaires, scripts used to guide phone or in-person interviews, etc.
• Focus group guides
• Data use agreements (may be required for use of existing data from third parties)
• Addendum for Multi-Site Studies where UNC-CH is the Lead Coordinating Center
• Documentation of reviews from any other committees (e.g., GCRC, Oncology)
X Documentation of training in human research ethics for all study personnel
• Investigator Brochure if a drug study
X Protocol, grant application or proposal supporting this submission; (e.g., extramural grant application to NIH or foundation, industry protocol, student proposal)

Principal Investigator: I will personally conduct or supervise this research study. I will ensure that this study is performed in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations and University policies regarding human subjects research. I will obtain IRB approval before making any changes or additions to the project. I will notify the IRB of any other changes in the information provided in this application. I will provide progress reports to the IRB at least annually, or as requested. I will report promptly to the IRB all unanticipated problems or serious adverse events involving risk to human subjects. I will follow the IRB approved consent process for all subjects. I will ensure that all collaborators, students and employees assisting in this research study are informed about these obligations. All information given in this form is accurate and complete.

_____ _____

Signature of Principal Investigator Date

Faculty Advisor if PI is a Student or Trainee Investigator: I accept ultimate responsibility for ensuring that this study complies with all the obligations listed above for the PI.

_____ _____

Signature of Faculty Advisor Date

Department or Division Chair, Center Director (or counterpart) of PI: (or Vice-Chair or Chair's designee if Chair is investigator or otherwise unable to review): I certify that this research is appropriate for this Principal Investigator, that the investigators are qualified to conduct the research, and that there are adequate resources (including financial, support and facilities) available. I support this application, and hereby submit it for further review.

_____ _____

Signature of Department Chair or designee Date

_____ _____

Print Name of Department Chair or designee Department

Part A.2. Summary Checklist

Are the following involved?	Yes	No
A.2.1. Existing data, research records, patient records, and/or human biological specimens?	__	__X
A.2.2. Surveys, questionnaires, interviews, or focus groups with subjects?	__X	__
A.2.3. Videotaping, audiotaping, filming of subjects?	__X	__
A.2.4. Do you plan to enroll subjects from these vulnerable or select populations:		
a. UNC-CH students or UNC-CH staff?	__	__X
b. Non-English-speaking?	__	__X
c. Decisionally impaired?	__	__X
d. Patients?	__	__X
e. Prisoners, parolees and other convicted offenders?	__	__X
f. Pregnant women?	__	__X
g. Minors (less than 18 years)? **If yes**, give age range: to years	__	__X
A.2.5. a. Is this a multi-site study (i.e., involves organization(s) outside UNC-CH)?	__X	__
b. Will any of these sites be outside the United States?	__	__X
If yes, provide contact information for the foreign IRB.		
c. Is UNC-CH the sponsor or lead coordinating center?	__	__X
If yes, include the ***Addendum for Multi-site Studies where UNC-CH is the Lead Coordinating Center***.		
A.2.6. Will there be a data and safety monitoring committee (DSMB or DSMC)?	__	__X
A.2.7. a. Are you collecting sensitive information such as sexual behavior, HIV status, recreational drug use, illegal behaviors, child/physical abuse, immigration status, etc?	__	__X
b. Do you plan to obtain a federal Certificate of Confidentiality for this study?	__	__X
A.2.8. a. Investigational drugs? (provide **IND #**)	__	__X
b. Approved drugs for "non-FDA-approved" conditions?	__	__X
All studies testing substances in humans must provide a letter of acknowledgement from the UNC Health Care Investigational Drug Service (IDS).		
A.2.9. Placebo(s)?	__	__X
A.2.10. Investigational devices, instruments, machines, software? (provide **IDE #**)	__	__X
A.2.11. Fetal tissue?	__	__X
A.2.12. Genetic studies on subjects' specimens?	__	__X
A.2.13. Storage of subjects' specimens for future research? ***If yes***, *see instructions within the form* ***Consent for Stored Samples***.	__	__X
A.2.14. Diagnostic or therapeutic ionizing radiation, or radioactive isotopes, which subjects would not receive otherwise? ***If yes***, *approval by the* ***UNC-CH Radiation Safety*** ***Committee*** *is required.*	__	__X
A.2.15. Recombinant DNA or gene transfer to human subjects? ***If yes***, *approval by the* ***UNC-CH Institutional Biosafety*** ***Committee*** *is required.*	__	__X
A.2.16. Does this study involve UNC-CH cancer patients? ***If yes***, *submit this application directly to the* ***Oncology Protocol Review Committee***.	__	__X
A.2.17. Will subjects be studied in the General Clinical Research Center (GCRC)? ***If yes***, *obtain the* ***GCRC Addendum*** *from the GCRC and submit complete application (IRB application and Addendum) to the GCRC.*	__	__X

Part A.3. Potential Conflict of Interest

The following questions apply to **all investigators and study staff involved with this research, and/or their immediate family members (spouse, dependent children, parents, significant others).** With respect to this study, will any of the study investigators or study staff or their immediate family members:

A.3.1. Have an intellectual property interest in any technology or invention used in this study, including patent rights, copyright, etc.?	__ yes	X__ no
A.3.2. Receive support from a non-UNC source (**other than through a sponsored research agreement**) for this research study?	__ yes	X__ no
A.3.3. Receive any form of personal compensation (**other than as specified in the budget of a sponsored research agreement**) from a Sponsor of this study, including salary, consulting fees, honoraria, royalties, equipment, gifts, etc.? a. **If yes**, does or will that personal compensation exceed $10,000? b. **If yes**, is that personal compensation tied to any performance within this study such as enrollment goals for the study?	__ yes __ yes __ yes	X__ no X__ no X__ no
A.3.4. Have an ownership interest of any nature in the Sponsor or a product used in this study, including equity, stock options, etc? a. **If yes**, does or will that interest exceed $10,000 in value or 5% equity in a publicly traded Sponsor? b. **If yes**, does that interest include any equity interest in a non-publicly traded Sponsor?	__ yes __ yes __ yes	X__ no X__ no X__ no
A.3.5. Hold any position with the Sponsor, including officer, employee, director, trustee, consultant, member of advisory board, etc.?	__ yes	X__ no
A.3.6. Have a conflict of interest previously disclosed through the University's conflict of interest evaluation process that relates to this research study?	__ yes	X__ no

If the answer is "yes" to any of the questions above, please include an explanation with this application. As with any changes to the research itself, relationships or interests that develop later should be brought to the attention of the IRB for further consideration. Please contact the Office of University Counsel for guidance or assistance regarding the University's Conflict of Interest Policy. See http://www.unc.edu/campus/policies/coi.html for the policy.

Part A.4. Questions Common to All Studies

For all questions, if the study involves only secondary data analysis, focus on your proposed design, methods and procedures, and not those of the original study that produced the data you plan to use.

A.4.1. **Brief Summary**. Provide a *brief* non-technical description of the study, which will be used for internal and external communications regarding this research. Include purpose, methods, and participants. Typical summaries are 50-100 words.

The purpose of this study is to explore "how" K-5 elementary principals of state recognized "Schools of Excellence" are (or aren't) promoting and supporting both excellence AND systemic equity in their schools. Through the use of interviews with principals, assistant principals, teachers, and parent leaders, the specific strategies that principals use to advance their work in the face of countervailing pressures of public schools will be documented.

A.4.2. **Purpose and Rationale**. Provide a summary of the background information, state the research question(s), and tell why the study is needed. If a complete rationale and literature review are in an accompanying grant application or other type of proposal, only provide a brief summary here. If there is no proposal, provide a more extensive rationale and literature review.

Although studies have examined schools that make a difference in the lives of marginalized children (Oakes, Quartz, Ryan & Lipton, 2000; Riester, Pursch & Skrla, 2002), there is an absence of literature regarding principals as the unit of analysis and the process of actually leading for excellence and equity. The rationale of this empirical inquiry of leadership for excellence and systemic equity is to document how schools, and leaders in particular, can and are pursuing, supporting, and achieving both goals (see attached copy of Application for Research Study in Wake County Public Schools).

A.4.3. **Full description of the study design, methods and procedures.** Describe the research study. Discuss the study design; study procedures; sequential description of what subjects will be asked to do; assignment of subjects to various arms of the study if applicable; doses; frequency and route of administration of medication and other medical treatment if applicable; how data are to be collected (questionnaire, interview, focus group or specific procedure such as physical examination, venipuncture, etc.). Include information on who will collect data, who will conduct procedures or measurements. Indicate the number and duration of contacts with each subject; outcome measurements; and follow-up procedures. If the study involves medical treatment, distinguish standard care procedures from those that are research. If the study is a clinical trial involving patients as subjects and use of placebo control is involved, provide justification for the use of placebo controls.

This study of twenty (20) North Carolina "Schools of Excellence" employs qualitative case study methods as the dominant research paradigm. Multisite qualitative research studies address the same research questions in a number of settings using similar data collection and analysis procedures in each setting. The intent is to optimize description utilizing cross-site comparisons and to increase the potential for generalizing findings beyond a particular case. The following questions will focus this research: (1) How are principals of Schools of Excellence promoting and supporting

social justice and systemic equity in K-12 public schools? (2) What are principals of Schools of Excellence doing to ensure the success of ALL their students and what were the important first steps they took as they moved toward high achievement for all? (3) How do these findings connect to and build upon the literature related to leadership for social justice and systemic equity? and (4) What can be learned from Schools of Excellence that could benefit other schools with similar demographics? Qualitative data will be collected by the principal investigator and the four co-investigators through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with multiple sources (i.e., 15-20 school principals, 15-20 assistant principals, 30-40 teachers, and 15-20 parent leaders). Each principal and assistant principal interview will last approximately 60 minutes. Each teacher and parent leader interview will last approximately 45 minutes. The research questions, which served as the foundation on which the protocols were formulated, will also serve as the cornerstone for the data analysis. Interviews will be tape recorded and transcribed for purposes of analysis (see attached copies of interview protocols and attached copy of Application, and Approval, for Research Study in Wake County Public Schools).

A.4.4. **Benefits to subjects and/or society.** Describe any potential for direct benefit to individual subjects, as well as the benefit to society based on scientific knowledge to be gained; these should be clearly distinguished. Consider the nature, magnitude, and likelihood of any direct benefit to subjects. If there is no direct benefit to the individual subject, say so here and in the consent form (if there is a consent form). Do not list monetary payment or other compensation as a benefit.

By exploring best practices and documenting effective strategies, a research-based guide for leaders striving towards or improving upon excellent and equitable schools will be created. Aside from sharing their perspective and adding to a growing body of knowledge, there will be no direct benefit to the individual participants.

A.4.5. **Full description of risks and measures to minimize risks.** Include risk of psychosocial harm (e.g., emotional distress, embarrassment, breach of confidentiality), economic harm (e.g., loss of employment or insurability, loss of professional standing or reputation, loss of standing within the community) and legal jeopardy (e.g., disclosure of illegal activity or negligence), as well as known side effects of study medication, if applicable, and risk of pain and physical injury. Describe what will be done to minimize these risks. Describe procedures for follow-up, when necessary, such as when subjects are found to be in need of medical or psychological referral. If there is no direct interaction with subjects, and risk is limited to breach of confidentiality (e.g., for existing data), state this.

Because many of the participants will be in subordinate roles (e.g., assistant principals and teachers) and will be asked to comment on their principal's execution of equity-related policies and practices, the researchers are sensitive to a certain level of psychological risk that participants may encounter through participation in this study. As such, the researchers assure all participants strict confidentiality. All participants will sign consent forms, will agree to be audio-taped, and will be provided with pseudonyms. In an effort to assure interviewees anonymity, no personally identifiable information will be used. Pseudonyms will also be used for each school and for the school district. Data will be analyzed utilizing cross-site comparisons as a whole—no individual or individual school will be singled out in the analysis or in any of the reports.

A.4.6. **Data analysis.** Tell how the qualitative and/or quantitative data will be analyzed. Explain how the sample size is sufficient to achieve the study aims. This might include a formal power calculation or explanation of why a small sample is sufficient (e.g., qualitative research, pilot studies).

Data analysis procedures will follow the methods recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994). The interviews will be recorded with permission, transcribed, and will be analyzed for common themes and concepts. Constant comparative analysis/coding will be done as themes emerge.

A.4.7. **Will you collect or receive any of the following identifiers as part of the study data?** Does not apply to consent forms.

__ No **_X_** Yes *If yes, check all that apply*:

a. **_X_** Names
b. **_X_** Telephone numbers **[Work]**
c. __ Any elements of dates (other than year) for dates directly related to an individual, including birth date, admission date, discharge date, date of death. For ages over 89: all elements of dates (including year) indicative of such age, except that such ages and elements may be aggregated into a single category of age 90 and older
d. **_X_** Any geographic subdivisions smaller than a State, including street address, city, county, precinct, zip code and their equivalent geocodes, except for the initial three digits of a zip code **[School location]**
e. __ Fax numbers
f. **_X_** Electronic mail addresses
g. __ Social security numbers
h. __ Medical record numbers
i. __ Health plan beneficiary numbers
j. __ Account numbers
k. __ Certificate/license numbers
l. __ Vehicle identifiers and serial numbers (VIN), including license plate numbers
m. __ Device identifiers and serial numbers (e.g., implanted medical device)
n. __ Web universal resource locators (URLs)
o. __ Internet protocol (IP) address numbers
p. __ Biometric identifiers, including finger and voice prints
q. __ Full face photographic images and any comparable images
r. __ Any other unique identifying number, characteristic or code, other than dummy identifiers that are not derived from actual identifiers and for which the re-identification key is maintained by the health care provider and not disclosed to the researcher

A.4.8. **Data sharing.** With whom will *identifiable* (contains any of the 18 identifiers listed in question 7 above) data be shared outside the immediate research team? For each, explain confidentiality measures. Include data use agreements, if any.

_**X**_ No one
__ Coordinating Center**:**
__ Statisticians**:**
__ Consultants**:**
__ Other researchers**:**
__ Registries**:**
__ Sponsors:
__ External labs for additional testing:
__ Journals:
__ Publicly available dataset:
__ Other:

A.4.9. **Confidentiality of the data**. Describe procedures for maintaining confidentiality of the data you will collect or will receive. Describe how you will protect the data from access by those not authorized. How will data be transmitted among research personnel? Where relevant, discuss the potential for deductive disclosure (i.e., directly identifying subjects from a combination of indirect IDs). Describe your plan to destroy identifiers. When will identifiers be destroyed?

Individual participants, school sites, and the school district will not be identified in any report or publication about this study. All identifiable data, audiotapes, and subsequent transcriptions will be kept in a locked file cabinet inside the private, locked office of the PI. This information will not be shared with anyone outside the immediate research team. Pseudonyms will be used for the school district, individual schools, principals, assistant principals, teachers, and parent leaders involved. Information from individual participants will not be shared with any other participants (i.e., principals will not have access to any of the information shared by assistant principals, teachers, and/or parent leaders).

A.4.10. **Data security for storage and transmission**. Please check all that apply.

For electronic data:
__ Secure network _**X**_ Password access __ Encryption
__ Other (describe):
__ Portable storage (e.g., laptop computer, flash drive)
Describe how data will be protected for any portable device:

For hardcopy data (including human biological specimens, CDs, tapes, etc.):

_X_ Data de-identified by research team (stripped of the 18 identifiers listed in question 7 above)
_X_ Locked suite or office
_X_ Locked cabinet
_X_ Data coded by research team with a master list secured and kept separately
__ Other (describe):

Part A.5. The Consent Process and Consent Documentation (including Waivers)

The standard consent process is for all subjects to sign a document containing all the elements of informed consent, as specified in the federal regulations. Some or all of the elements of consent, including signatures, may be altered or waived under certain circumstances.

- If you will obtain consent in any manner, complete **section A.5.1**.
- If you are obtaining consent, but requesting a waiver of the requirement for a signed consent document, complete **section A.5.2**.
- If you are requesting a waiver of any or all of the elements of consent, complete **section A.5.3**.

You may need to complete more than one section. For example, if you are conducting a phone survey with verbal consent, complete sections A.5.1, A.5.2, and possibly A.5.3.

A.5.1. **Describe the process of obtaining informed consent from subjects**. If children will be enrolled as subjects, describe the provisions for obtaining parental permission and assent of the child. If decisionally impaired adults are to be enrolled, describe the provision for obtaining surrogate consent from a legally authorized representative (LAR). If non-English speaking people will be enrolled, explain how consent in the native language will be obtained. Address both written translation of the consent and the availability of oral interpretation. *After you have completed this part A.5.1, if you are not requesting a waiver of any type, you are done with Part A.5.; proceed to Part B.*

With permission from the Director of Research and Evaluation for the Wake County School System, potential participants will be contacted via phone and/or e-mail. At the time of the interview, all participants will be required to complete a "Consent to participate in a research study" form that is included as a part of this application. If participants do not complete the form, they will not be included in the study. No children, decisionally impaired, or non-English speaking persons will be enrolled in this study.

A.5.2. **Justification for a waiver of *written* (i.e., signed) consent**. *The default is for subjects to sign a written document that contains all the elements of informed consent.* Under limited circumstances, the requirement for a signed consent form may be waived by the IRB if either of the following is true:

a. The only record linking the subject and the research would be the consent document and the principal risk would be potential harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality (e.g., study involves sensitive data that could be damaging if disclosed). __ yes __ no
Explain.

b. The research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context (e.g., phone survey). __ yes __ no
Explain.

If you checked "yes" to either, will consent be oral? Will you give out a fact sheet? Use an online consent form, or include information as part of the survey itself, etc?

A.5.3. **Justification for a full or partial waiver of consent.** *The default is for subjects to sign a written document that contains all the elements of informed consent.* A waiver might be requested for research involving only existing data or human biological specimens (see also Part C). More rarely, it might be requested when the research design requires withholding some study details at the outset (e.g., behavioral research involving deception). In limited circumstances, parental permission may be waived. This section should also be completed for a waiver of HIPAA authorization if research involves Protected Health Information (PHI) subject to HIPAA regulation, such as patient records.

__ Requesting **waiver of some elements** (specify; see SOP 28 on the IRB web site):
__ Requesting **waiver of consent entirely**
If you check either of the boxes above, answer items a-f.. To justify a full waiver of the requirement for informed consent, you must be able to answer "yes" (or "not applicable" for question c) to items a-f. **Insert brief explanations that support your answers.**

a. Will the research involve <u>no greater than minimal risk</u> to subjects or to their privacy? __ yes __ no
Explain.

b. Is it true that the waiver will *not* adversely affect the rights and welfare of subjects? *(Consider the right of privacy and possible risk of breach of confidentiality in light of the information you wish to gather.)* __ yes __ no
Explain.

c. When applicable to your study, do you have plans to provide subjects with pertinent information after their participation is over? *(e.g., Will you provide details withheld during consent, or tell subjects if you found information with direct clinical relevance? This may be an uncommon scenario.)* __ yes __ not applicable
Explain.

d. Would the research be impracticable without the waiver? *(If you checked "yes," explain how the requirement to obtain consent would make the research impracticable, e.g., are most of the subjects lost to follow-up or deceased?).* __ yes __ no
Explain.

e. Is the risk to privacy reasonable in relation to benefits to be gained or the importance of the knowledge to be gained? __ yes __ no
Explain.

If you are accessing patient records for this research, you must also be able to answer "yes" to item f to justify a waiver of HIPAA authorization from the subjects.

f. Would the research be impracticable if you could not record (or use) Protected Health Information (PHI)? *(If you checked "yes," explain how* not *recording or using PHI would make the research impracticable).* __ yes __ no

Explain.

Part B. Questions for Studies that Involve Direct Interaction with Human Subjects

- *If this does not apply to your study, do not submit this section.*

B.1. **Subjects.** Specify number, gender, ethnicity, race, and age. Specify whether subjects are healthy volunteers or patients. If patients, specify any relevant disease or condition and indicate how potential subjects will be identified.

While the specific gender, ethnicity, race and age of the participants is unknown at this time, all subjects will be healthy volunteers.

15 to 20 K-5 Elementary Principals of "Schools of Excellence" in Wake County, NC (1 per school)
15 to 20 K-5 Assistant Principals of "Schools of Excellence" in Wake County, NC (1 per school)
30 to 40 Teachers working in "Schools of Excellence" in Wake County, NC (2 per school)
15 to 20 Parent Leaders associated with of "Schools of Excellence" in Wake County, NC (1 per school)

B.2. **Inclusion/exclusion criteria.** List required characteristics of potential subjects, and those that preclude enrollment. Justify exclusion of any group, especially by criteria based on gender, ethnicity, race, or age. If pregnant women are excluded, or if women who become pregnant are withdrawn, specific justification must be provided.

All participants must be currently working with (principals, assistant principals, and teachers) or associated with (parent leaders) a K-5, traditional calendar elementary "School of Excellence" (as designated by the state of North Carolina). Based on 2004-05 test data, 32 K-5, traditional calendar elementary schools in Wake County were identified as "Schools of Excellence." All 32 schools will be contacted and invited to participate in this study. It is anticipated that approximately 20 of the 32 schools will respond in a timely manner and agree to participate.

B.3. **Methods of recruiting.** Describe how and where subjects will be identified and recruited. Indicate who will do the recruiting, and tell how subjects will be contacted. Describe efforts to ensure equal access to participation among women and minorities. Describe how you will protect the privacy of potential subjects during recruitment. *For prospective subjects whose status (e.g., as patient or client), condition, or contact information is not publicly available (e.g., from a phone book or public web site), the initial contact should be made with legitimate knowledge of the subjects' circumstances. Ideally, the individual with such knowledge should seek prospective subjects' permission to release names to the PI for recruitment. Alternatively, the knowledgeable individual could provide information about the study, including contact information for the investigator, so that interested prospective subjects can contact the investigator.* Provide the IRB with a copy of any document or script that will be used to obtain the patients' permission for release of names or to introduce the study. Check with your IRB for further guidance.

The schools participating will be selected because they were originally identified as K-5, traditional calendar, elementary "Schools of Excellence" in Wake County according to North Carolina state testing data criteria (i.e., 90% of all of their 4th and 5th grade students scored at or above grade level on both the math and reading tests). With permission from the Director of Research and Evaluation for Wake County Public Schools, each school principal will be contacted via phone or e-mail and asked if they (and their school) are willing to participate. Each principal will be asked to identify to the researcher the names of assistant principals, four to five teachers, and two to three parent leaders who might be potential candidates. The researchers will randomly e-mail some of these potential participants and invite them to participate. Efforts will be made to

ensure equal access to participation among women (minority status will not be known) and to protection of privacy (e.g., principals will not know which teachers and parents were actually asked and agreed to participate). Each potential participant will have the opportunity to grant consent in a voluntary way after making an informed decision based on study details provided by the research team. The research team will make all the arrangements at the convenience of participants. All participants will sign a "Consent to participate in study" form at the time of the interview. Study participation is completely voluntary. Refusal to participate in this study will not result in any negative consequences for individuals (see attachment for recruiting e-mail).

B.4. **Protected Health Information (PHI).** If you need to access Protected Health Information (PHI) to identify potential subjects who will then be contacted, you will need a *limited waiver of HIPAA authorization*. If this applies to your study, please provide the following information.

a. Will the information collected be limited only to that necessary to contact the subjects to ask if they are interested in participating in the study?

b. How will confidentiality/privacy be protected prior to ascertaining desire to participate?

c. When and how will you destroy the contact information if an individual declines participation?

B.5. **Duration of entire study and duration of an individual subject's participation, including follow-up evaluation if applicable.** Include the number of required contacts and approximate duration of each contact.

The entire study should be completed within six months. Each principal and assistant principal interview will last approximately 60 minutes. Each teacher and parent leader interview will last approximately 45 minutes.

B.6. **Where will the subjects be studied?** Describe locations where subjects will be studied, both on and off the UNC-CH campus.

All interviews will be conducted in a private location at the participating school sites.

B.7. **Privacy.** Describe procedures that will ensure privacy of the subjects in this study. Examples include the setting for interviews, phone conversations, or physical examinations; communication methods or mailed materials (e.g., mailings should not indicate disease status or focus of study on the envelope).

The privacy of the subjects will be observed throughout the study. Participants will not be identified in any report or publication about this study. Each interview will occur in a private location (e.g., conference room, school office, unoccupied classroom). Only the researcher and the individual participant will be present during the interview. All data will be coded to preserve anonymity.

B.8. **Inducements for participation.** Describe all inducements to participate, monetary or non-monetary. If monetary, specify the amount and schedule for payments and how this will be prorated if the subject withdraws (or is withdrawn) from the study prior to completing it. For compensation in

foreign currency, provide a US$ equivalent. Provide evidence that the amount is not coercive (e.g., describe purchasing power for foreign countries). Include food or refreshments that may be provided.

No incentives will be used.

B.9. **Costs to be borne by subjects.** Include child care, travel, parking, clinic fees, diagnostic and laboratory studies, drugs, devices, all professional fees, etc. If there are no costs to subjects other than their time to participate, indicate this.

There will be no cost to the subjects other than their time to participate.

University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Adult Participants [Principals]
Social Behavioral Form

IRB Study #_____
Consent Form Version Date: ___11/4/05_____

Title of Study: ***Good Schools, Good Leaders: Portraits of Excellence!***

Principal Investigator: Kathleen M. Brown, Ed.D.
UNC-Chapel Hill Department: School of Education
UNC-Chapel Hill Phone number: 919-843-8166
Email Address: BrownK@email.unc.edu
Co-Investigators:

1) Jennifer Benkovitz, Co-PI (Doctoral student in Educational Leadership, School of Education)
2) Nakia Hardy, Co-PI (Doctoral student in Educational Leadership, School of Education)
3) Anthony J. Muttillo, Co-PI (Doctoral student in Educational Leadership, School of Education)
4) Thad Urban, Co-PI (Doctoral student in Educational Leadership, School of Education)

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Kathleen M. Brown
Funding Source: NA

Study Contact telephone number: 919-843-8166
Study Contact email: BrownK@email.unc.edu

What are some general things you should know about research studies?

You are being asked to take part in a research study. To join the study is voluntary. You may refuse to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future. You may not receive any direct benefit from being in the research study. There also may be uncommon or previously unknown risks to being in research studies.

Details about this study are discussed below. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study.