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The High School Principal as Instructional Leader:

An Explanatory, Mixed Methods Case Study Examining Principal Leadership within the Context of Rural Secondary Schools

A Dissertation Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Benjamin Tyler Clabo

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving and patient wife, Stephani Erin Clabo, for her support and care throughout this process; to our daughter, Adeline Violet Clabo, for making our lives so full of excitement and joy; to my unborn child, for strongly motivating me to complete this study; and to my parents, Curtis and Pansy Clabo, for instilling within me from a young age the manifest importance of education.

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Abstract

The purpose of this explanatory, mixed methods case study was to examine instructional leadership within the context of rural secondary schools. This investigation followed an explanatory mixed methods design of sequential quantitative and qualitative phases (QUAL→quan). For the quantitative phase, the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) was administered to eight principals and 312 teachers in eight rural secondary schools in the southeastern United States. Descriptive analysis of principal and teacher results found that principals were most engaged in the subscales of framing school goals, coordinating curriculum, and promoting professional development and least engaged in the subscales of maintaining high visibility, protecting instructional time, and providing teaching and learning incentives. Independent *t*-tests found statistically significant differences in the instructional leadership of principals based on four contextual factors: school size, school SES, principal administrative experience, and district funding (per pupil expenditure). Two principals and their schools were selected for participation in the qualitative phase of the study. Interviews and observations of principals and interviews with teachers added insight to the findings of the quantitative phase. Participants characterized the principalship as a multifaceted job where secondary school principals fulfilled four leadership roles: instructional leader, district/community liaison, organizational manager, and problem solver. Participants also identified important instructional leadership behaviors not measured by the PIMRS, such as hiring effective teachers, providing instructional resources, and sharing leadership responsibilities. The study concludes with suggestions for future instructional leadership research and practical advice for rural secondary school principals.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 1

Statement of the Problem 5

Significance of Study 7

Purpose of the Study 10

Research Questions 10

Definitions of Terms 11

Limitations and Delimitations of Study 12

Limitations 12

Delimitations 13

Organization of the Study 14

Conclusion 14

Chapter 2 16

Search Process for Literature Review 18

Methodological Features of Research on Instructional Leadership 29

Qualitative Studies of Instructional Leadership 29

Quantitative Studies of Instructional Leadership 30

The Absence of Mixed Methods Studies 32

Summary 33

The Power of School Leadership in Influencing Student Learning 34

The Origins of Instructional Leadership 35

Effective Schools Movement 35

The Effective Urban Elementary School Principal 36

Definition of Instructional Leadership/Leader 37
Typologies/Models of Instructional Leadership 39
The Impact, Role, and Responsibilities of Instructional Leaders 42
The Impact of Instructional Leadership on Student Achievement 43
The Indirect Role of Instructional Leaders 44
The Importance of a School Mission 45
Solving Problems and Providing Resources 46
Managing the Instructional Program 47
Summary 47
Factors that Affect Instructional Leadership 48
Socioeconomic Status (SES) 49
School Size, Level, and Organization 49
Community and District Involvement 50
Leader Variables—Gender, Age, and Teaching Experience 51
Summary 51
Criticisms and Limitations of Instructional Leadership 52
Summary 54
Conceptual Developments in Instructional Leadership 55
Shared Instructional Leadership 55
Integrated Leadership 56
Contingency Theory, Situational Leadership Theory, and Instructional Leadership 57
Theoretical Perspective 57
Contingency Theory and Situational Leadership Theory 58

Instructional Leadership through Contingency/Situational Leadership Theories 59
A Unified Theoretical Perspective 60
Future Avenues of Research on Instructional Leadership 61
Embedding Instructional Leadership in the Context 62
Adopting a Contingent, Situational View of Instructional Leadership 62
Studying Instructional Leadership in Secondary Schools 63
Utilizing a Mixed Methods Approach 63
Conclusion 64
Chapter 3 66
Characteristics of Mixed Methods Research 66
Type of Mixed Methods Design 67
Rationale for Mixed Methods Design 67
Explanatory Mixed Method Design 68
Influence of Case Study Research 70
Visual Model of the Design 71
Data Collection Procedures 73
Sampling Strategy 73
Quantitative Data Collection Procedures 74
Validity and Reliability of the PIMRS 77
Qualitative Data Collection Procedures 79
Selection of principals and schools for phase 2. 79
Development of interview and observation protocols 83
Interview questions and protocol 84

Interview transcriptions. 85
Participant codes. 85
Observation checklist and protocol 86
Conduct of site visits. 86
Complementarity of Data Collection Methods 87
Data Analysis 88
Analysis of Quantitative Data 89
Descriptive analysis. 89
Inferential analysis—independent *t*-tests. 89
Analysis of Qualitative Data. 90
Trustworthiness of Qualitative Data 93
Role of the Researcher 94
Potential Ethical Issues 95
Conclusion 96
Chapter 4 98
Introduction and Organization of Descriptive Analysis Chapter 98
General Profiles of Districts and Schools Participating in Study 98
Descriptive Analysis of Overall PIMRS Results 101
Comparison of Teacher Mean PIMRS Scores across All Schools 102
Defining the school mission 104
Managing the instructional program 104
Promoting a positive school learning climate 106
Comparison of Principal Mean PIMRS Scores across All Schools 107

Descriptive Analysis of PIMRS Data by Individual Districts and Schools 109
School District 1 110
Julius High School 111
Defining the school mission. 113
Managing the instructional program. 114
Promoting a positive school learning climate. 114
Richard High School 115
Defining the school mission. 118
Managing the instructional program. 118
Promoting a positive school learning climate. 118
District 1 Summary 119
School District 2 120
Titus High School 120
Defining the school mission. 123
Managing the instructional program. 123
Promoting a positive school learning climate. 124
Oberon High School 124
Defining the school mission. 127
Managing the instructional program. 127
Promoting a positive school learning climate. 128
District 2 Summary 128
School District 3 129
Lear High School 130

Defining the school mission. 132
Managing the instructional program. 132
Promoting a positive school learning climate. 133
Hamlet High School 133
Defining the school mission. 136
Managing the instructional program. 136
Promoting a positive school learning climate. 137
MacBeth High School 137
Defining the school mission. 140
Managing the instructional program. 140
Promoting a positive school learning climate. 141
District 3 Summary 141
School District 4 142
Prospero High School 143
Defining the school mission. 145
Managing the instructional program. 145
Promoting a positive school learning climate. 146
District 4 Summary 146
Perceptions of Instructional Leadership in Rural Secondary Schools 147
Defining the School Mission 147
Managing the Instructional Program 148
Promoting a Positive School Learning Climate 150
Conclusion 152

Chapter 5 153
Inferential Analysis of PIMRS Data 153
School Size and Instructional Leadership 154
School Size and Framing School Goals 158
School Size and Monitoring Student Progress 159
Socioeconomic Status (SES) and Instructional Leadership 159
School SES and Coordinating Curriculum 162
School SES and Promoting Professional Development 163
School SES and Providing Incentives for Learning 163
Principal Administrative Experience Level and Instructional Leadership 164
District Influence and Instructional Leadership 167
District Influence, PPE, and Instructional Leadership 172
District Influence, County/City Governance, and Instructional Leadership 173
Conclusion 174
Chapter 6 177
Organization of Qualitative Data Analysis Chapter 177
School and Principal Profiles 178
Oberon High School and Its Principal 178
Prospero High School and Its Principal 179
Principal and Teacher Perceptions of Instructional Leadership in Both Schools 180
Principal's Role as Instructional Leader 183
Defining the school mission. 186
Managing the instructional program. 188

Promoting a positive school learning climate. 189
Principal's Role as District and Community Liaison 194
Principal's Role as Organizational Manager 196
Principal's Role as Problem solver 198
Summary 200
Contextual Factors Influencing Instructional Leadership 201
Funding, Technology, and Resources 202
District Involvement 205
Summary 207
Principal Decisions and Actions Influencing Classroom Instruction and Achievement 209
Sharing Instructional Leadership and Other Leadership Responsibilities 209
Innovating the High School Organization 213
Hiring and Placing Effective Teachers 216
Providing Resources and Professional Development 219
Being an Accessible, Visible Presence 221
Minimizing Instructional Distractions and Disruptions 222
Summary 226
Conclusion 227
Chapter 7 229
Purpose and Research Questions of Study 229
Principal and Teacher Perceptions of Instructional Leadership in Rural Secondary Schools. 231
Contextual Factors Influencing Instructional Leadership in Rural Secondary Schools 236
Principal Decisions and Behaviors Affecting Classroom Instruction and Achievement 240

Instructional Leadership in Rural Secondary Schools 242
Contributions to Research on the Instructional Leadership Model 246
The Influence of the Rural Context 248
Avenues for Future Instructional Leadership Research 249
Practical Advice for Secondary School Principals 253
Conclusion 255
References 259
Appendices 271
Appendix A PIMRS (Teacher Version) 272
Appendix B PIMRS (Principal Version) 277
Appendix C Email Permission to Use PIMRS 281
Appendix D Principal Interview Protocol 282
Appendix E Teacher Interview Protocol 283
Appendix F Principal Activity Log 284
Vita 285

List of Tables

Table 1. Empirical and Theoretical Studies Discussed in the Review of Literature…….20

Table 2. Return Rates for PIMRS by Individual School and Total Population…….77

Table 3. Coordination of Specific Interview Questions with Research Questions……85

Table 4. Strengths and Weaknesses of Data Collection Methods…….88

Table 5. Important Demographic Information about Participating Schools……100

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics of Teacher and Principal PIMRS Results for JHS……..112

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics of Teacher and Principal PIMRS Results for RHS…….116

Table 8. Descriptive Statistics of Teacher and Principal PIMRS Results for THS…….122

Table 9. Descriptive Statistics of Teacher and Principal PIMRS Results for OHS…….126

Table 10. Descriptive Statistics of Teacher and Principal PIMRS Results for LHS……...131

Table 11. Descriptive Statistics of Teacher and Principal PIMRS Results for HHS……...135

Table 12. Descriptive Statistics of Teacher and Principal PIMRS Results for MHS……..139

Table 13. Descriptive Statistics of Teacher and Principal PIMRS Results for PHS……...144

Table 14. Independent *t*-tests Comparing LHS to HHS by School Size…...……..156

Table 15. Independent *t*-tests Comparing LHS to MHS by School Size…….157

Table 16. Independent *t*-tests Comparing THS to OHS by SES……..161

Table 17. Independent *t*-tests Comparing JHS to RHS by Principal Experience Level……..165

Table 18. Independent *t*-tests Comparing HHS to OHS by District Factor (PPE)……...…...169

Table 19. Independent *t*-tests Comparing PHS to OHS by District Factors (PPE/governance)..170

Table 20. Independent *t*-tests Comparing PHS to HHS by District Factor (governance)...……171

Table 21. Triangulation of Findings from Data Sources Used in Study of OHS……184

Table 22. Triangulation of Findings from Data Sources Used in Study of PHS…….185

List of Figures

Figure 1. Instructional Leadership Dimensions and Functions……41

Figure 2. Graphic Representation of Explanatory Mixed Methods Design……...69

Figure 3. Visual Model for Mixed Methods Research Study……72

Figure 4. Sample Item from the PIMRS (teacher version)……76

Figure 5. Difference between Overall Teacher and Principal PIMRS Scores……...81

Figure 6. Confidence Indexes for PIMRS Results from Participating Schools……82

Figure 7. Comparison of Teachers' Mean PIMRS Scores across All 8 High Schools……103

Figure 8. Comparison of Principals' Mean PIMRS Scores across All 8 High Schools……..108

Figure 9. Comparison of JHS Teacher Mean PIMRS Scores with Principal Scores……...113

Figure 10. Comparison of RHS Teacher Mean PIMRS Scores with Principal Scores……117

Figure 11. Comparison of THS Teacher Mean PIMRS Scores with Principal Scores……122

Figure 12. Comparison of OHS Teacher Mean PIMRS Scores with Principal Scores……...126

Figure 13. Comparison of LHS Mean Teacher PIMRS Scores with Principal Scores……131

Figure 14. Comparison of HHS Teacher Mean PIMRS Scores with Principal Scores……...135

Figure 15. Comparison of MHS Teacher Mean PIMRS Scores with Principal Scores……...130

Figure 16. Comparison of PHS Teacher Mean PIMRS Scores with Principal Scores……144

Figure 17. Venn Diagram of Four Secondary School Principal Roles……182

Chapter 1

Introduction

With an increased focus on accountability and standards over the past two decades, particularly since the implementation of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB), school principals are viewed as more than simply managers within schools; they instead possess an array of responsibilities beyond the purely managerial, not the least of which is that of functioning as instructional leaders (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, & Orr, 2007; Hallinger, 2005; Klump & Barton, 2007, Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). In fact Title 2, Section 2113 of NCLB exhorts principals to utilize "instructional leadership skills to help teachers teach" so that students in our nation's schools can be better prepared for mandated achievement tests. As such, policymakers, for some time, have recognized principal leadership as a fundamental educational input and one that is relatively easy to influence through policy (Hallinger).

Beginning in the late 1970s and early 1980s, many educational researchers, wrestling with an accountability movement even then, began to articulate the primary role of the school principal in terms of instructional leadership (Edmonds, 1979; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985, 1986). Research during the effective schools movement identified the instructional leadership of the principal as an important educational input that influenced the achievement of students and the success of schools (Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Heck, 1996b). Since its initial introduction almost 30 years ago, instructional leadership is still a research topic of some significance and relevance. In fact, recent movements within education, especially on the political front, have led to a renewed interest in instructional leadership as the model of leadership to follow in our

schools. Instructional leadership, as a model of educational leadership, is not a new idea, but it is a concept that continues to evolve and benefit from research.

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to provide a definition of instructional leadership. Much of the early work on instructional leadership stemmed from research conducted in urban elementary schools, often depicting the intrepid, tireless leadership of the principal overcoming considerable obstacles in improving student academic achievement. The success of principals was invariably tied to their ability to effect positive change in schools, as measured by student achievement (Edmonds, 1979).

The typical definition of instructional leadership marked it as a top-down, autocratic, transactional type of leadership (Hallinger, 2003). Instructional leaders bore tremendous, if not plenary, responsibility in directing matters of curriculum and instruction within their schools (Bamburg & Andrews, 1990; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). The principal was expected to be the principal teacher in his or her school. It was the responsibility of instructional leaders to be deeply and directly "involved with the teaching/learning process" (Beck & Murphy, 1993, p. 149). Models of instructional leadership were developed (Duke, 1987; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Smith & Andrews, 1989), and researchers identified key responsibilities of instructional leaders with regard to school climate, resources for teachers, school vision, principal visibility, and the like.

Instructional leadership somewhat fell out of favor in the 1990s with research focus turning towards transformational and distributed forms of leadership (Hallinger, 2003). However, the increased political focus on achievement test scores as the primary indicator of effective schooling and the pressure school leaders felt to take a more direct role in ensuring students perform on these tests has resulted in a return to more research on instructional

leadership (Hallinger, 2005). As a result of the advent of NCLB and the more recent American Diploma Project (ADP), high schools and their principals, in particular, find themselves faced with increased standards and accountability previously relegated primarily to elementary and middle schools. Growing pressure from business leaders has prompted states to join the ADP as a way to improve the rigor and supposed value of a high school education. Much of this revaluation of the high school diploma is accomplished through the adoption of a single educational path for all students that prepare them for both college and the work force.

In Tennessee, for example, all students must take science and math classes typically reserved only for those going on to the university level, such as chemistry, physics, Algebra II, and trigonometry. Tying school accountability not only to more difficult course work, stricter graduation rates, and tougher end of course exams but also to ACT achievement has further complicated the efforts of high schools and their principals to meet annual yearly progress as required by NCLB in the 35 states under the auspices of the ADP. When schools do not meet these requirements, it is the principal who is invariably held to blame. These forces have pressured secondary school principals to assume greater responsibility in instructional and curricular matters. With principals again being exhorted to act as instructional leaders by policymakers, school officials, parents, and other stakeholders, researchers and practitioners are wrestling with how to reconcile traditional modes of instructional leadership in various school contexts, such as secondary schools (Hallinger, 2003, 2005; Leithwood et al. 2004; Marks & Printy, 2003).

Because of contextual factors that render it impractical, inappropriate, and even undesirable for principals to exercise the traditionally autocratic, transactional form of instructional leadership in many school settings, researchers advocated a type of shared

instructional leadership (Barth, 2002; Day, Harris, & Hadfield, 2001; Marks & Printy, 2003; Southworth, 2002). While principals still maintain active focus on and involvement in matters of curriculum and instruction, considerable effort is expended to involve teachers on a school level in instructional leadership responsibilities. Some researchers (Hallinger, 2003; Marks & Printy, 2003) have suggested the need to conceptualize a more inclusive, flexible, and dynamic form of instructional leadership. The ideas offer potentially exciting and effective ways of translating instructional leadership successfully on the high school level.

Schools are complex organizations that require effective, dynamic instructional leadership in order to adequately meet the needs of their students. The larger student populations as well as bureaucratic, departmentalized structures of secondary schools often means that instructional leadership cannot be the responsibility of a single individual or principal. Also, principals in all contexts often find themselves distracted from important instructional issues by a litany of other responsibilities. Still, principals bear the majority of the leadership burden and their decisions, actions, and behaviors all affect student learning, whether positively or detrimentally. Principal leadership is second only to classroom instruction in school-based factors that influence student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2004). The accountability movement has further increased political and public scrutiny of the principalship and has also prompted considerable research into the instructional role and influence of the school principal (Hallinger, 2005).

There is little question in this researcher's mind as to the paramount importance of curricular and instructional matters for school principals, but despite the academic, political, and professional call for principals to be instructional leaders, research (Hallinger, 2005, 2008) points out that few principals today directly engage in these activities and behaviors. As such,

instructional leadership must be considered within the contexts in which it operates. The rural high school context presents challenges to the implementation of traditional forms of instructional leadership, but principals in these settings are still expected to find ways to effectively fulfill their responsibilities as instructional leaders. Effective instructional leaders in these schools may think and behave differently than their counterparts at different levels and in different contexts. This study seeks to explore instructional leadership within the context of rural high schools to see how this phenomenon plays out in these settings in order to inform both the theory and practice of instructional leadership.

Statement of the Problem

For the past two decades, many policymakers, researchers, and practitioners have defined the role of principals in terms of instructional leadership. This perspective recognizes the obligation of the school leader to be the *principal* teacher within the building. Principals are looked to as providers of strong, directive instructional leadership. This idea has held particular resonance as emphasis on accountability and standards has steadily increased.

The problem, however, is that this research does not always inform leadership practice. For all of the academic, professional, and political exhortations for principals to be instructional leaders, there is little if any evidence that principals in the new century behave anymore as instructional leaders than they did two decades ago (Hallinger, 2005). In many schools the barrier between office and classroom seems as strong and insurmountable as ever. Principals, despite being called on to exercise a variety of leadership models by a variety of stakeholders, find themselves relegated to the role of middle managers, either unable or unwilling to be instructional leaders.

This challenge to the exercise of instructional leadership is compounded by the diversity of school contexts in which principals must operate. Much of the early thinking on instructional leadership developed from research conducted in effective elementary schools (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Edmonds, 1979; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993). High schools, which are typically larger and more departmentalized, possess some important differences from elementary schools (Barth, 1990; Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982; Cuban, 1988; Hallinger, 2003, 2005; Lambert, 1998; Marshall, 1996). Hallinger (2005) stated that instructional leadership is easier to implement on the elementary level than the high school level because of certain contextual factors inherent to secondary schools.

Principals often lack the knowledge and expertise to be the sole arbiter of instructional responsibilities within the departmentalized and highly specialized academic environment of high schools. Issues of time and resources complicate any single person's ability to assume total directive control over a school's instructional program, even assuming said principal possesses the desire and will to be a strong instructional leader. These factors lead to another dimension of the problem this research confronts—that traditional autocratic, transactional models of instructional leadership may be impractical and ineffective on the high school level. Instructional leadership is a role that some researchers believe should be shared (Barth, 1990; Hallinger, 2003, 2005, 2008; Lambert, 1998, 2002; Marks & Printy, 2003). Effective instructional leaders in high schools, while maintaining a clear focus on the centrality of instruction and curriculum, may need to develop the leadership capacities of teachers and delegate important responsibilities to these lead teachers (Marks & Printy).

Research effectively embedding instructional leadership within the high school context will hopefully point to some solutions to this problem. More research is needed to substantively explore the interplay between instructional leaders and the high school context. Not only should this research look at the relationships among leader, context, and outcomes, but it should also examine the pathways and mechanisms through which active instructional leadership is exercised. An in depth look at cases of instructional leadership in high schools is needed.

Significance of Study

The significance of this study is four-fold: topical, conceptual, contextual, and methodological. Leithwood et al. (2004) asserted that the leadership of the principal is second only to classroom instruction in factors that promote student learning. Because of its manifest importance, principal leadership is an educational topic that should benefit from continued research. Instructional leadership has enjoyed somewhat of a resurgent academic scrutiny in the 21st century (Hallinger, 2005; 2008). As evidenced by the language in NCLB legislation, policymakers are still, after some thirty years since its introduction, articulating the role of the principal in terms of instructional leadership, and they are seeking ways to develop prospective and practicing principals to be effective instructional leaders as a fundamental way of improving student achievement.

This study approaches principal leadership from theoretical perspectives that focus on leadership within context, specifically contingency theory and situational leadership theory. Hallinger (2003) suggested that examining instructional leadership through the lens of contingency theory might prove useful in helping researchers and policymakers appreciate the contextual complexities of the leadership phenomena. Contingency theory defines leader effectiveness in terms of how well the leader's style fits with the context, and how well the

leader can adapt the context to that style (Northouse, 2004). Situational leadership theory further informs this perspective because it examines how leaders adapt their leadership style to meet the needs of certain situations or contexts (Northouse, 2004).

Leadership is perhaps best considered as not an either/or dichotomy of the managerial and transactional versus the distributed and transformational, but rather as a continuum that principals move along depending on a variety of personal and contextual factors. Leadership is a process of mutual influence; the leader influences and is influenced by the context in which he or she operates (Hallinger). Through the lens of contingency and situational leadership theories, flexibility of style becomes a crucial aspect for the success of instructional leaders and facilitates this models applicability to a variety of school contexts and settings. It is for these reasons that experts focused on principal leadership (i.e., Hallinger, 2005; Leithwood et al., 2004) have argued for more research examining the relationship between leadership and context(s).

Two key contextual features of this research lend further significance to the study. This study explores instructional leadership within the context of *rural secondary* schools. As a product of the effective schools movement, much of the research conducted on this topic has been limited to urban schools at the elementary level (Edmonds, 1979; Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b, 1998; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985 Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993). Despite this contextual focus, many researchers and policymakers advocate that principals at all levels and in all locals be instructional leaders.

If instructional leadership is to be one of the leadership models of choice in our schools, then continued research is needed looking at this model within a variety of school contexts. Secondary schools are often quite different than elementary or middle schools, just as schools found in urban centers are disparate from their rural counterparts. Hallinger (2005) recognizes

that there are important contextual challenges to the exercising of instructional leadership on the secondary level, such as the often bureaucratic, highly departmentalized and specialized nature of high schools. A study examining how instructional leadership unfolds in rural high schools could add much to the body of research on effective principal leadership.

Lastly, this study confronts instructional leadership from a relatively unique methodology—mixed methods research. Mixed methods research is very much concerned with "what works" (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). The method or methods to be used are dictated by the problem and research questions instead of by any strict adherence to a certain paradigmatic perspective. This pragmatic inclination leads the researcher to adopt a research methodology incorporating both quantitative and qualitative means in order to fully understand and study the topic of instructional leadership.

Specifically, this study utilizes an explanatory mixed methods case study approach to examine instructional leadership in secondary schools. The explanatory model consists of two sequential parts, an initial quantitative phase conducted in eight schools followed by a qualitative phase designed to further explore and develop the study's findings and conclusions (Creswell, 2005). Hallinger and Heck (1996b) advocated this research design as a potentially telling way of studying instructional leadership by taking advantage of the complementary strengths of quantitative and qualitative methods. Teddlie (2005) asserted that an explanatory method was essential to the study of both the relationship between leader and context/outcomes as well as understanding the mechanisms and paths of effective leadership. Using quantitative methodology in eight secondary schools as a means of identifying two examples of instructional leadership to then be studied qualitatively seems an ideal process in examining this concept within the context of rural secondary schools.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this explanatory, mixed methods case study is to examine instructional leadership within the context of rural secondary schools. The quantitative phase, which included eight rural secondary schools, was used to reach initial conclusions about contextual factors that influence the nature and exercise of instructional leadership in rural secondary schools as well as to identify the two cases of the instructional leadership for qualitative analysis. The subsequent qualitative phase utilized interviews and observations to further explore instructional leadership in specific secondary school settings.

Research Questions

Following this purpose, this explanatory, mixed methods case study addresses four questions:

1. How do the perceptions of principals compare with those of their faculties in regard to the principals' roles and effectiveness as instructional leaders in rural secondary schools? (quantitative and qualitative)
2. What district level and individual school factors both facilitate as well as hinder the exercise of instructional leadership in rural secondary schools? (quantitative and qualitative)
3. What instructional leadership decisions and behaviors of principals most influence classroom instruction and student achievement in rural secondary schools? (qualitative)
4. How is instructional leadership in rural secondary schools similar to and different from the typical conceptualization of this leadership model? (qualitative)

Definitions of Terms

Several terms were used throughout this study. Though definitions have already been provided elsewhere in the narrative, the following abbreviated glossary may prove helpful.

Contingency Theory: This theory holds that understanding leadership entails understanding the situations or contexts in which this phenomenon operates (Northouse, 2004). Effective leadership is "contingent on matching a leader's style to the right setting" (Northouse, p. 109). Leaders can adapt, through organizational decisions and policies, the context to better fit their individual leadership styles.

Situational Leadership Theory: This theory emphasizes how different situations or contexts require different types of leadership (Northouse, 2004). While still looking at leadership in the context like the former theory, situational leadership theory focuses more on how leader's adapt their personal style to the demands of the situation and less on how the leader influences situations.

Instructional Leadership: Instructional leadership is a model that characterizes principals as being deeply involved in matters of teaching and learning (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986). Hallinger and Murphy (1985) defined three dimensions of instructional leadership: articulating the mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a climate of learning.

Shared Instructional Leadership: This model seeks to integrate traditional instructional leadership, which is often leader centered and directive, with more transformational modes of leadership, particularly in regard to developing and empowering school stakeholders (Marks & Printy, 2003). Many contexts, such as large, departmentalized high schools, preclude the hands-on, hip-deep type of instructional leadership advocated by research with effective elementary schools (Hallinger, 2005).

Limitations and Delimitations of Study

Limitations

Some of the primary limitations of this study involved the data collection methods used. The quantitative data of the first phase were collected using a survey instrument, the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS). Although a much used and validated instrument, the PIMRS falls under what Creswell (2005) defined as an *attitudinal measure* in that it measures participants' feelings or perceptions of the principal's instructional leadership abilities. The data from this instrument are self-reported data. Perceptions do not necessarily equal reality, and maintaining a level of honesty and accuracy with survey data can be difficult. This concern was partially addressed by administering the instrument to both principals and teachers in order to obtain a more complete and balanced picture of the principals' instructional leadership. Also, the PIMRS measures the presence of instructional leadership and not the effectiveness of instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2008). Conclusions as to the effectiveness of instructional leadership can be cautiously made through the comparison of PIMRS data with achievement data.

The data collected from interviews and observations in the subsequent qualitative phase are not without their limitations. According to Yin (2003), data collected from interviews, while targeted and insightful, may be biased, inaccurate, and reflexive. Bias in the interview data can result from both the researcher (question construction) and respondent. There can be a tendency with interviews for the respondent to reflect the attitudes or ideas that are perceived to be desired by the researcher. Observations can suffer from the limitation of reflexivity, particularly when the observed is aware of his or her position as a research participant (Yin, 2003). As with

teacher observations/evaluations, there is always the risk that events are unfolding differently because they are being observed.

A moment must be taken to address the issue of generalizability in this mixed methods case study. Maxwell (2005) identified two forms of generalizability, internal and external. Internal generalizability, which is often of more importance to qualitative researchers, entails "the conclusions within a setting or group" and how these conclusions match up with the larger case(s) (p. 115). External generalizability, a matter of considerable concern for most quantitative research, means that the study allows for the "precise extrapolation of results to defined populations" (p. 116).

Qualitative methodology is an integral part of this study, particularly in deciding on the sample to be researched. The sample for this study was selected using a combination of two nonprobability sampling methods—purposeful and convenience sampling (Creswell, 2005). The use of nonprobability sampling methods, while important to the purpose and significance of the study, does limit the external generalizability of this study's findings. Because of this, the findings cannot be generalized to a larger population as with studies that employ probability sampling.

Delimitations

The researcher purposefully targeted this research project at rural secondary schools in southeastern Tennessee. This was a decision based on both personal research interest as well as a perceived gap in the research as revealed by the subsequent literature review. This decision, while limiting the generalizability of the study's findings, enabled the researcher to examine the manner in which specific contextual variables within these types of schools influenced the exercise of instructional leadership.

Organization of the Study

This first chapter has provided an overall introduction to this mixed methods study by discussing the research problem, significance, central questions, and other fundamental information. Chapter two affords an examination of the literature on principal leadership and, particularly, instructional leadership. Research on instructional leadership is traced from its origins in the effective school's movement of the 1970s and 1980s to more recent developments with regard to shared instructional leadership. Chapter three outlines the study's research design and will explain the rationale, type, and procedures for this explanatory mixed methods case study. Chapters four and five are devoted to descriptive and inferential quantitative analyses of the PIMRS data, respectively. Chapter six focuses on the qualitative data analysis. The final chapter, chapter seven, answers the study's four research questions, suggests future avenues for research on instructional leadership, as well as provides practical advice for rural secondary school principals.

Conclusion

Though still very much rooted in its effective elementary school origins, instructional leadership has expanded to be, in many policymakers and practitioners' minds, the leadership model of choice when it comes to improving school quality and student achievement. High school principals, in today's educational climate that demands increased rigor and accountability, must be concerned with their role in matters of curriculum and instruction. Research has shown that their values, decisions, and actions can and do influence school outcomes and student achievement. It is the principal who is often left holding the blame if achievement benchmarks are not met.

Unfortunately, few principals actually muster the combination of expertise and wherewithal to actively and effectively behave as instructional leaders, particularly on the high school level. Contextual aspects inherent to secondary schools complicate the exercise of the directive, transactional forms of instructional leadership proven successful in elementary settings. Examining the contextual factors that both hinder and facilitate the exercise of instructional leadership in high schools can help point to ways to improve the practice and development of instructional leaders in secondary schools. This overarching purpose—to examine instructional leadership in the high school context—informs this entire study from the review of literature, collection and analyses of data, to the findings and conclusions.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

This study seeks to add to an already existent body of research on the instructional leadership of principals. For over two decades, researchers have defined, examined, and refined this concept through a variety of studies, whether quantitative, qualitative, or mixed. Further, this concept has enjoyed tremendous longevity within the field of educational research. Boote and Beile (2005) explained that the study of prior and present research is crucial "to advance our collective understanding" (p. 3). As such, a fundamental step in this dissertation process has been a scholarly examination of this research.

Boote and Beile (2005) stated that "a substantive, thorough, sophisticated literature review is a precondition for doing substantive, thorough, sophisticated research" (p. 3). This literature review is an integral part of the research process and helps refine the purpose and focus of the study. It is necessary in understanding "what has been done before, the strengths and weaknesses of existing studies, and what they might mean" (p. 3). The review roots the dissertation firmly within a historical context and establishes its relevance and significance to present research. A literature review of the principal and instructional leadership yields an array of interesting, pertinent findings as well as points to future avenues of research.

Before proceeding into the actual literature review itself, it is necessary to revisit the purpose and research questions for this study and briefly discuss how they will influence this review. As has already been noted, the purpose of this explanatory mixed methods case study is to examine instructional leadership within the context of rural secondary schools. The researcher will utilize both quantitative and qualitative methodology in order to more fully study the myriad qualities and aspects of both leader and context that contribute to and/or prevent the exercise of

instructional leadership in rural secondary schools. Specifically, this mixed methods case study addresses four questions:

1. How do the perceptions of principals compare with those of their faculties in regard to the principals' roles and effectiveness as instructional leaders in rural secondary schools? (quantitative and qualitative)
2. What district level and individual school factors both facilitate and hinder the exercise of instructional leadership in rural secondary schools? (quantitative and qualitative)
3. What instructional leadership decisions and behaviors of principals most influence classroom instruction and student achievement in rural secondary schools? (qualitative)
4. How is instructional leadership in rural secondary schools similar to and different from the typical conceptualization of this leadership model? (qualitative)

The purpose and questions of this study are integral to the selection and organization of the studies that follow. At a most basic level, the purpose and questions presupposes that school leadership, and specifically instructional leadership, matters—that principals should behave as instructional leaders. The first section of this is an overview of the various sources of research on instructional leadership as well as the various methodological features of this research. Secondly, there is a discussion of the importance and impact of principal leadership. Thirdly, the origins of instructional leadership as an extension of the effective schools movements are traced. Next, various specific models of instructional leadership are outlined. Then, important studies conducted on this concept are explicated with particular focus on the role context plays in influencing the exercise of instructional leadership. Also, the limitations of this research are analyzed in order to establish the significance and rationale for this study on instructional leadership. Finally, the theoretical perspective that will guide this study is discussed.

Search Process for Literature Review

This review of literature began with a purposeful search for empirical studies and articles involving principal leadership and, particularly, instructional leadership. The first step entailed examination of electronic databases and search engines (i.e., ERIC, Ed Full Text, Google Scholar, and Google Books) using keywords (principal leadership, instructional leadership, instructional management, shared instructional leadership) to find relevant studies. Secondly, the researcher electronically and physically searched various educational journals on leadership (e.g., *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *Educational Leadership*, *Educational Research Quarterly*, *Journal of Educational Leadership*, *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*). The third step involved the study of reference lists in relevant review articles (e.g., Hallinger, 2003, 2005, 2008; Hallinger & Heck, 1996b, 1998; Leithwood et al., 2004; Southworth 2002), books (e.g., Blasé & Blasé, 2004; Cotton, 2003; Duke, 1987; Smith & Andrews, 1989), and book chapters (e. g., Hallinger & Heck, 1996a; Leithwood & Duke, 1999) in order to identify further relevant research. The fourth step involved an examination of unpublished dissertations studying instructional leadership, primarily studies that used the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) in secondary schools (Adams, 2002; Adkins, 1990; Brown, 1991; Dickerson, 1999; Garcia, 1999; Haack, 1991; Hallinger, 2008; Johnson, 2006).

These search efforts resulted in a considerable array of research on instructional leadership, which forms the basis of this review. In completing this review, over 75 studies, articles, dissertations, books, book chapters, and the like were studied. Much of the research on instructional leadership, owing to its effective schools roots and focus on student achievement, has been empirical, primarily quantitative correlational survey designs and qualitative case studies (Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b; Hallinger, 2008; Leithwood et al., 2004). Efforts have

been made, however, to use more sophisticated and robust methods (e.g. regression, path analysis, linear modeling) in order to appreciate the indirect, mediated nature of the influence instructional leadership has on schools and student achievement as well as better discern causal relationships between the leadership of principals and school outcomes (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Heck, Larsen, & Marcoulides, 1990; Marks & Printy, 2003; Silins & Mulford, 2002; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008) .

Additionally, works with more theoretical and practitioner focuses have been authored. Typically these studies examined instructional leadership in terms of what conceptual frameworks should be used by researchers (Hallinger, 2003), how to develop and foster instructional leadership behaviors in principals (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Sergiovanni, 1991), and how to share instructional leadership responsibilities with stakeholders (Blasé & Kirby, 2000; Lambert, 1998). Table 1 lists most of the studies and articles addressed in this review and provides a summary of their samples, methodologies, designs, and findings.

Table 1

Empirical and Theoretical Studies Discussed in the Review of Literature

Reference	Sample	Methodology			Design	Findings
		QUAN	QUAL	MIXED		
Adams (2002)	3 low performing, high improving high schools			x	Case study	Vision, staff development, data-driven decisions, and incentives contributed to improvement efforts.
Adkins (1990)	74 high school principals, 10% of teachers	x			Regression Analysis	Positive relationships between visionary leadership and 4 instructional leadership behaviors: supervision, visibility, program management, and school climate.
Andrews & Soder (1987)	33 urban elementary schools	x			Correlational	Student scores higher in schools with strong instructional leadership.
Bamburg & Andrews (1990)	10 high achieving , 10 low achieving elementary schools	x			Correlational	Goals essential for effective instructional leadership and student achievement.
Barth (1990)	Various leadership, adult learning research	x	x		Review of research, book	Leadership is a shared responsibility; a collective vision for school reform is essential for success.
Beck & Murphy (1993)	Various leadership studies	x	x		Metaphorical analyses	Instructional leaders focus on goals, technical operations, and active role in teaching and learning.
Blasé & Blasé (2004)	800 teachers, all levels		x		Open-ended questionnaire	Instructional leadership involves conferencing, staff development, reflection, visibility, praise, and autonomy.
Blasé & Kirby (2000)	Various cases of exemplary leadership	x	x		Review of research, description	Leaders empower teachers through praise, communication, autonomy, staff development, resources, and best practice; leadership is contextual.

Table 1 Continued

Reference	Sample	Methodology			Design	Findings
		QUAN	QUAL	MIXED		
Braughton & Riley (1991)	20 elementary schools: 20 principals, 68 teachers	x			Regression Analysis	Negative correlation between principal and teacher reading knowledge and student achievement.
Brewer (1993)	Sample of 1100 high schools	x			Multivariate regression	Instructional leaders impact achievement through goals and teachers.
Brown (1991)	55 principals in Blue Ribbon and non-Blue Ribbon high school	x			Correlational	Leaders placed greater importance on goals, instructional time, and student monitoring.
Burlingame (1987)	Various effective schools research		x		Analysis of research, case study	Research places too much importance on principal role and ignores context in cases of effective leadership.
Cotton (2003)	81 leadership studies	x	x		Analysis of research	Article identifies 26 essential traits; principal's relationship with students key to student success.
Creemers & Reezigt, (1996)	Various leadership studies	x	x		Analysis of research	School factors explain 10 to 20 percent of the variation in student learning.
Cuban (1984)	Various effective schools research	x	x		Review of research	Issues of finance/governance complicate reforms; nature of instructional leadership dependent on context.
Cuban (1988)	Variouseffective schools/leadership research	x	x		Analysis of research	Administrators are instructors, managers, and politicians; context drives principals to the managerial.

Table 1 Continued

Reference	Sample	Methodology			Design	Findings
		QUAN	QUAL	MIXED		
Dickerson (1999)	12 hs, 214 teachers	x			Correlational	Community type (rural/urban) and school SES influences teacher perception of instructional leadership.
Duke (1987)	Various cases of instructional leadership		x		Case study	Book identifies 7 primary roles for instructional leaders.
Dwyer (1986)	Various instructional leadership research	x	x		Analysis of research	Principal power shrinking while expectations for results are increasing; research on instructional leadership should be examined cautiously.
Eberts & Stone (1986)	Sample of 300 elementary schools	x			Correlational	Instructional leadership and conflict resolution important for student achievement; loss of consensus impedes success.
Edmonds (1979)	Various effective schools studies		x		Review of research; case study	Strong instructional leadership needed for success of disadvantaged students.
Garcia (1999)	Texas high school with large Hispanic populations	x			Correlational	Principals rated lowest on visibility; significant difference between perceptions of principals and teachers with regard to instructional leadership behaviors.
Glasman (1984)	175 most effective, 97 least effective principals		x		Exploratory, Description	Effective leadership focuses on achievement, shares test data with teachers, and evaluates performance.
Gerzi (1990)	Inner city elementary school		x		Case Study	Effective leadership tied to student motivation.

Table 1 Continued

Reference	Sample	Methodology			Design	Findings
		QUAN	QUAL	MIXED		
Haack (1991)	55 superintentents, 55 principals, 55 teachers high schools	x			Correlational	Significant agreement between principals and superintendents with regard to instructional leadership; significant difference between teachers and principals.
Hallinger (2003)	Various instructional/transformational leadership studies	x	x		Review of research	Contingent view of leadership that embeds leadership within the context needed to more fully examine instructional leadership.
Hallinger (2005)	Various instructional leadership studies	x	x		Analysis of research	Instructional leadership still prevalent in academic, political, and professional discourse
Hallinger (2008)	119 doctoral studies using the PIMRS	x	x		Critical synthesis	Most studies still involve elementary schools; instructional leadership prevalent topic for doctoral dissertations; methods employed are limited, primarily correlational.
Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis (1996)	87 elementary schools	x			Structural modeling	Gender, SES, and parental involvement influence leadership; clear mission essential for student achievement.
Hallinger & Heck (1996a)	38 leadership studies	x		x	Analysis of research; correlational	Most studies involved elementary schools with few mixed methods studies; leadership is both independent and dependent variable; leaders indirectly influence achievement through goal-setting.
Hallinger & Heck (1996b)	38 leadership studies	x		x	Analysis of research; correlational	Leaders influence indirect; Few experimental, longitudinal, or mixed studies.

Table 1 Continued

Reference	Sample	Methodology			Design	Findings
		QUAN	QUAL	MIXED		
Hallinger & Murphy (1985)	10 urban elementary schools	x			Description	Principals are more involved in instructional leadership than previously thought; gender and age of principal affect leadership.
Hallinger & Murphy (1986)	8 urban elementary schools of varying SES		x		Exploratory, description	School SES affects nature of instructional leadership in effective elementary schools.
Heck (1992)	3 elementary/17 high schools	x			Discriminant analysis	Presence of instructional leadership predictive of school achievement.
Heck (2000)	122 elementary schools	x			Multilevel regression modeling	Controlling for student composition, schools with strong instructional leadership and educational programs produce higher student outcomes.
Heck, Larsen, & Marcoulides (1990)	118 elementary/high schools: 332 teachers, 56 principals	x			Structural modeling	Principals influence achievement through instructional organization and school climate.
Heck, Marcoulides, & Lang (1991)	36 elementary/high schools	x			Discriminant analysis	Presence of instructional leadership predictive of school achievement.
Jackson (2000)	1 high school		x		Case study	Leadership must be distributed to all stakeholders and be based upon shared beliefs, values and, contexts for adult learning.
Johnson (2006)	276 high school principals	x			Correlational	Relationship found between presence of instructional leadership and school achievement/performance in goals, visibility, instructional time, and staff development.

Table 1 Continued

Reference	Sample	Methodology			Design	Findings
		QUAN	QUAL	MIXED		
Lambert (2002)	Anecdotes of schools with effective shared leadership programs		x		Review of research, description	School reform depends upon developing shared instructional leadership capacities in teachers and other stakeholders.
Leithwood (1994)	7 quantitative studies examing transformational leadership	x			Path analysis	School reform has shifted to high schools which are too large and complex for typical instructional leadership models; Transformational leadership influenced teachers' perceptions of reform and achievement.
Leithwood & Duke (1999)	Various instructional leadership studies	x	x		Analysis of research	Empirical evidence shows that instructional leadership practices increase student outcomes.
Leithwood et al. (2004)	Various leadership studies	x	x		Review of research	Leadership second only to classroom instruction in influencing achievement; Leaders set direction, develop people, and redesign the organization; future research should embed leadership in the context.
Leithwood & Montgomery (1982)	Various leadership studies		x		Review of research	Leaders use goals, factors, and strategies to improve schools; Leaders face 4 primary obstacles: teachers, role, district, community.
Leitner (1994)	27 urban elementary schools	x			Correlational	Instructional leaders use academic goals to create culture of high achievement.

Table 1 Continued

Reference	Sample	Methodology			Design	Findings
		QUAN	QUAL	MIXED		
March (1978)	Various leadership studies	x	x		Review of research	Leaders learn through experience; effective leadership training programs require information and best practices and appreciation of flexibility.
Marks & Printy (2003)	24 elementary, middle, and high schools	x			Hierarchical linear modeling	Instructional focus essential student achievement, but schools benefit from inclusion of transformational practices.
Mortimore (1993)	Inner city elementary school		x		Case study	Motivation and self-efficacy integral to effective leadership.
Murphy (2002)	Various leadership studies	x	x		Review of research	Principal/ school success tied to student performance.
Murphy & Shipman (2003)	Various research on ISLLC standards	x	x		Overview of ISLLC	Reform efforts examining leadership led to the development of ISLLC in order to move principal training beyond the knowledge acquisition to effective application.
Portin et al. (2003)	21 schools		x		Case study	Leaders must be problem solvers and share leadership responsibilities; 7 key responsibilities for school leaders.
Prestine & Bowen (1993)	4 middle, junior high, and high schools		x		Multi-site case study	Teacher support and leadership roles essential to successful reform; change occurs over time and across shifting contexts.

Table 1 Continued

Reference	Sample	Methodology			Design	Findings
		QUAN	QUAL	MIXED		
Rowan & Denk (1984)	149 schools, CAP data for 6th graders	x			Longitudinal regression modeling	Changes in leaders affect achievement, but the effects develop slowly and are influenced by SES context.
Scheurich (1998)	Urban HiPass elementary school		x		Case Study	Caring, effective leaders can overcome obstacles to student learning.
Scott & Teddlie (1987)	76 elementary schools: 76 principals, 250 teachers, 5,289 students	x			Structural modeling	Student SES is a strong predictor of achievement, but expectations of students, teachers, and principals affect achievement as well.
Sheppard (1996)	58 elementary, high schools: 638 teachers	x			Correlational	Instructional leadership related to commitment, involvement, and innovativeness of teachers; Variance differed depending on school level.
Silins & Mulford (2002)	96 high schools: 2503 principals, teachers	x			Path analysis	Leadership is exercised directly and indirectly through others; effective schools succeed despite the influence of SES and background.
Smith & Andrews (1989)	Various IL research and case studies	x	x		Review of research, Case study	There are 4 key instructional leader roles: resource provider, instructional resource, communicator, and visible presence; principals with differing styles can be instructional leaders.

Table 1 Continued

Reference	Sample	Methodology			Design	Findings
		QUAN	QUAL	MIXED		
Van de Grift & Houtveen (1999)	174 elementary schools	x			Correlational	Controlling for SES, instructional leadership does positively impact pupil achievement.
Waters et al. (2003)	69 leadership studies	x			Meta-analysis	21 leadership behaviors correlated with student achievement.
Waters & Grubb (2004)	69 leadership studies	x			Meta-analysis	Principals do influence achievement.
Witziers et al., (2003)	37 leadership studies	x			Meta-analysis	Direct effects of principal leadership on outcomes statistically quite small; longitudinal data on leadership needed to fully understand impact.

Note. CAP=California Achievement Program.

Methodological Features of Research on Instructional Leadership

In beginning the main body of this literature review, a discussion of the specific methodological features (methods, samples, and designs) of principal leadership and instructional leadership research is required before synthesizing the findings of these myriad studies. Although the primary focus of this section is on the methodological features of the research, some general statements as to the findings may be mentioned. Throughout this discussion, periodic reference to Table 1, which summarizes much of this information, might prove helpful.

In reviewing salient literature on principal leadership, Leithwood et al. (2004) identified three primary sources of research on the leadership of the principal—qualitative case studies of leaders in effective schools, quantitative studies looking at the impact of leadership on student and school outcomes, and quantitative studies examining specific behaviors of leader. The research effort depicted by Table 1 largely supported this assertion. Table 1 reveals that researchers over the past two to three decades examined instructional leadership using a variety of methods and designs, subjects and participants, and contexts.

Qualitative Studies of Instructional Leadership

Qualitative case studies (Edmonds, 1979; Gerzi, 1990; Maden, 2001; Mortimore, 1993; Scheurich, 1998) depicted both highly effective and ineffective examples of school leaders, particularly within urban elementary schools. Using interviews and observations, researchers chronicled the efforts of principals in effective schools to overcome disadvantaging circumstances in improving the schools and raising student test scores. Instructional leaders were viewed as having considerable direct impact on student achievement, findings which were often dissonant to those of quantitative studies (Robinson et al., 2008). This influence and

impact was often realized through the principal's abilities to exercise strong, caring leadership (Edmonds; Scheurich) and motivate students and staff (Gerzi; Mortimore). Also, these case studies many times offered general insight, specific behaviors, and effective leadership programs for practitioners wishing to develop and act as instructional leaders (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Portin et al., 2003; Smith & Andrews, 1989). Exploratory descriptive studies that interviewed large numbers of teachers and principals at all levels (Blasé & Blasé, 2004; Glasman, 1984) focused principals' instructional leadership roles in developing and working with staff and further added to the qualitative portion of this body of research. As is the case with qualitative data, these findings, however, could not be generalized to a larger population so other researchers attempted to quantify the relationship between leadership, achievement, and context.

Quantitative Studies of Instructional Leadership

Since instructional leadership is so tied to the improvement of schools as measured by student achievement, researchers conducted substantial quantitative research examining the direct and indirect effects of the principal's instructional leadership on said achievement. Large-scale quantitative studies (Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b, 1998) of the direct effect of leadership on schools and student learning were often correlational; few were experimental and none longitudinal. This is hardly surprising given the inherent challenges, both logistical and ethical, of performing experimental, longitudinal research within the field of educational (Teddlie, 2005). A perusal of Table 1 reveals that a majority of this research was conducted in elementary schools. Using some form of survey or questionnaire measuring perceptions of instructional leadership, researchers then compared these data with student outcomes, typically test scores, using a variety of hypothesis testing techniques (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Braughton

& Riley, 1991; Goldring & Pasternak, 1994; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Sheppard, 1998). Unlike as with qualitative studies, most of this research identified the influence of instructional leaders as smaller and in more indirect terms, such as setting goals and protecting instructional time.

Quantitative meta-analyses of leadership behaviors (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Waters & Grubb, 2004; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003; Witziers, Bosker, & Kruger, 2003) also informed this body of research, revealing the relative direct effect leadership has on student outcomes and a series of leadership practices that principals must improve in order to positively affect student achievement. These analyses entailed the examination of extant studies on principal leadership, including instructional leadership models, in which researchers estimated the effect size of principal leadership on student outcomes Studies analyzed ranged in number from 37 (Witzier et al.) to 69 (Waters and colleagues). Wide variance in findings occurred between these studies, which will be discussed in more depth later. Still, this research supported the conclusion that principal influence is largely indirect.

In an attempt to effectively study the indirect paths through which instructional leaders influence school outcomes, some researchers moved beyond correlational direct effects studies to more sophisticated mediated/indirect effects studies (Hallinger et al., 1996; Heck et al., 1990; Marks & Printy, 2003; Silins & Mulford, 2002). These studies used quantitative methods, such as structural modeling, hierarchical linear modeling, and path analysis, to examine not only the contextual variables that influence instructional leadership but to also identify indirect ways in which principals influence teaching and, in turn, student learning and achievement. These studies revealed potential causal relationships between instructional leaders' work through governance, school climate, and instructional programs and student outcomes.

Additionally, some of these studies provided insight into secondary schools where prevailing thought argues that instructional leadership functions in an even more indirect fashion than in elementary schools and principals must share decision-making with other stakeholders (Heck et al., 1990; Marks & Printy, 2003; Silins & Mulford, 2002). Still, even sophisticated quantitative designs such as these, ultimately fell short of identifying explicit causal relationships between leadership and achievement. Teddlie (2005) presented three possible reasons for this shortcoming in quantitative methodology: the practical and ethical issues involving random sampling and assignment of treatment, the inability to designate a truly "leaderless" control group, and the relative insignificance of educational leadership as an independent variable given the overwhelming influence of variables outside schools and principals' control on achievement.

The Absence of Mixed Methods Studies

A noticeable absence, in methodological terms, from the instructional leadership research reviewed in Table 1, was that of studies using a mixed methods design. Of the studies reviewed, only one, an unpublished dissertation on instructional leadership in three low-performing/high improving secondary schools (Adams, 2002), utilized an explicit mixed methods approach. Despite a concerted search effort for mixed methods studies explicitly exploring instructional leadership, they were still a relative rarity in the research, regardless of the potential advantages these types of designs may present in examining this concept (Hallinger & Heck, 1996b; Teddlie, 2005). Teddlie (2005) argued that a mixed methods approach to the study of leadership in education would be advantageous because of its ability to address both causal relationships (typically the arena of QUAN research) as well as causal mechanisms (typically the arena of QUAL research) among leadership, context, and outcomes. In short, quantitative research established the existence of a relationship, while qualitative means were much more effective at

explaining the nature of this relationship. Particularly, an explanatory design with sequential quantitative and qualitative phases that first allowed a researcher to establish relationships between leadership and school variables and then allowed the explanation of the reasons/mechanisms for said relationships would be of benefit to the field (Hallinger & Heck; Teddlie).

Summary

A fundamental piece of the review of literature is to disclose both what is known and how we know it. This discussion has involved the latter. In summary, a review of the methodological features of instructional leadership research revealed several pertinent facets and trends in this research:

- Researchers conducted considerable empirical research, both qualitative and quantitative, on the direct effects of instructional leadership on student outcomes.
- Discrepancy as to the nature (direct vs. indirect) and magnitude (large vs. small) existed between quantitative and qualitative researchers.
- Research designs of instructional leadership studies primarily comprised qualitative case studies and quantitative correlational studies.
- Researchers most often examined elementary schools in urban settings, prompting this researcher's focus on rural secondary schools.
- Some researchers adopted more sophisticated quantitative designs in order to examine the indirect/mediated paths through which principals appear to influence achievement and ascertain causal relationships among leadership, context, and outcomes.

- The methodological limitations of both quantitative and qualitative research complicated the chances of either fully understanding instructional leadership and led to the adoption of a mixed methods design for this effort.

The research studies in Table 1 are important not only in what they tell us about principal leadership and instructional leadership but also in what they might miss or neglect. This analysis and discussion of methodologies employed in these studies formed the rationale behind certain design decisions made with regard to this study. The next step in this review was to examine the findings of this research.

The Power of School Leadership in Influencing Student Learning

The 21st century only increased political and public focus on test scores and achievement standards as the primary benchmark of school success (Klump & Barton, 2007; Murphy, 2002; Murphy & Shipman, 2003). Because of this reality, school administrators could not neglect their instructional responsibilities. Research suggested that the leadership of the principal is second only to classroom instruction in factors that influence, either positively or negatively, the learning of students (Klump & Barton, 2007; Leithwood et al., 2004). In fact, Waters and Grubbs (2004) found that a one standard deviation improvement in leadership was associated with a ten percentile difference in achievement. Principal leadership affected student learning, and these leadership effects were largest where they were needed most (Leithwood et al.). In other words, the more a school and, in turn, a student population needed effective instructional leadership, the more impact a successful leader would have in improving student achievement in the school.

While these statements sound powerful, there was some need to provide perspective and context for them. Researchers, particularly quantitative, concluded the combined direct and

indirect effects of principal leadership were small but educationally significant (Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Heck, 1996a). School leadership represented roughly three to five percent of the variation in student learning (Creemers & Reezigt, 1996; Hallinger & Heck). This relatively small effect was rendered significant because all school variables (e.g., leadership, school climate, classroom instruction) signify only 10 to 20 percent of the variation in student learning (Creemers & Reezigt). Student intake factors (e.g., socio-economic status, race, or home life) represented the vast majority of the variation (Creemers & Reezigt; Hallinger & Heck). In other words, factors often outside the direct control of schools were the most influential of factors affecting student learning.

Regardless of these findings, leadership was and still is looked to as the panacea for many of the woes facing schools. It was an educational variable that, especially when compared with complex problems like endemic poverty, a lack of proper healthcare, dilapidated facilities, and other social and educational issues, easily influenced by policy (Hallinger & Heck, 1996b). School principals can be removed or replaced with relative ease if a school is not performing. As a result, policymakers often neglected other intervening factors when focusing on leadership as the primary strategy for school change/reform (March, 1978). Still, this preoccupation with principal leadership, while at times unfair, was not wholly unjustified and is not going away. Quite simply, as Leithwood et al. (2004) explained, "'effective' or 'successful' leadership is critical to school reform (p. 4).

The Origins of Instructional Leadership

Effective Schools Movement

A focus on the importance of principal leadership stemmed indirectly from a myriad of research on school change, reform, and improvement conducted in the 1970s and 1980s (Fullan,

1982; Purkey & Smith, 1983; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). Most notably, however, the effective schools movement led to the development and prominence of instructional leadership (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Heck, 1996b; Klump & Barton, 2007; Leithwood & Duke, 1999). During this time educational researchers and policymakers attempted to discover key educational inputs that could be influenced in order to improve schools and student achievement. Leadership became one of these key inputs identified (Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Heck, 1996b). Researchers quickly recognized the leadership of the principal as an integral part of creating and sustaining effective schools, especially within urban contexts. The concept of instructional leadership eventually became an important way to articulate, define, and study the principal's roles and responsibilities in schools.

The Effective Urban Elementary School Principal

Much of this early research examined leadership in regard to the effective urban elementary school, and as such many of the factors inherent within the urban elementary school context proved highly influential upon the instructional leadership model (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Edmonds, 1979; Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993). Researchers defined instructional leaders as strong, directive principals who focused on instruction and curriculum (Bamburg & Andrews, 1990; Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982; Edmonds, 1979; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986). The principal bore most, if not all, of the responsibilities of instructional leadership.

Instructional leadership was the role of principals, not teachers or other faculty (Bossert et al., 1982; Dwyer, 1986; Edmonds, 1979, Glasman, 1984; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). These principals were goal-oriented and hands-on, often "hip deep" in matters of teaching and learning (Cuban, 1984; Edmonds; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986).

Principals in effective schools emphasized academic goals (i.e., student achievement) and held teachers and students to high expectations (Mortimore, 1993; Purkey & Smith, 1983).

Because of the often relatively small size of elementary schools as well as other structural factors, instructional leadership developed into a rather autocratic, top-down style of leadership that placed much of the onus for achievement and reform on the principal (Edmonds, 1979; Hallinger, 2003, 2005; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982). Effective instructional leaders assumed a direct role in matters of curriculum and instruction beyond simply providing a general purpose or vision for the school. Effective schools research depicted intrepid and dynamic principals, who through hard work and force of will, overcame many of the harsh challenges of urban schooling (Edmonds).

This research led to extensive empirical study of instructional leadership in its own right (e.g., Andrews & Soder, 1987; Duke, 1987; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; Smith & Andrews, 1989). As this model of principal leadership gained wider acceptance, researchers worked to translate it into other contexts, such as middle and high schools. Initially, the application of instructional leadership to secondary schools was rather superficial, ignoring important contextual dissimilarities (Hallinger, 2005). Fortunately, this model continues to evolve in regard to schools that are larger and possess more specialized, departmentalized structures (Hallinger).

Definition of Instructional Leadership/Leader

With the origins of instructional leadership discussed, it becomes necessary to articulate as clear and cogent of a definition as possible. Instructional leadership is very much concerned with the principal's place in directing curriculum and instruction (Bamburg & Andrews, 1990; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). This concept focuses on the behaviors of educators as they engage

in activities that positively influence the growth of students (Leithwood & Duke, 1999). Through the lens of instructional leadership, then, the success of principals is measured in terms of the amount and nature of improvement they realize within a school, typically as determined by student academic achievement (Edmonds, 1979). Instructional leaders accomplish this success by setting goals, allocating resources, managing curriculum, and developing and evaluating faculty.

The definition of instructional leadership continues to evolve in the world of educational research. While Hallinger (2003) characterized the typical view of instructional leadership as a decidedly top-down, transactional style of leadership, ideas from more distributed, transformational conceptions of leadership have increasingly influenced instructional leadership. Leithwood et al. (2004) suggested the development of people—teachers, students, and other stakeholders—is a key part any model of effective leadership and that the principal cannot assume all power and responsibility in schools. Hallinger (2003) asserted that instructional leaders were finding it more and more necessary to delegate responsibilities, especially in certain contexts, and posited that principals may have to utilize a range of styles contingent on the situation. Marks and Printy (2003) concluded that while involving others in instructional leadership is beneficial for principals, a clear instructional focus on improving student academic performance must be the collective mission of the school.

In short, instructional leadership was a model that requires principal be the "principal teacher" in the school. At the heart of the model was a focus on matters of teaching and learning by the leader, staff, and students of a school. The definition, however, for this concept is an elastic one that continues to benefit from research and study.

Typologies/Models of Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership, as a general concept of principal leadership, has enjoyed tremendous longevity within the field of education. The idea that principals must first and foremost focus a school's purpose on student achievement resonated among researchers, practitioners, and policymakers. Klump and Barton (2007) pointed out that NCLB legislation today calls for principals to be instructional leaders. But beyond the broad notion of instructional leadership, certain researchers have articulated specific models/typologies of instructional leadership that identify specific behaviors and responsibilities of these types of effective school leaders (Duke, 1987; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Smith & Andrews, 1989). A discussion of these typologies will reveal both similarities and differences.

Duke (1987) authored the first book to comprehensively examine how school leaders (i.e., principals, assistant principals, department chairs) behave when acting in instructional leadership roles. This book drew upon cases and examples of effective instructional leaders from a variety of settings and grade levels—elementary, middle, and high schools—in order to identify the key responsibilities of an effective instructional leader. Duke discussed seven primary responsibilities of instructional leaders: teacher supervision and evaluation, staff and professional development, instructional management and support, resource management, quality control, coordination, and troubleshooting. Successful instructional leaders fulfill each of these obligations in order to improve student achievement and school climate.

The research of Smith and Andrews (1989) encapsulated the responsibilities of instructional leaders into four areas: resource provider, instructional resource, communicator, and visible presence. A fundamental responsibility of principals is to provide needed materials and resources to teachers and students. These resources can be range from tangible (money,

books, technology) to the intangible (planning time and professional development opportunities). As an instructional resource, principals themselves are sources of advice, information, and guidance on matters of teaching and learning. Further, principals as instructional leaders communicate to teachers, students, and stakeholders a clear vision for the school. Lastly, principals must be visible and active parts of schools and their instructional programs; as visible presences, principals do not stay in the office but are in the hallways and classrooms.

Principals possess considerable obligation, whether moral, ethical, and/or legal, in ensuring that all students in a school achieve and receive a quality education (Smith & Andrews, 1989). Principals, acting as instructional leaders, play a fundamental role in attaining this goal for their students and schools. Smith and Andrews examined a myriad of literature, research, and case studies to define the four primary responsibilities of instructional leaders. They also asserted that principals with very different personalities and management styles can be effective instructional leaders provided they emphasize these four dimensions. Further, Smith and Andrews developed an observational checklist and questionnaire that can be used by researchers seeking to study the instructional leadership of principals.

More than two decades ago, Hallinger and Murphy (1985) developed an influential model of instructional leadership that is still used in research today. Leithwood and Duke (1999) asserted that this is the most fully tested and empirically studied of instructional leadership models. In fact, Hallinger (2005) provided an analysis of the many studies conducted on instructional leadership from the 1980s to 2000. In this review, Hallinger (2005) outlined three dimensions of instructional leadership: defining the school mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school climate. Again, much of this early research was conducted in elementary schools in urban settings, but the model has since branched out to serve

as the chief conception of effective school leadership in all educational settings. Figure 1 summarizes key dimensions and functions of Hallinger's instructional leadership model.

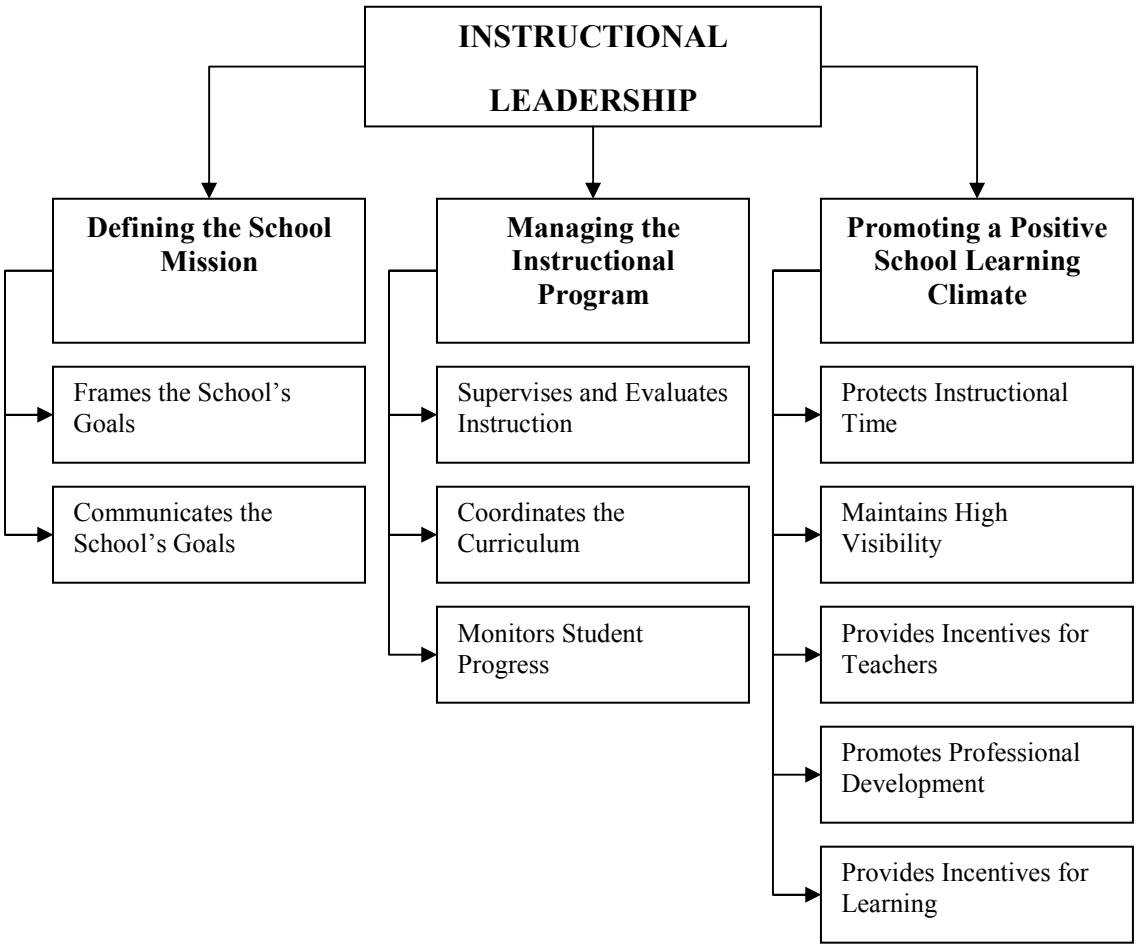


Figure 1. Instructional leadership dimensions and functions.

As definers of the school mission, effective instructional leaders frame and communicate goals to faculty, students, and the community (Hallinger, 2003, 2005; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). As instructional program managers, they have responsibilities for the supervision and evaluation of staff, the coordination of curriculum, and the scrutiny of student progress (Hallinger, 2003, 2005; Hallinger & Murphy). Lastly, instructional leaders, as promoters of a positive school climate, safeguard instructional time, champion academic standards, and maintain high visibility throughout the school (Hallinger, 2003, 2005; Hallinger & Murphy). Hand in hand with the development of this instructional leadership model was the creation of a research instrument for studying the instructional leadership of the principal—the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS). Researchers continue to use both this model and instrument in studies examining the leadership of the principal (Hallinger, 2008).

Since the 1980s, researchers have conducted more than 100 studies using Hallinger's model and instrument (Hallinger, 2005, 2008). Interest in instructional leadership waned from the 1990-2000, replaced by increased study of more distributed, transformational conceptions of leadership. With the onset of a "growing policy interest in instructional leadership and performance standards" in the new century, however, research interest in this model may again be on the rise (Hallinger, 2005, p. 11)

The Impact, Role, and Responsibilities of Instructional Leaders

Because of the relative import of principal leadership in regard to improving student learning, much research has been conducted on the instructional leadership of principals since this idea was first conceived in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Klump & Barton, 2007; Leithwood et al., 2004). Some key researchers in this arena have authored substantial overviews of this research on principal leadership and instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2003, 2005, 2008;

Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b, 1998; Leithwood et al.). The findings of this research reveal a great deal about instructional leaders but also point to other avenues of study for the future.

The Impact of Instructional Leadership on Student Achievement

Several researchers studied the impact of educational leadership on student achievement (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Bamburg & Andrews, 1990; Brewer, 1993; Eberts & Stone, 1986; Edmonds, 1979; Gerzi, 1990; Goldring & Pasternak, 1994; Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b, 1998; Heck, 1992; Heck 2000; Heck, Marcoulides, & Lang, 1991; Maden, 2001; Marks & Printy, 2003; Mortimore, 1993; Robinson et al. 2008; Scheurich, 1998; Van de Grift & Houtveen 1999). However, as already mentioned, discrepancy along methodological lines existed among the findings of these researchers and the magnitude and nature of the impact instructional leadership had on school outcomes. The findings of case study researchers (e.g., Edmonds, 1979; Maden, 2001; Schreurich, 1998) determined the impact of the principal as considerable and highly influential. Researchers attributed substantial responsibility for the successful reform of underperforming schools to the interventions and leadership of effective instructional leaders. A strong instructional leader could and did directly impact student achievement.

Quantitative studies (e.g., Andrews & Soder, 1987; Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b, 1998; Van de Grift & Houtveen, 1999) often disagreed with the findings of qualitative researchers. In most, a small but statistically significant relationship was found between instructional leadership and student achievement (Hallinger & Heck). This is not to say that there was no disagreement within quantitative research. Robinson et al. (2008), in a meta analyses of 16 instructional leadership studies, found that half indicated weak relationship and half indicated a strong to moderate impact. Those studies in the later group (e.g., Bamburg & Andrews, 1990; Heck, 1992; Heck et al., 1991) compared high and low performing schools with

similar demographics, discovering important differences in the instructional leadership between these types of schools. Further, researchers who considered larger and more complex contexts like secondary schools (Leithwood, 1994; Hallinger, 2003) questioned the feasibility of characterizing the influence of principals as a direct one. Witziers et al. (2003) argued that the lack of longitudinal data on principal leadership complicates research efforts, even those examining its indirect, mediated nature using more complex designs beyond the correlational.

These findings, both quantitative and qualitative, led to the conventional attitude that the impact of instructional leadership is indirect. Effective instructional leadership is exercised through principals' decisions regarding the direction, climate, and instructional programs of schools. This conclusion resulted in further findings on the role and responsibilities of instructional leaders in influencing schools and student achievement.

The Indirect Role of Instructional Leaders

Despite the fact that early instructional leadership research often depicted principals as "close to the classroom" (Little & Bird, 1987, p. 120), this is more suggestive of the focus of the principal rather than a direct responsibility of the school leader. The primary role of an instructional leader is largely an indirect one (Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b, 1998; Robinson et al., 2008). Principals exercise little direct influence on the classroom; the boundary line between office and classroom is as strong as ever (Hallinger). In fact, there is little evidence drawing a connection between principals' hands-on supervision of instruction and student achievement (Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b). Where this connection has been found is primarily on the elementary level and is often dictated by school size (Braughton & Riley, 1991; Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b).

Hallinger and Heck (1996b) argued that this fact should not be a "cause for alarm nor dismay" (p. 39). The heart of leadership is "achieving results through others" (p. 39). Principals ensure that leadership occurs but are not necessarily the sole providers of it (Portin, Schneider, DeArmond, & Gundlach, 2003). Effective instructional leaders set goals, design school structures, develop staff, and fulfill other crucial responsibilities (Hallinger & Heck, 1996b). Also, just because most of an instructional leader's influence is indirect does not mean he or she does not work directly with teachers (Bossert et al., 1982; Cuban, 1984; Dwyer, 1986; Edmonds, 1979; Hallinger & Murphy, 1986).

The Importance of a School Mission

Developing and articulating a mission or vision for the school is the most important and influential responsibility of an instructional leader (Adams, 2002; Bamburg & Andrews, 1990; Bossert et al., 1984; Brewer, 1993; Goldring & Pasternak, 1994; Glasman, 1984; Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b, 1998; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Johnson, 2006; Marks & Printy, 2003; Purkey & Smith, 1983). Study of the findings summarized in Table 1 repeatedly revealed the importance of goals, mission, vision, and high expectations for school success. Instructional leaders are goal-oriented and emphasize academic concerns and create a culture of high expectations (Bamburg & Andrews; Beck & Murphy 1993; Brewer; Brown, 1991; Glasman; Hallinger & Murphy; Goldring & Pasternak; Leitner, 1994; Mortimore, 1993; Purkey & Smith). This mission provides teachers, students, and other stakeholders with a sense of purpose and directs a school's efforts towards instructional ends. An instructional focus is essential to improving student achievement and may be enhanced by other factors but not replaced (Marks & Printy).

Murphy (1990) explained that a clear direction for the school, articulated in terms of specific learning goals or objectives, enables a school to marshal its teaching and learning efforts. This academic vision builds a culture of high standards and achievement for both teachers and students (Barth, 2002; Bossert et al., 1982; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985, 1986; Mortimore, 1993; Purkey & Smith, 1983). This instructional focus helps to creates consensus among faculty and staff (Brewer, 1993). Moreover, principals are called upon to be visionary, ambitious, and innovative in shaping the schools' mission (Deal, 1987; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1984). This mission influences how instructional leaders manage curriculum and instruction within the school (Bamburg & Andrews, 1990; Bossert et al.; Dwyer, 1986; Glasman, 1984; Hallinger & Murphy). Principals develop organizational structures that promote the goal of improving student learning (Bolman & Deal, 1992).

Solving Problems and Providing Resources

Not only do principals exercise their indirect influence by developing and articulating an instructional vision for the school, but also by solving organizational problems and providing needed resources to teachers (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Smith & Andrews, 1989). An instructional leader's roles as problem solver and resource provider are connected. Beck and Murphy (1993) remarked that "in many instances, principals who solve problems are portrayed as those who are most able to secure materials, money, time, or information for teachers" (p. 151). By aligning school culture and structures with the mission, instructional leaders affect student performance and school outcomes (Barth, 1990; Dwyer, 1986; Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b; Leitner, 1994; Southworth, 2002). Effective instructional leaders solve a school's problems with money, time, materials, and other resources in order to improve student achievement. Also, instructional leaders promote a school's learning

climate by maintaining a visible presence, protecting instructional time, and creating consensus among stakeholders (Adkins, 1990; Brown, 1991, 1989; Hallinger; Johnson, 2006; Eberts & Stone, 1986; Smith & Andrews).

Managing the Instructional Program

The second dynamic of instructional leadership—managing the instructional program—is the most problematic for school principals. As mentioned earlier, there is very little evidence of a connection between principal's direct monitoring of teachers and their instruction in regard to either a school's overall effectiveness or the achievement of students (Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b). Particularly, in the case of secondary schools, principals often find themselves without the time, expertise, and inclination to engage in hands-on supervision of classroom instruction (Barth, 1990; Bossert et al., 1982; Cuban, 1988; Hallinger, 2003, 2005; Lambert, 1998; Leithwood, 1994; Marshall, 1996). Even in smaller elementary schools, where principals are more likely to engage in this aspect of instructional leadership, the separation between principal and classroom remains strong (Hallinger, 2005). As it stands, the broader, more indirect behaviors of mission building and culture sustaining are the more prevalent and salient activities of instructional leaders (Hallinger, 2003).

Summary

Several key conclusions can be summarized from the above discussion regarding the impact, role, and responsibilities of instructional leadership:

- Despite some disagreement among qualitative and quantitative researchers, the general conclusion is that the impact of instructional leaders on schools and student achievement is indirect.

- Though often characterized as directly involved in the teaching and learning of students, instructional leaders influence outcomes through others.
- A school mission, founded on academic goals and high expectations, is the most important and influential responsibility of instructional leaders.
- Instructional leaders' efforts in creating and promoting a positive school climate, through resource provision, consensus-building, and active, visible presence, are also key responsibilities.
- There is little empirical evidence of principals' direct, active involvement in schools' instructional program or that this involvement impacts achievement.

Factors that Affect Instructional Leadership

A variety of factors—school size, organizational context, student population, socioeconomic status, leader qualities, and policy—influence the nature of instructional leadership exercised in schools (Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; 1986; Leithwood et al., 2004; Silins & Mulford, 2002). School context affects the role instructional leaders play within the organization in regard to mission building and other responsibilities (Bamburg & Andrews, 1990; Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Heck, 2002; Hallinger & Murphy; Scott & Teddlie, 1987). Hallinger (2005) asserted that "instructional leaders must adjust their role to the needs, opportunities and constraints imposed by the school context" (p. 19). In fact, an instructional leader's impact on student outcomes is often dictated by how successful he or she is in mitigating, overcoming, and/or managing contextual factors. The study of the relationship of instructional leadership and school context in not only fundamental to the understanding of its nature and influence but also in how and why certain

principals are able to effectively act as instructional leader. This research is important to the practice and development of instructional leaders.

Socioeconomic Status (SES)

Socioeconomic status is a contextual factor that influences instructional leadership in schools (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Dickerson, 1999; Hallinger et al., 1996; Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985, 1986; Rowan & Denk, 1984; Scott & Teddlie, 1987). As stated earlier, much of the initial research on instructional leadership was conducted in poor, urban schools that were turned around by the strong leadership of the principal (Edmonds, 1979). The type and specificity of a school's mission or goals is one aspect of instructional leadership affected by school SES. Lower SES schools often have clear and measurable goals for student achievement, while the academic mission of higher SES schools is more likely to be stated in broader, more holistic terms (Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985, 1986). As with school size, SES many times dictates how directive and hands-on the instructional leader will be in the school.

School Size, Level, and Organization

School size, level, and organization also dictate to what extent a principal can effectively act as an instructional leader. For instance, the smaller the school, the more directly a principal can be involved in matters of curriculum and instruction; whereas in larger secondary schools, an instructional leader would might need to delegate and assume a more indirect role (Bamburg & Andrews, 1990). Principals often lack the specific subject matter knowledge and expertise needed to supervise teachers to the degree advocated by this model, especially in larger, more departmentalized secondary schools (Barth, 1990; Bossert et al., 1982; Cuban 1988; Hallinger, 2003, 2005; Lambert, 1998; Leithwood, 1994; Marshall, 1996). The management of a large

bureaucracy can make it impractical to expect any one person to assume complete responsibility for the entire academic program (Barth). Principals in larger schools may find it necessary to adopt a more participatory, delegative style of instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2003; Marks & Printy, 2003). These principals maintain an instructional focus for the school but share responsibility with teachers, department heads, assistant principals, and the like. Examining instructional leadership within larger, more complex school contexts represents an important avenue for continued research (Hallinger, 2005).

Community and District Involvement

Forces outside the school, such as the community and district, also influence instructional leadership. Hallinger et al. (1996) found a significant relationship between instructional leadership and active parental involvement. Positive parental involvement seemed a priority for effective instructional leaders and benefited efforts to improve student achievement. An instructional leader's ability to promote shared purpose and values among stakeholders can overcome obstacles to success and reform (Lambert, 2000). Likewise, an instructional leader's success was more often tied to district support rather than district control; autonomy of governance was important to reform (Glickman, 1989). Unfortunately, a focus on achievement, standards, and accountability often resulted in a paradoxical shrinking of principal authority and an increase in personal responsibility (Dwyer, 1986). Rather than autonomous leaders, principals found themselves middle managers, juggling the demands of those above and below them (Cuban, 1984, 1988). Community and district forces can be either powerful assets or impediments to instructional leaders' efforts (Leithwood, 1984). Successful reform hinges on the presence of internal consensus with external support (Prestine & Bowen, 1993).

Leader Variables—Gender, Age, and Teaching Experience

Researchers also discovered relationships between instructional leadership and certain personal characteristics of principals. Gender, age, and prior teaching experience affect instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2005, 2008; Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Of these demographic variables, principal gender most often related to active instructional leadership, and this relationship was found in some of the earliest studies on instructional leadership (Hallinger & Murphy). The consistent finding that female principals engaged more actively in instructional leadership was remarkable not only for its longevity but also because it was present across school levels and even countries (Hallinger). Though not as consistent as gender, principal age and prior teaching experience influence the likelihood of a principal acting as an instructional leader. The younger the principal the more likely he or she would exercise instructional leadership (Hallinger; Hallinger & Murphy). This could be a product of reforms in principal training which enable younger potential school leaders to benefit from the latest research and development methods. Somesome researchers traced a relationship between principals' prior teaching experience and instructional leadership, but this variable has, at times, met with mixed results (Hallinger et al.).

Summary

Even though researchers (Heck, 2000; Silins & Mulford, 2002) have controlled for SES and other contextual variables and established links between instructional leadership and school outcomes, these factors still affect instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2005). The role that contextual and personal variables play in influencing the exercise of instructional is central to the purpose of this study examining instructional leadership in secondary schools. It has implications for both the practice and training of school principals as instructional leaders.

Researchers in principal leadership and instructional leadership spheres consistently call on more work studying leadership within the context in which it operates (Hallinger & Heck, 1996b; Hallinger; Leithwood et al., 2004). Prior research on context and its impact on instructional leadership provides some important insights:

- School SES often influences the specificity and language of the school mission articulated by the instructional leader; instructional leaders in lower SES schools communicate the mission in terms of clear, measurable goals for student achievement.
- School size, level, and organization influence the presence and nature of instructional leadership. Instructional leaders in larger, departmentalized secondary schools find it necessary to delegate responsibilities and lead in more indirect ways.
- Parental involvement is important to the successful efforts of instructional leaders.
- District support, rather than control, is connected to strong, effective instructional leadership. Principals need autonomy of governance in order to succeed.
- Personal traits of principals—gender, age, and prior teaching experience—correlate positively with active instructional leadership. A remarkable consistency of findings regarding the likelihood of female principals to be instructional leaders is present in the research.

Criticisms and Limitations of Instructional Leadership

Although some of the methodological limitations with instructional leadership research have already been discussed, it is requisite to address in more detail what some researchers consider as limitations with the theory of instructional leadership itself. Perhaps one of the primary criticisms of the instructional leadership is that some researchers feel that it is only one of many responsibilities of a school principal (Barth, 1990; Bolman & Deal, 1992; Cuban, 1988).

Principals satisfy a variety of roles and responsibilities within schools, and effective management is often indistinguishable from effective leadership (Cuban).

Few administrators possess either the expertise or the inclination to exercise the strong, authoritative control called for in much instructional leadership research (Barth, 1990). Assuming such a degree of authority and responsibility can overwhelm principals and lead to burn out. Even if principals are ready and willing to be instructional leaders, Cuban (1988) argued that basic realities of the organization of schools preclude principals from wielding the necessary power and influence called for by the model, relegating them to little more than middle managers equally answerable to constituencies above and below them. One of the contradictory consequences of the accountability movement is a loss of principal autonomy to federal, state, and district entities, while at the same time increasing principals' culpability if schools and students fail (Dwyer, 1986).

Instructional leadership drew criticism as well for neglecting to share authority with others, particularly teachers. Models of instructional leadership, when examined in terms of teacher leadership and professionalism, many times came across as outmoded and paternalistic (Burlingame, 1987; Poplin, 1992; Sheppard, 1996). Sergiovanni (1991) asserted that when faculty are capable and dedicated, highly directive forms of instructional leadership are problematic. The size and complexity of many schools, particularly large high schools, make it difficult for any one person to assume complete responsibility, but some researchers do not view coalescing all power into a single instructional leader as desirable anyway (Barth, 1990; Glickman, 1989; Jackson, 2000; Lambert, 1998). Depending too much on the principal as the sole provider of instructional leadership is unsustainable and often leads to the failure of reform efforts when a change in leadership occurs (Jackson).

Lastly, instructional leadership draws fire because it is viewed as an educational concept or slogan with little substance or relevance to the realities of the principalship. Hallinger (2005) admitted that there is little evidence that principals behave anymore today as instructional leaders than they did when the model was first introduced. He remarked that it is particularly "interesting to note the lack of any empirical evidence that principals spend more time directly observing and supervising classroom instruction" (p. 25). When in practice, instructional leadership focuses more on mission-building and climate control than on the instructional program (Hallinger). In short, a relatively small number of principals are instructional leaders (Barth, 1990). And yet, instructional leadership, as an ideal, is still touted today by researchers, practitioners, and policymakers (Klump & Barton, 2007). This disconnect between theory and practice is at the heart of this research project examining instructional leadership in secondary schools.

Summary

Though instructional leadership is an idea still very much present in academic, political, and professional discourse surrounding the principalship, it is not a theory without its critics. Much of this criticism can be summed up by four statements:

- Instructional leadership is only one of many responsibilities of a principal.
- Many principals lack the expertise, autonomy, and/or the inclination to act as instructional leaders.
- Typical models of instructional leadership place too much responsibility and power on the role of principal, neglecting the importance of involving others in school reform.
- For all of the discussion, research, and advocacy, relatively few principals actually are instructional leaders.

These criticisms have informed theoretical developments on instructional leadership that have, in turn, influenced this larger research effort.

Conceptual Developments in Instructional Leadership

Shared Instructional Leadership

Many of the criticisms of and contextual challenges to the exercise of a highly directive form of instructional leadership outlined above led some researchers to advocate a type of shared instructional leadership (Barth, 2002; Day et al., 2001; Jackson, 2000; Lambert, 2002; Marks & Printy, 2003; Southworth, 2002). Marks and Printy (2003) defined shared instructional leadership as "the active collaboration of principal and teachers on curriculum, instruction, and assessment" (p. 371). These instructional leaders actively engage other educators in the business of leading schools, soliciting advice and suggestions as well as delegating responsibilities to assistant principals, department heads, expert teachers, and other faculty. Essentially, as Glickman (1989) stated, the principal becomes the "leader of instructional leaders" within the school. Sharing instructional leadership with teachers makes sense because teachers often hold vital knowledge about students' capabilities (Hallinger 1992).

An instructional leader's role is primarily an indirect one of providing vision and resources to teachers (Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b, 1998). Teachers, as classroom instructors, possess the foremost influence on student learning of all school-based factors (Leithwood et al., 2004). As a result teachers already wield tremendous power in regard to the academic success of students and in turn the school. Involving teachers in leading and reforming the school seems to be an obvious decision.

Fortunately, shared instructional leadership considers these realities. Marks and Printy (2003) wrote that it is "an inclusive concept, compatible with competent and empowered

teachers" (p. 374). Leadership roles for teachers can be both formal and informal (Prestine & Bowen, 1993). With this model principals are no longer expected to be the sole individual responsible for organizational success and reform, and teachers are engaged more fully in the administration and direction of the entire school, not simply of their individual classrooms. Marks and Printy (2003) maintained that "active collaboration [between principals and teachers] around instructional matters. . .enhance[s] the quality of teaching and student performance" (p. 371). Strong, supportive leadership from the principal, however, is still necessary (Blasé & Kirby, 2000), and the focus of the school should be an instructional one (Marks & Printy).

Integrated Leadership

Some researchers considered ways to integrate instructional leadership with more shared, transformational, and distributed models in order to create an integrated leadership (e.g., Hallinger, 2003; Marks & Printy, 2003). These latter models, while still emphasizing the importance of mission-building and organizational management, place considerable focus on the development of people (Leithwood et al., 2004). More so than is in the typical conception of instructional leadership, researchers considered school reform as occurring through people effects, supporting and training teachers, rather than articulating specific instructional goals (Leithwood, 1994). In these models, principals fulfilled a much more facilitative, supportive, bottom-up role.

Hallinger (2003) viewed an emphasis on developing people and sharing leadership as a possibly effective way to overcome some of the difficulties instructional leaders face in attempting to exercise too autocratic of control in large schools. Likewise, instructional leadership, with its emphasis on specific teaching and learning goals, could enhance more participatory, transformational models leadership by providing a clearer sense of purpose for the

organization. Marks and Printy (2003) called this unity "an integrated form of leadership" (p. 376).

Contingency Theory, Situational Leadership Theory, and Instructional Leadership

Hallinger (2003, 2005) posited that contingency theory might further inform this concept of an integrated leadership. If leadership effectiveness is contingent on the context, then principals find themselves at times influencing the context in order to better facilitate the success of instructional leadership efforts. Still, just as leader's influence the context, the context influences leaders. Situational leadership theory applied to instructional leadership proposes that principals should exercise varying degrees of instructional leadership styles from the directive to the shared or distributed in order to best serve their teachers, students, and schools. In other words, effective school leaders strive "simultaneously at instructional and transformational tasks" (Marks & Printy, 2003, p. 377).

This is why future research on principal leadership and specifically instructional leadership must embed the principal within the context of the school and examine how successful principals overcome and navigate, using a variety of skills, the myriad factors that influence the effective administration of a school (Hallinger 2003, 2005; Leithwood et al., 2004). In other words, instructional leadership may not look exactly the same in every context, and the success of principals and their schools may depend on their ability and flexibility to adjust their instructional leadership styles to differing school contexts.

Theoretical Perspective

The above discussion on the broadening of the instructional leadership concept from a strictly authoritative, transactional role exercised solely by the principal to a more participatory, facilitative role shared with teachers and other stakeholders led to the selection and development

of this study's theoretical framework or perspective. Anfara and Mertz (2006) defined a theoretical perspective "as any empirical or quasi-empirical theory of social and/or psychological processes. . .that can be applied to the understanding of phenomena" (pg. xxvii). The theoretical perspective guides a research project from the collection, analysis and interpretation of data. For this study examining instructional leadership embedded in the high school context, contingency and situational leadership theories quickly stood out as an appropriate and illuminating perspective to use. This theoretical perspective has already been hinted at earlier in this review but needs further explication.

Contingency Theory and Situational Leadership Theory

The broad theoretical frameworks or perspectives from which this study approaches principal leadership is contingency theory. Some researchers and authors (e.g., Northouse, 2004) draw a distinction between contingency theory and situational leadership. Based upon the work of Fiedler (1967), contingency theory articulates leadership effectiveness in terms of the best fit between leader and context. Leader style and personality are largely considered fixed, so matching the best leader with the best situation is the primary method of ensuring organizational success. Through their actions and decisions, leaders can, however, adapt the context or the organization to better fit with their styles (Northouse). Situational leadership, based on the work of Hersey and Blanchard (1969), advocates the usage of varying degrees of directive or task behaviors and supportive or relationship behaviors depending on the organizational context. This theory looks at leadership in terms of how the leaders adapt their leadership styles to best serve the needs/demands of the situation (Northouse).

From these perspectives, there is no single right way to lead, and leaders both influence and are influenced by the context. Many researchers and policymakers strive to narrowly

identify one type or conception of effective leadership that will prove sufficient in all schools in all places and at all times, as is the case with typical conceptions of instructional leadership. If "true" effective leadership can be so defined, then policies and programs can be developed to train individuals to be effective leaders. Unfortunately, in this drive to discover or develop the best leaders, the situation or context and how it influences leadership is a key factor that can be neglected. Contingency and situational leadership theories are leadership theories that not only take into account contextual issues when looking at leadership, but also require a cognizance of situational factors on behalf of the leader.

Through the lens of these theories, leadership becomes a process of mutual influence among leader, followers, and the context; this idea of mutual influence is particularly apt considering the indirect nature of principal leadership (Hallinger, 2003). A principal's leadership style, through the organizational and instructional decisions he or she make, shape the school context, and likewise principals can find their leadership style and behaviors affected by an array of contextual factors, such as school size, student SES, and district involvement. Contextual factors may demand that leaders modify their goals and behaviors in order to be successful, or in some cases, situational engineering on the part of the leader can mitigate the influence of these factors. Leadership is no longer a choice between the transactional and transformational, the task-orientation and the relationship-orientation, or the directive and the facilitative. Effective leaders use a range of styles or methods, depending on situational factors, in order to successfully lead an organization or, in this case, a school.

Instructional Leadership through Contingency/Situational Leadership Theories

When looked at through the lens of contingency and situational leadership theories, instructional leadership becomes a less rigid, static concept and is viewed as more dynamic and

flexible. Rather than the typical conception of a highly directive, transactional, task-oriented role, instructional leadership represents a continuum of leadership values, beliefs, and behaviors principals move along depending on the context in which they operate (Hallinger, 2003). Instructional leadership becomes a model with the flexibility to be applicable in a myriad of school contexts regardless of size, demographics, level, and organization. In fact, the exploration and examination of these differences in contexts are fundamental to the understanding of how and why some principals are able to act effectively as instructional leaders.

Through organizational decisions and policies, principals can affect the structure of schools to promote instructional leadership efforts (contingency theory). Also, instructional leaders' actions in defining the school mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a school climate can be either directive, participatory, or a combination thereof depending on what the circumstances warrant (situational leadership theory). From these perspectives, the suggestion that it is always necessary to be either becomes inappropriate and problematic. For example, the traditional role of the instructional leader as sole possessor of school leadership prerogative might be very appropriate in at risk schools in need of quick and dramatic reform, just as shared instructional leadership that empowers stakeholders might be necessary if sustained, long term improvement is required (Hallinger, 2003). The advantages of these theoretical frameworks are that they provide a flexibility and open-mindedness to this study as it examines instructional leadership within the context of secondary schools.

A Unified Theoretical Perspective

The use of a contingent, situational perspective of instructional leadership is based upon the belief that, in many contexts, the exercise of traditional instructional leadership, which places the majority of the leadership burden on the school leader, is impractical. Still, it is important,

especially in an educational climate enamored with test scores and accountability, for principals to act as instructional leaders, focusing school reform on matters of student achievement. Instructional leadership responsibilities, however, are not the sole purview of the principal. Cosner and Peterson (2003) remarked that "placing teacher learning at the heart of instructional leadership is essential" (p. 12). Accountability can be viewed as an opportunity to develop teachers in order to share instructional leadership. Principals, in the age of school reform, are now viewed as "agent[s] of change," and "the managerial role of the instructional leader [has] lost its centrality" (Marks & Printy, 2003, p. 391). Fortunately, these leadership theories allow us to view instructional leadership as a dynamic and flexible concept that can not only influence school organizations but can also evolve and change to meet the challenges of myriad contexts, including rural secondary schools.

Future Avenues of Research on Instructional Leadership

The studies, articles, books, and book chapters discussed above reveal much about the topic of instructional leadership and the wealth of research that has come before this present project. Though first mentioned over two decades ago, this model of school leadership is still prevalent in the discourse of today's educational clime. In fact, the resurgence of the accountability movement in this century has only increased the interest in instructional leadership. This review addressed not only the origins, definition, and specific models of instructional leadership but also synthesized the methodological features, salient findings, and limitations of the research into this topic. The synthesis of this research informed both the significance and direction of this study. Essentially, this study was conceived and structured to fill in some of the "gaps" in research on instructional leadership. This literature review not only

provided a glimpse of prior research and its findings but also pointed to the direction this inquiry should take.

Embedding Instructional Leadership in the Context

First, the most progress in the study of both principal leadership and instructional leadership will come from research that places the principal in the context of the school and its varied settings (Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Heck, 1996b, Leithwood et al., 2004). Leithwood et al. argued that more research is needed in studying how effective leaders intervene in and improve a school when faced with complex organizational and district factors. It is for this reason that the relationship between the instructional leader and the context is at the heart of this effort.

Adopting a Contingent, Situational View of Instructional Leadership

Secondly, the increased focus on the mutual influence between leader and context calls for a more flexible, dynamic outlook on instructional leadership that incorporates ideas from more participatory theories leadership, such as shared instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2003, 2005; Marks & Printy, 2003). It was suggested some time ago that a variety of leaders and leadership styles can fall under the umbrella of instructional leadership (Smith & Andrews, 1989). A single, rigid conception of instructional leadership is no longer appropriate. It is perhaps obvious that instructional leadership within an urban elementary school might look differently than in a rural, secondary school. A contingent, situational view of instructional leadership that represents this concept as a continuum will aid in its application to a variety of school contexts.

Studying Instructional Leadership in Secondary Schools

Thirdly, this more flexible notion of instructional leadership will prove beneficial in examining instructional leadership within the context of secondary schools. All principals at all levels are exhorted to be instructional leaders, even though this concept is still rooted in its elementary, effective schools origins (Hallinger, 2005). Critics of instructional leadership have questioned its application and relevance in the high school setting (Barth, 1990; Bossert et al., 1982; Cuban 1988; Lambert, 1998; Marshall, 1996). Hallinger listed a series of challenges to the exercise of instructional leadership on the secondary level: bureaucratic nature of the schools; departmentalized, highly specialized classrooms; larger, more diverse student populations; and the need to delegate the varied responsibilities at this school level. These factors call into question just how directive and heroic instructional leaders can be on the high school level. Studies such as Marks and Printy (2003) have offered a glimpse at how instructional leadership might operate within these settings, but more work is needed.

Utilizing a Mixed Methods Approach

Finally, little, if any, mixed methods studies were found in the research. Over a decade ago, Hallinger and Heck (1996b) suggested a possibly fruitful type of mixed methods research that could add to our understanding of instructional leadership—an explanatory, mixed methods study. Still, much of the research continues to fall on either the qualitative or quantitative side of the methodological spectrum. Moving beyond correlational quantitative studies to incorporating complimentary qualitative methods of interviewing and observations will enable the researcher to more fully understand the how instructional leaders act within their differing contexts. Teddlie (2005) stated that a pragmatic mixed methods approach is the best way to apprehend the causal relationships and mechanisms of principal leadership.

Conclusion

The literature review is a fundamental piece of the research process, whether the study is quantitative, qualitative, or mixed. Its primary purpose is the provision of significance and direction to present research efforts. The instructional leadership of the principal is a subject that benefitted and continues to benefit from much academic scrutiny. A review of this literature reveals a great deal about the designs, findings, and limitations of instructional leadership research.

Research designs for studies on instructional leadership run the gamut from the quantitative to qualitative, but with few mixed methods designs. Instructional leaders exercise a significant indirect influence on school outcomes, typically through providing vision and promoting a climate of learning. There is little empirical evidence to suggest that instructional leaders' direct supervision and management of schools' curriculum and instruction impacts student achievement. A variety of factors, from student SES to the gender of the principal, can influence the presence, nature, and effectiveness of instructional leadership. Much of the criticism with regard to instructional leadership is the notion that it is a "one size fits all" solution; it lacks the flexibility to be effectively applicable in a myriad of contexts beyond urban elementary schools, like larger, more complex high schools in rural settings. Empirical and theoretical efforts have been made to expand the notion of instructional leadership by incorporating ideas and behaviors from more participatory models of school leadership.

The synthesis of this research revealed that much is known about instructional leadership, but that there is also much that is not known. Few principals exercise instructional leadership in their school, most function as little more than middle managers. This information, in turn, influenced the purpose, central questions, and research design of this study. Not only

does the review of important, relevant research inform decisions regarding the topic to be researched (i.e., instructional leadership and the secondary context) and theoretical framework or perspective (i.e., contingency theory) that will be used to guide this study, it also points to the methodology to be employed (i.e., explanatory, mixed methods), which is the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Characteristics of Mixed Methods Research

For many years methodology in research has been divided into two distinct and often contentious camps—quantitative and qualitative methods. For those of us ill-satisfied with the prospect of finding ourselves limited to an either-or decision in our research, a third paradigm that capitalizes on the strengths of both positivism and constructivism has received attention in recent years—pragmatic mixed methods research. This methodology requires research to be focused much more on what is to be studied and the best method or methods to employ to accomplish this, rather than on a rigid adherence to any one paradigm (Wolfe, 1999). Selection of research methods should stem less from an attempt to establish objective truth or adhere to a specific paradigm and more from a desire to use the means that will best explain the phenomena to be examined. Maxcy (2003) asserted that the "unique contribution [of pragmatists] is to open up inquiry to all possibilities while tying that search to practical ends" (p. 86).

This openness to possibilities and willingness to adopt multiple methods affords an array of potential ways mixed methods research can be designed and conducted. Mixed methods research can be concurrent (e.g., QUAL + QUAN), in which both qualitative and quantitative data are collected simultaneously, or sequential (e.g., QUAN →QUAL), in which quantitative data are collected and then qualitative or vice versa (Creswell, 2005). One type of data can be dominant or more central to the overall purpose and research questions. This dominant/less dominant relationship is often noted by the use of upper and lower case letters (e.g., QUAN→qual). Creswell (2005) identified three primary mixed methods designs: triangulation

designs (QUAL + QUAN), exploratory designs (QUAL→quan), and explanatory designs (QUAN→qual).

Type of Mixed Methods Design

Rationale for Mixed Methods Design

Study of principal leadership embedded in the context is a vital future avenue of research (Hallinger, 2005; Leithwood et al., 2004), and research examining effective instructional leadership within the context of rural secondary schools would benefit greatly from a mixed methods approach. Coupling the use of both quantitative methods of data collection (surveys) with qualitative means (interviews and observations) provided a more complete, balanced, and, perhaps, authentic view of instructional leadership. The quantitative portion served as the primary part of this research examining the relationships between instructional leadership and various contextual variables with the subsequent qualitative part fulfilling a supplementary role in providing insights into the mechanisms and activities of instructional leadership.

By combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches, mixed methods research provided an opportunity for the researcher to utilize the complementary strengths of each in order to buttress inferences. Greene, Caracelli, and Graham (1989) identified five purposes in mixing methods. The first two—triangulation and complementarity—both address the use of different methods as a means of affirming or complementing the findings of each. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2003) outlined three primary advantages to implementing a mixed methods design: the ability to answer questions other methodologies cannot, better, stronger conclusions, and a greater diversity of outlooks. In placing the focus of research on what is to be studied rather than misguided paradigmatic loyalties, mixed methods researchers are able to capitalize on the

different strengths of quantitative and qualitative methods and offer, simply, a more complete picture.

One of the foremost strengths of mixed methods research is its demand that researchers reject any notions of methodological dogmatism in confronting matters of inquiry. Mixed methods research is inherently "inclusive, pluralistic, and complementary" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2003, p. 17). It requires that research focus on the questions to be answered in determining the best method or methods to be used. A variety of data, both textual and numeral, can be collected and analyzed in order to provide a more complete picture of the phenomena. A researcher can use methods that are complimentary (i.e. the strengths of one overcome the weaknesses of another). Findings from quantitative and qualitative phases can be triangulated in order to further corroborate or support a study's conclusions. A mixed methods study can confront problems and questions that are too great or complicated for a single method project to fully address.

Explanatory Mixed Method Design

Once it was determined that the problem, purpose, and questions of this research study would benefit from a mixed methods design, it then became necessary to decide on which specific design to use. The specific methodology for this research was an explanatory mixed method design that used sequential quantitative and qualitative sections (QUAN→qual). Also called a two-phase method, Creswell (2005) stated that this method "consists first of collecting quantitative data and then collecting qualitative data to explain or elaborate on the quantitative results" (p. 515). Quantitative methodology held the priority and was collected first and then used, along with the study's purpose, questions, and framework, to guide the following qualitative research. Researchers (Hallinger & Heck 1996b; Teddlie, 2005) suggested this

design as an effective way to examine principal leadership in context by fully exploring the relationships and mechanisms of leadership as well as capitalize on the complementary strengths of both quantitative and qualitative procedures and data collection. Figure 2 provides a simple graphic representation of this explanatory method.

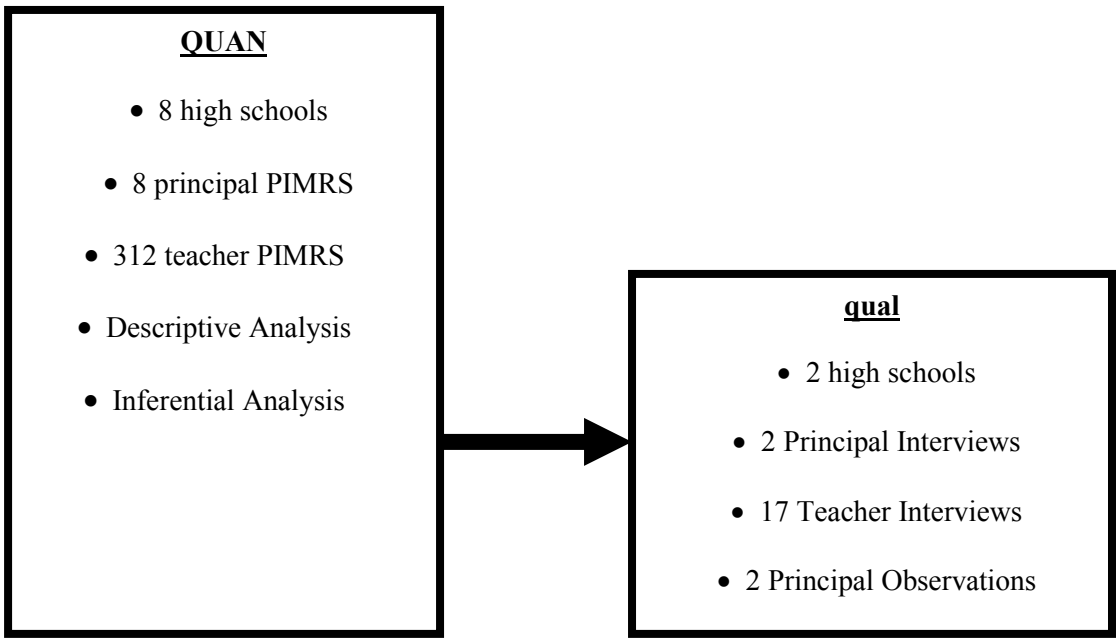


Figure 2. Graphic representation of explanatory, mixed methods design with specific data sources for study included, adapted from Creswell (2005).

The researcher opted for an explanatory design because both triangulation and exploratory designs presented problems with regard to this study's purpose and completion. First, the logistical challenges to a single novice researcher conducting both quantitative and qualitative research simultaneously seemed daunting and counterproductive. Secondly, an exploratory design (QUAL→quan) would not be appropriate because it is used many times to study specific phenomena in order to develop some form of quantitative instrument that can then be applied in multiple contexts or sites (Creswell, 2005). Other researchers (e.g., Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Smith & Andrews, 1989) have already developed effective, validated, and reliable quantitative instruments that can be used to study instructional leadership. This study examining how instructional leadership plays out in secondary schools would benefit from a much more inductive research approach. An explanatory design allowed the researcher to compare instructional leadership initially across several schools in the qualitative phase and then also focus inquiry in the second phase on two examples of instructional leadership for more in depth qualitative analyses.

Influence of Case Study Research

While this study utilized a mixed methods design, it was also influenced by case study research. Yin (2003) defined a case study as "an empirical study that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 13). A case study approach is extremely apt when the researcher wishes to fully explore a phenomenon (instructional leadership) within a specific context (rural secondary schools). The researcher used the quantitative data to not only reach certain findings but to focus the research effort on two particularly instances, or *cases*, of

effective instructional leadership. The researcher then utilized interviews and observations to more fully study these specific cases of instructional leadership.

Visual Model of the Design

Not only did this methodological choice add to the significance of the research, but the combination of quantitative and qualitative components strengthened and enriched the findings. The Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) administered in the quantitative phase measuring the instructional leadership aptitude of principals from their perspectives and from the perspectives of the faculty provided a starting point for analysis. The qualitative segment was then used "to refine results" by "exploring a few typical cases, probing a key result in more detail, or following up with outlier or extreme cases" (Creswell, 2005, p. 515). Interviews with principals and teachers and observations of principals were conducted after the quantitative phase was completed in order to explain and expand on the findings. Figure 3 serves as a visual model for this explanatory mixed methods study.

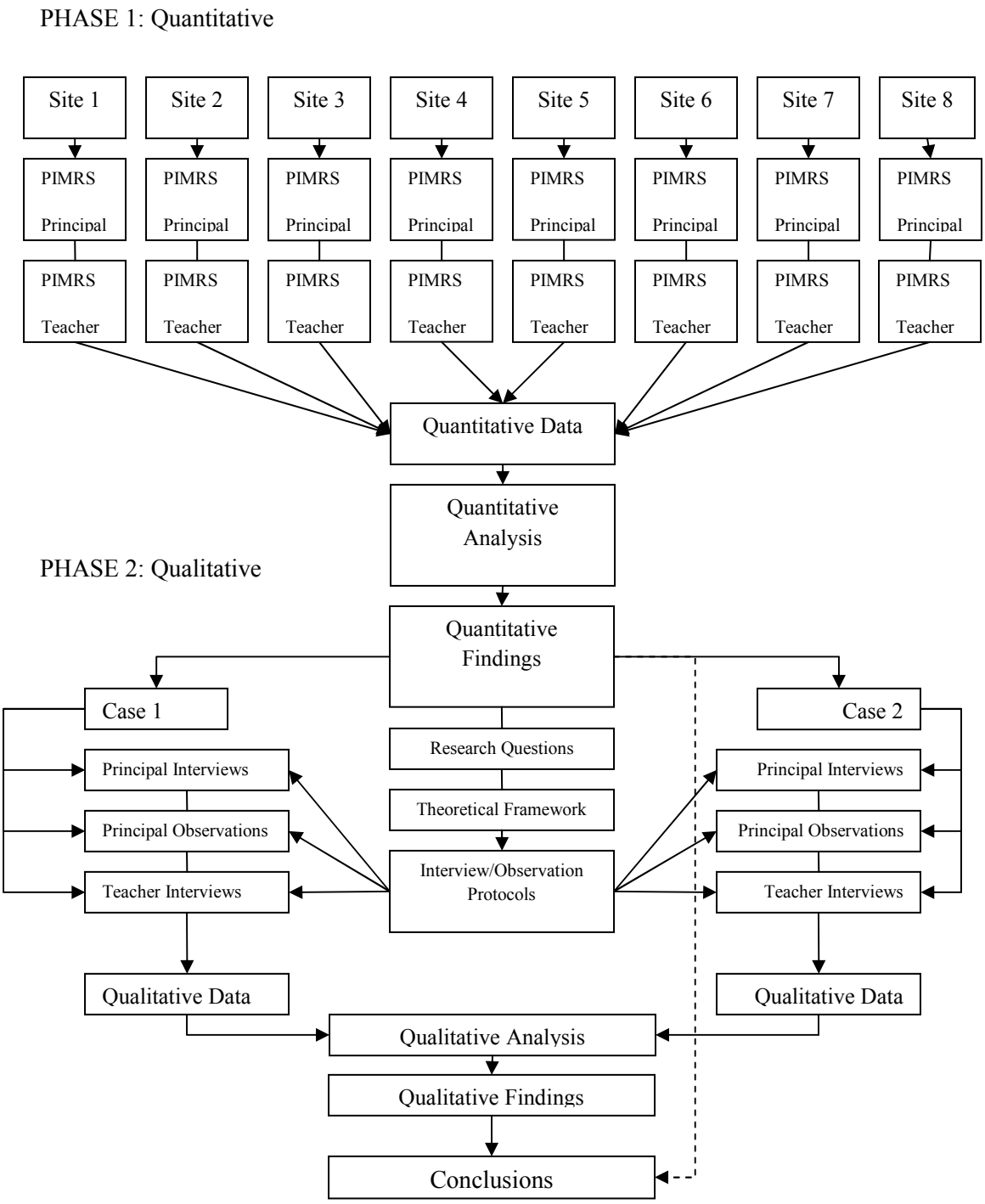


Figure 3: Visual model for mixed methods research study.

Data Collection Procedures

As Greene et al. (1989) proposed, an overarching function of a mixed methods design involves the ability to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. These data can be used to triangulate findings—to see whether what is discovered in one method matches with the findings of another. The utilization of multiple methods from both paradigms allows the researchers to bring to bear the complementary strengths of different data collection approaches. It was with these insights in mind that the researcher decided on the use of specific data collection procedures that would hopefully provide stronger inferences and conclusions in regard to the nature of the principal as instructional leader.

Sampling Strategy

The sampling strategies employed in this study were alluded to in the first chapter's discussion of the study's limitations and delimitations. Purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990), also called criterion-based selection (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993), was the primary method and was used to focus this research project on rural secondary schools and was also utilized in the selection of specific sites. Two rationales for purposeful sampling, according to Maxwell (2005), were especially relevant for this study: (1) to explore cases vital to the research and its questions and (2) to compare differences between settings or individuals. As Merriam (1998) pointed out, most studies involve a degree of convenience sampling and this study was no different. Principals and, in turn, their teachers ultimately had to volunteer to participate in both phases of the research study. Principal participation in the interviews and observations was secured prior to administration of the PIMRS. In the case of teachers, an attachment to the PIMRS surveys was provided for teachers to sign and turn in separately, if they were willing to participate in the second phase.

Quantitative Data Collection Procedures

A list of 10 southeastern school systems that fell under the label of rural was compiled. Specific criteria informed this selection process: (1) willingness of principals to participate in both phases of the study, (2) academic and leadership awards/recognitions of schools and principals, (3) ability of researcher to secure participation of all eligible schools within the same district(s), and (4) logistic issues/concerns in successfully completing both phases at selected sites. Email inquiries requesting permission to conduct research were sent to the appropriate district level entities followed a week later by phone calls if no response were forthcoming. A study information sheet, copies of the teacher and principal versions of the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS), a list of potential interview questions, and an informed consent document accompanied the emails. By early November 2009, district level permission was secured from seven of the ten school systems.

District level permission was contingent on the willingness of the individual schools' principals. Email inquiries requesting permission to conduct research with the aforementioned attachments were sent to school principals. Principals were also contacted by phone. The seven remaining districts constituted approximately 16 high schools for potential participation in the study ranging in student populations from a few hundred to over two thousand. Ten of these schools representing six districts responded to the inquiries. Of these 10 high school principals, two were willing to participate in the interviews and observations personally but were unwilling to ask faculty to participate in the study. Eight schools with a population of 638 teachers and representing four districts remained.

The initial quantitative phase of the research entailed the use of a Likert scale instrument, the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS), that measures perceptions of the

principal's instructional leadership (See Appendices A and B for teacher and principal versions). Permission to use the PIMRS for this mixed methods study was acquired from Dr. Philip Hallinger in November of 2008 (See Appendix C). Using this instrument, the perceptions of both school principals and their faculties were collected.

Part one of the principal version of the PIMRS asked participants for district and school's names, number of years as principal of the school, and total years of administrative experience. Part one of the teacher version of the PIMRS asked participants for the school's name, number of years as a teacher in the school, and total years of teaching experience. Additional demographic and contextual information on the schools was collected by examining each school's state report card as well as school websites.

Part two of the PIMRS used a Likert scale of five responses from *almost never* to *almost always* to rate the principal's instructional leadership in 10 subscales: (1) framing school goals, (2) communicating school goals, (3) supervising and evaluating instruction, (4) coordinating curriculum, (5) monitoring school progress, (6) protecting instructional time, (7) maintaining high visibility, (8) providing incentives for teachers, (9) promoting professional development, and (10) providing incentives for learning (Hallinger 2005, 2008). The 10 subscales are further grouped under three broad instructional leadership dimensions (see Figure 1 on page 41). Subscales 1 and 2 constitute Dimension 1 of *Defining the School Mission*. Subscales 3 through 5 constitute Dimension 2 of *Managing the Instructional Program*. Subscales 6 through 10 constitute Dimension 3 of *Promoting a Positive School Learning Climate*. The principal and teacher versions are identical except for the stem "To what extent do you (principal version)" and "To what extent does your principal (teacher version)." Figure 4 provides a sample item from the teacher version of the PIMRS.

To what extent does your principal. . .?

	ALMOST NEVER				ALMOST ALWAYS
II. COMMUNICATE THE SCHOOLS GOALS:					
6. Communicate the school's mission effectively to members of the school community	1	2	3	4	5
7. Discuss the school's academic goals with teachers at faculty meetings	1	2	3	4	5
8. Refer to the school's academic goals when making curricular decisions with teachers	1	2	3	4	5
9. Ensure that the school's academic goals are reflected in highly visible displays in the school (e.g., posters or bulletin boards emphasizing academic progress)	1	2	3	4	5
10. Refer to the school's goals or mission in forums with Students (e.g., in assemblies or discussions)	1	2	3	4	5

Figure 4: Sample item from the teacher version of the PIMRS (Hallinger, 2005).

The researcher delivered survey packets to the schools in early December 2009. Four of the principals agreed to the administration of the surveys during scheduled faculty meetings whereas four agreed to the placement of surveys in teachers' boxes with completed surveys to be returned to a box or folder in the main office. Surveys were given to both principals and teachers within the schools for purposes of comparing the perception data. Eight head principals completed the PIMRS (principal version), and the teacher version was administered to a total teaching population of 638. Table 2 reports return percentages from each of the schools.

Table 2

Return Rates for PIMRS by Individual School and Total Population

	School Name	Total Faculty	Returned Surveys	Percentage
District 1	Julius High School	101	43	43
	Richard High School	90	56	62
District 2	Titus High School	87	39	45
	Oberon High School	91	46	51
District 3	Lear High School	38	16	42
	Hamlet High School	60	24	40
	MacBeth High School	106	41	39
District 4	Prospero High School	65	47	72
	Totals:	638	312	49

The researcher hoped for return rates in the 50% to 75% rates. With the first administration, rates ranged from a low of 23% to a high of 72%. Return rates from schools in District 3 were particularly low, resulting in additional measures to increase the rates. Principals agreed to forward email requests to teachers with the PIMRS attached. Additional paper copies of the PIMRS were provided. These efforts yielded the collection of approximately 30 additional surveys across the three schools. The onset of the Christmas vacation as well as missed days for snow and inclement weather during January further complicated matters. Roughly 50% of the total teaching population (N=312) among the eight high schools responded to the PIMRS.

Validity and Reliability of the PIMRS

In his PIMRS Resource Manual Version 2.2, Hallinger asserted that the PIMRS is a valid, reliable instrument that exceeds the general standards for instruments used for research and

diagnostic purposes (i.e., leadership assessment and development). Content validity addresses the degree to which items on the PIMRS are appropriate measures of the instructional leadership subscales. Hallinger (1982) employed procedures outlined by Latham and Wexley (1981) to measure the content validity of the instrument. Four educational professionals familiar with the instructional leadership behaviors of principals—three principals and one assistant principal—independently assigned potential items to the most appropriate instructional leadership subscales. In assessing the instruments content validity, each item assigned to a subscale had to achieve a minimum average agreement of .80 from the group of raters. These efforts achieved average agreements of 80% to 100% on items, depending on the subscale (Hallinger).

Hallinger (1982) measured the internal consistency of the PIMRS in order to establish the instrument's reliability. Internal consistency refers to how "items that have been grouped together conceptually as subscales correlate with each other" (Hallinger, p. 8). The minimum acceptable reliability standard was set at .80 in assessing the instruments internal consistency (Latham & Wexley, 1981). Cronbach Alpha coefficients for the subscales ranged from a low of .78 for providing incentives to teachers to a high of .90 for supervising/evaluating instruction, coordinating curriculum, and monitoring student progress (Hallinger). In terms of internal consistency, the PIMRS is a reliable instrument.

Hallinger (1982) also assessed the instrument's discriminant validity, or the instrument's ability to discriminate among the performance of principals. The variances of teacher ratings for principals both between and within schools were compared. If between school variances on subscales were significantly greater than those within schools, then the instrument was deemed as differentiating principal instructional leadership behaviors. One way analysis of variance was

used to compare between and within school variances of teacher ratings. Professional development was the only subscale to fail to meet this validity standard (Hallinger).

Qualitative Data Collection Procedures

The findings of the quantitative portion dictated the design and scope of the subsequent qualitative phase. Wolcott (1992) discussed three major methods of qualitative data collection: interviews, observations, and documents. The first two were used in the second phase of this study. Interview and observation protocols were devised based upon the theoretical framework, research questions, and the quantitative findings. The qualitative phase and methods focused scrutiny upon two instructional leaders and their schools.

Selection of principals and schools for phase 2. An integral part of the administration of the PIMRS in the first phase of this study was not only to gain insights about instructional leadership in these eight schools using quantitative methodology but also to help identify two principals and schools for the qualitative phase involving interviews and observations. Selection of these principals and schools was not a simple process but involved several criteria for the ultimate judgment: the PIMRS data from each of the eight schools, return rates on the PIMRS, experience level of principals, and district features/governance.

Based largely on the above criteria and with the guidance and input of his dissertation committee, the researcher ultimately selected the principals of Oberon High School and Prospero High School for participation in the second phase of this study. These choices were made because of several specific reasons:

1. The principals of OHS and PHS were two of the most veteran administrators of those participating. Principals with less than three years experience in their present roles and schools were eliminated from consideration; this criterion removed the principals of

Richard High School and Lear High School from possible participation in the qualitative phase.

2. Teacher ratings are the most valid of the three versions (teacher, principal, and supervisor) of the PIMRS. The principals of OHS and PHS respectively represented one of the lowest and highest rated principals of the eight schools. Additionally, *t*-test analyses of the PIMRS scores of these principals resulted in some of the most statistically significant differences in their instructional leadership.
3. Whereas Hallinger (2005) cautioned against the use of a holistic PIMRS average as a measure of instructional leadership, overall teacher and principal averages were used to compare the overall differences in perceptions between principals and their faculties (see Figure 5). The deviation in PIMRS ratings between these principals and their faculties were two of the highest. The principal of PHS rated himself considerably lower than his teachers did; whereas the principal of OHS rated himself higher.

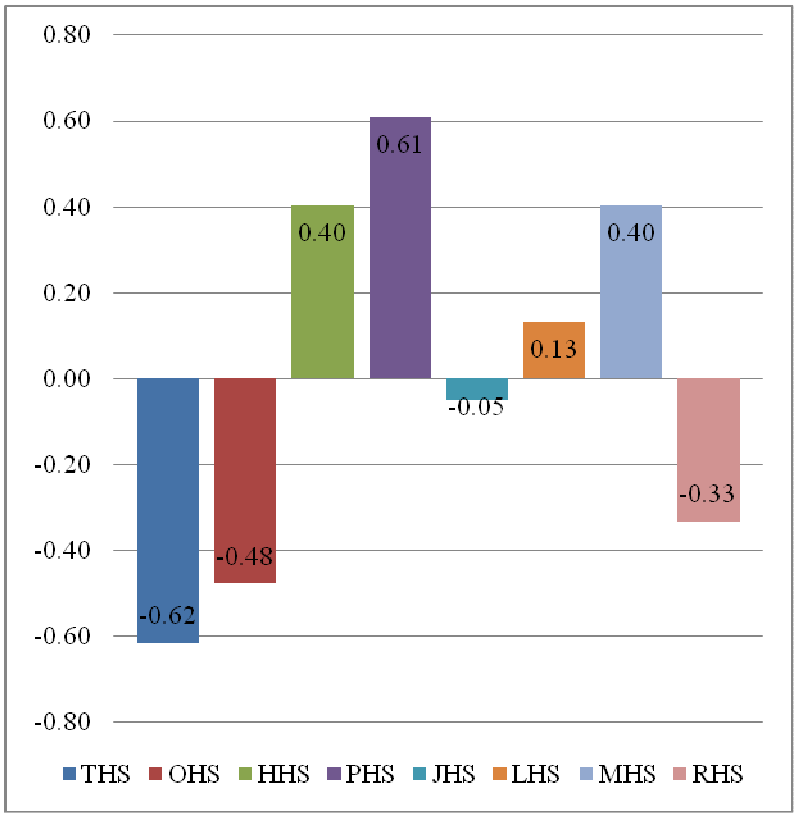


Figure 5: Differences between overall teacher and principal perceptions on the PIMRS.

4. These two schools provided two of the highest return rates for teachers on the PIMRS (see Table 2 on page 77). Figure 6 provides *confidence indexes* for each school derived from multiplying the return percentage by the overall PIMRS rating of each principal. Aside from the principal of Richard High School, who was eliminated from phase 2 because of experience level, the principals of OHS and PHS had the highest confidence indexes.

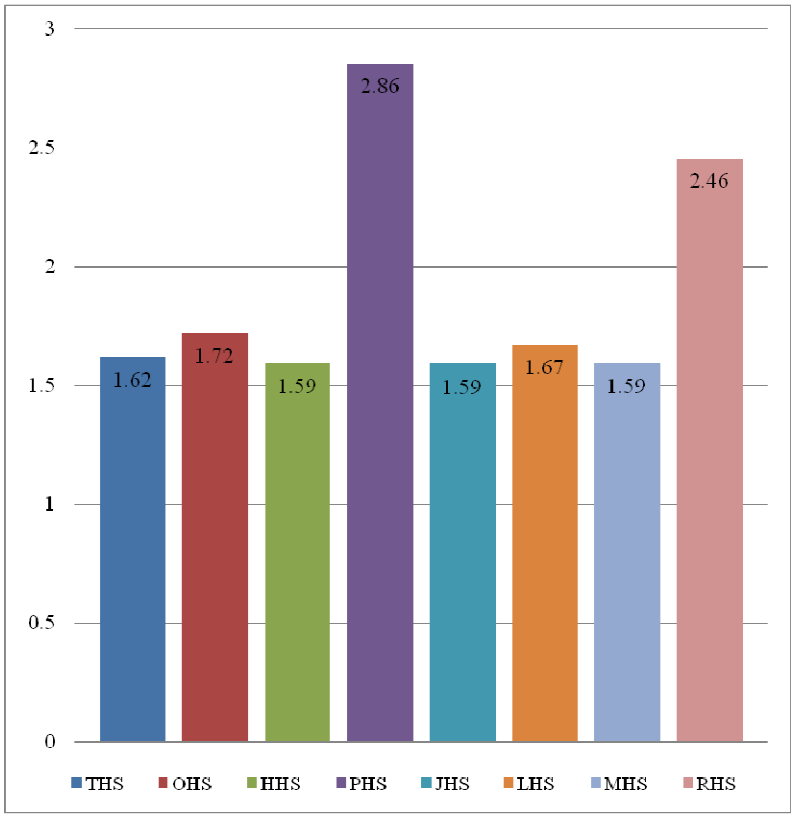


Figure 6: Confidence indexes for PIMRS results from participating schools.

5. Both of these principals had been recognized for their leadership. The principal of PHS received regional Principal of the Year from the state; the principal of OHS was a recipient of a leadership award from the state's flagship university.
6. The schools represented a difference in system wide governance: PHS is in a city district, and OHS is in a county district.

The primary goal of the qualitative phase was to focus scrutiny upon two of the eight schools in order to add strength and meaning to the findings generated through quantitative analysis of the PIMRS results. Multiple schools might have potentially been selected for the second phase. One of the advantages to this research design is that it promoted the possibility of further follow-up research in any of the participating schools. This aspect of the design

potentially opens future avenues of research for the researcher, particularly in targeting how specific facets of instructional leadership play out in specific school contexts. For the purposes of this study and for the reasons outlined above, however, focus of this second phase was narrowed to the principals of Oberon High School and Prospero High School.

Development of interview and observation protocols. Once the researcher identified the two principals and schools for participation in the qualitative phase, development began on the interview and observation protocols. For a brief time, interviews with principals and teachers were considered as the only data collection method for the second phase, but an observational component for the principals was soon added in order to ideally see instructional leadership behaviors in practice as well as check the accuracy of the PIMRS and interview results. This was a necessary addition given how quickly the researcher realized the wide variance in teacher awareness and understanding of principal daily activities. Both data collection methods were requisite to understanding how effective instructional leaders function and intervene within specific high school contexts.

Multiple resources were drawn from in order to develop both protocols. The study's purpose, central questions, and theoretical frameworks influenced the general nature of the interview questions and the observation checklist. The PIMRS results from the two schools played an important role in devising and wording the specific questions for principals and teachers at both schools. Appendices D, E, and F provide the interview questions and observation log utilized in the two schools for the qualitative phase of this research. The role of the qualitative phase was to add more insight and strength to the inferences from the quantitative portion and perhaps explain the nature of those initial findings. Interviews with principals and

teachers as well as observations of the principal's instructional leadership in action proved fundamental to the in depth case study approach of the second, qualitative phase.

Interview questions and protocol. Merriam (1998) asserted that "interviewing is the best technique when conducting intensive case studies of a few selected individuals" (p. 72). Personal interviews with the two principals provided essential insights into how these principals exercised instructional leadership within their individual contexts. Several iterations of interview questions were crafted before the researcher decided on the final principal and teacher versions (Appendices D and E). Both the principal and teacher versions of the questions are nearly identical with wording being the primary difference between the two. Special attention was paid to ensuring that the interview questions would effectively address the study's research questions. Table 3 shows which specific interview questions coordinate with the research questions. The researcher conducted interviews with the principal and eight teachers in each school. Interviewing both principals and teachers, much like with administering the PIMRS to both, afforded another opportunity to compare the two groups' perceptions of instructional leadership within the specific school contexts.

Table 3

Coordination of Specific Interview Questions with Research Questions

	Research Question	Interview Questions
1	How do the perceptions of principals compare with those of faculties in regard to the principals' roles and effectiveness as instructional leaders in rural secondary schools? (quantitative and qualitative)	1; 2; 3; 4; 5a-5b; 6a-6b; 7; 8; 9; 10a-10c; 11; 12; 13
2	What district level and the individual school factors both facilitate as well as hinder the exercise of instructional leadership in rural secondary schools? (quantitative and qualitative)	5a; 5b; 6a; 6b; 7; 13
3	What instructional leadership decisions and behaviors influence the success of classroom instruction and student achievement in rural secondary schools? (qualitative)	8; 9; 10a-c; 13
4	How is instructional leadership in rural secondary schools similar to and different from the typical conceptualization of this leadership model? (qualitative)	1; 2; 3; 4; 5a-5b; 6a-6b; 7; 8; 9; 10a-10c; 11; 12; 13

Principal interviews occurred in the principals' offices and lasted for approximately one to two hours. A permission form was included on the teacher version of the PIMRS that teachers willing to participate in an interview could complete and return separately to the researcher. Teacher interviews happened before, during, and after school and lasted approximately 45 minutes. The researcher conducted eight teacher interviews at Oberon High School and nine at Prospero High School.

Interview transcriptions. The researcher digitally recorded all 17 interviews (2 principals/17 teachers). A professional transcriptionist was hired to transcribe the recordings into text in order to aid in the study and analysis of these data.

Participant codes. In referencing participants' responses in this study, the researcher adopted a simple code to maintain confidentiality. Principals are associated with their schools, as in *The principal of PHS. . .*, when discussed within the text. If reference was required at the

end of a quotation, an abbreviated code was used (PHS-P). In the case of specific teachers, each teacher participant was referenced with a letter of the alphabet and the school, as in *Teacher A of OHS*. When reference was needed at the end, an abbreviated code was used (OHS-TA).

Observation checklist and protocol. Observations strengthened data collected through interviews. Whereas perceptions of instructional leadership were an integral part of this study, this capacity in action was important as well. Maxwell (2005) stated that observations are vital to "getting at tacit understandings and 'theory-in-use,' as well as aspects of the participants' perspectives that they are reluctant to directly state in interviews" (p. 94). Observations were an obvious data collection method for a study examining the exercise of instructional leadership in specific secondary school contexts.

The instructional leadership subscales and activities outlined in the PIMRS survey as well as the research of Smith and Andrews (1989) influenced the development of the observation protocol. An observation time log was created in order to catalogue the activities of the principal during the time the researcher was at the school. An advance copy of this log was sent to principals for them to complete prior to the site visit (Appendix F). Observations were conducted over the course of two days in each school and involved shadowing the principal throughout a variety of activities. During this time, the researcher maintained informal field notes and also completed the principal time log. Principals completed their logs prior to the visit, based on their personal experiences of typical days at the job.

Conduct of site visits. The researcher conducted interviews and observations over the course of three days at each site. More time was allotted for each visit, but the three days ultimately provided an appropriate glimpse into the schools and the instructional leadership of the principals while at the same time minimizing the disruptions to the two schools. One day

was used to complete the majority of teacher interviews, while two days were utilized in interviewing and observing the principal. Before the site visits, the researcher discussed via telephone calls with the principals the broad schedule and general logistics of the site visits, deciding on the most convenient time for the visits as well as interview and observation times with the principals. Emails were sent to each participant with several attachments: informed consent forms, interview questions, and principal activity log (principals only). These documents were sent prior to the visits in order to solicit and address any questions, concerns, and/or general feedback from participants. The emails were also used to schedule interview times with teachers.

Complementarity of Data Collection Methods

Methods of data collection were selected for their complementary strengths and their abilities to add to the overall inferential power of the study. The PIMRS afforded the ability to collect a great deal of data and run statistical analysis on those data, but surveys measure perceptions and are considered self-reported data. It could not be assumed that people were being totally forthright on surveys or providing an accurate view of reality. In the case of this study, the PIMRS measured *perceived* instructional leadership and not necessarily its actual presence in the school or effectiveness with regard to student achievement (Hallinger, 2008). Interviews allowed a more in-depth and targeted way of collecting data. The researcher benefited from the ability to probe deeper with interviews than with surveys. Interviews suffer a similar drawback as surveys in that individuals' word and action may be two entirely different things. Observations were used as a way to overcome the shortcomings of both surveys and interviews. Table 4 presents an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the data collection methods used in this study.

Table 4

Strengths and Weaknesses of Data Collection Methods

Source of Evidence	Strengths	Weaknesses
Surveys	• Easy to administer • Amount of data • Allows statistical analysis	• Self-reported data • Inflexible
Interviews	• Targeted; enables researcher to focus on certain issues/topics • Insightful; deeper probing of perceptions • Flexible; allows for changes, shifts in investigation	• Self-reported data • Reflexity; participants say what interviewer wants to hear • Bias • Time-consuming analysis
Observations	• Reality; observing real events • Contextual; able to witness context of events	• Time-consuming • Reflexity; fact of observation influences behaviors • Potential cost

Data Analysis

Data analysis for this mixed methods study occurred in three sequential steps: descriptive, inferential, and qualitative analyses. Once the quantitative data from the PIMRS, administered to both principals and teachers in the eight schools, were collected, they were analyzed before beginning the qualitative phase. An important purpose of the quantitative data beyond helping answer the four research questions was to provide direction and insight for the subsequent qualitative phase. The qualitative phase was intended to enrich and add to the findings of the quantitative phase. The specific data analysis procedures are addressed below in more detail.

Analysis of Quantitative Data

Both the responses from principals and teachers on the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) were collected and analyzed in the quantitative phase of this mixed methods study. Analyses of the quantitative phase data answered the first research question: How do the perceptions of principals compare with those of their faculties in regard to the principal's role and effectiveness as instructional leaders in rural secondary schools? Additionally, these analyses helped provide insight into the second question about contextual and personal variables that promote or hinder a high school principal's instructional leadership.

Descriptive analysis. The quantitative analysis phase of this study began with a descriptive analysis of the PIMRS data. Coladarci, Cobb, Minium, and Clarke (2004) stated that descriptive statistics are utilized to organize and summarize the data for easier understanding. Descriptive comparisons between the mean scores on the PIMRS from both the principals' self reports and the teachers' surveys answered the first research question about the differences in perceptions of teachers and principals with regard to instructional leadership. Prior research held that there were often considerable differences between principals and teachers' responses on the instrument. Additionally, this comparison enabled the selection of the instructional leaders for subsequent qualitative investigation.

Inferential analysis—independent *t*-tests. Coladarci, Cobb, Minium, and Clarke (2004) explained that the independent *t*-test is used to compare the means of two populations, in this case the teacher's scores on the PIMRS in one school with those of another. For this phase of the quantitative analysis, teacher survey data were used. This was for two reasons: first, teacher responses represented the lion-share of collected data, and second, teacher responses provided the most valid PIMRS data on the instructional leadership of principals (Hallinger,

2005; 2008). Independent *t*-tests were run to determine if there were statistically significant differences between the perceptions of teachers in different schools with regard to principals' effectiveness as instructional leaders in secondary schools.

Comparisons were examined based on four contextual factors—school size, school SES, experience level of principal, and district funding/governance. Comparisons of teacher responses based on these variables helped answer questions about what contextual variables within schools and what personal attributes of principals affect instructional leadership/leaders in rural secondary schools. For example: Are teachers in smaller more affluent rural secondary schools more or less likely to perceive their principals as instructional leaders? Are teachers in schools with novice or veteran principals more or less likely to perceive their principals as instructional leaders?

These tests were conducted to reach certain initial conclusions about the factors within rural secondary schools that influenced the perceived effectiveness of principals as instructional leaders. Two instructional leaders were identified for further scrutiny in the subsequent qualitative phase. The quantitative findings, in conjunction with the research questions and theoretical framework, were then used to develop interview and observation protocols to be implemented in the second phase to explore more fully the instructional leadership of principals in rural secondary schools.

Analysis of Qualitative Data.

Analysis of the quantitative data established that certain contextual factors and leader traits do influence the perceived effectiveness of instructional leaders in secondary schools. Still, a gap that was often present in the study of instructional leadership is *how* and *why* principals are able to act as instructional leaders in the face of certain contextual challenges. Data from the

PIMRS did not address the thinking behind the exercise of effective instructional leadership which is vital to determining the answer to the above questions (Hallinger, 2008). Collection and analysis of qualitative interview and observational data were utilized for a more targeted examination of specific leaders in specific contexts in order to more fully get at this thinking.

Wolcott (1994) identified "three major ways to 'do something'" with qualitative data—describing, analyzing, and interpreting (p. 10). In many instances, all three of these activities are lumped together as *analysis*. Each of these activities was incorporated within the qualitative phase of this study. Before analysis began, recorded interviews were transcribed into text. Maxwell (2005) suggested the use of categorizing strategies, such as coding and thematic analysis, as an effective means of analyzing qualitative data. The aim of coding was to "rearrange. . .[the data] into categories that facilitate comparison between things in the same category and that aid in the development of theoretical concepts" (p. 97).

The researcher adopted a modified form of the constant comparative method to analyze and develop themes from the interviews, field notes, and observations. Creswell (2005) defined constant comparative data analysis as "an inductive data analysis procedure. . .of generating and connecting categories by comparing incidents in the data to other incidents, incidents to categories, and categories to other categories" (p. 406). Themes or core concepts were generated in regard to instructional leadership in the two schools by constantly comparing the answers/responses/ideas of the participants. Common ideas or indicators in these raw data were grouped into codes which were, in turn, combined into themes or categories (Glasser, 1978). These themes were then utilized to explain and strengthen the findings and answer the study's research questions.

The researcher uses the word modified because this comparative process for this mixed methods study was not entirely inductive. Whereas in a wholly qualitative study the researcher might attempt to approach the phenomenon to study as a tableau rasa, this second phase was heavily influenced by the quantitative findings of the first phase. Important themes or aspects of instructional leadership within the context of rural/small town secondary schools were already revealed in the initial quantitative phase. To a large degree the overarching categories were already defined by the PIMRS model of instructional leadership. The purpose of the interviews and observations was to add further meaning and explanation and the findings of the quantitative phase—a more inherently deductive process. Further, the three sources of data enabled triangulation of findings. The PIMRS data were strengthened/validated by the interview transcripts which were in turn reinforced by the observational data. Inductive analysis was used to develop important themes revealed in the qualitative data that did not necessarily fit neatly within the instructional leadership model.

In practice, the researcher approached the data from the interview transcripts following a specific process. The researcher both recorded and took field notes during interviews. Field notes provided the researcher with a starting point for analyzing the interviews in the interim while interviews were being transcribed. A matrix was created for each school in which responses from each participant on each interview question was recorded based on the field notes. In deductive fashion, the field note responses were first compared to see how they aligned with the dimensions and subscales of the PIMRS model. Then, the researcher examined the specific interview transcripts for the specific statements in the words of participants to support the PIMRS model. As said before, not all information/responses in the interview transcripts fell

neatly under the dimensions and subscales of the instructional leadership model. Inductive analyses of these data led to the development of important concepts for discussion.

Since data from two schools or cases were analyzed, some explanation of cross case analysis is needed. Yin (2003) remarked that cross case analysis and/or synthesis may be "easier and the findings are likely to be more robust than having only a single case" (p. 133). Yin (2003) recommended some form of word tables that depict and organize the data from the two cases using the research questions and theoretical framework(s). These matrices aided in structuring and studying the qualitative data from both cases and drawing connections between leaders and schools. This analysis helped answer the research questions and more fully explore how instructional leadership played out in specific school contexts or cases.

Trustworthiness of Qualitative Data

Whereas matters of validity in the initial quantitative phase have been addressed through the selection of a reliable and valid instrument for the study of instructional leadership (i.e., the PIMRS), a moment must be taken to discuss validity, or *trustworthiness*, with regard to the qualitative data collected and analyzed in this study. The production and dissemination of valid knowledge—research findings that accurately reflect reality—is a fundamental part of all research, both quantitative and qualitative (Merriam, 1998). Qualitative researchers (Maxwell, 2005; Merriam, 1998) suggested a variety of ways to ensure or test the trustworthiness of qualitative findings:

- utilizing a variety of data collection methods (triangulation);
- remaining in the field or on site until no new data or themes are discovered (saturation); and

- explicitly articulating the basic assumptions and personal biases of the researcher (theoretical framework(s); ethical considerations).

These methods can help make certain the trustworthiness of the qualitative data—that the data from the interviews and observations effectively and realistically depict how principals exercise instructional leadership in secondary school settings.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in any study, whether quantitative, qualitative, or mixed, is important. Merriam (1998) declared that the researcher "is the primary instrument for the gathering and analyzing of data and, as such, can respond to the situation by maximizing opportunities for collecting and producing meaningful information" (p. 20). Quantitative methodology calls for the researcher to be removed or separate from what is to be studied. During the initial phase of this mixed methods study, I adhered to this more objective role while administering the PIMRS and analyzing the data. The researcher's role in qualitative research, however, is much more participatory and involved. During the second phase, I adopted the role of participant researcher as I interacted with principals and teachers during the interviews and observations. A mixed methods format might somewhat obscure the traditional role of the researcher in a single method study. I endeavored to model the tolerance for ambiguity, sensitivity to context and the variables within, as well as the necessary communication skills requisite to be an effective researcher (Merriam).

It is also important for me to discuss how my occupation as an administrator in a rural high school could potentially influence my work with this research study. As an assistant high school principal, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges and struggles administrators face in managing and leading a school. A multitude of managerial responsibilities often distract

principals from matters of teaching and learning, and the divide between office and classroom many times seems insurmountable.

In my position as assistant principal, my primary responsibility is student discipline, and, while maintaining an orderly and safe school climate is an integral albeit indirect part of instructional leadership, I often wish to take a more active role in instruction and curriculum issues. These feelings and experiences motivated me into pursuing this research study. I am interested in the topic of instructional leadership in high schools on educational, professional, and personal levels. I want to know how and why certain principals are more effective as instructional leaders on the secondary level so that I can one day be a more successful school administrator. This interest, while helpful in pushing me forward with my research, could cause some ethical issues if I do not stay mindful of my role and responsibilities as the researcher.

Potential Ethical Issues

Creswell (2005) emphasized the importance of ethical behavior with regard to the conduct of research whether it is in respecting participants, in reporting findings fully and honestly, or in other concerns. Merriam (1998) explained that researchers are "limited by being human—that is, mistakes are made, opportunities are missed, personal biases interfere" (p. 20). Ethical researchers are necessary prerequisites to effective, meaningful research. As a result, success in research endeavors requires a cognizance of ethical concerns on the part of the researcher.

During the course of this study, I conducted research in schools with which I am familiar and interacted with principals and faculties who know me. Schools within the system that I work as well as schools in neighboring counties that, at times, work with me participated in this study. I made a special effort to maintain trust and confidentiality with the principals and teachers in

these schools. Reviewing guidelines, such as those outlined by Institutional Review Board, helped me act as a conscientious and ethical researcher throughout this process.

Before conducting any research using human subjects/participants, The University of Tennessee requires researchers to gain approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The review process under the IRB requires all research comply with all regulations involving a variety of concerns and issues for participants in the research project, such as informed consent, potential risks to participants, recruitment procedures, and confidentiality in the collection, use and presentation of data. In the case of confidentiality, for example, all names of participant schools, principals, and teachers were changed in order to protect their identities. This process helped ensure an ethical and safe research process for any human participants.

Conclusion

The literature review established two primary rationales for a mixed methods design: the relative short supply of such designs in extant research and the potential effectiveness of such designs in fully examining the relationship between instructional leadership and school context. With this study of instructional leadership, an explanatory, mixed methods design afforded the objectivity and exactitude of quantitative research in the initial phase but also presented the possibility for giving meaning and elaboration of findings through qualitative methods. As has already been discussed, instructional leadership cannot be studied adequately outside the contexts in which this phenomenon operates. An explanatory approach with sequential quantitative and qualitative phases enabled the researcher to initially examine attitudes of eight high school principals and their faculties using a validated and proven instrument (PIMRS) and then to focus the study on two instructional leaders, as identified by the first phase data, to be studied qualitatively with interviews and observations. This methodology embedded

instructional leadership within the context of secondary schools and was an ideal way of exploring the contextual factors of schools and the personal attributes of principals that enable them to be successful instructional leaders on the high school level.

Chapter 4

Descriptive Analysis

Introduction and Organization of Descriptive Analysis Chapter

Since this study used an explanatory, mixed methods case study approach comprising sequential quantitative and qualitative steps, the discussion of the data analyses encompasses three chapters: descriptive, inferential, and qualitative analyses. Chapter four addresses the descriptive analysis of the quantitative data. The purpose of this first phase is to provide an overview of instructional leadership in rural secondary schools and identify two principals for qualitative analysis. This chapter has been organized in a deliberate and systematic fashion in order to provide a logical progression through the data collection and data analyses processes.

First, a brief overview of the general features/demographics of the districts and schools selected is provided. Second, descriptive analyses of the data acquired from each of the eight high schools by the administration and collection of the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) afford a look at instructional leadership within these individual schools. These analyses examine the ratings of teachers and the self reports of the principals, comparing the results on the three dimensions and 10 subscales of the PIMRS (see Figure 1, p. 41). Finally, all of these analyses and results are synthesized, leading to the identification of the two principals and their schools who will participate in the second qualitative phase.

General Profiles of Districts and Schools Participating in Study

Before wading into the specific results of the PIMRS administered in each school, time is given to paint an overall picture of districts and school. General information regarding demographic features of each district and schools ideally provide context for the subsequent discussion of the PIMRS data and were used in the selection of the two school principals to

participate in the second qualitative phase. Table 5 provides a summary of important data/demographic information on each school, such as school size, SES, NCLB standing, and the like. Most of the information and data presented in these sections comes from three sources: state Department of Education report cards for each system and school; community, district, and individual school websites; and information gleaned from the administration and collection of the PIMRS.

Table 5

Important Demographic Information about Participating Schools

	School Name	Size	PPE	SES	T1	SS	NCLB	GR	AR	TCAP	ACT	HQ
District 1	Julius High School	1876	$8117(-)	39.6%	N	Y	GS	93.7%	92.7%	3.9(-)	20.8(+)	100%
	Richard High School	1512	$8117(-)	47.0%	N	Y	SI 2-I	88.2%	93.4%	4(-)	20.2(-)	100%
District 2	Titus High School	1500	$7711(-)	52.8%	N	Y	GS	93.0%	93.0%	3.9(-)	20.9(+)	100%
	Oberon High School	1413	$7711(-)	41.8%	N	Y	GS	96.1%	93.9%	4.1(=)	21.4(+)	100%
District 3	Lear High School	585	$8492(-)	48.2%	N	Y	GS	93.0%	92.5%	4.1(=)	24.2(+)	100%
	Hamlet High School	1210	$8492(-)	35.8%	N	Y	GS	93.1%	93.5%	4.1(=)	21.1(+)	100%
	MacBeth High School	1798	$8492(-)	58.6%	Y	Y	T	85.4%	92.1%	4.1(=)	20.4(-)	100%
District 4	Prospero High School	1262	$8201(-)	38.5%	N	Y	GS	88.7%	95.7%	4.1(=)	20.7(+)	100%

Legend: PPE—Per Pupil Expenditure; SES—Socioeconomic Status; T1—Title 1; SS—Safe School; GR—Graduation Rate; AR—Attendance Rate; HQ—Highly Qualified; (-)—Below State Average; (+)—Above State Average; (=)—Equal to State Average

According to the data in Table 5, schools participating in the study ranged in size from the smallest with a student population of 600 students to the largest with 1900 students. Per pupil expenditures (PPE) in each of the four districts were below the state average with District 3 possessing the highest PPE. School SES percentages ranged from a low of 35% to a high of approximately 60%. Two of the largest schools (Richard High School and MacBeth High School) were targeted under NCLB. The highest performing schools participating in the study in terms of ACT scores were Lear High School, Oberon High School, and Hamlet High School. More details about individual sites are included later in this chapter when discussing the descriptive data by districts and schools.

Descriptive Analysis of Overall PIMRS Results

This descriptive analysis follows a specific progression. First, the overall descriptive picture or portrait presented by the data is addressed. Tables and line graphs compare the perceptions of the eight teaching faculties and the perceptions of the eight principals. Results and noticeable trends are discussed based on this holistic picture. Secondly, each school and district is descriptively examined in order to see how each fits and deviates from the results/trends found in the broad analysis. Finally, the important results presented in these discussions are summarized.

Throughout the following discussion, terminology is used related to Hallinger's (2005, 2008) model of instructional leadership and the PIMRS instrument. There are three levels to this model of instructional leadership—dimensions, subscales, and items. Since all three of these levels are referenced when discussing the results in the quantitative analyses chapters, explanation and clarification of these levels are provided for readers (also see discussion in Chapter 3, p. 75). Hallinger outlined three broad *Dimensions* of instructional leadership: (1)

defining the school mission, (2) managing the instructional program, and (3) promoting a positive school learning climate (see Figure 1, p. 41). Much of the ensuing discussion is organized by these broad dimensions. These dimensions are further subdivided into 10 *Subscales*; for example, Dimension 1 is comprised of framing school goals (subscale 1) and communicating school goals (subscale 2). The subscale score is the basic score provided by the PIMRS and is the most discussed in these chapters. For both the overall PIMRS results and the individual district and school results, each of the 10 subscales is discussed at length. On the PIMRS each subscale has five job behaviors, or *Items*, associated with it (see Figure 4, p. 76). Specific items (the individual Likert statements from the instrument) are addressed when they add insight into why certain subscales were rated higher and lower by respondents.

Comparison of Teacher Mean PIMRS Scores across All Schools

Figure 7 is a line graph that depicts average teacher scores by school on the 10 PIMRS subscales. Most of the teachers' ratings fell between 3 (sometimes) and a 4.25 (frequently). The mean teacher scores on many of the subscales clustered within a close range, with the most noticeable exception of subscale seven, maintaining high visibility. While the magnitude of teacher mean scores varied across the schools, teachers across all schools rated principals highest and lowest in many of the same subscales. Discussion of the results following the figure is organized around the three dimensions of the PIMRS and their related subscales.

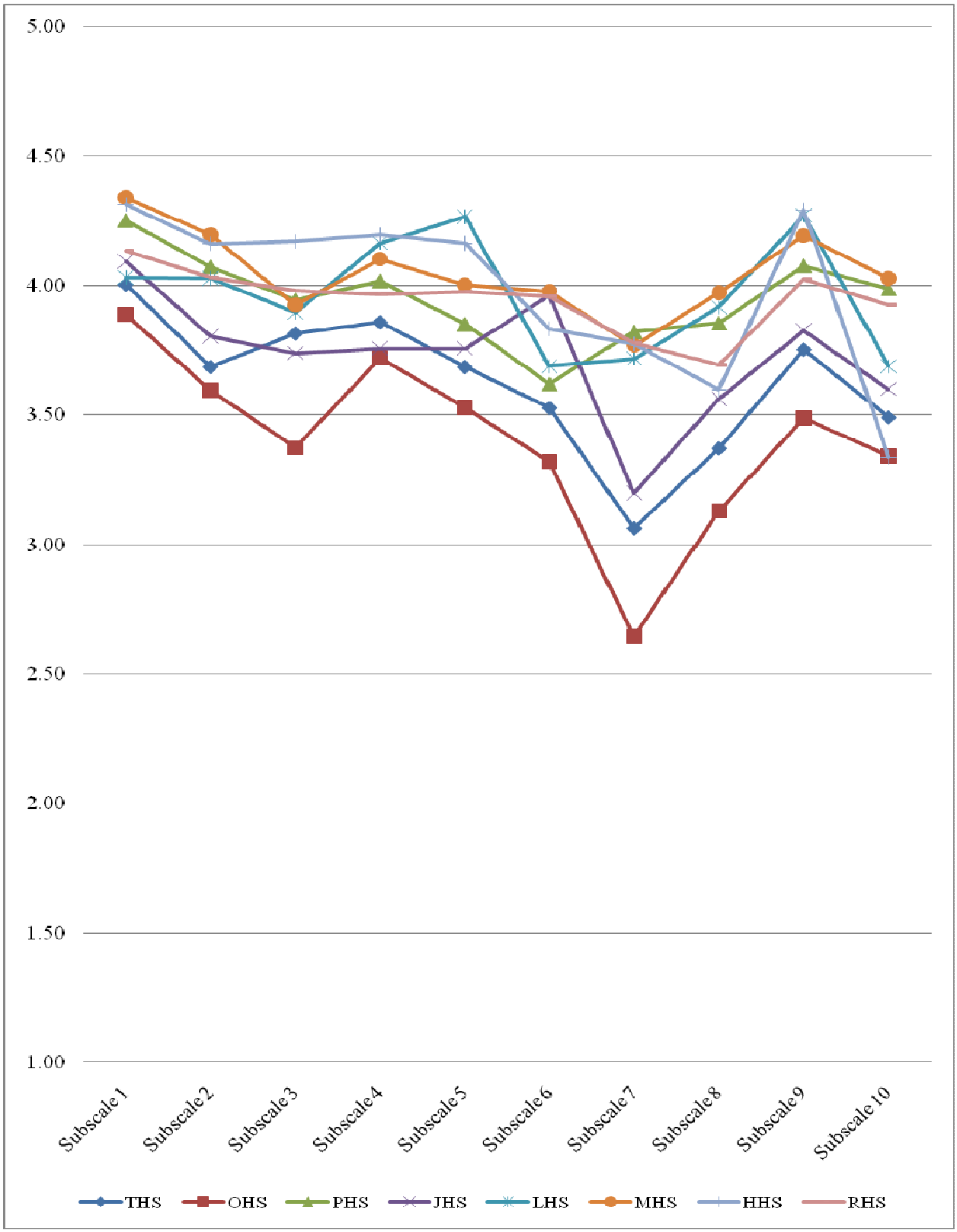


Figure 7: Comparison of teachers' mean PIMRS scores across all eight high schools.

Defining the school mission. Teachers rated principals highest in subscales of Dimension 1—framing school goals and communicating school goals. Teachers in the eight schools perceived principals as frequently engaging in the instructional leadership functions of framing school goals (3.89-4.34) and communicating school goals (3.60-4.20). In terms of framing school goals, teachers in the schools identified principals as especially active in developing school goals that were based on student performance data and staff input. Teachers typically rated principals slightly lower in the second subscale of communicating goals. The drop in PIMRS score resulted from lower ratings on individual items pertaining to the communication of goals to students and the reflection of goals in public displays.

Providing an overall direction for an organization or school is perhaps the most fundamental and easily recognized aspect of effective leadership, and, specifically, instructional leadership (Adams, 2002; Bamburg & Andrews, 1990; Bossert et al., 1984; Brewer, 1993; Goldring & Pasternak, 1994; Glasman, 1984; Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b, 1998; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Johnson, 2006; Marks & Printy, 2003; Purkey & Smith, 1983). Recent movements in education, such as NCLB and the American Diploma Project, have increased accountability for high schools and tied school success to measurable student outcomes, such as test scores and graduation rates. This, in turn, has influenced high schools to develop and articulate more concrete, measurable, and, ideally, understandable goals. Mandated, periodic school improvement processes require the involvement of principals and faculties in framing and communicating school goals.

Managing the instructional program. Although not as high as with dimension one, teachers still scored principals well in the dimension of managing the instructional program and its three subscales. With few exceptions, principals in the eight schools were perceived as

frequently active in the subscales of supervising and evaluating instruction (3.37-4.17), coordinating curriculum (3.72-4.20), and monitoring student progress (3.53-4.27). In most schools, principals received their second highest PIMRS score for the subscale of coordinating curriculum. Teachers viewed principals as active in curricular matters, such as using student outcomes to develop and assess curriculum and effectively delegating grade level curricular responsibilities to others. With the supervision/evaluation of instruction, principals rated highest in formal observation but lowest in reviewing student work and informally visiting classrooms. In monitoring student progress, teachers perceived principals as most involved in school-wide, formal processes and less in meeting with individual teachers or students. The principal of the smallest school (Lear High School) scored highest in this subscale.

The overall high scores of the principals in these subscales runs counter to prior research that has often found managing the instructional program as the least perceived and influential facet of instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b). It is also perhaps worth reiterating that the subscales of this dimension, according to previous research, are the least influential in terms of affecting student achievement. Though principals may be perceived as frequently engaging in activities associated with the direct supervision of instruction, these activities often do not seem to influence student outcomes. Increased accountability in secondary schools might explain a greater perceived involvement of principals in instructional manners. Another potential explanation might be the time of year in which the PIMRS was administered in the eight high schools, early in the second semester, when deadlines for teacher evaluations were looming and these evaluations were present on the minds of both teachers and principals.

Promoting a positive school learning climate. In all schools principals were rated lowest with regards to the dimension of promoting a positive school learning climate and its five subscales. With the exception of subscale 9 of providing professional development (3.49-4.29), principals received their lowest subscale scores in four of the five subscales of this dimension. Teacher perceptions varied considerably in this dimension, especially compared to the relatively close range of scores in the first dimension. Depending on the specific school, teachers perceived principals as *sometimes* or *frequently* exercising the functions of protecting instructional time (3.32-3.98), maintaining high visibility (2.64-3.81), providing incentives for teaching (3.13-3.97), and providing incentives for learning (3.34-4.03). Most principals received their lowest PIMRS rating in the area of visibility, perhaps no surprise given the size and structure of high schools. In providing incentives for teachers and students, principals scored best in incentivizing teachers and students in public, formal ways and less in individual, informal ways. Oddly, the principals of the three largest schools (Julius, Richard, and MacBeth High Schools) scored highest in the protection of instructional time.

Dimension 3 of promoting a positive school learning climate deals largely with a principal's relationships with teachers and students both as individuals and groups. Researchers identified maintaining visibility, minimizing instructional distractions, and building consensus among teachers and students as important parts of effective instructional leadership (Adkins, 1990; Brown, 1991, 1989; Hallinger 2003, 2008; Johnson, 2006; Eberts & Stone, 1986; Smith & Andrews, 1989). In secondary schools that are typically larger and more complex, it might not be surprising that this dimension is rated lowest as opposed to the second dimension of managing the instructional program. The expectation of a single administrator being able to maintain visibility and recognize the efforts of individual students and teachers might be impractical or

impossible in large high schools. The minimizing of interruptions to instruction is an important concern to the individual classroom teacher, and failures in this instructional leadership function would readily frustrate classroom teachers. Further, pressure to fulfill responsibilities perceived as more directly tied to student achievement, such as the framing of school goals or the coordination of curriculum, might take away from principals' efforts in this third dimension of instructional leadership.

Comparison of Principal Mean PIMRS Scores across All Schools

Principals in the eight high schools completed the PIMRS as a self report of their own instructional leadership activity. Figure 8 is a line graph showing the principal subscale scores across all eight high schools. Principals rated themselves slightly higher than did their teachers with most scores falling between 3.5 and 4.5 on the PIMRS. It was quickly evident, especially upon comparing this graph with that of the teachers' PIMRS results, that the principals' subscale scores did not follow any readily discernable trend. While teachers typically agreed on which subscales the principals were most and least active in, principals' self ratings did not reflect any real consensus. The clustering of subscale scores that occurred with teachers was mainly absent in the principal PIMRS results from the eight schools.

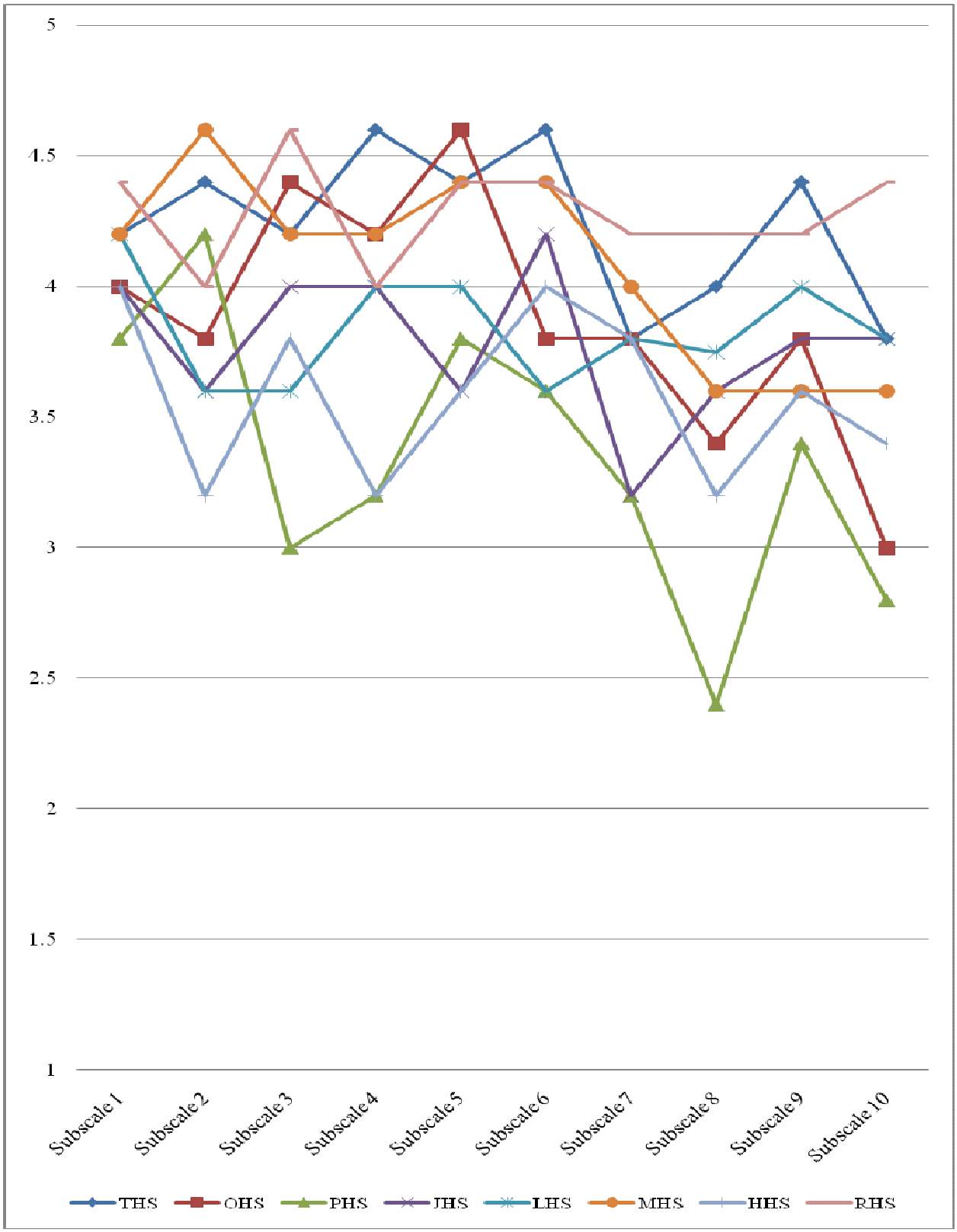


Figure 8: Comparison of principals' mean PIMRS scores across all 8 high schools.

Principal self scores in the subscale 1 of framing school goals were very close, but whereas teachers rated this subscale as the most active, principal perceptions varied by school. Although teachers rated subscale 7—maintaining high visibility (2.64-3.81)—as the lowest, principals rated subscale 8 and 10—providing incentives for teachers (2.40-4.20) and students (2.80-4.40)—as their lowest. Overall, principals, like teachers, identified many of the subscales of dimension 3 as their most problematic and least active instructional leadership subscales. In comparing Figures 7 and 8, it was interesting to note that two of the lowest rated principals according to their teachers scored themselves as two of the highest, most active instructional leaders (i.e., the principals of Titus High School and Oberon High School), while two of the highest rated principals according to their teachers scored themselves as two of the lowest, least active instructional leaders (i.e., the principals of Hamlet High School and Prospero High School).

Descriptive Analysis of PIMRS Data by Individual Districts and Schools

Providing an overall examination of the PIMRS results for all teachers and principals in the study could hide substantial disparities in the scores of principals and teachers on the district and individual school levels. Space is given to the discussion of the PIMRS results on both district and individual levels. Just as the administration of the PIMRS to both principals and teachers was advantageous for the purpose of comparing perceptions of instructional leadership and ideally presenting a more complete, accurate portrait of instructional leadership within particular high school settings, the use of the PIMRS in the four different school districts enabled discussion and comparison of the results within and across the school districts and hopefully added to the quality and substance of the analysis and findings. These individual district and

school examinations also afforded the opportunity of comparing the individual sites to the overall data trends.

Additional contextual and demographic features of the districts and schools are discussed. Descriptive statistics for the principal and teacher PIMRS subscale results for each school are presented in tables. The three dimension scores in each table were calculated by averaging the related mean subscale scores. For example, the mean scores for framing school goals and communicating school goals were averaged to find the mean score for dimension 1 of defining the school mission. Abbreviated names for the PIMRS dimensions and subscales are used in the tables. For example, *promote learning climate* is utilized for dimension 3 of promoting a positive school learning climate, and *professional development* stands for subscale 9 of promoting professional development (see Table 6, p. 112). Dimensions and subscales are referenced by their full name in the narrative. Line graphs comparing teacher and principal mean PIMRS subscale scores follow each table. Discussion of the results for each school follows the table and figure and is organized around the three PIMRS dimensions and their corresponding subscales.

School District 1

District 1 is located in a southeastern county with a population of roughly 120,000 residents according to the 2006 census estimate. There are three public school systems in the county: a county system and two municipal systems. The school district participating in this study is the county system that serves a largely rural/small town population. District 1 serves a student population of approximately 12,000 and encompasses 20 elementary, middle, and high schools. A little more than 50% of the student population is classified as economically disadvantaged. As shown in Table 5 (see p. 100), per pupil expenditure is slightly below the

state average. According to the system's report card, 17 of the system's 20 schools are in Good Standing under No Child Left Behind (NCLB). All teachers in District 1 are highly qualified. District level governance is provided by a six member board of education and a newly appointed school superintendent. Both high schools in District 1—Julius High School and Richard High School—opted to participate in this study.

Julius High School

Julius High School's (JHS) student body is predominantly white (97%) with 40% of the student population classified as economically disadvantaged. Table 5 (see p. 100) affords a summary of important information about the school's graduation rate, attendance, and achievement. The school is in Good Standing with NCLB and was last targeted in 2005. The JHS faculty is comprised of six administrators and over 100 certified, highly qualified teachers. The average overall teaching experience for the faculty of JHS is nine years. Organization of the school depends on the grade level of the students. Students in grades 10-12 are on a typical block schedule of eight classes per year, while freshman at JHS attend a freshmen academy that is housed in a former middle school on the JHS campus.

The principal of JHS has held this position since 2005. He has a master's degree in educational administration and over 15 years experience in education as a teacher and administrator. Previously, he was a vocational teacher. The principal of JHS is unique among the other administrators participating in this study in that he spent over 20 years working in the private sector in neighboring states before becoming a teacher. The principal is supported by five assistant principals, who each fulfill certain leadership roles in the school, such as athletic director and administrator of the freshman academy.

Julius High School (JHS), the largest school in the study by student population, returned 43 out of 101 total surveys. Table 6 provides mean scores, standard deviations, median, and mode for the teacher responses on PIMRS for JHS as well as the principals' mean scores for the 10 subscales and three dimensions and the difference between principal and teacher mean scores for purposes of comparison. A positive difference shows a subscale in which teacher ratings were higher than principal self-ratings; a negative difference denotes the inverse. Comparison of PIMRS scores principals and teachers is one of the most important and meaningful uses of PIMRS data (Hallinger, 2005). Figure 9 is a line graph comparing the mean subscale scores of the JHS faculty with the self scores of the principal.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics of Teacher and Principal PIMRS Results for JHS

Subscales/Dimensions	N	M(T)	Md	Mo	SD	Range		M(P)	Diff
Frame goals	43.00	4.09	4.00	4.00	0.90	1.00	5.00	4.00	0.09
Communicate goals	43.00	3.80	4.00	4.00	1.07	1.00	5.00	3.60	0.20
Define School Mission		3.95						3.80	0.15
Supervise instruction	43.00	3.74	4.00	5.00	1.17	1.00	5.00	4.00	-0.26
Coordinate curriculum	43.00	3.76	4.00	4.00	1.08	1.00	5.00	4.00	-0.24
Monitor progress	43.00	3.76	4.00	4.00	1.13	1.00	5.00	3.60	0.16
Manage Instructional Program		3.75						3.87	-0.11
Protect time	43.00	3.96	4.00	5.00	1.17	1.00	5.00	4.20	-0.24
Maintain visibility	43.00	3.20	3.00	3.00	1.37	1.00	5.00	3.20	0.00
Teaching incentives	43.00	3.56	4.00	3.00	1.21	1.00	5.00	3.60	-0.04
Professional development	43.00	3.83	4.00	5.00	1.13	1.00	5.00	3.80	0.03
Learning incentives	43.00	3.60	4.00	4.00	1.14	1.00	5.00	3.80	-0.20
Promote Learning Climate		3.63						3.72	-0.09

Legend: (T)—Teachers; (P)—Principal

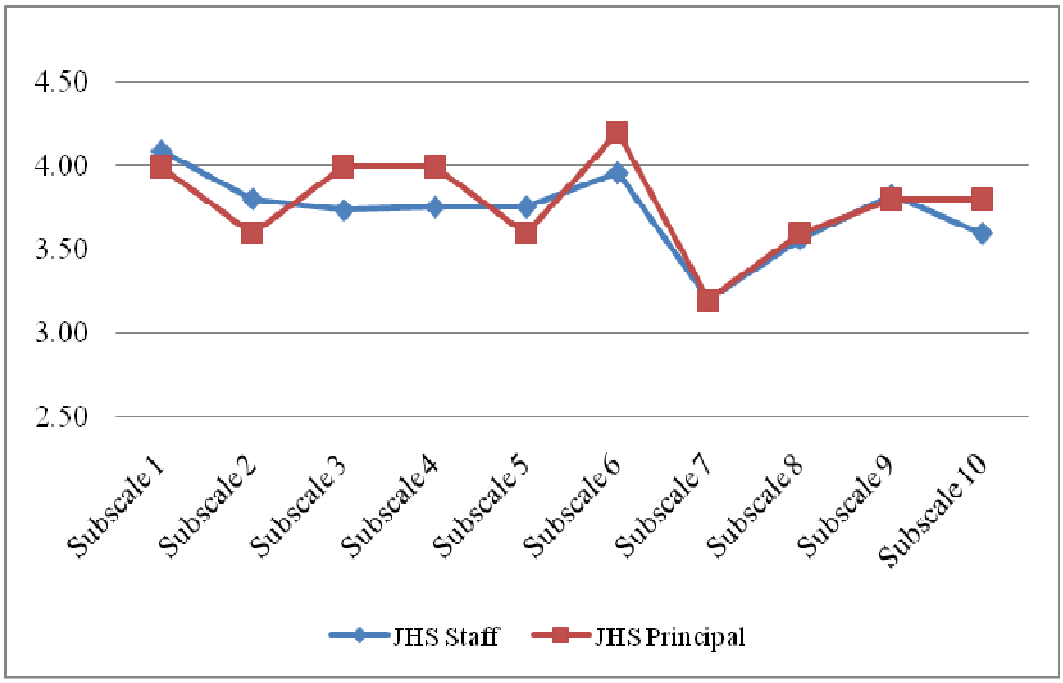


Figure 9: Comparison of JHS teacher mean PIMRS scores with principal scores.

According to the data presented in Table 6 and Figure 9, both principal and teacher ratings identified the principal as frequently engaging in nine out of the 10 instructional leadership functions. The graph shows considerable agreement between the principal and teachers of JHS with regard to the principal's perceived instructional leadership. With the exception of the subscale 7 of maintaining high visibility, the principal most often received ratings of *frequently* (4.00) and *almost always* (5.00) from the teachers. Teachers scored the principal higher than he scored himself in five of the 10 subscales. Results are discussed for each dimension and its corresponding subscales.

Defining the school mission. Teachers at JHS scored the principal highest in the dimension of defining the school mission (3.95) and in the subscale of framing school goals (4.09). This was the one dimension in which teachers rated the principal higher than he rated himself (3.80). The principal gave himself one of his highest (4.00) and lowest (3.60) subscale

scores in this dimension. Although marginally representing the greatest difference (.15) in perceptions between the teachers and principal in terms of the PIMRS dimensions and subscales, perceptions between the principal and teachers were still quite close (see Figure 9). The principal of JHS was perceived as frequently engaging in this dimension of instructional leadership.

Managing the instructional program. The principal of JHS rated himself highest overall in the dimension of managing the instructional program (3.80), giving himself some of his highest subscale scores in supervising/evaluating the instructional program (4.00) and coordinating the curriculum (4.00). The principal scored himself lowest in the area of monitoring student progress (3.60). Teachers were consistent across all three subscales of dimension 2: supervising/evaluating instruction (3.74), coordinating curriculum (3.76), and monitoring student progress (3.76). There was little overall difference (.11) between the perceptions of teachers and the principal with regard to the management of the school's instructional program. The principal of JHS was viewed as frequently fulfilling the subscales of this instructional leadership dimension.

Promoting a positive school learning climate. The teachers (3.63) and the principal (3.72) of JHS scored the principal lowest in the dimension of promoting a positive school learning climate. Teachers and principal also rated the principal lowest overall in the subscales of maintaining high visibility (3.20/3.20) and providing incentives to teachers (3.56/3.60) with essentially the same scores. Figure 9 (see p. 113) depicts the noticeable drop in the mean scores for subscale 7, especially when compared with the scores for subscale 6. Teacher scores for this subscale deviated the most (1.41) in comparison with the other subscales, representing a greater variance in teacher perceptions of the principals' visibility in the school. Low ratings in this

dimension and specifically in the subscale of visibility will be a trend shown throughout the data collected from the other eight schools. There was an aspect of instructional leadership with regard to the principal of JHS in which this data set deviated from the overall trend—this principal's unusually high PIMRS score in subscale 6 (see Figure 9, p. 113). Teachers awarded the principal with his second highest PIMRS score for protecting instructional time (3.96). The principal awarded himself his highest subscale score in protecting instructional time (4.20). Although receiving the lowest ratings in this PIMRS dimension by both teachers and himself, the principal of JHS would still be perceived as overall frequently promoting a positive learning climate.

Richard High School

The school's student body is similar in makeup to its sister school with the exception of its Hispanic/ELL population which is almost three times that of JHS. Richard High School (RHS) has a larger segment of its student population qualifying as economically disadvantaged (47%) but is not a Title 1 school. According to the school's state report card, RHS was first targeted in 2005 for its graduation rate and is presently classified as School Improvement 2-Improving. RHS is slightly smaller than JHS with a faculty comprised six administrators and roughly 100 certified, highly-qualified teachers. The average overall teaching experience of the faculty at RHS is eight years, and the teachers are in their first year serving under the current principal. Teachers and students are organized in much the same way as JHS.

In his first year, the principal of RHS is the newest administrator of the eight participating schools. Prior to becoming principal at RHS, he spent more than 15 years as a teacher, coach, and assistant principal. The principal is supported by five assistant principals.

Four of the assistant principals are responsible for a specific grade 9-12, and one acts as the school's athletic director.

Of the approximately 100 certified teachers at RHS, 56 teachers returned completed surveys to the researcher. Table 7 provides mean descriptive statistics for the teacher responses on PIMRS for RHS, in addition to the principal mean scores and the difference between principal and teacher mean scores for purposes of comparison. Figure 10 is a line graph comparing the mean subscale scores of the RHS faculty with the scores of the principal.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics of Teacher and Principal PIMRS Results for RHS

Subscales/Dimensions	N	M(T)	Md	Mo	SD	Range		M(P)	Diff
Frame goals	56.00	4.14	4.00	5.00	0.88	1.00	5.00	4.40	-0.26
Communicate goals	56.00	4.03	4.00	5.00	1.00	1.00	5.00	4.00	0.03
Define School Mission		4.08						4.20	-0.12
Supervise instruction	56.00	3.98	4.00	5.00	1.02	1.00	5.00	4.60	-0.62
Coordinate curriculum	56.00	3.96	4.00	5.00	0.99	1.00	5.00	4.00	-0.04
Monitor progress	56.00	3.98	4.00	5.00	0.97	1.00	5.00	4.40	-0.43
Manage Instructional Program		3.97						4.33	-0.36
Protect time	56.00	3.96	4.00	5.00	1.05	1.00	5.00	4.40	-0.44
Maintain visibility	56.00	3.78	4.00	5.00	1.27	1.00	5.00	4.20	-0.42
Teaching incentives	56.00	3.69	4.00	5.00	1.18	1.00	5.00	4.20	-0.51
Professional development	56.00	4.03	4.00	5.00	0.99	1.00	5.00	4.20	-0.18
Learning incentives	56.00	3.93	4.00	5.00	1.06	1.00	5.00	4.40	-0.48
Promote Learning Climate		3.88						4.28	-0.40

Legend: (T)—Teachers; (P)—Principal

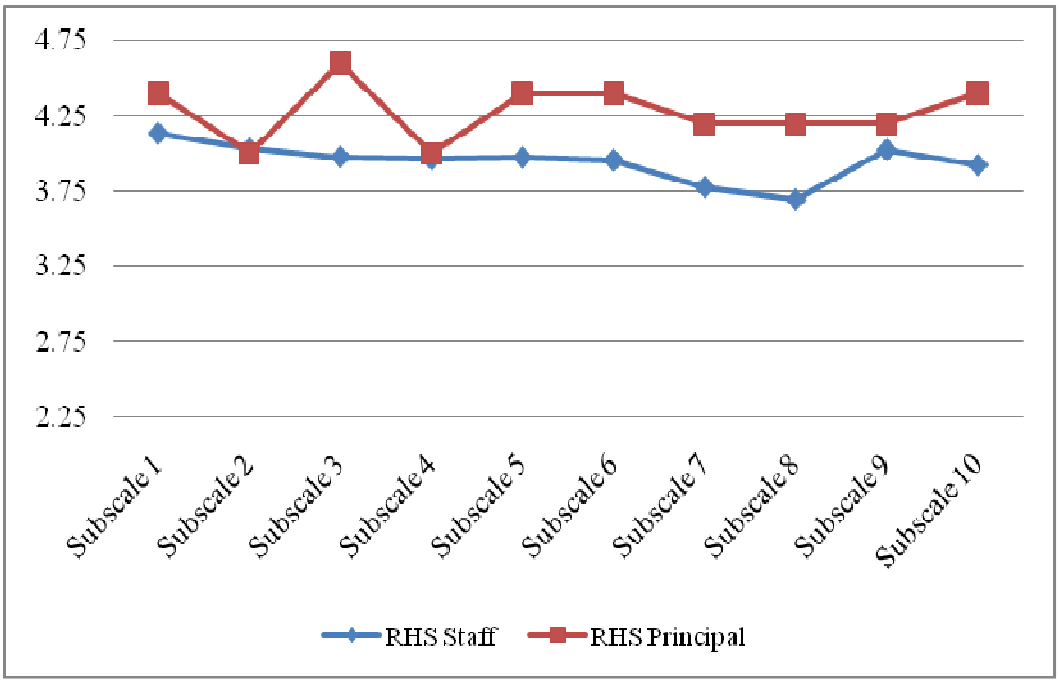


Figure 10: Comparison of RHS teacher mean PIMRS scores with principal scores.

Of the eight participating schools, the principal of RHS was overall one of the highest rated principals on the PIMRS. The most frequent score (mode) that the principal of RHS received from faculty in all 10 subscales was a rating of 5.00 or *almost always*. The principal consistently (with the exception of subscale 2) rated himself higher than the teachers—a common trend identified in the literature on instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2008). The data in Table 7 and Figure 10 showed general agreement between the principal and teachers of RHS with regard to the principal's perceived instructional leadership. Subscale scores from both teachers and the principal fell between 3.70 and 4.50. His high ratings on the PIMRS might partially be owed to the "honeymoon period" of a first year principal, a fact the principal of RHS joked about with the researcher. Results are discussed for each dimension and its corresponding subscales.

Defining the school mission. Teachers at RHS rated the principal highest in the dimension of defining the school mission (4.08) and in its subscales of framing school goals (4.14) and communicating school goals (4.03). The principal rated himself lowest in this dimension of instructional leadership (4.20), albeit only slightly when compared with the other two dimensions and still higher than the teachers scored him. According to the PIMRS results, the principal and teachers of RHS perceived the principal as frequently engaging in the subscales associated with defining the school's mission.

Managing the instructional program. Like his district counterpart at JHS, the principal of RHS scored himself highest in the dimension of managing the instructional program (4.33) and particularly in the subscale of supervising/evaluating instruction (4.60). While lower than the principal self-scores, mean teacher scores in this dimension (3.97) and the subscales (3.98/3.96/3.98) were high and marked the principal as frequently fulfilling these instructional leadership functions in the school. The greatest difference in role group perceptions on an individual PIMRS score existed in the subscale of supervising and evaluating instruction (-.62), a fact further reinforced by Figure 10 (see p. 117). The formal teacher evaluation process was on the minds of principals and teachers in many of the eight high schools, as gleaned from both formal and informal conversations with participating educators during both data collection phases.

Promoting a positive school learning climate. Teachers of RHS scored their principal lowest in the dimension of promoting a positive school learning climate (3.88) and in the subscales of providing incentives to teachers (3.69) and maintaining high visibility (3.78). The largest difference in perception on a dimension occurred in promoting a school learning climate (-.40). In regard to subscale 7 maintaining high visibility, teacher scores varied the most as

shown by the high standard deviation (1.30). The most agreement between teachers and principal occurred in subscale 9 providing professional development (4.03/4.20). The principal of RHS, like his colleague at the other district high school, received a high rating from teachers in the subscale of protecting instructional time (3.98). Despite receiving his lowest scores in this dimension and on these subscales, the principal of RHS was still frequently promoting a positive school learning climate.

District 1 Summary

The above tables and graphs on the PIMRS results from the schools in District 1 revealed trends across the high schools in this district as well as trends that will be subsequently revealed in the PIMRS results from the other high schools and districts participating in this study. Based on the information discussed in the above tables, figures, and narrative, certain salient findings should be summarized. Overall the PIMRS data from JHS and RHS reflected substantial agreement between principal and teachers that these were two principals who frequently engaged in the three dimensions of instructional leadership. The principal of RHS was one of the overall highest rated principals on the PIMRS by his teachers, but these data were perhaps skewed by his newness to the position of head principal. In support of prior research, teachers identified the dimension of defining the school mission and its subscales as the most perceived aspect(s) of instructional leadership for both principals. Both principals, however, rated themselves highest in the dimension of managing the instructional program. Teachers at JHS and RHS perceived their principals as least active in the dimension of promoting a positive school learning climate and specifically in the subscales of providing incentives for teachers and maintaining high visibility. When compared with most of the other principals participating in the study (see Figure 7, p. 103), the principals of JHS and RHS were somewhat unique in that their PIMRS

ratings on subscale 6, protecting instructional time, were not one of their lowest but was one of their highest rated PIMRS subscales.

School District 2

District 2 is a located in a small county with a population of roughly 60,000 residents according to a 2005 US census estimate. District 2 serves a largely rural/small town student population of around 10,000 and includes 18 elementary, middle, and high schools. A little more than 60% of the student population is classified as economically disadvantaged, and almost 40% receives Title 1 funds. With a Hispanic student percentage of 13% or roughly 1300 students, District 2 serves a substantial population of ELL students. As shown in Table 5 (see p. 100), the per pupil expenditure is lowest of all participating districts. According to the system's 2009 Report Card, 16 of the system's 18 schools are in Good Standing, and all teachers are highly qualified under No Child Left Behind (NCLB). An eight member board of education and an appointed school superintendent provide district level governance. Both high schools in District 2—Titus High School and Oberon High School—consented to participate in this study.

Titus High School

Titus High School (THS) has a student body of nearly 1500, of which over 50% are classified as economically disadvantaged. Table 5 (see p. 100) summarizes important information about the school's graduation rate, attendance, and achievement. The school is in Good Standing with NCLB and was last targeted in 2008. THS is slightly larger than the other high school in the district with a faculty comprised of four administrators and 87 certified, highly qualified teachers. The average overall teaching experience of the faculty sample is 10 years. THS adheres to a typical block schedule of four 90 minute classes a semester, eight classes for

the entire year. Students and teachers for upper grades 10-12 are departmentalized by subjects, while 9th graders attend a freshmen academy.

Having served since 2004, the principal of THS is in his fifth year as the head school administrator. Prior to his appointment to this position, he served one year as interim principal and 13 years as an assistant principal at the high school. Before coming to District 2, he was also a school principal in a neighboring county. The principal is supported by three assistant principals. Responsibilities delegated to the assistant principals include discipline, attendance, athletic coordination, and management of the freshman academy.

Titus High School (THS) returned 39 completed surveys out of a total certified teaching population of 87. Table 8 provides descriptive statistics for the teacher responses to the PIMRS for THS. The table presents the principal mean scores for the 10 subscales and three dimensions and the difference between principal and teacher mean scores for purposes of comparison. Figure 11 is a line graph comparing the mean subscale scores of the principal with the faculty of THS. The figure reveals a greater difference between the principal and teacher subscale scores than in both of the two previously discussed high schools.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics of Teacher and Principal PIMRS Results for THS

Subscales/Dimensions	N	M(T)	Md	Mo	SD	Range		M(P)	Diff
Frame goals	39.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	0.94	1.00	5.00	4.20	-0.20
Communicate goals	39.00	3.69	4.00	4.00	1.08	1.00	5.00	4.40	-0.71
Define School Mission		3.85						4.30	-0.45
Supervise instruction	39.00	3.82	4.00	4.00	0.93	1.00	5.00	4.20	-0.38
Coordinate curriculum	39.00	3.86	4.00	4.00	0.94	1.00	5.00	4.60	-0.74
Monitor progress	39.00	3.69	4.00	4.00	1.08	1.00	5.00	4.40	-0.71
Manage Instructional Program		3.79						4.40	-0.61
Protect time	39.00	3.53	4.00	4.00	1.18	1.00	5.00	4.60	-1.07
Maintain visibility	39.00	3.06	3.00	3.00	1.23	1.00	5.00	3.80	-0.74
Teaching incentives	39.00	3.37	3.31	3.00	1.10	1.00	5.00	4.00	-0.63
Professional development	39.00	3.75	4.00	4.00	0.97	1.00	5.00	4.40	-0.65
Learning incentives	39.00	3.49	3.64	3.00	1.09	1.00	5.00	3.80	-0.31
Promote Learning Climate		3.44						4.12	-0.68

Legend: (T)—Teachers; (P)—Principal

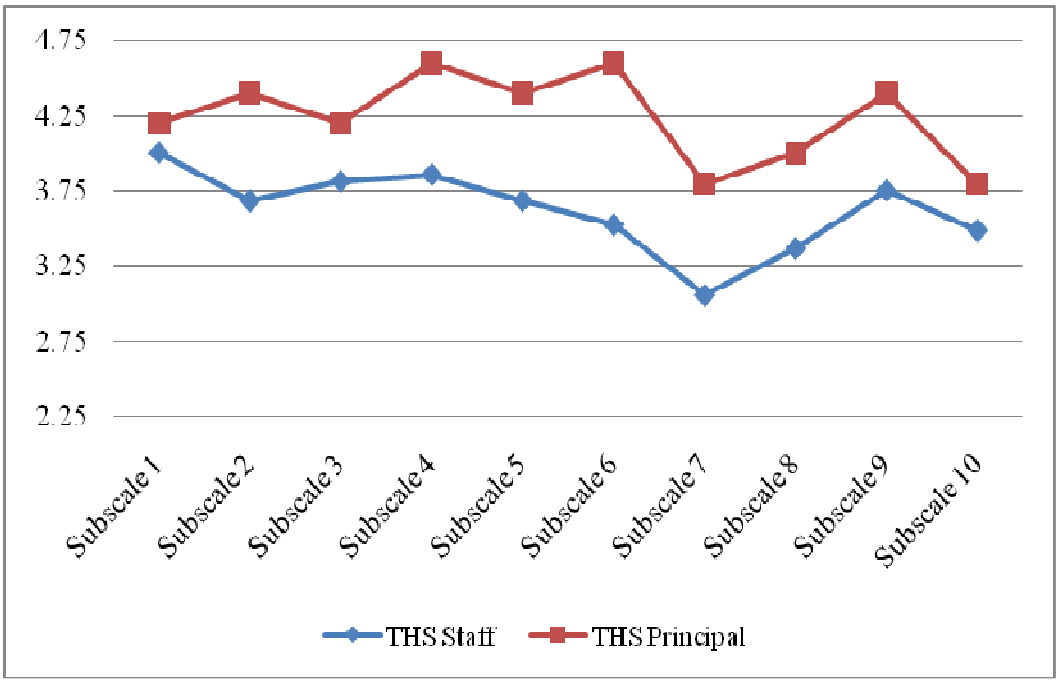


Figure 11: Comparison of THS teacher mean PIMRS scores with principal scores.

The principal of THS received some of the overall lowest ratings from teachers on the 10 subscales of the PIMRS. Most mean subscale scores of the principal and teachers fell between a 3.5 and 4.5. The data in Table 8 and Figure 11 revealed that across all subscales the principal rated himself higher than did his faculty. Differences in the perceptions of principal and teachers in all three dimensions (-.45/-.63/-.68) were higher with THS than in the two previous data sets. In dimensions 1 and 2, there was agreement that the principal frequently engaged in many of the 10 instructional leadership subscales outlined in the PIMRS. Even in dimension 3 where the principal received some of his lowest ratings, Figure 11 demonstrates considerable general agreement between principal and faculty as to the trend of the subscales scores. Results are discussed for each of the three dimensions and their related subscales.

Defining the school mission. Teachers rated the principal highest in dimension 1 of defining the school mission (3.85) and in the subscale of framing school goals (4.00). Teacher mean subscale score dropped with subscale 2 of communicating school goals (3.69). The principal rated this dimension as his second highest (4.30), but only slightly and still higher than the faculty did. Prior research underpinned the prominence and importance of mission-building for instructional leadership (Bamburg & Andrews, 1990; Bossert et al., 1984; Brewer, 1993; Goldring & Pasternak, 1994; Marks & Printy, 2003). According to the PIMRS results, the teachers of THS identified their principal as frequently engaging in this dimension of instructional leadership.

Managing the instructional program. The principal of THS rated himself highest in the dimension of managing the instructional program (4.40) and in the subscale of coordinating curriculum (4.60). The teachers awarded the principal one of his highest subscale scores in coordinating curriculum (3.86). This principal was perceived as often participating in curricular

matters and using achievement test data to develop and coordinate the school's curriculum as outlined in the PIMRS. Teacher ratings and principal self-ratings marked the principal as often supervising/evaluating instruction (3.82/4.20) and monitoring student progress (3.68/4.40). The federal Department of Education recognized THS a few years ago as a Blue Ribbon School, and the high school enjoyed a reputation of utilizing test data to make instructional decisions.

Promoting a positive school learning climate. While the principal rated himself as frequently acting as an instructional leader in dimension 3, the teachers' mean scores for this dimension and most of its subscales denoted the principal as only sometimes fulfilling these functions. The teachers and principal scored the principal lowest in the dimension of promoting a positive school learning climate (3.44/4.12) and in the subscales of maintaining high visibility (3.06/3.80), providing incentives for teachers (3.37/4.00), and providing incentives for learning (3.49/3.80). Teacher mean scores deviated most in maintaining high visibility (1.23), as in the case of the previous two schools. Attention was also drawn to the large discrepancy in the perceptions regarding the protection of instructional time (-1.07) between teachers (3.53) and the principal (4.60) scores. The principal regarded this function as one of his strongest/most frequent instructional leadership activities whereas teachers regarded it as one of his weakest/least frequent.

Oberon High School

Oberon High School (OHS) is slightly smaller than its sister school with a student body of 1410. With approximately 41% of its student body classified as economically disadvantaged, OHS does not qualify as a Title 1 school. Table 5 (see, p. 100) affords a summary of important information about the school's graduation rate, attendance, and achievement. The school is in Good Standing with NCLB and had never been targeted. OHS's faculty is comprised of four

administrators and 90 certified, highly qualified teachers. The average overall teaching experience of the faculty sample is eight years. Teachers and students were organized much like THS.

The principal of OHS is in his fifth year as head administrator of the school. Previously, he served as an elementary school principal, high school assistant principal, high school biology teacher, as well as director of a residential educational facility in a nearby southeastern state. He is the only principal in this study with his doctorate, which he earned in 2002. OHS's principal received an educational leadership award from the state's flagship university in 2007. The principal is supported by three assistant principals with specific areas of focus: curriculum and special education, attendance and the freshman academy, and student discipline and athletic coordination.

OHS returned 46 completed surveys out of a total certified teaching population of approximately 90 teachers. Table 9 provides the descriptive statistics for the teacher responses on PIMRS for OHS. The table presents the principal mean scores for the 10 subscales and three dimensions and the difference between principal and teacher mean scores. Figure 12 is a line graph comparing the mean subscale scores of the principal with the faculty of OHS. This graphic affords a clearer visual comparison between the principal and teachers scores on PIMRS.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics of Teacher and Principal PIMRS Results for OHS

Dimensions/Subscales	N	M(T)	Md	Mo	SD	Range		M(P)	Diff
Frame goals	46.00	3.89	4.00	4.00	0.86	1.00	5.00	4.00	-0.11
Communicate goals	46.00	3.60	4.00	4.00	1.03	1.00	5.00	3.80	-0.20
Define School Mission		3.74						3.90	-0.16
Supervise instruction	46.00	3.37	3.00	3.00	1.13	1.00	5.00	4.40	-1.03
Coordinate curriculum	46.00	3.72	4.00	4.00	0.97	1.00	5.00	4.20	-0.48
Monitor progress	46.00	3.53	4.00	4.00	1.14	1.00	5.00	4.60	-1.07
Manage Instructional Program		3.54						4.40	-0.86
Protect time	46.00	3.32	3.39	4.00	1.31	1.00	5.00	3.80	-0.48
Maintain visibility	46.00	2.64	3.00	3.00	1.24	1.00	5.00	3.80	-1.16
Teaching incentives	46.00	3.13	3.00	3.00	1.14	1.00	5.00	3.40	-0.27
Professional development	46.00	3.49	4.00	4.00	1.11	1.00	5.00	3.80	-0.31
Learning incentives	46.00	3.34	3.00	4.00	1.09	1.00	5.00	3.00	0.34
Promote Learning Climate		3.18						3.56	-0.38

Legend: (T)—Teachers; (P)—Principal

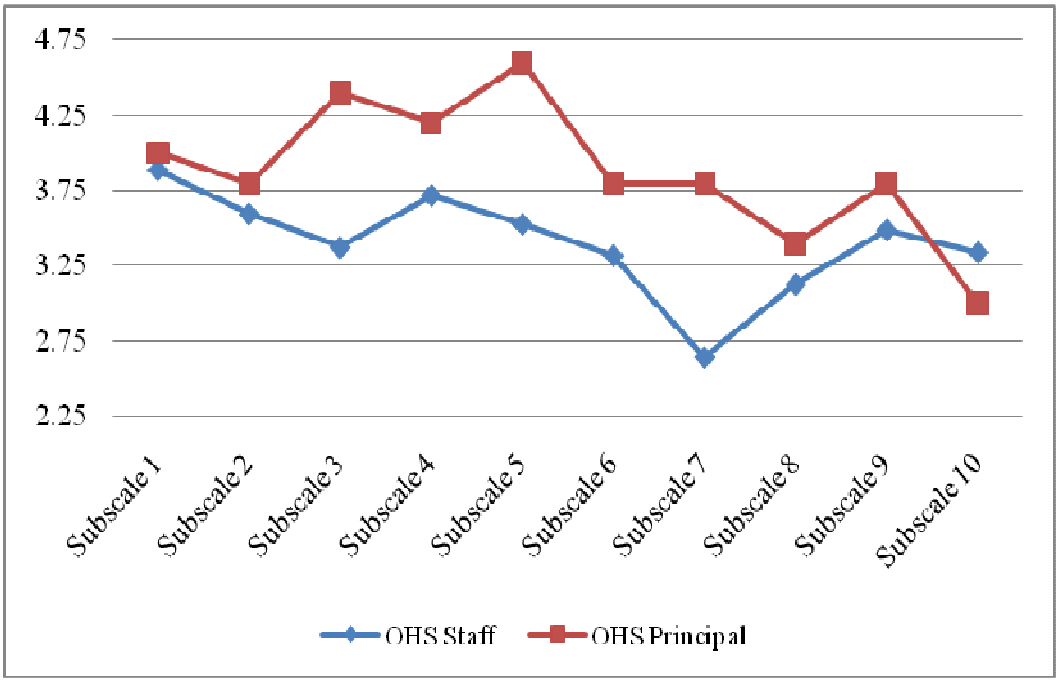


Figure 12: Comparison of OHS teacher mean PIMRS scores with principal scores.

Much like his counterpart at the other high school in District 2, the principal of OHS received some of the lowest teacher ratings on the 10 instructional leadership functions of the PIMRS. The data in Table 9 show that across all subscales except one (i.e., subscale 10, providing incentives for learning) the principal rated himself higher than did his faculty. Most mean subscale scores of the principal and teachers fell between 3 and 4. On most of the subscales the principal received a rating of 4 or *frequently*, but the high standard deviations, as compared to the other schools, illustrates a greater variance in the perceptions of faculty. While the table and figure show the general agreement between teachers and principal with regard to both dimensions 1 and 3, it also shows the clear difference of perception with dimension 2 (-.86). Results from OHS are discussed based on the three dimensions and their corresponding subscales.

Defining the school mission. The teachers at OHS rated the principal highest in the dimension of defining the school mission (3.74) and in the PIMRS subscales of framing school goals (3.89) and communicating goals (3.60). While not identifying this as his most active area of instructional leadership, the principal's self-rating in this dimension (3.90) and its subscales (4.00; 3.80) were close to those of the teachers. In most of the participating high schools, teacher perceptions of the principal dipped slightly from the framing to the communication of school goals. Teachers at OHS perceived their principal as frequently functioning as an instructional leader in the subscales related to this PIMRS dimension.

Managing the instructional program. The principal of OHS was the fourth principal to rate himself highest in the dimension of managing the instructional program (4.40). He scored himself a frequently active in the subscales of coordinating curriculum (4.20), supervising/evaluating instruction (4.40), and monitoring student progress (4.60). Teachers

granted the principal one of his highest subscale ratings in coordinating curriculum (3.72). Overall, the teacher mean score for this dimension (3.54) just barely falls under the designation of *frequently*. The greatest difference in perceptions occurred in this dimension, especially in the perceptions of teachers and the principal for subscales 3 and 5. Figure 12 (see p. 126) depicts an inverse relationship in the perceptions of the principal and teachers in the 3 subscales that constitute the PIMRS dimension of managing the instructional program. The principal rated himself highest in supervising/evaluating instruction and monitoring student progress and lowest in coordinating instruction; teachers' perceptions were the opposite.

Promoting a positive school learning climate. The principal and teachers scored the principal lowest in dimension 3 of promoting a positive school learning climate (3.18/3.56). Disagreement occurred in scoring the individual subscales. The principal rated himself highest in the subscales of protecting instructional time (3.80) and maintaining high visibility (3.80) and lowest in the subscales of providing incentives for teachers (3.40) and providing incentives for learning (3.00). The principal of OHS received the highest rating from teachers in promoting professional development (3.49) and his lowest scores on maintaining high visibility (2.64) and providing incentives for teaching (3.18). The principal's perceived activity in the subscale of maintaining visibility fell between *rarely* and *sometimes*, and the greatest difference in subscale scores (-1.17) happened with subscale 7.

District 2 Summary

The data from the schools in District 2 largely reinforced trends, at least in terms of teacher results, apparent in the previous schools. Greater disagreement occurred between the perceptions of principals and teachers in this district than in the previous one with principals rating themselves higher in almost all of the 10 PIMRS subscales. Teachers at THS and OHS

perceived their principals as frequently acting as an instructional leader in two of the three PIMRS dimensions. Teachers in the school district regarded dimension 1 of defining the school mission as the most perceived aspect of their principals' instructional leadership, while both principals reported dimension 2 of managing the instructional program as their most frequent instructional leadership activities. Both teachers and principals at these high schools identified dimension 3 of promoting a positive learning climate as the most problematic and least perceived instructional leadership dimension for the principals. Maintaining high visibility was recognized by teachers in both schools as a subscale of particular concern. There was considerable discrepancy between the perceptions of principal and teachers at THS in terms of the frequency with which the principal protected instructional time. The principal rated this subscale as one of his highest, whereas the teachers rated it as one of his lowest. With the instructional leadership of the principal of OHS, there was disagreement between principal and teacher perceptions in terms of the subscale of maintaining high visibility.

School District 3

District 3 is a school system located in a county with an approximate population of 71,000 according to the 2000 census. District 3 is the largest school district participating in this study, encompassing 25 schools and an approximate total student population of 14,000. Almost 60% of the students in District 3 are classified as economically disadvantaged. Per pupil expenditure is slightly below the state average. The system's 2009 Report Card identifies 18 of the system's 25 schools in Good Standing under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and all teachers in the district are highly qualified. District level governance is provided by a five member board of education and an appointed school superintendent. Three of the four high schools in District

3—Lear High School, Hamlet High School, and MacBeth High School—agreed to participate in this study.

Lear High School

Lear High School (LHS) is the smallest of the schools featured in this study with a student population of approximately 600. LHS's percentage of economically disadvantaged students is slightly less than 50%. Table 5 (see p. 100) provides a summary of important information about the school's graduation rate, attendance, and achievement. LHS's faculty is comprised of three administrators and 38 certified, highly qualified teachers. The average overall teaching experience for the faculty is 15 years. LHS adheres to a typical block schedule; students and teachers in grades 9-12 are departmentalized by subject areas. LHS is the only high school in this study that does not use a freshman academy model for its ninth graders.

This is the principal of LHS's third year as the head administrator. He is a recent returnee to the school district after spending a few years as vice mayor for the county. Prior to this, he served as an elementary school principal and in a supervisory role with the school district. He is supported by one full-time assistant principal who handles student discipline and one half-time assistant principal who addresses attendance.

Lear High School (LHS) returned 16 completed PIMRs out of an approximate certified faculty of 38 teachers. Table 10 provides the descriptive statistics for the teacher responses on PIMRS for LHS as well as presenting the principal mean scores for the 10 subscales and three dimensions and the difference between principal and teacher mean scores. Figure 13 is a line graph that compares the scores of both the principal and teachers on the 10 PIMRS subscales. The graph demonstrates general agreement between the principal and teachers of LHS with regard to the principal's perceived instructional leadership activities.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics of Teacher and Principal PIMRS Results for LHS

Dimensions/Subscales	N	M(T)	Md	Mo	SD	Range		M(P)	Diff
Frame goals	16.00	4.03	4.00	4.00	0.84	1.00	5.00	4.20	-0.17
Communicate goals	16.00	4.03	4.00	4.00	0.94	1.00	5.00	3.60	0.43
Define School Mission		4.03						3.90	0.13
Supervise instruction	16.00	3.90	4.00	4.00	0.91	1.00	5.00	3.60	0.30
Coordinate curriculum	16.00	4.17	4.08	5.00	0.97	1.00	5.00	4.00	0.17
Monitor progress	16.00	4.27	4.20	5.00	0.84	1.00	5.00	4.00	0.27
Manage Instructional Program		4.11						3.87	0.24
Protect time	16.00	3.69	4.00	5.00	1.28	1.00	5.00	3.60	0.09
Maintain visibility	16.00	3.72	4.00	5.00	1.31	1.00	5.00	3.80	-0.08
Teaching incentives	16.00	3.92	4.00	4.00	1.15	1.00	5.00	3.75	0.17
Professional development	16.00	4.27	5.00	5.00	1.06	1.00	5.00	4.00	0.27
Learning incentives	16.00	3.69	4.00	4.00	1.06	1.00	5.00	3.80	-0.11
Promote Learning Climate		3.86						3.79	0.07

Legend: (T)—Teachers; (P)—Principal

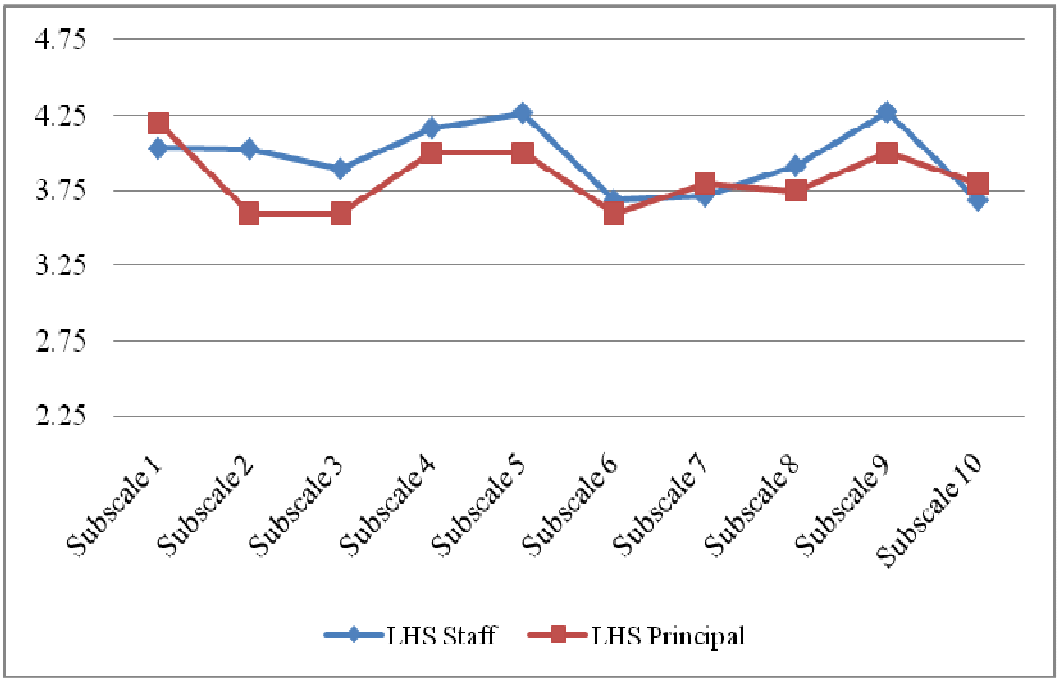


Figure 13: Comparison of LHS mean teacher PIMRS scores with principal mean scores.

The data in Table 10 and Figure 13 show general agreement between the principal and teachers of LHS. The teachers rated the principal higher than he rated himself in all three dimensions and in seven of the ten subscales. Practically all scores of both the principal and the teachers fell between a 3.5 and 4 on the PIMRS. According to both the principal and teacher results on the PIMRS, the principal of LHS was perceived to frequently engage in all the instructional leadership subscales measured on the PIMRS. The results from LHS are discussed in terms of the three instructional leadership dimensions and their related subscales.

Defining the school mission. The teachers of LHS were the first faculty not to identify dimension 1 as the most perceived area of their principal's instructional leadership, but teachers still rated the principal well in defining the school's mission (4.03). The principal of LHS scored himself highest in the dimension of defining the school mission (3.90) and in the subscale of framing school goals (4.2). Teacher mean score for subscale 1 (4.03) was very close to the principal's score. Teachers also perceived the principal as more active in communicating goals (4.03) than the principal perceived himself (3.60). The PIMRS results from both principal and teachers depicted a principal frequently engaged in the instructional leadership behaviors of defining the school mission.

Managing the instructional program. The teachers of LHS rated the principal highest in the dimension of managing the instructional program (4.11) and in the PIMRS subscales of monitoring student progress (4.27). The principal rated monitoring student progress (4.00) as one of his most active PIMRS subscales of instructional leadership. Teachers and principal also perceived the principal as frequently engaging in the other two subscales of this dimension—supervising/evaluating instruction (3.90/3.60) and coordinating curriculum (4.17/4.00). Perhaps the small size of LHS (less than 600 students) enabled the principal to more often engage in the

instructional program management behaviors of dimension 2. School size might play an important role in allowing the principal and teachers to more effectively monitor the progress of students, a subscale rated by both principal and teachers as one of the highest, which in turn might explain the ACT scores of LHS students (see Table 5, p. 100).

Promoting a positive school learning climate. Both principal and teachers rated the principal lowest in the dimension of promoting a positive school learning climate (3.86/3.79) and in the instructional leadership function of protecting instructional time (3.69/3.60). Teachers scored the principal lower in providing incentives for learning (3.69) and maintaining high visibility (3.72). Much has already been said of maintaining high visibility, but it seems even in a high school of fewer than 600, principal visibility was concerning. LHS teachers were the first faculty to rate their principal lower in providing incentives for learning than in providing incentives for teaching. Teachers perceived the principal as frequently providing teaching incentives (3.92). The principal received his highest subscale rating in the area of providing professional development (4.27). Dimension 3 of promoting a positive school learning climate was once again viewed by the principal and teachers as the most difficult of the instructional leadership dimensions for high school administrators.

Hamlet High School

Hamlet High School (HHS) is a high school of approximately 1200 students that serves an unincorporated community that extends into two adjacent counties. With an economically disadvantaged population of 35%, HHS is the most affluent school represented in this study. Table 5 (see p. 100) affords a summary of important information about the school's graduation rate, attendance, and achievement. The school is in Good Standing with NCLB and has never been targeted. Achievement scores, ACT scores, and graduation rate are above state averages.

The faculty of HHS is made up of four administrators and 60 highly qualified teachers. The average overall teaching experience for the faculty sample of HHS is 10 years. HHS follows a block schedule of four 90 minute classes each semester. Students and teachers in grades 10-12 are departmentalized by subject areas, and ninth graders attend a freshmen academy.

The principal of HHS has held his position since 2005. Previously, he served as an elementary school principal and, before that, as an assistant principal and middle school math teacher. Three assistant principals and a special education coordinator assist the principal. Each principal handles certain responsibilities, such as attendance, textbooks, athletic coordination, and discipline.

HHS returned 24 completed PIMRS surveys out of an approximate total teacher population of 60 teachers. Table 11 provides the descriptive statistics for the teacher responses on PIMRS for HHS. The table also presents the principal mean scores for the 10 subscales and three dimensions and the difference between principal and teacher mean scores. Figure 14 is a line graph comparing the teacher mean subscale scores with the principal scores on the PIMRS.

Table 11

Descriptive Statistics of Teacher and Principal PIMRS Results for HHS

Dimensions/Subscales	N	M(T)	Md	Mo	SD	Range		M(P)	Diff
Frame goals	24.00	4.31	4.28	5.00	0.74	2.00	5.00	4.00	0.31
Communicate goals	24.00	4.16	4.18	5.00	0.91	1.00	5.00	3.20	0.96
Define School Mission		4.24						3.60	0.64
Supervise instruction	24.00	4.17	4.28	5.00	0.94	1.00	5.00	3.80	0.37
Coordinate curriculum	24.00	4.20	4.39	5.00	0.89	2.00	5.00	3.20	1.00
Monitor progress	24.00	4.16	4.11	5.00	0.94	1.00	5.00	3.60	0.56
Manage Instructional Program		4.18						3.53	0.64
Protect time	24.00	3.83	4.00	5.00	1.08	1.00	5.00	4.00	-0.17
Maintain visibility	24.00	3.77	4.00	5.00	1.22	1.00	5.00	3.80	-0.03
Teaching incentives	24.00	3.60	4.00	5.00	1.23	1.00	5.00	3.20	0.40
Professional development	24.00	4.29	4.17	5.00	0.75	2.00	5.00	3.60	0.69
Learning incentives	24.00	3.34	3.29	5.00	1.23	1.00	5.00	3.40	-0.06
Promote Learning Climate		3.77						3.60	0.17

Legend: (T)—Teachers; (P)—Principal

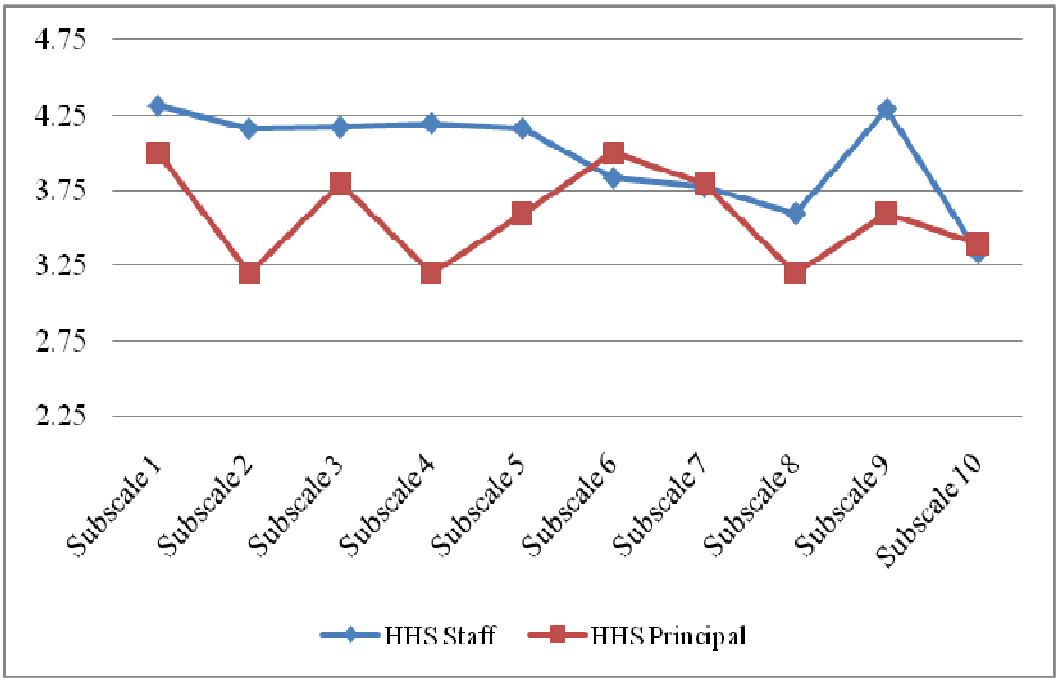


Figure 14: Comparison of HHS teacher mean PIMRS scores with principal mean scores.

Contrary to what was typically found in research using the PIMRS, the teachers of HHS rated the principal higher than he rated himself across all three PIMRS dimensions and in most of the 10 subscales. According to the data in Table 11 and Figure 14, practically all the scores fell between 3.25 and 4.25. While the principal perceived himself as only sometimes active in at least five of the PIMRS subscales, the teachers of HHS perceived the principal as frequently engaging in most of the 10 instructional leadership functions. The PIMRS results from HHS are discussed based on the three dimensions and their associated subscales.

Defining the school mission. While the mean scores for dimensions 1 and 2 were close, the teachers rated the principal slightly higher in defining the school mission (4.24). Teachers perceived the principal as frequently active in both framing school goals (4.31) and communicating school goals (4.16). These results aligned well with those of the previous high schools. Principal self-ratings for the three dimensions were similar. Dimension 1 of defining the school's mission was one of the two in which the principal scored himself highest (3.60). With regard to the subscales, the principal rated himself as frequently active in framing school goals (4.00) but only sometimes engaged in communicating goals (3.20).

Managing the instructional program. Teachers rated the principal as frequently involved in dimension 2 of managing the instructional program (4.18) and in each of the three subscales constituting this area of instructional leadership. Another trend developing in the PIMRS results was evident in the results from HHS—teachers rated coordinating curriculum as the principal's highest subscale of dimension 2 (4.20), while the principal rated himself lowest in this subscale (3.20). The principal rated himself slightly lower in the dimension of managing the instructional program than in the other two dimensions (3.53), a departure somewhat from the other principals discussed previously who rated dimension 2 as their most active area of

instructional leadership. He perceived himself as most active in the PIMRS function of supervising and evaluating instruction (3.80). While teachers perceived the principal as frequently engaged in these subscales, the principal's self-rating placed his perception of activity in this area as falling between *sometimes* and *frequently*.

Promoting a positive school learning climate. The teachers rated the principal lowest in the dimension of promoting a positive school learning climate (3.77). This was higher than the principal's self-rating in this dimension (3.60), which tied with his self-rating in dimension 1. The principal was perceived as most active in the subscale of providing professional development (4.29), although there was considerable difference between this score and the self-rating of the principal (3.60). Principal rated himself highest in protecting instructional time (4.00), which was one of the few subscales in which his self-rating was higher than the mean score of teachers (3.83). Teachers and the principal rated the principal lowest in the subscales of providing incentives for teachers (3.60/3.20) and providing incentives for learning (3.34/3.40). The principal was perceived as only sometimes engaging these PIMRS subscales. This was only the second time a faculty rated the principal lower in learning incentives than teaching incentives. The perceptions of teachers and principal were quite close with regard to maintaining high visibility (3.77/3.80).

MacBeth High School

With a student population over 1700, MacBeth High School (MHS) is the largest school in District 3 and the second largest high school that participated in this study. MHS has the highest percentage of economically disadvantaged students (almost 60%) and receives Title 1 funding. Table 5 (see p. 100) provides a summary of important information about the school's graduation rate, attendance, and achievement. The school is targeted under NCLB because of

the math achievement of the students with disabilities subgroup. The faculty is comprised of six administrators and over 100 certified, highly qualified teachers. The average overall teaching experience for the faculty sample of MHS is approximately seven years with an average teaching experience with the current principal of four years. Teachers and students in grades 10-12 follow a typical block schedule, while incoming ninth graders attend a freshmen academy.

The principal of MHS is in his fifth year as head administrator at the high school. He served as an assistant principal for several years under the previous principal. He is a former football coach, high school teacher, and a graduate of MHS. He is presently working on his education specialist's degree. The principal is supported by five assistant principals. Each assistant principal is delegated specific responsibilities: freshmen academy, transportation, disciplinary hearings, curriculum, athletics, and attendance.

The faculty of MacBeth High School (MHS) returned 41 completed PIMRS surveys out of a total teacher population of 109 teachers. Table 12 provides the descriptive statistics for the teacher responses on PIMRS for MHS as well as the principal mean scores for the 10 subscales and three dimensions and the difference between principal and teacher mean scores for purposes of comparison. Figure 15 is a line graph comparing the teacher mean subscale scores with the principal scores on the PIMRS. The graph enabled an easier way to visually compare the perceptions of principal and teachers on the 10 subscales of the PIMRS.

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics of Teacher and Principal PIMRS Results for MHS

Dimensions/Subscales	n	M(T)	Md	Mo	SD	Range		M(P)	Diff
Frame goals	41.00	4.34	4.32	5.00	0.65	2.00	5.00	4.20	0.14
Communicate goals	41.00	4.20	4.11	5.00	0.75	2.00	5.00	4.60	-0.40
Define School Mission		4.27						4.40	-0.13
Supervise instruction	41.00	3.92	4.00	4.00	0.77	1.00	5.00	4.20	-0.28
Coordinate curriculum	41.00	4.10	4.00	4.00	0.73	1.00	5.00	4.20	-0.10
Monitor progress	41.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	0.74	2.00	5.00	4.40	-0.40
Manage Instructional Program		4.01						4.27	-0.26
Protect time	41.00	3.98	4.00	5.00	0.98	1.00	5.00	4.40	-0.42
Maintain visibility	41.00	3.77	4.00	4.00	0.97	1.00	5.00	4.00	-0.23
Teaching incentives	41.00	3.97	4.00	4.00	0.73	2.00	5.00	3.60	0.37
Professional development	41.00	4.19	4.00	4.00	0.61	1.00	5.00	3.60	0.59
Learning incentives	41.00	4.03	4.00	4.00	0.72	2.00	5.00	3.60	0.43
Promote Learning Climate		3.99						3.84	0.15

Legend: (T)—Teachers; (P)—Principals

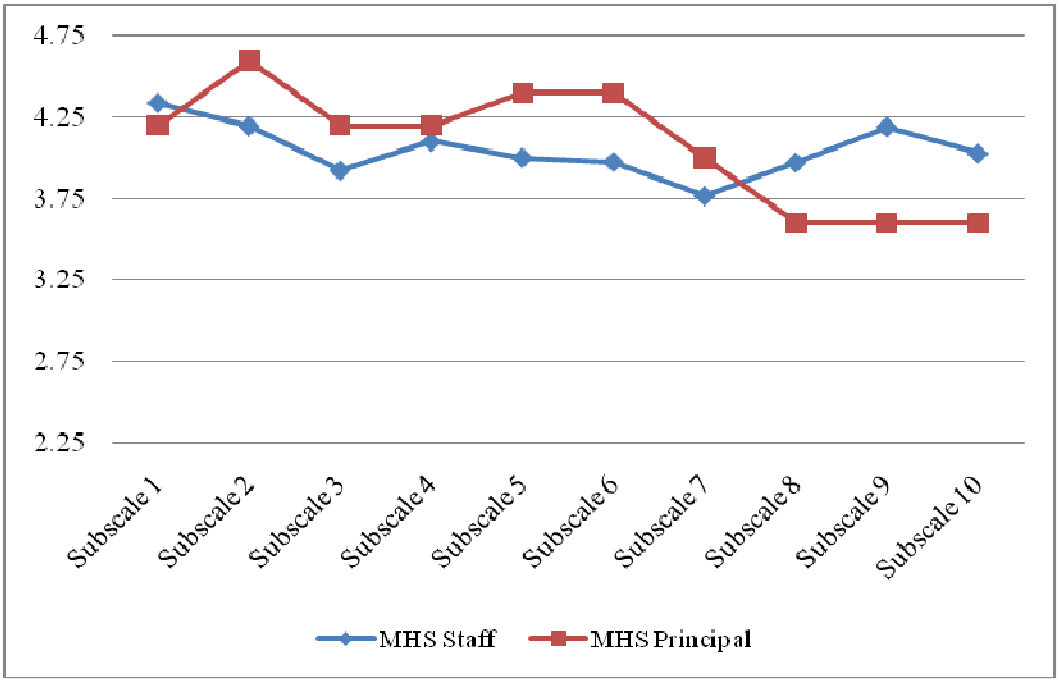


Figure 15: Comparison of MHS teacher mean PIMRS scores with principal mean scores.

Teachers at MHS awarded their principal some of the highest mean scores in the three dimensions and ten subscales of the PIMRS. The data in Table 12 and Figure 15 showed that the principal rated himself higher in six PIMRS subscales than did his faculty. Most mean subscale scores of the principal and teachers fell between a 3.75 and 4.5. Even though there was some disagreement in terms of which subscales the two rated highest and lowest, the principal and teachers of MHS agreed that the principal frequently engaged in most of the instructional leadership functions outlined in the PIMRS. The results from MHS are discussed in terms of the three dimensions and their related PIMRS subscales.

Defining the school mission. The teachers (4.27) and the principal (4.40) of MHS scored the principal highest in the first dimension of defining the school mission. The teachers gave the principal his two highest mean subscale scores in both functions of this dimension—framing school goals (4.34) and communicating school goals (4.20). The principal received a lower PIMRS rating from faculty for the communication of school goals, while the principal gave himself the lower score in framing goals (4.20) and the higher score in communicating goals (4.60). The principal of MHS was identified as frequently active in the instructional leadership functions of framing and communicating school goals.

Managing the instructional program. Both teachers (4.01) and the principal (4.27) rated the principal as frequently engaged in this dimension of instructional leadership. Teachers scored the principal highest in the subscale of coordinating the curriculum (4.10), much like the PIMRS results for faculties in the other participating high schools. The principal was scored lowest in supervising/evaluating instruction (3.92). The principal rated himself highest in the subscale of monitoring student progress (4.40). The principal's self-scores for the subscales of supervising/evaluating instruction (4.20) and coordinating instruction (4.20) were the same.

Promoting a positive school learning climate. Dimension 3 of the PIMRS was rated by both teachers (3.99) and the principal (3.84) as the principal's least frequent area of instructional leadership, marking the seventh time this dimension was scored the lowest. Teachers scored the principal lowest in maintaining high visibility (3.77), providing incentives for teachers (3.97), and protecting instructional time (3.98). Teachers rated the principal highest in the subscale of promoting professional development (4.19). Another trend developing in the data was that teachers typically perceived the principal as most active in promoting professional development, even more so than principals' perceived themselves. The principal scored himself lowest in subscales 8-10 with the same score in all three (3.60). The principal of MHS rated himself highest in the subscale of protecting instructional time (4.40). When coupled with the teachers subscale score, the principal of MHS appeared to be active in protecting instructional time. The principals of the largest high schools in this study seemed to be the most engaged in this area of promoting a school climate of learning.

District 3 Summary

The principals of the three high schools of District 3 were some of the highest rated principals on the PIMRS. The results from the administration of the PIMRS in these schools supported the larger discussion of instructional leadership in rural secondary schools. As with the high schools in the other two districts, the principals and teachers of HHS and MHS agreed that their principals were most active in dimension 1 of defining the school mission. The teachers of LHS, however, rated their principal slightly higher in dimension 2 of managing the instructional program. The principals of District 3 scored lowest in the dimension of promoting a positive learning climate. Even more so than with maintaining high visibility, these principals were perceived as struggling in the instructional leadership function of providing incentives for

learning (i.e., students). Much like the other schools in the study, teachers scored principals as frequently active in providing professional development. Unlike the other schools, principals received high ratings in the subscale of providing incentives for teachers. Teachers of LHS, the smallest and highest performing school in the study, perceived their principal as particularly active in the subscale of monitoring student progress. The principal of HHS scored himself lower than did his teachers on most of the subscales of the PIMRS, rating himself as only sometimes active in half of the subscales. The results from MHS support the trend that the principals of the largest schools in the study appeared to be more active in protecting the instructional time of teachers than in the smaller high schools.

School District 4

District 4 is unique among the school systems participating in this study in that it is the sole municipal district. The city containing District 4 has a population of approximately 7000 according to the 2000 census. District 4 comprises three schools—a high school, middle school, and elementary school—and serves a rural/small town student population of around 2300. Almost 60% of the student population is classified as economically disadvantaged, and almost 30% receive Title 1 funds. At 16% of the population, Hispanic students represent the largest minority segment of the student body. Per pupil expenditure is below the state average. All three schools in the system are in Good Standing under NCLB, and all teachers are highly qualified. An appointed superintendent and a six member board of education provide district level governance in the small district. The district's one high school—Prospero High School—agreed to participate in this study.

Prospero High School

Prospero High School (PHS) has a student population of approximately 1260. PHS, with an economically disadvantaged student percentage of 38%, is the second most affluent school in the study. Table 5 (see p. 100) provides a summary of important information about the PHS's graduation rate, attendance, and achievement. The school has never been targeted and is currently in Good Standing with NCLB. The school's faculty is comprised of four administrators and 60 certified, highly qualified teachers. The average overall teaching experience for teachers at PHS is nine years. PHS adheres to a typical block schedule, and students and teachers are departmentalized by subject areas. PHS has instituted a freshmen initiative for ninth grade students.

This is the fifth year for the principal of PHS. Prior to coming to PHS, he served as a middle school principal, high school assistant principal, and high school teacher in the neighboring county district. He has both his master's and educational specialist's degrees and received recognition this year as the regional high school principal of the year. He is supported by three assistant principals. One assistant focuses on the ninth grade initiative and attendance; another focuses on facilities and sophomore/junior discipline; and one assistant principal handles senior discipline and administrates the school's Career and Technical Education (CTE) program.

PHS returned 47 out of approximately 65 administered surveys. Table 13 provides the descriptive statistics for the teacher responses on PIMRS for PHS. The table also presents the principal mean scores for the 10 subscales and three dimensions and the difference between principal and teacher mean scores. Figure 16 is a line graph comparing the mean subscale scores of the principal with the faculty of PHS.

Table 13

Descriptive Statistics of Teacher and Principal PIMRS Results for PHS

Dimensions/Subscales	N	M(T)	Md	Mo	SD	Range		M(P)	Diff
Frame goals	47.00	4.25	4.00	4.00	0.72	2.00	5.00	3.80	0.45
Communicate goals	47.00	4.07	4.00	5.00	0.92	1.00	5.00	4.20	-0.13
Define School Mission		4.16						4.00	0.16
Supervise instruction	47.00	3.94	4.00	4.00	0.99	1.00	5.00	3.00	0.94
Coordinate curriculum	47.00	4.02	4.00	4.00	0.88	1.00	5.00	3.20	0.82
Monitor progress	47.00	3.85	4.00	4.00	0.89	1.00	5.00	3.80	0.05
Manage Instructional Program		3.94						3.33	0.60
Protect time	47.00	3.62	4.00	4.00	1.16	1.00	5.00	3.60	0.02
Maintain visibility	47.00	3.82	4.00	5.00	1.23	1.00	5.00	3.20	0.62
Teaching incentives	47.00	3.86	4.00	4.00	1.01	1.00	5.00	2.40	1.46
Professional development	47.00	4.08	4.00	4.00	0.88	1.00	5.00	3.40	0.68
Learning incentives	47.00	3.99	4.00	4.00	0.90	1.00	5.00	2.80	1.19
Promote Learning Climate		3.87						3.08	0.79

Legend: (T)—Teachers; (P)--Principal

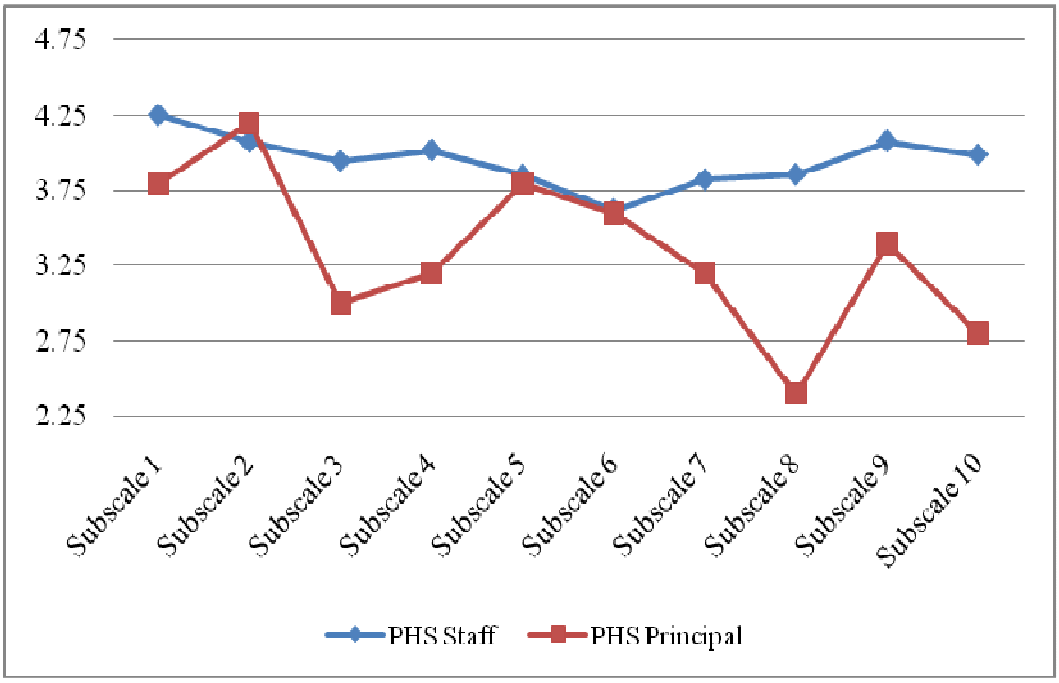


Figure 16: Comparison of PHS teacher mean PIMRS scores with principal mean scores.

The principal of PHS received some of the highest dimension and subscale ratings from his faculty on the PIMRS. Table 13 and Figure 16 show that most teacher mean subscale scores fell between 3.75 and 4.25. Teachers at PHS perceived their principal as frequently engaged in at least nine of the 10 instructional leadership functions of the PIMRS. Study of Figure 16 also revealed that teachers rated the principal higher in all but one of the subscales. In a few of the subscales, the principal rated himself substantially lower than did the teachers. Principal and teachers practically agreed on subscales 2, 5, and 6. PIMRS results from PHS are discussed based on the three dimensions and their corresponding subscales.

Defining the school mission. Both role groups rated the principal highest in dimension 1 and its associated subscales. Teachers scored the principal as frequently active in defining the school mission (4.16) and in the subscales of framing school goals (4.25) and communicating school goals (4.07). The principal scored himself lower than teachers in this dimension (4.00) but still considered himself frequently engaged in defining the school mission. As has been the case a few times previously, the principal rated himself higher in the communication of goals (4.2) than he did in the framing of goals (3.8). Subscale 2 was also the one subscale in which the principal rated himself higher than the teachers did.

Managing the instructional program. Teachers perceived the principal as frequently engaged in dimension 2 (3.94), while the principal's self score (3.33) places his activity between *sometimes* and *frequently*. There were considerable differences between the ratings of teachers and principals in both subscale 3 of supervising/evaluating instruction (3.94/3.00) and subscale 4 of coordinating curriculum (4.02/3/20). As the trend has been with most of the other schools, the teachers rated the principal highest in the subscale of coordinating curriculum. Like some of his counterparts in the other district, the principal, however, scored himself highest in the monitoring

of student progress (3.80). Teachers agreed with the principal's perception in regard to subscale 5 (3.85).

Promoting a positive school learning climate. The teachers and the principal of PHS identified dimension 3 as the least perceived, active area of instructional leadership for the principal (3.87/3.08). The teachers' mean score still marked the principal as frequently fulfilling the activities associated with this dimension, but the principal's self-rating reflected an attitude of only sometimes engaging in these instructional leadership functions. Teachers rated the principal highest in the subscales of promoting professional development (4.08) and providing incentives for learning (3.99). In most of the schools, teachers frequently identified professional development as the most perceived of the instructional leadership function. Most interestingly, the principal of PHS received the highest mean score of principals in the study for subscale 7 of maintaining high visibility (3.82). Teachers rated the principal lowest in the protection of instructional time (3.62). Although the principal scored this subscale as his highest (3.62), the scores were identical. The principal scored himself lowest in the subscales of providing incentives for teaching (2.40) and learning (2.80).

District 4 Summary

Both teacher and principal results from PHS on the PIMRS aligned considerably with the overall picture and further added to this discussion of instructional leadership in rural secondary schools. The principal and teachers of PHS both identified the principal as most frequently engaged in the subscales of dimension 1 of defining the school mission. Seven of the eight teaching faculties in the study perceived this area of instructional leadership as the most active for their principals. With regard to dimension 2 of managing the instructional program, teachers again scored the principal highest in coordinating curriculum, while the principal scored himself

highest in monitoring student progress. Teachers at PHS identified dimension 3 of promoting a school climate of learning as the most challenging aspect of instructional leadership. The principal of PHS concurred that this was his most challenging area of instructional leadership, rating himself considerably lower in the subscales of this dimension than did his teachers. The subscales of protecting instructional time, providing incentives for teachers, and providing incentives for learning were identified as areas of concern by teachers and the principal. Teachers perceived promoting professional development as the principal's most active subscale of this dimension, and the principal of PHS was perceived by his faculty as the most active in maintaining high visibility.

Perceptions of Instructional Leadership in Rural Secondary Schools

In concluding the first part of the quantitative portion of this study, this analysis presents a comprehensive look at instructional leadership in these eight schools based on the PIMRS results. For continuity, these findings are organized around the three dimensions and 10 subscales of the PIMRS. To further explain the results of the administration of the PIMRS, discussion includes some examination of individual Likert items on the instrument associated with each of the subscales (see Figure 4, p.76 and Appendix A, pp. 272-276). This helps explain the specific leadership behaviors in which principals succeeded and struggled.

Defining the School Mission

Analysis of the PIMRS results revealed broad consensus among teachers that the eight principals frequently engaged in the instructional leadership activities associated with defining the school mission (see Figure 7, p. 103). Principals also perceived this area of instructional leadership as important (see Figure 8, p. 108). These findings aligned well with prior research, which typically found this area of instructional leadership as the most perceived and influential

(in terms of directly and indirectly affecting student outcomes) of the PIMRS dimensions and subscales (Adams, 2002; Bamburg & Andrews, 1990; Bossert et al., 1984; Brewer, 1993; Goldring & Pasternak, 1994; Glasman, 1984; Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b, 1998; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Johnson, 2006; Marks & Printy, 2003; Purkey & Smith, 1983).

Teachers identified principals as particularly active in framing school goals. Only one of the eight principals received less than a 4.00 in this subscale, and even in that case, the mean score (3.89) would still fall under the designation of *frequently* (see Figure 7, p. 103). The variances in ratings among teachers (standard deviations) were least for this subscale, demonstrating that teacher perceptions were in the most agreement on this subscale. Teacher perceptions in most of the schools fell in varying degrees with the second subscale of communicating school goals, but even with the lower scores, most principals were still considered as frequently active in this subscale. Examination of teacher responses across the eight schools on the individual items associated with this subscale shed light on this trend in the PIMRS data. Principals in most of the schools received high mean scores in behaviors of articulating and discussing school goals with faculty (Items 6-8). The teachers' mean scores dipped across all schools in terms of the principal relaying and referencing school goals to students (Items 9-10).

Managing the Instructional Program

Teachers in the eight schools perceived principals in seven of the eight schools as frequently active in this dimension and its subscales (see Figure 7, p. 103). The four principals in districts 1 and 2 rated this dimension as their highest (see Figure 8, p. 108). While prior research found little correlation between student outcomes and the direction of principal's in

instructional and curricular activities, these principals seemed to be relatively active in this dimension and its subscales (Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b). The influence of greater accountability in secondary schools serves as a possible explanation for these principals' perceived activity in this dimension of instructional leadership.

Principals often rated themselves higher in the subscale of supervising and evaluating instruction than did teachers. Perceptions regarding the formal and informal nature of instructional supervision influenced the difference in attitudes of the two role groups. Both principals and teachers typically scored principals strongly in the supervision behaviors that would fall under the formal teacher evaluation process. Teachers perceived principals as less engaged in regular, informal, "walkthrough" observations (Item 13) and also scored principals lower in the review of student work as part of the observation process (Item 12).

Teachers rated the principals highest in the coordination of curriculum. Across most of the high schools, this subscale was often the highest rated subscale in dimension 2 and one of the highest rated subscales overall by teachers. Teachers perceived their principals as most active in clarifying curricular responsibilities, using testing to inform curricular decisions, and ensuring overlap between the curriculum and test objectives (Items 16, 17, and 19). The instructional leadership behavior associated with Item 16 was the only one of the few items on the instrument that explicitly required principals to share an instructional leadership responsibility.

One of the largest gaps in perceptions occurred in the monitoring of student progress. Principals repeatedly scored themselves higher in this subscale than teachers. Principals conceived of this subscale in the broader terms of subgroups, test scores, and school goals, while teachers individualized this subscale to specific classrooms and students. Principals were viewed as most active in the discussion of student strengths and weaknesses, the use of test data to assess

progress, and the communication of progress to faculty (Items 22-24). Principals were considered least active in meeting with teachers individually (Item 21) and informing students of the school's academic progress (Item 25).

Promoting a Positive School Learning Climate

Most teachers and principals identified the third dimension as the most challenging area of instructional leadership for principals (see Figure 7, p. 103 and Figure 8, p. 108). Many of the activities associated with this dimension were the most concerning to teachers and perhaps the most fundamentally influential towards their success in the classroom. Teachers might not readily recognize principal efforts in using test data to make curricular decisions, but they would notice constant intercom interruptions of their classrooms.

The perceptions of teachers and principals varied the most with regard to the protection of instructional time. In most of the schools, teachers perceived principals the most active in limiting intercom interruptions (Item 26) and in promoting the use of class time for instructional matters (Item 29), while teachers viewed principals as least active in preventing students from missing class for discipline issues (Item 27) and enforcing consequences for tardy/truant students (Item 28). The most unexpected aspect of these data was how well the principals of the three largest schools in this study (Julius, MacBeth, and Richard High Schools) were rated in this subscale by their faculties. The largest schools seemed most effective, in the perceptions of their teachers, at instituting organizational practices and policies that reduced instructional interruptions.

Perceptions also differed in regard to the principals' abilities to maintain a visible presence in the schools. Teachers consistently rated this subscale as the least frequent instructional leadership activity of principals. Principals were perceived as failing most in

regularly visiting classrooms (Item 32), covering classes for absent/late teachers (Item 34), and providing tutoring or instruction to students (Item 35). The only activity associated with this subscale teachers universally rated principals well on was in attending extracurricular activities (Item 33), and four of the principals were perceived as frequently engaging in informal conversations with students during breaks or lunches (Item 31). Few of the subscales and specific items drew as clear attention to the difficulties for high school principals in exercising the highly directive, hands-on form of instructional leadership commonly touted in the research.

Both teachers and particularly principals identified the subscales 8 and 10 of providing incentives to teachers and students as problem areas. In the behaviors of these subscales, principals most frequently opted for broad, public recognition, such as faculty meetings, school assemblies, newsletters, and honor rolls. With faculty, principals preferred to informally and privately acknowledge individual efforts (Item 37), rather than formally acknowledge teachers with a written memo (Item 38). Principals rarely recognized students on formal or individual bases (Item 48) or contacted parents/guardians to praise student accomplishments (Item 49). PIMRS results from principals and teachers pointed to a need for more frequent mechanisms for incentivizing the efforts of teachers and students.

Teachers rated subscale 9 of promoting professional development as the overall second highest of principals, only below the framing of school goals. Principals were viewed as frequently engaged in most, if not all, of the behaviors associated with this subscale, whether in tying professional development to school goals (Item 41) or in guiding inservice activities on instructional matters (Item 44). All of the items of this subscale addressed formal development activities, but formal district-mandated professional development is not the only way principals reinforce best practice or improve the instruction of teachers. Some items dealing with less

formal professional development activities of principals, directed both at the self and at faculty, would have perhaps added to the data collected and helped answer this question.

Conclusion

The descriptive analysis of the PIMRS results began with a discussion of the overall perceptions of instructional leadership across all the schools. This discussion allowed the researcher to paint a broad picture of instructional leadership in rural secondary schools. Results from teachers revealed substantial agreement in their perceptions of principals' instructional leadership and in what functions teachers regarded as the most and least active for principals (see Figure 7, p. 103). For instance, most faculties perceived their principals as frequently active in defining the school mission and least active in promoting a positive school learning climate. Principal perceptions, however, were much less congruous (see Figure 8, p. 108). Since the PIMRS was administered in eight different high schools representing four different school districts, analysis turned to the individual schools and districts in order to examine the particular features of instructional leadership in these particular school contexts. This analysis revealed both similarities and differences in the perceptions of teachers in the individual schools and districts. Each principal, in terms of his instructional leadership, was perceived by his faculty as possessing individual strengths and weaknesses. Still, the overall trends to the data were maintained throughout the schools with amazing consistency. PIMRS mean subscale scores from principals and teachers revealed that principals were perceived as most active in framing school goals, coordinating curriculum, and promoting professional development and least active in maintaining visibility, providing incentives for teaching and learning, and protecting instructional time.

Chapter 5

Inferential Analysis

Inferential Analysis of PIMRS Data

Independent *t*-tests were run on the data to compare teacher results from the eight rural secondary schools in order to determine any statistically significant differences between the teachers' perceptions of the principals' instructional leadership based on four factors: school size, school socioeconomic status, principal administrative experience level, and district funding and governance. In the previous discussion, the researcher used the PIMRS results to compare the perceptions of participants in order to identify important trends and differences in the perceived instructional leadership activities of principals in the eight schools. This descriptive analysis illuminated interesting aspects of the instructional leadership of the principals in these rural secondary schools.

In examining instructional leadership within these contexts, it was not enough to simply describe the phenomenon. Prior research demonstrated that just as instructional leadership influences student achievement (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Bamburg & Andrews, 1990; Brewer, 1993; Eberts & Stone, 1986; Edmonds, 1979; Gerzi, 1990; Goldring & Pasternak, 1994; Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b, 1998; Heck, 1992; Heck 2000; Heck, Marcoulides, & Lang, 1991; Maden, 2001; Marks & Printy, 2003; Mortimore, 1993; Robinson et al. 2008; Scheurich, 1998; Van de Grift & Houtveen 1999), it is also influenced by certain contextual variables of individual school sites (Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; 1986; Leithwood et al., 2004; Silins & Mulford, 2002). This led to a second purpose or use for the PIMRS results—the comparison of results across schools based on certain contextual factors to

determine any significant differences in the instructional leadership of principals in different school settings.

In studying the results of prior research, the researcher opted to compare PIMRS results from the eight schools based on four contextual factors: school size, school socioeconomic status (SES), principal administrative experience level, and district funding/governance. The purpose of these comparisons was to discover whether or not the mean difference between teacher subscale scores at different schools was statistically significant. The statistical test used to compare the PIMRS results from the schools was the independent *t*-test. The level of significance set for each test was $p<.05$. Results from the independent *t*-tests are reported in tables. Subscales are referenced by the abbreviated names used in previous tables (i.e., Table 6, p. 113) rather than the subscale number. For example, *learning incentives* is used for providing incentives for learning. Significant values are denoted by an asterisk (*).

School Size and Instructional Leadership

Several researchers argued that school size affects the instructional leadership of school principals (Barth, 1990; Bossert et al., 1982; Cuban 1988; Hallinger, 2003, 2005; Lambert, 1998; Leithwood, 1994; Marshall, 1996). One of the fundamental criticisms of the application of the instructional leadership model in secondary schools is largely framed in terms of the size of typical high schools. It seems rather intuitive that certain instructional leadership behaviors and activities would be easier to accomplish in smaller schools. The large size of many high schools, in terms of both students and staff, could hinder the efforts of instructional leaders. This study included schools of varying sizes and afforded an opportunity to compare the perceived instructional leadership of principals from schools of different sizes. Cursory examination of the mean teacher scores from the eight schools (see Figure 7, p. 103), however, revealed that some

of the principals from the largest schools were the highest rated. Comparisons of principals on the 10 subscales of the PIMRS still revealed a few interesting findings.

District 3, which included Lear High School (LHS), Hamlet High School (HHS), and MacBeth High School (MHS), presented the best opportunity to test the relationship of school size and instructional leadership. LHS, with a student population less that 600, was considerably smaller than the other schools in its district and in the rest of the sample. The teacher mean scores from LHS on the 10 PIMRS subscales were compared with the teacher mean results of the other two district schools. Independent *t*-tests tested the null hypothesis that there was no statistically significant difference between the instructional leadership of principals in small high schools (LHS) and the instructional leadership of principals in large high schools (HHS and MHS). Tables 14 and 15 report the results of the independent *t*-tests comparing the schools on the 10 subscales of the PIMRS. Significant values are denoted by an asterisk (*).

Table 14

Independent *t*-tests Comparing LHS to HHS by School Size

	LHS			HHS					
PIMRS Subscale	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	*t*	Df	*p*
Frame goals	16	4.03	0.84	24	4.31	0.74	-2.77	4	0.050*
Communicate goals	16	4.03	0.94	24	4.16	0.91	-1.12	4	0.330
Supervise instruction	16	3.90	0.91	24	4.17	0.94	-2.06	4	0.109
Coordinate curriculum	16	4.17	0.97	24	4.20	0.89	-0.24	4	0.821
Monitor progress	16	4.27	0.84	24	4.16	0.94	0.68	4	0.534
Protect time	16	3.69	1.28	24	3.83	1.08	-0.72	4	0.513
Maintain visibility	16	3.72	1.31	24	3.77	1.22	-0.27	4	0.799
Teaching incentives	16	3.92	1.15	24	3.60	1.23	2.34	4	0.079
Professional development	16	4.27	1.06	24	4.29	0.75	-0.33	4	0.760
Learning incentives	16	3.69	1.06	24	3.34	1.23	2.31	4	0.082

Table 15

Independent *t*-tests Comparing LHS to MHS by School Size

PIMRS Subscale	LHS			MHS			*t*	Df	*p*
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD			
Frame goals	16	4.03	0.84	41	4.34	0.65	-8.56	4	0.001*
Communicate goals	16	4.03	0.94	41	4.20	0.75	-1.04	4	0.358
Supervise instruction	16	3.90	0.91	41	3.92	0.77	-0.21	4	0.848
Coordinate curriculum	16	4.17	0.97	41	4.10	0.73	0.36	4	0.735
Monitor progress	16	4.27	0.84	41	4.00	0.74	4.18	4	0.014*
Protect time	16	3.69	1.28	41	3.98	0.98	-1.82	4	0.143
Maintain visibility	16	3.72	1.31	41	3.77	0.97	-0.22	4	0.837
Teaching incentives	16	3.92	1.15	41	3.97	0.73	-0.30	4	0.777
Professional development	16	4.27	1.06	41	4.19	0.61	0.76	4	0.488
Learning incentives	16	3.69	1.06	41	4.03	0.72	-1.96	4	0.122

As the data in Tables 14 and 15 show, when the significance level is set at $p<.05$, only two subscales were statistically significant—framing school goals (in both comparisons) and monitoring student progress (in comparing LHS and MHS). The tests failed to reject the null hypothesis in eight of the 10 subscales of the PIMRS. The data in the above tables appear to countermand the "conventional wisdom" that principals in smaller schools are more likely to exercise instructional leadership.

School Size and Framing School Goals

The difference between the principals' ratings in subscale 1 of framing school goals was statistically significant when comparing the principal of LHS to both the principal of HHS and MHS. The opposite relationship, however, resulted from the *t*-tests. The *t*-test analysis revealed that the perceived activity in the subscale of framing school goals of the principals in the two largest schools (HHS: M = 4.31, SD = 0.74; MHS: M = 4.34, SD = 0.65) was significantly higher than the perceived activity of the principal in the smallest school (LHS: M = 4.03; SD = .84), $t(4) = -2.76, -8.56$, $p < .05$. Although, according to the PIMRS, all three principals would be considered as frequently engaging in this instructional leadership behavior, some significant difference occurred as a result of school size.

The most feasible explanation to this unusual occurrence is best explained in terms of student achievement, and not school size. LHS test scores, particularly achievement on the ACT, were significantly higher than the scores of its fellow district schools (see Table 5, p. 100). Looking back at previous years' scores revealed that LHS has historically enjoyed test scores that placed the school academically in the upper echelons of the state. Researchers asserted that principals of high performing/achieving schools developed and articulated broader goals that lacked the focus on student outcomes advocated by the PIMRS model (Hallinger, 2005;

Hallinger & Murphy, 1985, 1986). MacBeth High School, on the other hand, is targeted under NCLB. The consequences levied because of this designation, such as having to develop a new school improvement plan, require principals to frame school goals in terms of student outcomes.

School Size and Monitoring Student Progress

The principal of LHS received the highest mean PIMRS rating in subscale 5 of monitoring student progress. Examination of the PIMRS items associated with the subscale quickly revealed how school size influences a principal's ability to exercise these instructional leadership behaviors. The *t*-test analysis showed that the instructional leadership activity of the principal of LHS in the subscale of monitoring student progress (M = 4.27, SD = 0.84) was significantly higher than the perceived activity of the principal of MHS (M = 4.00, SD = .74), $t(4) = 4.18$, $p < .05$. While not significantly different, the principal of LHS also received a higher rating in this dimension than the principal of HHS.

One would naturally think that monitoring the progress of 600 students would be easier for the principal than monitoring the progress of 1700 students. The size of both the student and staff populations in the school directly influences the principal's ability to perform certain instructional leadership activities under this subscale, such as meeting with individual teachers and students about testing and informing stakeholders of the school's progress. The high scores of the students at LHS indicate that the principal was frequently monitoring the progress of the school's students.

Socioeconomic Status (SES) and Instructional Leadership

Researchers argued that instructional leadership in lower SES schools was more likely because of the often intense focus on student outcomes and the constant pressure to meet performance standards (Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985, 1986). This study featured

schools with SES percentages ranging from roughly 30% to over 50%, as measured by the schools' percentages of students qualifying for free/reduced-priced lunches (see Table 5, p. 100). District 2, comprised of Titus High School and Oberon High School, represented the best opportunity to test the influence of school SES on the instructional leadership of the respective principals. The principals and schools shared considerable similarities in terms of size, experience level of principals, and other demographic features (see Table 5, p. 100). The most noticeable difference between the two schools was the SES of their student populations.

Teacher mean scores of the two principals were compared to determine if significant differences existed in the instructional leadership of the two principals as defined by the 10 subscales of the PIMRS. Independent *t*-tests tested the null hypothesis that there was no significant difference between the instructional leadership of a principal in a high SES secondary school (OHS) and the instructional leadership of a principal in a low SES secondary school (THS). Table 16 provides the results of the independent *t*-tests comparing the two principals. An asterisk (*) denotes a significant value at the $p < .05$ significance level.

Table 16

Independent *t*-tests Comparing THS to OHS by SES

PIMRS Subscale	THS			OHS			*t*	Df	*p*
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD			
Frame goals	39	4.00	0.94	46	3.89	0.86	1.75	4	0.156
Communicate goals	39	3.69	1.08	46	3.60	1.03	1.52	4	0.202
Supervise instruction	39	3.82	0.93	46	3.37	1.13	2.41	4	0.074
Coordinate curriculum	39	3.86	0.94	46	3.72	0.97	3.34	4	0.029*
Monitor progress	39	3.69	1.08	46	3.53	1.14	0.92	4	0.408
Protect time	39	3.53	1.18	46	3.32	1.31	1.42	4	0.228
Maintain visibility	39	3.06	1.23	46	2.64	1.24	2.28	4	0.085
Teaching incentives	39	3.37	1.10	46	3.13	1.14	2.45	4	0.071
Professional development	39	3.75	0.97	46	3.49	1.11	4.89	4	0.008*
Learning incentives	39	3.49	1.09	46	3.34	1.09	2.93	4	0.042*

The first aspect of the data in the above table worth noting is that the principal of the lower SES school (THS) rated higher in all of the 10 subscales of the PIMRS. This fact lent some credence to the assertion that principals in lower SES schools more frequently act as instructional leaders. According to the data presented in Table 16, three of these differences in subscale ratings were significant—subscale 4 of coordinating curriculum, subscale 9 of promoting professional development, and subscale 10 of providing incentives for learning. The tests failed to reject the null hypothesis in seven of the 10 subscales.

School SES and Coordinating Curriculum

The *t*-test analyses of the mean teacher scores for the principals of THS and OHS demonstrated a statistically significant difference in the perceived activity in the PIMRS subscale of coordinating curriculum. The principal of THS, the lower SES school, was rated as significantly more active in this instructional leadership function (M = 3.86, SD = .94) than the principal of OHS, the higher SES school (M = 3.72, SD = .97), $t(4) = 3.34$, $p < .05$. Despite both mean scores denoting a designation of frequently, principal activity in this subscale appeared to be affected by school SES.

School SES influences how directive and hands-on instructional leaders are in schools (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Dickerson, 1999; Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985, 1986; Rowan & Denk, 1984; Scott & Teddlie, 1987). While both schools have been recognized as effective schools, an important difference exists between the two schools. As is the case many times when discussing schools of differing SES status, OHS is the higher performing school, while THS is the higher achieving school. As mentioned earlier, THS was recognized as a Blue Ribbon school in 2005. Pressures to meet benchmarks and adequate yearly progress motivate

the principals of lower SES schools to greater instructional leadership activity and to assert more control over the curriculum of the school.

School SES and Promoting Professional Development

The *t*-test analysis of the mean PIMRS scores for the two principals demonstrated a significant difference in their activity in the subscale of promoting professional development. The principal of THS was scored as significantly more engaged in this PIMRS function (M = 3.75, SD = 0.97) than the principal of OHS (M = 3.49, SD = 1.11), $t(4) = 4.89$, $p < .05$. The principal of THS was perceived by his teachers as emphasizing professional development as a fundamental way of improving instruction and student outcomes as well as tying opportunities more closely with school goals.

School SES and Providing Incentives for Learning

The *t*-test analyses showed a statistically significant difference in the perceived activity of the two principals in the PIMRS subscale of providing incentives for learning. Teachers perceived the principal of THS as significantly more involved in this instructional leadership function (M = 3.49, SD = 1.09) than the principal of OHS (M = 3.34, SD = 1.09), $t(4) = 2.93$, $p < .05$. Motivating students to learn was problematic subscale for principals in all schools in the study, and the principal of the lower SES school was perceived as more engaged in the instructional leadership activities measured by this subscale.

The researcher ascribed the significant difference between the principals of THS and OHS in this PIMRS subscale to one factor. This subscale deals largely with acknowledging and rewarding the academic efforts of students, areas of considerable concern and importance for principals and teachers in schools with sizeable populations of low SES students. According to its website, THS utilizes a student motivation program called Positive Behavior Support, which

in part requires the creation and application of a student reward system for recognizing good behavior and academic achievement. The researcher has firsthand experience with this program, and its use in THS helps to explain these results.

Principal Administrative Experience Level and Instructional Leadership

Researchers determined that the leader characteristics of gender and age most influence instructional leadership, (Hallinger, 2005, 2008; Hallinger et al., 1996; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Unfortunately, substantial differences in gender and age of the participating principals were practically nonexistent. Prior teaching experience has been found to have a mixed influence on the instructional leadership of principals (Hallinger et al.), but again there were generally little differences among the principals in terms of overall teaching experience. The one leader quality the researcher was able to examine was principals' administrative experience. Six of the principals in the study possessed five or more years of administrative experience at their present high school, whereas two of the principals (RHS and LHS) had been at their present schools for less than three years.

District 1, comprised of Julius High School (JHS) and Richard High School (RHS), featured a veteran principal and a novice principal in his first year and represented an opportunity to test the influence of principal administrative experience. The new principal of RHS rated higher on nine of the 10 PIMRS subscales than his counterpart, but the researcher was interested to see if these differences were significant. Independent *t*-tests tested the null hypothesis that there was no difference between the perceived instructional leadership of a veteran principal (JHS) and a novice principal (RHS). Table 17 provides the results of the *t*-test analyses comparing these principals across the 10 PIMRS subscales. Significant values are denoted by an asterisk (*).

Table 17

Independent *t*-tests Comparing JHS to RHS by Principal Experience Level

PIMRS Subscale	JHS			RHS			*t*	Df	*p*
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD			
Frame goals	43	4.09	0.90	56	4.14	0.88	-0.84	4	0.449
Communicate goals	43	3.80	1.07	56	4.03	1.00	-1.96	4	0.122
Supervise instruction	43	3.74	1.17	56	3.98	1.02	-3.96	4	0.017*
Coordinate curriculum	43	3.76	1.08	56	3.96	0.99	-4.24	4	0.013*
Monitor progress	43	3.76	1.13	56	3.98	0.97	-2.46	4	0.070
Protect time	43	3.96	1.17	56	3.96	1.05	0.04	4	0.969
Maintain visibility	43	3.20	1.37	56	3.78	1.27	-3.34	4	0.029*
Teaching incentives	43	3.56	1.21	56	3.69	1.18	-3.18	4	0.034*
Professional development	43	3.83	1.13	56	4.03	0.99	-1.85	4	0.138
Learning incentives	43	3.60	1.14	56	3.93	1.06	-1.68	4	0.168

The new principal of RHS was rated higher than the veteran principal of JHS in all but one of the subscales. Despite this, the tests failed to reject the null hypothesis in six of the ten PIMRS subscales. The *t*-test analyses of the teacher mean scores for the two principals showed a significant difference between the levels of instructional leadership activity in four of the PIMRS subscales—subscale 3 of supervising/evaluating instruction, subscale 4 of coordinating curriculum, subscale 7 of maintaining visibility, and subscale 8 of providing incentives for teaching. Principal administrative experience level influenced teachers' perceptions of instructional leadership. Given the subscales found significant, teachers at RHS perceived their new principal focusing more on matters of staffing and visibility than the veteran principal of JHS.

More than any of the four variables addressed in this section, the researcher approached this one with the most caution, largely because of the "honeymoon" factor. Just as new presidents often enjoy strong poll numbers early in an administration, a new principal could benefit from the general optimism or positive feelings of teachers during the first year of his or her principalship. It would perhaps be interesting to administer the PIMRS again in a few years to the principal and teachers at RHS in order to determine how realistic this picture of the principal's instructional leadership was. Regardless of the reason or explanation for the influence, the newness of the principal of RHS to the job affected teachers' perceptions of his activity as instructional leader.

Another contextual variable, school SES, helps in explaining the significant difference between the perceptions of these principals' instructional leadership, especially with regard to coordinating curriculum. The principal of THS, the school in District 2 with the lower SES, scored significantly higher on the subscale of coordinating curriculum than the principal of OHS.

As the principal of the school with the lower SES, the principal of RHS is perceived by teachers as assuming a more active role in curriculum, especially in tying instructional and curricular decisions to student outcomes. The school's targeted NCLB status (see Table 5, p. 100) further explains why this new principal rated higher than his district counterpart. Principals in schools with lower SES, lower graduation rates, and achievement scores often exercise the highly directive instructional leadership model measured by the PIMRS (Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985, 1986).

District Influence and Instructional Leadership

With the other three variables, the researcher compared schools within the same district, but this did not allow for the consideration of district influence on principal instructional leadership. The review of literature on instructional leadership revealed little prior research examining the influence of district funding and governance on the instructional leadership of school principals (Glickman, 1989). Hallinger (2005) developed a version of the PIMRS for administration to school directors to rate the instructional leadership of principals in their districts. This instrument, however, does not measure the district influence on instructional leadership. District leadership could certainly both help and hinder the instructional leadership of principals, especially in terms of providing support and resources to the schools and their leaders.

The researcher considered two factors in comparing schools on the basis of district influence—per pupil expenditure and city/county governance. With these criteria in mind and controlling as much as possible for other demographic variables, the principals of three schools—Oberon High School (OHS), Hamlet High School (HHS), and Prospero High School (PHS) were compared to one another. OHS and HHS, both schools in county controlled school

districts, represented respectively schools in districts with the lowest and highest per pupil expenditures in the study. PPS was the only city district school in the sample, and the district provided per pupil expenditures slightly lower than District 3. Independent *t*-tests tested the null hypothesis that there was no significant difference in the perceptions of school principals based on district funding and governance. Tables 18, 19, and 20 show the results of the *t*-test analyses. An asterisk (*) denotes a value significant at the $p < .05$ level.

Table 18

Independent *t*-tests Comparing HHS to OHS by District Factor (PPE)

	HHS			OHS					
PIMRS Subscale	N	M	SD	n	M	SD	*t*	Df	*p*
Frame goals	24	4.31	0.74	46	3.89	0.86	-3.71	4	0.021*
Communicate goals	24	4.16	0.91	46	3.60	1.03	-6.74	4	0.003*
Supervise instruction	24	4.17	0.94	46	3.37	1.13	-3.54	4	0.024*
Coordinate curriculum	24	4.20	0.89	46	3.72	0.97	-6.11	4	0.004*
Monitor progress	24	4.16	0.94	46	3.53	1.14	-6.35	4	0.003*
Protect time	24	3.83	1.08	46	3.32	1.31	-21.22	4	<.001*
Maintain visibility	24	3.77	1.22	46	2.64	1.24	-10.16	4	0.001*
Teaching incentives	24	3.60	1.23	46	3.13	1.14	-5.82	4	0.004*
Professional development	24	4.29	0.75	46	3.49	1.11	-5.62	4	0.005*
Learning incentives	24	3.34	1.23	46	3.34	1.09	0.03	4	0.977

Table 19

Independent *t*-tests Comparing PHS to OHS by District Factors (PPE and governance)

	PHS			OHS					
PIMRS Subscale	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	*t*	Df	*p*
Frame goals	47	4.25	0.72	46	3.89	0.86	-4.67	4	0.001*
Communicate goals	47	4.07	0.92	46	3.60	1.03	-11.12	4	<.001*
Supervise instruction	47	3.94	0.99	46	3.37	1.13	-8.18	4	0.001*
Coordinate curriculum	47	4.02	0.88	46	3.72	0.97	-5.37	4	0.006*
Monitor progress	47	3.85	0.89	46	3.53	1.14	-1.69	4	0.167
Protect time	47	3.62	1.16	46	3.32	1.31	-2.78	4	0.050*
Maintain visibility	47	3.82	1.23	46	2.64	1.24	-8.63	4	0.001*
Teaching incentives	47	3.86	1.01	46	3.13	1.14	-32.28	4	<.001*
Professional development	47	4.08	0.88	46	3.49	1.11	-4.92	4	0.008*
Learning incentives	47	3.99	0.90	46	3.34	1.09	-7.78	4	0.001*

Table 20

Independent *t*- tests Comparing PHS to HHS by District Factor (governance)

PIMRS Subscale	PHS			HHS			*t*	Df	*p*
	n	M	SD	n	M	SD			
Frame goals	47	4.25	0.72	24	4.31	0.74	1.22	4	0.290
Communicate goals	47	4.07	0.92	24	4.16	0.91	0.95	4	0.398
Supervise instruction	47	3.94	0.99	24	4.17	0.94	1.19	4	0.299
Coordinate curriculum	47	4.02	0.88	24	4.20	0.89	1.72	4	0.160
Monitor progress	47	3.85	0.89	24	4.16	0.94	2.24	4	0.089
Protect time	47	3.62	1.16	24	3.83	1.08	2.38	4	0.076
Maintain visibility	47	3.82	1.23	24	3.77	1.22	-0.82	4	0.457
Teaching incentives	47	3.86	1.01	24	3.60	1.23	-2.96	4	0.041*
Promote development	47	4.08	0.88	24	4.29	0.75	3.36	4	0.028*
Learning incentives	47	3.99	0.90	24	3.34	1.23	-9.03	4	0.001*

The results of Tables 18 and 19 comparing OHS with both HHS and PHS showed the most remarkable differences in the perceived instructional leadership activities of principals participating in this study. According to the data in the tables, statistically significant differences in the instructional leadership of the principals occurred in nine out of the 10 PIMRS. Both the principals of HHS and PHS were viewed as significantly more involved in instructional leadership activities than the principal of OHS. Only two subscales—providing incentives for learning (HHS/OHS) and monitoring student progress (PHS/OHS)—supported the null hypothesis. As the data in Table 20 demonstrate, far fewer significant differences existed between the principals of PHS and OHS. Significant differences occurred in three subscales when comparing these two principals. These results led the researcher to conclude that the district variable of per pupil expenditure (PPE) appeared more influential on perceptions of the principals' instructional leadership than city versus county district control.

District Influence, PPE, and Instructional Leadership

As the demographic information in Table 5 (see p. 100) showed, PPE for District 3 was the lowest of the participating schools. The two principals from this district with the lowest PPE were rated the lowest by teachers on the PIMRS survey (see Figure 7, p. 103), despite the schools and their principals receiving recognition for their achievement and leadership on local, state, and national levels. A lack of funding and resources on school and district levels could influence overall perceptions of a principal's instructional leadership activity and effectiveness. Resource provision, although not an explicit part of the PIMRS model of instructional leadership, was revealed as a fundamental aspect of principals' instructional leadership, and funding certainly influences principals' abilities to provide instructional resources (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Smith & Andrews, 1989).

Specific comparisons of the PPE for OHS with those of HHS and PHS resulted in percentile differences of 10% and 6% respectively. In further reinforcing the proposition that money was perhaps at play in at least partially explaining the substantial difference in the perceived instructional leadership of the principals, the researcher focused on subscale 9 of promoting professional development. In terms of PIMRS subscales, promoting professional development is the one most directly tied to district influence, as many professional development opportunities are planned and funded on a district level. The *t*-test analyses demonstrated that teachers perceived the principals of OHS (M = 3.49, SD = 1.11) and PHS (M = 4.08, SD = .88) as significantly less active in this instructional leadership subscale than the principal of HHS (M = 4.29, SD = .75), $t(4) = -5.62; 3.36$, $p < .05$. The principal in the district with the highest PPE rated significantly higher on this subscale than the other two principals, and the results trended according to level of PPE. District funding and support often influences the scope, quality, and availability of professional development in schools, and it appears that this influence was reflected in the perceptions of these principals' involvement in this instructional leadership function.

District Influence, County/City Governance, and Instructional Leadership

With only three schools in the system, the city district containing PHS was much smaller than the county district containing HHS. Differences in governance and funding could exist between city and county controlled school districts. The researcher was interested in examining whether the smaller size and city governance of District 4 influenced teachers' perceptions of their principal's instructional leadership. Comparison of the mean teacher subscale scores for the principals of PHS and HHS revealed that the principal of HHS rated higher in eight of the 10 subscales but significantly higher only in the subscale of promoting professional development.

The *t*-test analyses showed that the principal of PHS (Subscale 8: M = 3.86, SD = 1.01; Subscale 10: M = 3.99, SD = 0.90) rated as significantly more active in the subscales 8 and 10 of providing incentives for teaching and learning than the principal of HHS (Subscale 8: M = 3.60, SD = 1.23; Subscale 10: M = 3.34, SD = 1.23), $t(4) = -2.96, -9.03$, $p < .05$. Independent *t*-test results questioned the overall influence of county/city governance on the instructional leadership of principals. Whether it is the small size or city governance of District 4 (or some other factor) that accounts for the significant differences in perceptions on these two subscales was uncertain. These results further supported the conclusion that most of the influence of district leadership on the perceived instructional leadership of principals comes from funding (PPE) and not type of governance.

Conclusion

Just as researchers found that the instructional leadership of principals affected classroom instruction and student achievement, prior research also established that certain contextual/demographic variables of schools could influence the instructional leadership of principals. Using independent *t*-tests, the researcher examined the influence of four factors on the instructional leadership of principals—school size, school SES, principal administrative experience level, and district funding/governance. The *t*-test analyses of the PIMRS results from the eight schools generally supported that the contextual factors of school size, school SES, principal administrative experience level, and district funding/governance exercised some influence over the perceived instructional leadership activities of these principals.

In analyzing the schools in District 3 based on school size, principals at the larger schools (HHS and MHS) were perceived as more involved in the framing of goals, while the principal at the smaller school (LHS) was considered more active in monitoring student progress.

Differences in achievement among the schools arguably explained the surprising finding that the principals of the larger schools were perceived as more active in the framing of school goals. The principal of LHS was the highest rated principal overall in the subscale of monitoring student progress, and he was perceived by teachers as significantly more active in this subscale than the principal of the MHS, the largest District 3 school.

Descriptive analysis of District 2 schools—THS and OHS—revealed that the principal of the lower SES school (THS) rated higher in all 10 subscales of the PIMRS. Independent *t*-test analyses based on school SES showed that the principal of THS scored significantly higher than the principal of OHS in the subscales of coordinating curriculum, promoting professional development, and providing incentives for learning. These findings aligned well with prior research which asserted that principal in less affluent schools more often exercise the hands-on, directive style of instructional leadership outlined in the PIMRS model.

The new principal of RHS rated higher than his more experienced District 1 colleague in nine of the 10 PIMRS subscales. Analyses based on principal administrative level with the schools in District 1 resulted in the principal of RHS rating significantly higher in the subscales of supervising/evaluating instruction, coordinating curriculum, maintaining high visibility, and providing incentives for teaching. Newness to the job of principal influenced overall perceptions of the principal's activity as instructional leader. Differences in school SES might have also been at play in explaining this difference in perceptions.

The most significant findings resulted from comparing schools based on district influence. Analyses of the principals of OHS, HHS, and PHS based on district funding/governance pointed to the conclusion that district funding (PPE) as the most significant district factor influencing the perceptions of principal instructional leadership. The principals of

the two schools in districts with the higher PPE (HHS and PHS) rated significantly higher in 9 PIMRS subscales when compared to the principal from the district with the lowest PPE (OHS). The researcher suggested that funding affected principals' abilities to provide resources to teachers, which in turn possibly influenced overall perceptions of instructional leadership. The surprising amount of differences among principals based on district influence warrants further study.

Chapter 6

Qualitative Data Analysis

Organization of Qualitative Data Analysis Chapter

From the onset of this research examining instructional leadership within the context of rural secondary schools, the researcher opted for an explanatory, mixed methods case study design with sequential quantitative and qualitative phases as the best methodology to provide the most complete and meaningful picture of this leadership phenomenon in high schools. The complexity of this design choice required three data analysis chapters rather than the customary one. The previous chapters outlined the initial quantitative phase which entailed the administration of the Principal Instructional Management Rating School (PIMRS) to principals and teachers in eight participating schools followed by a two prong analyses of these result: descriptive analyses and inferential analyses involving independent t- tests. In this chapter the qualitative analysis of the interviews and observations conducted at Oberon High School (OHS) and Prospero High School (PHS) is discussed. Reasons for the selection of these two schools and their principals for this phase were outlined in Chapter 3 (pp. 79-83).

First, broad, general impressions of the principals, faculties, and schools are briefly discussed so as to establish the larger contexts for the qualitative analyses. Then, data collected from the interviews and observations in the two schools are analyzed in order to develop the key themes and concepts regarding instructional leadership within the contexts of these two schools. Lastly, the qualitative findings on the instructional leadership behaviors of the two principals are summarized so that they can effectively be synthesized with the results of the quantitative phase in order to answer the study's research questions.

School and Principal Profiles

Oberon High School and Its Principal

Oberon High School (OHS) is a school of extremes, serving the most and least affluent students in its district. Constructed in the late 1960s, the original building and site has been improved and renovated several times since then. OHS fosters a strong academic reputation in the surrounding region and has some of the highest test/achievement scores of the eight high schools in this study. In 2007, *U.S. News and World Report* recognized the high school in its annual *America's Best High Schools*.

OHS is unique in that it offers 18 advanced placement courses, and it is one of the priorities of the administration and faculty to encourage all students to take at least one AP class during their four years in high school. OHS offers dual enrollment courses through a local community college. One senior will graduate this year with both a high school diploma and an associate's degree. According to its website, OHS's mission is to educate students in the areas of communication, problem-solving, and responsibility. Students at OHS are encouraged to select one of four career-themed areas of focus to pursue in the school. Teachers in the school's freshmen academy are handpicked by the administration and are organized together in teaching teams, which are housed (with the exception of science teachers) in their own part of the building.

The principal of OHS is in his fifth year as principal of the school. Over his tenure at OHS, his faculty has transitioned from an older, veteran faculty to a younger one. The principal estimated that he had hired over half the teachers presently on staff at OHS. The interview and observations of the principal revealed an academically-minded administrator who focuses much of his attention on maintaining and improving the overall academic program of the school. He

spends much of his time examining and revising the school's curriculum, particularly through working with the schedules for teachers and students. He ascribes much of his influence over the instructional program of the school to his work with the schedule. His primary goal for the school is ensuring a rigorous and challenging curriculum for all the school's students through the broadening of AP and dual enrollment courses and the creation of a universal honors curriculum. The new requirements of the American Diploma Project, especially in math, has preoccupied the attention of the principal in planning courses for the next school year to help at-risk students pass Algebra I, geometry, and Algebra II.

Prospero High School and Its Principal

Prospero High School (PHS) is a two story high school located a few miles from the center of town and within walking distance of the small city system's district headquarters. As the only high school in the district, PHS benefits from an actively involved superintendent of schools and school board. According to its website, PHS seeks to nurture the intellect, talent, and character of all its students in order to prepare them for citizenship in a global society.

Although considered to be a strong academic school in the region, one of PHS's most notable hallmarks is in the area of technology/vocational education. The Career and Technical Education (CTE) facilities and programs at PHS are outstanding with a state of the art building and programs in nursing, publishing/printing, and engineering. PHS, over the years, has applied for and been awarded considerable amounts of grant money for its CTE programs. The school also possesses, in comparison with the other schools in the study, a high level of technology and computers.

The principal of PHS is in his fifth year as head administrator of the school. The principal is most often an affable, easy-going person who spends much of his time moving about

the school, addressing concerns and solving problems. His foremost academic priority for the school is improving PHS's graduation rate. In achieving this goal, he has been working closely with district leadership to examine the system's attendance policy as well as promote formative assessment in the classroom. Like his counterpart in the other district, the principal is also focused on the new math standards, particularly in finding ways to remediate struggling students and increase achievement for freshmen taking algebra. One afternoon during the researcher's visit, the principal met with math teachers and a guidance counselor about the new math requirements under the American Diploma Project.

Principal and Teacher Perceptions of Instructional Leadership in Both Schools

Four interview questions dealt directly with answering the first research question as well as serving as a check on the results of the PIMRS data as to the similarities and differences in perceptions on instructional leadership. The researcher asked questions about the primary responsibilities of the principals, the actual activities that constituted principals' days, and the general familiarity of participants with the concept of instructional leadership. Principals and teachers, although typically understanding instructional leadership in rather broad terms (if at all), still articulated many aspects of the principal's role in terms of this leadership model, but with some interesting additions and differences.

Analysis of interview responses of principal and teacher participants from both schools revealed that the ideal role for principals was one of instructional leadership. A tension arose in many of the interviews between the role principals should or desired to assume (one of instructional leadership) and the roles that were often expected or forced upon them by the nature and circumstances of the high schools and/or constituencies outside the school. Participants characterized their principals as actively involved in many activities associated with instructional

leadership (i.e., setting goals, evaluating teachers, promoting learning, and the like). They also depicted their principals as often being distracted from these activities by parents, paperwork, and problems. Participants perceived the principals' role as instructional leader as being many times overshadowed by their roles as district/community liaison, organizational manager, and problem solver.

The following discussion is organized around these four principal roles—instructional leader, district/community liaison, organizational manager, and problem solver—revealed in the qualitative data. An important caveat needs to be addressed before proceeding into this discussion. The individual discussion of these four roles revealed in the qualitative interviews does not necessarily assume that these roles are entirely discrete. Many activities associated with dealing with district/community relations, problem solving, and organizational management fall under the instructional leadership model, both explicitly and implicitly. For instance, the problems principals solve are many times related to their role as instructional leader, just as communication with district/community constituencies is a part of this model. Figure 17 graphically depicts the interconnected relationship of these principal leadership roles. The Venn diagram represents the overlapping nature of principal leadership roles.

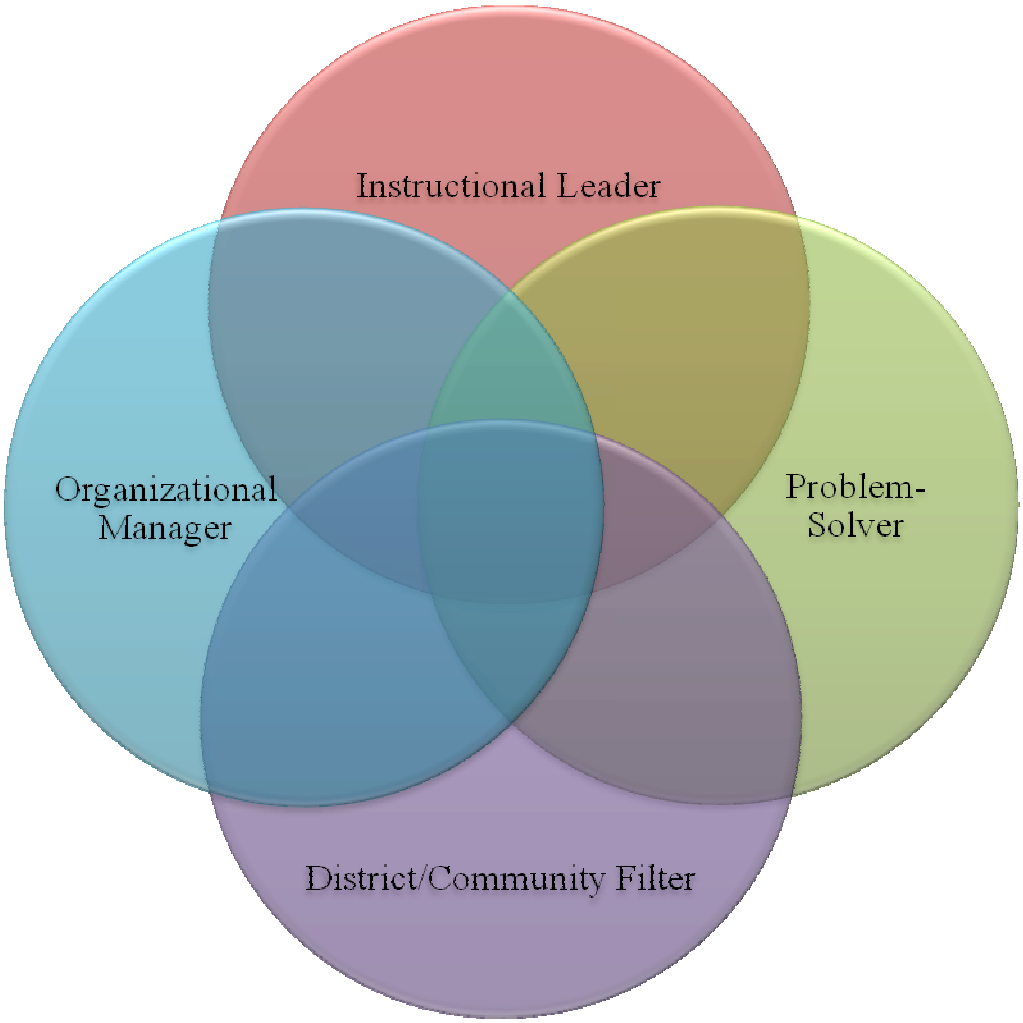


Figure 17: Venn diagram of four secondary school principal roles.

The overlap of all four roles in the center of the figure points to how principals draw upon all four roles in fulfilling certain leadership responsibilities, such as communicating school goals. Communicating school goals is subscale 2 of the PIMRS model of instructional leadership and an important activity for instructional leaders. The principal's role as district/community liaison would come into play in communicating goals to district and community stakeholders. Problems could arise in the effective fulfillment of this leadership responsibility, and these problems could be organizational in nature, involving the policies and procedures in the school that facilitate the communication of goals to others inside and outside the school. A principal would act as both a problem solver and organizational manager in facilitating the communication of goals. Despite their overlapping and interconnected nature, the four principal roles are discussed individually with supporting qualitative data from the interviews and observations.

Principal's Role as Instructional Leader

Triangulation of findings through the utilization of multiple data sources—survey, interviews, and observations—was a fundamental strength of the explanatory, mixed methods case study. Tables 21 and 22 provide an overview of how the PIMRS data, interviews, and observations supported one another and afforded a more complete picture of the instructional leaders at OHS and PHS, respectively. The tables present the teacher mean scores for each PIMRS subscale, whether teacher and principal interviews supported these ratings, whether these instructional leadership behaviors were observed, and what specific activities were observed. Names of the PIMRS dimensions and subscales are abbreviated for space. For example, *instructional program* is used for dimension 2 of managing the instructional program, and *monitor progress* is used for subscale 5 of monitoring student progress.

Table 21
Triangulation of Findings from Data Sources Used in Study of OHS

				Interviews		Observations	
PIMRS Dimensions	PIMRS Subscales	PIMRS M(T)	PIMRS Classification(s)	TI	PI	O/NO	Observed IL Activities
School Mission	Frame goals	3.89	Frequently	S	S	O	Examined math scores of incoming eighth graders in order to set academic goals for upcoming year; discussed goals for AP courses and dual enrollment courses with faculty.
	Communicate goals	3.60	Frequently	S	S	O	Displayed school mission, academic goals, educational mottos in office, classrooms, hallways, and throughout building.
Instructional Program	Supervise instruction	3.37	Sometimes	S	NS	O	Engaged in formal teacher evaluation process.
	Coordinate curriculum	3.72	Frequently	S	S	O	Led curriculum planning meeting with assistant principals; delegated curricular responsibilities to assistant principal; utilized test scores to schedule teachers and students.
	Monitor progress	3.53	Frequently	S	S	O	Monitored academic progress of African American and ELL student subgroups; used test scores to measure progress of goals for these students.
Learning Climate	Protect time	3.32	Sometimes	S	S	O	Intercom announcements interrupted classes; attended meeting with truant student.
	Maintain visibility	2.64	Rarely/Sometimes	S	S	O	Briefly toured building; occasionally in hallways during class changes.
	Teaching incentives	3.13	Sometimes	S	S	NO	No activity observed.
	Professional development	3.49	Sometimes/Frequently	S	S	O	Met with video production teacher about videotaping of master teacher strategies for professional development; placed journal articles on educational topics, best practices in teacher boxes.
	Learning incentives	3.34	Sometimes	S	S	O	Postcards sent out to parents recognizing student achievements.

Legend: TI—Teacher Interviews; PI—Principal Interviews; S—Supported PIMRS; NS—Not Supported PIMRS; O-Observed; NO—Not Observed; IL—Instructional Leadership

Table 22
Triangulation of Findings from Data Sources Used in Study of PHS

PIMRS Dimensions	PIMRS Subscales	PIMRS M(T)	PIMRS Classification(s)	Interviews TI	Interviews PI	Observations O/NO	Observed IL Activities
School Mission	Frame goals	4.25	Frequently	S	S	O	Developed academic goals based on student math performance and school's graduation rates.
	Communicate goals	4.07	Frequently	S	S	O	Communicated goals and expectations to teachers in curriculum meetings; referred to goals when making curricular decisions.
Instructional Program	Supervise instruction	3.94	Frequently	S	S	O	Engaged in formal evaluation process; informally visited classrooms of struggling, ineffective teachers to assess instruction.
	Coordinate curriculum	4.02	Frequently	S	S	O	Directed math curriculum meeting with department head, lead teachers, and counselor; coordinated curriculum meeting on new personal finance course; utilized math scores to place students in algebra courses.
	Monitor progress	3.85	Frequently	S	S	O	Monitored student grades in algebra classes; discussed number of failures with department head and counselor; used data to support hiring new math teacher; monitored senior students in danger of not graduating.
Learning Climate	Protect time	3.62	Frequently	S	S	O	Limited intercom interruptions of classroom instruction; worked to reform system attendance policy.
	Maintain visibility	3.81	Frequently	S	S	O	Constantly walked throughout building; visited classrooms; monitored hallways, lobby, lunch room, and bus duty; repeatedly talked informally with teachers and students.
	Teaching incentives	3.86	Frequently	S	S	O	Praised academic and leadership efforts of assistant principals, teachers, and counselors.
	Professional development	4.08	Frequently	S	S	O	Worked with district and school level educators in developing formative professional development on formative assessment.
	Learning incentives	3.99	Sometimes	S	S	O	Visited CTE classrooms and lauded student engineering projects; displayed pictures of Hope scholarship winners and top ten percent students in lobby.

Legend: TI—Teacher Interviews; PI—Principal Interviews; S—Supported PIMRS; NS—Not Supported PIMRS; O-Observed; NO—Not Observed; IL—Instructional Leadership

Following is a discussion of the interview responses and observational data that supported the principals' activities as instructional leaders. The discussion is organized around the three PIMRS dimensions: defining the school mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school learning climate. Interview responses are coded in the fashion outlined in Chapter 3 (see pp. 85-86). Principals are associated with their schools, as in *The principal of OHS*, when discussed within the text. If reference is required at the end of a quotation, an abbreviated code is used (OHS-P). Each teacher participant was referenced with a letter of the alphabet and the school, as in *Teacher A of PHS* and with an abbreviated code at the end of quotations (PHS-TA).

Defining the school mission. As in the PIMRS results, the majority of the participants, using various phrases, asserted the defining of the school mission as a crucial part of principal leadership. Using words like *focus* (OHS-TC), *vision* (OHS-TB), *tone* (PHS-TC), *goals* (OHS-TB), and *expectations* (PHS-P), participants repeatedly identified the central responsibility of the principal in providing direction and purpose for the school. The principal of OHS asserted that his most important responsibility was "articulating overall vision for the school and. . .moving everybody towards that vision." A teacher suggested that this vision should "promote an academic focus" (OHS-TC), while a colleague argued that "collaboration with teachers [was needed] so that the vision is a community vision" (OHS-TB). The principal of PHS characterized this leadership function as "set[ting] the tone in a lot of ways. . .expectations," and a teacher said that this "tone is set for the entire school" (PHS-TC).

When asked, teachers in both schools perceived their principals as using outcome data to set goals for the school. Both principals worked previously as administrators at different levels

and understood the importance of outcome data in framing and evaluating school goals. The principal of PHS stated:

> We [principal and faculty] are focused on challenges and working. . .to address challenges that are coming up like, the new standards, the new graduation requirements.

Referring to the principal's use of data in defining the mission of PHS, a teacher remarked:

> He [the principal] is a former mathematics and accounting teacher. . .and he can crunch the numbers (PHS-TG).

Teachers were well aware of their principals' specific priorities. The principal of OHS identified the expansion of advanced placement and dual enrollment courses to all students as key to his mission for the school. He pointed out that:

> [The] availability of advanced placement courses had grown from 4 classes to 19 courses. . .[and participation had increased] from approximately 90 students to over 500 (OHS-P).

A teacher (OHS-TA) explained that it was the school's mission to see every student enrolled in at least one advanced placement or dual enrollment course during the four years at OHS. In reference to this goal, teachers praised the principal for his "incredibly high goals. . .and willing[ness] to try something new" (OHS-TE).

Strengthening the school's graduation rate was on the mind of the principal and teachers of PHS. The school enjoyed good test scores, but the graduation rate had dropped over the past few years. When asked about the mission of the principal and school, one teacher simply stated "making sure our kids are going to graduate" (PHS-TH). The principal, working with his advisory council, emphasized the redesign of the school's attendance and grading policies as well as the adoption of formative assessment as the school's primary steps to realizing this goal.

Both principals visualized the school's mission in terms of improving student outcomes by meeting and exceeding the requirements outlined in NCLB and the American Diploma Project. Particularly, the new math requirements were on the minds of principals and teachers of both schools. The researcher observed both principals during curriculum meetings with assistants, counselors, and teachers addressing the best ways to meet these requirements (see Table 21, p. 184 and Table 22, p.185). Interviews responses revealed principals, teachers, and schools with clear school goals.

Managing the instructional program. Interview responses as to the principals' responsibilities and activities with regard to the management of the instructional program aligned closely with the overall trends revealed in the PIMRS results of the first phase. Principals were most active in the broad, formal activities of coordinating curriculum and instruction and less active in the informal, individualized behaviors under supervising/evaluating instruction and monitoring student progress. Principals actively worked with department heads, faculty teams, guidance counselors, and district supervisors in coordinating and evaluating each school's curricular and instructional programs. The formal evaluation process largely constituted the majority of principals' classroom visitations.

Some participants characterized the principal's role in broad terms of developing and coordinating the school's curriculum. The principal's job was "guaranteeing a curriculum for all students" (OHS-P). Teachers at both schools perceived the principal as "overseeing the curriculum" (OHS-TE; PHS-TB). Another teacher considered the principal as "the final say on what is taught" (PHS-TC). Given these perceptions it was not surprising that the principal of PHS addressed this role in terms of accountability, stating:

> It's important for the principal to be involved with instruction and with programs, ninth grade initiative, formative assessment, advisory council. . .because somebody has to be accountable.

Both principals and many of the teachers at the two schools remarked philosophically about the formal evaluation process, viewing the process as time intensive and as actually a deterrent to frequent, informal, and perhaps more meaningful walk-through evaluations. The principal of PHS questioned his ability "to wrap up the 30 teachers who have been evaluated" and complete their summative interviews by the deadline.

Promoting a positive school learning climate. Participants most often articulated two leadership subscales that neatly fell under this third PIMRS dimension: maintaining high visibility and providing professional development. This was perhaps not surprising given that these two instructional leadership functions represented respectively the overall least and most active areas for high school principals in this dimension according to the PIMRS results.

The researcher asked directly about visibility even when participants did not discuss it in answering the interview questions. A few participants at each school, without probing during the interviews, recognized the visibility of the administration as a challenging but valuable part of effective instructional leadership:

> Just being present, I don't mind if they [administrators] show up in the classroom often (OHS-TA).

> I think a principal should be in everyone's class at least once a week. It's [lack of visibility] the nature of the beast because I believe that most principals would prefer to do that (PHS-TE).

The day to day activities and requirements of the job often impeded principals from frequently visiting classrooms. Participants did not view the lack of visibility as a matter of volition but rather as an unfortunate reality of the principal's complex, demanding job. Based on interviews and observations, this was one of the areas of greatest difference between the two principals. Essentially, during the school visits, most of the interactions among the principal of OHS and teachers, students, parents, and other school stakeholders occurred in and around the office, whereas most of the interactions with the principal of PHS and others happened in classrooms, hallways, the lobby, cafeteria, and the like.

Early in the interview, the principal of OHS acknowledged his struggles in maintaining a visible presence in the school:

> Just doing walkthroughs, I'll kind of poke my head is to see how things are going but to say that I'm actually in the classroom, maybe 30 minutes a day.

The interviews and observations revealed that the principal of OHS depended upon his assistants a great deal to be visible presences in the school, whether in the classroom, hallways, or lunch room. Much of his day was spent in and around the office. This was not to say that he was not accessible or available to teachers or that teachers perceived it as difficult to find or talk with their principal. Teachers steadily streamed in and out of his office with questions, concerns, or just casual conversation.

According to the PIMRS results, the teachers of PHS rated their principal as the most visible of the principals participating in the first phase. Interviews and observations bore this out to a large degree. Visibility and approachability were extremely important to the principal of PHS. He stated, "I try to be visible. I try to be accessible during the day." The principal made it a point to be out front in the morning welcoming students and parents to the school, and, in the

afternoon, he was in the lobby or out front of the building. He asserted that he had "turned around a middle school" largely by being visible and approachable to the public. Shadowing the principal for two days revealed that much of his day was spent in moving about the school addressing issues. During class changes, he was in the hallways, talking with students and staff.

Most teachers commented on the principal's visibility and approachability; one teacher characterized it in this way:

> [The principal] is a partner, not a boss. . .[his] door is always open. . .present in the hallways. . .picking up trash (PHS-TF).

One teacher described the principal as a "down home kind of personality" (PHS-TG). Another teacher recounted how the principal visited her classroom in the days after her grandmother passed away, checking on her and her students (PHS-TA). Participants also commented on the principal's visibility and accessibility with the community at extracurricular and athletic events.

Despite this overall perception of high visibility, the principal of PHS faced challenges in maintaining visibility, especially in frequently and informally visiting classrooms. In observing the principal, the researcher witnessed him often popping into classrooms, but later the principal admitted that most of his classroom visitations were based on specific reasons or problems. Some classrooms he visited on almost a daily basis because of issues or problems with the specific teacher, course, or group of students, but other classrooms he rarely saw. One teacher characterized this as a matter of trust:

> Maybe it's one those no news is good news things. . .typically I have to go find him to see him and I'm okay with that because it tells me he trusts me. I don't have any doubt that if I was not doing what I was supposed to do I would see him more (PHS-TG).

Another teacher echoed the idea that this was again a product of the job:

> I think it's the way the job works for him here because he says he wants to be in the classroom doing walkthroughs and stuff, but it just never happens (PHS-TC).

The younger, more inexperienced teacher participants regarded the principal as more visible, in terms of classroom visits, than the more veteran teachers. One teacher remarked that the many problems the principal dealt with made it difficult for him to be around when "good things were happening" (PHS-TF).

The PIMRS results identified providing professional development as principals' most active area of dimension 3, and the interviews at OHS and PHS supported this perception. Principals and teachers considered professional development as a central part of their principals' instructional leadership. Participants most often discussed highly structured and formal professional development activities (inservices, conferences, or workshops), but more informal professional development occurred. At OHS, the researcher observed the principal distributing journal articles on best practices to his faculty for their professional growth.

Most teacher participants spoke of the professional development at their schools in positive terms, regarding activities as relevant and meaningful to the goals of the school and the needs of their classrooms and students. The most important factor influencing the perception of the schools' professional development was how relevant and focused the opportunities were. The principal of OHS focused his school's recent professional development on the alignment and mapping of curriculum:

> I think that the administration is doing all the right things [in terms of curriculum mapping] and a lot of the things they do are meaningful and I think they really nurture some instructional leadership in that area (OHS-TA).

> Our curriculum is extremely well structured and a lot of thought, time, and energy of all the faculty goes into it. I would say exemplary on our curriculum, our structure for professional development. We get very high marks for the fact that continuing professional development is very much encouraged by our administration (OHS-TE).

The principal of PHS concentrated professional development on testing and grading, specifically on formative assessment. He was mounting an effort to reevaluate the ways the school assessed and graded its students, attending conferences and workshops on the topic as well as sending his assistants and lead teachers to professional development. Teachers appreciated this new continuity in professional development opportunities:

> I think they do a pretty good job on that [professional development]. I think they've worked really hard to make a change there. . .[providing opportunities] on things that would actually help us and benefit us (PHS-TC).
>
> Right now we're spending probably sixty to seventy percent [of inservices] on professional development and we're focusing on formative assessment as ways of improving our instruction. It puts students in a non-threatening environment for asking questions (PHS-TE).
>
> He's helping us with studying formative assessment and then before that differentiated instruction. He's made sure we have those opportunities. . .have a bag of tricks if you will. . .a treasure chest of ideas and ways to teach things (PHS-TD).

Although not completely sold on all aspects of formative assessment, teacher interest and support were growing, mostly because the principal worked to build support by sending teachers to conferences and workshops. The principal involved both his assistants and teachers in professional development on formative assessment. A few participants noted how each assistant

principal led segments of the last inservice on the topic. Teachers enjoyed this school-led professional development far more than past inservices when a guest speaker or educational expert would be brought in to talk to the faculty.

Principal's Role as District and Community Liaison

A leadership role participants consistently viewed as an integral part of the principal's job was in dealing with constituencies outside the school, such as district leadership, parents, and community groups. In these rural communities, the high school functioned as a center of culture, and the principal was considered a very public figure. This role was mentioned by many teachers right after or even before instructional responsibilities. Discussion of this role separately does not mean that some activities in this area could not be associated with the principal's instructional leadership, simply that area was perceived by participants as often distracting principals from clear instructional leadership functions.

Participants typically cast relationships with district leadership in a positive light of providing information on standards, technology, and best practices to principals, who then disseminated this information to the faculty. Both OHS and PHS, as high schools in relatively small rural districts, enjoyed active, involved district leadership. School superintendents were visible in the schools, and participants at both sites were on a first name basis with district leaders. This involvement placed demands on the time of principals in the schools. A major part of the principal's job was acting as "liaison between [the] school and district" (PHS-TF). A teacher at OHS remarked that "the principal is back and forth to central office," attending meetings and keeping apprised of important information for the school (OHS-TH).

By contrast, relationships with other constituencies, particularly parents, were often portrayed in strained and at times negative terms. One teacher explained this dynamic:

> I think the community has blinders on and as long as they don't hear anything bad they don't become involved. . .[until] something goes wrong (OHS-TD).

Teachers often characterized the school as being beset by federal mandates, angry parents, and a demanding community. Teachers articulated the relationship between the school and the "outside" as a distractive or even adversarial one with the principal functioning as a "filter," "mediator," or "first line of defense" between the school and these forces. One teacher, discussing this role, stated:

> Their [principals'] primary responsibility is addressing outside sources who want to know what's going on in the school. I think principals are subject to outside forces that they have to respond to. I think they have to be a filter, because one of the things that as teachers we get really bent out of shape about is if a parent [who's upset] comes in direct contact with us with no warning, no kind of filter (PHS-TG).

Principals addressed these groups on behalf of the school, sheltering or protecting teachers and students in the classroom. The principal of PHS felt that an important part of his job was to be available to any parents or community members that wanted to speak with him, even if this happened at the expense of other responsibilities. A teacher characterized his role as "a mediator. . .making sure the community's happy" (PHS-TH). The principal of OHS considered "establishing good communications with the public" as essential to effective school leadership, and one of his teachers argued that it was the principal's responsibility "to promote positive interactions between anyone in the community and the school" (OHS-TD). Another teacher at OHS stated, "I see them (administrators) dealing with a lot of relationship issues, parents and community members" (OHS- TF). Both principals and teachers recognized that a

substantial part of the principal's day could be taken up by meetings with upset parents, the editor of the local newspaper, or a group wanting to provide funding to the school.

In observing the principals over the course of the three day site visits, the importance of principals' roles as district/community liaisons became quickly evident. Principals were in constant communication with district level leadership. The principal of OHS was on the phone with the superintendent throughout the day because of a tee shirt scam involving the high school. The principal of PHS spent a few hours one day attending a special school board work session addressing a summer exchange trip for students at the school. Within the local community, both principals functioned as very public figures, and both high schools served as centers of activity for the larger community, particularly with regard to athletics and other extracurricular activities. Outside constituencies repeatedly vied for the attention of both principals. Parents expected to speak and meet with the head principal about any number of issues or concerns.

Principal's Role as Organizational Manager

One criticism of the instructional leadership model was that effective management is often indistinguishable from effective leadership (Cuban, 1988). Managing the school organization—budgeting, scheduling, staffing, paperwork, discipline—is a crucial part of the principal's role in leading a school. Many of the leadership activities outlined in the PIMRS, particularly in the dimension of creating a positive learning climate, could be conceptualized in terms of organizational management and policy. Creating and maintaining an organizational climate of safety, order, and routine influences the overall success of teaching and learning. Organizational problems, particularly those involving money, many times result in serious trouble for a school principal, much more readily than a lack of vision or an instructional failure.

Participants identified organizational manager as an important role for secondary school principals.

Respondents at both sites repeatedly referred to the principal's responsibilities in this area, discussing the principal's organizational role in terms of safety, order, and administrative duties and often making comparisons with the business world:

> He is basically the CEO of the company. . .[ensuring] everything from the smallest part to the largest part is a well-oiled machine (OHS-TG).
>
> He's dealing with department heads, dealing with changing standards, dealing with budgetary issues. I think a lot of it is managing people, like being the manager of a business (PHS-TI).
>
> Principals should be knowledgeable of the school system and how the school runs and be efficient in that (PHS-TA).

The second leadership responsibility the principal of OHS mentioned was maintaining "safety, safety for students and staff" (OHS-P). Teachers agreed that an important part of the principal's job was "maintaining order in the school and organization" and "making sure everything's running smoothly. . .the school's run properly" (OHS-TA; OHS-TH).

Teacher respondents reflected an overall attitude in regard to organizational management that the principal's job was one of protecting the classroom from unnecessary distractions. The principal created a well-managed and ordered school organization that enabled effective instruction to occur in each classroom. Principals ensured that schedules, procedures, policies, and other organizational mechanisms supported teacher efforts in the classroom, not disrupted them.

During the principal interviews at both sites, participants took time while answering questions to sign checks and complete other administrative paperwork. Apologizing for the need to multi-task, the principal of OHS admitted that any opportunity was taken to complete paperwork while at the same time addressing other issues. The principal of PHS showed the researcher his completed budget for the school; a document he had spent considerable time completing during the past few weeks with department heads and the school's bookkeeper. Teacher respondents understood the amount of principal's time often taken up by organizational administration. One teacher perceived an organizational focus a product of principal training:

> What they're qualified to do is mostly administration and that's what I've seen of the courses that they have to take to become [a principal]. Most principals would prefer to do that [instructional leadership]. . .they need to have an administrative staff that does clerical things. Somebody's got to be dealing with teachers (PHS-TE).

Perhaps more than any aspect of the job, the principals delegated or shared duties of organizational management with assistant principals, guidance counselors, office staff, and bookkeepers. The principal of OHS benefited from the financial expertise of a bookkeeper who was a certified public accountant, while the principal of PHS delegated much of the administrative responsibilities for facilities and maintenance to one of his assistant principals. Despite these efforts to share organizational responsibilities, the principals experienced pressure to keep some for themselves, especially matters of finance and paperwork.

Principal's Role as Problem solver

Another part of the principal's leadership role in secondary schools that was repeatedly discussed in the interviews was that of problem solver. Solving problems could readily fall under any and all of the other three roles. Prior research identified part of instructional

leadership as solving instructional problems (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Smith & Andrews, 1989). Most leadership models, including instructional leadership, were founded upon an assumption of proactivity on the part of the organization's leader, but there is an element to leadership of responding to unexpected (or expected) problems and issues that arise no matter the effectiveness and efficiency of the leader and organization. A great deal of time can be spent in organizations as large and complex as high schools solving problems, be they instructional, operational, and/or relational. The principal of PHS explained this facet of the principalship:

> [The job of principal is] unfortunately putting out fires a lot of times or addressing issues as they come up. . .you might have a list of things to get accomplished during the day but then you have one huge disciplinary issue that comes up and you end up dealing with that all day (PHS-P).

Principals endeavored to delegate some of this problem solving responsibility, but teachers, students, and parents ultimately looked to the principal as "the final say" when conflicts needed to be resolved or problems needed to be solved (PHS-P).

Teacher respondents recognized that a substantial part of a principal's day could be consumed with solving problems and "resolving conflicts" (OHS-TD). Teachers expected and appreciated the principal's availability in resolving problems:

> [The principal spends] a lot of time on just referrals, disciplining students, dealing [with] students, dealing with problems, facilities as well, and scheduling (OHS-TG).
>
> He spends a great deal of the day being interrupted. . .he's always available and sometimes there is a line for his door, teachers waiting on him, or parents, or students (PHS-TA).

> Being an effective leader is probably more than anything taking care of any problem that arises in an adequate manner (PHS-TB).
>
> He spends a lot of time. . .mediating problems. . .the complaint department. (PHS-TH)

For example, while interviewing the principal of OHS, a student was discovered in possession of a knife. The administration responded quickly and effectively in resolving the situation—finding the student, securing the knife, contacting the authorities, and notifying parents—but this one issue consumed almost two hours of the principal and assistant principal's time.

The primary impetus for the discussion of the leadership role of problem solver was to address the reactionary aspect of school leadership. Issues arise in schools from minor personality conflicts to major crises involving student safety, and principals are expected to effectively respond and solve these problems. At both schools, the researcher quickly experienced how frequently unexpected problems and crises interrupt the school leader's day. At neither site was the researcher able to complete interviews with the principals without having to stop the interview multiple times in order to allow principals to address various concerns with students, staff, parents, facilities, and others.

Summary

Interview responses demonstrated remarkable similarity between principals and teachers in terms of the principal's perceived leadership responsibilities and activities in the school. Important themes regarding the instructional leadership of secondary school principals were revealed through analysis of the interview and observation data. Interviews and observations largely reinforced the teacher perceptions of their respective principals' instructional leadership, as reflected in the PIMRS results from the quantitative phase (see Table 21, p. 184 and Table 22, p. 185). Without using the explicit language and terminology of the PIMRS instructional

leadership model, participants still articulated the ideal and most important role of the high school principal in terms of instructional leadership, specifically in the behaviors of framing school goals, coordinating the curriculum, and promoting professional development. The researcher observed that the most prominent difference in the leadership of the two principals was in their levels of visibility throughout the building, but both principals struggled with routine positive visits to classrooms.

Respondents identified three other roles that often vied for principals' attention over explicit instructional leadership activities: district/community liaison, organizational manager, and problem solver. Most teacher participants regarded the principal's responsibilities as a district/community liaison as essential to protecting the instructional efforts of teachers in the classroom and preserving the institutional integrity and core focus of the school. Effective organizational management was another role that participants recognized. Administrative duties were viewed as distractions for principals who should be freed to concentrate on more instructional matters. Principals also found their days often consumed with solving problems, managing conflicts, and addressing unexpected crises.

Contextual Factors Influencing Instructional Leadership

Not only did the interviews and observations function as ways to reinforce and expand upon perceptions of instructional leadership in rural secondary schools, but the researcher asked specific questions aimed at understanding contextual factors in the two schools that influenced the instructional leadership of principals. Prior research demonstrated that a number of school factors and leadership qualities appear to influence the instructional leadership of principals at all levels, such as school size, student SES, principal gender, and principal experience level (Bamburg & Andrews, 1990; Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b, 2002; Hallinger

& Murphy, 1985, 1986; Leithwood et al., 2004; Scott & Teddlie, 1987; Silins & Mulford, 2002). The *t*-test analyses of principals in the quantitative phase revealed that school size, SES, principal experience level, and district governance/funding all influenced perceptions of instructional leadership in the secondary schools featured in this study.

Principal and teacher participants identified several of the same contextual factors identified above that they felt both facilitated and hindered principals' abilities to effectively act as instructional leaders. The following discussion addresses two contextual factors participants perceived as hindering the instructional leadership of principals—(1) funding, technology, and resources and (2) district involvement—that were also examined in the inferential analysis chapter (see Chapter 5) using the PIMRS data from these same two schools. Interview and observations shed some light on the role these factors played in affecting the perceived instructional leadership activities of these principals.

Funding, Technology, and Resources

Funding, particularly its influence on the availability of technology and resources in schools, was a contextual factor often mentioned by study participants. Respondents at both schools perceived resource provision as an essential part of the instructional leadership. A principal's ability to support teachers by providing needed materials, instructional technology, and professional development was viewed as a fundamental way principals influenced classroom instruction and the achievement of students. This area seemed to mark the greatest difference between the circumstances of the two principals and perhaps explained why such significant differences occurred between perceived instructional leadership of the principals based on *t*-test analysis (see Table 19, p. 170).

As educators in the district with the lowest PPE, the principal and teachers of OHS typically characterized themselves as forced to accomplish much with little money, technology, and resources. Teachers perceived a lack in technology when considering other schools and the realities of a modern education:

> The other high school [in the county] has a lot more technology. . .but they have funding through Title 1 (OHS-TB).
>
> Here's my technology right here, I have one computer. . .I don't have any computers for my students (OHS-TC).
>
> These kids are going into colleges where everything is word documented, everything is typed [on a computer] and the kids don't get that, they're still writing papers [by hand] (OHS-TD).

The principal shared his faculty's frustration with the lack of technology, and as we toured the building, he asserted that any spare money the school had was used to purchase technology. The principal of OHS discussed the academic accomplishments of his teachers and students in the face of funding inequities with a mixture of pride and frustration:

> We are performing above the state average, but we're being funded below the state average and some of the things we would like to do are simply hindered because of resources. We would love to compare ourselves to an Oak Ridge, but then when you look at what they're funding their programs. . .we can compete with them, but we're never going to surpass them (OHS-P).

The building and facilities of OHS was another source of frustration related to matters of funding and resources. The principal of OHS acknowledged that 12 of his teachers did not have classrooms, forcing them to use other teachers' rooms during planning periods. A lack in teacher

workroom space resulted in displaced teachers with few options of suitable areas for uninterrupted instructional planning or departmental collaboration. Most rooms in the building were being used at all times during the day for classroom instruction. The researcher can attest to this lack in open rooms based on the difficulty he faced in finding private, quiet areas to conduct many of the interviews. One teacher wished that the administration could "offer every teacher in the building their own classroom" (OHS-TD).

In comparison to OHS, the principal, teachers, and students of PHS, in general, enjoyed superior facilities. Although class size was a concern (because of fewer teachers), most, if not all, of the teachers at PHS had their own classrooms. Touring the building revealed a greater availability of teacher workrooms, computer labs, and library facilities than at OHS. The principal and teachers of PHS, as a benefit of working in a small city district, had a considerable role in the budgeting process. The school and school system operated an aggressive grant writing program in order to obtain technology and other instructional resources. Instructional technology—computers, projectors, smart boards, and DVD players—was widely available throughout the school. Principal and teachers perceived that if they needed technology or resources that, within reason, it would be provided by the school and/or district. The principal of PHS recognized the school's fortune, while at the same time explaining that the school would continue to make technology a priority:

> Of course we have a lot of technology here, but I think that's something that people would want to add if they said here's a lot of money (PHS-P).

During a tour of the building, the principal showed the researcher a new computer lab, a state of the art engineering classroom, and the school's impressive Career and Technical Education (CTE) annex. The CTE program offered classes an array of vocational areas, such as nursing

and printing. One teacher referred to this program as "the crown jewel" of the school (PHS-TF). Matters of facilities, funding, technology, and resources were rarely mentioned by the participants of PHS as a hindering contextual factor.

District Involvement

As schools in small districts, both OHS and PHS benefited from supportive involvement of district level leadership. School superintendents, instructional supervisors, school board members and other district officials were visible, active presences in the two schools. Principals in the schools characterized district relationships largely in positive terms. District leadership was considered supportive and involved but not controlling. The principal of OHS stated, "We're basically site based except for finances." He felt that district leadership backed his decisions, especially in matters of staffing. The principal of PHS described his relationship in terms of teamwork: "When I came here, one thing I found to be a big strength was just the team, from central office down."

Both principals felt supported but not micro-managed by district officials, especially in the provision of resources, professional development of faculty, and the hiring of staff. More will be said later about the importance of hiring and retaining effective teachers, but principals perceived superintendents as following their recommendations in matters of staffing. Differences in funding and resources existed between the two schools as discussed above, but a lack of funds was not blamed or attributed to the district. The principals of OHS and PHS perceived district involvement as key to their instructional leadership in the schools and appreciated the support of district officials.

Teachers at OHS repeatedly praised the superintendent and instructional supervisors for their presence and assistance in the school:

> Two weeks ago he [the school superintendent] visited my classroom (OHS-TA).
>
> Overall they [district officials] do a pretty good job. The central office has high expectations for us as a faculty and for our students and is fairly responsive with the funding. They have to go to bat for us with the county commission (OHS-TE).
>
> The central office leadership is very encouraging. They are obsessed with test scores like every other district is but very encouraging. . .I'll walk the halls and see central office personnel all the time (OHS-TF).
>
> There is a lot of collaboration among all the other schools [in the district], instead of just being separated. There's usually always people going to central office and vice versa. All the schools in the district seem to work together fairly well (OHS-TG).

One negative to the district's influence on OHS was a perceived district pressure to maintain an overall equivalence between the district's two high schools. Participants felt that the superintendent and school board did not wish for either school to be too radically different from the other in terms of programs and services. The principal and teachers of OHS had, at times, met with district resistance to some of their more ambitious proposals, such adopting an exclusively honors educational program or requiring all students to take at least one AP class.

Teachers at PHS also responded positively to questions about district support and involvement. Participants characterized the school superintendent as deeply involved locally in the school as well as politically in state level educational circles with one teacher referring to him as a "policy wonk" (PHS-TG). Teacher respondents at PHS remarked:

> I see [the superintendent] out here a lot, coming through, saying hello, checking in on people, seeing what they need. . .I've heard in more than one instance that someone will

send him an email saying they need something and he's here with it in the same day (PHS-TI).

[The superintendent] is very involved politically, he is the 'go between' between us and the state. . .they get us what we need. . .we have a lot of autonomy as long as we can support what we're doing with research, with data. He's all about the research and all about the data (PHS-TA).

[The superintendent] is very active, I think he pretty much has his pulse on everything that's going on. He sets forward his expectations, then he's going to leave the room for the different principals to implement that [vision] however they think best (PHS-TC).

At least once a week, I'll see a school board member in the building or the superintendent. . .our superintendent knows some of our kids. . .I think we're actually pretty lucky, I mean if we need something we usually get it (PHS-TH).

I've had school board members in my classroom. I've seen [the superintendent] over here quite a bit. . .technical support is always available. We have good support for our teacher inservices from the school board (PHS-TE).

The researcher attended a special district work session involving the superintendent, central office staff, and school board members. The atmosphere of the meeting was open and friendly, with a general sense of comradery among district and school officials. The principal of PHS commented that the school superintendent considered everyone in the system "a family."

Summary

A fundamental part of this study was to examine instructional leadership within the context of rural secondary schools, particularly in looking at contextual factors of rural secondary schools influencing the instructional leadership of principals. The researcher asked

several interview questions designed to explore the relationship between instructional leader and the high school context in order to add further meaning to the results of the initial quantitative phase and answer the study's research questions. The researcher focused on two factors identified in both the quantitative and qualitative phases that seemed to affect teachers' perceptions of principals' instructional leadership: (1) funding, technology, and resources and (2) district involvement.

Interviews and observations revealed considerable differences in funding, resources, and technology available to the two principals in the different districts. The principal and teachers of PHS benefited from overall better facilities, more technology, and greater revenue sources through budget requests and grant writing. In contrast, a general sense of dissatisfaction and frustration over a lack of money, computers, and classrooms pervaded the climate of OHS. Since resource provision was revealed in the literature and in this study as fundamental to a principal's indirect influence as instructional leader, shortcomings in funding and facilities at OHS seemed to affect teachers' overall perceptions of the instructional leadership of their principal, regardless of whether these issues were under his direct control.

District leadership was extremely involved in the high schools of both these small rural systems. Participants in both schools characterized district involvement as mostly positive factors in helping principals exercise instructional leadership, especially in terms of resource provision and professional development. District officials were visible, active presences in the schools, while affording principals considerable autonomy in the governance of individual buildings. Even the principal and teachers of OHS made little criticism of their district leadership when discussing concerns of funding and technology.

Principal Decisions and Actions Influencing Classroom Instruction and Achievement

The instructional leadership of these two rural secondary school principals was affected not only by the other roles expected of them but also by contextual factors of these specific schools. Despite the complexity of both the principal's job and the high school setting, participants identified specific decisions and actions on the part of their principals that they felt most impacted teaching and learning in the classroom. The researcher asked respondents to consider the principal's influence over matters of curriculum, classroom instruction, and testing. Participants in both schools named important instructional leadership activities, not all of which fell neatly under the PIMRS model, such as sharing leadership responsibilities, innovating the high school organization, hiring effective teachers, providing instructional resources, being an accessible, visible presence, and minimizing instructional disruptions.

Sharing Instructional Leadership and Other Leadership Responsibilities

The analysis of the qualitative data established the secondary school principal's job as a complex and multi-faceted set of responsibilities, not all of which were instructional leadership functions. Likewise, participants perceived the size, complexity, and departmentalized structure of traditional high schools making it extremely difficult and highly impractical for any one person to be the sole wielder of instructional leadership responsibility in the school. The most fundamental way for principals to ensure that instructional leadership functions are fulfilled in their schools is through a willingness to share leadership responsibilities with others in the building.

Few teachers interviewed for this study desired or expected the principal to bear the sole onus for instructional leadership, despite the fact that the PIMRS instructional leadership model looks only at the head principal. When asked to discuss the instructional leadership of the

principals in their schools, teacher participants invariably spoke of the leadership of the administration, principals and assistant principals. A teacher participant in the initial quantitative phase pointed out this perceived weakness in the PIMRS, making note of it on the returned survey:

> Some of these questions did not leave any room for the delegation of principal responsibilities. Even though my principal may not do some of these things in the survey questions, it does not mean that those things do not get done by someone else. I think that this should be mentioned as a limitation of this survey (PHS-T).

The qualitative phase enabled the researcher to examine the important role delegation plays in successfully leading high schools. Interviews and observations revealed two principals readily willing to share an array of leadership responsibilities in order to ensure success for their students and schools. Both principals considered sharing leadership responsibilities as a necessity to being a successful secondary school principal:

> I think the ability to delegate is big. I think that people who want everything to channel through them limit momentum because. . .if everybody has to wait for a decision from this particular person before they can move you just get locked down. Just the magnitude [of the job]. . .you can't have everything run through you (OHS-P).
>
> I've been very fortunate in surrounding myself with people who support my weaknesses. It's important for other people to have buy-in, to have a voice (PHS-P).

Teacher participants at the schools also asserted the importance of sharing leadership:

> I think you [the principal] have to be able to delegate to be respected. We have different teams and those team leaders are delegated with certain responsibilities. He noticed test

> scores [on the eleventh grade writing prompt] were not good so he delegated a team to do something about it (OHS-TG).
>
> He's [the principal] not making all the decisions. We [the school] want feedback before we make a decision. . .[the principal delegates because] it creates a strong school, two brains are better than one and it gives the entire faculty a feeling of belonging and ownership. . .that we're an integral part of the operation of the school (OHS-TE).
>
> [An important part of instructional leadership is] delegation of authority, being able to assign tasks and give up some of his [the principal's] power. He puts each administrator [assistant principal] in charge of various grade levels and all aspects involved with them (PHS-B).
>
> We have an instructional team, an advisory team. We get together and discuss ideas. I think he's pretty good at delegating. It helps involve everybody and if you feel involved it makes a big difference. (PHS-TH).

Teachers desired to help their principals lead the schools and appreciated being given voice in decision making. Although principals did not always implement teacher suggestions, teachers felt that this was most often the result of a lack of resources or district vetoes, not necessarily the unwillingness of their school leaders. The principal of PHS offered one caveat to promoting leadership in others:

> It's important for other people to have buy in. . .that's not to say they're always going to get to do things the way they want to but they are going to be involved. I tell my teachers 'don't come to me just with the problem. I don't need problem identifiers. I need problem solvers (PHS-P).

Of the four leadership roles outlined earlier, principals shared responsibilities under all of them. During the two days observing and interviewing the principals, each continually introduced the researcher to assistants, teachers, and other individuals who fulfilled a variety of leadership roles in the school from administrating the freshmen academy to handling special education matters to developing and modifying the curriculum. Authority over athletics, facilities maintenance, student discipline, purchasing, instructional technology, and other school areas were shared among the faculty. On his assistant principals' days off, the principal of OHS hired substitutes for teachers with principal certification so those teachers could fill in and gain administrative experience. The principal of PHS considered it an important part of his job to prepare his assistant principals to become head principals of schools.

Even certain instructional leadership responsibilities were delegated to others. The principal of OHS included one of his assistant principals in a substantial portion of his interview, particularly during discussions on curriculum, instruction, and testing. The principal acknowledged that a major reason for hiring him as assistant principal was not only "for him to grow as a leader. . .[but because] he was viewed as an academic person in the school." A few teachers acknowledged that they often looked to this assistant principal for instructional advice before the principal. One teacher in particular said:

> I honestly wouldn't define our principal as our instructional leader. One of our assistant principals is more of the instructional leader. . .[he's] a former math teacher [who] knows data, understands data. The principal defers to him a lot. I think part of it is by design because the principal has confidence in him and knows his abilities (OHS-TB).

Whereas teachers relied on the head principal for the overall instructional vision and goals for the school, the principal of OHS many times deferred to this assistant principal, especially in

matters of testing and student achievement. This willingness to delegate instructional leadership responsibilities to his assistant perhaps in part explained the relatively low scores the principal of OHS received from faculty on certain subscales of the PIMRS, such as coordinating curriculum and monitoring student progress. The principal of PHS also shared curriculum responsibilities with his instructional team and advisory council, which met once a week before school.

Innovating the High School Organization

The relationship between leader and context or, as in this case, principal and school was one of mutual influence. Principals affect and are affected by contextual factors of their organization. Just as the size, complexity, and structure of their schools required these principals to share leadership, they prompted the principals to examine and implement ways to change the organization to facilitate instructional leadership. Both principals sought ways to innovate the departmentalized, content-driven, and often isolated structure of their schools to improve school wide communication and collaboration. Principals advocated schools within schools, smaller learning communities, common planning, and multidisciplinary teaming:

> I think that because of the size of the school that we are, anytime you can break the school down into smaller groups is a positive. I would like to build a school that you could have multidisciplinary teams of teachers (OHS-P).
>
> [Given the facilities and flexibility,] I would really work on developing professional and learning communities (PHS-P).

Sharing and delegating leadership roles and responsibilities served as a relatively simple way of breaking the school into more manageable parts. As mentioned before, principals delegated various grade level and departmental responsibilities to assistants and lead teachers, distributing authority and in a sense creating smaller communities within the larger school.

Much of the major programmatic changes in the two schools, however, were directed primarily at ninth grade students in order to improve their achievement, conduct, and attendance. OHS operated the more defined and innovative freshmen academy model, and many of the teachers in the building lauded the program and felt that many of its features would benefit the larger school and the rest of the students:

> I think the freshman academy would be something I was not for initially but have I seen a difference in the ability of my seniors that have gone through the freshman academy? Yes I have. I do think that vertical teaching, that collaboration, that everybody getting on the team, working for a certain goal, and the freshman academy have been great (OHS-TC).
>
> One of the greater things we've probably done is the freshmen academy. They [the principals] put some of the strongest teachers there. Discipline referrals have decreased, our attendance rate has either stayed the same or increased, and our graduation rate is steadily going up. I would attribute a lot of it to the freshmen academy (OHS-TA).
>
> I think it's [the freshmen academy] one of our strongest programs now. I think we have the right teachers in the right spots. . .[the teachers] are more cognizant of what's going on with the kids, they know their attendance, they know their grades, they communicate more (OHS-TB).
>
> I think that it [the freshmen academy] helps and it makes that transition from middle school to high school a little bit better, especially the way we have them all centralized in one part of the building (OHS-TH).

Freshmen classes, with the exception of science and computer classes, were housed in a separate part of the school. Teachers and students in the freshmen academy followed a teaming

approach in which groups of four core teachers with common planning times shared the same groups of students among them. The principal and teachers perceived benefits from this approach beyond purely academic outcomes, such test scores and graduation rate. Many felt the approach fostered communication and collaboration among the ninth grade teachers. Ninth grade teachers drew strength from the team when addressing student problems and parents. As one teacher put it, these teachers enjoyed the "strength in numbers." The principal was examining the possibility of implementing a multidisciplinary, teaming approach with sophomore students and maybe with the rest of the school. He envisioned OHS structured around multidisciplinary colleges where students focused on specific high school specialties or majors like the humanities, medicine/health, music and art, and others.

The ninth grade initiative at PHS had been implemented for only one year and did not represent as much of a change in structure or program. The principal described the ninth grade initiative:

> Because of our facility we weren't able to separate them. Our core classes consist only of [first time] students in the ninth grade. We have an administrator for the ninth graders (PHS-P).

The focus of the program was on improving the achievement, attendance, and discipline for students in the crucial first year of high school. With the facilities, funding, and flexibility, the principal of PHS would separate the freshmen and look at other ways to create smaller professional and learning communities. He viewed the ninth grade initiative as a first step towards improving the success and experience of freshmen. Given time, he anticipated the program growing into a separate freshmen academy. A few of the teachers perceived a benefit in the program, but none advocated any drastic moves away from the departmentalized structure of

the school with a few balking at the suggestion of a less departmentalized structure as diminishing academic rigor.

Facilitating communication and collaboration was still a priority, but the efforts of PHS in this area mostly involved a push for common planning time for departments. This was an ongoing struggle, as one teacher described:

> They're [the administration] trying to develop a more collaborative system. A couple of years ago, we were trying to get a common planning time [for departments] implemented in the school system. We couldn't convince the higher ups that it was viable and could work (PHS-TA).

The best the principal had accomplished, given the scheduling demands and district resistance, was common lunches for departments. Teachers appreciated this time, but everyone hoped for more change.

Hiring and Placing Effective Teachers

Arguably the theme developed from these data that impressed the researcher the most was the singular importance principals and teachers in both schools placed on staffing. When asked what instructional leadership behaviors participants perceived as most affecting classroom instruction and student achievement, respondents repeatedly identified the hiring of effective teachers and their strategic placement in the school as the most influential. A common thread of "right teachers, right classes" emerged in these data. The principal of PHS characterized the significance of this leadership function:

> One of the most important things I do as a principal is when I have an opportunity to hire a teacher. I've always tried to have good teachers. There's no substitute for a good teacher (PHS-P).

At OHS, the principal estimated that he hired in his five years as principal approximately half of his staff. The teacher population was changing from a mostly veteran staff to a relatively young staff. He viewed his ability to hire teachers as fundamental to challenging the status quo and implementing change in the school.

The unfortunate but necessary other aspect to this responsibility was the necessity to recognize and remove ineffective teachers. The decision to give tenure to a teacher was one of the most serious and, at times, difficult decisions for the principals:

> I think being able to make a difficult decision because when it comes down to giving a [ineffective] teacher tenure, a lot of people will give a teacher tenure because they don't want to go to the trouble of finding somebody else, let alone having that difficult conversation with them that they're not coming back (PHS-P).

Both admitted to reservations that they might be perceived as too quick to not grant tenure, but neither principal felt that taking chances on ineffective teachers by granting them tenure was a wise option for school leaders. Teacher participants in the schools seemed to understand and appreciate the weight of this responsibility:

> The previous administration would take a chance on some teachers. Those teachers would definitely get tenure. This administration they don't take a chance if there's a question about a teacher, so there's been a lot of turnover at this school with new teachers. I think it's really good to be quite honest. . .that takes backbone (OHS-TA).
>
> I also think that you [the principal] have to make sure your personnel is what it needs to be, to make some tough decisions. Tenure year rolls around, are you going to keep some of them or can you make some really tough decisions? That's something that I know our principals have had to deal with this year (OHS-TF).

> A lot of hiring and firing goes through him [the principal]. There have been people [teachers] who have been here for a year that have gone. I know that's not an easy decision to make, but if you see someone isn't good at what they do you have to make the decision for the benefit of the students. You have to be willing to make the tough decisions. (PHS-TI)
>
> As far as instructional leadership, the most important thing he can do is make sure he hires the right people and puts them in the right place (PHS-TG).

The last teacher quote introduced another aspect of staffing for instructional leaders—matching teachers with the right classes and students. The teacher likened the instructional leader role of his principal to that of a chess player who strategically moves his teachers into the most advantageous classes:

> He [the principal] puts people in the right places, he moves people to the right position to ensure the best chances of success (PHS-TG).

This sentiment was echoed at OHS, as well:

> I think they [administrators] place us [teachers] in the classes that we're strongest. That doesn't just mean content knowledge, that's where we can reach the students that maybe another teacher can't reach (OHS-TB).

The principal of OHS discussed the deliberate and strategic placement of teachers in the right classes and with the right students at length. He perceived much of his influence over curriculum and instruction in the school as resting with the schedule for teachers and students, which he "scrapped" each year in order to find the most successful matches of teachers, courses, and students:

> Like our freshmen academy, [teachers] were hand selected for their personalities, more nurturing individuals. We've been specific on the AP teachers as well people that we feel are some of our better teachers. In the core math, we picked people that we thought would be best for the kids, folks who were innovative. We knew we couldn't put a traditional teacher in front of those [classes]. We've been very lucky with personnel (OHS-P).

If, as research suggested (Leithwood et al., 2004), principal leadership is second only to classroom instruction in factors most influencing student achievement, then it should be no surprise that participants identified staffing as central to the instructional leadership of principals.

Providing Resources and Professional Development

Much has already been said about both the provision of resources and professional development. Many participants identified both of these leadership functions when earlier discussing the primary roles of their principals. Participants often mentioned these aspects of instructional leadership together. Professional development was considered a resource much like a textbook or a computer. Teachers closely related both of these functions with the previous leadership activity of hiring and placing effective teachers. The progression was a logical one that clearly reflected the overall perception of the indirect nature and influence of instructional leadership—the successful instructional leader hired, placed, supported, and developed effective teachers.

Both principals discussed the provision of resources and professional development as important ways they influence instruction and achievement:

> I try to help them be better teachers. . .facilitate them with getting resources they need.
>
> My job is to help them be able to do their job[s] better, whether that's getting the

resources they need. Ultimately what happens in the classroom is where the rubber meets the road (OHS-P).

I try to provide them [teachers] with what they need to be successful. . .providing resources. (PHS-P)

Teachers at the schools also addressed the importance of the principal's role in providing resources and support:

[The principal should] know what good instruction looks like and provide everything needed for that good instruction to take place (OHS-TA).

They [principals] are providing support for the teachers. . .instructional supplies, advice, discipline, content knowledge (OHS-TB).

I think [the principal] can help faculty become better teachers by giving them what they need to be better [classroom] managers. (OHS-TF)

[The principal points] you in the right direction in regards to curriculum or classroom management, discipline issues, and parents (PHS-TF).

Differences in available resources existed between the two schools and principals. The principal of OHS, who did not benefit from the technology and funding available to his counterpart, attempted to mitigate this lack in resources through the continual promotion of professional development. An important part of the principal's role as a district/community liaison was in communicating with instructional supervisors and experts on a district level. Participants perceived their principals as attending district level meetings and workshops, learning about upcoming changes or best practices, and then communicating this needed information to the teachers at the school.

Although not an explicit aspect of the PIMRS model of instructional leadership, other models regarded this area as important to instructional leaders (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Smith & Andrews, 1989). A purpose of this phase was to enhance or add to the quantitative results by identifying facets of effective instructional leadership that were overlooked through the administration of the PIMRS. The fact that participants mentioned this instructional leadership behavior multiple times during the interviews points to its significance in the minds of principals and teachers both to classroom instruction and student achievement.

Being an Accessible, Visible Presence

Although not as universally mentioned as the previous leadership activities, principal accessibility and visibility require further comment. Most teachers expected to gain their principal's ear whenever they needed to speak with them. Many teachers at both schools appreciated seeing their principals frequently around the school. Maintaining high visibility was one of the most fundamental ways principals influenced school climate. A teacher at PHS explained it in the following fashion:

> Everything that they [the administrators] do helps me do my job. I mean, just their presence. They're in the commons area, they talk to kids, they show kindness. Being at the ball game on Friday night and making sure no brawl ensues. It all manifests in the somewhere in the classroom. [The principal] gave a student a pat on the back, knew that [he or she] did a good job and now the student feels good and wants to do even better (PHS-TF).

The principal of PHS maintained a visible presence throughout many areas of the school—hallways, lobbies, lunch rooms, bus duty areas, athletic events. This visibility contributed to and improved the school's overall learning climate.

High schools, structurally and culturally, reinforced a departmentalized, rather isolated climate where, as prior research asserted, a wall existed between the office/principal and the classroom/teacher (Hallinger, 2005). Principals often neglected the most important area of the school, the classroom, unless problems happened. Some teachers desired the presence of principals when positive activities/events occurred. The same teacher quoted above asserted this point:

> Maybe [the principal] could stop by and peek in, just to see what we're doing, and hear a couple of kids' poems and smile and brag on them. . .I know it's not always possible, but just to be more visible when good things are happening, than just showing up when bad things happen (PHS-TF).

Both phases of this study revealed visibility, particularly in classrooms, as the most problematic area for secondary school principals. Many of the teachers at both schools wanted principals to be more visible in the school and their classrooms.

Minimizing Instructional Distractions and Disruptions

Early on in the interviews when discussing the role of the principal as instructional leader with participants, few, if any, of the participants mentioned the importance of protecting instructional time. On the PIMRS, principals in most schools received their second lowest rating on this subscale. When discussion later turned to the principal activities most influencing instruction and achievement, many participants discussed this area.

Both high schools featured in this phase were busy places in which a plethora of activities vied for the time and attention of principals, students, and teachers. Announcements, meetings, clubs, field trips, and athletics all served to interrupt classroom instruction. The demands of parents and the community distracted teachers from work in the classroom. Even student discipline issues often resulted in lost instructional time because consequences, such as detention, in school suspension, and out of school suspension, entailed students missing classes.

In discussing the protection of instructional time, the principal of OHS stated, "I think that they [the teachers] view my role is to keep everything. . .keep as much away from them as possible so they can do their jobs." Teachers at OHS experienced mixed feelings as to their principal's effectiveness at keeping interruptions away from classrooms. While not necessarily attributing all the blame on the school's administration, teachers in the school perceived instructional distractions as a problem and desired more effective routines and mechanisms in order to minimize these interruptions:

> I think they [administrators] do a decent job at it [protecting instructional time]. There's so much stuff that goes on in the school that it's kind of overwhelming and it's hard to budget the time and even out to where each class has missed the same time (OHS-TH).
>
> You've planned this lesson thinking you're going to have this much time and then the intercom comes on and says we need this group [of students] to report here. Sometimes those decisions are out of their [the administration's] hands, but I do think there could be a little more consistency in the protection of that time (OHS-TB).
>
> There's no need to have [PA] interruptions every period. We find ourselves with all these special events, choir concert, guest speakers. A week will be butchered because there are three events that for some reason had to happen (OHS-TF).

> The greatest hindrance would be the amount of classroom interruptions that come through the telephone, PA system, or that come from scheduled activities that interrupt. . .there's not enough time to teach what I've got to teach (OHS-TE).
>
> The majority of our discipline in school is not law breaking. They [students] skip class and they're put in in school [suspension]. Well, that's yet another day they're out of my classroom (OHS-TC).

The handling of discipline represented somewhat of a "catch 22" for both principals. Teachers expected discipline problems to be addressed promptly and effectively but begrudged the loss of instructional time often involved in handling these issues.

The overall perception of the principal of PHS with regard to the protection of instructional time was somewhat more positive, especially in certain areas. Teachers felt that their students understood that there were consequences to disrupting teaching and learning:

> The support you get any time there's a disruption that takes away from learning. Disruptions being dealt with effectively. Our kids know that if they're impeding our learning process that they're going to be disciplined in some way (PHS-TB).

Interviews and observations revealed an effective effort in eliminating excessive use of the PA system at PHS. In walking around the school and talking with teachers during the site visit, the researcher did not hear a single intercom announcement. Most of the teachers appreciated this effort, but one teacher wondered if the principal went to too much trouble in stopping PA interruptions:

> We do announcements at the beginning of second block. They [administrators] try to call kids to the office over the intercom in between classes trying not to interrupt you, but

in the hall way kids never hear it. I think maybe they even go too out of their way to not disturb (PHS-TI).

Some teachers at PHS perceived interruptions resulting from field trips and discipline as problematic, especially late in the semester with tests looming. A sizeable group of students had spent most of the previous week on a field trip so this instructional disruption was readily on the minds of some participants at PHS:

> Trying to put as much into the day as we can with the ninety minute schedule throwing in extracurricular [activities] impedes us. I have students who have been on six [field trips], so they're not in the classroom learning (PHS-TE).
>
> Allowing too many field trips. . .interruptions to instructional time, usually it's the students who are poor in math that are the one's pulled out of class [for field trips]. Or the students that have discipline issues problems, they're put in in school, again taken out of class (PHS-TC).
>
> I had five or six out at any given time for field trips. It seems like when you just get the class together the phone rings or somebody comes to the door (PHS-TD).

The need for principals to effectively reduce distractions to teaching and learning was manifest. Interviews and observations supported the significance of this area to teachers. Teachers attributed student success directly to the amount and quality of instructional time they were able to spend with each student, or as one teacher explained:

> What takes away from student effectiveness is my time away from each individual student. The more time I can spend with a student one on one the better they're going to perform (PHS-TE).

The perceived importance of the principal's role in protecting instructional time by minimizing interruptions, such as announcements, meetings, and student discipline reinforced the overall attitude of participants that the influence of instructional leaders on classroom instruction and student achievement was primarily indirect.

Summary

Analyses of interview and observation data revealed specific decisions, behaviors, and actions on the part of principals/instructional leaders that participants perceived as most facilitating effective instructional leadership. Participants neither desired nor required principals to be the sole providers of instructional leadership in the schools. In order to effectively lead schools and ensure instructional leadership functions were met, these high school principals shared a variety of leadership responsibilities, even some instructional leadership roles. Along with sharing instructional leadership, many participants identified a willingness to change/innovate the organization and structure of secondary schools as advantageous to the principal's instructional leadership. Smaller learning communities, teaming, and common planning enhanced communication and mitigated some of the organizational impediments to instructional leadership.

With regard to instructional leadership behaviors affecting instruction and achievement, participants perceived the influence of instructional leaders in primarily indirect terms. Teachers in both schools respected the importance of their principals' role in hiring effective teachers and matching these teachers with the most appropriate classes and students. Principals and teachers also recognized the difficulty and necessity in removing ineffective teachers from the schools before they gained tenure. The principals' next instructional leadership responsibilities were in the provision of resources and professional development to teachers in order to enhance

classroom instruction and student achievement. In the perceptions of teachers, principal accessibility was appreciated but was not viewed as a substitute for visibility, and frequent positive visits to classrooms by principals were considered as rarities in both schools. Teacher participants at both schools regarded the protection of instructional time as a crucial, but often neglected, way principals impacted teaching and learning at the classroom level.

Conclusion

The primary advantage of utilizing an explanatory, mixed methods case study approach was the use of complimentary quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to offer a more comprehensive look at instructional leadership in rural secondary schools. The analysis of the PIMRS administered in the eight schools in the first phase revealed several important themes and trends in participant perceptions of instructional leadership and the contextual factors of high schools that appeared to influence instructional leadership in the settings. These perceptions were further supported in the interviews and observations conducted at two of the eight secondary schools—Oberon High School and Prospero High School (see Table 21, p. 184 and Table 22, p. 185). Visits to both schools revealed two principals focused on matters of instructional leadership while faced with both common and unique challenges. The researcher drew several important findings about instructional leadership of secondary school principals from the qualitative phase that augmented the conclusions of the previous quantitative discussion.

Principal and teacher participants characterized the primary role of the high school principal as one of instructional leadership. Interview and observation data depicted two principals who were involved and active in many areas of instructional leadership, particularly in framing and communicating goals, coordinating curriculum, and promoting professional

development. Interviews and observations identified three other roles that high principals often assumed in effectively leading their schools: district/community liaison, organizational manager, and problem-solver. The role of district/community filter was viewed by many teachers to be as important as the principals' instructional leadership responsibilities. This finding as well as results from the inferential analysis prompted the researcher to focus on two contextual factors: (1) funding, technology, and resources and (2) district involvement. Disparities in funding, technology, and resources seemed to affect teachers' overall perceptions of their principals' instructional leadership in the two schools.

Participants denoted two primary ways in which principals ensured instructional leadership responsibilities were fulfilled in their high schools—sharing instructional and other leadership responsibilities with others and innovating or changing the organization to facilitate the exercise of instructional leadership. In discussing the most influential instructional leadership behaviors of principals, teachers conceptualized the principal's role as indirectly influencing teaching and learning through hiring good teachers, supporting them with resources and professional development, and protecting them from distractions both inside and outside the school. Visibility was also recognized as an important part of principal leadership. The researcher, through the interviews and observations at both sites, recognized a difference in the visibility between the two principals with the principal of PHS appearing to maintain the more visible presence throughout the school, but both principals faltered in terms of frequent positive visitations to classrooms.

Chapter 7

Findings and Conclusion

The final chapter of this study provides answers to the research's central questions, suggestions for future avenues of instructional leadership research, and practical advice for practitioners. Ideally, the summative information presented in this chapter supports prior research efforts as well as adds to the theory and practice of instructional leadership in rural secondary schools. Before addressing these topics, time is taken to revisit the purpose and research questions.

Purpose and Research Questions of Study

For over two decades, many researchers, policymakers, and practitioners have asserted that school principals should act as instructional leaders. This model of leadership has enjoyed a recent resurgence in prominence during the 21st century largely as the result of an increased focus on student outcomes and accountability on federal and state levels. Federal and state programs, such as NCLB, Race to the Top, and the American Diploma Project, place tremendous pressure on schools and their principals, teachers, and students to increase rigor of course work and student achievement on tests, such as ACT, SAT, and other state-mandated exams. Principal preparation programs at universities as well as state and district level professional development opportunities for school leaders have returned to an emphasis on the instructional leadership role and responsibilities of the school principal.

For all of this focus on the importance of the principal's role as instructional leader, few principals manage to effectively function in this capacity. This is further complicated by the fact that most models of instructional leadership, including the one used in this study, are still very much rooted in research conducted in urban elementary schools. If instructional leadership is to

be the model of preference for school principals at all levels and in all contexts, then, more research is needed in embedding instructional leadership within specific school contexts, in order to determine exactly how this leadership function plays out when faced with the unique structures and demands of most secondary schools. It was this aspect of the research that led to the purpose of this study—to examine instructional leadership within the context of rural secondary schools. In meeting this purpose, the researcher sought to answer four central questions:

1. How do the perceptions of principals compare with those of their faculties in regard to the principals' roles and effectiveness as instructional leaders in rural secondary schools? (quantitative and qualitative)
2. What district level and individual school factors both facilitate and hinder the exercise of instructional leadership in rural secondary schools? (quantitative and qualitative)
3. What instructional leadership decisions and behaviors of principals most influence classroom instruction and student achievement in rural secondary schools? (qualitative)
4. How is instructional leadership in rural secondary schools similar to and different from the typical conceptualization of this leadership model? (qualitative)

Both phases of this explanatory, mixed methods case study revealed several important findings regarding the instructional leadership of rural secondary school principals. Findings for the individual parts—descriptive analyses, inferential analyses, and qualitative analyses—have been discussed in their respective chapters earlier in the dissertation. Now these findings are synthesized in order to answer the research questions. These conclusions not only possess value in what they add to the greater body of research on instructional leadership but also hold

implications for the practice of the principalship and point to future avenues of educational research.

Principal and Teacher Perceptions of Instructional Leadership in Rural Secondary Schools

In answering the first research question, the researcher addressed principal and teacher perceptions of instructional leadership in rural secondary schools as primarily revealed through the administration of the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale in eight high schools. Comparison of teacher and principal PIMRS ratings of the principals' instructional leadership revealed an array of relationships between perceptions. While the researcher expected principals to rate themselves higher than teachers, in actuality principals, depending on the school, rated themselves higher, lower, and nearly identical to the ratings of teachers on the PIMRS. Two of the highest scored principals by their faculties (the principals of PHS and HHS) rated themselves considerably lower than did teachers, whereas two of the lowest rated principals by their faculties (the principals of THS and OHS) scored themselves as two of the most active instructional leaders (see Figure 7, p. 103 and Figure 8, p. 108). In the case of the principal and teachers of JHS, perceptions were practically identical (see Figure 9, p. 113).

Teacher subscale scores across the eight schools clustered in similar ways. Teacher scores of principals differed in terms of magnitude, and principals who were rated highly on one subscale were typically rated highly on them all, likewise for the lower rated principals. However, comparison of teacher PIMRS results revealed an overall consistency in ratings among the eight schools (see Figure 7, p. 103). Despite differences in the magnitude of their subscale scores, principals in the eight schools were most often scored highest and lowest in the same subscales. For example, teachers in the eight schools rated principals highest in the subscales of framing school goals, coordinating curriculum, and promoting professional development and

lowest in the subscales of maintaining high visibility, protecting instructional time, and providing incentives for learning. According to the PIMRS results from these eight schools, teachers perceived principals as relatively succeeding and struggling in the same instructional leadership subscales.

Teachers in the participating secondary schools perceived the principals as frequently active as instructional leaders, especially in the dimensions of defining the school mission and managing the instructional program. Principals in these eight high schools were characterized as thinking and leading based on student outcomes, specifically test scores and graduation rates. In the PIMRS results from the first phase, teachers regarded principals as particularly involved in the subscales of dimension 1: framing and communicating school goals. This finding aligned well with prior research (Adams, 2002; Bamburg & Andrews, 1990; Bossert et al., 1984; Brewer, 1993; Goldring & Pasternak, 1994; Glasman, 1984; Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b, 1998; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Johnson, 2006; Marks & Printy, 2003; Purkey & Smith, 1983). Interviews and observations revealed two principals focused on measurable academic goals for their schools and who had successfully articulated these goals to teachers. Teachers at OHS readily acknowledged goals of expanding the school's AP program and improving math achievement of students. Teachers at PHS were fully aware of the school's goal for bettering the graduation rate.

The management of the instructional program was the dimension in which the most differences in perceptions existed between principals and teachers. Teachers overall rated principals highly in dimension 2, especially in the coordination of curriculum. Principals, however, typically rated themselves higher in subscales 3 and 5 of supervising/evaluating instruction and monitoring student progress. The researcher observed curriculum meetings at

both schools where principals met with assistants, teachers, and counselors in order to address the individual goals of their schools. According to the results of both the PIMRS and the interviews and observations, principals were viewed as most active in broad, formal instructional leadership behaviors and less involved in individualized, informal activities. Behaviors that required the principal to fulfill instructional leadership behaviors, such as informally visiting classrooms, monitoring individual classrooms and students, and notifying parents and students of goals, were less frequently met. If the instructional leadership activity was tied to a formal mechanism (e.g., school improvement, faculty meetings, formal teacher observations, and/or inservice/professional development), principals were perceived as more involved than when the activity was not.

Secondary school principals, based on both teacher and principal results on the PIMRS as well as the results of interviews and observations in the second phase, struggled most with the third dimension of promoting a positive school learning climate and specifically in the subscale of maintaining high visibility. The majority of teachers and principals identified dimension 3 and many of its subscales as the instructional leadership activities in which principals faced the most challenges. With the exception of subscale 9 of promoting professional development, participants scored principals lowest overall in the remaining four subscales of this dimension. This was a finding of particular concern given the fact that most prior research found that this dimension, given the indirect influence of principal leadership, was more significant in terms of affecting classroom instruction and student achievement than dimension 2 of managing the instructional program, in which most principals rated higher on the PIMRS (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Smith & Andrews, 1989). Principals and

teachers agreed that secondary school principals struggled most in protecting instructional time, maintaining high visibility, and providing incentives for teaching and learning.

According to the PIMRS results, principals in the smaller schools rated lowest in protecting instructional time. The principals of JHS, RHS, and MHS scored surprisingly well on this subscale despite the large size of their respective schools. Perhaps the size of their organizations forced these principals to act more effectively in this instructional leadership function. When asked about the instructional leadership behaviors most influencing classroom instruction and student achievement, teachers of both schools in the second phase repeatedly discussed the protection of instructional time. The high schools in this study were busy places where a litany of extracurricular activities, announcements, and other disruptions competed for the attention of teachers and students. Even at PHS, where the principal worked diligently to minimize intercom disruptions and revise the school's attendance policy, teachers identified problems with interruptions from field trips and discipline problems. The protection of instructional time was revealed as a fundamental way principals both positively and negatively impacted the classroom.

Almost uniformly, participants rated the maintaining of high visibility as the least frequent area of instructional leadership for principals in this study. Aside from the item addressing attendance at extracurricular activities, many principals in the smallest to the largest schools routinely received scores of *rarely* and *sometimes* on the items constituting this subscale. As a few participants pointed out both on the PIMRS and in the interviews, the expectation of secondary school principals to cover classes and tutor students might be questionable and even unfair. Regardless, the most important aspects of the PIMRS results for this subscale were the instructional leadership activities of talking informally with students and teachers during free

time and frequently visiting students and teachers in their classrooms. These aspects of visibility challenged high school principals. The highest rated principal in this PIMRS subscale (the principal of PHS) participated in the second phase of this study, and interviews and observations revealed that he maintained a visible presence in the school. He was constantly moving about the building addressing problems and talking informally with teachers and students, but he still struggled with frequent, positive visits to many classrooms. Teachers considered visibility as a fundamental way in which the principal influenced the overall climate of the school.

The wall of separation between the principal and the individual teacher, classroom, and student seemed as strong and seemingly immutable as ever. Aside from classroom observations and visits directly connected to the formal teacher observation process, these secondary school principals only sometimes visited teachers and students in the classroom. This trend showed up in item scores for a few of the PIMRS subscales, not just the items of maintaining high visibility. Unless problems occurred, classroom teachers in these high schools were mostly left alone with little direct supervision from head principals and their assistants. Little prior research showed a strong connection between the principal's direct supervision of the classroom and student outcomes (Braughton & Riley, 1991; Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b). Principals at PHS and OHS iterated the importance of effective teaching on student achievement but infrequently engaged in instructional leadership activities associated with visiting, monitoring, and evaluating teachers and students in the classroom. Teacher participants characterized this as both a matter of professional trust and an unfortunate challenge inherent in the nature of being a principal of a high school. Most teachers, however, expressed a desire for principals to be more frequent positive presences in their classrooms.

High school principals, in acting as instructional leaders, often neglected students as an important stakeholder group. According to PIMRS results, principals were routinely rated by both themselves and teachers lowest on items addressing principal communication and interaction with students. Principals and teachers in all eight schools typically concurred with one another with regard to involving students. This showed up not only in the items of subscale 10 of providing incentives for learning but also in items of other subscales, such as communicating school goals, supervising/evaluating instruction, monitoring student progress, and maintaining high visibility. For example, the dip in subscale scores for most principals from framing school goals to communicating school goals was the result of low item scores on communicating goals to students and displaying goals prominently around the building. Principals engaged in some activities related to students (PHS—wall of recognition; THS—Positive Behavior Support), but few principals enacted any systematic, routine policies and programs for including students in the decision-making of the school or for recognizing student academic accomplishments.

Contextual Factors Influencing Instructional Leadership in Rural Secondary Schools

The second research question examined the influence of contextual factors on the instructional leadership of rural secondary schools. According to analyses using independent *t*-tests, contextual factors of school size, school SES, principal administrative experience level, and district influence affected the instructional leadership of secondary school principals in certain PIMRS subscales. Principal and teacher participants in the qualitative phase also identified contextual factors they perceived as influencing instructional leadership.

In an effort to control for district influence in examining school size and SES and instructional leadership, the researcher focused *t*-test analyses on schools in individual districts

(school size—District 3; school SES--District 2; principal administrative experience level—District 1). Analyses of principal instructional leadership based on school size yielded limited and rather mixed results with school size influencing two PIMRS subscales. With framing school goals, principals in the larger schools (MHS and HHS) were significantly more active in this subscale than the principal in the smaller school (LHS). The larger size of these schools seemed to have an inverse influence on principal activity in this subscale with these principals being perceived as more active than the principal in the smaller school. With monitoring student progress, the principal of the smallest school (LHS) was significantly more active in this subscale than the principal of the largest high school (MHS). LHS's high test scores supported the perceived activity of the principal in this area of instructional leadership.

Prior research established the influence SES can have on instructional leadership. Principals in lower SES schools often exercised more hands-on, directive style of instructional leadership proposed by the PIMRS (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Dickerson, 1999; Hallinger et al., 1996; Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985, 1986; Rowan & Denk, 1984; Scott & Teddlie, 1987). Descriptive analysis of the principals in Districts 1, 2, and 3 showed that the principals of the lower SES schools (RHS, THS, and MHS) were scored higher in most of the PIMRS subscales than their colleagues in more affluent schools. The *t*-test analysis of District 2 principals based on school SES revealed that the principal of the THS scored significantly higher on the subscales of coordinating curriculum, promoting professional development, and providing incentives for learning. As research suggested, teachers at THS perceived their principal as significantly more hands-on and involved in matters of curriculum than did the teachers at the more affluent and higher performing OHS. Professional development seemed to be more of a priority for this principal. Incentivizing and motivating students would

be of particular concern to the principal in the school with the lower school SES. The principal of THS instituted a student reward system to recognize student achievements in both conduct and academics, which helped explain the significantly higher score in subscale 10.

Research pointed to the influence of certain leader traits on the exercise of instructional leadership, such as gender, age, and prior teaching experience (Hallinger, 2005, 2008; Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). The researcher examined the influence of principal administrative experience on instructional leadership by comparing the PIMRS teacher mean scores of the principals in District 1. The new principal of RHS was rated higher than the veteran principal of JHS in nine of the 10 PIMRS subscales. The *t*-test analyses of the teacher scores showed a statistically significant difference between the levels of instructional leadership activity in four subscales—supervising/evaluating instruction, coordinating curriculum, maintaining visibility, and providing incentives for teaching. The researcher explained these findings for a two reasons. First, new leaders, whether in schools, business, or government, often enjoy strong positive support early in an administration. Secondly, RHS is also the lower SES school and is targeted under NCLB. The confounding influence of this contextual factor could better explain the significant difference in the principals' perceived instructional leadership.

District influence could be either a powerful asset or detriment to principals' effectiveness as instructional leaders (Glickman, 1989; Leithwood, 1984). Three schools were analyzed to examine the relationship of funding and district governance on teacher perceptions of instructional leadership, and these analyses revealed the most significant results. When compared based on PPE, the principals in the schools with the higher PPE (HHS and PHS) were rated significantly more active in nine of the 10 subscales than with the school from the district

with the lowest PPE (OHS). When the two higher PPE schools were analyzed from the basis of city/county governance, the results were much more muted. The principal from the county district (HHS) with the higher PPE rated significantly higher in the subscale of promoting professional development (arguably the PIMRS subscale in which district influence would be most strongly felt). The principal from the city district (PHS) rated as significantly more active in the subscales of providing incentives for teaching and learning.

The results seemed to suggest that PPE was the most influential contextual factor on teacher perceptions of principal effectiveness as instructional leader in these eight schools. With the exception of the new principal of RHS, if the principals in this study were ranked by PIMRS score from highest to lowest, the ranking would follow the per pupil expenditure for each district. As revealed in the qualitative phase, funding tied directly with a principal's ability to provide teachers with technology and resources, which was revealed as an important part of instructional leadership in secondary schools.

Principal and teacher participants at the two schools in the second phase also identified contextual factors of high schools they perceived hindered and facilitated instructional leadership. School size, student population, school facilities and technology, school organization and structure, and district involvement all were characterized as affecting the principal's ability to exercise the directive, hands-on type of instructional leadership outlined in the PIMRS model. Overall, many contextual aspects of rural high schools complicated the principals efforts to be the sole provider of instructional leadership within the school. Based on the results of the inferential analyses (see Chapter 5), the researcher focused on teacher and principal attitudes toward two contextual factors: (1) funding, technology, and resources and (2) district involvement. Interviews and observations at the schools revealed considerable differences in the

funding, resources, and technology available to principals and teachers. Specifically the lack of classrooms and technology for the teachers at OHS influenced their overall perception of their principal's instructional leadership. Active district involvement was viewed by participants in both schools in primarily positive terms, especially its role in supporting principals' hiring choices as well as providing resources and professional development opportunities to principals and teachers.

Principal Decisions and Behaviors Affecting Classroom Instruction and Achievement

The third research question helped establish the instructional leadership decisions and behaviors that participants perceived most affected teaching and learning on the classroom level. Not all of these behaviors are considered in the PIMRS model of instructional leadership nor measured by the PIMRS instrument. Without the second qualitative phase, some of these behaviors would have been missed. As instructional leaders, secondary school principals indirectly influence teaching and learning through the hiring, placing, supporting, developing, and protecting of teachers. Research established the principal's primary influence as mainly indirect (Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Heck, 1996a, 1996b, 1998; Robinson et al., 2008), and the findings of the second phase of this research study supported this assertion. Participants at both schools identified the classroom teacher as the most important and fundamental indirect path through which instructional leaders impacted student achievement. This should not be surprising since researchers argued that leadership was second only to classroom instruction in factors influencing achievement and outcomes (Leithwood et al., 2004).

Principals at OHS and PHS regarded few of their instructional leadership decisions as significant and influential in terms of student outcomes as the hiring of an effective teacher or, to the converse, the removal of an ineffective one. The principal of PHS argued that there was no

substitute for a good teacher. Neither principal perceived it as wise to allow a teacher of uncertain abilities to gain tenure. Teacher respondents recognized the weight of hiring/firing decisions and appreciated the principals' willingness to make difficult decisions for the betterment of the schools and their students. This was another area where district support aided the principal in affording the school leader the autonomy to make decisions on staffing. Despite the seemingly obvious influence the hiring of effective teachers would have on the instructional effectiveness of schools, the PIMRS model of instructional leadership model neither addresses nor measures this area of school leadership.

Principals viewed the scheduling of teachers and students as another way in which they influenced classroom instruction and student achievement. Participants repeatedly forwarded a theme of right teacher with the right class (or students). The principal and teachers of OHS focused on this aspect of principal leadership. The researcher observed a curriculum meeting in which the principal discussed the scheduling of algebra teachers and students for the upcoming school year as a fundamental way of meeting new math standards. A teacher at PHS likened his principal's scheduling of teachers to a game of chess in which the principal moves teachers into the most advantageous positions or classes. The principal's curricular and instructional power rested in scheduling. The strategic placement of teachers with the most appropriate students often followed discussions about the hiring of teachers when talking about the instructional leader's impact on student outcomes.

Once an effective teacher was hired and matched with the most appropriate students, it was the principal's job to support, develop, and protect the teacher. Interviews and observations with principals and teachers at OHS and PHS pointed to the centrality of the principal's instructional leadership role in supporting and providing resources to staff, an aspect of

instructional leadership established in the review of literature. While Smith and Andrews (1989) developed a model that incorporated resource provision, Hallinger's (2005) PIMRS does not explicitly address this instructional leadership function. The researcher, based on the data collected in the second phase, attributed a great deal of the differences in perceived instructional leadership activity of the two principals to disparities in funding, resources, and technology. If the influence of instructional leaders is largely indirect, then some accounting of their role as resource providers should be included in the PIMRS. Resource provision would most logically fit under dimension 3 of promoting a positive school learning climate. The inclusion of a new subscale or at least items under existing subscales (e.g., providing incentives for teachers) would strengthen the effectiveness of the PIMRS for use in high schools and in other school settings.

Instructional Leadership in Rural Secondary Schools

With the final research question, the researcher considered how instructional leadership in rural secondary schools was similar to and different from the PIMRS model. Other researchers asserted that contextual factors of high schools complicate principals' abilities to exercise the directive, hands-on model of instructional leadership measured by the PIMRS (Barth, 1990; Bossert et al., 1982; Cuban 1988; Hallinger, 2003, 2005; Lambert, 1998; Leithwood, 1994; Marshall, 1996). The job of high school principal is a complex, multi-faceted one in which at least three different leadership roles—district/community liaison, organizational manager, and problem solver—competed with the principal's time as instructional leader. These leadership roles developed from analyses of the qualitative interviews and through the observations of principals. Researchers addressed the importance of effective organizational management (Cuban, 1988) and problem solving (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Smith & Andrews, 1989) on the success of principals' leadership

efforts. These leadership roles were not considered as mutually exclusive (see Figure 17, p. 182). While principal and teacher participants articulated the primary role of principals in terms of instructional leadership, principals still found their days filled with responsibilities and issues connected to these other three roles.

Research examining instructional leadership in these high schools focused attention on the significant public role expected of head principals by both district and community constituencies. The principals of rural secondary schools are very public figures, just as the schools themselves are centers for the community. The principals of OHS and PHS experienced considerable pressure to meet the demands of outside forces, both inside and outside the school system. Whether through conferences, workshops, or telephone calls, district and community entities sought the time of principals. Teachers considered this role to be almost as important as that of instructional leader. The principal was characterized as a liaison or mediator between the school (and its teachers and students) and an indifferent, and many times adversarial, outside world. Teachers considered it the principal's role to advocate on behalf of the school and to protect teachers and students in the classroom from district and community pressures.

Despite these obstacles in terms of context and role, the high school principals in this study rated well on many of the subscales of the PIMRS, particularly in dimensions 1 and 2. Teachers perceived their principals engaged in instructional leadership activities and defined the principal's most important leadership role in terms of this model. Closer scrutiny of the PIMRS results and results from the qualitative phase, however, revealed differences in the instructional leadership exercised in these schools and the type called for in the PIMRS model.

According to the PIMRS results, even though the eight principals scored as frequently active in many of the PIMRS subscales, they were scored highest by teachers in the broad

instructional leadership functions of framing school goals, coordinating curriculum, and promoting professional development. The qualitative phase supported the importance of these behaviors and also established providing resources, which is not measured by the PIMRS, as another important instructional leadership activity. These results characterized the principals in these schools as most involved in broad, indirect instructional leadership functions. Principals and teachers both perceived factors associated with the size, complexity, and structure of secondary schools as impeding highly directive, hands-on instructional leadership. Participants considered the expectation that the principal be the sole provider of instructional leadership as impractical and unwise.

High school principals in effectively ensuring the fulfillment of instructional leadership responsibilities in their schools must share responsibilities and also consider ways of innovating and changing the organization and structure of high schools. The results of the both phases revealed challenges to secondary school principals' abilities in being the sole providers of instructional leadership in their schools. While principals could provide a general sense of direction and broadly manage the instructional program, they struggled in fulfilling many aspects of this highly directive leadership model. Prior research and the findings of this study reinforced the necessity of instructional leaders to share responsibilities with others in their schools (Barth, 2002; Day et al., 2001; Jackson, 2000; Lambert, 2002; Marks & Printy, 2003; Southworth, 2002). The secondary schools in this study are simply too large and complex for any one person to provide all the instructional leadership.

The principals of OHS and PHS exhibited a clear willingness to delegate instructional leadership responsibilities and other leadership responsibilities to assistant principals, lead teachers, guidance counselors, and others in their buildings. Teachers also recognized the need

for this delegation and perceived it as unreasonable to place the sole instructional leadership burden on the shoulders of the principal, especially considering the departmentalized, content-driven structure of high schools. In the case of the principal of OHS, he shared many instructional leadership responsibilities, particularly in the dimension of managing the instructional program, with an assistant principal who, as a former math teacher, was quite comfortable and able in analyzing and using outcome data. The principal of PHS depended on the help of his advisory council, department heads, and guidance counselors in successfully managing the school's instructional program.

The incorporation of shared instructional leadership was another area in which the PIMRS could possibly be modified or adapted for use in secondary schools. Aside from a single item under the subscale of coordinating curriculum, few items on the PIMRS addressed effective delegation on the part of instructional leaders. While the primary instructional leadership responsibility still rests with the head principal, some attention should be given to principals who successfully use delegation as a way to ensure the fulfillment of necessary instructional leadership responsibilities in their schools.

Not only did principals share instructional leadership responsibilities with others, they also sought to break up the school organization into smaller parts in order to circumvent structural and organizational challenges to instructional leadership. These behaviors and decisions often worked hand-in-hand with one another. Activities as basic as assigning assistant principals to grade level responsibilities helped create schools within schools. This enabled teachers and students who might rarely interact with the head principal in an organization as large as these high schools to identify with a specific member of the administration. The principal of OHS established a freshmen academy administrated by an assistant principal that

followed a teaming approach to teaching. Many teachers outside the ninth grade envied this approach and viewed it as potentially beneficial if adopted throughout the other grades. The principal of PHS began a ninth grade initiative, while not as dramatic of a change, still represented a nascent step in changing the rigid high school structure. Additionally, the Career and Technical Education (CTE) program, which was administered by one of the assistant principals and garnered considerable grant money for the school, was regarded by teachers as a successful organization within the larger school.

Contributions to Research on the Instructional Leadership Model

In answering the four research questions, a great deal has been said about the exercise of instructional leadership within the contexts of these eight rural secondary schools. The findings of the quantitative phase mainly supported prior research using the PIMRS, conducted in schools in a variety of contexts. The qualitative phase, however, provided insights not measured by the PIMRS. As a way of drawing this discussion of the answers to the study's research questions to a close, three contributions of the qualitative phase to the instructional leadership model are further highlighted, specifically the importance of staffing to instructional leaders, the need for instructional leaders to share leadership responsibilities, and the pressures/demands placed on instructional leaders by district and community forces.

The findings of this study, particularly the qualitative phase, emphasized the importance of the hiring, placement, and support of effective teachers to successful instructional leadership. Hallinger's (2005) model of instructional leadership and its associated survey instrument, the PIMRS, largely neglects these instructional leadership behaviors. The influence of instructional leaders on the secondary level is indirect, and the participants in this study identified the primary indirect path of this influence as through the classroom teacher. One of the most influential and,

at times, difficult decisions an instructional leadership makes, in terms of affecting student achievement, is in the hiring of an effective teacher and/or the removal of an ineffective one. After a teacher is hired, then the instructional leader's primary responsibilities are to strategically place this teacher with the right group of students and then support the teacher with resources and technology. More so than any other implication of this study, the researcher would argue for instructional leadership models, such as the PIMRS, to focus on the centrality of the principal's role in hiring, placing, and supporting of effective teachers. The importance of staffing should be a focus for programs aimed at developing and training instructional leaders.

The suggestion that instructional leaders share leadership responsibilities with others in the school organization is neither a new nor novel idea, and yet research and policy still places considerable responsibility and accountability on the principal to be the sole instructional leader in schools. The quantitative phase of this study found that principals were most involved in the broad, indirect PIMRS subscales of framing school goals, coordinating curriculum, and promoting professional development. The results of the qualitative phase depicted two high school principals who frequently shared instructional leadership, and teachers who were willing and capable of helping their principals ensure instructional leadership responsibilities were fulfilled. The rural secondary schools in this study were too large and complex for the principal to be the only provider of instructional leadership. The findings of this study hopefully add strength to the argument that instructional leaders, at least in rural secondary schools, must share leadership with assistants, teachers, and other stakeholders. The theory and practice of instructional leadership in secondary schools should emphasize the principal as a facilitator of instructional leadership and not its sole provider.

In Chapter 6, the principal's role as district/community liaison was discussed as a discrete leadership role of secondary school principals, connected to the principal's instructional leadership but still as a role unto itself. Teachers at the two schools studied in the second phase considered their principals as not only instructional leaders but also as *instructional protectors*, especially in their expectations of the principals' relationships with the district and community. Just as it is the instructional leader's responsibility to protect the instructional time of teachers from announcements, field trips, discipline problems, extracurricular activities, and other interruptions, teachers expected principals to protect them from distractions from the district and community. There is a public dimension to the principal's role as instructional leader. The implications of this could be as concrete as revising the items of the PIMRS subscale of protecting instructional time to include behaviors related to dealing with the public. Instructional leadership models should take into account the principal's role in protecting the instructional integrity and academic focus of the school from outside disruptions.

The Influence of the Rural Context

Although choosing from the outset of this study to focus on secondary schools within rural communities, the researcher found it difficult to clearly attribute influence of the rural context on the instructional leadership in these schools. The need for instructional leaders to share responsibilities and innovate the organization tied neatly to factors inherent in secondary schools in most contexts. At times during the second phase, the researcher detected glimpses of possible influence, particularly in regard to the public role of principals and issues of funding. High schools in many contexts, however, are centers of their communities, and district/community responsibilities vie for the attention of rural, urban, and suburban principals. Further, even though each of these schools was funded below the state average, this is not a

problem unique to these schools in rural communities but is also one faced by urban schools and their principals.

This failure possibly resulted for a few reasons. First, factors associated with the structure of typical high schools could have overshadowed or masked influences that could have been attributed to the rural context. Second, the design and implementation of the second qualitative phase might have simply fell short of effectively detecting possible influences of the rural context. Third, challenges facing schools in rural communities, such as poverty, funding, and resources, are many of the same challenges facing schools in urban districts. Regardless of the reasons for this failing, there was still value in conducting instructional leadership research within this context. The only way to determine the influence (or seeming lack thereof) of contextual factors on instructional leadership is to conduct research in a variety of school contexts.

Avenues for Future Instructional Leadership Research

This study began as an effort to fill gaps in the existent research of instructional leadership. These gaps revealed in the review of literature informed decisions regarding this study's purpose, research questions, theoretical framework, and methodology. Just as previous research guided the scope and nature of this study, so does this dissertation point to future avenues of research on the instructional leadership of rural secondary school principals.

First, this study hopefully established the viability and effectiveness of a mixed methods research approach to the study of instructional leadership in secondary schools. An explanatory, mixed methods case study approach was an effective and fruitful way of examining instructional leadership in specific school contexts because it not only strengthened findings through the use of complimentary data collection methods but also enabled the researcher to examine the ways in

which instructional leadership played out in the specific school settings. As mentioned in Chapter 3, researchers advocated this design as a potentially revealing approach to the examination of principal leadership in context (Hallinger & Heck 1996b; Teddlie, 2005). Complimentary data collection methods (see Table 4, p. 88; Table 21, p. 184; and Table 22, p. 185) enhanced the overall strength of the findings. With regards to the use of qualitative data sources, interviews and observations afforded the researcher the opportunity to more fully explore the relationships and mechanisms of instructional leadership.

Instructional leadership is a complicated phenomenon, requiring a multi-faceted research approach. The PIMRS was an effective measure of the presence of instructional leadership but was insufficient by itself in adequately looking at the interplay between instructional leader and the secondary school context. Quantitative methods (e.g., the PIMRS) helped establish relationships between leadership and certain contextual variables of high schools, such as school SES and school size, but qualitative methods (e.g., interviews and observations) enabled the researcher to study the thinking behind the exercise of this leadership model. Important themes and findings were developed from the qualitative data sources that would not have been discovered through the utilization of solely quantitative data sources. For example, without the second phase, the importance of the hiring and scheduling of teachers as well as the provision of resources, which the PIMRS does not consider, would have been missed. Research using a mixed methods approach, specifically an explanatory approach, to examine instructional leadership within specific school contexts would continue to add to our collective understanding of this phenomenon.

Second, the findings of both phases of this research study indicate specific aspects of instructional leadership in rural secondary schools for more focused examination, especially in

looking at the subscales and functions in the PIMRS dimension of promoting a positive school learning climate. The surprising uniformity in the teacher results to the PIMRS (see Figure 7, p. 104), which were later supported by the interviews and observations, led the researcher to consider the benefit of more directed research exploring specific instructional leadership subscales. One possibility within the context of the schools in this study would be the subscale of protecting instructional time. The principals of the District 2 schools—Julius High School and Richard High School—rated particularly well in the protection of instructional time despite leading two of the largest high schools in the sample. Given the importance teachers in the second phase placed on this instructional leadership subscale, research examining the ways in which principals effectively minimize instructional interruptions would enhance the study and practice of instructional leadership in secondary schools.

Third, this study pointed to the need for a research effort to adapt the PIMRS for use in high schools. This was a suggestion forwarded by the creator of the PIMRS (Hallinger, 2005; 2008). The findings of both phases of this study supported the use of the teacher version of the PIMRS as a relatively effective and valid instrument for the measurement of principal instructional leadership activities and behaviors within schools. Teacher perceptions in the eight schools, in terms of which subscales principals were most and least active, clustered in a remarkably similar fashion (see Figure 7, p. 103). Qualitative results from both interviews and observations with principal and teacher participants in the schools featured in phase 2 (see Table 21, p. 184 and Table 22, p. 185) reinforced the initial pictures of principal instructional leadership established by the administration and analyses of the PIMRS.

This, however, is not to say that the research of instructional leadership in secondary schools might not benefit from an effort to revise or develop the PIMRS, which is still very much

an instrument rooted in elementary and middle school research, to better, more effectively address the contextual and leadership circumstances of high schools. While the PIMRS is a valid and much used instructional leadership instrument, it does not wholly translate to the secondary school context, where the larger size, structure, and complexity preclude the highly directive form of instructional leadership forwarded by this model. Some individual items on the PIMRS, such as those expecting the principal to cover classes or provide direct instruction to students, could be construed as impractical and even unfair in effectively measuring the instructional leadership of secondary school principals.

Although the adaption of the PIMRS for use in high schools was not a purpose of this research, this study, particularly the qualitative phase, identified at least two areas in which the PIMRS might be better adapted for use in high schools: (1) the significance of resource provision, and (2) the necessity to share/delegate instructional leadership responsibilities to others. If the principal's influence as an instructional leader is indirect, then both of these behaviors should be considered as fundamental to effective leadership, especially in large, complex high schools.

Both prior research and the findings of this study addressed the importance of resource provision to instructional leadership and the overall perception of instructional leadership effectiveness. The researcher concluded that much of the difference in perceptions of instructional leadership of the principals of PHS and OHS was associated with disparities in funding and resources. As suggested earlier, resource provision could be incorporated in dimension 3 of promoting a positive school learning climate, perhaps in a revision of subscale 8 *providing incentives for teaching*. A subscale for providing support for teachers, both in terms of resources and recognition, would strengthen the PIMRS model.

With regard to the sharing and delegating of instructional leadership responsibilities, the researcher argues for the inclusion of this leadership behavior in dimension 2 of managing the instructional program. Only one item under subscale 3 of coordinating curriculum implies the need to share leadership. Principals exercise little direct influence over classroom instruction, and secondary school principals many times lack the content specific knowledge to exercise many of the instructional behaviors under this dimension, particularly in supervising/evaluating instruction and monitoring student progress. Principals influence the instructional program primarily through teachers. For these reasons this is the PIMRS dimension in which secondary school principals would most need to share responsibilities.

Practical Advice for Secondary School Principals

An underlying purpose to this study beyond adding to the research on instructional leadership was to inform the practice of this model in rural secondary schools. Examining the implications of this study's findings revealed fundamental ways in which principals in the field can successfully improve their effectiveness as instructional leaders. For the most part, these suggestions reflect the areas of instructional leadership that (a) this study identified as the most important and/or problematic, and (b) the researcher considered the simplest for the building level principal to implement. While these suggestions could perhaps be gleaned from the previous discussions, the researcher opted to provide a list of the most salient recommendations for high school principals leading in contexts similar to the schools featured in this study:

- **Focus on teachers**. Instructional leaders influence student outcomes through classroom instruction so the focus of instructional leaders should be on the classroom teacher. This study established the importance of hiring, placing, and supporting of effective teachers as central to the instructional leadership of principals and overall school success. Most

importantly, principals must take the responsibility of hiring good teachers (and firing ineffective teachers) with special concern and demonstrate the courage to make tough decisions regarding staffing.

- **Be visible**. High schools are often large and complex organizations where any number of responsibilities and concerns vie for the principal's attention and seemingly conspire to keep the principal in the office. Principals must endeavor to be visible throughout the school, frequently visiting classrooms. A barrier exists between the office and classroom in many high schools, where the departmentalized structure can isolate principals and teachers. Additionally, the formal evaluation process is time-consuming and prohibitive to the type of brief, walkthrough observation advocated here. Positive visibility of the principal in the school is essential to the climate of a school and the overall instructional leadership of the principal.
- **Minimize disruptions**. In talking with teachers, it would be no hyperbole to suggest that principals immediately remove the intercom system from their high schools. As discussed earlier, high schools are busy places where any number of disruptions can occur throughout a typical day. Arguably, frequent interruptions concerned the classroom teacher more than any other failure in instructional leadership. Teachers' perceptions of their principal's role as district/community liaison were framed in terms of protecting the instructional integrity of the classroom and sheltering classroom teachers from outside disruptions and distractions. High school principals should carefully examine how they handle announcements, field trips, truancy, discipline problems, and other potential disruptions to classroom instruction.

- **Share/delegate leadership**. Despite the overwhelming pressure and responsibility placed on principals to ensure school and student success, high school principals must be willing to share leadership responsibilities with others, even instructional leadership responsibilities. The job and expectations of the high school principal are often time too great for any one leader to meet. Sharing leadership with others not only eases the burden for principals but also involves teachers and other school stakeholders in the direction and management of the school. High school principals must be strategic in delegating responsibilities. Surrounding oneself with assistants, teachers, counselors, office staff, and others that one can depend upon and trust is fundamental to a high school principal's success as an instructional leader.
- **Motivate students**. Instructional leaders must not only focus on teachers but should focus on students as well. The quantitative phase of this study identified how principals were perceived as neglecting students as an important stakeholder group with a vested interest in the school organization. The adoption of a formal program for recognizing/rewarding student achievement and behavior could be beneficial to high schools, especially in motivating struggling, nontraditional learners.

Conclusion

Instructional leadership, as a model of principal leadership, has enjoyed considerable longevity within the field of educational research. In fact, with the renewed emphasis on accountability and standards in the advent of NCLB, Race to the Top, and the American Diploma Project, the pressure for secondary school principals to act as instructional leaders will most likely only increase. This pressure motivated researchers and practitioners to attempt to reconcile traditionally directive modes of instructional leadership in various school contexts,

such as secondary schools (Hallinger, 2003, 2005; Leithwood et al. 2004; Marks & Printy, 2003). If instructional leadership to be the primary leadership model for schools, then continued research is needed in examining instructional leadership within specific school contexts. This explanatory, mixed methods case study sought to satisfy this need by utilizing sequential quantitative and qualitative phases to examine instructional leadership within the context of rural secondary schools. Ideally, the findings of this study have not only reinforced the conclusions of what that has come before but also added new insights to research on instructional leadership.

The job of instructional leader is the foremost responsibility of rural secondary school principals, and the principals who participated in this study were perceived as frequently fulfilling many of the functions outlined in the PIMRS model of instructional leadership, particularly in defining the school's mission and managing the instructional program. The instructional leadership influence of these principals, however, was largely indirect and primarily realized through classroom teachers. According to the findings of this study, the most important and influential instructional leadership activities of rural high school principals involved the selection, placement, support, protection, and development of effective classroom teachers. Many of the behaviors associated with promoting a positive school learning climate were found to be the most important to teachers and, unfortunately, the least frequently met by principals. Principals cannot forget that it is in the classroom where teaching and learning occurs and must expend every effort to promote teaching and learning in the classroom.

Despite daunting contextual factors of many rural secondary schools, such as school size, organizational structure, and inadequate funding, principals are still ensuring that instructional leadership responsibilities are met, but they are not alone in doing so. High school principals cannot carry the burden of instructional leadership burden by themselves. Principals must share

instructional leadership responsibilities with others in the school. This fact was revealed in the analysis of the PIMRS results from the schools and further reinforced in the qualitative phase. Effective instructional leaders delegate an array of responsibilities and roles to assistants, guidance counselors, lead teachers, and others. Viewing the principal as a facilitator of instructional leadership and not its sole provider is the best way to effectively translate this model to the secondary school context.

This study was conducted from the sincere belief that effective principal leadership matters in ensuring the success of schools, and that research efforts aimed at improving the theory and practice of principal leadership will ultimately improve the field of education for practitioners and students. When this study began two years ago, the state department of education for the districts and schools featured in this study implemented an educational leadership redesign of the standards used by all institutions in the state that provide leadership development, training, and licensure. The group that led this design was called the Instructional Leadership Commission, and they unveiled their Instructional Leadership Standards in January of 2008. The report stated:

> All schools need effective instructional leaders who are well prepared and capable of leading the changes in curriculum and instruction that will result in higher levels of learning for all students. Effective instructional leaders create a school culture of high expectations conducive to the success of all students. Effective instructional leaders ensure that school programs, procedures, and practices focus on the learning and achievement of all students. (Tennessee Board of Education, 2008)

Thirty years after its initial introduction in educational research, the instructional leadership model is still prominent, and this model is still influencing how principals at all levels are

developed and trained on local, state, national, and international levels. There is no question as to the longevity, importance, and influence of instructional leadership. The purpose of this study was to inform into the theory and practice of instructional leadership in rural secondary schools in order to assist principals in developing and acting as instructional leaders.

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Appendices

Appendix A PIMRS (Teacher Version)

PRINCIPAL INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT RATING SCALE
TEACHER FORM

Published by: Dr. Philip Hallinger
philip@leadingware.com

All rights are reserved. This instrument may not be reproduced in whole or in part without the written permission of the publisher.

Note: Thank you for participating in my research study. I know that your time is valuable. The following survey should take approximately 5 to 10 minutes to complete. When completed, please place the survey in the box/envelope provided in the office. If you are willing to participate in an interview, please sign the form at the end of the survey, detach the section from the survey, and place it in the separate box/envelope provided.

PART I: Please provide the following information about yourself:
(A) School Name: _____
(B) Years, at the end of this school year, that you have worked with the current principal:
1 5-9 more than 15
2-4 10-15
(C) Years experience as a teacher at the end of this school year:
1 5-9 more than 15
2-4 10-15

PART II: This questionnaire is designed to provide a profile of principal leadership. It consists of 50 behavioral statements that describe principal job practices and behaviors. You are asked to consider each question in terms of your observations of the principal's leadership over the past school year. Read each statement carefully. Then circle the number that best fits the specific job behavior or practice of this principal during the past school year. For the response to each statement:
5 = *Almost Always*; 4 = *Frequently*; 3 = *Sometimes*; 2 = *Seldom*; 1 = *Almost Never*
In some cases, these responses may seem awkward; use your judgment in selecting the most appropriate response to such questions. Please circle only one number per question. Try to answer every question. Thank you.

To what extent does your principal . . . ?

	ALMOST NEVER				ALMOST ALWAYS
I. FRAME THE SCHOOL GOALS					
1. Develop a focused set of annual school-wide goals	1	2	3	4	5
2. Frame the school's goals in terms of staff responsibilities for meeting them	1	2	3	4	5
3. Use needs assessment or other formal and informal methods to secure staff input on goal development	1	2	3	4	5
4. Use data on student performance to develop the school's academic goals	1	2	3	4	5
5. Develop goals that are easily understood and used by teachers in the school	1	2	3	4	5

	ALMOST NEVER				ALMOST ALWAYS
II. COMMUNICATE THE SCHOOL GOALS					
6. Communicate the school's mission effectively to members of the school community	1	2	3	4	5
7. Discuss the school's academic goals with teachers at faculty meetings	1	2	3	4	5
8. Refer to the school's academic goals when making curricular decisions with teachers	1	2	3	4	5
9. Ensure that the school's academic goals are reflected in highly visible displays in the school (e.g., posters or bulletin boards emphasizing academic progress)	1	2	3	4	5
10. Refer to the school's goals or mission in forums with students (e.g., in assemblies or discussions)	1	2	3	4	5
III. SUPERVISE & EVALUATE INSTRUCTION					
11. Ensure that the classroom priorities of teachers are consistent with the goals and direction of the school	1	2	3	4	5
12. Review student work products when evaluating classroom instruction	1	2	3	4	5
13. Conduct informal observations in classrooms on a regular basis (informal observations are unscheduled, last at least 5 minutes, and may or may not involve written feedback or a formal conference)	1	2	3	4	5
14. Point out specific strengths in teacher's instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)	1	2	3	4	5
15. Point out specific weaknesses in teacher instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)	1	2	3	4	5
IV. COORDINATE THE CURRICULUM					
16. Make clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels (e.g., the principal, vice principal, or teacher-leaders)	1	2	3	4	5
17. Draw upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions	1	2	3	4	5
18. Monitor the classroom curriculum to see that it covers the school's curricular objectives	1	2	3	4	5
19. Assess the overlap between the school's curricular objectives and the school's achievement tests	1	2	3	4	5
20. Participate actively in the review of curricular materials	1	2	3	4	5

	ALMOST NEVER				ALMOST ALWAYS
V. MONITOR STUDENT PROGRESS					
21. Meet individually with teachers to discuss student progress	1	2	3	4	5
22. Discuss academic performance results with the faculty to identify curricular strengths and weaknesses	1	2	3	4	5
23. Use tests and other performance measure to assess progress toward school goals	1	2	3	4	5
24. Inform teachers of the school's performance results in written form (e.g., in a memo or newsletter)	1	2	3	4	5
25. Inform students of school's academic progress	1	2	3	4	5
VI. PROTECT INSTRUCTIONAL TIME					
26. Limit interruptions of instructional time by public address announcements	1	2	3	4	5
27. Ensure that students are not called to the office during instructional time	1	2	3	4	5
28. Ensure that tardy and truant students suffer specific consequences for missing instructional time	1	2	3	4	5
29. Encourage teachers to use instructional time for teaching and practicing new skills and concepts	1	2	3	4	5
30. Limit the intrusion of extra- and co-curricular activities on instructional time	1	2	3	4	5
VII. MAINTAIN HIGH VISIBILITY					
31. Take time to talk informally with students and teachers during recess and breaks	1	2	3	4	5
32. Visit classrooms to discuss school issues with teachers and students	1	2	3	4	5
33. Attend/participate in extra- and co-curricular activities	1	2	3	4	5
34. Cover classes for teachers until a late or substitute teacher arrives	1	2	3	4	5
35. Tutor students or provide direct instruction to classes	1	2	3	4	5
VIII. PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR TEACHERS					
36. Reinforce superior performance by teachers in staff meetings, newsletters, and/or memos	1	2	3	4	5
37. Compliment teachers privately for their efforts or performance	1	2	3	4	5
38. Acknowledge teachers' exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files	1	2	3	4	5
39. Reward special efforts by teachers with opportunities for professional recognition	1	2	3	4	5

	ALMOST NEVER				ALMOST ALWAYS
40. Create professional growth opportunities for teachers as a reward for special contributions to the school	1	2	3	4	5
IX. PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT					
41. Ensure that inservice activities attended by staff are consistent with the school's goals	1	2	3	4	5
42. Actively support the use in the classroom of skills acquired during inservice training	1	2	3	4	5
43. Obtain the participation of the whole staff in important inservice activities	1	2	3	4	5
44. Lead or attend teacher inservice activities concerned with instruction	1	2	3	4	5
45. Set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas or information from inservice activities	1	2	3	4	5
X. PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR LEARNING					
46. Recognize students who do superior work with formal rewards such as an honor roll or mention in the principal's newsletter	1	2	3	4	5
47. Use assemblies to honor students for academic accomplishments or for behavior or citizenship	1	2	3	4	5
48. Recognize superior student achievement or improvement by seeing in the office the students with their work	1	2	3	4	5
49. Contact parents to communicate improved or exemplary student performance or contributions	1	2	3	4	5
50. Support teachers actively in their recognition and/or reward of student contributions to and accomplishments in class	1	2	3	4	5

NOTE: The second phase of this research project involves interviewing teachers. If you would be willing to participate in a 30 to 45 minute interview on the instructional leadership of principals, please write your name and contact information below, detach this section from the survey, and place it in the separate box/envelope provided. Thank you again for your time and assistance.

_____	_____
TEACHER NAME	PHONE NUMBER/EMAIL

Appendix B PIMRS (Principal Version)

PRINCIPAL INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT RATING SCALE
TEACHER FORM

Published by: Dr. Philip Hallinger
philip@leadingware.com

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Note: Thank you for participating in my research study. I know that your time is valuable. The following survey should take approximately 5 to 10 minutes to complete. When completed, please place the survey in the box/envelope provided in the office. If you are willing to participate in an interview, please sign the form at the end of the survey, detach the section from the survey, and place it in the separate box/envelope provided.

PART I: Please provide the following information about yourself:
(A) School Name: _____
(B) Years, at the end of this school year, that you have worked as the current principal:
1 5-9 more than 15
2-4 10-15
(C) Years experience as an educator at the end of this school year:
1 5-9 more than 15
2-4 10-15

PART II: This questionnaire is designed to provide a profile of principal leadership. It consists of 50 behavioral statements that describe principal job practices and behaviors. You are asked to consider each question in terms of your observations of the principal's leadership over the past school year. Read each statement carefully. Then circle the number that best fits the specific job behavior or practice of this principal during the past school year. For the response to each statement:
5 = *Almost Always*; 4 = *Frequently*; 3 = *Sometimes*; 2 = *Seldom*; 1 = *Almost Never*
In some cases, these responses may seem awkward; use your judgment in selecting the most appropriate response to such questions. Please circle only one number per question. Try to answer every question. Thank you.

To what extent do you . . . ?

	ALMOST NEVER				ALMOST ALWAYS
I. FRAME THE SCHOOL GOALS					
1. Develop a focused set of annual school-wide goals	1	2	3	4	5
2. Frame the school's goals in terms of staff responsibilities for meeting them	1	2	3	4	5
3. Use needs assessment or other formal and informal methods to secure staff input on goal development	1	2	3	4	5
4. Use data on student performance to develop the school's academic goals	1	2	3	4	5
5. Develop goals that are easily understood and used by teachers in the school	1	2	3	4	5

	ALMOST NEVER				ALMOST ALWAYS
II. COMMUNICATE THE SCHOOL GOALS					
6. Communicate the school's mission effectively to members of the school community	1	2	3	4	5
7. Discuss the school's academic goals with teachers at faculty meetings	1	2	3	4	5
8. Refer to the school's academic goals when making curricular decisions with teachers	1	2	3	4	5
9. Ensure that the school's academic goals are reflected in highly visible displays in the school (e.g., posters or bulletin boards emphasizing academic progress)	1	2	3	4	5
10. Refer to the school's goals or mission in forums with students (e.g., in assemblies or discussions)	1	2	3	4	5
III. SUPERVISE & EVALUATE INSTRUCTION					
11. Ensure that the classroom priorities of teachers are consistent with the goals and direction of the school	1	2	3	4	5
12. Review student work products when evaluating classroom instruction	1	2	3	4	5
13. Conduct informal observations in classrooms on a regular basis (informal observations are unscheduled, last at least 5 minutes, and may or may not involve written feedback or a formal conference)	1	2	3	4	5
14. Point out specific strengths in teacher's instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)	1	2	3	4	5
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IV. COORDINATE THE CURRICULUM					
16. Make clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels (e.g., the principal, vice principal, or teacher-leaders)	1	2	3	4	5
17. Draw upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions	1	2	3	4	5
18. Monitor the classroom curriculum to see that it covers the school's curricular objectives	1	2	3	4	5
19. Assess the overlap between the school's curricular objectives and the school's achievement tests	1	2	3	4	5
20. Participate actively in the review of curricular materials	1	2	3	4	5

	ALMOST NEVER				ALMOST ALWAYS
V. MONITOR STUDENT PROGRESS					
21. Meet individually with teachers to discuss student progress	1	2	3	4	5
22. Discuss academic performance results with the faculty to identify curricular strengths and weaknesses	1	2	3	4	5
23. Use tests and other performance measure to assess progress toward school goals	1	2	3	4	5
24. Inform teachers of the school's performance results in written form (e.g., in a memo or newsletter)	1	2	3	4	5
25. Inform students of school's academic progress	1	2	3	4	5
VI. PROTECT INSTRUCTIONAL TIME					
26. Limit interruptions of instructional time by public address announcements	1	2	3	4	5
27. Ensure that students are not called to the office during instructional time	1	2	3	4	5
28. Ensure that tardy and truant students suffer specific consequences for missing instructional time	1	2	3	4	5
29. Encourage teachers to use instructional time for teaching and practicing new skills and concepts	1	2	3	4	5
30. Limit the intrusion of extra- and co-curricular activities on instructional time	1	2	3	4	5
VII. MAINTAIN HIGH VISIBILITY					
31. Take time to talk informally with students and teachers during recess and breaks	1	2	3	4	5
32. Visit classrooms to discuss school issues with teachers and students	1	2	3	4	5
33. Attend/participate in extra- and co-curricular activities	1	2	3	4	5
34. Cover classes for teachers until a late or substitute teacher arrives	1	2	3	4	5
35. Tutor students or provide direct instruction to classes	1	2	3	4	5
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36. Reinforce superior performance by teachers in staff meetings, newsletters, and/or memos	1	2	3	4	5
37. Compliment teachers privately for their efforts or performance	1	2	3	4	5
38. Acknowledge teachers' exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files	1	2	3	4	5
39. Reward special efforts by teachers with opportunities for professional recognition	1	2	3	4	5

	ALMOST NEVER				ALMOST ALWAYS
40. Create professional growth opportunities for teachers as a reward for special contributions to the school	1	2	3	4	5
IX. PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT					
41. Ensure that inservice activities attended by staff are consistent with the school's goals	1	2	3	4	5
42. Actively support the use in the classroom of skills acquired during inservice training	1	2	3	4	5
43. Obtain the participation of the whole staff in important inservice activities	1	2	3	4	5
44. Lead or attend teacher inservice activities concerned with instruction	1	2	3	4	5
45. Set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas or information from inservice activities	1	2	3	4	5
X. PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR LEARNING					
46. Recognize students who do superior work with formal rewards such as an honor roll or mention in the principal's newsletter	1	2	3	4	5
47. Use assemblies to honor students for academic accomplishments or for behavior or citizenship	1	2	3	4	5
48. Recognize superior student achievement or improvement by seeing in the office the students with their work	1	2	3	4	5
49. Contact parents to communicate improved or exemplary student performance or contributions	1	2	3	4	5
50. Support teachers actively in their recognition and/or reward of student contributions to and accomplishments in class	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix C Email Permission to Use PIMRS

Question about receipt of payment for PIMRS

Inbox x

Reply

show details 11/5/08

bclabo1@gmail.com

to Philip

Dr. Hallinger:

I wanted to see if you had received my check for the use of the PIMRS. Thanks.

Sincerely,

Ben Clabo

Reply Forward

Reply

show details 11/5/08

Dr. Philip Hallinger

to me

Received, thanks.

PJH

- Show quoted text -

Dr. Philip Hallinger

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Mobile HK: +852 6129 4624
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Appendix D Principal Interview Protocol

(RQ1, RQ4)
1. Describe a typical day as principal of this school.

2. What do you spend most of your day doing?

3. What are the primary responsibilities of a high school principal?

4. How familiar are you with the idea/model of instructional leadership, and how would you define instructional leadership? **Or** What does it mean when policymakers say principals should act as instructional leaders?

(RQ1, RQ2, RQ4)
5a. What organizational factors of this high school (or high schools in general) promote effective instructional leadership and student achievement? (building design, scheduling-students and teachers, etc.)
5b. What organizational factors hinder effective instructional leadership and student achievement in high schools?

6a. How do district entities/authorities support the instructional leadership of high school principals?
6b. How can they impede/impair the principals instructional leadership?

7. What obstacles/challenges (at all levels: school, district, state, etc.) do you face in effectively leading this school?

(RQ1, RQ3, RQ4)
8. What personal traits/characteristics enable an individual to be an effective principal/instructional leader?

9. What decisions and actions on your part most affect student achievement?
10. What are the principal's responsibilities with regard to:
    a) curriculum
    b) classroom instruction, and
    c) student assessment?

(RQ4)
11. How is principal/instructional leadership different on the secondary level than at the elementary, primary, and/or middle levels?

12. Do you delegate or share instructional leadership responsibilities with others in the school? If so, what responsibilities do you share and why?

Appendix E Teacher Interview Protocol

(RQ1, RQ4)
1. Describe a typical day as a teacher in this school.

2. What are the primary responsibilities of a high school principal?

3. What does your principal spend most of his day doing?

4. How familiar are you with the idea/model of instructional leadership, and how would you define instructional leadership? **Or** What does it mean when policymakers say principals should act as instructional leaders?

(RQ1, RQ2, RQ4)
5a. What organizational factors of this high school (or high schools in general) promote effective instructional leadership and student achievement? (building design, scheduling-students and teachers, etc.)
5b. What organizational factors hinder effective instructional leadership and student achievement in high schools?

6a. How do district entities/authorities support the instructional leadership of high school principals?
6b. How can they impede/impair the principals instructional leadership?

7. What obstacles/challenges (at all levels: school, district, state, etc.) does your principal and fellow teachers face in effectively leading this school?

(RQ1, RQ3, RQ4)
8. What personal traits/characteristics enable an individual to be an effective principal/instructional leader?

9. What decisions and actions on your part most affect student achievement?

10. What are the principal's responsibilities with regard to:
    a) curriculum
    b) classroom instruction, and
    c) student assessment?

(RQ4)
11. How is principal/instructional leadership different on the secondary level than at the elementary, primary, and/or middle levels?

12. Does your principal delegate or share instructional leadership responsibilities with others in the school? If so, what responsibilities does he share and why?

Appendix F Principal Activity Log

PRINCIPAL ACTIVITY LOG

DIRECTIONS: In the space provided, briefly log your administrative/leadership activities for the day. Please be as specific as possible.

	ACTIVITY/ACTIVITIES		ACTIVITY/ACTIVITIES
7:30		12:00	
8:00		12:30	
8:30		1:00	
9:00		1:30	
9:30		2:00	
10:00		2:30	
10:30		3:00	
11:00		3:30	
11:30		4:00	

Vita

Benjamin Tyler Clabo was born in Knoxville, TN, the eldest son of Curtis and Pansy Clabo. Upon graduating high school, he attended Tennessee Technological University where he earned a Bachelors of Science degree in Secondary Education English in May 2000. Benjamin taught high school English for one year at DeKalb County High School and for five years at Pigeon Forge High School. During the 2004-2005 school year, he was recognized as high school teacher of the year for the Sevier County School System. In May 2005, Benjamin graduated from The University of Tennessee with a Masters of Science degree in Educational Administration and Supervision (EAS). The following fall he entered the EAS doctoral program at The University of Tennessee. From August 2006 to May 2010, he served as assistant principal at Pigeon Forge High School. He was selected for and attended the David L. Clark Graduate Student Seminar in Educational Administration and Policy in April 2008. Benjamin is presently in his first year as the assistant principal at Gatlinburg-Pittman High School. He lives in Sevierville, TN with his wife Stephani and daughter Adeline.