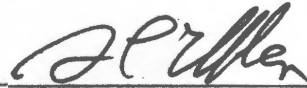


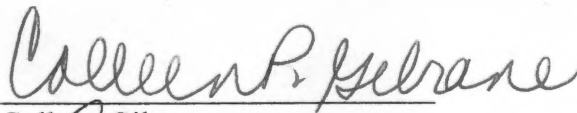
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Kathy Dykes Sims entitled "The Duties, Responsibilities, and Challenges of Opening a New Elementary School." I have examined the final paper copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education, with a major in Educational Administration and Policy Studies.

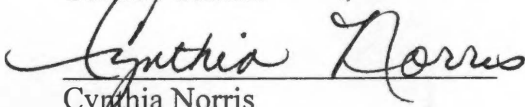


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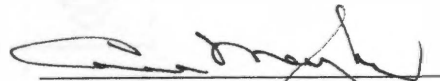


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Thesis
2005b
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**THE DUTIES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND CHALLENGES
OF OPENING A NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

A Dissertation Presented for the

Doctor of Education

Degree

The University of Tennessee

Knoxville

Kathy Dykes Sims

May 2005

DEDICATION

In loving memory of my mother,
Elizabeth Carol Dykes,
who until her last day provided
unconditional support, encouragement,
and love. The memory of her belief in
me continues to inspire my life.

To my wonderful father,
Roland Dykes, Jr.,
for giving me an independent
spirit, determination and
for always being there for support.

To my husband, John,
and daughter, Kristina.
All of us need a cheering squad rooting
us on, especially during such a long and
challenging project. Your patience and
understanding while I tackled this project
has been a tremendous source of
inspiration and encouragement.
I love you.

Sims, Kathy Dykes. "The Duties, Responsibilities, and Challenges of Opening a New Elementary School." Unpublished Doctor of Education Dissertation, University of Tennessee, May 2005.

Abstract

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the challenges of principals who opened new elementary schools and to identify the essential responsibilities and duties they encountered. Identifying the role and latitude of the principal at different phases of the school construction was also examined. This research was guided by the research question: What are the duties, responsibilities, and challenges that principals encounter when charged with the task of opening and organizing a new elementary school?

The sample for the study included three principals from three Tennessee public elementary schools who opened a new school for the first time during the 2001-2002 or 2002-2003 school years. The data for this study was collected via personal interviews using a semi-structured interview guide which consisted of twenty questions.

Several findings emerged from the data revealing some important observations about the duties, responsibilities, and challenges that principals encounter opening a new school. These included: 1) the planning and design stage of the new school was developed before the principal was appointed; 2) the latitude of the principal during the construction phase varied depending on when principals were appointed; 3) there was a diverse list of duties and responsibilities consisting of processes, procedures, and functions for which no assistance was provided or formal guidelines established; 4) an incredible amount of time and energy was spent by the principal dealing with unexpected

and unavoidable challenges and concerns; 5) the need to consult and involve all stakeholders in the process of establishing a new learning community; 6) specific skills and attributes are needed by those who open new schools; 7) a sufficient amount of time is needed by new school openers to focus solely on the task of organizing and implementing a new school setting; 8) there is a rewarding personal and professional feeling that accompanies the challenge of opening a new school.

The following recommendations are drawn from the findings of the study. The recommendations of the study suggest: 1) that principals be appointed early in the design and planning phase of new schools; 2) specific knowledge, skills, and characteristics are needed by those who open new schools; 4) a support system is needed for new school openers; and 5) principal preparation programs need to be improved.

PREFACE

This exploratory study describing the experience of three elementary principals opening a new school stems directly from my personal experience as an elementary principal who also had the distinct privilege of opening a new school. It was July 17, 1999, two days before my forty-something birthday, when I received ‘the call’ from the assistant superintendent offering me the job as principal of the system’s newest elementary school, which was scheduled to open in August 2000. What a great birthday gift! It was truly a moment of ecstasy and a day I will long remember. I was elated to be appointed principal of the system’s 52nd elementary school. Within ten minutes of ending the conversation with the assistant superintendent my mind was racing with thoughts of what I would need to do in order to get this new school opened.

From August to December 1999, I continued as the assistant principal, a position I had held for eleven years, in an existing elementary school. My transition from role of assistant principal to principal occurred in January 2000, at which time I assumed fulltime duties and responsibilities for organizing and opening the system’s new elementary school. For the next eight months I would work from a temporary office space located at the school system’s central office. Henceforward, the days and months ahead were filled with planning, coordinating, and orchestrating every imaginable detail associated with school organization.

There were numerous meetings I had to attend. I met bi-weekly with the job site foreman and his construction crew, and frequently communicated with teachers, parents, students, and community groups. As principal of this new school, I had the duty and

responsibility of coordinating, selecting, and requisitioning purchase orders for furniture, fixtures, and equipment to fill the state's third largest (in square footage) elementary school and the system's first elementary school built to state standards.

Not only were the duties and responsibilities endless and time-consuming, this unique opportunity also presented an array of unknown and unexpected challenges. Many of the challenges were as diverse as the duties and responsibilities I encountered. One challenge I remember distinctly was the arrival of the interior doors for the new school. Every door, two hundred and ten of them to be exact, arrived in a color I had not selected. With less than six weeks before school was scheduled to open, there was not enough time to re-order new doors and have them installed before the first day of school. The construction foreman began negotiating to see what it would take for me to accept the doors. I used my role and latitude as principal to barter and trade for a rather expensive building feature that had originally been included in the design for the new school, but had to be eliminated due to budget constraints. My proposal was to keep the doors, and in return, receive the covered walkway for the bus round at no expense to the system. It seems that my proposition was a good deal for the construction company, considering what they would have to pay to purchase an additional two hundred and ten doors.

Although I was appointed principal thirteen months before the new school opened, I now realize that I had no idea the extent of the duties, responsibilities, and challenges I would experience during the months ahead. The first few months following my appointment in July were filled with mixed emotions. There were

moments of excitement, fear, anxiety, uncertainty, and loneliness. As I sorted through the emotional roller coasters, I found myself having to make decisions in areas where I had very limited, and in some instances, no experience or knowledge. Reflecting on this experience, it became clearer to me that the leadership skills I had utilized as a leader in an existing classroom or school were quite different from the leadership skills I utilized to open a new school. As the result of this experience and my new role, identifying the duties, responsibilities, and challenges of principals opening new schools emerged not only as a personal interest but also as the object of a professional quest. Because of this interest, the question of whether educational leaders have the necessary knowledge, skills, and ability to accept the charge of opening and organizing new school settings led me to investigate the process more in-depth.

From knowledge gained from my personal experience, I am very much aware of how complex and challenging the task of organizing and opening a new school can be. While leading the process of opening and organizing a new school has definitely been the highlight of my professional career thus far, I feel compelled to offer those educational leaders who may in the future lead the charge of opening and organizing a new school a better understanding of duties, responsibilities, and challenges they may encounter.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the challenges of principals who have opened new schools at the elementary level and to identify the essential duties and responsibilities they encountered. By examining these challenges, the knowledge and skills needed by educational leaders might be identified and a better understanding of the process involved in opening a new elementary school might be available to benefit principals, teachers, students, and school systems.

Every fall, principals across the nation experience the opening of a new school year. The amount of work that has to be completed before teachers and students arrive is overwhelming. For principals in existing schools, opening school at the beginning of each school year is quite different from opening a new school for the first time. Although many of the duties and responsibilities appear similar for both situations, a principal opening a new school building is presented with an array of different issues that have not been sufficiently researched and documented, issues often unknown and unexpected. Taylor (1978) noted, "Planning a new school is one of the more difficult tasks a group can face because it is fraught with uncertainty, changefulness, and many unknowns" (p. 71).

The challenges that surround the task of organizing and opening a new school require new leadership skills and knowledge on the part of the principal. When new schools are created, the challenges unique to each principal in each school setting need to be identified, analyzed, and interpreted.

Statement of the Problem

The United States population and the school age population will change dramatically during the first quarter of the 21st century (Tirozzi, 2001, p. 435). Growing student populations will eventually lead to the building of new schools. Taylor (1978) stated “the educational literature of the past two decades contains very little solid knowledge about the problems of planning and implementing new schools” (p. x). Opening these new schools will add challenges and new dimensions to the role of a school principal who may not have the skills or knowledge necessary for opening and organizing these new settings. Understanding the process and issues associated with opening and organizing new schools will be beneficial for principals faced with this challenge and for those charged with preparing and supporting them.

Rationale for the Study

As the trend for a growing and diverse student population continues to rise, it is becoming more apparent that there is a need to document the skills and knowledge utilized by educational leaders who have experienced the opening of a new school. Due to aging and under capacity of many school buildings, many school systems across the nation will be faced with the task of constructing new schools over the next decade. Tirozzi (2001) predicted that thousands of schools would need to be renovated or constructed over the next decade, and he emphasized that the main focus of school construction would be on “new” school settings. In preparation for this deluge of new

school construction, Shepherd and Ragan (1982) projected that “[school] leaders would need a thorough grasp of the entire school program in its social setting, historical background, objectives, relationship among parts, methods, and procedures” (p. 162).

Based on the statistics presented in the following section, the percentage of school principals who will open new schools will increase. To understand the skills and knowledge required of these principals, we must first examine more closely the emerging issue of a growing student population.

Growing Student Population

A National Perspective

According to the United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports (2001), increases in school-age populations are expected over the next twelve years and increases in the elementary enrollment are anticipated through the year 2012. This increasing trend has been seen in recent years. Thomas Snyder, director of the Annual Reports Program at the United States Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics, reported another record-setting elementary school enrollment for the fall of 2001, with approximately 40,000 additional children entering public and private elementary schools. Data derived from surveys conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported public elementary and secondary enrollments increased by six percent from 1994-1999, but when examined separately, enrollment at the elementary and secondary levels exhibited different patterns. Between 1994 and 1999, public elementary enrollment rose by five percent, while

secondary enrollment increased by nine percent. During the 1996-1997 school -year, 86,058 public schools provided instruction to 45.6 million students in the United States. One year later, during the 1997-1998 school-year, there was an increase of about 1.3 million students enrolled in the nation's public schools. This increase in student population resulted in 87,631 public schools, a gain of 1,573 public schools providing instruction in the United States.

In the school year 1999-2000, there were 46.9 million students enrolled in public and secondary school. Of these students, 26.0 million were in pre-kindergarten through grade six and an additional 20.2 million were in grades seven through twelve. The remaining 0.7 million were un-graded students. During the 2000-2001 school year, instruction was provided to 47.2 million students in the United States, an increase of less than one percent from the 46.9 million students in 1999.

The State of Tennessee

Student population in Tennessee is rapidly increasing as well. Tennessee has a compulsory attendance law that mandates all children between the ages of 5 through 17 attend school. The state, as of April 1, 2001, had an increase of over 1,743 in school-age population, persons five to seventeen years of age, since the 1970 school year. (United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, August 2001).

Public school membership in Tennessee, based on data collected by the United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), and

reported in the Fall of 1999, revealed a total student membership of 916,202 students in pre-kindergarten through grade twelve. For the school year 2000-2001, data reported to the Tennessee Department of Education from county and public schools, kindergarten through grade twelve, revealed that 984,015 students were enrolled.

The elementary school membership, grades kindergarten to sixth grade, accounts for 545,591 students in Tennessee. The state's growing elementary student population creates a need for additional buildings to accommodate 55% of the state's net enrollment of elementary student membership. The experience and challenge of opening a new school, especially those built to accommodate student growth, should be an issue of importance for the school systems in Tennessee.

New School Construction

A National Perspective

Different growth patterns in public school enrollment around the country have left many schools overcrowded and others under capacity. New school construction is necessary to address urgent and emerging trends such as overcrowding and rising student enrollments in our public schools.

According to data reported in 1999 and compiled by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), an additional 2,400 new public schools would be needed by the year 2003 to accommodate rising enrollments and to relieve overcrowding, and thousands of new schools would be needed in later years. In the 1997-1998 school year, there were 87,631 public schools in the United States. Based on data reported by the

NCES, states across the nation reported 93,273 public elementary and secondary schools in the 2000-2001 school year.

The State of Tennessee

In Tennessee, school construction boomed during the early 1980s with new schools being built and old schools being repaired, renovated, modernized, and enlarged at a rate not seen since the 1950s and 1960s. Statistics compiled by Market Data Retrieval (MDR) indicated that in Tennessee there were 26 new schools built and ready for occupancy for the school year 2001-2002, compared to the 12 new schools constructed and ready for occupancy during the 2000-2001 school year. Statistics compiled showed that 38 new schools opened in Tennessee between the years 2000 to 2002 (Market Data Retrieval), increasing the number of new schools built in Tennessee by 52% over a two-year period.

Summary of Growing Student Population

A growing and diverse student population is on the rise in our nation's schools. To address this emerging trend, and to be able to provide the best education possible for the more than 47.2 million students enrolled in our nation's public schools, there seems to be no other alternative but to construct new schools. In *The Baby Boom Echo Report*, The United States Department of Education (1999) made the following observation:

The fact of the matter is simply this: There is no end in sight to the number of children entering our nation's schools. This nation has a rare opportunity in this

time of peace and prosperity, to accept the challenge of educating the millions of young people entering our schools this year and those who will be entering our schools for years to come. America's schools are full of optimistic young people who deserve the best education possible. Now is not the time to be short sighted. (August 19, part 10, p. 2)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe the duties, responsibilities, and challenges of three principals who had opened new elementary schools. From such a study, principals who are selected to open and organize new school settings would have a better understanding of the duties, responsibilities, and challenges associated with opening a new school.

Research Question

Given this purpose, the research question for this study was: What are the duties, responsibilities, and challenges that principals encounter when charged with the task of opening a new elementary school?

Framework in Which the Study is Situated

It has been noted that the research focusing on the opening of a new school is virtually nonexistent (Taylor, 1978). In order to examine and compare the role of a principal who has opened a new elementary school with the role of a principal in an

existing school, a review of literature on the skills and knowledge needed for educational leaders should be helpful. This review of literature included research on leadership effectiveness, effective schools research, school culture, school climate, learning communities, and school organization. This examination of related literature can perhaps provide a better understanding of the role principals have in opening a new elementary school.

During the past 10 to 15 years, the literature concerning leadership in schools has primarily centered on the role of the principal as instructional leader. Principals are the most frequently examined source of school leadership and there is evidence that they can make a significant difference in schools and in school achievement. Consistently, the research on school effectiveness confirms the role of the principal as vital to the success of a school (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1986; Levin & Ornstein, 1993; Sergiovanni, 1991). Former United States Secretary of Education, William Bennett (1986) wrote, "The research is perfectly clear. It's hard to find a good school without an effective principal" (p. 128).

Since very little research has concentrated on the experiences of principals who have opened new schools, this research along with the research in leadership effectiveness, effective schools research, and school organization will hopefully provide significant information and greater clarification on what is needed for and expected of a principal who opens a new school.

Definition of Terms

Creation of a setting – involves two or more people brought together in new relationships for a sustained period of time to achieve stated objective (Sarason, 1972).

Effective School - An effective school is usually narrowly defined as one in which students score higher than expected on standardized tests of basic skills, given their socioeconomic status (Perkey and Degan, 1985).

Effective Schools Research - The Effective School research emerged as the response to findings of Professor James Coleman, a prominent education researcher. In 1966, Coleman presented a report of his findings to the United States Congress, which examined the achievement of 600,000 students in 4,000 schools. Based on his research, Coleman concluded that the homes from which children come make a greater difference in academic performance than do the schools they attend. Coleman's report credited the student's family background as the main reason for student success in school.

Elementary School - An elementary school is one that contains any grade configurations of pre-kindergarten through grade 6.

Learning Environment - All surrounding conditions and influences that affect personal development (Dale, 1972).

School / Learning Community - A group of people within an educational society sharing similar customs, interests, characteristics or beliefs.

New School – For the purpose of this study, the term “new school” refers to a building that has been newly constructed, was not a replacement for an older or smaller building, had no prior occupancy of students or staff, and was created to accommodate a growing student population.

School Climate - School climate has been defined as the relatively enduring pattern of shared perceptions of the characteristics of a school and its members. The environment is a big component of school climate (Keefe, Kelley, & Miller, 1985).

School Culture - Culture is the underground stream of norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and rituals that build up overtime as people work together, solve problems, and confront challenges. This set of informal expectations and values shapes how people think, feel, and act in schools (Deal & Peterson, 1998).

School Organization - School organization is defined as how schools arrange the resources of curriculum, instruction, students, time, space, and personnel for maximum effect on student learning (Danielson, 2002).

Limitations of the Study

Three limitations were identified in this study. They are (1) choice of architect selected to design the new school, (2) criteria used by system superintendents to select principals of the new schools, (3) gender and race of participants.

Delimitations of the Study

To obtain a better understanding of the challenge of opening a new elementary school, three principals were interviewed. Because one of the parameters for the selection of principals was that they had opened a new elementary school in Tennessee, the sample size was greatly reduced.

Other than having had the experience of opening a new elementary school in the state of Tennessee, additional criteria for school selection included: the school must be identified as a public school, opened for the first time in school years 2000 and 2001, the school must include or have a combination of grades K-5, have a minimum student population of 300 students, and be geographically located in the state within a three-hour commute of the researcher's residence.

Participants meeting the criteria for selection were identified through the Market Data Retrieval School Directory Guide to all public and non-public K-12 schools. Three principals were identified. The sample for this study consisted of three principals, with an attempt to represent both genders. Assistant Principals opening new schools were excluded from the study.

Organization of the Study

This study contains five chapters. Chapter I includes the statement of the problem, rationale and purpose of the study. The research question, framework, and definition of terms are also included in Chapter I.

A review of the literature is contained in Chapter II. The review of the literature focuses on six major areas: Leadership Effectiveness, Effective Schools Research, School Climate, School Culture, Learning Communities, and School Organization.

Chapter III includes the research methodology and design, description of the participants, and the interview guide. Chapter IV includes the summary of findings and answers to the research question. Chapter V provides conclusions and recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Related Literature

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe the duties, responsibilities, and challenges of three principals who had opened new elementary schools. From such a study, principals who are selected to open and organize new school settings will have a better understanding of the duties, responsibilities, and challenges associated with opening a new school.

While the study's focus was on the duties, responsibilities, and challenges of three principals who had organized and opened a new elementary school, the review of related literature included the areas of leadership effectiveness, effective schools research, school climate, school culture, school communities, and school organization at all leadership levels. The review of literature on leadership effectiveness defined leadership and the characteristics of effective leaders. The review of literature on effective schools examined the factors that contribute to student results or outcomes. The review of literature on school culture and school climate examined the meaning of and characterized the norms that are associated with each term. The review of literature on school and learning communities investigated how effective leadership relates to building a school learning community. The review of literature on school organization examined the organizational practices that center on effective teaching and learning.

Leadership Research

Few topics have engendered as much interest among business organizations and educators as has the term *leadership*. The literature on leadership is so vast that one can easily be overwhelmed by its volume. Books and journals are filled with variable definitions of leadership and there are numerous lists that characterize behaviors of leaders. Bennis (1984) and Bennis and Nanus (1985) noted that there are more than 350 definitions of leadership recorded in the literature.

Similarities that exist among other terms that are synonymous with leadership have been contributed to some of the confusion and disagreement of the term 'leadership'. One such similarity is the comparison between the terms leadership and management. These terms are often used interchangeably. However, there are some who think that leadership is different from management. James Lippman (1964) was one of the early writers in educational administration who made the distinction between management and leadership by claiming that leadership was about changing things while management was about running things as they are. In Lippman's words, "Leadership is the initiation of a new structure or procedure for accomplishing an organization's goals and objectives" (p. 44).

Gardner (1989) suggested several dimensions for distinguishing leadership from management. His suggestions provided descriptive characteristics that separate a leader from a manager. One distinction Gardner believed separated a leader from a manager was that, "leaders think longer term, look outside as well as inside, and influence

constituents beyond their immediate formal jurisdiction. They emphasize vision and renewal and have the political skills to cope with the challenging requirements of multiple constituencies” (p. 295). When referring to the inside and outside, Ubben, Hughes, and Norris (2001) explained that “the ‘inside’ functions of a school include staffing and instructional improvement, curriculum development, student services, and resources procurement and building utilization, including budgeting and maintenance, while the ‘outside’ function is public relations” (p.11).

Bolman and Deal (1997) also had concerns that the two terms, leadership and management, are typically confused, arguing that a person can be a leader without being a manager, and vice-versa. Kotter (1988) viewed management as primarily being about structural nuts and bolts: planning, organizing, and controlling. Kotter viewed leadership as a change-oriented process of visioning, networking, and building relationships. Hughes (1999) explained further by examining the terms leadership and management to show that the terms are interrelated. Hughes declared:

Although leadership may describe dynamic efforts, such as translating into action a vision for the organization, creating change, and developing new policies, management emphasizes a supportive status quo to provide people stability and balance in the workplace so that they can work in relative comfort. (p. 27)

The literature reviewed for this study noted a frequent comparison of leadership with *authority*. Fitzwater (1991) offered his perspective of leadership and authority by

proclaiming, “Leadership is ultimately the ability to influence other people to do something, the authority and controls exercised by the leader may be derived democratically or autocratically, and the force of leadership may be subtle or an obvious one” (pp. 5-6). This association created some concern for Bolman and Deal (1997), for they believed leadership was distinct from authority. Their explanation for discerning the difference had to do with separating authority from legitimacy. Their analogy of the two terms was that, “Authority and leadership are built on legitimacy and voluntary obedience and that people voluntarily obey authority so long as they believe it is legitimate” (p. 295).

Lambert (1998) elaborated further on the comparison of leadership and authority by stating the following:

When we think of leadership, we are accustomed to picturing people in roles with formal authority, such as principals, superintendents, or directors. But we can view *leadership* as a verb, rather than a noun, by considering the processes, activities, and relationships in which people engage, rather than as the individual in a specific role. (p. 18)

With as many similarities of leadership with other terms like management and authority, it has proven “to be no easy task to identify a single view of leadership that beats all other views” (Sergiovanni, 2001, p. 40). Bolman and Deal (1997) pronounced their perspective of leadership by claiming that “most images of leadership suggest that leaders get things done and get people to do things: leaders are powerful and they are

expected to persuade or inspire rather than to coerce or give orders” (p. 294). Lambert (1998) supports this image by declaring:

Leadership is about learning together, and constructing meaning and knowledge collectively and collaboratively. It involves opportunities to surface and mediate perceptions, values, beliefs, information, and assumptions through continuing conversations; to inquire about and generate ideas together; to seek to reflect upon and make sense of work in the light of shared beliefs and new information; and to create actions that grow out of these new understandings. Such is the core of leadership. (pp. 5-6)

The actions of leaders generate responses from their constituents and followers. Keeping with the view of the relationship between leaders and those with whom they work, Lambert (1998) described leadership as “the reciprocal learning processes that enables participants in a community to construct meaning toward a shared purpose” (p. 18). Foster (1984) declared, “Leadership is a consensual task, a sharing of ideas and a sharing of responsibilities” (p. 3). Bolman and Deal (1997), defined leadership as being “a subtle process of mutual influence fusing thought, feeling, and action to produce cooperative effort in the service of purposes and values of both the leader and the led” (p. 296). Grady Bogue (1994) wrote, “Leadership is a conceptual, moral, and performing art. It is an integrating art form involving the orchestration of ideas, values, and skills. It is a venture in moral philosophy” (pp. 145-146).

These images of leadership convey the message that leadership is about people

and the relationships developed in their organizational context. Foster's (1984) examination of leadership seems appropriate to conclude this section on defining leadership. Foster remarked, "Leadership, in the final analysis, is the ability of humans to relate deeply to each other in the search for a more perfect union" (p. 3). "The results attained are the final and only real measure of what has been accomplished by leadership, and the proof is in the response of those who follow" (Fitzwater, 1991, p. 6). When organizing and opening a new school, effective leadership is necessary for the structuring, implementation, and successful conclusion of the process.

Characteristics of Effective Leaders

Bolman and Deal (1997) noted in their work that several studies have found similar characteristics among unusually effective leaders across a variety of sectors and situations. Much has been learned over the years about leadership in relation to organizational context and variables that might affect a leader's effectiveness in different contexts. Leaders, like leadership definitions and characteristics, are different, depending on the context in which they operate. "Good leadership is situational - what works in one setting will not work in another" (Bolman and Deal, 1997, p. 297). Even if leaders did the same things within their own organization, the results might not always turn out to be the same. There are no guarantees that a particular characteristic or level of knowledge will produce an effective leader. As suggested by Green (1995), "Successful leadership is not characterized by a particular definition, style or method, but by a

consistent commitment to a few important principles” (p. 24). These principles are inclusive of behaviors, skills, competencies, and knowledge that are essential to leadership within any context and with any variable.

Today’s leaders face unique challenges—demands of time, knowledge, and skills, which take their toll on even the most effective leader. The ever-increasing list of challenges suggests that leaders have a highly developed repertoire of skills, behaviors, knowledge, and competencies. Numerous publications and research emphasized the knowledge and skills considered essential to function effectively as a leader. As a result, many leadership programs operate on a prescribed list of pre requisites and standards that future leaders must complete before being certified in leadership. The prescribed list of pre requisites tends to focus on the knowledge and skills needed to receive leadership certification.

The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) compiled a list of skills they claim administrators need to develop to be effective leaders. Skill development was noted in the following areas:

1. Designing, implementing, and evaluating school climate
2. Building support for schools
3. Developing school curriculum
4. Instructional management
5. Staff evaluation
6. Staff development

7. Allocating resources

8. Educational research, evaluation, and planning (Hoyle, et al., 1985, p. 83).

McQuade and Champagne (1995) in their book, *How to Make a Better School*, cited a study that was conducted by Rutherford (1985) and colleagues at the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education at the University of Texas. In this study, principals were observed and interviewed over a period of five years. When they compared effective and less effective principals, they found that the more effective principals:

1. Have clear, informed visions of what they want their schools to become--visions that focus on students and their needs;
2. Translate these visions into goals for their schools and expectations for the teachers, students, and administrator;
3. Establish school climates that support progress toward these goals and expectations;
4. Continuously monitor progress; and
5. Intervene in a supportive or corrective manner, when this seems necessary.

(p.249)

At the beginning of this chapter, different viewpoints of leadership were presented. Despite the apparent confusion and disagreement about those views, several studies have found similar viewpoints that distinguish the differences regarding characteristics among effective leaders. It was Bolman and Deal (1997) who maintained:

Perhaps the two most widely accepted propositions about leadership are that all good leaders must have the “right stuff” - qualities like vision, strength, and commitment that are essential to leadership. Effective leaders help establish a vision, set standards for performance, and create focus and direction for collective efforts. (p. 297)

Mark Goldberg (2001), in his article titled *Leadership in Education: Five Commonalities*, synthesized 43 interviews with educational leaders of all types, including principals, teachers, researchers, and politicians, and found five common traits or characteristics of leadership. From the persons Goldberg interviewed, he found each of them exhibited at least four of the characteristics to some reasonable extent. Goldberg noted the following five commonalities of leaders:

First, these leaders have **bedrock beliefs** that inspire and guide their words and actions. Second, these convictions give leaders **courage to swim upstream**, persevering in unconventional paths that might take years to bear fruit. Third, the leaders displayed a strong **social conscience** that motivated their actions and made them sensitive to inequities and injustices, not only in schools but also in the larger society. Fourth, these leaders displayed a **seriousness of purpose** that let them keep a steady focus on central issues and not be distracted from their mission. Finally, these leaders had **situational mastery** of the environments they worked in. This mastery goes beyond generic skills that could work as well in other settings. (In Lashway, 2002, p. 3)

Bolman and Deal (2002) generated a list that includes five qualities that are consistent across effective leaders. The qualities on their list include:

Focus. Great leaders have an internal compass and know what direction they want to take. They always have it in mind and use every activity and event as an opportunity to demonstrate the desired direction. These are leaders with a vision.

Passion. A second quality of outstanding leaders is that they care deeply about their work and making a difference. Passion is hard to fake. People know if it's there or not. Either way, those feelings are contagious.

Wisdom. Veteran leaders have lots of experience. Wise leaders have learned from their experience, from both success and failure. Their hard earned wisdom enables them to recognize and appreciate the complexities they face. They are able to see pattern and order where others are overwhelmed by confusion.

Courage. Leadership inevitably places bets on the future, making decisions in the face of incomplete information and conflicting pressures. You'll be wrong some of the time. Even when you are right, there always will be critics who think otherwise. Right or wrong, you'll hear from opponents and naysayers. That's why leadership is stressful and scary. It is not an easy matter to plunge ahead when you don't have all the information and aren't sure you're on the right road. Courage lets you move ahead anyway.

Integrity. Warren Buffett once said the three most important qualities in a [leader] are integrity, intelligence, and energy. But without the first, he cautioned,

the other two will kill you. Integrity is at the heart of qualities like honesty, depth and a moral compass that inspire trust and loyalty. (pp. 13-14)

Sergiovanni (2001) cited a study that was conducted on perceptions of good leadership by Danish, English, and Scottish teachers. In this study, the researchers, Moos, Mahony, and Reeves (1998) identified five definitions of school leadership:

1. Leadership means having a clear personal vision of what you want to achieve.
2. Good leaders are in the thick of things, working alongside their colleagues.
3. Leadership means respecting teachers' autonomy, protecting them from extraneous demands.
4. Good leaders look ahead, anticipate change and prepare people for it so that it does not surprise or disempower them.
5. Good leaders are pragmatic. They are able to grasp the realities of the political and economic context and are able to negotiate and compromise. (p. 63)

It seems that many of the studies on leadership list multiple characteristics of effective leaders. An examination of the literature on effective leadership characteristics and qualities has led to the conclusion that leaders tend to exhibit certain similar characteristics. Although much of the current literature seems to advocate specific characteristics of effective leaders, a consistent finding of which characteristics are best was not found.

Of all the characteristics noted in the many studies on leadership, one of the most frequent findings in the research on leadership effectiveness is that leaders have a *vision*.

In fact, “the importance of vision has been cited so often that it has become something of a cliché.” (DuFour & Eaker, 1992, p. 5). After reviewing the literature, a capsulation of the purpose of vision can be summarized by claiming that vision provides leaders with a belief of what future one is pursuing. These beliefs represent the value structure of the leader and those with whom the leader works, provides a focus for the mission, goals, and strategies, provides direction and guide behavior, and should be evident in daily practices.

Leadership is about learning. Fullan (2001) remarked, “A major objective of a leader should be to ‘cause’ greater capacity in the organization in order to get better results” (p. 65). In summary, being an effective leader does not seem to require an all or nothing list of characteristics.

The Principal’s Role as Leader of the School

The importance of strong leadership has been cited again and again in studies of excellent businesses and schools. One finding that consistently emerged from the recent wave of studies was the importance of the principal within the school, as principals are the most important people in the school when it comes to providing leadership. Principals play a key role in leading within the school, and they are central to a school’s success and student learning.

“The principal’s role is so diverse that a single description cannot fully capture the nature of the position” (Bergman, 1998, p.1). Principals today are expected to create

a team relationship among staff members, acquire and allocate resources, promote teacher development, improve students' performance on standardized tests, and build effective community linkages (Drake and Roe, 2003; Pierce, 2000). Despite such diversity in their role, principals have assumed additional roles while striving to balance the new ones with those already in place. Killion (1997) declared, "As principals assume new roles, accompanying responsibilities, and challenges, they must assess their own skills, seek opportunities to develop those that are associated with their new roles, and monitor how they respond to the many challenges of principalship" (p. 83).

Responding to the ultimate role of a school principal is that of leading within the school and being central to the school's success and student learning. "Twenty-first century principals", just as Tirozzi (2001) predicted, "would have to shift their role from a focus on management and administration to a focus on leadership and vision- on facilitating the teaching and learning process" (p. 48).

This sentiment is even more complex for the principal charged with opening a new school. School leadership for the 21st century will definitely require some changes in practice. Student learning must be at the center of what schools are all about and should drive all the decisions school leaders make. As new schools are created, they will need leadership from principals who focus on advancing student and staff learning (DuFour, 2002, p. 12). Sergiovanni (2001) declared that we would need leadership for schools themed to learning. In this new leadership, Sergiovanni asserts that leaders would spend more of their time on purposing, developing idea structures for their

schools, building a shared followership, and helping their schools become communities of responsibility.

There seems to be agreement that, with strong leadership by the principal, a school is likely to be effective (Barth, 1990). Because the principal is viewed in such high regard, his or her leadership sets the tone for numerous aspects of the school's organization and structure. It is through the leadership of the principal that staff is aware of what they do for and with students that affects the students and their achievement.

Jerry Bamberg (1997), Director of the Center for Effective Schools at the University of Washington, wrote:

For schools to become learning organizations, the school's leader must accept responsibility for creating conditions that promote and enhance learning.

Perhaps most important of all, principals need to create a climate that promotes risk taking and eliminates the fears of failure. If these things can be done successfully, schools will then possess the capacity to develop a shared vision about what needs to be done and engage in the kinds of activities that are needed to make their shared vision a reality. (p. 12)

This step is not for the principal to do alone. Developing the vision of a school's future means having every stakeholder - principals, staff, students, parents, and community - involved in the formulation of the school's vision, mission, and goals. Ideally, it is the principal who leads this task, providing direction and guiding behavior for all those involved. Robert Starratt (1995) declared, "Principals as leaders must

nurture the vision that expresses the school's core values; they develop the structures and policies that institutionalize the vision" (p. 3). Bonstingl (1992) reaffirms the crucial role of the principal in developing the school's future by summarizing:

School leadership consists of working with teachers, parents, students, and members of the community as coach and mentor so that the organizational context in which all students' growth and improvement is valued and encouraged can be maximized by teachers and students, parents, and community members who support the common effort. (p. 80)

"Increasingly, educators are being challenged to take the lead in designing, creating, and organizing schools that work for learning. Perhaps the single most important factor in creating an exemplary school is the willingness to pursue that goal with tenacious persistence." (DuFour and Eaker, 1992, p. 9)

Effective Schools Research

With the goal of organizing schools that work for learning, school leaders must consider every aspect of the educational experience and take advantage of current research to create the most effective schools possible. Micheal Fullan (2002) declared that a major objective of a school leader should be to transform the institution into one that learns how to learn. The effective school movement does just that by identifying factors that help schools increase student learning. An identified list of common traits and principles serve as guidelines for learning achievement and outcomes. Research

findings (Squires, Huitt, and Segars, 1985) on the characteristics of effective schools acknowledged the principal as exerting a tremendous influence toward refining and maintaining a school's social system that promotes achievement and learning. Effective schools research has confirmed the role of the principal as vital to the success of a school (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1986; Levin & Ornstein, 1993; Sergiovanni, 1991).

A principal's effect on school outcomes is subject to many factors, some of which include societal and demographic changes. These changes have stimulated new pressures on schools and those who lead them. Traditionally, the role of the school principal was to be the leader of the school and as such was responsible for the many diverse tasks required to keep the school running smoothly. For the principal of a new school, this role presents new and different pressures. Principals of new schools are faced with a challenge that presents them with acquiring a deeper understanding of how best to create and organize new school setting that promotes achievement and learning. Sergiovanni (1991) stated, "the majority of the problems and situations that principals face are characterized by ambiguity and confusion that defy clear-cut technical solutions" (p.3). For the principal of a new school, this ambiguity and confusion is only compounded by the lack of documented knowledge and research that focuses on opening new schools.

The Effective School research emerged as the response to findings of Professor James Coleman, a prominent education researcher. In 1966, Coleman presented a report of his findings to the United States Congress, which examined the achievement of 600,000 students in 4,000 schools. In Coleman's research, which was funded by the

United States Office of Education, he concluded that the homes from which children come make a greater difference than do the schools they attend. Coleman's report credited the student's family background as the main reason for student success in school. His findings proposed that children from poor families and homes lacking the prime conditions or values to support education could not learn, regardless of what the school did.

In 1979, Dr. Ron Edmonds, then professor at Harvard University, led a team of researchers in an effort to discount James Coleman's claim that family background did make a difference in student achievement. Dr. Edmonds was successful disputing Coleman's claim by documenting in his research that students from low-income families outperformed their peers in the more affluent nearby schools. Based on the findings of Edmond's and other school effectiveness researchers (Brookover and Lezotte, 1977), the United States Office of Education provided \$1M to fund additional research to identify more exceptions. Additional research was able to find many schools in which poor children were learning beyond expectations. Hence, the name 'effective schools.' "Essentially, we can assume that all children can learn what any child can learn if we provide the appropriate teaching and learning environment in the school" (Bloom, 1976, p. 39).

While some researchers were still examining why low -income schools were successful and others were not, other researchers were focusing their attention on identifying additional contributing factors and characteristics of effective schools. A list

of common traits and characteristics that became known as the *effective schools correlates* was developed because they correlated with the high levels of student achievement. These correlates are:

- A safe and orderly environment
- Climate of high expectations for success
- Strong instructional leadership and emphasis
- Clear and focused mission
- Opportunity to learn/time on task
- Frequent monitoring of student progress
- Constructive home and school relations. (Raham, 2004, p. 1)

For decades, educators and researchers have sought to explain low student performance by either the characteristics of the individual student or the family background. James P. Comer (1997) noted, “Because we believe it is all in the genes, we do not think enough about how societal factors and forces interact to make desirable outcomes possible” (p. 13). The discovery that some schools are effective in teaching students from disadvantaged family backgrounds makes plausible the conclusion that the nature of the school can make a difference in the level of student learning (Brookover, Beamer, Eftim, Hathaway, Lezotte, Miller, Passalacqua, Tornatzky, 1982).

Characteristics of Effective Principals

An effective school is usually narrowly defined as one in which students score higher than expected on standardized tests of basic skills, given their socioeconomic status (Perkey and Degan, 1985). Nearly all of the literature on effective schools (Brookover & Lezotte, 1977; Edmonds, 1979; Hoover, 1978; Phi Delta Kappa, 1980; Weber, 1971) emphasized the importance of the school principal in bringing about high levels of student achievement.

Bolman and Deal (1997) noted in their work that several studies found similar characteristics among unusually effective leaders across a variety of sectors and situations. Much has been learned over the years about leadership in relation to organizational context and variables that might affect a leader's effectiveness in different contexts. Leaders, like leadership definitions and characteristics, are different depending on the context in which they operate. As new roles for principals are being created, one must assess and analyze how characteristics of principal effectiveness impact student and or school performance. Recent research (McEwan, 2003) identified ten traits that can be used as indicators of effective principals. McEwan was able to formulate the ten traits of highly effective principals through a survey process he distributed "to an eclectic group of 175 individuals (principals, superintendents, central office administrators, staff developers, university professors, teachers, parents, school board members, and education activists around the country" (p. xxiii). From a list of thirty-seven survey items, respondents selected the following traits as essential to being a highly effective

principal:

Trait Number 1: The Communicator - The highly effective principal is a Communicator- a genuine and open human being with the capacity to listen, empathize, interact, and connect with individual students, parents, and teachers in productive, helping, and healing ways, as well as the ability to teach, present, and motivate people in larger group settings.

Trait Number 2: The Educator – The highly effective principal is an Educator – a self-directed instructional leader with a strong intellect and personal depth of knowledge regarding research- based curriculum, instruction, and learning who motivates and facilitates the intellectual growth and development of self, students, teachers, and parents.

Trait Number 3: The Envisioner - The highly effective principal is an Envisioner – an individual who is motivated by a sense of calling and purpose, focused on a vision of what schools can be, and guided by a mission that has the best interest of all students at its core.

Trait Number 4: The Facilitator – The highly effective principal is a Facilitator – a leader with outstanding human relation skills that include the abilities to build individual relationships with parents, teachers, and students; collaborative teams with staff members and parents; and a school-wide community of leaders.

Trait Number 5: **The Change Maker** – The highly effective principal is a Change Master – a flexible, futuristic, and realistic leader, able to motivate as well as manage change in an organized, positive, and enduring fashion.

Trait Number 6: **The Culture Builder** – The highly effective principal is a Culture Builder – an individual who communicates (talks) and models (walks) a strong and viable vision based on achievement, character, personal responsibility, and accountability.

Trait Number 7: **The Activator** – The highly effective principal is an Activator – an individual with gumption (e. g., drive, motivation, enthusiasm, energy, spunk, and humor) enough to share with staff, parents, and students.

Trait Number 8: **The Producer** – The highly effective principal is a Producer – a results-oriented individual with a strong sense of accountability to taxpayers, parents, students, and teachers who translates high expectations into intellectual development and academic achievement for all students.

Trait Number 9: **The Character Builder** – The highly effective principal is a Character Builder – a role model whose values, words, and deeds are marked by trustworthiness, integrity, authenticity, respect, generosity, and humility.

Trait Number 10: **The Contributor** – The highly effective principal is a Contributor – a servant-leader, encourager, and enabler whose utmost priority is making a contribution to the success of others. (McEwan, 2003, p. 174-175)

Earlier in the study there was mention of what has been learned in past research about leadership in relation to organizational context and the many variables that might affect a leader's effectiveness in different contexts. The principalship is a complex job, important to establishing and maintaining good schools (Glickman, 1987), and effective principals must adapt to a variety of work-related contexts to enhance school organization, productivity, and student achievement.

For principals of new schools, organizing and establishing a good school is even more complex. In the years ahead, one challenge for educational researchers and practitioners will be to recognize, analyze, and assess the complexities and challenges of opening new schools by providing valid, reliable, and useful information that will hopefully produce an effective school and a principal who implements proven and effective practices.

The list of principal effectiveness characteristics compiled by Whitaker (2003) and others (Bolman and Deal, 1997; Benjamin, 1979; McEwan, 2003) are helpful to the extent that they have captured those factors that are likely to have a cumulative impact on student and school performance. The skills and basic principles outlined in this section are assumed to have a profound effect on the complex challenges that will affect any principal. McEwan (2003) identified ten traits that could be used as indicators of

effective principals, which include: educator, communicator, envisioner, facilitator, change maker, culture builder, activator, producer, character builder, and contributor. Likewise, Norris et al. (2002) challenged those who prepare future leaders to consider providing the future leaders with the dispositions, knowledge, and performance skills necessary for fostering learning communities within their future schools. Johnson (2000) announced, "The effective principal carefully assesses his/her unique situation and appropriately applies knowledge to the task he/she must accomplish to create an effective school" (p. 32).

McCauley (1990) asserted that effective principals:

Place top priority on student learning and have high expectations for staff students, thus creating a school climate of achievement and an enthusiasm for excellence. Their understanding of the factors that influence schooling is a guide for designing effective learning environments. These designs can be put into action with skills at setting direction, organizing, and implementing. Yet they realize that different schools require different leadership styles and thus adapt their behavior to fit within that context. They also understand the key role that teachers play in successfully meeting educational goals and work to build productive and trusting relationship, communicate , and provide staff with developmental opportunities. They have positive relations not only with teachers but with students and community. They have developed sophisticated information processing skills to help monitor progress toward goals and anticipate new problems. (p. 9)

Since the release of the 1987 report of the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration, considerable attention has been devoted to finding ways to improve the quality of leadership in our schools and school systems. In a paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Joseph Murphy and Neil Shipman (1998) wrote about what has been known for centuries. Murphy and Shipman wrote about the great diversity of requirements for leadership positions in America's school and school districts. As Murphy and Shipman proclaimed:

In important ways, being a high school principal is different from being an elementary school principal. We are also aware of the importance of context in shaping the expectations facing school leaders. There are real differences in the demands confronting an elementary school principal in a core city and one in a suburban town. (p. 20-21)

Bolman and Deal (1997) succinctly professed:

Perhaps the two most widely accepted propositions about leadership are that all good leaders must have the "right stuff" – qualities like vision, strength, and commitment that are essential to leadership – and that good leadership is situational – what works in one setting will not work in another. (p. 297)

Similarly, there are real differences in the demands and challenges that confront principals in existing schools and for principals opening new schools. Because of the wide range of diversity of requirements for school leadership positions, there was a need for "developing a powerful framework for redefining school leadership and to marshal

the forces necessary to bring that design to life” (Murphy and Shipman, 1998, p. 1).

From the work of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, the standards that emerged from the development process, known to many as the ISLLC Standards, are:

- A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.
- A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional development.
- A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organizational, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
- A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.
- A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.
- A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of

all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context. (p.24)

Purkey and Smith (1983) have studied many school cases that reviewed school effectiveness. The commonalities of findings among the case studies were striking. Five factors stood out as a common to most, but not all, of the case studies. These are (1) strong leadership by the principal or another staff member, (2) high expectations by staff and student achievement, (3) a clear set of goals and emphasis for the school, (4) a school-wide effective training program, and (5) a system for monitoring student progress.

While one approach to establishing an effective school is based on strong leadership by the principal, most effective schools come about as a result of a collaborative effort that includes teachers, itinerant and support staff, students, parents, and community members. Throughout the research, the principal emerged as the one who sets the tone, focus, philosophy, and direction in a school. When assessed and analyzed closely, research findings (Benjamin, 1979) on effective schools indirectly confirmed similarity in terms of principals, beliefs, instruction, and teachers. Benjamin communicated: “[Effective] principals tend to rock the boat. They forsake the desire to be loved for the hard task of monitoring students’ progress. They set achievement goals for their students, and they judge their teachers and themselves by them” (p. 102).

School Culture Research

The field of education lacks a clear and consistent definition of school culture. For Clifford Geertz (1973), a noted anthropologist, culture represents a historically transmitted pattern of meaning. Those patterns of meaning are expressed both (explicitly) through symbols and (implicitly) in our taken-for-granted beliefs. Heckman (1993) stated school culture lies in the commonly held beliefs of teachers, students, and principals. Stolp and Smith (1995) defined culture as historically transmitted patterns of meaning that include the norms, beliefs, traditions, and myths understood, maybe in varying degrees, by members of the school community. Terrence E. Deal and Kent D. Peterson (1998) noted that culture is the underground stream of norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and rituals that builds up overtime as people work together, solve problems, and confront challenges. This set of informal expectations and values shapes how people think, feel, and act in schools. James W. Keefe and John M. Jenkins (1997) noted:

Culture encompasses the daily rituals and important ceremonies of a school: its subcultures, and its underlying values, beliefs, and assumptions. The least tangible level of a school culture involves beliefs about the nature of learners and learning, the purposes of schooling, and the basic organizational design. Schools that aspire to become learning organizations and school based profession communities must reflect values like ‘all students can successfully learn,’ ‘teachers accept collective responsibility for student learning,’ and ‘learners are all different and have a right to respect, fairness and caring in the school.’” (pp. 9-10)

For centuries, researchers have compiled impressive evidence on school culture. With this evidence, educators are now better able to develop a deeper understanding of school culture and its importance in promoting effective schools. In 1999, Peterson explained, "Culture influences the actions and spirit of the school life. [Culture] shapes a school's motivation, commitment, effort, and focus" (p. 17). Zepeda (1999) indicated:

To better understand the school's culture, effective principals look for artifacts, practices, and expectations within the organization. These sources can assist the principal in uncovering and understanding the school's culture. The principal is encouraged to engage faculty, parents, support staff, students, and central administration who come into frequent contact with the school...in uncovering the culture of the school. (p. 22)

Jon Saphier and Matthew King (1995) cited twelve norms of school culture, which, if strong, contribute to the instructional effectiveness of a school. These included:

1. Collegiality
2. Experimentation
3. High expectations
4. Trust and confidence
5. Tangible support
6. Reaching out to the knowledge base
7. Appreciation and recognition
8. Caring, celebration and humor

9. Involvement in decision making
10. Protection of what's important
11. Traditions
12. Honest, open communication. (p. 116)

In a presentation at the State Department of Education in August 1993, Lawrence Lezotte reported that one of the seven correlates of effective schools was high climate of high expectations for success. Other essential elements of effective schools include the following:

1. A strong belief that all children have the ability to learn
2. Clear goals and high expectations set by state and local systems
3. Improvement efforts that are results-driven
4. School staff empowered to determine how to reach goals
5. School climates that encourage risk taking and departures from past practices
6. Decision-makers having access to a solid knowledge base
7. Teacher support that includes training technical assistance, and support systems. (Source: Web of Success).

Wong and Wong (2002) proclaimed:

Students like being in a consistent environment where everyone knows what to do and where they can get on with learning. All effective schools have a climate, and it is the information one gets from the climate that sends a message to the students that they will be productive and successful. (p. 2)

“In effective schools, students are expected to reach the goals set for them. In effective schools, the standards for achievement are high yet reasonable” (Squires, et al., 1985, p. 6). “In effective schools, principals are instructional leaders who have high expectations for teachers and support teachers’ professional development plans that advance the school’s mission and goals” (Web of Success, p. 3).

Because principals are so important to school effectiveness, they must strive to implement “common practices that support academic excellence,” and “validate the academic orientation of the school, its sense of collective responsibility and the sustained commitment to students and their learning” (Keefe and Jenkins, 1997, p. 10). Principals have many opportunities to reinforce and shape a school culture. According to Gupton (2003), any principal in any context, [an old school or a new school], should take advantage of the key community building opportunities she has formulated as outlined in Figure One on the following page.

School Climate Research

Climate is one of the major descriptors of school culture, a concept that is easy to recognize but difficult to define. The NAASP Task Force on School Environment (Keefe, Kelley, & Miller, 1985) defined school climate as “the relatively enduring pattern of shared perceptions of the characteristics of a school and of its members.” Other definitions emphasize “setting high expectations” while others highlight “friendliness” or “organizational personality.”

Careful recruitment, screening, selection, orientation, and mentoring of new faculty and staff to create a family of philosophical kinship and shared passion for students' success.

Identification of teacher, parent, and community leaders and appropriate delegation of responsibilities to those whose beliefs and visions most closely approximate the leader's and are focused on students' learning,

Planning (with staff) for and being an active participant with staff in well-designed, meaningful staff development that is guided by student performance indicators, focused in improving instruction, and evaluated by one primary criterion – its impact on classroom teaching and learning.

Developing (with staff) and implementing a process of supervision and evaluation that is supportive and team based – rather than competitive and punitive – in its orientation; includes teachers, administrators, and staff; and clearly operates for the primary purpose of improving employee's performance and student learning.

Making and taking time to celebrate and reward students' and staff accomplishments, outstanding efforts, and performance among the entire school community and calculated risk taking to improve teaching and learning.

Looking for ways to practice what you preach – and rewarding those who do likewise.

Figure One

Shaping School Culture

Note: From *The Instructional Leadership Toolbox* (p. 67), S. L. Gupton, 2003, Thousands Oaks, California: Corwin Press, Inc.

Reavis (1990) summarized:

Climate differs from culture in that it addresses the way people in the organization feel about the organization. It includes such areas as trust, honesty, opportunity for participation, morale respect, cohesiveness, caring, and renewal. (p.42)

School climate, or environment, is a comprehensive structure made up of the culture, physical plant, organizational structure, social relationships, and individual behavior (Dietrich & Bailey, 1996). A lot has been learned about effective organizational practices, and the knowledge of spatial organizations has been examined in a number of studies (Weinstein & David, 1987; Loughlin, and Suina, 1982). Concrete evidence has been compiled that shows that the organizational structure of a school has a powerful effect on students, teachers, and parents. The physical plant plays an active role in school events, and directly influences behavior and serves as an indicator of climate and expectations (Weinstein, 1979). Therefore, the basic criterion for the utilization of the school environment is to establish an arrangement that can be quickly modified to support the participation and activity which most complements the instructional goals and objectives of the school.

Catherine E. Loughlin (1992), in reference to environment, wrote about a positive school environment where the whole environment supported the primary purpose of school achievement success. Loughlin affirmed,

Above all, the school should be organized so that it provides a safe and physically comfortable environment that will promote student learning. Because children

learn what they live, the school should be organized and structured in a way to facilitate the attainment of social, emotional, and physical development of our students. (p. 23)

“When the knowledge of these effects is applied to support instructional purposes, the environment can function on behalf of learning” (Loughlin & Suina, 1982, p. 162).

Building a School /Learning Community

In previous sections of this study, a number of research related questions were posed to determine a school’s effectiveness. In this section, a review of the literature of effective leadership as it relates to creating a school / learning community was explored. In keeping with the contextual nature of this section, the terms school community and learning community were used interchangeably. The concept of school community has its roots in the Greek word ‘*paideia*.’ Although this word is difficult to define, it is commonly accepted that the notion of paedia is an evolution towards an educative community (Goodlad, 1984). Goodlad went on to suggest that paedia “evokes generative thoughts regarding the interplay between the development of mature, enlightened individuals and maximum cultural development. The community optimally educates” (p. 349).

Together, teachers, staff members, administrators, parents and students create a culture and climate that makes up a group known as the school community. Sandra Gupton (2003) acknowledged:

Wholesome school communities are built on a culture of mutual trust and respect among members – students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members. This paves the way for internal harmony, cooperation and smooth functioning, which enables the best instruction and learning to take place. (p. 66)

Sergiovanni (1993) stated, “Communities are defined by their centers of values, sentiments and beliefs that provide the needed conditions for creating a sense of “we” from a collection of “I’s” (p. 6). “The purpose for building community”, according to Gouthro and Gibson (1996), “comes out a willingness on the part of all stakeholders to establish what it was that they believed and valued in common, sometimes evolving from a commonly held vision” (p. 2). Norris et al., (2002) wrote:

Community celebrates the dignity and worth of self and others, fosters the empowerment of both, and encourages and supports the maximum development of human potential for the benefit of the common good. The very word *community* implies unity, relationships, and a kindred sense of spirit. The concept of relationships is central to the definition, for it suggests an emotional bonding resulting from the interaction of individuals joined in a common purpose. In a learning community the purpose is “learning”; therefore, individual and collective growth are the products of that relationship. (p. 9)

For the principal who opens a new elementary school, the purpose of building community in schools should be one of the central themes on which the new elementary school opener focuses their efforts. Effective schools are a learning community, a place

where teachers and administrators study, work, and learn together with the mission of improving student achievement (Wong & Wong, 2002).

The creation of an effective school community is not an individual effort, but a total effort of everyone in the school. Mike Schomaker and Roland Barth say what has always been known: “People who work together always achieve greater results than people who work alone.” The challenge of building community does not rest with the schools alone. (Norris et al., p. 12).

The Principal’s Role in Building a Learning Community

For principals opening a new elementary school, many challenges exist. One of these challenges is to lead by building a school community. The centrality of values for administrators for the 21st century is clearly evident in the call for leadership of the school community (Beck and Murphy, 1966: Murphy, 1994). Calabrese (1994) asserted, “Building a learning community may be the most difficult task facing a school leader” (p.4). According to Calabrese, building community or a learning organization in a new school commences when the leader realizes that “the school provides a context that brings people together to build an organization that is mutually supportive and focuses on achieving community-related goals” (p. 2).

The major characteristics of a true learning community are a recognized state of continuing interaction and interdependence directed toward the accomplishment of organizational purposes (Goldman, 1972). As the result of their work with learning

communities, and in an effort to understand the power of learning communities, Norris, et al. (2000) cited eight belief statements that emerged from their study of learning communities. The beliefs are:

1. Knowledge and acceptance of self and others, along with a willingness to share power through collective contributions, is the foundation of community.
2. An ethic of care surrounds a true learning community.
3. Personal awareness and values acquisition are dependent not only on knowledge of but experiences with others. Experience is the greatest teacher.
4. Learning communities exert a powerful influence in shaping personal and collective values.
5. Learning communities are laboratories for experiencing transformational leadership and for forming the dispositions, knowledge, and performance skills necessary for transformational leadership.
6. A learning community *structure* (a cohort or a team) does not automatically ensure that a learning community will evolve.
7. Professors can inhibit the full development of learning communities, as well as the benefits derived from them, by their insistence on maintaining a “sage on the stage” model of instruction.
8. Transfer of learning must be purposefully reinforced throughout the learning community experience if the dispositions, knowledge, and performance of future leaders are to be enacted. (p. 10)

In understanding how a community of learners is built, a major step is to define the role of principals in the process. The ultimate role of the principal in building school community is to produce an effective school. An effective school is one in which essentially all of the students acquire the basic skills and other desired behavior within the school. For principals, the focus of building school community should be the provision of opportunities for learning. For that reason alone, principals must survey the literature on schools and on schooling to become what Barth (1990) has termed the “leading learner” in a school community (In Hughes, 1990, p. 232). Barth (2000) wrote, “Whether we are called principals or teachers, our primary responsibility is to promote learning in others and in ourselves” (p. 68). According to Barth:

Schools can become communities of learners where youngsters discover - and adults *rediscover* - the joy, the difficulty, and the excitement of learning. The most important role of the principal is that of the leading learner: one who displays and models the behavior we hope and expect students to acquire. (p. 68-69)

The new school opener needs to recognize that the involvement of students, parents, teachers and others will increase the organization’s full development and maximize efforts toward the accomplishment of the organizational purposes – producing an effective school. In essence, “the school becomes a community of life-long learners united in a common project: making the vision of what the school can become come to pass” (Glickman & Kanawati, 1998, p. 1250).

School Organization Research

DuFour and Eaker (1992) observed that, “educators are being challenged to take the lead in designing, creating, and organizing schools that work for teaching and learning. Perhaps the single most important factor in creating an exemplary school is the willingness to pursue that goal with tenacious persistence” (p. 9).

Organizing schools that work for teaching and learning, according to William Spady (1988), is based on an inherently attractive concept he refers to as “*organizing for results*.” This concept implies a deliberate attempt to plan and conduct essential activities so as to accomplish our aims successfully – in other words, purposefully doing what we set out to do. From Spady’s perspective, that means, “having all students learn well, not just the fastest, the brightest, or the most advantaged” (p. 36). Spady elaborated further on organizing for results by stating:

Our educational systems, schools, and instructional programs are not organized to achieve or ensure successful results; instead, they are organized primarily for student custody and administrative convenience. If we were to organize for results, we would have to make major changes in our philosophy, purpose, operations, and structures. (p. 90)

If the purpose of our schools is to provide a quality education for all students, then leaders need to design the organization with that purpose in mind. Elementary school buildings constructed between 1945 and 1957 differed in important respects from those built earlier. Greater consideration was given to the type of program to be carried on

inside the buildings (Shepherd & Ragan, p. 439). Some of the different aspects that Shepherd and Ragan (1982) observed then of school construction were that two- and three-story buildings were giving way to one-story buildings, school sites are larger, and classrooms are larger.

There is considerable evidence that schools as currently designed are not operating in the best interest of either the students they seek to educate or the people who work in them. Goodlad (1984) proclaimed, "The organization of schooling appears to proceed as if we had no relevant knowledge regarding the development of children and youth" (p. 323). Murphy (1998) commented 14 years later that "We organize schools as if we had no idea or knowledge of how children learn" (lecture notes, 1998). He further expounded on this observation by declaring:

The specific challenge, then, is to use new principles of organization in service of the creation of [new school settings]. These new [settings] need to promote the development of a professional work place. Even more important, [organization] of new [settings] must advance from blueprints based on our best knowledge of student learning. (p. 15)

To borrow Richard Elmore's (2002) wallpaper metaphor, organizing a school is like unexamined wallpaper. Elmore declared:

People who work in schools do not pay attention to the connection between how they organize and manage themselves and how they take care of their own and their students' learning. The structure of the organization is like wallpaper--after living

with the same wallpaper for a certain number of years, people cease to see it. (p. 3)

Elmore (2002) elaborated further by stating, “In our present political and social environment of schooling, this lack of attention is dangerous and irresponsible” (p. 3).

Elmore’s observations lead to the summation that schools are under pressure for increased accountability for student learning, and too many educators cannot account for the basic elements of their organization and how these elements affect the learning that teachers and students engage in.

Researchers (Elmore, 2002) agree that educators need to look closely at the organizational and instructional practices that affect the learning of students and adults in school. Most school principals, when assigned to a school as principal, “inherit a preexisting organizational structure” (Danielson, 2002, p. 45). For the educational leader who finds himself or herself in a new role, such as the principal who opens a new school, “certain aspects of the school’s organization ... will become part of that new school’s identity” (Danielson, p. 45). This reality can make designing the school’s organizational structure a challenging one.

A school administrator might be unable to select the pupils for the school but he or she can select actions to enhance the likelihood of pupil success at school (Hughes, 1999, p. 228). Organizing schools to support higher levels of achievement and learning for students is challenging, but research has documented such efforts that demonstrated success in many areas of the United States. An analysis of the research reveals that we have learned about how schools can be organized in ways that can enhance the quality of

learning that students experience. It has become clearer “that ordinary schools could succeed in extraordinary ways when they refocused their work on the needs of students rather than the demands of bureaucracies” (Darling-Hammond, 1997, p. 33).

Danielson (2002) described school organization as:

How schools arrange the resources of time, space and personnel for maximum effect on student learning;... How a school is organized should reflect the staff's commitment to the success of all students. Every aspect of the instructional program will convey the values and goals of the staff toward students and their learning. Through a school's organizational patterns, the staff can convey to both students and their parents that learning is important, that the business of the school is learning, and that the different elements of the school's organization are structured to support that learning. (p.43)

With as many challenges that educational leaders are faced with in the 21st century, the time has come for a closer examination of learning in our schools. Recent questioning of the purpose of education focuses on the worth of what we teach, how we teach, and on the quality of learning that takes places in our schools. A little over a year ago, President George W. Bush put his signature to a massive federal law titled *The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)*, which emphasized quality, performance, and accountability of all schools. As described in the March 2003 issue of *TEA Today*, the 1,100-page bill - the latest incarnation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 - markedly expanded the federal government's role in education, prescribed

mandates to the states, and along the way touted goals almost nobody could dispute: Close the student achievement gap, make public schools accountable, set standards of excellence for every child, put a qualified teacher in every classroom (p. 12).

In response, many educational organizations have focused on changes that center on improving teaching and learning. In the past decade, we have seen a focus on new and creative teaching techniques in our classrooms, a movement that emphasized active learning, the value of learning, and the importance of assessment on teaching. We have addressed the all-important issue of learning by students without focusing on the all-important questions of what and how our students learn academic material. One change, as noted by Darling-Hammond (1997), which could maximize students' learning would be to create "learning-centered" schools. To create such a school, we need to know how students learn, to understand the barriers to students' learning, and to develop classroom techniques that promote learning among students.

Summing up the reality of organizing and maximizing schools for student learning, Ron Edmonds (1981) stated emphatically:

We can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need to do that.

Whether or not we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven't so far. (p. 53)

It is evident that no blueprint yet exists for the creation of schools that eliminates all barriers to student success. However, almost monthly researchers publish reports of

fledging efforts to design new organizations and more valid ways to assess student learning. The components of school organization are filled with worthy thoughts. Principals promote the school's academic emphasis by their own actions, by the organizational structures they put in place, and by their beliefs. While no single characteristic of leadership or component of school organization can guarantee school effectiveness, it is crucial as educational leaders that we are more mindful and cognizant of these components so that as we restructure, design, or organize new school settings our schools will exemplify the true purpose of education, which is academic success for all learners.

Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on the review of literature regarding leadership effectiveness, effective school research, principal effectiveness, building a school/learning community, and school organization. There is a fair amount of agreement in the literature that existing organizational structures and leadership ineffectiveness contribute to the problems that currently plague our schools. There is a considerable amount of literature that directs our attention to focus on the needs and interests of students when organizing schools. These trends acknowledge the new expectations that must emerge for education to succeed in a complex and global society.

Sandra Gupton (2003) in her book, *Instructional Leadership Toolbox*, remarked about how to improve teaching and learning for today's students. Gupton wrote:

Along with the dramatic changes in the makeup of the U. S. population and school-age children, research that illuminates our understanding of learning has rapidly increased over the last decade, giving educators considerably more reliable information on which to base decisions about programs, curricula, and teaching. Educators must assume the responsibility of keeping abreast of what research has to offer about how learning happens best and how schools, classrooms, principals, and teachers can facilitate the learning of children. (pp. 121-122)

Most schools could dramatically improve the quality of learning and student success if they are willing to stop some of the traditional practices and beliefs they have regarding schools and learning by aligning what they know about effective leadership, effective schools, school/learning communities, and school organization to match the fundamental purpose of schooling. These views and emerging trends in the area of effective schools and school communities suggest an emerging vision of education that builds on the foundation of experiments for student success, but with unique distinctions. It represents a statement of education's increasing value and worth to the learner and community, reflects the increased emphasis on students as individuals, and builds upon the efficiency and professionalism of enhanced leadership skills of the school principal. Murphy (1998) declared, "Leaders for tomorrow's schools will face the great challenge of helping define and breathe life into new forms of leadership and [school communities]. Their work will be neither easy nor comfortable" (p. 14).

CHAPTER THREE

Methods and Procedures

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore, identify, and describe the duties, responsibilities and challenges of three principals who had opened a new elementary school. From such a study, the researcher hopes to provide principals who are selected to open and organize new school settings in the future with a better understanding of the duties, responsibilities, and challenges associated with opening a new school.

Objectives

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Explore, identify, describe, and compare the challenges that principals of new schools encounter.
2. Identify and describe the essential principal duties and responsibilities needed for opening of a new school.
3. Identify central patterns and themes that characterize the opening and organization of new schools.

Research Question

Given this purpose, the research question for this study was: What are the duties, responsibilities, and challenges that principals encounter when charged with the task of opening and organizing a new elementary school?

Research Method

A research method is one way of investigating certain kinds of questions (Manen, 1990, p. 1). The purpose of this study was to contribute to a better understanding of the challenges that face principals when they are charged with opening a new school. This study also sought to identify and describe the essential principal duties and responsibilities needed for opening a new school. A qualitative methodology was selected for this study, "Because of its descriptive nature and ability to capture the direct experience of phenomena, an issue or a process explored, and of those who have lived them" (Creswell, 2002, p. 146). Trochim (2000) noted that qualitative research has special value for investigating complex issues and that researchers need to use qualitative research as the basis for documenting direct experiences because it "tells the story" from the participants' viewpoint, providing rich descriptive detail. This study was an exploratory one in that very limited information is available about planning and implementing new schools. Consequently, qualitative research was the approach of choice for this study, "This exploration is needed because little research exists on the topic or because the issue is complex and its complexity needs to be better understood" (Creswell, 2002, p. 62).

Qualitative research excels at generating information that is very detailed, and accordingly uses different methods to collect various kinds of information from which to make observations. Qualitative research places an emphasis on data collection, the experience, and the behaviors. As opposed to quantitative research, qualitative research

focuses on understanding and meaning through oral narratives and observations rather than through numbers and statistics. Trochim (2000) noted, “Qualitative research enables you to describe the phenomena of interest in great detail, in the original language of the research participants” (p. 2).

Wilson (1977) listed two reasons or fundamental beliefs for using qualitative methodology: (1) Events must be studied in natural settings; that is, understanding requires field-based research; and (2) A researcher cannot understand events without understanding how they are perceived and interpreted by the people who participate in them. Along the same line, Merriam’s (1998) underlying assumptions or basic characteristics of the qualitative mode of inquiry serves as a reassuring guideline for selecting this approach. Merriam listed six characteristics:

- Qualitative researchers are concerned primarily with process, rather than outcomes or products.
- Qualitative researchers are interested in meaning - how people make sense of their lives, experiences, and their structures of the world.
- The qualitative researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Data are mediated through this human instrument, rather than through inventories, questionnaires, or machines.
- Qualitative research involves fieldwork. The researcher physically goes to the people, setting, site, or institution to observe or record behavior in its natural setting.

- Qualitative research is descriptive in that the researcher is interested in the process, meaning, and understanding gained through words or pictures.
- The process of qualitative research is inductive, in that the researcher builds abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, and theories from details. (pp. 7-8)

Selection of Participants

Based on the characteristics that define a new school, a total of three principals from three Tennessee public elementary schools were asked to participate in this study. The researcher identified all participants who met the selection criteria by utilizing the Market Data Retrieval (MDR) School State Directory to all public and non-public schools. Participants were selected carefully through a process known as purposeful sampling. Davey (1999) communicated, "Purposive sampling maximizes the chance of obtaining accurate information about the studied phenomenon for it relies upon choosing those who have both the experience of the phenomenon and the ability to communicate their experience of the phenomenon" (p. 4). Using the criteria for purposeful sampling, participants were selected based on the following:

- That they have experienced the phenomenon under study,
- That they can communicate their experience of the phenomenon as free as possible from embarrassment and bias, and
- That they are able to "bracket" their knowledge, beliefs, and common understandings about the phenomenon. (Davey, 1999, p. 5)

John Davis (2004) remarked that the personal feelings about the research and participants are important, although not to the participants. This process is known as bracketing. Davis explains 'bracketing' as a useful strategy for recognizing and setting aside the researcher's own reactions. Russell Davey (1999) concurred on the description by claiming that, " 'bracket' knowledge, or '*epoche*', is the process whereby all previous knowledge, beliefs, and common understandings about a given phenomenon are 'set aside'" (p. 5).

Final determination and the selection of three principals were based on two factors: (1) the prospective participant's qualifications fulfilling the criteria for purposeful sampling, and (2) the participant's willingness to participate.

Data Collection Strategy

As indicated earlier, the basis to use qualitative research "is to document direct experiences because they 'tell the story' from the participant's viewpoint, providing rich descriptive detail" (Trochim, 2000, p.3). In a qualitative research study, descriptive data are important. Hancock (1998) wrote, "Qualitative approaches to data collection usually involve direct interaction with individuals on a one-to-one basis or in a group setting. The benefit of using this approach includes the richness of data and deeper insight into the phenomena under study" (p. 9). The review of literature (Hancock, 1998; Trochim, 2000; Creswell, 2002; Yin, 1994) consistently listed three main methods of collecting qualitative data, which are: individual interviews, focus groups, or observations.

Researchers agree that, in qualitative studies, interviewing is a major source of qualitative data needed for understanding the phenomenon under study. “The interview is the best way - and perhaps the only way - to find out what is in and on someone else’s mind” (Patton, 1990, p. 278). Wright (2003) affirmed, “Interviews are good not only for getting information from and/or about someone but also for getting their information and perspectives in their own words” (p. 8). Consequently, the data collection method for this study was the interview.

Interviews, one-on-one or group interviews, conducted for qualitative research can have various characteristics. Wright’s (2003) menu of interview characteristics includes:

1. **Structured**, [which means] all questions [are] prepared before-hand, written up, and asked in specific order from which the researcher does not deviate, even over several interviews;
2. **Semi-structured**, [which means] having specific themes but not necessarily specifically worded questions and allowing for change of order and direction based on how things happen during the interview; or
3. **Open-ended**, [which means the questions are] based on broad themes and allowing the direction of the interview and the issues addressed or the emphasis to come largely from the interviewee or what comes from the interview process itself. (p. 8)

Most common is the semi-structured interview that is guided by a set of questions

and issues to be explored. Interviewing, especially semi-structured and unstructured formats, fares well when compared to other data collection techniques in terms of the validity of the information obtained. Similarly, Trochim (2000) wrote:

Unstructured interviewing involves direct interaction between the researcher and a respondent or group. It differs from traditional structured interviewing in several important ways. First, although the researcher may have some initial guiding questions or core concepts to ask about, there is no formal structured instrument or protocol. Second, the interviewer is free to move the conversation in any direction of interest that may come up. Consequently, unstructured interviewing is particularly useful for exploring a topic broadly. (p.1)

In essence, compared to structured interviews, unstructured interviews provide ample opportunity to probe for clarification and ask questions appropriate to the respondent's knowledge, involvement, and status. The interview also provides for "continuous assessment and evaluation of information by the inquirer, allowing him to redirect, probe, and summarize" (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p. 187).

The process of conducting a qualitative interview, as described by Creswell (2002), is where the researchers ask one or more participants mostly general, open-ended questions and record their answers (p. 203). In open-ended questions, the respondents reply in their own words. The open-ended response can yield a wide range of information and indicate the respondent's level of knowledge. Thus, it can be clearly ascertained whether the respondent understood the question.

The data collection strategy for this study was the interview. Wright (2003) acknowledged “interviews are good not only for getting information from and/or about someone but also for getting their information and perspectives in their own words” (p. 8). Interviews were arranged for maximum convenience for the participants at a time and location of their choosing to gather information and data focusing on the challenges of opening a new elementary school. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide. The interview guide developed was composed of a set of questions that guided the researcher in exploring the phenomenon of opening a new elementary school. The interview guide questions are found in Appendix B. The instrumentation also included a two-page data profile form requesting personal, educational, and school profile information. (See Appendix C).

In an attempt to capture every verbal detail, interviews were audio-taped. After each interview, the researcher transcribed the audiotape. Once transcriptions were complete, each participant was provided with a copy of the transcript to make additions, corrections, or modifications to the transcript.

Using the instrumentation, a pilot interview was conducted with a principal who had opened a new school but was not a participant for the study. Based on the data gathered by conducting a pilot interview, changes or revisions within the interview guide were made that “revealed ambiguities, poorly worded questions, and questions that [were] not understood” (Franken and Wallen, 1996, p. 76).

Data Analysis Strategy

Data analysis involves summarizing the mass of data collected and presenting the results in a way that communicates the most important features (Hancock, 1998, p.16).

Through data analysis, which consists of “examining, categorizing, tabulating, or otherwise recombining the evidence to address the initial propositions of a study” (Yin, 1994, p. 102), emerging themes and patterns regarding a phenomena will develop.

Merriam (1998) stated:

Data analysis is the process of making sense out of data. And making sense out of data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read - it is the process of making meaning. Data analysis is a complex process that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between inductive and deductive reasoning, between description and interpretation. (p. 178)

Once the data collection stage with each participant was complete, the audiotapes were transcribed. After the transcriptions were complete, each participant was provided with a copy of the transcript so that each had the opportunity to make additions, corrections, or modifications to the transcript. All transcripts were then consistently coded and data were then compared and sorted into a matrix grid, providing a visual comparison of data from all participants.

Given the purpose, objectives, and research question for this study, the following steps fulfilled the methodology procedure:

1. Based on the characteristics that define a new school (one that has been newly constructed, was not a replacement for an older or smaller building, had no prior occupancy of students or staff, and was created to accommodate a growing student population), new elementary schools that opened in the state of Tennessee for the first time during the school year 2001-2002 and school year 2002-2003 were identified.
2. Utilizing the list of identified new elementary schools in the state of Tennessee, three elementary schools were selected that met the additional criteria for selection, as outlined below:
 - Must be identified as a public school;
 - Geographically located in the state of Tennessee within a three hour commute of Knoxville, Tennessee;
 - Must be an elementary school, including grades K-5;
 - Minimum student population of 300 students, with a preference for schools with a larger student population;
 - Among the three principals selected, an attempt to represent both genders will be considered.
3. Screened potential candidates by contacting principal of the new elementary school via telephone to discuss study, extent of principal involvement, and seek verbal agreement to participate. Informed candidate that source of contact was through the state directory maintained by Market Data Retrieval

Systems.

4. Two alternates were selected in the event that any of the selected participants were unable to participate for any reason.
5. Once participants had been identified, selected and verbally agreed to participate, and to ensure participant of confidentiality and anonymity, the researcher forwarded via U. S. registered mail an Informed Consent Form (See Appendix A) which was completed by each participant and returned to the researcher.
6. Once Form B had been signed and returned, the researcher scheduled a convenient date, time, and location to conduct an interview with the participant.
7. Began collecting data by conducting scheduled interviews with each of the selected participants using the Interview Guide. Each interview was audio taped.
8. Began the process of analyzing data as outlined in the Data Analysis section.
9. Began the process of writing summary of findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Results

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe the duties, responsibilities, and challenges of three principals who had opened new elementary schools. The major research question for the study was: What are the duties, responsibilities, and challenges that principals encounter when charged with the task of opening a new elementary school? This information was gathered through in-depth interviews with three principals that opened a new elementary school in the state of Tennessee, which were guided by the following research questions:

1. As principal, what was your role during the construction phase?
2. During the construction phase, what latitude did you as principal have in making decisions as they related to the organization of the new school?
3. What responsibilities and duties did you have or assume as they related to organization of the new school during the construction phase (staffing, selection of colors, furniture design, etc.)?
4. What leadership challenges did you encounter prior to the opening of your new school?
5. What organizational challenges did you encounter prior to the opening of your new school?
6. What other challenges do principals of new schools encounter prior to opening?

7. What were the things that were important to you and how did you put them into practice?
8. What vision had you formulated of what your new school would be like once it was completed?
9. What did you do prior to opening of the new school to have your vision become a reality?
10. In regards to the stakeholders (staff, students, parents, community), what were some of the challenges or concerns that arose prior to the opening of the new school? How did you handle these concerns or challenges?
11. How did you engage stakeholders (staff, students, parents, community), and what were some of the challenges or concerns that arose prior to the opening of the new school? How did you handle these concerns or challenges?
12. Was there any type of induction given for you and your staff before you moved into your new building? If so, who conducted the induction and what was the process?
13. If you were given the opportunity to open a new school again, would you do it? Why or why not?
14. If you had the opportunity to open a new school again, what would you do differently?
15. What was the most important aspect of opening a new school?
16. What was the most difficult challenge of opening a new school?

17. Do you believe you had adequate academic knowledge and background experience to prepare you for the challenge of opening a new school?
Explain.
18. What skills do you believe principals need to be successful in opening and organizing a new school?
19. What advice or suggestions would you give to a principal appointed to open a new school?
20. What advice or suggestions would you give to school systems/districts that you feel would be beneficial to the success of opening of a new school?

These questions formed the interview guide which was the primary data source used to identify and describe the duties, responsibilities and challenges that principals encounter when opening a new elementary school. A qualitative methodology was selected for this study “because of its descriptive nature and ability to capture the direct experience of phenomena, an issue or a process explored, of those who have lived them” (Creswell, 2002, p. 146). The outline for this chapter presents the demographic information of each principal and school that participated in the study, and the remainder of the chapter is organized according to the findings related to the interview questions.

Demographic Information

The researcher identified the three participants who met the selection criteria by utilizing the Market Data Retrieval (MDR) School State Directory to all public and non-public schools. All of the participants selected for this study were female and were at

least 40 years of age when they experienced the opening of a new school. Two of the new school openers were assistant principals when appointed as principal of the new school, and one new school opener was serving as principal in an existing school. The new school openers were experienced educators who averaged 42.5 years of age and 25.6 years of experience when appointed to open a new elementary school. The work experiences for the participants included the role of classroom teacher, librarian, guidance counselor, and assistant principal. To protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants and the schools, fictitious names have been assigned. The participants will be referred to as Grace, principal of Glendale Elementary; Kristina, principal of Kormel Elementary; and Loretta, principal of Lincoln Elementary. Other demographic and composite information about the new schools and the three principals who participated in this study is presented in Table One on the following page.

Two of the three schools, Glendale Elementary and Kormel Elementary opened at the same time, August 2000, and one school, Lincoln Elementary, opened a year later in August 2001. The duration of construction for each of the new schools varied slightly. The average amount of time to complete Glendale Elementary and Kormel Elementary was 21 months, and Lincoln Elementary was completed in ten months. Two of the three schools were Intermediate Schools accommodating only third, fourth, and fifth-grade students. The third school was a traditional elementary school with grade configurations consisting of kindergarten through fourth grades. Two schools have seen a slight increase in student population since the opening year, while another has seen a slight

Table One
Demographic Information

Principal Information	Grace	Kristina	Loretta
Age *	46	40	44
Ethnicity	White	White	White
Gender	Female	Female	Female
Work Experience	Teacher Guidance Counselor Principal	Teacher Librarian Assistant Principal	Teacher Assistant- Principal Principal
Years of Professional Experience *	25 years	18 years	24 years
Educational Background	Bachelor of Science Master of Science Educational Specialist	Bachelor of Science Master of Science	Bachelor of Science Master of Science
Date Appointed Principal of New School	March 2000	January 2000	March 2001

*As of date appointed as principal of new school

decrease in student membership. The number of staff members at each new school ranged from a low of 51 to a high of 69. Demographic information for each school is outlined in Table Two on the following page.

Findings Related to the Interview Questions

The interview guide used for this study consisted of 20 semi-structured questions. Analysis and interpretation of the interview questions began by clustering questions that were similar in context. This clustering process provided the researcher with more than one opportunity to glean understanding in identifying and describing the duties, responsibilities, and challenges of each participant as she discussed her experience of opening a new school.

Cluster One: Interview questions one, two, and three present data regarding the role, latitude, responsibilities and duties of each principal during the construction phase. The questions were:

1. As principal, what was your role during the construction phase?
2. During the construction phase, what latitude did you as principal have in making decisions relative to the organization of the new school?
3. What responsibilities and duties did you have or assume relative to the organization of the new school during the construction phase (staffing, selection of colors, furniture design, etc.)?

Table Two
School Demographics

School Name	Glendale Elementary	Kormel Elementary	Lincoln Elementary
Month/Year New School Opened	August 2000	August 2000	August 2001
Duration of New School Construction	1 and 1/2 years	2 years	10 months
Grade Configuration of New School	Intermediate School Third, Fourth, and Fifth Grades	Intermediate School Third, Fourth, and Fifth Grades	Elementary School K,1,2,3,4
Enrollment as of Date School Opened	480	450	545
Enrollment as of Interview Date	490	422	760
Staff Size: Certified Non-Certified	38 26	31 20	54 15

The first cluster of questions were intended to discover the role, latitude, responsibilities and duties of each principal from the date of their appointment as principal continuing until the date the new school opened for students. The role of the principal during the construction phase varied for each participant, due mainly in part to the time each individual was appointed principal of the new school until the date the school opened for students.

From this cluster of questions, three themes emerged. The first theme to emerge was that principals in this study were not involved in the planning stage of their new school's structural design. For all three principals, the design phase for the new school was complete when they were appointed principal. Due to the time frame in which each principal was appointed, this factor provided no opportunity for the principals to be involved in the planning process and design of the new school. When asked about her role in the planning and design phase of the new school, Grace replied:

"You know, I really didn't have a lot of input during the design phase. There were teachers and parents and administrators on a committee that looked at blueprints and studied the makeup of how this school was going to be built. I was not on that committee. As far as having a lot of input into the design, I didn't."

The second theme to emerge was that each principal had limited latitude and opportunity for input once construction began. One principal, Kristina, principal of Kormel Elementary, was appointed eight months prior to the opening of her new school, and the other two principals, Grace and Loretta, were appointed only four months before the opening of their new school.

Being appointed eight months before the opening of her new school, Kristina had more latitude in making decisions regarding many aspects of the school's features after construction began than did Grace and Loretta. Unlike the other two principals, Kristina was consulted on many levels concerning the interior and ground features. Kristina remarked:

"Although plans for the building were already in place, as were the brick and the roof color, I was involved in all of decisions for FFE (furniture, fixtures, and equipment). I made decisions regarding styles and colors; I chose the playground equipment and all the furniture for the classrooms."

With construction well underway, Loretta, who was appointed only four months before her new school opened, was able to make two changes that would affect organizational practices of the new school. Loretta explained her involvement by stating:

"The basic changes I was able to make in the building centered on making some color scheme changes. I was able to make some changes structurally to the building from color scheme standpoints primarily. I was only able to make some changes to the colored accent walls for the classroom and hallways and to the pattern of the hallway floor tile."

Loretta explained the reasoning for the request to change the hallway floor tile by recalling that the architects had designed the building so that one side of each hallway would have a colored accent wall in each classroom. The opposite side of the hall would have a different accent wall, and each grade level would have their 'own color.' Loretta further explained:

“This works wonderfully from an architectural and design standpoint, but from an implementation standpoint when you’ve designed for five kindergarten classes, five first-grade classes, and the second year you have six kindergarten classes and four first grade classes, the color scheme and the color content do not work, so we wanted that shifted. The architects also had designed a colored border for our floor. We have white tile on the floor and a royal blue stripe along the wall. I had them move that blue tile stripe one block away from the wall and have our students walk on the blue stripe. Architecturally, they didn’t think of that.”

The second change that Loretta orchestrated had to do with details in the textbook storage room. Architect plans called for only nine inches of clearance on each shelf for textbooks. The problem with that plan, as Loretta explained, was that “the textbooks would not fit on the shelves.” Loretta noted, “They (textbooks) were too big, they would not stand up on the shelves! I was able to affect a change on the shelving before they installed them throughout the building.”

Although each of the principals involved in this study were not involved in the planning and design phase of their new school, each of them felt like the changes they were able to make after their appointment and during the construction phase brought about significant and effective improvements in how their school was organized and would operate. Had the opportunity to be involved earlier in the planning process for the new school, Grace believed she, “could have contributed more by alerting the architects about current educational trends and approaches.” Grace continued:

“Having the opportunity to talk with designers and architects about the current educational approaches that are used in our schools so that they can design schools to accommodate our programs, and not have programs designed around the school’s design, would have been beneficial.”

The third theme to emerge from this cluster of questions was that principals in this study had to deal with a diverse list of duties and responsibilities consisting of processes, procedures, and functions for which no assistance was provided or formal guidelines established. One of the major responsibilities mentioned by the three principals for which no formal guidelines were provided was staffing.

Although participants described the responsibility and duty of staffing as “time-consuming,” the concerns and experience for each of them was quite different. As evident by the experience of the three principals in this study, there were no formal guidelines or processes followed when selecting staff for the new schools.

Grace, the principal of Glendale Elementary, struggled with the decision of whom to hire for a secretary and bookkeeper. Due to the fact that this new school opener only had one year of experience as a principal, she felt “scared” and “stressed.” Grace commented:

“I hired a new secretary and bookkeeper. And that was kind of scary for me because I’d had only one year of experience as a principal. And you know, there are a lot of things that you can observe as a principal, but the things you would not necessarily know would be the internal auditing system and the attendance issue, and all of those things. I was still learning, and yet I had two new people,

and we all learned together. It turned out fine, but it was a little stressful as we went through that process to get everything set up.”

After staff selection was complete, Grace told her new staff:

“We have a new beginning. We will decide how this school will run. We will have to decide from that very first day on issues such as how our kids are going to behave, how we’re going to have parents in and out of our building, our security measures, all of that.”

For Kristina, staffing was a little less problematic. Because Kristina’s new school was going to be an Intermediate School, teachers from the existing elementary schools who taught third, fourth, or fifth grade were given first consideration for coming to the new school. Kristina explained:

“If they chose to stay and move to a different grade, if there was an opening, they had that choice. Most chose to go to the new school. But the decision had to be their choice. They had to want to be part of this new concept, this new beginning. More importantly, they needed to be able to buy-in and support the vision and concept.”

Loretta’s experience with staffing evolved with a different twist. When asked if she had control over who came to the new school, Loretta replied:

“For the most part, no! The teachers who were already in those grades came to this school. For example, if you were a third - grade teacher at Lincoln Elementary, you came to this school. I kind of inherited a few staff members. There were some changes made. We had teachers who were attached to the old

building who did not want to leave their friends or associates. They talked to me or the director of schools, and those decisions were just worked out. It just worked out for everyone. It was not a big issue for us.”

Unlike beginning school in an existing building, Grace summed up the duties and responsibilities principals of new schools have to deal. She stated:

“In a new school you have to design a procedure for everything... arrival, dismissal, traffic, movement through the hallway, to the cafeteria, art, music, library, and physical education classrooms. Then, afterwards, you have to communicate it to teachers, parents, and students...everybody.”

Interviewing the many candidates and trying to decide which individual would be a good fit for the new school was a major responsibility during the construction phase. Merging of faculty members with strong personalities, classroom assignments for staff in the building were examples of staffing issues, also.

The duties and responsibilities also involved tasks associated with the creation and implementation of processes and procedures that were closely associated with staff issues. Such tasks identified from the data were formulation of schedules, development of staff handbook, grouping and assigning students to classrooms, curriculum development, material acquisition, and organizing and conducting staff development. When the participants were asked, “What other responsibilities and duties did you assume during the construction phase?,” the following is a compilation of their responses:

- Interviewing and hiring for faculty selection

- Classroom assignments for staff in the building
- Planning the movement process to new facility
- Formulation of schedules
- Development of student and staff handbook
- Zoning and transportation concerns
- Frequent communication with teachers, parents and students regarding construction progress
- Development of discipline plans
- Preparation of a budget for expenditures
- Grouping and assigning students to classrooms
- Curriculum development
- Selection of new textbooks
- Overseeing assembly labor
- Material acquisition
- Furniture, fixture, and equipment selection
- Inventory of all new equipment and furniture
- Organizing and conducting staff development
- Development and implementation of security measures

Cluster Two: Data regarding the leadership and organizational challenges that arose prior to the opening of a new school are analyzed by clustering interview questions four, five, six, ten, and twelve. The questions were:

4. What leadership challenges did you encounter prior to opening of your new school?

5. What organizational challenges do principals of new schools encounter prior to opening of your new school?
6. What other challenges do principals of new schools encounter prior to the opening?
10. In regards to the stakeholders (staff, students, community, staff), what were some of the challenges or concerns that arose prior to the opening of the new school? How did you handle these concerns or challenges?
12. What induction/orientation were you given before you were issued the keys to the new building? Were there others you included in the orientation? If so, who were they and why did you include them?

Prior to the opening of a new school, the duties and responsibilities of principals are diverse and endless, and so are the challenges that accompany that role. The theme to emerge from this cluster of questions was that principals of new schools spend an incredible amount of time dealing with unexpected and unavoidable challenges and concerns. A compilation of the challenges, separated into leadership and organizational challenges, encountered by principals who participated in this study prior to the opening of their new school is outlined in Table Three on the following page.

One such challenge Loretta encountered was the closing of the school street in May prior to the new school opening in August. Loretta explained:

“My school is one mile off of the main highway. So, not only were my parents wondering if their school was back there, but they were also wondering, how do I get to it? So we had our work cut out for us in communicating this to teachers,

Table Three

**Leadership and Organizational Challenges Encountered
Prior to Opening of New School**

Leadership Challenges	Organizational Challenges
Late appointment as principal of new school	Getting names of students zoned to attend school
Having dual responsibilities and duties at two schools	Limited training on adopted textbook series
Not being on committee that ordered furniture. When furniture came in, principal had no idea where it was supposed to go	Not being on committee that ordered furniture; not having enough furniture purchased
Being forceful, hard-nosed with construction people	Dealing with facility/structure problems early in construction phase.
Staff development during the summer	Implementation of a new schooling concept– Intermediate School
Hiring teachers early so they could attend workshops/training	Unassembled furniture- coordination of getting it put together and in the correct space
Being on call 24/7 and at school for deliveries everyday	Not able to move staff in until after Open House which occurred three days before teachers were to report
Conducting several meetings with staff to keep them informed of progress.	Zoning issue – drew students from both ends of the county
Inherited a few staff members.	Lack of funding for furniture and equipment needs

students, parent, and the community. We literally created maps with two different back - road routes to the school.”

Loretta acknowledged that had she not “had the opportunity to work with a phenomenal construction - site director,” a challenge like the one described above could have been a disaster.

Another challenge that all three principals encountered dealt with furniture and equipment needs for their school. Although the challenge context was similar for each principal, each principal’s concern was different. Grace’s furniture challenge was one that most principals would love to encounter. Grace’s school, Glendale Elementary, was the first new school built in their system in a long time. Grace exclaimed: “This (building of a new school) was something that did not happen in this county very often.” Consequently, the school was completely furnished with “new equipment, new desks, new office furniture, new everything!” Grace summarized her challenge, exulting:

“Because they completely furnished this school with new everything, there was some type of delivery everyday. There were people here putting furniture together daily. I was trying to help them figure out where furniture went. But because I didn’t have any input into what was ordered as far as office furniture or furniture for any of the classrooms, I would have to get out the papers and decipher where things went in the school. That was a big challenge.”

The furniture challenge for Loretta, principal of Lincoln Elementary, was also quite different. For Loretta, her challenge developed as the result of funding not being appropriated into the construction budget for new furniture and equipment. At the time

when Lincoln Elementary was being built, the local school system had no opening of school organizational budget. Loretta emitted:

“There was not any funding for copy machines, computers, maps, globes, or overheads. The construction budget provided us with a teacher desk and chair, a filing cabinet, student desks, student chairs, and tables. We had a screen, a mounted wall screen with nothing to project upon it. We had a nice built-in TV cabinet in every classroom, but no funding to purchase the televisions.”

Due to Loretta’s persistence and “strong belief that students at Lincoln Elementary deserved nothing but the best”, she was able to procure funds through an established networking system with various central office personnel to “purchase bookshelves and tables that were necessary for centers, computers, guided reading and for all those kinds of things.”

Kristina’s experience with acquiring new furniture and equipment was less problematic and more privileged than Loretta’s. Because Kristina’s school system had planned ahead and allocated the financial resources to purchase needed furniture and equipment, Kristina did not have to worry about classrooms being equipped adequately. Kristina also had the opportunity to visit other new schools in the area to get an idea of what her school might want to purchase in terms of furniture and equipment. Kristina acknowledged:

“We had a good budget for furnishings for the school. The challenge came when the student desks and furniture arrived. The one thing I remember was that nothing was assembled. But a crew was put together to assemble the furniture. It

was amazing. All in all, it went smoothly.”

With school scheduled to begin the second week of August, construction at the three schools was not yet complete. The delay in taking possession and moving in to the new school was frustrating for everyone involved. This presented another challenge for the principals. “Teachers were anxious to move their belongings in and begin the process of organizing their classrooms,” noted Loretta. While parents and students were also anxious to be able to do a walk-through, the principals knew this was not a possibility. Although this was something each principal wanted to do, timing would not permit it.

With school scheduled to begin in three weeks, Loretta was now skeptical if school construction would be finished in time. For Loretta, her staff and parents, the rhetorical questions now were: “Will it truly open?” and “What is the time frame for completion?” In the meantime, and in addition to all the other duties and responsibilities pending, Loretta now had the responsibility of calming all anxieties and reassuring teachers, parents, and students that school would begin as scheduled.

At all three schools, even though the building was not cleared for occupancy, furniture, equipment, supplies and materials continued to arrive. This responsibility presented a challenge for Lincoln Elementary, as Loretta explained:

“Furniture delivery was scheduled for a certain date. The problem was that different pieces of furniture were purchased from different vendors. At that time student desks and chairs were purchased from one vendor, teacher desks were purchased from another vendor, and bookcases came from another vendor. So on the day of delivery, we had to stagger our furniture delivery so that we could get

the furniture in the building. On the day we actually took possession of furniture, I had four different vendors on site delivering furniture and it was exceptionally organized chaos.”

Not being able to take possession of the new school in a timely manner presents additional challenges for principals. One school, Lincoln Elementary, where Loretta is the principal, was actually turned over for occupancy 36 hours before children arrived. Loretta remarked:

“Our building was still considered a construction zone three days before school was scheduled to open. Prior to that, I was not allowed to permit parents to do a walk through...to do those kinds of things. I did three separate mailings to parents that summer - including basic information like school opening time, a copy of the traffic patterns, copies of bus routes and bus numbers, and explained to them that the building would open on time, but that it was not released to the system and I was not at liberty to invite them to come do a walk-through. From that point on, it was very difficult.”

When new schools are not ready for occupancy within a reasonable amount of time before school is scheduled to open, other challenges exist. Such challenges mentioned by participants in this study were:

- Staff does not have ample time to organize and prepare work areas
- Conducting staff meetings and staff development off site
- Amount of time spent addressing media about the construction delay
- Principal having to be available twenty four hours a day, seven days a week

for last minute adjustments, changes, and deliveries

- Not being able to adequately clean the building once construction was complete
- Creation of frequent communication mailings to parents, staff
- Not being able to communicate with the community in a timely manner regarding school related issues
- Not being able to have the community walk through the new building before school opened
- Not being able to devote a lot of time to the process of creating a feeling of team and community before school opened.

For principals of new schools, the challenges do not cease once the doors are opened for staff and students. The principal then is confronted with a new set of challenges. None of the principals in this study received any type of induction before they occupied their building. Table Four on the following page illustrates the remarks by each participant when asked, “Was there any type of induction given you and your staff before you moved into your new building?”

Cluster Three: Interview questions seven, eight, nine, and eleven examined the participant’s thoughts on vision and shaping culture and climate in new school settings. The questions were:

7. What were the things that were important to you and how did you put them into practice?
8. What vision had you formulated of what your new school would

Table Four

Participant's Remarks of Induction Session

Participant	Remarks
Gayle, Principal of Glenview Elementary	No. The maintenance person and the construction supervisor handed me a ring of keys, and said, don't give out your last key. Always keep your last one. No, nothing was done as far as induction to the new building.
Kristina, Principal of Kormel Elementary	There was no formal induction. There was nothing done to orientate me to the equipment or building.
Loretta, Principal of Lincoln Elementary	Absolutely none! There was no induction. There was no handholding. I was left to figure out everything. No training, no induction, no nothing!

be like once it was completed?

9. What did you do prior to opening of the new school to have your vision become a reality?

11. How did you engage stakeholders (staff, students, parents, community) in developing the school's culture and climate prior to the opening of your new school?

The theme to emerge from this cluster of questions was the importance of understanding the need to consult and involve all stakeholders in the process of starting a new learning community. Before the doors to a new school are opened, the event is marked by apprehension of expectations and practices for everyone. Such an experience evokes a wide variety of emotions, behaviors, and concerns, for everyone-the principal, staff, students, parents, and even the community in which the new school is being built.

For the principals participating in this study, opening and organizing a new school was considered a major task. For the principals and staff, it was an opportunity to "have a brand new beginning" and to introduce students, parents, and the community to the culture and expectations of their new school in a way that promotes academic achievement, positive behavior, and active involvement.

School leaders cannot begin to establish a rewarding and productive learning community without first assessing their own beliefs and values of the school's purpose. This assessment of beliefs and values translates into vision. This vision provides leaders with a belief about the future to which one is aspiring. When participants were asked the question, "What were the things that were most important to you?," every response had

to do with people and relationships. Table Five on the following page outlines responses to the interview question from each participant.

Terrence E. Deal and Kent D. Peterson (1998) noted, “Culture is the underground stream of norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and rituals that builds up overtime as people work together, solve problems, and confront challenges” (p.36). Other definitions emphasized were, “setting high expectations,” while others highlight “friendliness” or “organizational personality.”

Shaping school culture and climate is something a principal cannot do alone. Grace conceded: “It cannot be a one - man show. It is a team. It is a team from the bottom up, from the custodians, to the cooks, to the teachers.” The efforts of the principals to create school culture and climate involved consideration of the values and beliefs of others, beginning with staff and extending outward to include the entire learning community. The activities guided by the principals in this study prior to the opening of their new school reinforced Deal and Peterson’s (1998) recommendation of shaping culture by permitting “people [to] work together, solve problems, and confront challenges.”

The principal at Lincoln Elementary, Loretta, described what she did to engage stakeholders in the process of establishing culture and climate at their new school.

Loretta noted:

“I did a lot of team building with my staff, developing procedures that they understood and that they took ownership of, like establishing expectations, communicating expectations for good behavior, for discipline procedures, and for

Table Five

What Were The Things That Were Important To You

Participant	Response
Grace, Principal of Glendale Elementary	▪ It was my belief that we had a school that operated for kids. ▪ One of the most important things we wanted to see at our school was the people and the students. ▪ We wanted a child-friendly school. We also wanted a parent- friendly school, but we wanted it to be a safe school. ▪ We wanted a strict program. But we felt it was for the benefit of our kids.
Kristina, Principal of Kormel Elementary	▪ It was important to have a positive attitude throughout the process. It was impressed upon the staff that they also have a positive attitude. ▪ I wanted everything to be perfect...the perfect faculty, the perfect facility, the perfect students. I kept the vision that when the doors opened to the public for the first time, everything would be perfect.
Loretta, Principal of Lincoln Elementary	▪ Planning, establishing guidelines and expectations with my staff. ▪ Establishing expectations for the way we treat boys and girls and the way we treat parents. ▪ To have the best possible environment for children and teachers. ▪ That the school be a vital part of the community ▪ My attention was strictly focused on getting teachers moved in and getting the building open and presentable for children. ▪ Being able to communicate early with parents about procedures, expectations, curriculum, goals, and vision.

instruction. We did a lot of team building and we did a lot of talking. I allowed teachers to design procedures. I had a team of teachers that tackled opening arrival. I had a team of teachers that tackled dismissal. I had a team of teachers that walked the building talking about what our expectations for behavior in the hall would be. They talked about how we were going to get young children up and down stairwells when they traveled to the library by themselves. I had teachers taking ownership.”

At Kormel Elementary, Kristina conducted similar culture and climate building activities with her new staff prior to the new school opening. Kristina recounted:

“I worked day and night for months. I made sure I was involved in all decisions concerning the school. I took ownership in the school and when meeting with grade level teachers, I encouraged them to do the same.”

Similar activities occurred at Glendale Elementary. Grace outlined what she did prior to her new school opening:

“We sat down together and made decisions how we wanted to transition between classes, moving through the halls, we didn’t want them unsupervised, and we had to start from day one.”

By establishing meaningful traditions that reach beyond the classroom and creating a sense of the school as a whole, one can begin to develop school culture (Educational Research Services, 1999). A sampling of the community building activities, what Lawrence Petersen (2002) refers to as “projects to humanize the school”, identified by the principals participating in this study and that occurred prior to the opening and

during the first year of operation at the new schools are listed on below:

- Community meetings
- Selection of a school mascot
- Choosing school colors
- Design of a school t-shirt
- Open House where parents were invited to school during the first week to meet the teacher and learn of the school's expectations, curriculum, and goals
- Creation of a school handbook that would help parents better understand the school's programs, policies and procedures
- Parent-teacher conferences were held early in the school year to discuss classroom expectations
- Established a parent volunteer room where parents could gather and work throughout the day and mingle with other parents or staff
- Parent volunteer programs
- Active PTO program
- Weekly invitation to parents to come eat lunch at the school with their child
- Family Night with a barbeque supper
- Chartered a Boys Scout Troop
- Chartered a Girls Scout Troop

As demonstrated by the participants interviewed for this study, principals of new schools can increase responsibility by providing opportunities for decision-making and involvement before new schools open. These principals recognized that they must first

work toward establishing a sense of ownership and community by seeking active involvement and input in decisions that would guide the day to day behavior and expectations for the new school.

School-wide activities like sporting events, ceremonies, and assemblies can instill a sense of connectedness and school pride. By promoting involvement and including individuals in decision-making, the principals demonstrated through their organized activities that they were focused on establishing rapport and relationships that would eventually lead to a positive and productive environment for everyone.

Cluster Four: Interview questions 17 and 18 provided each participant the opportunity to identify and discuss the essential knowledge and skills they believe are needed by individuals who may experience the opening of a new school. The questions were:

17. Do you believe you had adequate academic knowledge and experience to prepare you for the challenge of opening a new school? Explain.
18. What skills do you believe principals need to be successful in opening and organizing a new school?

The theme to emerge from this cluster of questions was that principals of new schools need to possess specific skills and attributes that will contribute and enhance an effective learning environment. When participants were asked the question, “Do you believe you had adequate academic knowledge and experience to prepare you for the challenge of opening a new school?,” two of the three principals, Loretta and Kristina,

believed they did have adequate knowledge and experience. Kristina proclaimed:

“I think I had adequate knowledge and experience which prepared me for the challenge. I had been a teacher, librarian, and assistant principal. I had been in three different schools and worked under eight different principals throughout the years.”

Loretta responded to the question with an emphatic, “Yes!” Loretta continued by classifying:

“I had been a principal of a school with 850 students for five years. I had been a middle school assistant principal four years prior to that. So I had the contacts and experience. You develop contacts and experience as a principal that you do not develop as an assistant principal and the contacts and experience were the only things that made it happen.”

It was Grace who felt like she was not adequately prepared to open a new school. Reflecting on her experience and assessing her knowledge and preparation, Grace confessed:

“You know what, probably not! Looking at what a principal does seems a lot easier than what a principal actually does. Although I had experience as a principal for one year, it was overwhelming and I felt that I needed another year or two just to roll with the flow. Probably not, but I survived!”

The three participants reached consensus on one leadership skill they deemed most important for those charged with opening a new school. The number one leadership skill that emerged from the interviews was having the “ability to communicate.” When

principals open and organize new school settings, they encounter varying levels of individuals with whom they must communicate. An analysis of the transcripts indicated that principals participating in this study found themselves communicating with an array of individuals, such as, architects, system administrators, construction workers, vendors, colleagues, teachers, students, parents, community leaders, and media representatives.

When new schools are being built, principals must listen attentively and empathetically to the concerns of all stakeholders. As Grace reflected:

“You just have to keep communicating with the kids and parents. Everyone has questions, and they want answers to those questions. There are no small concerns when it comes to the concerns of parents and students who will attend your new school. Keep smiling, remain positive, and if you don’t know the answer to the questions, let them know you will find the answer and get back to them.”

In addition, Grace noted that another skill principals need to be successful in opening and organizing a new school is patience. She elaborated further by explaining that one of the biggest lessons she learned was that “having to be patient and wait on other people to do what they have to do.” The principal of Glendale Elementary confessed:

“Knowing that I couldn’t do everything and that I couldn’t control everything was a difficult thing for me because I like to know what is going on, and I like to have my thumb on what is going on and that was a time when you couldn’t do that very much.”

For Loretta, principal of Lincoln Elementary, another skill she believed principals of new schools need is determination. She expressed her belief by stating:

“Principals of new schools need to be determined. They need to not let anyone deter them. Yes, take suggestions, listen to constructive criticism and other people’s ideas, but keep your vision in mind as you continue to make decisions for your new school.”

Kristina believes the new school opener needs to be “organized and ready to make decisions. The new school opener must be a decision maker. They need not make rash decisions, because the decisions they make are decisions they and others will have to live with for a long, long time.”

This study presents a unique opportunity for principals who have organized and opened a new school to share what skills they believe principals need to be successful in opening and organizing a new school. “The number one priority of a principal’s job description”, according to McEwan (2003), “is to communicate in appropriate, productive, meaningful helpful, and healing ways with teachers, students, parents, colleagues, as well as a vast array of others, whether individually, in small groups, or en masse” (p. 2).

Another theme to emerge from the analysis of the data was that principals of new schools communicate in a variety of ways. Through the interview process, the following activities were mentioned by principals and thus identified as a communication strategy or technique used to communicate with stakeholders throughout the process of opening and organizing a new school setting:

- Interviewing staff
- Writing newsletters

- Community forums
- Staff meetings
- Staff development training
- Chairing committees
- Conferencing with teachers
- Recruiting volunteers
- Motivating staff, students, parents
- Participating in construction meetings
- Media interviews
- Talked with parents about school expectations
- Discussion meetings with staff to develop expectations
- Development of a school handbook

As McEwan professed, “If principals can’t communicate-with people of all ages, socioeconomic and educational levels, and every color, race, and creed-going to work every day will be both painful and unproductive” (p. 2).

Participants in this study realized that communication was a critical part of every task they encountered. They became aware of how important it was that there not be a breakdown in communication amongst all stakeholders. Effective communication is a two-way process. An important basic of the dialogue and communication process includes not only sending messages, but also receiving them. As noted in the research,

The highly effective principal is a communicator – a genuine and open human

being with the capacity to listen, empathize, interact, and connect with individual students, parents, and teachers in productive, helping and healing ways, as well as the ability to teach, present, and motivate people in larger group settings (McEwan, 2003, p. 216).

Cluster Five: Interview questions 19 and 20 gave each participant the opportunity to share advice or suggestions to individuals or systems that experience opening new schools. The questions were:

19. What advice or suggestions would you give to a principal appointed to open a new school?
20. What advice or suggestions would you give to school systems/districts that you feel would be beneficial to the success of opening a new school?

The emerging theme from this cluster of questions was that principals of new schools need ample time to focus on the task of organizing and implementing an effective learning environment for students and staff. As the purpose for this study dictates, by examining the duties, responsibilities, and challenges of opening a new school, a better understanding of the process involved might be available to benefit principals, teachers, students, and school systems. The primary goal of this study was to identify the duties, responsibilities, and challenges and, in turn, provide advice and make recommendations and suggestions to improve the process of opening a new school for future principals and school systems. The outline that follows provides a summary of advice or suggestions from participants to principals appointed to open a new school and to school systems that have plans to open a new school.

Grace, Principal of Glendale Elementary

Advice or Suggestions to Principals

- Seek input from others.
- Ask a lot of questions.
- Do a lot of PR work with the public promoting the new school.
- Seek the assistance of others; you cannot do it by yourself.
- Keep a journal, notebook with documentation of meetings, etc.
- While at times it is a stressful experience, it is such an opportunity. Hang in there. It will come together. Enjoy it!

Advice or Suggestions to School Systems

- Select an administrator who has at least three years experience as a principal to open and organize a new school.
- Get the administrator involved early on the design phase.
- Allocate funds to do what needs to be done.

Loretta, Principal of Lincoln Elementary

Advice or Suggestions to Principals

- Ask questions, and meet people.
- Listen to the concerns of staff and parents. Allow them the opportunity to be involved in problem solving and decision-making.
- Seek out principals who have done it before.
- Pamper the construction crew.

Advice or Suggestions to School Systems

- Do research on projected student population and build the school large enough to accommodate that population.
- Have an operating budget for a new school.
- Come up with a planning committee to help design schools/classrooms and replicate that from school to school.
- Talk with designers and architects about the current educational approaches that are used in our schools so that they can design schools to accommodate our programs, not programs designed around the school's design.
- Provide additional assistance to principals (vice principals, administrative assistants) early in the construction phase to assist with some of the responsibilities and duties.
- Assign a mentor.
- Make sure school personnel are included in the planning process.
- Create a new school handbook for future principals opening new schools.

Kristina, Principal of Kormel Elementary

Advice or Suggestions to Principals

- Listen to suggestions of others. Think things through before making decisions.
- Be as involved in the process as possible.
- Communicate with parents frequently just to let them know what is going on.
- Have a grand opening and invite the public. It sets the tone!
- Be positive.

- Don't forget that you have a personal life!

Advice or Suggestions to School Systems

- Principals opening new schools should be given four to six months or more to do nothing but concentrate on the new school. No other responsibilities, no other job, nothing but the new school.
- Be sure to budget appropriately for all aspects. Don't make the school of parent organization be responsible for raising funds for high dollar items such as playground equipment.

The participants in this study now have a better understanding of the many challenges and changes that occur while organizing and opening a new school and the personal and professional impact it imposes. It is through their experience and reflection on the process that they have a better understanding of how important it is to share and discuss what they learned from such an experience, and thus make it available to other principals and systems that open new schools. The more that is learned and shared about the challenges of opening a new school, the greater the opportunity will be for future principals who open new schools to create a successful and effective learning environment and community.

Cluster Six: Participants are able to reflect on their personal experience and share their thoughts on the opportunity of opening a new school in interview questions 13, 15, and 16.

13. What was the most important aspect of opening a new school?
15. What was the most difficult aspect of opening a new school?

16. If you were given the opportunity to open a new school again, would you do it? Why or why not?

The theme to emerge from this cluster was how rewarding and exciting the principals felt it was to have the opportunity to open a new school. Four years ago, the three principals involved in this study embarked upon the “highlight of [their] career!” Each individual had been tapped to lead the opening and organization of a new elementary school. Appointed late in the construction phase, assuming responsibilities for details for which no formal or informal training had been provided, each principal faced the challenge of opening a new school with enthusiasm and excitement.

Each principal thought it was a “wonderful opportunity” to open a new school. Similarly, each participant’s “wonderful opportunity” was also unique. The administrators involved in this study had varying opinions of what they felt was the most important aspect of opening a new school. Although the experience was filled with many unknowns and challenges, “Opening a new school was such a once in a lifetime opportunity and there were so many benefits to just starting out brand new.” Grace thought the most important aspect of opening a new school was, “Having the opportunity to work as a group to decide what was important, make decisions about those things, and then put together a school that we felt would provide students the opportunity to learn well.”

For the principal of Lincoln Elementary, Loretta thought the most important aspect of opening a new school was “being able to put one of my beliefs in action.” The community in which Loretta’s school is located has a low socio-economic status and the

student population is predominantly African-American. Loretta believes that “all children deserve a quality education regardless of race or culture... they all deserve the best!”

For Kristina, the most important aspect of opening a new school had to do with the challenge of creating a new staff. Kristina explained:

“More than likely, a new school will take staff members from more than one existing school. Children are easy to mold; adults are much more difficult. The new faculty has to become one faculty for it to become a successful school. For me, it was important to bridge the gap between the adults I hired. While somewhat of a challenge, it was an aspiration I held high!”

Just as there were rewarding and important aspects of opening a new school, there were also difficult aspects identified by each principal. From “not being ready way ahead of time,” “begging for money,” and “being on call 24/7,” these principals felt the pressure from the incredible demands of time, resources, and energy. For example, as one principal stated, “Being on call 24/7” gave new meaning to time management. A difficult aspect, according to Kristina, was “being the only female at monthly construction meetings.”

Although one participant admitted she probably needed more experience as an administrator before leading the task of opening a new school, Grace admitted that “not knowing every little detail about what needed to go on at school in terms of an administrative view was a difficult aspect.” Grace added: “Learning the auditing system, how to do a budget ...there are just a lot of things that you have to be in this position to

do and to know. There were just an overwhelming chain of events that had to happen before school started that one year.”

Kristina, principal of Kormel Elementary, indicated that one of the most difficult aspects for her was that the duty and responsibility of opening a new school was so time consuming. Kristina recalled:

“I was consumed with the job. I didn’t take any vacation time that summer even though it was there for the taking. One thing that stressed me was that on the final walk-through I was told, ‘If you don’t comment on this today, it will too late.’ Although there were several other persons involved, architects and foremen on site, the final decision was left up to me to say everything was acceptable. I didn’t feel I was qualified to make those decisions about such things as wiring, electrical, plumbing, etc.”

Principals experience the opening of school every fall. But the experience is not the same for principals who open a new school for the first time. There was no “hand-holding,” “expert advice,” or “handbook” from which to seek support, guidance, or knowledge. This was a difficult aspect for the principals. It was then that Grace, principal of Glendale, discovered: “Looking at what a principal does seems a lot easier than what a principal actually does.”

Although the demands of opening a new school are overwhelming and chaotic at times, when asked, “If you were given the opportunity to open a new school again, would you do it? Why or why not?,” two principals gave a resounding “Yes!” and one principal hesitantly stated, “Probably not!” Following is the response of each individual.

Grace stated emphatically: “It was such a positive experience, yes, I would do it again. As for as the opportunity and the benefit that came from opening a new school, yes, I would do it again!”

Loretta proclaimed: “In a heartbeat, in a heartbeat. It was such a phenomenal experience. I truly, truly have enjoyed the construction experience!”

Kristina maintained: “I would probably not open a new school. This was something most only wish to achieve once in their life. However, I would do it if necessary. It would be easier this time around just based on my prior knowledge and the experience.”

Chapter Summary

The challenges principals of new schools face are relentless, confronting them every minute of the day, making their job even more complex. When the doors to a new school finally open, the principal has no idea what other dimensions of challenges he or she will encounter. The wide range of challenges they encounter provides them with opportunities to create a learning environment built upon a foundation of beliefs and purpose. In addition, these principals were able to provide some valuable insight into the challenge of opening a new elementary school. The findings revealed some important observations about the duties, responsibilities and challenges of opening a new school. These included:

- The planning and design stage of the new school was developed before the principals were appointed. This factor provided little or no opportunity for the principals to have input in to the design of the new school.

- The latitude of the principal's role during the construction phase will vary depending on when principals of new schools are appointed, resulting in little or no opportunity for input from the principal once construction begins.
- A diverse list of duties and responsibilities consisting of processes, procedures, and functions for which no assistance was provided or formal guidelines established. Many of duties and responsibilities are managerial in nature.
- An incredible amount of time and energy is spent dealing with unexpected and unavoidable challenges and concerns.
- The importance of understanding the need to consult and involve all stakeholders in the process of establishing a new learning community. Shaping school culture and climate is not something a principal can do alone.
- In order to create and establish an effective learning environment, specific skills and attributes are needed by those who open new schools. The ability to communicate was the number one attribute mentioned.
- An ample amount of time is needed by new school openers to focus solely on the task of organizing and implementing an effective learning environment for students and staff.
- There is a rewarding personal and professional feeling that accompanies the challenge of opening a new school.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary of Findings, Recommendations, and Future Research

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe the duties, responsibilities, and challenges of three principals who have opened new elementary schools. The major research question for the study was: What are the duties, responsibilities, and challenges principals encounter when they are charged with the task of opening a new elementary school?

This chapter examined data collected via interviews with three principals who had opened a new elementary school in the state of Tennessee. The data source was examined and analyzed closely to identify and describe the duties, responsibilities, and challenges that principals encounter when charged with the task of opening a new elementary school. A qualitative methodology was selected for this study “because of its descriptive nature and ability to capture the direct experience of phenomena, an issue or a process explored, of those who have lived them” (Creswell, 2002, p. 146).

Findings

As the result of each principal’s direct involvement, beginning with their appointment as principal of a new school, the following themes emerged from this exploratory study:

- The planning and design stage of the new school was developed before the principals were appointed. This factor provided no opportunity for the principals to have input into the design of the new school.

- The latitude of the principal's role during the construction phase will vary depending on when principals of new schools are appointed, resulting in little or no opportunity for input from the principal once construction begins.
- A diverse list of duties and responsibilities exist, consisting of processes, procedures, and functions for which no assistance was provided or formal guidelines established. Many of duties and responsibilities were managerial in nature.
- An incredible amount of time and energy was spent dealing with unexpected and unavoidable challenges and concerns.
- The importance of understanding the need to consult and involve all stakeholders in the process of establishing a new learning community.
- In order to create and establish an effective learning environment, specific skills and attributes are needed by those who open new schools. The ability to communicate was the number one attribute mentioned.
- A sufficient amount of time is needed by new school openers to focus solely on the task of organizing and implementing an effective learning environment for students and staff.
- There is a rewarding personal and professional feeling that accompanies the challenge of opening a new school.

Being the principal of a new school involves being responsible for a diverse list of tasks that need to be completed prior to opening. This diverse list is also accompanied by many unexpected challenges. The following is a summary of the findings associated with these identified tasks and challenges and their relationship to the research question, which was: *What are the duties, responsibilities, and challenges that principals encounter when they are charged with the task of opening a new elementary school?*

Role of the Principal During Pre-Construction and Construction Phase

The duties and responsibilities involved in opening a new school can be daunting, especially for school leaders trained in curriculum, instruction, student development, and the educational process, not in how to manage a construction project. From the analysis of the first cluster of interview questions, which focused on the role, latitude, responsibilities, and duties of each principal during the pre-construction and construction phase, two themes emerged. For the new school openers participating in this study, none was involved in the planning and design phase for the new school. Both phases were completed before each of the new school openers were appointed as principal of the new school. Being appointed as principal after the planning and design phase was finalized provided these new school openers little or no opportunity to have input into any of the structural or environmental features of the new facility. What input principals did have was limited to decisions that related to color schemes and selection of furniture and equipment.

The image of a successful school should exist in the minds of district leaders and

principals long before the date of the school's opening. In most school districts, school principals play a key role in the pre-construction process. The literature has shown that the role principals play during the design and pre-construction phase of a new school could be, and are, very beneficial in many aspects. Bradley and Protheroe (2003) noted:

Some principals believe that, for lack of extensive knowledge of architecture and engineering, they are not competent to contribute during the design phase.

Nothing could be further from the truth. From knowledge born of experience, principals can tell architects the safest ways to separate cars and bus loading zones or the best locations for classrooms and labs. A school architect should not only be willing but eager to have input from the people who use the building.

(p.38)

In agreement, Chan and Ledbetter (1999) proclaimed:

The principal who has had an opportunity to participate in the initial planning of the school building will have a head start in subsequent planning. If the principal was not a part of the original planning team, he or she will need to review the various stages of the school construction project, from needs assessment to funding, programming, site acquisition, architect selection, design development, bidding, and contracting for construction. (p. 25)

Duties and Responsibilities

The third theme to emerge from the data was that the principals participating in this study had to deal with a diverse list of duties and responsibilities consisting of

processes, procedures, and functions for which no assistance was provided or formal guidelines established. From this diverse list, one of the major duties that caused a great deal of concern for all three participants was staffing. Analysis of the data for this study suggests that one of the greatest duties and responsibilities assumed by the participants was hiring and assigning staff for the new school.

Principals participating in this study expressed legitimate concerns regarding issues such as “interviewing and hiring for faculty selection,” “staffing the building,” and “deciding which teachers would be in which grade.” For principals, staffing is more than just assigning teachers to subjects and classrooms. Ubben, Hughes, and Norris (2001) claimed that “one of the greatest responsibilities assigned to a principal is organizing and assigning staff in the school” (p. 228). The task is to organize the students and the staff into instructional assignments that will provide the best learning environment. Additional research (Williamson, 1993) has shown that the most important consideration is ensuring that the staff members are selected and placed so that the curricular and instructional programs are positively affected. Principals must correctly place staff to benefit students. The duty and responsibility of staffing a new school is probably the most important duty and responsibility new school openers will encounter as their staffing decisions can and will have an effect on school effectiveness and student performance.

The demands of being the principal of a new school often present challenges that do not lend themselves to simple solutions. When leading the task of opening and organizing a new school, there are challenges around every corner. The new school opener has to confront these challenges and should deal with them in a positive way.

Among the time consuming and unavoidable challenges principals of new schools must deal with, as mentioned by the participants in this study, include:

“Planning the movement process to the new facility; zoning and transportation issues; development of discipline plans; working with the construction people; overseeing assembly labor; inventory of all new equipment and furniture; and the development and implementation of security measures.”

In 2001, Tirozzi observed how the principal’s job was becoming more complex and demanding. Wulff (1996) itemized several aspects of the principalship that have changed over the past five years. There are real differences in the demands and challenges that confront principals in existing schools and principals opening new schools. For principals of new schools, their job takes on a new dimension of complexity and demands. Analysis of the second cluster of interview questions disclosed that principals of new schools encounter unexpected and unavoidable challenges and concerns.

The challenges encountered by the participants in this study were divided into two categories: leadership and organizational challenges. A major organizational challenge and concern of the three principals participating in this study dealt with furniture and equipment needs for their schools. Research (Chan and Ledbetter, 1999) has documented that “most school systems contract for furniture and equipment separately from the construction contract, and the principal also must carefully coordinate the ordering, delivery and installation of all such materials before opening day” (p. 25). The furniture and equipment challenge for these new school openers came as the result of not being on

the committee responsible for purchasing furniture and equipment. By not having any involvement with this duty, the new school openers in this study were faced with such challenges of “not having enough furniture purchased to equip the classrooms and school”, “having to orchestrate the process of getting furniture assembled and placed in the correct classroom or space”, and a “lack of funding for furniture and equipment needs.”

Taylor (1978) noted, “Planning a new school is one of the more difficult tasks a group can face because it is fraught with uncertainty, changefulness, and many unknowns” (p.71). This sentiment rang true for the principals participating in this study. According to Conzemius (1999), “Effective principals understand how change occurs, and the impact it has on individuals and groups” (p. 33). Teachers, parents, students and others in a community have a lot of anxiety about anything that is new or different than what they are accustomed to. When new schools open, it is a major ordeal for everyone. Cushman (1994) noted, “Developing a shared language among staff and community about school change can go far toward reducing those anxieties. No subject is too small or large, it seems, to put on the table if students and parents are to feel invested in the new school early on” (p. 1).

The implementation of a new schooling concept added to the leadership and organizational challenges encountered by one of the participants in this study. Not only was the community receiving a new school, it would have to adjust from a traditional schooling concept of grades kindergarten through five to an intermediate concept consisting of grades three through five. Consequently, the principal of this new school

had to deal with the usual challenges that accompany students as they transition to a new school setting. For students and parents, the changefulness and unknowns of a new setting evoked a wide variety of emotions, behaviors, and concerns. This challenge added an entirely new dimension, not to mention an additional responsibility, for the new school opener. Pam Robbins, (2003) noted:

The primal role of a leader is emotion. As leaders we must effectively manage our emotions, because they have an impact on those with whom we interact.

What's more, leaders must be socially competent; they should know how to read - and respond to - body language. These skills are what a leader uses to help shape the culture of a school. (p. 2)

Involvement of Stakeholders

The work of principals of new schools reaches beyond the establishment and boundaries of individual classrooms of student and teacher learners to another group of learners. This group is known as the school or learning community. The New Webster's International Encyclopedia defines community as, "A term used in the social sciences to designate a group of people within a larger society sharing similar customs, interests, characteristics or beliefs" (p. 251). In order to address the broad range of challenges that confront new school openers, the participants in this study stepped outside their role of curriculum and instruction leader, and assumed a focus for creating a learning community and shaping school culture and climate.

Culture is the underground stream of norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and rituals

that build up over time as people work together, solve problems, and confront challenges. This set of informal expectations and values shapes how people think, feel, and act in schools (Deal and Peterson, 1998). In research conducted by Lashway (1995), he wrote, “Climate is a concept that is easy to recognize but difficult to define. Some definitions emphasize “setting high expectations” while others highlight “friendliness” or “organizational personality.”

In schools that function as learning communities, teachers are guided by a shared purpose and take collective responsibility for student learning (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). With this focus on “continuity of purpose and commitment to excellence” (Tirozzi, 2001, p. 432), principals contribute to and enhance the quality of school and student learning. Research (Sergiovanni, 1994) has shown that the creation of a school or learning community is enhanced if the members of an organization share core values, commitment, collegiality, perspectives, and a professional relationship. As one of the principals in this study remarked: “It (creation of a learning community) cannot be a one-man show. It is a team effort. It is a team from the bottom up, from the custodians, to the cooks, to the teachers.”

While state authorities and local school district leaders establish broad goals and objectives for schools, principals of new schools share responsibility with their new staff and community of learners for making decisions about what their values, beliefs, goals, and vision for the new school will be. When people talk about vision they are referring to the imaginative concept of how things could, should, and will be. In schools and classrooms, every member of the learning community must be invited, encouraged,

assured equitable participation in both formulating and enacting the vision (Gallavan, 2003).

For the stakeholders associated with the new schools identified in this study, this meant being involved and having input on various aspects of the new school, including: “Making decisions regarding the design of the new school; choosing the mascot; selecting school colors; serving on various committees; establishing student clubs and organizations; and establishing active school parent and teacher associations.” Prior to the opening of their new school, principals in this study collaborated with teachers, parents, and community members to discuss “their expectations for students and learning,” “how they wanted their new school to operate, and having the opportunity to make those decisions from day one.”

The discussions focused on shared beliefs and values. Parent meetings held at Lincoln Elementary during the first week of school focused on “procedures and expectations, what the curriculum would look like, and the goals and vision wanted and hoped for the new school.” These discussions set the tone and direction for many of the aspects of the new school, from “deciding how this school will run, how our kids are going to behave, how we’re going to have parents in and out of the building, our security measures, all of that.”

Researchers have compiled some impressive evidence on building a learning community, school culture, and vision. Effective learning communities correlate strongly with increased student achievement and motivation, and with teacher productivity and satisfaction (Stolp, 1994). Culture plays a major role in school restructuring (Newmann

and Associates, 1996) and school improvement efforts (Fullan, 1998). Culture influences the actions and the spirit of school life. It shapes a school's motivation and commitment, effort, and focus (Peterson, 1999).

Any organization benefits when leaders cultivate a spirit of cooperation and teamwork. The principals in this study realized that the vision they had for their new school was more likely to become reality by working collaboratively with stakeholders in an effort to build a collective and shared vision focused on what is important, thus increasing the sense of shared responsibility for academic success.

Essential Characteristics, Skills, and Abilities

Agreements exist among the new school openers participating in this study when identifying factors that contributed to successfully opening a new school. Among the traits agreed upon were the ability to communicate, and having prior experience as a principal.

The number one characteristic that participants deemed most important for those charged with opening a new school was "having the ability to communicate." Poor communication affects the ability get any job done. It can lead to confusion, losses, misunderstandings, and missed opportunities. Learning to communicate well lets others understand ideas and needs. It is equally important to understand the messages others are sending. Communication was an important part of the pre-opening process, as the new school openers in this study had to listen attentively and empathetically to the concerns of all stakeholders. Effective communication, which includes communicating

in a variety of ways, was key to coping with the leadership challenge of dealing with multiple constituents, which included architects, system administrators, construction workers, vendors, colleagues, teachers, students, parents, community leaders and media representatives.

Analysis of the data suggest that another useful skill for a new school opener includes having previous experience as a principal or experience in other administrative positions. Those employed as a school principal typically gain skills on the job, and most principals learn the role from working in other school leadership positions or administrative roles. Because effective school leadership involves making difficult choices and decisions and exercising careful judgment, the three participants in this study agreed that previous experience as a principal or experience in other administrative positions would be of great benefit to the new school opener.

Other skills and characteristics gleaned from the data source indicate that principals of new schools need to also possess the characteristics of being a decision maker, have determination, organization skills, and patience. As one of the new school openers noted, "This job (being the principal of a new school) requires you to have good communication and personal skills, a degree of intellect and the ability to think fast on your feet. But not necessarily in that order."

When new schools are slated to open in many school systems and districts, one of the most important decisions the system or district delays is that of appointing the principal of the new school in a timely manner. When the decision and appointment of a principal is finally made, as is documented by this study, the appointment generally

occurred within five to nine months before the new school was slated to open, and the person named was likely an administrator in an existing school. When an individual accepts the challenge of leading the task of opening and organizing a new school, he/she is agreeing to take on additional responsibilities beyond the duties and responsibilities of being a principal in an existing school. The new school opener and practicing administrator must now divide their time between two schools, dealing with a duplicate set of duties, responsibilities and challenges. One participant acknowledged that one of the biggest challenges she dealt with had to do with “having another job while trying to assume the duties for the new school.” She added, “If the person appointed as principal of a new school has another job such as assistant principal of another school, they often have to assume both responsibilities. Systems do not seem to take this into consideration.”

A Rewarding and Professional Experience

Principals experience the opening of school every fall. But the experience is not the same for principals who open a new school for the first time. While participants in this study experienced an array of duties and responsibilities, compounded by leadership and organizational challenges, they felt that opening a new school was “a positive experience,” “a phenomenal experience,” and “the highlight of my career.” Although the experience was filled with many unknowns and challenges for these participants, each felt privileged to have been given the opportunity to lead the charge of opening a new school.

As the demand increases for principals to assume the role of organizing new school settings, those tapped with the responsibility should view it as a personal and professional challenge and opportunity to create a successful and effective learning environment and community.

Summary of Findings

The following summarizes the findings of this study. After analyzing the data, eight themes emerged as the result of examining the duties, responsibilities, and challenges of a principal opening a new elementary new school. The themes were:

- Level of involvement and participation of the principal during the planning and design phase of a new school
- Latitude of the principal during the pre-construction and construction phase of a new school
- Diverse list of duties and responsibilities
- Unexpected and unavoidable challenges and concerns encountered by principals of new schools
- Importance of involving the entire learning community in the decision- making process
- Specific skills and attributes are needed by those who open new schools
- An ample amount of time is needed by new school openers to focus solely on the task of organizing and implementing an

effective learning environment

- There is a rewarding personal and professional feeling that accompanies the challenge of opening a new school

By successfully orchestrating through the identified duties, responsibilities and challenges of opening a new school as described in this study, one could attribute the success of a principal opening a new school to six skills, abilities or personal characteristics. These are:

- Ability to communicate
- Previous administrative experience
- Patience
- Determination
- Decision-maker
- Organization Skills

This study adds to the limited research on the topic of the duties, responsibilities and challenges of principals opening a new school. The analysis of the data obtained from personal interviews with three principals in the state of Tennessee who have experienced the opening of a new school has led to specific and valuable insight for school systems, principals, and future research on this topic.

Much has been learned over the years about leadership in relation to organizational context and variables that might affect a leader's effectiveness in different contexts. Good leadership is situational – what works in one setting will not work in

another (Bolman and Deal, 1997). While similar in nature, the duties, responsibilities, and challenges of a principal opening a new school are more complex and diverse from the duties, responsibilities, and challenges of a principal in an existing school. This study has provided the researcher with an opportunity to investigate the experience and identify the essential duties, responsibilities, and challenges encountered by each principal while leading the task of opening a new elementary school.

Accomplished new school openings involve making many difficult choices and decisions, exercising judgment and honoring the complex nature of effective leadership. Generally, school principals employ professional knowledge and skills related to the field of education, yet seldom do they employ the knowledge and skills needed to tackle the challenges that surround the task of organizing and opening a new school. A secondary goal of this study was to identify the needed skills and characteristics of new school openers and provide a better understanding of what is needed of those who open new schools, while responding thoughtfully to the wide range of duties, responsibilities, and challenges that accompany the role of new school openers.

Principals appointed to open new schools must acquire and employ a repertoire of leadership skills and abilities, yet remain flexible and reflective about their task, drawing lessons from experience. The professional responsibility and primary focus of principals who open new schools should be on creating and organizing an effective learning environment, while completing an array of tasks in partnership with staff, students, parents and the community.

The task of opening a new school can be portrayed as an activity that allows an

individual to dispense valued knowledge and skills of what they know makes an effective school and thus transmitting that knowledge and skill into creating a successful learning community. It is that and more. Principals of new schools have the opportunity to pursue changes in school organizational arrangements that lend support to academic achievement.

Affirmation about what school leaders should know and be able to do is documented heavily in the literature. The research and knowledge base of skills and abilities for principals opening new schools is limited. Opening a new school for school leaders is unlike any other profession where leaders are confronted with “uncertainty, changefulness, and many unknowns” (Taylor, 1978, p. 71). However, the knowledge base for what skills and knowledge are needed by school leaders and school systems opening new schools is growing. Research studies and documentation of personal experiences by those who have opened new schools will provide awareness and support for knowledge related to many of the duties, responsibilities and challenges of opening a new school. But much remains to be learned.

These new school openers were eager to talk about their experiences. Wood and McQuarrie (1999) wrote:

Bringing meaning to experiences occurs when teachers and administrators take time to reflect on their experiences, to uncover insights, and learning embedded in those experiences. Individual experiences and what people learn from them become useful when they are shared and discussed with other colleagues. (p. 13)

New school openers should take advantage of the limited resource of new school openers

by communicating with them about their experience opening a new school. By establishing a supportive and mentoring relationship with fellow colleagues who have experienced the opening of a new school, the new school opener will have an outlet in which to relate relative concerns, frustrations, and questions.

The participants in this study are but a small representation of the growing number of principals who open new schools. These individuals were genuinely concerned about the best way to organize their school for maximum results, anxious to build collaborative relationships with stakeholders, and dependent on the knowledge and experience of their career to support them in their efforts in creating an effective learning community. Educators, school systems, architects, and superintendents have a responsibility to engage in authentic conversations to determine how best to plan and design new school settings.

Recommendations

Principals opening new schools face nearly overwhelming responsibilities that would challenge the most competent leaders in any field. Principals in new schools will need to balance a variety of roles. The role of the principal opening a new school devotes little time to being the instructional leader. The new school opener's role evolves to a broader role of orchestrating responsibilities and decision-making, and interacting with a wider range of individuals, including community members and other stakeholders. That is why system leaders need to understand the increasing complexity of the role of a principal opening a new school so that they can provide the support and encouragement

new school openers need. This study adds to the limited knowledge base on the topic of a principal's duties, responsibilities, and challenges opening a new school. The following recommendations and suggestions are to be shared with educators, school systems, architects, and superintendents that may become involved in the process of opening a new school.

Start Planning Early. When new schools are slated for construction in any community, school systems and system leaders need plenty of time to plan and design the new structure. Early planning should cover curricular and instructional programs, demographics, and facilities. An important aspect of the planning process should be to review the system's history of student population growth patterns of the community. Such review will assist system leaders in making adequate decisions about the needed size and space of the new structure.

Early Planning Also Includes Designing and Budgeting Appropriately. When planning and designing new schools, school leaders need to keep in mind that the business of schools is learning and that the way a school is designed, organized, and equipped has a direct impact on the student learning. Finances should not be an obstacle to achieving this goal. To open and equip a new school from the ground up is expensive if done correctly. Another important factor to remember when designing a new school is that curriculum and instructional processes should influence the design of the school.

Principals of New Schools Should Be Appointed Early. The principal appointed to open a new school needs to be a deciding factor early in the project at all levels of decision-making. As validated by the data collected for this study, principals of new

schools are generally appointed six to nine months prior to the opening a new school. It is recommended that principals of new schools be appointed twelve to eighteen months prior to opening to provide them with the opportunity to participate and be involved in the planning and design phase of the new school.

By making the principal appointment early in the design and pre-construction phase, the principal will have the latitude, authority and availability to address the endless issues, tasks, and unexpected and unavoidable challenges that precede the opening of a new school. With the increased duties and responsibilities that accompany the role of principals of new schools, early appointment will provide the new school opener sufficient time to focus solely on the task of organizing and implementing an effective learning environment.

New School Openers Need Specific Knowledge, Skills, and Characteristics. The appointment of a principal of a new school should be based on several factors. The following characteristics and qualifications need to be kept in mind by those responsible for hiring and appointing principals of new schools. New school openers need some understanding and knowledge of planning and designing new school facilities and how school design affects and impacts curriculum. Principals of new schools need some knowledge of the change process and how change in school environments effect students and others. Principals of new schools need some understanding of the unique pieces of school culture and building a learning community.

In addition to the professional knowledge base, the success of a principal opening a new school could be attributed to the individual possessing characteristics, attributes, or

skills, as those identified by the participants in this study, which are: (1) The ability to communicate; (2) Previous administrative experience; (3) Patience; (4) Determination; (5) Decision maker, and (6) Organization skills.

Develop A Support System for New School Openers. Principals participating in this study reported that there was no “hand-holding,” “expert advice,” or “handbook” from which to seek support, guidance or knowledge. Most people assume, system leaders included, that individuals appointed to open a new school know what to do. That assumption needs to be re-evaluated.

A comprehensive support system needs to be developed and implemented for principals opening new schools. Support systems and appropriate learning opportunities from mentors who have experienced the process of opening a new school are essential to the success new school openers have. To meet the need, school systems along with college and university preparation programs and education agencies must develop support systems for new school openers. These support systems should provide structured processes and procedures for addressing the duties, responsibilities, and challenges associated with opening new schools.

The development and establishment of such a support system should include a handbook created specifically for principals opening new schools. The handbook would include, but not be limited to, pertinent system and state educational information and how to access available resources and assistance on topics such as: State and federal guidelines for broad goals and objectives for school; State requirements for certain school specifications (size, space, features, safety, etc.); System policies and procedures

for staffing; System policies and procedures for requisitioning and purchasing; Federal, state and system guidelines for adhering to employment and employee rights and responsibilities; Public relations training; Staff development opportunities and available resources; and a composite listing of principals who have opened new schools in the district, region, or state.

Improve Principal Preparation Programs. Today school principals are being asked to respond to the challenge and needs of a changing and increasingly diverse and growing student population. The knowledge, ability and skills to understand and cope with these challenges are outdated. School leaders will need to be well prepared, capable and responsible for dealing with such demands and the changing role of the school principal. It is crucial that college and university programs focus their attention on improving principal preparation programs. College and universities are challenged to ensure that prospective principals are able to effectively lead in new roles such as that of opening and organizing new school settings. The process of opening a new school is absent from graduate programs that are responsible for developing educational leaders. College and university programs that develop principals need to implement a component in their studies that reflects school planning and construction.

Recognizing that new knowledge about principals opening new schools is being formulated, a final recommendation would be to continually review the process to reflect new findings and to update the knowledge base as appropriate. These recommendations are the touchstones that guide the creation of new school settings.

Summary of Recommendations

As principal of a new school, the individual is expected to be the leader who sets the course for academic achievement; the visionary leader who focuses the school community on creating and establishing a learning environment where success for all is the primary goal; and the inspirational leader who ensures that all stakeholders in the school community continually work together for educational excellence. At the same time, the principal opening a new school must also be the leader who is responsible for overseeing and orchestrating many of the day-to-day new school issues and concerns that evolve. In this role, the new school opener is responsible for an array of duties and tasks, including, but not limited to, interviewing and hiring for faculty selection, classroom assignments for staff in the building, formulation of schedules, development of student and faculty handbook, organizing and conducting staff development, overseeing furniture and equipment inventory and assembly, and development and implementation of security measures. These expectations and many more ensure that any individual who accepts the responsibility of leading the charge for opening and organizing a new school is stepping into one of the most critical and demanding roles in education today.

As with the implementation of any new setting, these principals met with obstacles, challenges, and opportunities. Nonetheless, they continued to face their obstacles, challenges, and opportunities head-on with the resolve, commitment, and vision to create and establish a learning environment that promotes success for all.

Future Research

The educational literature of the past two decades contains very little solid knowledge about the problems of planning and implementing new schools (Taylor, 1978). This qualitative study contributes to the insight of the duties, responsibilities and challenges of principals opening new schools. Based on the results of this study, it is suggested that additional research be conducted in the following areas.

1. Future research is recommended for other grade levels. This study only involved elementary principals who have opened new schools. A study focusing on the duties, responsibilities, and challenges of opening a new school for middle or high schools principals would provide insight into the similarities and differences in the process.
2. Other qualitative studies could be performed addressing the challenges of teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders at different grade levels - elementary, middle, and high - who have experienced the opening of a new school.
3. Since Tennessee is experiencing a diverse and growing student population, a quantitative study utilizing questionnaires or surveys, involving all principals in the state, at a specific grade level, who have opened a new school should be conducted. Data would be analyzed for similarities and differences of duties, responsibilities, and challenges.
4. A sample of teachers could be interviewed or surveyed about their level of involvement and participation in opening a new school. In addition, data

could be collected on curriculum, instruction, and student challenges teachers encountered as the result of a new school beginning.

5. An autobiographical study documenting, from the time of appointment, the duties, responsibilities, and challenges of a principal opening a new school.

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Table 2 – Enrollment in grades K-12 in public and private elementary and
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

INTRODUCTION

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Kathy Dykes Sims, a doctoral candidate at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, College of Education, Health, and Human Science, Department of Educational Administration and Policy Studies. I hope to learn more about the leadership and organizational challenges of principals who have opened a new elementary school, identifying and describing the essential principal duties and responsibilities required for opening a new school. From such a study, principals who are selected to open and organize new school settings will have a better understanding of the challenges, duties, and responsibilities associated with opening a new school.

INFORMATION ABOUT PARTICIPANTS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE STUDY

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

1. Meet with the investigator at the most convenient time and place for you.
2. Complete a profile data sheet about your personal, educational, professional, and school background.
3. Take part in one interview. Information will be sought concerning the leadership and organizational challenges of opening a new school and the essentials duties and responsibilities that are required of principals who have opened a new school. Your interview will be audio-taped.
4. Read the transcribed notes from the interview. You may review the notes and request that all or any portion of the notes be destroyed, deleted, modified, or corrected.
5. Your participation in this study will involve no more than three hours of your time: 15 minutes to complete the profile data sheet, no more than two hours for the interview, and approximately thirty minutes to read the transcript for verification.

RISKS

There are no foreseeable risks involved with any of the procedures proposed for this study.

BENEFITS

Although you will receive no direct benefits, this research will hopefully provide significant information and greater clarification on what is needed for and expected of a principal who opens a new school. From such a study, principals who are selected to open and organize new school settings will have a better understanding of the challenges, duties, and responsibilities associated with opening a new school.

_____ **Participant's initials**

CONFIDENTIALITY

The information in the study records will be kept confidential. Data will be stored securely and will be made available only to persons conducting the study unless participants specifically give permission in writing to do so otherwise. In the event that a transcriber is utilized, he or she will be asked to sign a pledge of confidentiality. No reference to participant's identity will be made in oral or written reports which could link the participants to the study.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the principal researcher, Kathy Dykes Sims, via e-mail at SimsK6@k12tn.net. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, contact Research Compliance Services of the Office of Research at (865) 974-3466.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you withdraw from the study before the data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

CONSENT

I have read the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature _____ **Date** _____

Investigator's signature _____ **Date** _____

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW GUIDE

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. As principal, what was your role during the construction phase?
2. During the construction phase, what latitude did you as principal have in making decisions as it related to the organization of the new school?
3. What responsibilities and duties did you have or assume as it related to organization of the new school during the construction phase (staffing, selection of colors, furniture design, etc.)?
4. What leadership challenges did you encounter prior to the opening of your new school?
5. What organizational challenges did you encounter prior to the opening of your new school?
6. What other challenges do principals of new schools encounter prior to the opening?
7. What were the things that were important to you and how did you put them into practice?
8. What vision had you formulated of what your new school would be like once it was completed?
9. What did you do prior to opening of the new school to have your vision become a reality?
10. In regards to the stakeholders (staff, students, parents, community), what were some of the challenges or concerns that arose prior to the opening of the new school? How did you handle these concerns or challenges?

11. How did you engage stakeholders (staff, students, parents, community) in developing the school's culture and climate prior to the opening of the new school?
12. Was there any type of induction given for you and your staff before you moved into your new building? If so, who conducted the induction and what was the process?
13. If you were given the opportunity to open a new school again, would you do it? Why or why not?
14. If you had the opportunity to open a new school again, what would you do differently?
15. What was the most important aspect of opening a new school?
16. What was the most difficult challenge of opening a new school?
17. Do you believe you had adequate academic knowledge and background experience to prepare you for the challenge of opening a new school? Explain.
18. What skills do you believe principals need to be successful in opening and organizing a new school?
19. What advice or suggestions would you give to a principal appointed to open a new school?
20. What advice or suggestions would you give to school systems/districts that you feel would be beneficial to the success of opening of a new school?

APPENDIX C

DATA PROFILE FORM

DATA PROFILE FORM

Principal Data

Principal's Name: (Ms.) (Mrs.) (Mr.) (Dr.) _____
First Middle Initial Last

Age: _____ Gender: (circle one) Male Female Ethnic Origin: _____

Educational Employment Background

Beginning with the most recent, list all applicable employment and positions held in the education profession prior to the opening of your new school:

Dates of Employment

Title / Position Held

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Educational Background

List all college degree(s) earned prior to the opening of your new school:

Degree Earned

Date of Completion

College / Area of Concentration

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

School Data

Name of New School: _____

School Address: _____

City: _____ **Zip Code:** _____ **County:** _____

State Region: (circle one) **East** **Middle** **West**

School System / District Name: _____

School System / District Student Population: _____

Duration of New School Construction: _____

Date New School Opened: _____

Grade Configuration of New School: _____

Student Population when new school opened: _____

Student Population at date of interview: _____

Staffing Data:

Provide data information based on year new school opened:

Number of certified employees _____
(Classroom teachers, content area teachers, special area teachers)

Number of non-certified employees _____
(Teaching assistants, auxiliary paraprofessionals, custodians, food services, etc.)

Other:

When were you appointed principal of the new school? _____

Did you apply for the position? _____

APPENDIX D

TRANSCRIBER'S PLEDGE OF CONFIDENTIALITY

TRANSCRIBER'S PLEDGE OF CONFIDENTIALITY

As the transcribing typist of the research project conducted by principal researcher,

Kathy D. Sims, I understand that I will be hearing tapes of confidential interviews.

In good faith, research participants revealed data on these tapes with assurance that their information would remain strictly confidential. I understand that I have a responsibility to honor this confidentiality agreement. I hereby agree not to share any information on these tapes with anyone except the primary researcher of this project. Any violation of this agreement would constitute a serious breach of ethical standards, and I pledge not to do so.

Signature of Transcribing Typist

Date

VITA

Kathy Dykes Sims was born on July 19, 1957 in Newport, Tennessee. She attended Tanner Elementary School and Newport Grammar School before graduating from Cocke County High School in June 1975. She pursued her Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. After graduating in May 1979, she returned to her hometown and began her teaching career with the Newport City School System. In 1981, she relocated back to Knoxville and continued her teaching career, teaching fourth grade at Mooreland Heights Elementary and fourth and fifth grades at Bearden Elementary. In May 1984, she graduated from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville with a Master's Degree in Educational Administration and Supervision. In 1989, she was appointed assistant principal at Karns Intermediate School. During her career at Karns Intermediate, she experienced the construction and opening of a new facility. In August 1999, she was appointed principal of Hardin Valley Elementary School, a new school that opened for the first time in August 2000. In August 2002, she was promoted to Elementary Supervisor. Kathy is currently the Executive Director of Human Resources for the Knox County School System, a position she has held since April 2004.

Kathy has been the vice-president of the Knoxville Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., the treasurer for Knox County Elementary Principals Association, and chairperson of the research and development committee for the Tennessee Association of Elementary School Principals.