REEVES, TRAVIS LEE, Ed.D. Principal Leadership and the Development of Organizational Culture in a New School. (2006)
Directed by Dr. Rick Reitzug. 133 pp.

The purpose of this research was to perform an in depth examination of principal leadership on the development of organizational culture in a new high school. Specifically, this research described the early culture of the school, the support of the community, the importance of building trusting relationships with colleagues, and the influence of the principal's leadership on the organization.

A case-study methodology was the primary research method used to gather information. Data was gathered using interviews, both principal and faculty members, observations, document analysis, and field notes. The research design included measures that insured high levels of trustworthiness.

Data from each form was used to describe the early formation of organizational culture at this new school and the influence of the principal on the organizational culture. Results from the qualitative data indicate that the principal has the respect of the staff and students, he has built the foundation for solid community support, he has empowered his teachers to make decisions in the school, and he has used the 'firsts' of the school as a positive culture building strategy. Furthermore, there was a strong

correlation between the vision, philosophy, and actions of this principal that have influenced the early development of culture at this school.

PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP AND THE DEVELOPMENT

OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

IN A NEW SCHOOL

by

Travis Lee Reeves

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of The Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Greensboro
2006

Approved by

_____
Committee Chair

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Committee Chair_____

Committee Members_____

_____

_____

_____
Date of Acceptance by Committee

_____
Date of Final Oral Examination

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My studies throughout the doctoral program have been rewarding. This is an experience I will always treasure because of the wonderful people I have met and the knowledge I have gained as a result of my classes, research, and practical application. I would like to recognize my committee members, Larry Coble, Rebecca Carver, and Carl Lashley, for their patience, guidance, help, and support during my comprehensive examination and dissertation. Each committee member contributed greatly to my learning. Rick Reitzug, chair of my committee, always gave me a different perspective to consider as I conducted my research. He demonstrated patience and modeled kindness as we worked closely together. I appreciate his practical knowledge and experience in the area of educational leadership.

I thank all of my family, friends, and colleagues for their patience and willingness to help. Most of all, I thank my wife, Leslie, for her encouragement, support, and sacrifice during the past four years. With her constant understanding, love, and devotion, this dream became a reality. I dedicate this work to her.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The job of a principal in a school is comprised of many specific tasks

and responsibilities. An effective principal is responsible for planning,

organizing, leading, staffing, directing, evaluating, coordinating, reporting,

and budgeting for the entire school. The principal has a great deal of

influence over the day-to-day activities associated with the school.

Specifically, my interest lies in the principalship and its impact on school

culture. The focus of this research will be a case study of one principal

and his influence on the culture of a new school setting. Why study

culture? Schein (1992) states that culture, its creation, and its

management are inextricably linked to leadership. He posited that culture

must "begin with leaders who impose their own values and assumptions on

a group" (p.1). A positive organizational culture can have a dramatic

effect on the organizational effectiveness of the school. Deal and Peterson

(1999) wrote the following on leadership and culture.

> Successful schools possess leaders who can read,
> assess, and reinforce core rituals, traditions, and values.
> Successful schools have leadership emanating from many
> people—leadership that maintains and supports learning for

1

all students, as well as learning for staff. Successful cultures have leaders who know deep down in their hearts how important schools are to children and want to make them the best places they can be. Successful cultures have leaders who can cope with the paradoxes of their work and take advantage of the opportunities of the future (p. xiii).

Many scholars support the notion that principals and leaders can make an impact on the culture of an organization.   For leadership to affect the culture of an organization, he/she must be able to perceive the limitations of one's own culture and to develop the culture adaptively.   This is the ultimate challenge of leadership within organizational culture (Schein, 1992).   When able to create this environment of culture, the principal can bond students, faculty members, and others together to work for common ideas that have intrinsic meaning. The group will have a mission to do what is best for the school community, because the two goals are intertwined into one encompassing vision.

Thus, I am interested in ways a principal influences the culture of a school. I want to learn more about how what the principal does and says influences the culture of the school. The research and information gained from this study will enable me to make my school the best place it can be for my students and staff members, while also contributing to the community.

This case study will concentrate on one high school principal in Northwest North Carolina. This principal is opening a new high school with 877 students. This principal has many years of experience as a teacher, coach, and administrator in another high school within the same district.

The primary methodology chosen for this research is case study. This research will take an extensive look into one organizational culture within a new high school. The focus will be to describe the setting and its culture, as well as to describe how one individual's influence guides the evolution of the setting.

This case study will be comprised of three separate data gathering methods: interview, observation, and document analysis. The principal and 25 faculty members were interviewed during this research. Observations occurred periodically during the research stage. The principal was observed in as many leadership settings as possible. Documents from the new school organization were analyzed throughout the research phase.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

What do we know about school and organizational culture from the literature?

What else do we need to know?

How have researchers studied school/organizational culture?

The review of professional literature that follows is intended to serve several purposes. First, it is important to define important key terms that will be crucial to the process of describing and understanding the organizational culture examined within this case study. Second, it is important for these terms to be understood individually, as well as the interconnected relationship they form to create significant concepts. Third, this literature review will represent the perspective and point of view of several prominent leaders within this body of research. Perhaps the most important part of this literature review is to present background information from the literature that will be important as I describe the organizational culture of this school and present findings from this case study.

Deal and Peterson (1999) state, "too much emphasis has been given to reforming schools from the outside through policies and mandates. Too little attention has been paid to shaping schools from within" (p. xi). A positive organizational culture can have a dramatic impact on the organizational effectiveness of the school.

Organizational Culture Defined

Anthropologists have used the term culture to refer to the customs and rituals in various societies that have existed throughout history. Social scientists Deal and Peterson (1990) state that "culture consists of the stable, underlying social meanings that shape beliefs and behavior over time" (p. 7). They subsequently applied the concept of culture to more limited aspects of patterns, behaviors, and thought within organizations (Deal & Peterson, 1999). This idea is known as organizational culture.

According to Schein, organizational culture may be thought of as a set of rules that evolves over time, related to the norms of a particular group (Schein, 1968). Within an organizational culture, as in any culture, individuals act consistently within the norms of their culture; therefore, the type of culture an organization has significantly impacts the work of people. Organizational culture is a term that can be applied to the creation and life of the norms, beliefs, and values of a school.

Schein (1992) states:

> The most useful way to think about culture is to view it as the accumulated shared learning of a given group, covering behavioral, emotional, and cognitive elements of the group members' total psychological functioning. For shared learning to occur, there must be a history of shared experience, which in turn implies some stability of membership in the group (p. 10).

Leadership in Organizational Cultures

It would be difficult for organizational cultures to be successful in

education or business without competent, positive, and creative

leadership. Schein makes a distinct point regarding the relationship

between leadership and culture.

> When one brings culture to the level of the organization, one can see more clearly how it is created, embedded, developed, and ultimately manipulated, managed and changed. The dynamic process of culture creation and management are the essence of leadership and make one realize that leadership and culture are two sides of the same coin (Schein, 1992, p.1).

While leadership and organizational culture have a direct

correlation, Schein feels that leaders need to try to "understand culture,

give it its due, and ask yourself how well you can begin to understand the culture in which you are embedded" (Schein, 1992, p.2).

> Culture is the result of a complex group learning process that is only partially influenced by leader behavior. But if the group's survival is threatened because elements of its culture have become maladapted, it is ultimately the function of leadership to recognize and do something about the situation. It is in this sense that leadership and culture are conceptually intertwined (Schein, 1992, p.5).

For leadership to positively affect the culture of an organization, the leader must be able to perceive the limitations of his/her own culture and develop the culture adaptively. How to build a positive culture within the context of the existing organization is the ultimate challenge of leadership within organizational culture (Schein, 1992). Culture building is a source of meaning and significance for teachers, students, administrators, and others as they see how they fit into the school culture. Once school culture is established, the culture acts as a positive socializer of thought and programmer of behavior (Sergiovanni, 2001). Culture in a school serves as a compass setting to steer people in a common direction; it provides a set of norms defining what people should accomplish (Sergiovanni, 2001, p. 108). School culture affects every part of the enterprise from what

faculty members talk about in the lunchroom, to the type of instruction that

is valued; from the way professional development is viewed, to the

importance of learning for students (Deal & Peterson, 1999). When able to

create this positive cultural environment, the principal can bond students,

faculty members, and others together to work for common ideas that have

intrinsic meaning. The school community members have a mission to do

what is best for them and their school because the two goals are

intertwined into one encompassing vision.

The principal is the key player in the success or failure of a school to

establish an effective organizational culture.

> In many ways the school principal is the most important
> and influential in any school…It is his leadership that sets the
> tone of the school, the climate for learning, the level of
> professionalism and morale of teachers and the degree of
> concern for what students may or may not become (U.S.
> Senate, 1972, pp. 305-307).

Nevertheless, the principal's presence alone will not ensure that an

effective culture exists for students. Most successful principals will say

that getting the culture right and paying attention to how parents, faculty

members, and students define and experience meaning are two widely

accepted rules for creating effective schools (Sergiovanni, 2001).

Bates (cited in Sergiovanni, 2001, p.112) elaborates on the

principal's influence in shaping school culture.

> The culture of the school is therefore the product of conflict and negotiation over definitions of situations. The administrative influence on school language, metaphor, myths, and rituals is a major factor in the determination of the culture, which is reproduced in the consciousness of teacher and pupils. Culture that is based on metaphors of capital accumulation, hierarchy, and domination is at least partly attributable to the exercise of administrative authority during the negotiation of what is to count as the culture in the school.

Does this mean that all stakeholders have to agree? Sergiovanni

addresses this point clearly. "Not all schools with strong cultures are

characterized by "harmony." Indeed, agreeing to disagree may well be the

core value of a given school culture" (Sergiovanni, 2001, p.112).

How does a principal go about establishing or reinforcing an

effective organizational culture for his/her school? First, a principal must

be seen as a leader, not a manager. It is important that a principal view all

school activities as opportunities to create and promote the ideas of a

positive school culture, not just daily duties to "get through." Dwyer,

Barnett, and Lee (1987) found that

Effective principals communicate values consistent with the "overarching framework" that they hold for their positions through the routine, frequent, and often-brief interaction that make up their day. Similarly, Scott, Ahadi, and Krug (1990) found that what distinguished effective principals from less effective principals were not the types of activities in which they were engaged, but rather the meanings that they ascribed to these activities. Effective principals saw routine actions such as monitoring the lunchroom as opportunities to promote instructional priorities through, for example, conversations with students, whereas less effective principals perceived these actions as simply routine management tasks (cited in Reitzug & Reeves, 1992, p.212).

These daily activities are renewing and enriching parts of a school's life, small things that are vital to the creation of culture.

Second, a principal who is a true leader takes the idea of an "overarching framework" to the next level. He or she has an overall picture of what the school can be, if the leader looks to the future and involves everyone in the school's growth and potential. This is the concept of vision. Principals should be challenged to insure that their schools have visions that faculty members, students, and community members can make a part of their daily lives.

Bennis (1984) finds that compelling vision is the key ingredient of leadership among heads of the highly successful organizations he studied. "Vision refers to the capacity to create and communicate a view of a

desired state of affairs that induces commitment among those working in the organization. Vision becomes the substance of what is communicated as symbolic aspects of leadership are emphasized" (Sergiovanni, 2001, p. 106). Schein (1992) states that visionary leadership must be understood in this context, in that the vision sometimes serves the function of providing the psychological safety that permits the organization to move forward.

Third, with visionary leadership, the effective principal will make certain the school is headed in a positive direction. Negative school culture can be a powerful force that detracts from the vision of the leader and the school. It is sometimes necessary to deconstruct an existing culture in order to remove negative elements. "Organizational cultures are created in part by leaders, and one of the most decisive functions of leadership is the creation, the management, and sometimes even the destruction of culture" (Schein, 1992, p.5).

Schein (1992) says, "leaders of the future must possess new skills in analyzing and changing cultural assumptions and the ability to learn the assumptions of a whole new organizational culture" (p. 211).

To obtain these goals, principals as school leaders must be willing to look at their school culture closely to maintain and progress in the twenty first century. Educational change abounds in the age of accountability.

11

Individual members of organizations that form cultures must recognize how deeply their perceptions, thoughts, and feelings are culturally determined. Schein (1992) concludes ultimately, we cannot achieve the cultural humility required to live in a turbulent culturally diverse world, unless we can see cultural assumptions within ourselves. In the end, cultural understanding and cultural learning start with self-insight.

School cultures are diverse as Schein points out; however, it is the responsibility of the principal to look at him/herself in a progressive way as he/she attempts to build a positive school culture that promotes student achievement, leadership, vision, and trust. Principals are challenged to ensure that their schools have a vision that faculty members, students, and community members can make a part of their daily lives.

Positive Cultures and Toxic Cultures

Deal and Peterson discuss toxic cultures and negative subcultures in depth. "To understand the nature of toxic cultures, it is important to understand how they differ from positive places" (Deal & Peterson, 2001, p. 87).

Positive cultures and positive schools have these characteristics (Deal & Peterson, 1999):

- A mission focused on student and teacher learning;

- A rich sense of history and purpose;

- Core values of collegiality, performance, and improvement that engender quality, achievement, and learning;

- Positive beliefs and assumptions about the potential of students and staff to learn and grow;

- A strong professional community that uses knowledge experience, and research to improve practice;

- A shared sense of responsibility for student outcomes;

- A cultural network that fosters positive communication flows;

- Leadership among staff and administration that blends continuity with improvement;

- Rituals and ceremonies that reinforce core cultural values;

- Stories that celebrate successes and recognize heroines and heroes;

- An overall sense of interpersonal connection, meaningful purpose, and belief in the future;

- A physical environment that symbolizes joy and pride;

- A widely shared sense of respect and caring for everyone.

Positive school culture is required for a school to be successful. Administrators, teachers, and students must have common values that hold them together as a unit or body. In order for a visionary leader to understand where their school and their school culture fit into this model, they must also be able to assess the negative or toxic cultures that may exist at their school (Deal & Peterson, 2001, p.87).

Toxic cultures have these characteristics (Deal &

Peterson, 1999):

- A lack of shared purpose or a splintered mission based on self-interest;

- Staff members who find most of their meaning in activities outside work, negativity or anti-student sentiments;

- Viewing the past as a story of defeat and failure;

- Norms of radical individualism, the acceptance of mediocrity, and an avoidance of innovation;

- Little sense of community where negative beliefs about colleagues and students abound;

- Few positive traditions or ceremonies to develop a sense of community;

- A cultural network of naysayers, saboteurs, rumormongers, and antiheroes, where communication is primarily negative;

- A dearth of leadership in the principal's office and among staff;

- Positive role models unrecognized in the school and community;

- Social connections that have become fragmented and openly antagonist;

- Rather than hopes, dreams and a clear vision, a sense of hopelessness, discouragement, and despair (Deal & Peterson, 2001, p. 88).

These settings are not pleasant for faculty members or students. A principal must be aware of his/her school and its needs as he/she builds a positive culture. The principal is crucial in establishing and shaping the culture of the school, either in a positive or negative way.

Shaping Organizational Culture

One large part of positive culture building is the recognition of ritual and ceremony. Deal and Peterson (1999) note: "Without ceremony to honor traditions, mark the passage or time, graft reality and dreams onto old roots, or reinforce our cherished valued and beliefs, our very existence could become empty, sterile, and devoid of meaning" (p. 31). The rituals, ceremonies, slogans, and stories of a school fortify the core values and symbolize what is important for students, faculty members, and community members. These rituals and ceremonies also provide everyone a chance to reflect on what is essential.

With political correctness, state, and federal accountability measures, and compacted curriculums, many schools have neglected rituals and ceremonies. Rituals become significant traditional events in schools. Traditions and ceremonies provide a vital tie to the past, reinvigorate the present, and make a promise for the future. Special

events in schools touch the hearts of students, faculty members, and parents.   Community members often recall pleasant memories of their own personal experiences in school and are able to relate to the present. Deal and Peterson (1999) state: "When people honor traditional rituals, it gives them a cultural foundation to weather challenges, difficulties, and change. Rituals are the daily comings and goings that creates the mortar that binds people and activities; rituals hold a school together" (p.33).

To create and combine school cultures, some rituals and ceremonies should be re-created by the students, faculty members, and parents. Many rituals and ceremonies were created by past classes or leaders and the relevance and importance is not binding to the current school community. School culture represents an effective means of coordination and control in a loosely connected world. Sergiovanni (2001) notes:

> Its covenant or center of purposes and shared values represent a source of inspiration, meaning, and significance for those who live and work in the school. These qualities can lead to enhanced commitment and performance that are beyond expectations. As a result, the school is better able to achieve its goals (p. 108).

Storytelling is a powerful way to shape the organization's culture. Too often, educational professionals look to quantitative numbers to describe schools and their effectiveness. The data is often used to make key decisions within the school. Concrete data is useful in making some decisions; however, stories that are rich in meaning and history may have a deeper impact on the success or failure of the school.

> Stories are key cultural elements, and they serve many purposes. They can help initiate new staff members into cultural understanding, provide laughter or tears needed to get through a difficult situation, and reinforce core values and purposes. Stories are powerful in part because people can easily remember and be moved by stories that are vivid, meaningful, and clear (Deal & Peterson, 2001, p. 59).

Stories do many things for organizational culture. Stories may teach others what to do in crises, they may motivate others to do good for the organization, they may even spread an unwritten set of expectations that the staff members have for each other. Stories are fun, non-threatening, and reflective. Staff members react favorably to positive stories that instill value, purpose, simplicity, and the practical application of knowledge.

The use of storytelling by the leader is a great way to exemplify the heroes and heroines of an organization. Heroes and heroines

demonstrate the core values of the school. When shaping organizational

culture, it is important to celebrate heroes and heroines within a school

organization.

> When heroes exemplify qualities a school wants to reinforce, leaders can recognize these individuals publicly. Schools can commemorate teachers or administrators in pictures, plaques, or special ceremonies just as businesses, hospitals, or military units do (Deal & Peterson, 1999, p. 93).

Symbolic leadership is another way to shape organizational culture.

 "It is not only the formal leadership of the principal that sustains and

continuously reshapes culture but the leadership of everyone. Deep

shared leadership builds strong cohesive cultures" (Deal & Peterson, 1999,

p.87). Almost all actions of school leaders can have symbolic content

when the school community understands the actions' relevance to shared

values.

Sergiovanni (1991) suggests that symbolic leadership does not

require grand dramatic events, but more often takes place through simple

routines that communicate important messages. The arrangement of the

principal's office, for example, signifies what the principal deems important.

The principal models values through his or her demeanor and actions.

Facial expressions and a sense of humor send signals of formality or

informality, approachability or distance, concern or lack of concern.

Reitzug and Reeves (1992) note:

> Symbolic leadership is the hidden dimension of principal's leadership. The tendency of principals and all other individuals is to focus on the substance and intent of their actions. They are less likely to consider the multiple interpretations that followers construct of the meaning of these same actions. Yet, some critical theorists will exhort that because principals may be using symbolic leadership as a means to develop their school culture they are manipulating and controlling their staff members (Reitzug & Reeves, 1992). Yet as Bolman and Deal (1984) argued, what is most important about any event is not what happened but rather the meaning the individuals attach to what happened. The implication for principals has less to do with exchanging substance for symbol than it does with becoming sensitive to symbol in substance (cited in Reitzug & Reeves, 1992, p. 217).

Principals must realize what is appreciated and honored, and send

signals of core values and what is admirable and achievable (Deal &

Peterson, 1999). It is the leader's responsibility to give attention to the

informal, subtle, and symbolic aspects of school life and, along with the

students, faculty members, and members of the community, to answer the

following questions: What is this school about? What are we doing here?

What do we believe in? Why do we function the way we do? How are we

unique? How do I fit into this school? Purpose and meaning are essential

in helping the school become a community of mind (Sergiovanni, 2001).

As Greenfield (1973) states:

> What many people seem to want from schools is that
> schools reflect the values that are central and meaningful in
> their lives. If this view is correct, schools are cultural artifacts
> that people struggle to shape in their own image. Only in such
> forms do they have faith in them; only in such forms can they
> participate comfortably in them (Greenfield, cited in
> Sergiovanni, (2001), p. 112).

Schein (1992) states: "One of the most subtle yet most potent ways

through which cultural assumptions are embedded and perpetuated is the

process of selecting new members" (p. 243). As principals hire new faculty

members, they must identify their purpose within the organization and how

they will be able to contribute.   Principals have a responsibility to hire

highly qualified teachers who will make an impact on students and student

achievement. However, they also must consider the makeup of the staff

and how new people will fit into the school culture. Schein (1992)

continues: "Founders and leaders tend to find attractive those candidates

who resemble present members in style, assumptions, values, and beliefs"

(p. 244). They are considered the best people to hire and are assigned

characteristics that will justify their being hired. Unless someone from the outside is involved in the hiring practice, there is no way of knowing how much the current implicit assumptions are dominating the recruiter's (principal's) perceptions of the candidates (Schein, 1992). This is why Sergiovanni noted earlier the importance of building a resilient school culture where there is loyal opposition. Effective principals need staff members who are positive, yet highly critical of themselves and their practices. This should translate in highly productive staff members who are never satisfied with the status quo and want to find better ways to reach their students and operate the school. Some principals may find this intimidating and neglect to hire these loyal oppositionists.

When new staff members are hired, this is an excellent time for the principal of the school to acclimate the faculty members to the positive aspects of the school culture. New staff members have absolutely no knowledge of old rituals, school problems or personality conflicts between staff members. It is the duty of the principal to insure that new staff members are welcomed into the culture of the school and mentored by positive role models. Schein (1992) points out very simply:

In a rapidly changing world, the leader/founder must not only have a vision but must be able to impose it and to develop it further as external circumstances change. Inasmuch as the new members of the organization arrive with prior organizational and cultural experiences, a common set of assumptions can only be forged by clear and consistent messages as the group encounters and survives it own crises (p. 375).

Leadership is vital in order for an organizational culture to succeed. The principal must rise to the challenge; lead, not manage; create a vision for the school; emphasize and encourage all positive aspects; realize the importance of ritual and include all members of the school in the creation of meaningful ceremonies; and understand how his/her role as a symbol affects the community's perception of the school. Schein sums up the role of the leader and what he/she needs to accomplish in order to be successful. "The bottom line for leaders is that if they do not become conscious of the cultures in which they are embedded, those cultures will manage them. Cultural understanding is desirable for all of us, but it is essential to leaders if they are to lead" (Schein, 1992, p. 15).

Relationships and the Formation of Organizational Culture

Principals must build a resilient culture, one that can bend to change here and there, but not break; that can stretch in a new direction and

shrink from an old, but still maintain its integrity; a culture that is able to

bounce back and recover its strength and spirit, always maintaining its

identity (Sergiovanni, 2001).

One key to building resiliency is the cultivation of a small, but

energetic loyal opposition made of people who enjoy an honest, high-

trusting relationship, but who have conflicting visions, goals, or methods.

The task of the loyal opposition is to bring out the best in the

principal/leader. Principals need to be grateful to those who oppose them

in a high-trust way, for they bring the picture of reality and practicality to

the leader's plans (Block, 1987 cited in Fullan, 2001, p.124).   In order to

build trusting relationships with staff members, the principal must be able

to confront and deal with loyal oppositionists in a positive manner. This is

also a part of building the cultural force that Sergiovanni discusses in his

work. Through a trusting relationship with stakeholders, the principal is in

a position to negotiate differences in good faith with students, faculty

members, and parents. Again, this is a key to building school culture and

involving as many different people as possible to insure that all have a

voice and are empowered to work for the school and the community. In

fact, "Trust provides the motivation and energy that makes it possible for

organizations to work" (Bennis & Goldsmith, 1997, p.120). Schools are

one example of trusting social organizations within society. Trust binds those schools that are successful with parents, students, and faculty members. Trust and relationship building are important in shaping school culture with all constituents. Fullan (2001) describes relationships in a similar manner. "Good relationships purge a knowledge-creation process of distrust, fear, and dissatisfaction, and allow organizational members to feel safe enough to explore the unknown territories of new markets, new customers, new products, and new manufacturing technologies" (Fullan, 2001, p. 45). Trust, therefore, is intimately related to confidence, faith, and "becomes an issue when others have influence over something that is important to us" (Shaw, cited in Lee, 1998). For Lewine and Regine (2000), "relationships are not just a product of networking but genuine relationships based on authenticity and care" (Lewine & Regine cited in Fullan, (2001), p. 52). As leadership builds organizational culture, the individual stakeholders want to know their purpose and they want to make a difference. They want to be able to express their opinions without negative repercussions. They want to be able to trust their leader just as their leader trusts them.

Creating a New School Organization and Culture

Most of the literature on leader/principal influence on an organization's culture comes from studies of established organizations. Few, if any, studies have explored culture development in new organizations. Schein wrote on culture change in young organizations in his book, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*. He stated that in the "first stage, the founding and early growth of a new organization, the main cultural thrust comes from the founders and their assumptions" (Schein, 1992, p. 303).

> The way in which culture can and does change depends upon the stage at which the organization finds itself. For example, when a culture is in the growth stage…,leaders can manipulate what they pay attention to, control, and reward; their role modeling and coaching; how they allocate resources; how they select, promote, and "deselect" people; the organization structures and processes they create and so on. However, once the culture has stabilized in a mature organization because of a long history of success, leaders find that such manipulations are often limited or superficial in their effects. They discover that changing deeply embedded assumptions requires far more effort and time. (Schein, 1992, p. 297).

Schein believes "The culture in young and successfully growing companies (schools) is likely to be strongly adhered to because:

1) The primary culture creators are still present,

2) The culture helps the organization define itself…,

3) Many elements of the culture have been learned as defenses against anxiety as the organization struggles to build and maintain itself" (Schein, 1992, p. 305).

Nonetheless, our knowledge of culture development in new organizations is limited. Therefore, understanding the principal's role in the development of the organizational culture is crucial to understanding how school culture is developed from the beginning.

As new school organizations are created, there must be a clear strategy for the creation of organizational culture. Part of this strategy includes the creation of a mission statement. Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (1996) state,

In order to help people see the benefits, the management needs to define the purpose or mission of the

organization. A good mission statement explains the basic purpose of the operations. It illustrates how the organization differs from others in the same industry and identifies the scope of the operations in product, service, and market terms. The mission is interpreted by the stakeholders and turned into personalized visions. Top management should ask: What meaning does the organizational mission or purpose trigger in the stakeholders (p. 548)?

To further involve the stakeholders in the future of the organization, the leader's strategy would include the creation of a setting. Sarason, Professor of Psychology Emeritus at Yale University, has completed much research and work on the creation of settings. Sarason ties the creation of settings to his own life as an immigrant to the United States from Russia in the 1920's.

Settings may be defined as "any instance when two or more people come together in new and sustained relationships to achieve certain goals" (Sarason, 1972 p.1, cited in Brubaker, 2003). When new organizations are formed, it is crucial that the leader establish goals that all members can strive for and achieve together. These goals are universal in nature and there is a primary value agreement between the leader and the core group. Just as with a new organization, the creation of a setting is not without conflict and potential disagreement between the core groups. "The fact of the matter is that agreement on values may be a necessary condition, but

it is far from being a sufficient condition" (Sarason, cited in Brubaker 2003).

Sarason offers a framework for the creation of a setting.

1. It is important to identify, understand, and respect the pre-existing history of a proposed setting.
2. Although one's impulse is to rush forward with the construction of the new setting, it is wise to reach consensus on the underlying values of the proposed setting.
3. The leader and core group must agree prior to the initiation of the setting on the norms or ground rules that will govern the new setting.
4. Leaders who create and sustain a setting must recognize a dilemma with regard to human and non-human resources: There will always be more desires than resources.
5. Diversionary activities will often take the leader and core group away from their core activities.
6. Leaders and the core group can give too much attention to innovations for delivering services to clients at the expense of creating an environment that will entertain continual innovation, enthusiasm, and creativity.
7. All persons involved in the creation of settings have to get at a high level in order to give at a high level.
8. Leaders must listen to the dissonant voice.
9. The transactional context in which all participants are interactive is a more accurate and useful description of setting creation than the simple cause and effect way of thinking.
10. Doing one's professional autobiography is an important activity, "…an autobiography which would inevitably have to be personal and professional" (Sarason, 1972, cited in Brubaker, 2003).
11. While engaged in the creation of a setting, the leader and others must have self-correction stance in place.
12. Sarason personalizes the matter of the ends of education by asking and answering the question, "What is the one overarching characteristics you want your child to have when he or she is graduated from high school?
13. Sarason's love of ideas is complemented by his personal kindness and encouragement for others.

14. Sarason believes that educators, in contrast to those in medicine, "…have oversold what is known at the expense of what is unknown" (Sarason, 1991, cited in Brubaker, 2003).
15. Finally, Sarason believes that the creation of a setting is much more than a technical process (Sarason, 1972 cited in Brubaker, 2003).

"Sarason believes that the formation of a core group is one of the inevitable early steps in the creation of an educational setting" (Sarason, 1972, cited in Brubaker, 2003). This core group could be described as a family, the people closest to the leader. "The challenge to the educational leader is to find appropriate and sometimes subtle ways to involve all members in creating the new setting. In this way they assume ownership for the creation of the new setting" (Sarason, 1972, cited in Brubaker, 2003). Creating a new educational setting is certainly complex and requires a great deal of forethought and leadership. In a word of cautionary advice, Sarason offers these parting words. "The name of the game is not change but how to recognize, react to, and work through the turmoil of change which is always deeply personal and social in nature and context" (Sarason, 1972, cited in Brubaker, 2003).

Sarason also noted several basic assumptions that are important to leaders who want to create successful settings. The energy and enthusiasm felt by the leader and others within the organization are

important, but insufficient in order to carry the momentum of the new

setting past the honeymoon period. "The leader and core group must

agree prior to the initiation of the setting on the norms or ground rules that

will govern the new setting" (Sarason cited in Brubaker, 2003, p.7). The

leader must also be aware that, as Deal and Peterson (1999) have found,

educational institutions spend too much time creating educational solutions

that are program dominated, rather than working on the overall culture or

setting of a school organization.

As the leader of the organization, one of the most important tasks is

to establish and make sure the basic values of the organization are

followed and to create positive norms. The importance of values within an

organizational culture determines what is rewarded and what is sanctioned

by the organization. According to Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (1996),

business values consist of:

1. Quality is important
2. Cost effectiveness is important
3. Being the market leader is important
4. Customer service is important

These business values could easily be translated into school values

with just a few words. The concept is identical.

Individual values are:

1. The right to try and to fail is important
2. Safety is important
3. Teamwork is important

These individual values are critical to any organization's success.

"A norm can be characterized as a "driving rule" for organizational behavior" (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 1996, p. 549). As the principal of a new school establishes organizational culture within the building, norms are established each day. Norms are established by how the basic values are interpreted and followed by the organization. As with any organization, these norms can be positive or negative. Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (1996) note the following examples of negative norms in an organizational culture:

1. Take no risks;

2. Follow instructions without deviation to be safe;

3. If you make a mistake you will be punished.

The following is an example of positive norms in an organizational culture:

1. You should take risks;

2. You are personally responsible;

3. You need to change your means of personal development (Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson, p. 549).

Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson further state,

> The existing organizational culture is the result of implemented decisions and events that have shaped the organization's way of thinking and operating. Every new strategic decision is an attempt to influence the culture or the organization's way of performing to achieve the desired results. If the culture does not support the new strategies, most of the time the strategies will never get implemented. The organizational culture must be "in tune" with or attuned to the strategy (Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson, 1996, p.550).

With a mission statement, a setting, basic values, positive norms in place and agreed upon by all members or the organization, the leader has a chance to create an effective, thriving organizational culture.

Criticisms of Shaping Culture

While there are many proponents that believe positive principal leadership is embodied in a set of beliefs, positive norms, guidelines, and

common goals for the school to follow, shaping the culture of schools has not been without criticism. "Critical theorists have argued that much of the organizational culture literature embodies a manipulative view in which culture becomes a newly discovered, less obtrusive, but perhaps more pervasive form of control (Bates, 1987; Foster, 1986, cited in Reitzug & Reeves, 1992). These critical theorists note that such radical shifts in traditional school leadership often embellish "ideological control based upon the manipulation of the company culture" (Bates cited in Reitzug & Reeves, 1992). Foster (cited in Reitzug & Reeves, 1992) "asserted that such managers manipulate culture because they 'engage in a program of change designed to produce a new culture…altered to reflect the particular reality the manager happens to envision'" (p. 136).

In any organization, the leader or manager is going to have an overwhelming positive or negative effect on the members of the organization. Each leader or manager, by virtue of his/her position, must make key decisions that influence the organizational culture every day. These decisions often define what is important to that particular leader and therefore often influence other decisions made by members of the organization.

The key "distinction is whether a leader's influence is manipulative appear to be whether the leader is engaged in an 'intellectual exercise' or in an 'intuitive expression of one's own beliefs'" (Foster, 1986, p.136, cited in Reitzug & Reeves, 1992) and whether the 'culture is largely based on metaphors of participatory democracy, equity, and cultural liberation or on metaphors of capital accumulation, hierarchy, and domination' (Bates, cited in Reitzug & Reeves, 1992).

Shaping school culture is a complex, varied, and long-term process. Much of the day-to-day interaction between the principal and the faculty members, students, and parents is what determines the culture of the school. It is essential when looking at this leadership principle, to also explore the use of manipulation by the principal as a form of control. As Bates and Foster mention in the previous paragraph, there is a big difference between a culture that is largely based on participatory democracy and equity, versus a school culture that is dominated by capital accumulation, hierarchy, and domination. This definition clearly marks the difference between shaping school culture in a positive sense, and the manipulation of school culture as a way of controlling adults, students, and parents.

Conclusion

The concepts of general culture, organizational culture, and leadership within organizational culture, addressed within this literature

review are intended to promote the goal of this case study on the development of organizational culture in a new high school in Northwest North Carolina.

It is also important for the reader to understand that the information contained in this literature review represents a paradigm in which the findings of the case study will be viewed as they are gathered by interview, observation, and document analysis. The manner in which this literature review was prepared does not represent the only way to address these important concepts. This literature review and these findings represent an influential framework that has dictated both the methodology, and the presentation of findings.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Type of Qualitative Study

This research is a case study of a principal in a newly formed high school. Merriam (1998) defines "case study as an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit" (Merriam, 1998, p.27). The unit of analysis for this case study is the principal. The focus of the case will be on his culture building practices. "As a research strategy, the case study is used in many situations to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political, and related phenomena" (Yin, 2003, p.1). For the purpose of this research, "Qualitative data are attractive. They are a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes occurring in local contexts" (Miles and Huberman, 1984, p.15). Since the overall purpose of this study was to determine the contributions one principal could make to school culture in a new high school organization, a qualitative approach was the appropriate methodology of research. This required an intensive study of people and settings.

This study protected the confidentiality of the principal, the faculty members, students, school, and school district. I used pseudonyms to protect all individuals. All information collected is confidential. Permission was obtained from the school system, as well as the university before the research was conducted.

Description of Key Concepts

Three key terms were used heavily in this research: leadership, culture, and culture building. School culture encompasses words, slogans, rituals, ceremonies, and team building. The principal used these and other forms of leadership that were not mentioned in this basic definition. Schein (1992) states

> If one wishes to distinguish leadership from management or administration, one can argue that leaders create and change cultures, while managers and administrators live within them (p. 5).

The second term, culture, is defined as the beliefs and assumptions that give meaning to what people say and do, and that influence and guide their actions. These beliefs and assumptions are existing, yet unwritten elements. They are the unwritten rules of the school that influence the actions of students and staff members. These unwritten rules compose

the deeper structure of life that is reflected and transmitted through symbolic language and expressive language of students, faculty members, and the principal.

The third term, culture building, refers to examples of the principal's actions that promote leadership and the culture of the building. The heroes and heroines, rituals, ceremonies, traditions, stories, and team building exercises are all examples that exemplify "the practice" of the principal in an effort to strengthen the culture of the building.

Cultures take on the shape of their heroes and heroines. Heroes and heroines are defined as individuals who exemplify the "core values of the school. Heroes and heroines show us what we can become. They provide the culture with an image of the best that is in us" (Deal & Peterson, (1999), p. 58).

Rituals are another element of culture that give deeper meaning to an organization. Rituals are defined as "procedures or routines that are infused with deeper meaning. They help make common experiences uncommon events" (Deal & Peterson,1999, p. 32). When these common events become rituals in a school and can be tied to a school's mission and vision, they "summon a spirit and reinforce cultural ties" (Deal & Peterson,1999, p.32).

Ceremonies are another element of organizational culture. Ceremonies are defined as "complex, culturally sanctioned ways that a school celebrates successes, communicates its values, and recognizes special contributions of staff and students" (Deal & Peterson, 1999, p. 35). Deal and Peterson (1999) state that "successful ceremonies are carefully designed and arranged to communicate values, celebrate core accomplishments, and build a tight sense of community" (p. 41).

Traditions are a combination of the rituals and ceremonies that have been passed on by the heroes and heroines to the organization. Traditions are important events that have a special history within the organization. Deal and Peterson (1999) state "traditions are a part of the history; they reinvigorate the culture and symbolize it to insiders and outsiders alike" (p. 41).

Stories are another important aspect of organizational culture. Stories can reinforce the core values of the organization.

> Telling stories that exemplify the importance and quality of collegiality can reinforce successful cultures. When school principals and teachers recount positive stories of the school to students, to parents, and to newly hired staff, it communicates what is important and expected (Deal & Peterson, 1999, p.55).

Heroes, heroines, rituals, traditions, ceremonies, and stories make the routines of school symbolize what is important, valued, and significant. This is organizational culture. All of these elements put together make up the culture of an organization and often determine whether it will be successful.

Research Setting

- This qualitative case study took place in a brand new, rural high school that serves 877 students, grades 9-11. This is a traditional high school with a seven period day and many extra curricular activities for students. This school offers a full range of academic opportunities for students. Within the Arts program, students can take visual arts, dance, orchestra, band, or theatre. The career and technical education program offers computer application, business, fashion merchandising, agriculture and teen living classes. The Language department offers classes in French, German, Latin, and Spanish. All End-of-Course classes have advanced placement classes. There are nine athletic programs for males and eleven athletic programs for females. This school has 61 classroom teachers, 40 are female and 21 are male. 90% of the faculty

members are white while 10% are African American. The demographics of the student body are 1%-Asian, 2%-multi-racial, 3%-Hispanic, 8%-African American, and 85%-white. This new school was built on an old farm with two ponds that comprised 60 acres. The location of this school is in the Northwest Piedmont-Triad region of North Carolina.

Research Participants

Selection of Principal. The principal selected for this study was selected based on the following criteria.

- The principal selected for this research is currently leading a new school organization.

- The school in which this person is the principal was easily accessible for me, yet not part of my school district.

- I wanted to study a principal who is highly regarded throughout the state and is well known by public school educators across the state.

- I wanted to study someone who had teacher, coach, and administrative roles in the school.

- I needed someone who was willing to be a research participant.

- I wanted to study someone with experience in a traditional high school.

- I felt it was important to study a principal with whom I had no former ties.

Selection of Interviewees

Selection of Faculty Members Interviewed. I interviewed twenty-five faculty members. All research participants were volunteers. The group of twenty-five faculty members represented a wide range of experience and content areas, and symbolized a broad cross section of the faculty. I interviewed 20 teachers, the media specialist, the media assistant, one teacher assistant, one guidance counselor, and the testing/curriculum coordinator. Seventeen of the interviewees were female while eight were male. Twenty-two of the interviewees were white, while three were African American. The experiences of the faculty members interviewed varied. Five faculty members interviewed had between 0-5 years of experience, three faculty members interviewed had between 6-10 years of experience. Eight faculty members interviewed had between 11-15 years of experience. Three faculty members interviewed had between 16-20 years of experience. Three faculty members interviewed had between 20-25 years of experience. Three faculty members interviewed had over 25

years of experience.   All interviews were solicited and confirmed via email. The staff was warm and hospitable during my time on campus. I was pleased with the participation rate from the faculty at this new high school.

Data Collection

I gathered my empirical information by interview, observation, document analysis, and field notes. I interviewed the principal on three separate occasions while on campus.   Twenty-five faculty members were interviewed.   Each conversation began with a review of the research and the consent form from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Individuals willingly gave their consent for the interview. Interview questions were predetermined for both the principal and the faculty members. As interviews were conducted and responses reviewed, follow up questions were posed during the interview. All questions were directed at principal leadership and culture building in a new school organization. Interviews were conducted before, during, and after school hours, and during convenient times for the research participants.

Interviews-Principal

The principal was interviewed on three separate occasions.   All

interviews with the principal were conducted in his office. I spent

approximately 60-75 minutes per interview with the principal.   Questions

were tailored differently for each interview. The first interview focused on

his overall experience in education, his experience at his previous high

school, and the impact that his experience has had on the development of

this new school organization. The second interview focused on the new

school, the current programs that have been implemented, and his overall

philosophy of school culture building. The third interview focused on his

vision for the school in the future. During the final interview, I wanted to

gain a better understanding of what worked for this principal as he opened

this new school and what did not. I also wanted to get his advice for other

principals as they open new schools in the future. This is one of the most

important pieces of this research and will prove to be beneficial for other

principals and school leaders that read this research.   I posed the

following questions to the principal:

Interview # 1

- Tell me about your previous high school (Marietta).

- What was the culture like?

- What were some of the traditions that were practiced by faculty members?

- What were some of the traditions that were practiced by students?

- Were there one or two factors that kept you at Marietta for so long?

- What personal or leadership experience from Marietta will promote the culture at Ridgeview?

- Why do you think that you had so many applicants for teaching positions at Ridgeview?

- What is your perception of how you want to develop the culture at Ridgeview?

- Do you see a difference between school climate and school culture?

- What cultural things have you brought from Marietta to Ridgeview?

- How much community input have you had at the new school?

- What is the biggest difference between the two schools?

- What advice would you give other principals when opening a new school?

Interview # 2

- What is this school about?

- What is important here?

- How do you know?

- What symbolizes the culture of this school?

- Does this school have a slogan?

- If so, how is this slogan communicated?

- What do you value?

- What do faculty members and students value?

- Are these values shared? How do you know?

- Do you anticipate your leadership style will be different in a new school organization because of different needs?

- Has your leadership style been altered or developed by the school and people you work with on a daily basis?

- What ceremonies are important in a school?

- What rites or rituals do you plan to practice in this school?

- Will this school have any traditions at the inception of its existence?

- How are traditions formed at high schools?

- What are you doing to encourage the growth of school culture between faculty members, students, parents, and community members?

- What aspects of school culture do you feel are important?

Interview # 3

- What intentional actions do you take to promote the culture of the school?

- What unintentional actions of the principal appear to influence the culture of the school?

- In your opinion, what influence do slogans, stories, heroes, rites, rituals, ceremonies, and celebrations seem to play in the building of the culture of the this school?

- Assess the first semester of the school year. Where are you in relation to where you wanted to be at this time?

- What does the 2nd semester hold for you and the students here?

- What cultural things have started that will continue?

- What will this school feel like from a school culture standpoint five years from now?

- During the time you were planning the opening of the school, what was the most important thing you did to get this school ready?

- What advice would you give another principal opening a new school?

- What advice would you give any principal about establishing a positive school culture?

- What could a central office administrator learn from a principal regarding the development of a positive school culture?

- What could a businessperson learn from this culture building experience?

Follow up questions were asked of the principal, these questions do not appear in this list.

Interviews – Faculty Members

Twenty-five faculty members participated in this research study. All faculty members that participated in this research were volunteers. These research participants represented a wide cross section of the faculty and varied in their experience and knowledge of the principal. Some taught at the same high school where the principal was before; others were new to the community and school district and did not have a history with the principal. It was important to get a wide spectrum of research participants in order to make sure the research data was valid and obtain an accurate representation of the staff as a whole. I feel this was accomplished.

All faculty members were interviewed at school during a convenient time for them, either during their planning periods or before/after school. Interviews were conducted in many different sites within the building. Most interviews were conducted in the classrooms during planning periods. Some were conducted in teacher workrooms, the media center, an office, and one was conducted in the hall while the teacher assistant had lunch duty. All faculty members were asked the same questions, using the same standards. As the principle researcher, I was careful not to lead interview participants in their answers and approached each interview in the same fashion. As the interview began, I reviewed the consent form, gained their

approval and signature, and proceeded with the universal interview

questions I had generated previously. Some follow up questions were

posed during the interview based on different answers by faculty members,

their experience, their knowledge of leadership and culture building, their

knowledge of the community, and their knowledge and understanding of

the principal.   Many of the questions used were similar to those asked of

the principal. My main concern for the faculty members interviews was to

understand their viewpoints of what was happening at this school.

During the interviews, I listened for specific statements and

examples from the faculty members that explained how the culture was

influenced by daily events and principal leadership. Each interview was

unique and informative.

Faculty Member Interview Questions

The following questions were used during the faculty member

interviews:

- What is this high school about?

- What is important at this high school?

- What does this high school believe in?

- Does this school have a slogan?

- If so, how is this slogan communicated?

- "How is this high school unique?" (Sergiovanni, 2001, p. 112)

- What does the principal of the school value?

- What do faculty members value in this school?

- What role do you play in the leadership of the school?

- Does the leadership style of the principal influence school culture?

- What ceremonies are important at this school?

- What rites or rituals are important in this school?

- Does this school have any budding traditions—that is, things that are becoming traditions, or that you think will become traditions?

- Will this school have any traditions at the inception of its existence?

- What stories illustrate the significant events at this high school thus far in the school year?

- What advice would you give a principal opening a new school organization?

- What role does school culture play in the success of the school?

- What role does leadership have in the development of school culture in a new school organization?

Observations

Observations were conducted on nine occasions during the data-gathering phase of this research. Observations were conducted during school in the cafeteria, hallways, classrooms, and at after school functions.

I observed the cafeteria on three separate occasions for approximately 30 minutes (11-16-05, 11-30-05, & 12-14-05). I observed class changes on two occasions and made notes (11-16-05 & 12-14-05). On my first visit to the school, Mr. Sterling took me on a tour of the school which lasted over 60 minutes (10-24-05). I observed a football game on October 21, 2005 for approximately 2 1/2 hours. On December 17, 2005, I was on campus for approximately 2 1/2 hours observing a basketball game. I observed a class in the media center for approximately 50 minutes (11-30-05). During the observations, I noted the connection between the literature on the principal and school culture building. This was the basis of my observation. During these observations, I looked specifically for interactions between principal, faculty members, students, parents, and community members. I also observed symbolic icons of school culture that were displayed throughout the school.

Since this is a case study on the principal, I observed the principal in many settings and situations throughout the school day. Each setting and situation was different and required different leadership skills. I used observation forms to note most of these observations; however, many principal exchanges were spontaneous and I used field notes to record his interactions with students and staff. Each observation and segment of the

school day observed was enlightening to this case study on principal leadership and culture building. Each observation proved to be a bricolage, helping to piece together what this principal is about and what defines his leadership. As the researcher-as-bricoleur, I was able to get a full picture of this school, the school culture, and the principal's leadership. During my observations, I noted what the principal did that was important to him and compared this to his answers in each interview. The principal's actions and their influence on school culture building were the emphasis of my observations.   (See Appendix A.)

These observations served as a connection between the literature and the interviews on school culture building. As I interviewed the principal and faculty members, I listened for common variables or themes as they spoke. I attempted to connect these themes to the literature on school culture as I came to conclusions regarding this case study on principal leadership and school culture building. These observations were an essential part of this research because they allowed me, the principle research participant, to observe words and themes translated into action.

Document Analysis

The third form of data collection was through extensive document analysis. Again, as the principle research participant, I was interested in all

forms of communication the principal used in the new school. I analyzed

memos, letters, mission statement, web pages, PTSA newsletter, video

footage, newspaper articles, dedication material, and any other material

that pertained to the school, the principal, and leadership that could invoke

school culture building. Throughout the analysis, I was cognizant of

recurring themes, concepts, and ideas that were present in the written

documents. I looked for interpersonal skills, communication skills, conflict

resolution skills, negotiation skills, team-building skills, and any other

characteristics that may have resulted in culture building and formed a

connection to previous research data or literature on principal leadership

and school culture building. These documents supplemented the

interviews and observations.

Data Analysis

My first step in analyzing the data was to answer a series of

questions. What does the data between the principal interviews and the

faculty member interviews have in common? What does the information

indicate? What did the principal do to make this part of the school? Does

the information gained from the observations support the information

gained in the interviews? What documents support the interviews and

observations of the principal? How does the literature fit into this? What

conclusions can I draw from the interviews, the observations, and the document analysis?

As I analyzed the interviews, observations, and documents, I used a code to organize similar data for consistency. From this data, I noted important analytical concepts that were crucial to the principal and school culture building. No software was used to organize data. Information was coded using the following forms: rites, rituals, ceremonies, stories, traditions, leadership, principal values, culture building, symbolization of culture, values and beliefs (principal, faculty members, and students), creating a series of firsts, and community. Using the literature written on principal leadership and school culture building, information was coded looking at the same ideas and concepts considered in the interviews, observations, and documents.

After I finished coding all research and literature, I looked for similarities and differences between the data gained in the research. I compared and contrasted the interview data from faculty members, with the information from the principal. In order to get a true sense of the principal, his leadership, and the culture building efforts, it was important for the principal and the faculty members to answer the interview questions fully and honestly, which I felt they did.

I also compared and contrasted the information gained from observations and document analysis. During the analysis, I identified specific examples of culture building within the school. These descriptions enhanced the study and enabled me as the writer to tell the story of the principal and the development of the school culture.

Second, I was able show trends in my interviews, observations, and document analysis. As a part of the data analysis, I wanted to assess the beliefs and practices of the principal as they related to the benefit and values of the school. I used various pieces of literature to back up my analysis. For example, Schein's work *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, as well as Deal and Peterson's book on *Shaping School Culture.*

Researcher Subjectivities

According to Peshkin, "subjectivity can be seen as virtuous, for it is the basis of researchers' making a distinctive contribution, one that results from the unique configuration of their personal qualities joined to the data they have collected" (Peshkin, 1985). My experience and perspective on principal leadership and school culture could be biased, based on my own understanding of the job and the nature of the business. Also, as a former coach, I could understand and relate to the significance that athletics

played on the culture of the school; however, I personally feel that this is only one part of school culture and that there are many other more complex pieces that make up the organizational culture of a school. It is necessary to disclose this point to the reader.   As a subjective researcher, I did not allow this knowledge to influence my research and data.   Using qualitative research strategies, my research was unbiased due to the amount of material and data I collected during my study. My findings were based solely on the information obtained during interviews, observations, document analysis, and field notes.

I did not know any of the faculty members at the school nor the students. This study was objective, and the material taken from this research was not influenced in any way.

As I analyzed data, interviews, observations, and text, I chose to cite personal experiences to make sense of the material. These personal experiences were noted in the text, and were offered as a personal interpretation of the research.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was established in many different ways. The data gained using interviews, observations, and document analyses was evaluated. These different modes of data collection were a key to

understanding the principal and the school culture.   Peer debriefing was used in the context of this research. It was important to expose my research to other parties in order to explore all aspects of school culture building. An audit trail was established with the interviews, observations, and documents. Each was coded in an appropriate classification for easy access. I had prolonged engagement in the research field. I collected data on-site over a three-month period. My observations were persistent and structured.   My schedule was structured to insure that I had enough time on site to evaluate the various components of school culture.

This study is reliable because I established trust in my qualitative study based on four questions that Lincoln and Guba outline. The basic issue in relation to trustworthiness is simple: How can the researcher persuade the audience that his/her findings of an inquiry have worth and meaning?   According to Lincoln and Guba (1985, pp. 289-331), researchers should pose the following four questions:

1. "*Truth Value*: How can one establish confidence in the truth of the findings of a particular inquiry for the subjects and the context in which the inquiry was carried out?"—My research was based solely on interviews from participants directly affected by this case study. I interviewed many different

members of the school community and asked questions that were consistent and relevant to the research. My research was conducted in a professional manner.

2. *"Applicability*: How can one determine the extent to which the findings of a particular inquiry have applicability in other contexts or with other subjects?"—This research is far reaching and should be applicable to many different situations within an education setting or beyond. I conducted this case study research on a principal in public education; however, the same principles regarding leadership and culture building could be applied in a business setting. The organizational piece of this study made it unique.

3. *"Consistency*: How can one determine whether the findings of an inquiry would be repeated if the inquiry were replicated with the same subjects in the same context?"—Each research setting is different and all people are different. However, based on the literature, the inquirer could establish a baseline and use operational definitions to define the extent of the research. This research could be replicated using the same interview questions, observational techniques, and analyzing

the same forms of text. While the immediate results would be different, I am confident that each researcher could make positive contributions to the academic world using this qualitative research model.

4. *"Neutrality*: How can one establish the degree to which the findings of an inquiry are determined by the subjects and conditions of the inquiry and not by the biases, motivations, interests, or perspectives of the inquirer?"—The researcher must qualify and admit his/her own knowledge during the research process and recognize his/her own subjectivity while collecting data. It is important to understand ourselves, our strengths, and their influence on the research. The researcher should keep his/her distance from the research collection point in order to keep his/her neutrality. Again, I used both peer debriefing and created an audit trail to ensure that the information gained is accurate and reflects the true nature of the principal and the school culture.

Using these four questions, I compared and contrasted my completed data with the collection phase. The information gained in the

interviews, along with the observations, should be more than enough data to insure the reasonableness of my analysis and conclusion.

Benefits and Risks of the Study

This research study will benefit the principal and the new school organization as they begin a new era in education. To begin with, my research data regarding the leadership of this principal was informative and reflective for the principal. He was open and honest with me during our interviews. On many occasions, we were able to discuss his leadership and key decisions he had already made to get the school open and to develop the culture of the school. Secondly, this research will assist any principal as he/she enters the world of building a new school organization. Third, this research could shed new information on school culture and leadership that has never been identified. Fourth, as the researcher I benefited from this research project. I profited from the literature, the interviews, the observations, and the real life experiences I gained during this data collection. As the principle researcher, this was an enjoyable project. During my time in the field, I had many positive experiences and was able to strengthen my own leadership abilities based on my interchanges and conversations with this experienced principal. I was able to bring back new ideas and institute them in my school. The information I

gained from this research study has already benefited me and will continue to enhance my experience as an educational leader now, and influence any role that I may encounter in the future. This research was meaningful to me and the world of education in many different ways.

Significance of the Study

This study was worth pursuing for several reasons. Leadership is an art. Everyone leads in a different manner; I have exposed myself to a proven leader, in a unique situation, and have had the time to reflect upon the encounter. Reflection is important to me as the researcher as I grow personally and professionally.

This research was written for principals or administrative leaders who are interested in school culture and the influence their leadership can have on a school or educational organization. For those principals who have the opportunity to open a new school, this will be beneficial as they plan and organize their staff and the building of a school culture.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS-

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Overview and Introduction

The data gathered by means of interview, observation, document

analysis, and field notes will be at the core of the presentation of findings in

this chapter. As the primary researcher, I will describe and analyze the

findings from my research. According to Harry Wolcott's book,

Transforming Qualitative Data, Description, Analysis, and Interpretation,

description is defined as "What is going on here?" Using the descriptive

techniques suggested by Wolcott, I will tell the story of a new high school

organization that has been formed by the principal. Using stories,

illustrative examples, reflections, first hand accounts, and my own personal

observations and experience, the story of Ridgeview High School will be

told.

Wolcott (1994) states that "qualitative researchers need to be

storytellers" (p.17). This is crucial for successful descriptive accounts.

Using one of Wolcott's suggestions on the presentation of description in

qualitative studies, I will relate the story of this new high school in chronological order.

> Events always can be related in the order that they occurred, with relevant context introduced as needed. Relating events in ordinal (first, second, …) or chronological sequence offers an efficient alternative to the sometimes lengthy bridges written to give an account the appearance of flow when significant events do not seem all that continuous (Wolcott, 1994, p. 19).

As the primary storyteller, I will tell the story I heard as an interviewer and observer. I will describe what life is like in this new high school for faculty members and the principal.

Section I-Description

Mr. Otho Sterling-Principal

Mr. Otho Sterling, the principal in this case study, was a teacher, coach, athletic director, assistant principal, and principal at Marietta High School. He was at Marietta High School for 24 years. Marietta High School was built in 1923 and has a long-standing reputation for academic excellence in the community, which it serves. Mr. Sterling was only the fifth different principal to serve this school in its 83-year history.

Mr. Sterling noted that Marietta High School was the most diverse high school in the county. "Marietta is different; it has an inner city flavor" (Principal Interview #1). Marietta High School has a strong alumni base with a long history. According to Mr. Sterling, Marietta uses tradition and history in positive way. In his opinion, the students inherit a feeling that they are different. One reason Mr. Sterling stayed at Marietta for so long was that it was easy to be caught up in the fact that the faculty and student body were different, and therefore special. The students at Marietta felt as if they had ownership of the school. "This is something that I want to bring to Ridgeview. I want the kids to have the same experience. I want to empower students to feel like they want to make a difference" (Principal Interview #1).

In an interview, I questioned Mr. Sterling regarding the cultural activities/offerings he brought from Marietta to Ridgeview. He answered, "Excellence in teaching, student involvement, and the creation of service clubs" (Principal Interview #1).

Mr. Sterling also wants Ridgeview High School to reflect his vision, but not be an exact replica of Marietta High School. He feels the culture of this school should be a reflection of the community. He wants Ridgeview to be the focus of the community in which it is located. "I want to create a

culture where students and parents can come and feel comfortable.
School should be the best four years of the student's life" (Principal
Interview #1).

Ridgeview High School-The Beginning

The planning and building process for Ridgeview High School
began in 2002, and took approximately three years. The principal for this
school, Otho Sterling, was hired from Marietta High School, a high school
in the same district.

Mr. Sterling began his new position in January 2005. The school
opened August 25, 2005. Between the time he was hired and the time the
school opened, Mr. Sterling was very busy organizing and meeting with
community members. Mr. Sterling had 17 meetings in four days with
students, parents, and community members. Mr. Sterling did not waste
any time establishing strong communication lines with the community and
the students. From the beginning, the community input into this school was
extensive. The athletic booster club and PTSA contacted Mr. Sterling for
meetings. The purpose of the meetings were to talk about the opening of
the new school and to empower students and parents to help make
decision regarding school colors, mascots, alma mater, and the fight song.
Mr. Sterling wanted the students and parents to buy into the school before

it opened. All community members, students, and parents were invited to attend these support meetings. On three separate occasions, they met in area churches to organize the booster club and the parent/teacher/student association (PTSA). Mr. Sterling noted there was standing room only at all the meetings.

The initial community support was crucial to setting the tone for the establishment of the school. The athletic booster club received early encouragement from the local school board during the summer months. The following is a newspaper article summarizing this accomplishment.

Two months ago, when Ridgeview High School was still being built and months before it was scheduled to open, 350 people crowded into a church to start talking about how to support its athletic program. Ridgeview may be a state-of-the-art high school, but booster-club members say that it still needs the little touches that other high schools have accumulated over the years. They wanted to borrow $200,000 and get $100,000 in donations from the school system for a variety of items, including an irrigation system and stadium lights for the baseball fields, a scoring table for the basketball area, and signs for the football field. 'Other high schools in the area have waited a long time before they could do that; we're looking at wanting to do that faster. We do not want to wait 10, 20 years…like other schools have done, said Don Smith, the president of the Ridgeview High School Athletic Booster Club. Otho Sterling, Ridgeview's principal, said he is not worried about the club's ability to repay the money. 'One thing I have learned in my short time out here is this school is going to be the focus of this community for an awful long time, and all the students are

going to benefit from this initiative from the first year, he said (Deaver, "Club Gets Early Boost", 2005).

The school board agreed to find the money for the athletic booster club. This victory for the booster club rallied other parents to help the school in other ways. The community supported this school 100%. Mr. Sterling noted that this community brought a different mindset to the fundraising efforts of the booster club. "They bring a business mentality to the table," said Mr. Sterling (Principal Interview #1). Rather than do only one project per year, the booster club wanted to complete all athletic facilities the first year. The booster club wanted their children to benefit immediately from the school and the extracurricular activities that are offered at Ridgeview.

Another issue that faced the new school was identification. Mr. Sterling wanted this new high school to stand out from all the others in the district. This was very important to him. He wanted the students to establish the school colors and mascot from the beginning. Using ballots, the students who attended Ridgeview chose the school mascot (Wildcats) and school colors (black, purple, and silver). This was one of the first decisions made by the future students at Ridgeview High School. "I want

every kid in the county to come to Ridgeview High School. That is the culture I want" (Principal Interview #2). This theme of student participation and empowerment will continue during the development of the culture of the school.

This school district also has "Schools of Choice." Students in the school district have the option to attend any high school within their district. Therefore, the formation of the school culture and student empowerment was crucial to the beginning of this school and the reputation that Mr. Sterling wanted this school to have in the community and the school district. Mr. Sterling was, and is competing with other principals for students, so the reputation of the school is crucial to the success of the school.

One of the most critical aspects of building a school culture and opening a new school is the dynamic aspect of human resources. Between January of 2005 and the opening of school, Mr. Sterling hired staff members. Mr. Sterling realized that he needed to surround himself with positive people. Throughout his 31 years in education, he had formed many professional relationships. He was amazed that he had over 600 applications for the teaching jobs at Ridgeview High. He knew early on that he could create an "All-Star" teaching staff. The terms "All-Star" and

"Dream Team" were used on several occasions by Mr. Sterling to describe the faculty members he assembled at Ridgeview. He could have taken up to 30% of the staff from Marietta; however, he did not want to disrupt the entire school. As a result, he only took nine faculty members from Marietta. The majority of the staff at Ridgeview are either from other schools in the district, or from out of county and out of state locations. With over 600 applications, he was very deliberate in choosing his staff. When I spoke with the staff members at Ridgeview, they all expressed that they feel special. In our interview, Sally Combs stated, "It is a special thing to be picked to be a part of this school. He (principal) has the best staff" (Faculty Member Interview #24). Another teacher, Sandy Beach, stated that, "Mr. Sterling handpicked me to come here. He is always saying we are the 'Dream Team' to teachers. This is a positive pump up for the staff" (Faculty Member Interview #1).

Ridgeview High School-Summer Preparation

Mr. Sterling had a busy Spring, meeting community members and hiring new staff members. This type of work continued through the summer months leading up to the opening of school on August 25, 2005. This was a highly anticipated day in the history of Ridgeview High School.

The community support continued during the summer months. Faculty members, students, parents, and community members eagerly awaited the opening day of school. In anticipation of football practice and Friday night games, the athletic booster club sponsored Saturday morning "rock parties." In an interview, the Athletic Director, Tim Thomas, noted there were two rock parties where parents and community members came to school to pick up rocks on the football field. "Parents just wanted to help. They wanted to make this place valuable. Everyone is expected to give. We had community members here that didn't even have kids in the school" (Faculty Member Interview #18).

Football practice for Ridgeview began on August 1, 2005. This was an important milestone for the school, the athletic department, and the community. The local newspaper covered the first practice with an article. Sections of the article are quoted:

> They came from middle schools, and they came from other high schools in the county. Some of the aspiring football players who showed up yesterday at Ridgeview High School for their first official football practice have never played a down of organized football in their lives. "It's not every day you get a chance to start history and be a part of something big," said Tom Delp, a junior at Ridgeview High School who played junior varsity at Northcrest the past two years. "North has a good program over there, but I was thinking it would be nice to be a part of that thing at Ridgeview."

At Ridgeview, there were plenty of players who competed for other high schools last season. And while those players all said they liked where they played last year, like Raheem Sanders, who played at Gilead, they said deciding to switch schools wasn't about changing scenery. 'I just wanted to be part of the new experience and be a part of history, Sanders said. 'Gilead, that's a great school but I wanted to be a part of something new.'

Adam Torres was a junior-varsity player at Marietta last year. He said that he and several friends decided to enroll at Ridgeview, and they will take turns driving to school every day. 'Marietta is a great school, but I think everything about this is going to be ten times better,' Torres said. 'You wonder if you will win a game or two games or no games, but it's about going out there and competing and doing the best you can. Everybody can go out and prove what they have, get a start fresh and build the program from the top' (Linker, "Ridgeview Holds Their First Football Practice," August 2, 2005).

The summer months were busy for Mr. Sterling as he prepared for students in August. On one occasion, he met with his department heads and core team at his house. He invited them over for pizza to discuss important items of interest. In interviews, many different teachers noted the importance of this meeting to coordinate ideas before school started. Jane Abbot, an experienced media specialist who was new to Ridgeview and the system said, "He (principal) knew these people and what they brought to the school" (Faculty Member Interview #19). Tim Thomas, the Athletic Director, who worked with Mr. Sterling at Marietta said, "He has

established a great faculty. He has career teachers who are the best in their field blended with youthful teachers" (Faculty Member Interview #18).

Ridgeview High School-1st Semester

The cheerleaders were the first to enter the school early on August 25, 2005, and they were there to greet all the students as they came to school on the first official day. The marquee in front of the school said, "The Tradition Begins."

When talking with prospective students and staff members during the spring and summer, Mr. Sterling always mentioned being the "first" to accomplish good things at Ridgeview. Once school began at Ridgeview, Mr. Sterling publicly made note of Ridgeview "firsts."   Tina Lincoln, a teacher at Ridgeview, noted during an interview, "Whenever we have a 'first,' we are told about it. These things are shared through announcements." Mr. Sterling uses an automated calling system frequently to call all students and parents. This is an effective way for him to communicate his message to the community. He used this system to communicate 'firsts' to the community.

In the student handbook, Mr. Sterling made it very clear from the beginning what his vision was for the school and the students who were

attending Ridgeview High School. In the section labeled "Message from the Principal," Mr. Sterling wrote the following:

> You are making history by becoming the first students to attend Ridgeview. From our various backgrounds, we will unite as Wildcats and our achievements will become the foundation of a new tradition of excellence in the district.
> I urge you to become involved with as many school activities as possible and work hard on your academic pursuits. As you enter the door, be prepared to mentally and physically work to your full potential. And when the bell rings to the end of the day, I want you to be excited about returning to meet new educational opportunities (Otho Sterling, Personal Communication, August, 2005)

Mr. Sterling wants the students at Ridgeview to believe they are special. On many occasions, he has mentioned that this is the first new high school to open in the county in over 40 years. This makes these group of students special to him. The first graduating class at Ridgeview, the first freshmen group of students to attend all four years at Ridgeview, the first football win, the first drama performance, all these firsts are well known and faculty members and students are aware they are making history every day at the school.

Throughout the 1st semester at Ridgeview, the principal, faculty, and students worked hard to establish tradition.   The first day of school, Mr. Sterling met with each grade level to discuss the school and his expectations. He wanted to bring the students together for the first time. He also established a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance during first period.   The music was chosen for the alma mater; however, the words have not yet been written. Mr. Sterling wants the students at Ridgeview to know the alma mater and practice this song at every major school gathering. During football games and pep rallies, the band plays the song.   Currently, there is a contest at the school to write the words to the alma mater.

The Student Government Association has written a constitution. Student government elections have been held and officers preside at meetings. The Art III class constructed five themed paintings, 9.5' x 4'10", which were used during the halftime show at the football game. A holiday art card contest was held and Mr. Sterling picked the winner. There was no homecoming at the school; however, they did have a spirit week with a powder puff football game. Many of the faculty members envision this becoming a tradition at Ridgeview. In the future when they have graduates, the alumni will begin homecoming festivities.   The School

Improvement Team developed the mission statement for Ridgeview High

School.

> Ridgeview High School, in partnership with parents and community, will provide a quality-learning environment that will empower students to become self-directed learners in an ever-changing society. (M. Montgomery, personal communication, January 10, 2006).

Many teachers on the School Improvement Team worked hard to

make the mission statement reflect the ideals of Mr. Sterling and the vision

he has for Ridgeview.

Mr. Sterling believes this school is about the students. It is evident

that in each instance, students have a voice at Ridgeview. Another

example of this school being centered on students is the title of the school

newspaper. Students voted to name the school's newspaper, *The

Rooster*, after a neighboring red rooster that crows each morning as

students arrive at the school. The rooster can be heard throughout the 60-

acre campus.

> You will be reminded of Ol' Red Rooster's presence every issue of the newspaper because the rooster inspired the name of Ridgeview's High School newspaper. Thanks to the

student body, our paper will be known as *The Rooster* ("You Asked for It-You Got It," 2005).

One of the most important events that happened during the 1st semester was the dedication ceremony on October 10, 2005. This event truly set the tone for Ridgeview High School. Mr. Sterling relied on John Phillip, his band instructor, to help organize the event for the school. I interviewed 25 faculty members from Ridgeview, and almost every faculty member mentioned the dedication ceremony as one of the most important and historical events to take place at the school.

Mr. Sterling made it clear from the beginning that all students would attend this dedication. The ceremony centered on the students, not the community and adults. Before the dedication occurred, he made sure that every student in the school had a seat in the school's auditorium. He telephoned the parents to inform them as to why they were not invited and why this was a special event for the teenagers at Ridgeview. Important dignitaries were there for the dedication ceremony. Senator Richard Burr and Representative Virginia Foxx, along with school board members and the superintendent were present at the dedication. The students running for student government offices conducted a part of the dedication

ceremony. On the inside of the dedication program, there was a message

from Mr. Sterling.

> Although opening with only grades nine through eleven in its initial year, Ridgeview High School provides a full program of extra curricular activities and athletics on its beautiful 60-acre campus. Students are challenged by an *all-star* teaching staff that was selected for their expertise, experience, enthusiasm, and dedication to the development of young people into successful citizens. Adopting the motto from Presidents Reagan's epitaph that, "…there is purpose and worth to each and every life," the faculty and staff at Ridgeview High School will encourage student participation in stimulating, academic lessons that will foster understanding and mastery of subject matter as well as instill a sense of commitment to their community through service.
> We look forward to working together to generate the connections that will make our new facility an integral part of a very special neighborhood ("Dedication Program, Ridgeview High School," 2005).

During the ceremony, the JROTC presented the colors, the Pledge

of Allegiance was spoken, the National Anthem was played, the Ridgeview

Chorus performed, and the architects of the building presented a key to

Mr. Sterling. Senator Burr and Representative Foxx also gave remarks

and dedicatory addresses. At the end of the ceremony, the Ridgeview High

School alma mater was played. This was the beginning of a long-standing

tradition that will continue at this school.

A professional company videotaped this dedication and copies were sold to students, parents, and community members. This was a way to include the non-school community in the day. Mr. Sterling was so pleased with the student body's reaction to the dedication and their behavior, that he called all parents using the automated calling system and told them how proud he was of the students and the community for embracing Ridgeview High School.

The Rooster, the student newspaper said this about the dedication ceremony:

> It was a special day for everyone who was able to attend the ceremony and promised even greater things to come in the future at Ridgeview High School ("Dedication Ceremony of Ridgeview in *The Rooster*," 2005).

Ridgeview held another community event during the first semester. The athletic booster club sponsored the Fall Festival. This type of event is usually held at elementary schools; however, this group wanted to try this event at the high school level. The support was a tremendous success, with over 90 vendors participating and raising over $6,000 for the booster club. The money earned from the event went to pay off the lawn equipment purchased at the beginning of the summer. "Many vendors

came with the hopes of advertising their businesses and helping the

school. The first annual Fall Festival at Ridgeview was a huge success"

(*The Rooster*, Oct. 2005). Many faculty members were surprised at the

success of this event and are prepared for this to be an annual tradition at

Ridgeview.

The first Parent, Teacher, Student Association newsletter was

published in October 2005. The newsletter was several pages in length

and very detailed. The organization was officially "chartered" and is

working hard for the school. In a message from the PTSA president, Ann

Dellinger, a parent at Ridgeview High School, stated:

Your support of Ridgeview PTSA thus far has been overwhelming. Our first "official" PTSA general meeting was standing room only. Our membership is already at 50%.
A goal of the Ridgeview PTSA is to uphold the high standards that Mr. Sterling expects from his staff and students. To do this however, we need your help. I encourage each and every one of you to become a member of the PTSA and take an active part in the lives of our future leaders, your children (Dellinger, A., 2005).

It is evident that Mr. Sterling has communicated his vision for

Ridgeview to the parents. The PTSA newsletter contains a message from

the principal that reiterates many of the same messages that he has

concentrated on up to this point in the school year.

> The entire faculty and staff join me in thanking you for the tremendous outpouring of community support for each and every event. You are to be commended for not only being there for our 'firsts' but for the continuous gifts of time, energy, finances, and support for all our activities. The partnership that grows between parents, teachers, and students is the foundation of Ridgeview High and it will allow us to create a tradition of academic excellence and community involvement. As we strive to live up to our motto "There is purpose and worth in each and every life", I encourage you to feel free to contact me with any concern. My door is always open to you (Dellinger, A., 2005).

In an event sponsored by a local T.V. station, Ridgeview won a baby

grand piano. This was a contest held by the T.V station to promote

community interest and give away a piano to a local school. Ridgeview

students and parents submitted the most emails (2,400) to win this piano,

valued at over $14,000, for the music department. This was another

example of a "first" for the school and the strong community support for

Ridgeview.

In our third interview, I asked Mr. Sterling to assess the first

semester. "I am surprisingly pleased at where we are. We have

instructional things in place. I am impressed with how much we have done

in a short time" (Principal Interview #3). Mr. Sterling noted that the maintenance department was still working on climate control and technical glitches. These things are typical of any school, new or old.

The Future of Ridgeview High School

In our third interview, I spoke with Mr. Sterling about the second semester at Ridgeview and what the future holds for the school. Mr. Sterling was very optimistic about the second semester. "We need to plan for growth. We have had many calls about choice transfer. People hear the positive things that are happening at Ridgeview. They want to be a part of something special" (Principal Interview #3). Students in the county must decide by February if they plan to transfer to another school for the upcoming school year. Although Mr. Sterling does not have a senior class; he is expecting another large freshmen class through choice transfer. This means hiring many more teachers, about which he is excited.

When we discussed the future of the school. Mr. Sterling felt that Ridgeview was planned with the neighborhood in mind and will continue to foster positive community support.

> Five years from now the school will be even more established, more refreshing, stated Mr. Sterling. This school is like wine, we will get better with age. However, we cannot rest on our reputation. Five years was my commitment to the

school and the county. I will be the measuring stick (Principal Interview #3).

In the student led newspaper, *The Rooster*, Mr. Sterling was asked several questions regarding Ridgeview High School. The student news reporter asked Mr. Sterling "What do you see happening here at Ridgeview?" (In the future) Mr. Sterling replied:

> I like to think of us as somewhat of a secret, and the secret is getting out. I have visions of the football stadium being horseshoed in; I also have visions of having separate fields for field hockey, for lacrosse, and for soccer. We are not land deprived, so I believe that we can expand for those things and with a 60-acre campus, I believe we will be a mini-college, and I think that the community will stay involved. On Friday nights, everyone will come to the Ridgeview games because it is the place to be. When there are field hockey or soccer games, everyone will be there as well, because it is Ridgeview ("The Man Behind the Smile," Vol. I, 2005).

Section II-Analysis

Now that I have presented the story of Ridgeview High School, I will analyze the qualitative data. According to Wolcott (1994), "Analysis addresses the identification of essential features and the systematic description of interrelationships among them—in short, how things work" (p.12). Ultimately, this section will make sense of the story.

I will approach the analysis of my findings relying heavily on the work of Harry Wolcott in *Transforming Qualitative Data, Description, Analysis, and Interpretation.* Wolcott suggested a list of ten strategies to use while analyzing data; I will employ many of the strategies that Wolcott offers. For example, I will highlight my findings, identify patterned regularities in the data, compare data (interviews) with others, and evaluate all information carefully (Wolcott, 1994, pp. 30-35). During this analysis, I will compare and contrast my interview data, observation data, document analysis data, and field notes with the literature and other related materials in order to make sense of the story. As the primary researcher, I will be looking for the emergence of themes.

School Culture

Student Focus. In each interview, Mr. Sterling talked passionately about the students at Ridgeview. "My focus is student oriented," stated Mr. Sterling (Principal Interview #2). Mr. Sterling uses a hands on approach with the students at Ridgeview. He blocks out time to eat lunch in the cafeteria with the students. "Lunchtime is my time with the kids. If things are going well they will tell you (good or bad)" (Principal Interview #2). Mr. Sterling does not look at cafeteria duty as a mundane task of monitoring student behavior, but as a time to bond with and get to know the students.

His secretary told me that lunchtime is the highlight of his day. I observed Mr. Sterling eating lunch with the special needs children. He spoke openly with them. He knows their names, as well as the names of most of the student body. The faculty members are amazed at how he can recall the students' names. On two separate occasions, I witnessed Mr. Sterling take students aside and ask them how things were going. He knew they were having personal problems, and his expressions and interest were sincere. Mr. Sterling also knows exactly where to draw the line with student engagement. He is not their best friend, but he is approachable and has their best interests in mind. Mr. Sterling makes it a point to brag on the students when he has a chance, both in the hallways and in the cafeteria.

One day while I was on campus observing, Mr. Sterling made an announcement encouraging the entire school to come to the first home basketball game. He noted this was the "first" home game where both the boys and girls were playing on the same night. It was important for him to announce this at the beginning of 7th period, because he would not be there to do the afternoon announcements. One of the Assistant Principals could have made this announcement; however, Mr. Sterling wanted the students to hear the invitation from him.

On several occasions, Mr. Sterling and I discussed the motto of Ridgeview High School, "There is purpose and worth in each and every life." Mr. Sterling feels very strongly that everyone should feel and know this at Ridgeview. "Perception is reality," stated Mr. Sterling. "I don't know what my colleagues are doing in their schools that they don't have time to sit down and get to know the students. This worries me" (Principal Interview #3). Mr. Sterling was also concerned that some students do not have fun at school and do not realize that school can be a rewarding experience.

On more than one occasion, Mr. Sterling and I spoke about his daily vision for the students at Ridgeview. Mr. Sterling wants the students at Ridgeview to come to school each day and be mentally and physically challenged. His goal is to physically and mentally drain them each and every day, knowing that they will look forward to coming back the next day. Mr. Sterling's competitive spirit came alive as we discussed students and administrative expectations. Sandra Lewis, a teacher at Ridgeview stated that Mr. Sterling values "children and learning" (Faculty Member Interview #16).

When comparing the school's web page, student handbook, and other principal communication, there is an emphasis on the students and

Mr. Sterling's expectations for them. I have noticed that when given a chance, Mr. Sterling brags about the students of Ridgeview and makes sure the community knows that the school is centered around the students. The dedication ceremony was a clear example of Mr. Sterling and his school being student focused.

The student newspaper, *The Rooster*, is another example of Ridgeview being student centered. I discussed the newspaper with the advisor, one of the English teachers. She was impressed with Mr. Sterling because he allowed the student body to pick the name of the paper and more importantly, he did not want to edit the paper before it went to print. She told me once the first edition of the paper was printed, she put a copy on his desk for the first time. Once he read the paper, he came down to her classroom and gave her a big hug. This was reassuring to the teacher that Mr. Sterling had complete confidence in her and in the newspaper staff. This was another example of Mr. Sterling allowing the students to express themselves without administrative control.

When the school was being organized and initial plans were made, Mr. Sterling was very open and honest with school officials when it came to the selection of the school colors and mascot. He stated that these decisions should be made by the students that attend Ridgeview. There

was political pressure from the outside to choose a certain mascot, along with school colors. Mr. Sterling made sure that the Ridgeview students would make this choice. He was successful with this decision and the students made the final choice.

Open and Approachable Leadership. From the initial phone conversation I had with Mr. Sterling, I observed that he had a positive attitude and was open to working with me during this case study. This frame of mind also gave me some insight into his leadership style. When I observed Mr. Sterling for the first time on a tour of the school, he was open and approachable. He took an active interest in this research. As we toured the school, Mr. Sterling took time to introduce me to various faculty members throughout the school. Mr. Sterling told me that he was not a micro-manager. He does not feel that he can operate in such an environment. When he hires new personnel, he looks for people who are independent self-starters, with positive frames of mind. He wants faculty members at Ridgeview who want to be there.

After my second interview with Mr. Sterling, I noted that he was very comfortable in his position and open with his leadership. He does not mind voicing his opinion if something is not right in the school or in the district. He has a good relationship with the superintendent and the school board,

and he feels comfortable voicing his concerns to them. Mr. Sterling is a take-charge kind of leader. He allows his actions to speak louder than his words. He told me, "If you have to tell people you are the boss, you are not. Everyone should know that without you telling them. I will not change the way I feel about leadership and school" (Principal Interview #2).

During our second interview, I asked Mr. Sterling if the school or people with whom he worked on a daily basis had altered his leadership style. Mr. Sterling stated that

> Leadership can be fine tuned-but does not change much. I am competitive. I do not like to lose. Life is competitive. I try to teach young people that you have to compete. Throughout my life, I have thrived on being told I could not do this or that (Principal Interview #2).

Inclusive Communication.   Mr. Sterling and I discussed the culture of the school and what intentional actions he took to promote the culture of the school. There was no school culture when Mr. Sterling started in January, 2005. He took a long look at the demographics and logistics of the school and its location. To Mr. Sterling, those two factors helped determine the initial culture of the school. In Mr. Sterling's eyes, one of the most important actions he took was getting to know the people of the

community and communicating his vision for the school to them. It was important for him to include the community in decisions concerning the school. It was not always easy to go into the community and seek input from the people that lived near Ridgeview High School. Many meetings were held at different locations; however, it was enjoyable for Mr. Sterling to see the large number of people at these community meetings. This was his first experience with the people of the northwestern part of the county. One theme that emerged early from his lines of communication with constituents of the community was the importance of trust. The community trusted Mr. Sterling to make the right decisions for the school, because he had taken the time to get to know the community.

As we discussed his leadership style at Ridgeview High School, Mr. Sterling noted that he had not changed his way of communicating with the faculty. "I continue to do the same thing here at Ridgeview that I did at Marietta" (Principal Interview #2). Many of the staff members hired by Mr. Sterling were not accustomed to being empowered by the principal. For example, Mr. Sterling had the confidence in the media assistant to use her technology skills to assist other instructors in the school. Samantha Toms, the media assistant noted, "This was the first time a faculty had ever looked to me for help" (Faculty Member Interview #11). Another teacher,

Sally Combs, noted that Mr. Sterling was like a father to her. "He has put me in positions where I have had an ability to lead," she said. "He has shown great confidence in me" (Faculty Member Interview #24).

Academic Purpose. The majority of the faculty members interviewed were familiar with the vision for the school. This school was new, and it created an environment of new beginnings for many teachers and students. This was a common response to many questions. The fact that this school was new made it unique. There was a common theme of academic purpose from all the faculty members interviewed. This theme was important to them and their colleagues. As an observer, I noted a collegial atmosphere at Ridgeview. Faculty members were cordial, helpful, and quick to laugh. They were serious with the students, but approachable. Each faculty member knew his/her purpose at the school and how he or she fit into the academic puzzle. I was impressed with this feeling each time I visited the campus. The following are words that several faculty members used to describe what the school was about and what was important at Ridgeview.

Positive relationships
Community
Respect
High Standards of Academic Success
Active Learning Environment
Professionalism
Accountability
Young People
Safe Environment
Empowered Students
Engaged Students
Meeting the educational needs of every student
Self-Respect
Sense of Honesty
Independence
Involving Neighbors
Community Support
Maximizing Potential
Innovative
Welcoming
Citizenship is built
Athletics
Family-unity-growing as a person
Moral Values
(Faculty Member Interviews #1-25)

In *The Rooster*, the student led newspaper of Ridgeview, the students speak out.

Onto the biggest fans of Ridgeview High, the students. Sporting the Wildcat paraphernalia to school and on game days, this school has the best spirit this system has ever seen. Its 'purpose and worth' is unquestionably the student body ("A Sincere Thank You," Vol. 1, 2005).

Value of Every Individual. Because the faculty at Ridgeview High

School has only been working together for approximately three months, I

did not expect their answers to my interview questions to be consistent.

Ridgeview has a large staff, with approximately 60 members. During the

interviews, we discussed the motto or slogan and how it represented the

school. I had already spoken with Mr. Sterling regarding the Ronald

Reagan quote, "There is purpose and worth in each and every life."

When asked the question, "Does this school have a motto/slogan?"

many of the faculty members grimaced trying to remember the exact words

of the quote. Some knew it by heart and could recite it immediately.

Others knew the meaning behind the quote and knew what meaning the

motto had for them and for students. Sue Stone, a teacher at Ridgeview

said, "There is opportunity for everyone," when discussing the motto of the

school (Faculty Member Interview #4). She could not remember the exact

words, but she knew what Mr. Sterling was trying to get everyone to

believe.

A minority of faculty members interviewed took the message on the

marquee, "The Tradition Begins," and stated that was the motto. Kim

George, a teacher at Ridgeview, said, "I have heard 'The Tradition Begins'

a lot at Ridgeview. Mr. Sterling is always talking about being the first to do this or that. This is important to the kids" (Faculty Member Interview #5).

Common Values. The faculty members at Ridgeview hold a common set of values. When discussing individual and school wide values, many of the faculty members discussed hard work, involvement of students' in activities, well rounded young people, academic growth, being a part of an all-star staff, relationships, student success, and excellence in all endeavors. These values were closely tied to the values of Mr. Sterling. These common themes emerged from this section of the interview questions.

I asked the faculty members to tell me what the principal valued in the school. Their answers were very similar. In almost all cases, the faculty members answered, "students first." Each answer reflected the idea that the school was student centered. Carol Jordan, a teacher at Ridgeview stated, "I value Mr. Sterling, he loves kids. This trickles down to the staff" (Faculty Member Interview #9). The media assistant, Samantha Toms, stated that Mr. Sterling

> Emphasizes honesty with faculty and students. He is up front. You know what is going on-there is not a secret door where things are hidden. He has pushed the pride and school

spirit.   He has put this in the building (Faculty Member Interview # 11).

Culture Building Practices by Mr. Sterling

When Mr. Sterling was asked about establishing a positive school culture, he noted three key factors.

1. The principal must know his/her personal philosophy and vision;

2. The principal must know what type of culture he/she wants to create;

3. The principal must make this happen with leadership. Words will not make this happen (Principal Interview, #3).

Strategies for Building School Culture

Holding and Articulating a Personal Philosophy and Vision. From the beginning, Mr. Sterling understood his philosophy regarding educating high school students. He had a distinct vision for this new high school before the doors ever opened. He told me on several occasions that his leadership style had not changed since moving to this new school. Mr. Sterling met extensively with the community sharing his vision and asking for input into key decisions that have both a direct impact on the school and an indirect impact on the culture of the school.

Creating a Common Motto for the School. As has been stated previously, Mr. Sterling created a common motto for the school from the

beginning. He wanted to coin a phrase that symbolized his vision for the school and reflected his own personal educational philosophy. Mr. Sterling found a quote by President Ronald Reagan that had significant meaning to him. "There is purpose and worth in each and every life". Mr. Sterling used this quote extensively in his comments with faculty members, parents, the community, and me.

Almost every faculty member I interviewed could recite this quote word for word, or knew the meaning behind the motto. Mr. Sterling was consistent in his communication with all, that this school will recognize diversity and celebrate the accomplishments of all students.

Creating a Series of "Firsts" for the New School. I have noted several instances the "firsts" of Ridgeview High School. Mr. Sterling uses this term extensively with the faculty, students, parents, and community members. The cheerleaders were the first to enter the building on the first day of school. They welcomed all the students to the school. Mr. Sterling publicly congratulated the Cross Country Team on capturing Ridgeview's first conference championship. This ceremony was held during the halftime of a football game. The Cross Country team went on to finish second in the state. This was a notable accomplishment for the newly formed high school athletic program. He high-fived the students during the

ceremony and awarded them with plaques. Individual students were recognized at this award ceremony.

All of these accounts are a examples of the vision that Mr. Sterling has set for Ridgeview High School. From our initial conversations, Mr. Sterling noted how important all students are and his hopes for them as they choose to attend Ridgeview High School. At the conclusion of the first semester at Ridgeview High School, Mr. Sterling saw many of his visions for the school becoming a reality.

Using Rites, Rituals, and Ceremonies as Strategies for Building Culture. Mr. Sterling understood from the beginning the importance of rites, rituals, and ceremonies in the formation of the school culture. Mr. Sterling used these events and team situations to build culture with in the school. There are many examples where Mr. Sterling used the success of the athletic teams and the arts to promote the school culture and positive events within the school, as well as in determining what was going to be important in the school.

The staff at Ridgeview connected to these culture-building situations, although they were not always obvious. For example, during the faculty member's interviews, we discussed rites and rituals that were already present at Ridgeview. Sandy Beach, a teacher at Ridgeview,

noted that Fridays were becoming days for everyone to dress in the school

colors. It was not a dress down day, but a day to display pride in the

school and show support for the athletic teams (Faculty Member Interview

#1). The media assistant, Samantha Toms, discussed tailgating before the

football games in the fall. She noted this was becoming a tradition each

Friday night there was a home game. She expressed surprise at how

many staff members would come to the game with their families and

"hangout." "This is a nice opportunity to socialize with co-workers outside

of the school day" (Faculty Member Interview #11). Because of Mr.

Sterling's vision for the school, and the emphasis that the community

booster clubs have placed on athletics, the faculty knew these things are

important to the school and have been from the beginning.

When asked, "What rites or rituals are important in this school?"

Carol Jordan, a teacher at Ridgeview, stated, "It is difficult to say. The

powder puff football would be a nice tradition" (Faculty Member Interview

#9). Ms. Jordan was referring to the powder puff football game that took

place during spirit week involving the football players, cheerleaders, and

faculty. Many different faculty members noted the importance of spirit

week as a replacement for homecoming. They hope that spirit week will

continue next year.

During the first semester, there were two pep rallies that proved to be positive and tradition forming. At one pep rally, there was a dance competition between the students and staff.   Several faculty members noted the positive interaction between the student body and the staff during the these assemblies and the positive student behavior. Since many of the faculty members came from different schools, the idea of pep rallies was new to them. They felt these rallies were a positive factor in building a sense of school culture.

Almost every staff member mentioned the building dedication as a key event in the early history of the school. Carol Jordan, a teacher at Ridgeview, noted that this dedication was a students only dedication that put the teens first. She appreciated that Mr. Sterling made sure that all students had seats before adults were allowed to enter the auditorium. She said Mr. Sterling is "superior about placing expectations for students" (Faculty Member Interview, #9). As part of the dedication ceremony, the key to the school, given to Mr. Sterling by the architect, had the school motto engraved on it. This key is prominently displayed at the entrance of the media center. Billy Edwards, a teacher and coach at Ridgeview, noted the plaque in the media center with the message and even stated that, "Maybe Mr. Sterling could have a mural painted in the hallways to display

the motto/slogan even more prominently" (Faculty Member Interview #2).

After the dedication, Mr. Sterling was so proud of the students and their

behavior, he called all parents to let them know how pleased he was with

the students and the dedication ceremony. This proved to be another way

to glorify the heroes of the school by bragging about them for their positive

accomplishments.

The playing of the alma mater is becoming a tradition at Ridgeview.

Many faculty members noted the importance of the song at school

functions and athletic events. Currently the song does not have words; Mr.

Sterling wants the students to write the words to the song. There is a

contest being held by the school for the words to the alma mater. Mr.

Sterling wants all students to know the words to the song. In one of our

interviews, he noted that at most schools the alma mater is only sung at

graduation and very few students ever understand the meaning behind the

song. Mr. Sterling wants all students to know the alma mater, sing it

frequently, and understand the meaning behind the song. This is a

tradition that he wants to form from the beginning of Ridgeview's history.

Leading by Example.   "Stories are powerful ways to

communicate important information about a school" (Deal & Peterson,

2001, p. 59). There are many stories at Ridgeview that describe the

leadership and culture building that Mr. Sterling has initiated. Mr. Sterling

had a situation early in the year with parents of cheerleaders and dance

team members. He received a telephone call about a possible

disagreement between the two groups. Rather than take the words of the

parents, Mr. Sterling called all the girls together to talk about the problem.

After the meeting, Mr. Sterling concluded that the students did not have a

problem at all; the situation reflected a parent problem that really did not

even involve the students. This story was shared with me by Sue Goins, a

teacher at Ridgeview. She noted the tone of open communication that Mr.

Sterling set with the students and the parents early in the school year. She

felt this was an effective way to deal with this situation, and it showed the

students and the parents early on how Mr. Sterling was going to deal with

future problems (Faculty Member Interview #6).

Another story told by a staff member described the feeling of one

particular student and his experience thus far in the school year.

Samantha Toms explained that a neighbor of hers was a student at

Ridgeview. She asked him about his decision to attend Ridgeview after

attending a different high school the previous year. The student explained,

"Now I have that high school family. I did not fit in at my other school, but being able to start over is great. I am more rewarded here than in my previous school." Ms. Toms went on to say about Mr. Sterling, "He puts faith in you"(Faculty Member Interview, #11).

Throughout my conversations with faculty members, I found they were proud to work for Mr. Sterling and were proud that he picked them from so many applicants (600). The use of storytelling by the leader is a powerful way to spotlight the heroes and heroines of an organization. "Heroes and heroines, living and dead, personify values and serve as role models for others" (Deal & Peterson, 1999, p. 93). Sandy Beach told me that every time that Mr. Sterling has a chance, whether at a faculty meeting or pep rally, he tells the staff and students that he "picked the Dream Team" to teach at Ridgeview (Faculty Member Interview #1). Using these avenues of communication is a way for Mr. Sterling to celebrate the heroes of the school.

Mr. Sterling established his expectation regarding the Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence on the first day of school. Each teacher is responsible for leading these activities at the beginning of the day. When discussing rites and rituals, many teachers noted this daily event as

a ritual at the school. They were unsure if everyone was doing this, but

they were pleased with the participation in their individual classrooms.

The faculty members at Ridgeview agreed that leadership had a

positive impact on school culture. The culture of the school starts at the

top. "School culture plays a big role in the school. It is an invisible

atmosphere that surrounds kids in classrooms and hallways," stated

Dorothy Phillips, a teacher at Ridgeview (Faculty Member Interview, #25).

A teacher and coach at Ridgeview reinforced this view.

> Because this is a new school drawing students from
> different high schools across the county, it is important for the
> kids to come together as Ridgeview kids. The culture of the
> school plays a huge role in the success of the kids", stated a
> teacher and coach at Ridgeview (Faculty Member Interview,
> #20).

It is evident from the data in this case study, that Mr. Sterling had a

clear vision for Ridgeview High School from the beginning. His personal

leadership philosophy was easily adapted to a new community and a new

school culture. Mr. Sterling recognized early that he needed to include the

community in the school if he wanted maximum success from the

beginning. Mr. Sterling also set the tone early, he was going to be an

instrumental part of this school and he was going to set the example for all

to follow as he led the school.

CHAPTER V

INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

Overview and Introduction

This final chapter will emphasize the interpretation of the research as it related to the research question, "What actions, practices, and behaviors of the principal contribute to the development of school culture in a new school organization?" Using interpretative techniques outlined in Harry Wolcott's book, *Transforming Qualitative Data, Description, Analysis, and Interpretation,* I will interpret the research findings from interviews, observations, and other material gained while visiting Ridgeview High School. Interpretation, according to Wolcott, (1994) "addresses processual questions of meanings and contexts: 'What does it all mean?' 'What is to be made of it all?'" (Wolcott, 1994, p. 12)

> Associated as it is with meaning, the term interpretation is well suited to mark a threshold in thinking and writing at which the researcher transcends factual data and cautious analyses and begins to probe into what is to be made of them (Wolcott, 1994, p.36).

The data presented in Chapter IV provided an in-depth description and analysis of the organizational culture in its early stages at Ridgeview High School. Also depicted were the nuances of leadership by Mr. Sterling. The ways in which organizational culture and leadership interact with one another may be better perceived as one reflects upon and delves further into the interpretation of the data based on the perspectives of the professionals populating the school cultural scene. Several issues and themes will be explored in order to underscore those perspectives. Many lessons can be learned from this research. This study also has many implications, not only for the education profession but also for me, the primary researcher. I will discuss the limitations of the study as well as the strengths of the study. I also have recommendations for further study, concluding comments regarding my time spent at Ridgeview High School, and what this research means to me.

No claim is made that all perspectives of each individual have been uncovered at Ridgeview High School. The perspectives of interest are those that relate to principal leadership and culture building at a new high school. The purpose of the following interpretation is to reflect upon the data and place it in the proper context not only for the reader, but also for myself, the researcher. The following quote from Simon Ottenberg in

Wolcott (1994) made me think reflectively about this chapter on interpretation.

> Anthropology has shifted from questions of the accuracy of the data in the notes to matters of how one interprets them as text. Now everything is interpretation: culture is a text to be interpreted; field notes are a text; we are in a world of hermeneutics, symbolic and metaphoric analysis, and there is a strong turn to examining the self as anthropologist (Ottenberg, Thirty Years of Fieldnotes, p.156 cited in Wolcott (1994) p. 255).

What Can Be Learned From This Research?

This research is replete with examples of positive principal leadership and culture building at Ridgeview High School. Mr. Sterling is a unique individual who found himself in a position to make a difference in a high school and in a community. The leadership that he has provided to the school has set the tone for the school to be successful. Jane Abbot, the media specialist at Ridgeview, stated, "Because of the diverse backgrounds of the students and staff, we had to have strong visionary leadership to get everyone on board and know the program from the very beginning" (Faculty Member Interview #19). Another teacher, Tammy Jones, stated, "Leadership has played a big part in the development of our school culture. Everyone builds off him;

his enthusiasm rubs off on others. Some principals could not pull this off" (Faculty Member Interview #15). Going back to a conversation that Mr. Sterling and I had, he outlined three things a principal must do to insure success in a new school organization.

1. The principal must know his/her personal philosophy and vision;

2. The principal must know what type of culture he/she wants to create;

3. The principal must make this happen with leadership. Words will not make this happen (Principal Interview #3).

From all 25 interviews with faculty members and from the three interviews that I conducted with Mr. Sterling, I can state that he has accomplished all three of these leadership goals. He has carefully and systematically crafted his vision into a reality four months into the school year. I was impressed with his leadership from our first conversation.

Mr. Sterling has created a school culture that is built on trust and professionalism. Mr. Sterling told me more than once that he was not a micro-manager. The faculty members at Ridgeview reiterated that fact on several occasions.

As a principal myself, I can attest that teachers make the difference in a school. I truly believe that teachers have the biggest influence on student achievement. As the leader of the school, it is crucial for the

principal to hire the right people in order to create a successful school and

develop a school culture that is open, honest, and trustworthy. In the

book, *Good to Great*, Jim Collins (2001) emphasizes this concept.

> The executives who ignited the transformations from good to great did not first figure out where to drive the bus and then get people to take it there. No, they first got the right people on the bus (and the wrong people off the bus) and then figured out where to drive it. 'Look, I don't really know where we should take this bus. But I know this much: If we get the right people on the bus, the right people in the right seats, and the wrong people off the bus, then we'll figure out how to take it someplace great (p. 42).

Collins asserts that the right people do not need to be tightly

managed; they will be self-motivated to do a good job and therefore make

a difference either in a business or a school (Collins, 2001).

 Knowingly or unknowingly, Mr. Sterling was creating a culture of success

by celebrating the heroes of the school, the faculty members. Often in the

hallways and cafeteria, he found opportunities to commend and build up

the faculty members at Ridgeview.

On one occasion, I found myself in Mr. Sterling's office with one of

his most experienced teachers who followed him from Marietta High to

Ridgeview. She was concerned about a student who had come to Mr.

Sterling during lunch. The student had so much confidence in Mr. Sterling that she felt he would remove a bad social studies grade because of a dentist appointment. Mr. Sterling was quick to note to the teacher that he did not know the whole story, and the instructor had every right to mark the student down for missing a test after being given several opportunities to make up the grade. Initially, I could tell the teacher was upset by the student and the fact that she had gone directly to Mr. Sterling without consulting the teacher. I also gathered the teacher was upset because the student thought that Mr. Sterling would take care of the grade automatically. Once Mr. Sterling and the teacher talked this situation through, Mr. Sterling gave the teacher complete control over the situation and the grade. This was a classic example of the teacher feeling comfortable enough to talk to Mr. Sterling about a sensitive issue involving a student. Both the teacher and Mr. Sterling left the conversation with a positive frame of mind, knowing they had acted in a professional manner.

I have talked extensively about leadership and culture building in this new school. Many of the examples that I have given have been highly visible culture building exercises, such as the dedication ceremony and Friday night football games. However, I feel that the day-to-day issues of leadership are what impact and affect the culture the most. The student in

the example above was trying to manipulate the system and the adults over a grade. The student did not know that Mr. Sterling and the social studies teacher had a strong, trusting, professional relationship. As Mr. Sterling and the teacher concluded the conversation, they joked that the student never thought the two of them would get together and compare stories. Looking at leadership and culture building from the inside of this school and the inside of this research, I feel this is an excellent example of Mr. Sterling holding true to his commitment to the teachers to be professionals and make competent decisions for their students and classrooms. If Mr. Sterling had made a hasty decision allowing the student to make up the grade, this small decision and interaction with the teacher would have led to a larger, more complex set of problems for Mr. Sterling and ultimately the teaching staff and students.

Overwhelmingly, the faculty members agreed in the interviews that leadership sets the tone for the school and shows everyone what is important. The school is a direct reflection of the leadership. Different faculty members in the building made this remark on several occasions. I also noticed the confident feeling the faculty members had while working with Mr. Sterling. The faculty members felt comfortable that Mr. Sterling

would back them in any situation, as long as they were putting students first.

Faculty Members Advice for Principals Opening New Schools

The faculty members at Ridgeview cited four categories that were important for principals opening a new school. 1) Importance of communication, 2) Vision, 3) Employee empowerment, 4) Patience. Within each category, faculty members gave specific pieces of advice to principals opening new school.

Importance of Communication

1. Talk to as many people as possible about opening a new school
2. Visit new schools that have opened
3. Call Mr. Otho Sterling for advice
4. Bring students together on the first day of school
5. Establish the position of the principal and the role of the students
6. Set the tone early with all (community members, parents, faculty members, and students)
7. Listen to feedback from faculty members
8. Get community involved
9. Have an open door policy
10. Cultivate strong communication with staff

Vision

1. Follow your vision
2. Decide what is important
3. Get people to buy in and believe in the idea; have a vision for what you want
4. Have the courage not to back down

Empower Employees

1. Hire people you can trust-then allow them room to operate
2. Surround yourself with experts in all fields
3. Principal must be able to delegate
4. Be open to new ideas

Patience

1. Be patient
2. Take more time during the hiring process
3. Do not get frustrated by little stuff
4. Be prepared to deal with anything and everything

Why is This Research Important/Significant?

This research is important for many different reasons. Too little attention has been paid to shaping schools from within the schools. A positive organizational culture can have a dramatic effect on the organizational effectiveness of the school.

> While policymakers and reformers are pressing for new structures and more rational assessments, it is important to remember that these changes cannot be successful without cultural support. School culture, in short, is a key to school achievement and student learning (Deal & Peterson, 1999, p. xii).

As more and more funding is allocated on state and federal levels, class size is being reduced and the need for more classrooms and more new schools is increasing. In North Carolina, a new lottery bill was passed in the Legislature during 2005.

> 100% of the net proceeds of the North Carolina Educational Lottery will go to education expenses, including reducing class size in early grade, academic prekindergarten programs, school construction, and scholarships for needy college and university students (North Carolina Education Lottery, Retrieved from http://lottery.nc.gov/ on December 30, 2005).

Many schools are currently overcrowded and have many mobile units on their campuses. The General Assembly estimates that 170 million dollars will be created by the lottery in the 2006-07 school year for new construction of new schools (North Carolina Education Lottery, Dec. 30, 2005). As new schools are built and students are taken from different areas to compose the student bodies, there is need for principals to build positive school cultures from the beginning. "It is clear from reviews of successful schools' literature that the building of a culture that promotes and sustains a given school's conception of success is key" (Sergiovanni,

2001, p.104). This factor has been consistent in the literature review and the remarks of the faculty members and principal in this research.

When new schools are built and the principal and the school district assemble students, it will be important to establish a strong foundation for constructive school culture. The remarks of one teacher and coach at Ridgeview stick out in my mind concerning this issue. Sally Combs stated, "School culture has a great impact on the school because of what culture kids are brought up in. There are so many different cultures now, it is important for the school culture to be consistent so those kids can fit in" (Faculty Member Interview, #24).

As a principal and the primary researcher, I see the need for school culture building as one of the most important findings from this entire research. It is the job of the principal to create an atmosphere or culture where students belong and feel successful. This type of atmosphere begins with the culture of the building, the people that are in the building, and the decisions that are made.

With the impending increase in school construction, coupled with the future principal shortage predicted by the Principal's Executive Program at the North Carolina Center for School Leadership Development, this research is significant for principals establishing new schools and for new

principals adjusting to the life of leadership. The report prepared by the

Principals' Executive Program in March 2005 noted that over the next five

years over 50% of the principals in North Carolina could retire. This

means that many inexperienced principals will be leading schools across

the state and there will be a need for culture building within these schools.

This is important for the new principals to establish strong ties to their

schools and gain a better understanding of the area, faculty members,

students, and parents of the school community.

Another significant piece of this research is the impact that positive

school culture has on teacher recruitment and teacher retention. Most

would agree that it is unusual to get over 600 applications for teaching jobs

today in North Carolina. Mr. Sterling was proud of this fact and proud of

the solid faculty he hired. Teachers today can shop around for the best

schools and the best working conditions. The faculty members at

Ridgeview High school felt special to be a part of the elite group chosen by

Mr. Sterling. Mr. Sterling continues to emphasize this point.

By creating a positive school culture where teachers are empowered

to make decisions for themselves, Mr. Sterling has proven that he will not

have any problem recruiting teachers to Ridgeview. The faculty members I

spoke with were very happy to be there and had no thoughts of leaving.

One teacher and coach even stated Mr. Sterling was the only reason he came back to the district to work (Faculty Member Interview #20).

What Implications Does This Research Have?

From the very beginning, I have had three goals for this research. One, I hoped to help Mr. Sterling and the faculty at Ridgeview reflect on the current year and shed light on their accomplishments. Two, I hoped this research could help new principals in establishing positive school culture and more importantly, help principals who are opening new schools with the development of organizational culture. Third, I wanted to gain as much insight and information as I could for myself, so I could reflect upon my own leadership style for personal and professional growth. I have accomplished all three goals.

The staff at Ridgeview was welcoming. All interviewees were volunteers. I never asked Mr. Sterling for his help with the faculty members and their participation. During our last conversation, Mr. Sterling noted that the faculty enjoyed participating in the study and this had been a reflective experience for some of them. One of my most rewarding experiences as the researcher was seeing the inquisitive reactions of the faculty members when discussing the school in our interviews. I observed the faculty members taking a moment to objectively look at the school and

their roles in the school. During our interview sessions, I saw faculty members reflecting on the events of the school year and putting them into a clear context. My goal as the interviewer was to make them feel comfortable and make this an enriching experience.

Secondly, a new principal or a principal opening a new building could read this research and apply the leadership examples of Mr. Sterling. I know that I have. The suggestions made by the faculty members for a principal opening a new building were powerful and could be easily applied to an existing school or a new school organization. Third, this research has had a great implication for my own personal growth. As a principal, I appreciate all the hard work and effort Mr. Sterling has put into Ridgeview High School.

During my first visit to Ridgeview, I was impressed at the organization of the school. My first visit to a football game in the fall was insightful. As soon as a spectator parked in the lot, one entered the Wildcat Nation. There were signs everywhere. They were under the press box, under the scoreboard, and on the ticket gate. There were plaques that recognized the local athletic boosters. The football team had not won a game; however, the stands were full of proud fans. There were 38 cheerleaders and dance team members full of school spirit. The band was

fully adorned in traditional band costumes and performed during the halftime show. The art classes were incorporated into the Santana themed halftime show. Mr. Sterling took the time between the halves to recognize the Cross County team for the "first" place conference championship. I got the feeling this high school had been in existence for several years, not a couple of months.

Throughout my three interviews with Mr. Sterling, he always made me feel comfortable, much as he interacted with his staff. Our discussions centered, for the most part on the students. Most of our conversations, and his answers to my research questions, always came back to doing what was right for the students of the school.

I was immediately able to apply many of his leadership traits to my own job as a principal immediately. I appreciated his hands off style and the fact he is not a micro-manager. After being with Mr. Sterling for an extended period, I began to reflect on my own personal desire for learning and teaching. Initially, I was a secondary certified social studies teacher. I never taught at a high school. My experience in teaching is at the middle school level. My experience as an administrator is at an elementary level. Being around high school students and Mr. Sterling made me want to be a

high school principal. I really like the independence he has given his staff and feel his style is an effective way to lead.

Another positive aspect of this research was spending time with a fellow colleague in a separate system; an individual who does what I do on a daily basis. This was a professional development opportunity for me. In education, we seldom get the time to observe others.

This research will influence my current job as a principal and any other leadership role I may take in the future. This research will influence the decisions I make each day for my school and my staff. I will be able to relate the time I spent with Mr. Sterling and the faculty members at Ridgeview to future decisions I make. Whether a principal of a school, or the superintendent of a school district, I feel that I will be able to apply this research to every situation I encounter where social learning environments have been created to influence children. Whether working in a school or an office, the culture needs to be positive and trusting. In my mind, Mr. Sterling is an excellent role model for both the children and adults at Ridgeview.

Limitations to the Study

There were limitations to this study. One had to do with my own expertise in collecting, recording, analyzing, and interpreting the data

collected. Schein (1992) wrote, "It is important to spell out the underlying assumptions accurately and not to settle for surface manifestations that could reflect very different assumption sets" (p. 206). I do not feel that I had the competence of an experienced ethnographer like Schein. I had experience working with some quantitative data such, as test scores and my thesis for my Master's degree. Nevertheless, I had very little experience working with qualitative data. Knowing this limitation from the beginning allowed me to fully concentrate on the gathering of data through interview and observation. I knew that I had to gather a great deal of authentic data to make this research successful, both for the reader and myself, the researcher. I also knew that I had to be organized after I collected the data so I could make sense of all the material. I feel I have been successful.

A less significant limitation to this particular study was that the interview questions were not field-tested. The interview questions for the principal were pre-written and tailored differently for each interview. The questions for the faculty members were pre-written and used consistently for all 25 interviews. I had many interview questions directed toward ascertaining the culture of the school during its first four months of

existence. Moreover, when possible, I asked follow up questions that had a direct meaning to the individual participant and the interview.

A third limitation related to the fact that this research was a study about principal leadership and the development of school culture. Anthropologists have used the term culture to refer to customs and rituals in various societies that have existed throughout history. "This invisible, taken-for-granted flow of beliefs and assumptions give meaning to what people say and do" (Deal and Peterson, (1999), p. 3). They subsequently applied the concept of culture to more limited aspects of patterns, behaviors, and thought within organizations (Deal & Peterson, 1999). This idea is known as organizational culture. My time spent at Ridgeview allowed me to observe and interpret the initial beginnings of what the culture could be in the future. As the primary researcher, I observed activities that shape the beliefs and behavior of this emerging organizational culture. Only time will tell if these beliefs and behaviors will continue. It will take many years to fully establish the culture of Ridgeview and what the underlying social meanings are for the school and the community. As the reader reflects on the information in this research study, he/she needs to realize that the concept of building a culture takes many years. However, in my estimation, Ridgeview has established a

strong foundation for a stable school culture that is positive and centered around the students and community of Ridgeview High School. Mr. Sterling has laid the foundation, built a strong community following, staffed the school with expert teachers whom that he trusts, and has given his faculty members the authority to do their jobs. Mr. Sterling has also communicated his vision and expectation for the school to the students.

A fourth limiting factor is that all staff members that participated in the study were volunteers. There were no students interviewed during this study. Student answers could have provided even more information about the school culture and principal leadership. Through observation, newspaper articles, and student newspaper articles, I felt I was able to gain insight into the culture of the school through the student's eyes.

Strengths of the Study

As the primary researcher, this research has many strengths. First, this research can help future principals open new schools with practical advice that can be applied immediately. This research offers authentic advice from the principal and faculty members at a new school that currently has a positive school culture and spirit.

Second, this research is extensive. I have spent a great deal of time on the campus of Ridgeview High School observing and interviewing.

The description, analysis, and interpretation are full of details that outline the beginnings of a positive school culture that exemplifies strong, creative principal leadership. The fact that a large percentage of the faculty at Ridgeview participated in this study is significant. Again, all interview participants were volunteers. These faculty members represented a wide range of subject areas, background experiences, and previous knowledge of the principal. I wanted to make sure that I had a large group of interview participants to be certain that my data was accurate and fair.

Third, the information gained from the research provides many compelling parallels. A number of interesting remarks were made regarding the culture at Ridgeview High School and the leadership of Mr. Sterling. The fact that the current faculty of Ridgeview High School supports Mr. Sterling is evidence that he is effectively communicating his vision to the school staff. The fact that many of the faculty members gave me the same answer for many of the questions is evidence that Mr. Sterling has communicated his values through his work ethic. He believes in setting the example for all to follow. The fact that he had over 600 applications for jobs at Ridgeview is evidence that the teachers in the local and surrounding counties respect and admire his leadership and want to be a part of a successful organization. The overwhelming community

support the school has received from the athletic booster club and PTSA is evidence that Mr. Sterling has effectively communicated his vision and his purpose to these organizations. Each organization has commended him on his hard work and dedication to the students. The booster club has made a multi-year commitment to the school to improve and expand the athletic facilities. The fact that the web site, principal communications, PTSA newsletter, regional newspaper, and student publications consistently use the same language to describe and support the school is evidence that everyone has embraced Mr. Sterling's vision for the school.

During the course of this research, several concepts have emerged. None, perhaps, has distinguished itself more than the fact that a participatory organization has been established early in the history of Ridgeview High School. Mr. Sterling has included the students, staff, parents, and community members in establishing a community school.

Recommendations for Further Study

It would be interesting to examine the organizational culture at Ridgeview High School five years from now to determine whether the current culture will survive, thrive, be modified in minor ways, or drastically altered. Mr. Sterling told me in our last interview that he has committed himself to five years at this school in the district. At the end of those five

years, he will determine if he will retire or move on to another job. He said he would be the measuring stick (Principal Interview #3).

As this school's organizational culture continues to develop, it would be interesting to study teacher and administrative retention, student drop out rates, student absences, and the number of students participating in extra curricular activities.

In addition, it would be intriguing to study the leadership of the second principal at Ridgeview to determine whether it is as dynamic as Mr. Sterling's. The extent to which the leadership of the second principal changes the way of conducting business will help shed light on the strength of the beginning culture of Ridgeview High School. Leadership and organizational culture should be studied together, because "The analysis of culture can illuminate the study of leadership" (Schein, 1985, p.x).

Concluding Statement

It is apparent that Otho Sterling is well respected by the staff at Ridgeview. Not only is he respected, the students, the parents, the faculty members, and the community like him. Mr. Sterling left Marietta High School, where he had a 24-year history as a teacher, coach, athletic director, assistant principal, and principal. At first it was a difficult decision

to move to Ridgeview; however, he told me in our last interview, coming to

Ridgeview has been rewarding and "re-energizing" (Principal Interview #3).

In our last interview, I asked Mr. Sterling what advice he would give

another principal opening a new school. He stated,

> Do it if you get the opportunity. You will always have your thumbprint on it and you will get to see if you are worth a flip. Starting from scratch will determine if you truly know what you think you know. Surround yourself with a strong staff and loyal people (Principal Interview, #3).

One of Mr. Sterling's former students now works with him at

Ridgeview as a teacher assistant and coach. In an email, this staff

member stated the following about the leadership of Mr. Sterling.

> I have known Mr. Sterling since he was an assistant principal at Marietta when I was in high school and I will tell you this, he is the most honest, caring, dedicated and just great all around person you'll ever meet! He has always been that way. His love for the kids and education are unbelievable. Ridgeview is very lucky to start out with a man of his character and his shoes will be very hard to fill once he retires! This coming from an ex-cop of 13 years and a one-time recipient of his write-ups while at Marietta, lol. Even when I was wrong, Mr. Sterling made it impossible for me to be angry with him because of his personable nature (J. Price, Personal Communication, October 25, 2005, Faculty Member #14).

In a final attempt to describe and interpret the leadership style of Mr.

Sterling, this quote from British philosopher Isaiah Berlin, in Warren

Bennis's Book, *On Becoming a Leader*, (2003) describes the leadership

style of Otho Sterling,

> The fox knows many things; the hedgehog knows but
> one. Leaders are both fox and hedgehog. They have
> mastered their vocation or profession, do whatever they do as
> well as it can be done, but they are also masters of the more
> fundamental, human skills. They're able to establish and
> maintain positive relationships with their subordinates in side
> the organization and their peers outside the organization.
> They have not only the ability to understand the organization's
> dimensions and purposes, but to articulate their understanding
> and make it manifest. They have the ability to inspire trust,
> but not abuse it (Bennis, 2003).

Mr. Sterling has made a difference at Ridgeview High School and

has laid the foundation for a solid organizational culture for the future. The

students, staff, parents, and community believe in him and his ideas for the

school. He inspires trust, loyalty, and commitment. Mr. Sterling has solidly

laid the groundwork for a great school, and due to his emphasis on

empowerment and trust, the members of the organization, (students, staff,

parents, and community members) have been left with the sense they

have been a big part of the school. Sally Combs, the 24th faculty member I

interviewed at Ridgeview, put leadership in an entirely different perspective for me as the researcher. I asked her the question, "What role does leadership have in the development of school culture in a new school organization?" With out hesitation, she said, "As teachers or whoever, we have to show an example. The way we present ourselves will represent how the students act" (Faculty Member Interview #24). I saw this as making a clear connection between leadership and the establishment of organizational culture. Leadership is not about what you do as a principal, it is about the way you inspire others and the way you make them feel. This teacher did not hesitate to categorize herself as a leader in the school because Mr. Sterling had given her the confidence and ability to lead. In my mind, this answer was an extension of Mr. Sterling's leadership in full force. His style of leadership was building a culture of caring and commitment for the faculty members at Ridgeview. This moment in time captured the answer to my research question, "What actions, practices, and behaviors of the principal contribute to the development of school culture in a new school organization?"

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bates, R. (1981). Management and the culture of the school. In Richard Bates & Course Team (Eds*.), Management of Resources in schools: Study guide I* (pp. 37-45). Geelong, Australia: Deakin University.

Bates, R. (1987). Corporate culture, schooling, and educational administration. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 23(4), 79-115.

Bennis, W. (1984). Transformation power and leadership. In Thomas J. Sergiovanni & John E. Corbally (Eds.), *Leadership and organizational culture*. Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press.

Bennis, W., & Goldsmith, J. (1997). *Learning to lead*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Bennis, W. (2003). *On Becoming a Leader.* New York. Basic Books

Brubaker, D. (2003*). The presentation of self and the creation of educational settings-A personal odyssey.* San Fransico: Jossey-Bass.

Dedication ceremony of Ridgeview. (2005, October, 10). *The Rooster*, Vol. I, Issue I.

Collins, J. (2001). *Good to Great.* New York. Harper Collins Publishers

Fun at Fall Festival. (2005, October, 10). *The Rooster*, Vol. I, Issue I.

Deal, T. & Peterson, K. (1990). *The Principal's Role in Shaping School Culture.* Washington, D.C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education.

Deal, T. & Peterson, K. (1999*). Shaping school culture.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Deal, T. & Peterson, K. (2001). *Shaping school culture-Fieldbook*. San
    Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Deaver, D. (2005, July 3). Club gets early boost. Winston-Salem Journal.
    RetrievedDecember2,2005,fromhttp//www.journalnow.com/servlet/sa
    tellite?Pagename=WSJ/MGArticle/WSJ_BasicArticle&c=MGArticle&
    cid=1031783631215

Dedication Program for Ridgeview High School, (October 10, 2005).
    Message from the Principal [Brochure].

Dwyer, D., Barnett, B., and Lee, G. (1987). The school principal:
    Scapegoat or the last great hope. In L.T. Scheive & M. Schonheit
    (Eds.), *Leadership: Examining the elusive* (pp. 30-46).
    Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum
    Development. In Reitzug, U. and Reeves, J. (1992). "Miss Lincoln
    doesn't teach here': A descriptive narrative and conceptual
    analysis of a principal's   symbolic leadership behavior," *Educational
    Administration Quarterly* 28(2), 185-219.

Foster, W. (1986). Paradigms and promises: *New approaches to
    educational administration*. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus.

Fullan, M., (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. San Francisco:
    Jossey-Bass.

Greenfield, T. (1973). Organization as a social inventions: Rethinking
    assumptions about change, *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*
    9(5). In Sergiovanni, T. (1999). *The Principalship*, 114.

Hersey, P., & Blanchard, K., & Johnson, D. (1996). Management of
    organizational behavior. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall,
    Inc.

A sincere thank you. (2005, October 10). *The Rooster*, Vol. I, Issue I.

The man behind the smile. (2005, October 10).   *The Rooster*, Vol. I,
    Issue I.

Lee, T. (1998). *A case study on school leadership and organizational culture.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Lincoln, Y. & Guba, E. (1985). Naturalistic Inquiry. *Establishing trustworthiness*, p. 290. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Linker, M. (2005, August 2). Ridgeview holds their first football practice. Winston-Salem Journal. Retrieved December 5, 2005, from http://www.journalnow.Com/servlet/Satellite?c=MGArticle&cid=1031 7841937003& Pagename=WSJ/MGArticle/WSJ_BasicArticle

Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Miles, M. & Huberman, A. (1984). *Qualitative data analysis*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publication.

North Carolina Education Lottery. (2005, December. 30). Introduction. Retrieved December 30, 2005, from http://lottery.nc.gov/

Peshkin, A. (1985). Virtuous subjectivity: In the participant-observer's I's. In D. Berg & K. Smith (Eds.), *Exploring clinical methods for social research* (pp. 267-282). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Principals' Executive Program. (2005, March). *Principal Supply and Demand (*Report to the University of North Carolina office of the President). Chapel Hill: NC, Center for Leadership Development.

Reitzug, U. and Reeves, J. (1992). "Miss Lincoln doesn't teach here': A descriptive narrative and conceptual analysis of a principal's symbolic leadership behavior," *Educational Administration Quarterly* 28(2), 185-219.

Dellinger, A. (2005-Fall). *Ridgeview Parent, Teacher, Student Association Newsletter*. Vol. I, Issue I.

Sarason, S. (1972). *The creation of settings and the future societies*. San Fransico: Jossey-Bass.

Sarason, S. (2002*). Educational reform: A self-scrutinizing memoir*.
New York:Teachers College Press.

Schein, E. (1968). Organizational socialization and the profession of
management. *Industrial Management Review*, 10, 8-18.

Schein, E. (1985). *Organizational culture and leadership*. San Francisco:
Jossey-Bass.

Schein, E. (1992). *Organizational culture and leadership*. (2nd ed.)   San
Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Scott, C. Ahadi, S., and Krug, S. (1990*).   An experience sampling
approach to the study of principal instructional leadership II: A
comparison of activities and beliefs as bases for understanding
effective school.* Urbana: University of Illinois, National Center for
School Leadership.

Sergiovanni, T. (1991). *The principalship-A reflective practice perspective.*
(2nd ed.). Newton, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Sergiovanni, T. (2001). *The principalship-A reflective practice perspective.*
(4th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Shaw, P. (1997*). Trust in the balance: Building successful organization
on results, integrity, and concern.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

United States Senate, Select Committee on Equal Education Opportunity.
(1972.) Revitalizing the Role of the School Principal, in   *Toward
Equal Educational Opportunity* (pp. 305-307). Senate Report No.
92-0000.Washington, D.C.: Office of Educational Research and
Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, 1990.

Wolcott, H. (1994). *Transforming Qualitative Data.*   Thousand Oaks:
Sage Publication

Yin, R. (2003). *Case study research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publication.

Appendix A

Observation Form

School Name: _____   Observer: _____

Date: _____   Time of Observation: _____

Identify and describe location in the school:

What factors are present that might contribute to the culture of the school?

What traditions, rites, and slogans are present in this part of the school building?

What observable role does the principal have in developing the school culture?

What observable role do the teachers have in developing or facilitating the culture of this school?

What seems to be important in this high school?

What types of interactions are present? (principal, teacher, student, parent)

What symbols are present that could possibly represent the school culture?