

PRINCIPAL SUCCESSION: A VIEW THROUGH THE
LENS OF MARY DOUGLAS' GRID AND GROUP

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CHAPTER I

OVERVIEW OF STUDY

Few administrators hold the same position throughout their career. Some change positions as often as every two to three years. A newly assigned administrator must acclimate to the culture of the school in a manner that sets the tone for the remainder of his or her tenure. According to Deal and Peterson (1999), “Successful schools possess leaders who can read, assess, and reinforce core rituals, traditions, and values” (p. XIII). The incoming principal is the outsider looking at the school with fresh eyes, trying to understand the rituals, traditions and values or the culture of the school where he/she has just been employed. There is little time to gain an understanding of the culture in a manner that allows for successful decision making and guidance as a leader. There is a plethora of research on school leadership, but how does this apply when the administration is not established in the framework of the school?

How an administrator traverses the transition process can be extremely successful or extremely detrimental to the culture of the school. If the administrator does not find a style that fits the established school culture, the process can cause the

administrator to fail or to have stifled influence. Carnes (2007) wrote that in today's world of educational accountability, research is needed for understanding and identifying characteristics that embellish the concept of leadership change. By investigating the approach a principal takes the first year when newly assigned to a building, a deeper understanding or pattern of behaviors will help administrators avoid mistakes that sometimes create a chasm stifling student growth and school improvement through the transition phase.

Problem Statement

Most likely, every principal will be placed in a different school assignment at one time or another. For example, the St. Petersburg Times (Catalanello, 2010) reported in a large Tampa Bay school district that "over a five-year span that includes the upcoming school year, 91 of Pinellas' 118 schools will have welcomed at least one new principal." The Florida Times ("New Principals," 2010) released the names of 34 schools within the Duval school system that would start the year with a different principal. While studying principal succession, Fink and Brayman (2006) found that schools had two thirds as many principals in the last 12 years as the schools had in the 28 years prior. In a study completed by the National Association of Elementary School Principals in 2008, 41.5% of principals had been in their current assignment 3 years or less compared to 25.2% in 1998 (Protheroe, 2009). In Oklahoma where this study was conducted, there were 521 different school districts with approximately 1,690 head principals (Oklahoma State Department of Education). Just the large amount of principal positions alone created an atmosphere for a high turnover rate.

While leadership succession is common knowledge in research, theory and practice, it is successful in some cases and unsuccessful in others. For example, in one year, San Francisco Public Schools successfully replaced or relocated six school administrators as determined by a review panel. However, in an attempt to recreate the same results, Chicago Public Schools replaced principals in a number of schools which resulted in marginal if any improvement (Kawal & Hassel, 2005). Research is even conflicted on the effectiveness of a new principal. Some studies suggest that a new principal can tackle challenges, bring new ideas and rejuvenate school improvement in a successful manner (Hart, 1993; Stine, 1998). Contrary to this positive view, MacMillan (2000) suggested that principal changes might impede school improvement efforts. Huber (2004) emphasized the importance of a principal's ability to react, to adapt and to support the school's culture. This is particularly important for a principal new to the building and must be done quickly. A school's culture and the ability for a principal to maneuver in the culture is a major factor in the school improvement process. A principal can influence the culture of the school therefore influencing the ability to improve the school if the principal understands the school culture (Deal & Peterson, 1999; Mees, 2008). Mary Douglas' grid and group is a typology of cultures that classifies how people are controlled by the group on one axis and the structure of the group on another axis, creating four opposed types of social control (Douglas, 1986). Through the use of Mary Douglas' grid and group, a principal newly assigned to a school should be able to better understand the culture of the school and adjust the leadership needs accordingly creating the ability to successfully lead the school in an effective manner.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to use Douglas' typology of grid and group to explain the succession process in selected schools.

Research Questions

1. In terms of grid and group, how does a principal who is new to a school adapt his/her leadership to the culture of the school?
2. In terms of grid and group, how do school members adapt to the new principal?
3. How useful is Douglas' typology of grid and group in explaining school leadership succession?
4. What other realities are revealed in this study?

Theoretical Framework

For the purpose of this research, Mary Douglas' (1970) two-dimensional typology, known as grid and group was used to classify the social environment by exposing the values and beliefs of the school where the newly assigned principal had been placed. The dimensions of grid and group are based on the group commitment versus the control and regulations or grid placed on the individual. The two dimensions create four quadrants of culture: weak-group/strong-grid bureaucratic, strong-grid/strong-group corporate, weak-group/weak-grid individualistic or strong-group/weak-grid collectivist. As this case study observed the decisions the newly assigned principal made and the strategies used, the grid and group theory was used to analyze the reaction of the faculty determined by the quadrant where the school fell. The conflicts that arise during the school year were also compared to this theory. Harris (2005) wrote about how the diagonal quadrants create the most conflict if the beliefs and values of one quadrant

are imposed on teachers that reside in another quadrant. Grid and group theory will provide an interesting perspective on the first school year of the newly assigned principal as it allows the researcher to view the members school through a theory that exposes the cultural dynamics of the school.

This research was conducted from a constructionist perspective. According to Creswell (2009), a constructionist researcher seeks to establish the meaning of a phenomenon from the views of the participants. Through interviews with various stakeholders, I studied multiple realities constructed by the members of the two schools and the implications of those constructions in their lives and in the interactions of others. This research did not seek to establish reality, but as with constructionist, this research strove to construct knowledge about reality. Multiple stakeholders had different experiences and different perceptions of life with the new principal all of which were needed to complete the whole picture of the reality that had been constructed (Patton, 2002).

Procedures

Because understanding individual perceptions, perspectives and beliefs that are unique to a newly assigned principal and his leadership approach in a unique cultural setting, the study aims to employ the principles of naturalistic inquiry (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). This allowed the researcher to document the real world events of a newly assigned principal through the eyes of the principal, the teachers, and the researcher. Grid and group was used to describe the culture of the school and leadership adaptation. I chose this form of research based on my background and the need to better understand the transition process. While in the classroom for 14 years, I worked under

six different principals. A few of those principals made such an impact during the first days of school that the faculty would have run through a brick wall for them. Other principals immediately developed an unsuccessful relationship due to personal actions within the first days of school. Then, as a principal, I have been asked by district leadership to move from one school to another school that was in need of a different leader. I was fortunate during those initial days and lucked into some strategies that worked extremely well and, of course, some that did not work, but was able to make the transition successfully. At the same time, some of the other principals who were moved that year as well struggled during the first months or even the first year. Because of these observations, the succession of principals has become especially interesting to me.

The layers of this case study included a variety of detailed, descriptive data from observations, interviews, grid and group instruments and documents at the schools where the principal was newly assigned. In February of the academic school year, teachers completed the grid/group instrument tools to develop an understanding of the culture. Interviews with teachers and the principal were conducted in March to gain an understanding of the individual perspectives. Participants volunteered for both the survey and interviews. Interview volunteers were given the option of where to meet for their interview in case they did not want to meet on the school site. Observations included day to day interactions with the principal and faculty. E-mails between the principal and faculty, weekly memos and other documents were requested as well to complete the picture.

The data told the story as it unfolded. All data from field notes, interviews, grid/group and documents were chronologically combined into a case record through the

school year. This record was edited for redundancies and organized in a format in which the data fit together in an accessible manner. From this record, the final case study was written in a rich, descriptive manner that created a picture of this principal's leadership in the specific grid/group culture.

Significance of Study

To Research

There is an abundant amount of research on school culture and on school leadership. Leadership research exists that pertains to different leadership styles and to how leadership contributes to school improvement (Deal & Peterson, 1999; Marzano, Waters, McNulty, 2005). Harris (2005) specifically researched how Mary Douglas' group and grid can be used to improve schools based on different cultures in a school. This study considered those components while looking at the specific situation where a principal was newly assigned to a school. This case study contributes to the existing research and adds a new aspect by narrowing the scope to a specific situation.

To Theory

This research looked at how an external factor such as a new principal might influence the dynamics of the school in relationship to where they were in the group/grid axis. Could a new leader move the school from one axis to another on the group/grid continuum? When Mary Douglas first began to broach the idea of natural symbols in 1970, she was looking at cultural controls from all over the world. She then refined the system in 1978 by developing a typology that would fit an infinite array of social interactions. Since then, multiple researchers have used this typology in settings from churches, boardrooms, sport teams, prisons, and the military (Douglas, 1982). This

research contributed to that theory by determining that a newly assigned principal's ability to gain knowledge and understanding of an unfamiliar school using Mary Douglas' grid and group is possible. This research also helped determine a newly assigned principal's ability to move an organization from one quadrant to another in the best interest of the organization.

To Practice

This research not only assisted principals with leadership theories to guide them, but it also contributed to a better understanding of what a principal needs to do when newly assigned to a building. District administrators could use this research as a guiding source when relocating administrators in the district or when hiring new principals from other districts.

National education organizations such as the National Association of Elementary School Principals, NAESP, and National Association of Secondary School Principals, NASSP, are continuously searching for research that benefits their membership by providing tools designed to improve effectiveness. This research strives to provide information concerning how a newly assigned principal could successfully navigate through the first year of a new assignment

Assumptions

Because the newly assigned principals involved in these two case studies volunteered, there was an assumption that other newly assigned principals might face some of the same experiences or problems as the principals involved. It was assumed that what was found with the participants in this research would pertain and be

meaningful to other newly assigned principals as well because many of the factors would be the same.

It was realized that every school presents different challenges, but the assumption was that the overall leadership and culture of this school could be generalized to other schools. There was also an assumption that the principal and teachers were honest and thoughtful in their interviews. While the interviewees had been informed about confidentiality, there was a risk that some may have felt uncomfortable making statements about their supervisor.

The assumption was also made that by choosing an experienced principal for this study rather than a first-year principal with no experience that certain factors such as lack of knowledge or expertise could be eliminated. These factors would be mistakes made by a first year principal, that a veteran principal would not make causing the research to be flawed. A veteran principal is also accustomed to the work load and expectations of the principalship where a first-year principal often has an adjustment period to these demands.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined:

1. Culture – “Collective thinking” (Douglas, 2002, p. 2)

“The moral and intellectual spirit of a particular form of organization”

“A dynamically interactive and developing socio-psychic system”

“Connected meanings ... that are multiplex, precarious, complex and fluid”

“The way the community explains itself to itself.” (Douglas, 2002, p. 4)

2. Grid – “Regulation or amount of control members accept...measure of structure”
(Douglas, 2007, p. 3)
3. Group – “General boundary around a community...how peoples’ lives are controlled by the group they live in” (Douglas, 2007, p. 3)
4. Naturalistic Inquiry – Lincoln and Guba (1985) described 14 axioms required for research to be considered naturalistic inquiry: (a) natural setting, (b) human instrument, (c) utilization of tacit knowledge, (d) qualitative methods, (e) purposive sampling, (f) inductive data analysis, (g) grounded theory, (h) emergent design, (i) negotiated outcomes, (j) case study reporting mode, (k) idiographic interpretation, (l) tentative application, (m) focus-determined boundaries, and (n) special criteria for trustworthiness.
5. Principal Succession – When one principal replaces another at a school site

Summary and Organization of the Study

This research was a naturalistic study based on a pragmatic framework. The purpose of this study was to provide information that would improve the principal succession process for principals newly assigned to a building and for district leaders as they work with newly assigned principals. Through the use of Mary Douglas’ grid/group cultural analysis tools, observations, interviews, and relevant documents, a case study was written based on the principals’ experiences once newly assigned to a building. The principals’ leadership decisions were compared to Mary Douglas’ Grid and Group based on the cultural analysis.

Chapter 2 provides a literature review over the need and history of principal succession. It also includes pertinent research on school culture and Mary Douglas’ Grid

and Group. Chapter 3 is a detailed report of the procedures or methods that were used during this research including participants, data collection and data analysis. Chapter 4 is the thick, descriptive story of the principal's first year told from multiple perspectives. Chapter 5 is the analysis of the case study with findings, conclusions, application of knowledge derived from this study and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

During my entire doctoral program, I have been interested in studying the phenomenon of principal succession and how school culture influences the principal transition process. In my classes, I researched and wrote over the components of this subject on as many assignments as I could. My interest originally began when, as a principal, I was asked to move to another building that needed a leadership change. As the principal new to a building, I spent several hours reflecting on the times as a teacher I experienced receiving a new principal. This brought back my memories pertaining to fear of new requirements, concern over the level of support, and overall dread of how the change would potentially influence my comfortable, known work environment.

The year I moved from one principalship to another was unfortunately before I was introduced to Mary Douglas' (1970) grid and group. I realized the importance of learning the culture of the school but lacked a tool to do so. To help with my understanding of the culture and desires of the faculty, I sent out a self-created survey which was useful, but did not provide the depth of understanding that could have been provided by the grid and group analysis which will be explained later in this literature review nor did my little survey provide insight into the direction the school culture needed to move. Fortunately, I worked in a district with other

principals that had worked in several buildings as well. They were willing to share lessons learned the hard way and to help in the transition.

At this time, I hold a central office position; however, I still confront the issue of principal succession as I work to place principals in different assignments and counsel principals through culture challenges. Currently, the district where I work is in the process of building a new middle school. When this school opens, we foresee moving a couple of principals from one building to another.

Principal Succession

Fink and Brayman (2004) found that while there is research pertaining to succession plans, there was little research focused on the leader and the viewpoint of the principal and the school during the succession process, elaborating that “overall, the available research on principal succession and rotation provided limited and conflicting views on the practice of leadership succession in schools” (p. 65). Looking even in the business world, Ballenger and Schoorman (2007) stated that “over four decades have passed since debate emerged over the existence of a succession effect that explained performance changes following leadership succession” (p. 118). Later in the same paper, attention was given to the fact that:

a relatively small number of case studies of leader succession gave us some insights into the outcomes the individual level of analysis. But a lack of empirical research at the individual level has required researchers looking for the succession effect in groups to make assumption regarding the process (p. 119).

Principal succession is a tense time for the faculty and the newly assigned principal due to the element of the unknown. From Watkins’ (2003) research in the business world, he found that it usually took leadership transitions 6.2 months for contributions or growth to appear. This

type of lag is not acceptable in schools. Once a principal is assigned to a new school, there is not time to sit back and get to know the culture of the school. Due to the accountability for results created by No Child Left Behind (NCLB), results have to be made in the first school year which is actually nine months. More concerning is the failed succession, if a principal succession is unsuccessful, not only can it be career ending for the principal, but it can also create a school-wide setback. Furthermore, individual student success can be influenced by the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the school principal. According to Marzano (2003), “whether a school operates effectively or not increases or decreases a student’s chances of academic success” (p. 3).

Ballinger and Schoorman (2007) defined leadership succession as “the planned or unplanned change of the formal leader of a group or organization” (p.119). The formal leader was described as the person with legitimate power, or in a school setting, the formal leader would be the building principal. There were multiple reasons for planned or unplanned succession. Some districts rotated principals on a regular basis under the premise that leaders appeared to make changes early in the new position, while they still had the view from an outside perspective. However, they also believed that after time, school administrators lost that view and became disenchanted or ineffective (Barker, 2006). Other schools just experienced a higher than average principal mobility rate (Fink & Brayman, 2006). This could be due to the difficulty of the school climate or school population or the lure of better schools in the district. There were other contributing factors for principal succession such as school reform, promotions to central office positions and attrition.

Three types of leadership succession were found by Ballinger and Schoorman (2007). There was the “follower” succession where the change was preplanned and the successor worked with the out-going leader prior to departure. The second type of succession was the contender.

In this case a successor was appointed from inside the organization with multiple inside contenders for the position. The third and final succession situation was the outside placement. This was the case when the newly appointed leader was hired from outside the organization, however, group members would quickly make connections from common acquaintances and prior work history. Ballinger and Schoorman (2007) also reported that the more unexpected the succession was, the more disruption there was to productivity and morale.

Succession Rate

According to The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010), school principal positions will grow eight percent in the next ten years from 445,400 positions to 482,500 positions. This is an estimation of 37,000 new principal positions in the next decade. This growth is based on a rise in student population and an increasing number of baby boomer principals that will retire in this decade. The mean age of principals is 50 years old which supports the belief of a growing retirement rate in the next 10 years (Protheroe, 2009). The Bureau of Labor did not include the positions that will be vacant due to school principals moving to central office positions opened because of the same large expectation for retirements at that level. Sixty six percent of principal membership surveyed by The NAESP (Protheroe, 2009) reported that they plan on retiring in the next 6-10 years.

According to the 2008 report conducted by the NAESP (Protheroe, 2009), almost 20% of the principals who had been a principal for less than five years were already assigned or moved to another building. Forty one percent of the principals surveyed had been in their current position for less than three years. According to experienced principals who were surveyed, 63% of them had worked as a principal for another district prior to their current assignment. Only 19% of principals had been in the same building for 10 years or more. In 2006, Fink and

Brayman (2006) predicted that 80% of the principals in the Ontario school system would retire by 2010.

Successful Versus Unsuccessful Principal Successions

In the literature, instances were found where school succession resulted in a positive experience either through professional growth of the principal, positive change in the culture, and/or higher academic achievement. There were also instances where principal successions were complete and utter failures due to the lack of the new principal meeting the expectations of the faculty or community. From the two polar extremes, hero and failure, there were examples of principal succession that fall at points in-between.

Educational Case Studies

Barker (2006) conducted a longitudinal case study involving leadership succession and school transformation over a seventeen year period at one school, Felix Holt High School. Data was collected from reports, pamphlets, correspondence, newspaper files, and performance database statistics. Barker conducted eighteen interviews with a diverse population of teachers, students, and principals. The first leadership succession took place in 1986. The new principal was described by one teacher as “wonderful with me, very supportive on personal matters, treated staff as individuals too, had a pupils first philosophy and a sense of humor” (p. 281). However, during this principal’s tenure, test performance improved less rapidly than the national average. Most other teachers saw the new principal as someone who did not come out of his office very often and as a principal who allowed student behavior to deteriorate. From another interview, Barker determined that because the new principal did not take an immediate action in areas believed to be of concern from the faculty, that lack of respect was rampant among the faculty members.

In 1992, the previous principal took early retirement due to health issues. The faculty eagerly awaited fresh blood. A new principal from another school was placed at Felix Holt. He was described as young and enthusiastic. One interviewee gave his opinion of an immediate positive influence when he explained, “he was a good communicator, a salesman, he tackled graffiti, and made a point that poor behavior would not be tolerated and was hands-on about school” (p. 282). Another interview described him as charismatic and supportive of the staff. He knew everyone and was determined to reverse the situation. The staff was unanimous that this principal had turned the school around despite any change in academic performance.

Seven years later, the school faced the third principal succession. The new principal came in under the shadows of a great predecessor. This principal was described as reluctant to state his views and complained when compared to the previous principal. Rapid teacher turnover began within the first year. In an interview the new principal stated, “There was no one I could talk to. I could not compete with the guy on the white horse that was before me. I was unwilling to compromise on standards and leading the school to a target” (p. 286). One core teacher did admit that he made changes that were substantive towards the core of teaching and learning with an impact on the classroom level. Even after the school made academic growth, credit was given to the previous principal.

Barker (2006) concluded that this study showed that culture and academic growth could occur during leadership succession, but more importantly, it demonstrated the importance of understanding the situation involved in the succession, specifically “how the leader’s life cycle, departure and replacement influenced the conditions for improvement” (p. 289). When the school was desperate for change, they rallied behind a leader that was charismatic, hands-on and out in the public. He was a strong leader, and they followed his leadership, even though it

lacked direction, because that is what the faculty was seeking. However, when the third principal arrived, even though he had a plan for academic growth and began enacting on that plan, few teachers supported him. It was only in retrospect that he received credit for the changes. His lack-luster personality did not fill the void left by principal number two. Although Felix Holt survived the three transitions, this study also exposed the vulnerability that a school faces during principal succession along with the concept that a faculty may not desire what is truly needed. For example, when the third principal came, the faculty wanted someone just like the “great guy” they had before. Although principal number two brought new life to the school, he did not provide direction and growth. If principal number three could have in some ways mimicked the popular traits of principal number two, while implementing his academic model, he might have faced less isolation and gained quicker support for his programs.

While I agreed with Barker’s conclusions, I also wondered if the high teacher turnover faced by principal number three is not a factor for the academic growth. Because he was able to replace such a large number of faculty members with teachers that he chose and teachers who would support his instructional model, could be part of the reason for the academic growth. Baker relied largely on institutional memory through interviews to describe the first two leaders.

Michelle MacFarlane (2009) conducted a self-study of her first year at a new school based on various leadership styles. While the bulk of this research was based on leadership styles, chapter five was a reflection on her transition to a new school. MacFarlane described multiple situations where she had to conform her leadership style to meet the needs of the situation and the needs of the people involved. For example, when the English department as a group decided to make some changes concerning novels, all teachers were willing to contribute ideas and support the change except one. Through the group process, MacFarlane was able to

play a support role, but when the one teacher would not conform, MacFarlane had to take a more directive approach with her. MacFarlane (2009) also wrote about the importance of learning what roles each person played among the faculty. At her new school, the faculty worked as a cohesive group under the guidance of one teacher. This singular teacher leadership was first noticed by MacFarlane in the fall at a faculty meeting when the staff was discussing whether they should allow students to wear costumes on Halloween. She noticed that teachers kept looking at the one teacher as they expressed their ideas. Finally the teacher made the comment, “Here we wear orange and black on Halloween” (p. 37). The decision was made. No one brought up wearing costumes again. Although MacFarlane (2009) recognized this control, she did not give it enough respect. The strong teacher leader, or better described as teacher bully, was a battle throughout the year finally resulting in the teacher union getting involved. Because MacFarlane had spent so much time trying to build relationships with other staff members, they finally took a stand against the bully when they realized that Michelle’s job was on the line as she tried to stand up to the teacher to make changes they initiated. In summary, MacFarlane (2009) reported that it was not the skills she possessed as a leader, but more importantly it was how the faculty perceived her skills and her intentions that made the final verdict on her success.

Although this case study appeared more as a journal of the principal newly assigned to a building, there were strong implications to the importance of understanding a culture when one is a new leader in an existing faculty. MacFarlane (2009) felt if she would have challenged the teacher bully early in the year before building relationships with the other faculty members, she most likely would not have survived. However, because she had earned the trust of most of the

faculty, they were willing to stand up to the teacher with her and move forward in implementing change.

As an author of several articles on school leadership succession and change over time, Fink and Brayman (2006, 2004) conducted a seven year study interviewing teachers and principals following an agreed upon interview process in nine schools writing a case on three of the nine. Questionnaires, focus groups, and observations were also included in the research. The first school in their research is Talisman Park, an academic school with high college attendance rates. The first principal transition researched was in 1974 when Harry Arness replaced Bill Rowan. Rowan was an innovative leader who inspired leadership among the teachers. More than 20 of his staff members moved on to leadership positions. Rowan left to open a new school in the district and took several staff members with him. The replacement, Arness, lacked the personality that Rowan demonstrated. Arness was described in one interview as a very strange guy compared to Rowan's description as a father figure. Arness was accused of making arbitrary, by-the-book, decisions rather than trying to work through problems with teachers. Fink and Brayman, (2006) described this situation as a poorly matched placement. The inbound trajectory (new principal) was at odds with the school's community of practice thus creating a conflict. Arnes was unsuccessful at Tailsman Park only to be replaced by Fred Laird. Laird was described as good to all of us and viewed as having an open door policy. The teacher who had called the union multiple times with Arnes, described Laird as wonderful and aware of everyone's problems. When Laird left in 1987, a period of rapid turnover began.

Tailsman Park experienced four principals within the next 13 years. One principal was promoted to superintendent, one moved to another school, one moved out of district and the final principal was still there at the time of the research. When Andrews was moved quickly to the

district office, there was no transition time for the incoming principal, Carmaine Watson. Outbound knowledge was completely ignored. This crippled the effectiveness of Watson resulting in another quick transition. Because of the lack of stability, teachers became reluctant to invest in the programs of new principals. This created a situation for Megson, the principal next in line, which gave him little influence among the teachers creating a situation where he had to take on the uncomfortable role of ensuring compliance.

The second school was Stewart Heights. When the study ended, Bill Andrews was the principal at Stewart Heights, a predominantly white, tightly knit community with the majority of the teachers having taught more than 20 years. Andrews was preceded by four principals from 1970 – 1998 when he took over. The first principal, Harry Swanson, lead a school that was divided between farm kids and town kids in a culturally united school. Swanson was described as a classroom principal. The third principal, Glen Jones was described as an amazing principal that could connect with students. Fred Jackman was next in line. He was upfront with teachers about his fear of following the beloved Glen Jones. However, it was brought to his attention that as much as the teachers loved Jones, there was a desire for more organization and backbone. Jackman was able to provide that and was described as a delightful and fabulous principal. Jackman himself admitted that he really had no direction for the school. He took the role of facilitator in relationships and tried to take the pressure off of teachers so they could work in the classrooms with students. This left the school happy but with no focus. After nine years of a principal that was mainly concerned with teachers and their needs, Bill Andrews moved from Talisman Park to Stewart Heights. Andrews had considerable inbound knowledge because he had been a principal at another building in the same district. This was in fact his third placement as a principal. Andrews was successful in moving the school towards a professional learning

community and made great strides in instruction and assessment by the end of his 2nd year. Unfortunately for Stewart Heights, after only two years, Andrews was quickly moved to a district position in a manner that left no time to prepare for the succession. When Jerry West came on board as principal, both assistant principals were replaced as well. West described the situation as overwhelming and isolated. West was the third principal assigned to Stewart Heights in 4.5 years. Teachers were resistant to the change. They immediately began asking him how long he was going to stay. This attitude resulted in a noncompliance situation among the teachers causing West to resort to traditional bureaucratic structures to ensure compliance. This form of leadership created a situation where West remained peripheral to the school's culture and may never be seen as or allowed to be an insider.

In contrast to Stewart Heights and Talisman Park, Blue Mountain High School is an example of carefully planned principal succession. Ben McMaster opened the school with innovative ideas. McMaster planned for his succession from the beginning by working to create a school structure that would continue after his departure. When the time for him to leave drew closer, he negotiated to name his successor, Linda White. White commented that she was on the same road as McMaster. However, about that same time, new government reforms came into place causing White to be torn in her direction. The faculty recognized this and saw it as failure to stay the course which caused her to lack credibility.

Fink and Brayman (2004, 2006) found evidence to support that some successions were successful while others were not with one of the key factors based around the amount of inbound and outbound knowledge the new principal received. How well the new principal was introduced and acclimated to the school mission and culture was influential on the principal's success. An incoming principal was more likely to be successful if he/she had information about

the school before entering the position. When left to discover the direction of the school and the culture of the school alone, the potential for success decreased.

To further support this point, Talbot (2000) followed a newly assigned principal, Marie, for a year writing a case study around the succession experience. Marie did spend a day with the outgoing principal, but that time was spent getting to know the physical needs of the school building. Once school started, Marie learned from multiple sources that the teachers desired more school discipline. She wished she had known this before school started so she could have begun the year with a plan. She also did not want it to come directly from her because she didn't want the students and parents to hate her right from the beginning. Marie commented that she often felt stranded and alone. In some situations her previous administrative experiences helped her, but in other situations, they failed to work in this building as they had previously in other buildings. Marie's second year was much better than her first. She believed her first year would have been more productive if she would have understood the school and its needs from the start. Talbot (2000) concluded that Marie gained success as she "blended her past experiences, values, and beliefs with the expectations of organizational players within the school" (p. 5). For Marie, this was a process that took time because she didn't have an understanding of the organizational beliefs and practices from the beginning.

Vanetta Porth (2000) studied the effects of a new administrator concerning school climate over the first 90 days finding that a principal's personal skills were valued more than management skills or educational knowledge. These findings implied that first impressions and acceptance had more to do with personal skills than professional skills. Consequently, management skills and educational knowledge were proven over time after personal connections were made.

From a study by Britz (2007) where superintendents, principals, and teachers were interviewed concerning the succession of a principal, Britz identified several interesting trends. For example, there was a tendency for judgment and expectations during the first 90 days to set the tone for the tenure of the administrator. Eighty two percent of the teachers, 90% of supervisors, and 80% of new principals responded that the first 90 days were very significant in a principal's success. One principal stated, "In the first 90 days, I recognized if I was going to make it or not" (p. 100). A portion of another principal's response included, "If I had not established relationships, built a team of leaders, let the staff see who I am and what I am about in the first 90 days, I don't think we would have pulled together for success" (p. 100).

Several of the principals in the study created focus groups, made his or herself available before school started to meet staff members, established credibility and visibility, and established a positive relationship with a small pool of teacher leaders. Principals also responded that, "everything I do and everything they see is all part of the credibility process" (p. 104). Positive teacher responses included: (a) in our first meeting, she listened to the concerns and did something to solve them; (b) during the first week of school she visited all classes and followed with positive notes; (c) I shared with her a personal problem, and she covered my afternoon classes so I could take care of it; and, (d) she was organized, listened to us, and had excellent follow-through.

When comparing these various studies on leadership succession, evidence became clear that the new principal must quickly become aware of the culture in the school and make adjustments in their leadership based upon the history and the cultural needs of the school. Often the faculty was looking for a leader that would take action and make changes such as the second principal at Felix Holt (Barker, 2006). Other times the faculty and even the community wanted a

new principal that would keep everything the same and keep the school going in the same positive directions as with the second principal at Blue Mountain (Fink & Brayman, 2004, 2006).

A third situation that researchers reported was when a new principal replaced a principal with a completely different personality or the principal was at odds with what the community expected such as in the situation where Arness replaced Rowan at Talisman Park. A new principal must gain an understanding of the culture of the school and what the school desires in order to gain acceptance and trust before any changes can be implemented successfully.

Non-educational leadership succession

Looking outside of an educational setting, Ballinger and Schoorman (2007) studied the components of leadership succession from the time that knowledge of the leader leaving was received by the organization through various phases until stabilization returned to the organization. Factors that Ballinger and Schoorman found influential on the success of the new leader were affected by:

1. Quality of relationship with the predecessor
2. Expectedness of the departure
3. Where the predecessor was going (retire, promoted, demoted, different company)
4. Length of time between discovery of departure and actual departure
5. Prior history with the new leader

Kawal and Hassell (2005) also looked outside educational settings to evaluate leadership succession. He first studied the success that William Bratton had when turning around the New York City Police Department. Bratton contributed his success to “getting a small number of key influencers on board including an ‘insider’; reveal performance and

progress data; identify and silence naysayers with indisputable facts” (p. 6). Shirley Franklin took the city of Atlanta from financial crisis to stability by using straightforward communication.

It was evident from the research that no one theory or one strategy would work in every situation because of all the variables in individual schools. From Watkins (2003) research, he found it is critical for a new leader to possess the ability to diagnose the statue of the organization to avoid pitfalls and to orchestrate change. He also emphasized the importance of new leaders matching strategies to situations.

Successful patterns have been identified in leadership succession. Kawal and Hassell (2005) studied both educational settings and public and private organizations looking to establish a criteria for success. Common traits found in successful successions included: (a) concentrating on only a few changes, (b) using proven practices for implementation, (c) communicating vision, (d) helping staff see the problems personally (e) showing speedy success, and, (f) relentless pursuit of goals. The findings from non-educational settings easily transferred to the same findings from educational settings.

School Culture

Organizational culture as it applies to schools is a significantly researched topic. Culture is identified and described in many ways. Schein (1993) reported that culture is often described by organizations as “the climate and practices that organizations develop around their handling of people or the espoused values and credo of an organization” (p. 369). Later he referred to culture as the “elements of a group or organization that are most stable and least malleable” (p. 370). The formal definition of culture is stated as “A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to

new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems” (p. 373). Furthermore, there are practices that tie a group to one culture such as a common language, hidden rules, group philosophies or beliefs, and shared history. Culture develops over time changing for survival, yet holding to patterns of sameness.

Culture within an organization develops at different levels. Hoy (1990) suggested that culture exists once members of an organization share a view of the world around them and see their place in that world. Schein (1985), however, stated that extensive data-gathering activities were needed to explore the history, stories, structures and other characteristics of a culture before determining the existence and depth of culture. It is also believed, according to Maslowski (2006), that within a culture there may be sub cultures. Sub culture is aligned with the main culture of the organization, yet held together separately by a common bond. This could be referred to as cultural segmentation or cultural differentiation. In a school setting this could be found within curriculum departments or grade level teams because each curriculum might have a common language that tied together just those teachers, yet they were held to the school culture through deeper ties.

Roa and Walton (2004) took a different look at culture. They described culture as the “moral and intellectual spirit of a particular form of organization” while stating that, “culture is a dynamically interactive and developing socio-psychic system” (p. 4). Roa and Walton (2004) included Douglas’ theory in their book describing the four opposing tendencies as a “four-fold cultural unit engaged in a continuous internal dialogue” (p. 8) actively contending for power. Due to this competition, culture is fragile and easily shifted. The four cosmologies of culture although in conflict with each other, need each other. To better understand this, it is important to look at Douglas’ works.

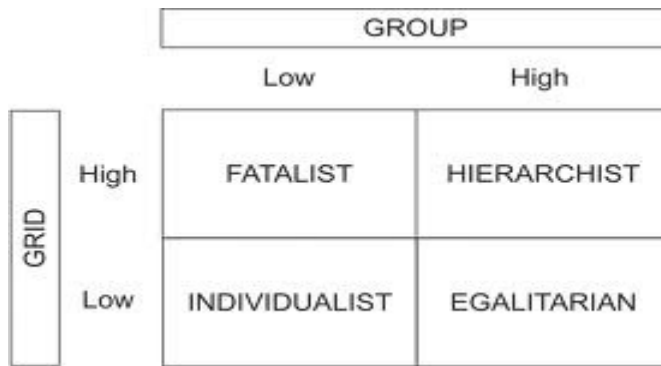
Mary Douglas' Grid and Group

In a written reflection of her first work on grid and group, Mary Douglas (1986) remarks:

The task was to attempt a typology of cultures based on people's need for classification. It would have to emphasize the division of labour and the organization of work. With this object I produced a crude typology intended to account for the distribution of values within a population. The account would show the connection between kinds of social organization and the values that uphold them (p. 2).

Two dimensions, group or general boundary and grid or regulation, were shown on a vertical and horizontal axis. Individuals moved across the axis by choice or circumstances. Douglas' first version was created with one quadrant containing a positional organization such as in a family or organization where everything was ranked and ordered by age or gender opposite of a household or organization that would demand explanations for rules and negotiate bedtimes or chores. The third quadrant was based on a community that was strongly bonded together such as a sect. This was the quadrant that had seen the most theoretical development over the years. The final quadrant was based on individualist or the group with extremely strong grid such as in a prison. Isolates such as a hermit or monk would be in this quadrant as well. Figure 2.1 shows how the four quadrants work together.

Figure 2.1 Simplified Grid and Group Theory



Note. From "Perversity in public service performance measurement" by M. Pidd, 2005 by International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management, 54, p. 489.

There were flaws in this first version that have been modified through research that tested the hypotheses in multiple organizations and cultures. For example, in 1982 the concept of power was added to the scope of manipulation and most importantly Douglas credits Michael Thompson because he “showed that any community has several cultures, and that each culture defines itself by contrast with the others. Those persons who share a culture maintain enthusiasm for it by charging the other cultures with moral failure.” (p. 8). This demonstrated how cultures compete for members, compete for prestige and compete for resources. The names also underwent several changes. The four dimensions were originally named A, B, C, and D. They were then changed to names that corresponded to the characteristics of the quadrant and edited again to avoid negative perceptions to certain quadrants.

The grid and group theory has been tested in multiple settings. Mary Douglas (1982) compiled essays of grid and group research in military settings, a Buddhist colony, and the Salem Village in 1692. It has been established that a correlation between individuals’ social environment and an expected set of characteristics does exist and can be described through the four quadrants of grid and group.

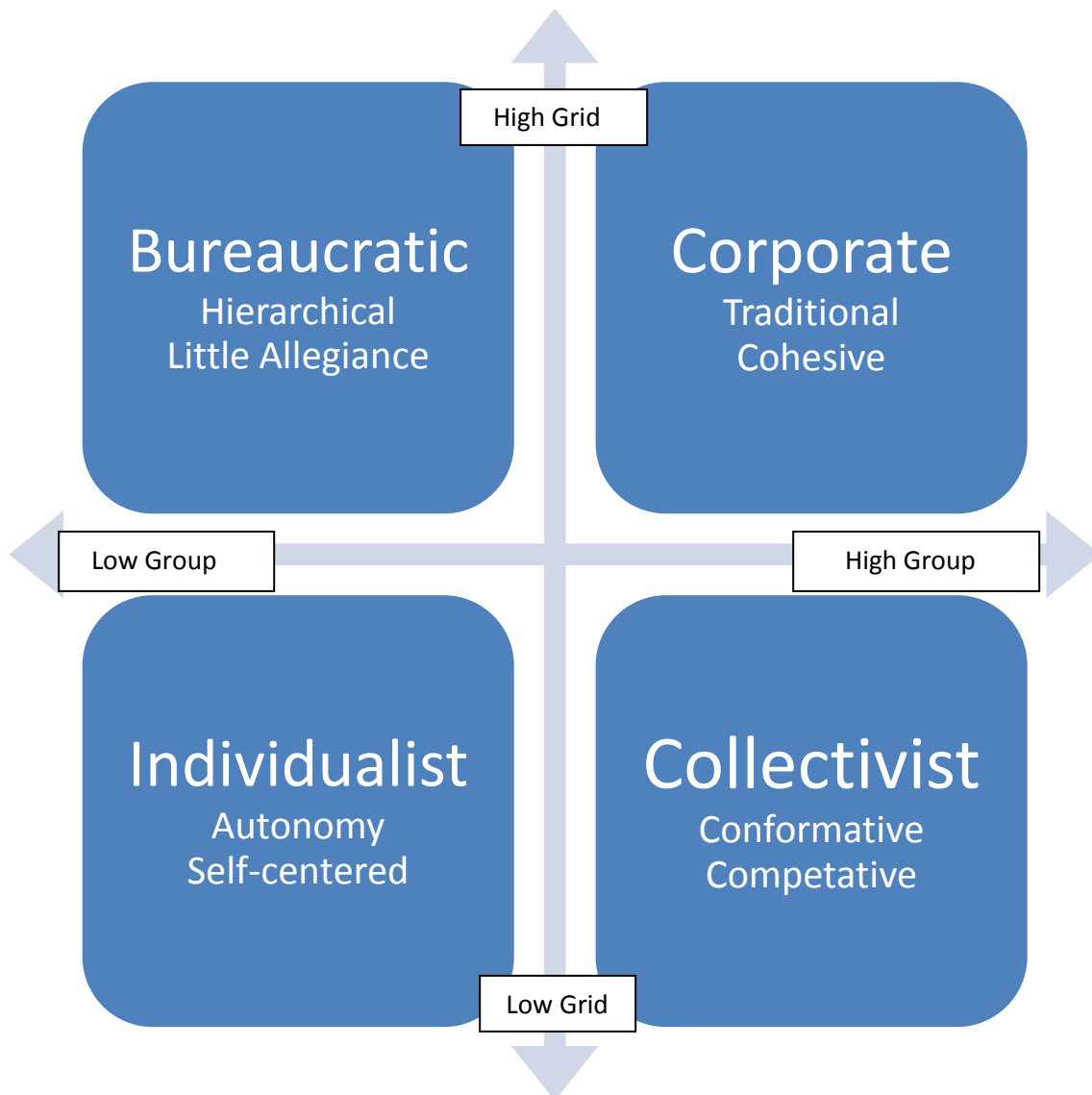
Mary Douglas' (1970, 1986) further explained that grid and group currently classifies a social environment based on the values and beliefs of the group and the control of the group on individuals. For example, grid is based on the amount of constraints and restrictions placed on individual's choices through rules and regulations. Grid is considered stronger when there are more restrictions. The weaker the grid, the more freedom individuals have. Group is determined by the relationships and commitment of the social group. The more the group is committed to each other, the stronger the group is considered. This is verified through long-held traditions, valued history, and the practice of putting the group before the individual. Cultures with minimal loyalty for the group are considered to have a weak group rating. The recognition of these two dimensions creates four descriptors of the social life among any group of people. While all four are continuously present, the culture of the group will fall predominately in the quadrant one or the quadrant four.

Douglas (1999) explained the assumption for four types of cultural bias based on the belief that all four are always present and are at war with each other. This assumption is not because they are the only four cultural groups, but because realistically cultural types could be listed in the thousands. However, the theory assumes that four are theoretically sufficient and all that is necessary for explanatory purposes of cosmologies and organizations. She also explains that the four organizational forms are not hierarchical, but are oppositional towards each other creating a vertical and horizontal dimension.

In a collection of Douglas' works (1982), she described the four quadrants as: weak-group/strong-grid or bureaucratic, strong-grid/strong-group or corporate, weak-group/weak-grid or individualism, and strong-group/weak-grid or collectivist. An individualist culture would be recognized by the lack of formal rules and the competitive nature of individuals. Bureaucratic

cultures are known for rigid order of command along with formal regulations for decisions. The majority of friends and relationships exist outside of the culture. A tight knit culture that stands together against outsiders while maintaining an organized level of hierarchy and decision making among the culture would be described as a corporate culture. The final of the four quadrants is the collectivist. This culture values each other as members and rejects authority or control. Figure 2.2 represents the four quadrants and their place in correspondence with high or low grid and group.

Figure 2.2 Mary Douglas' Typology of Social Environment



Harris (2005) authored a book, *Key Strategies to Improve Schools*, based on strategies for each of the four culture environments identified by Mary Douglas. For an individualist school, Harris suggested that personal success and individual goals are fundamental for improvement. Teachers consider themselves as experts and are expected to be treated as such. They also expect to be involved in decisions and want creativity and flexibility in those decisions. When looking to lead a bureaucratic school culture, a leader according to Harris (2005), must establish clear lines of communication, create committees, and provide incentive programs. Written expectations tied to rules are necessary to implement change. Within a corporate school culture, a leader must focus on common beliefs and recognize that members of the group will stand up for each other. Therefore, changes must be conveyed as good for the entire group. Decisions have to be made with input from members of the group and communicated as good for the group. Finally, a collectivist school culture requires that a leader views teachers as equals and works to develop consensus when making decisions. Teachers in a collectivist culture do not trust or respect an authoritarian figure.

Through Mary Douglas's grid and group typology, an instructional leader can predict reactions to decisions or explain why some tactics are successful in one culture, but not in others. Based on the quadrant where a school functions, a leader can adjust leadership styles to become more productive.

Conclusion

If a principal remains in administration more than five years, the principal will most likely experience changing buildings and taking on the role of the new principal probably more than once. This time of change is crucial for the principal's success and a pivotal point in the school's future. Many schools labeled as turn-around schools found new life when leadership

was replaced (Kawal & Hassell, 2005). Others have lost momentum declining in academic measures when a strong, goal oriented leader was replaced (Fink & Brayman, 2006). Often, this decline occurred because of a lack of inbound knowledge for the new principal or a lack of cultural understanding on the part of the incoming principal.

A newly assigned principal must realize the teachers have a history together that he/she has not been a part of. It is important to understand this history to prepare for the future. The history determines what the faculty desires in a leader. Rooney (2000) believed from interviews with teachers that teachers liked consistency because it provided security. Leadership change threatened this security to a level which the newly assigned principal must be aware of and address. Once the previous principal left, no matter how the teachers felt about the principal during his/her tenure, the principal suddenly became the hero of the past who haunted the new principal. When the two principals could work together sharing knowledge and respect, the chance for transitional success increased. This transfer of knowledge could be attributed to the new principal's increase in cultural understanding and higher success rate. Another tool that would help a principal understand the culture of the school and provide directions is Mary Douglas' grid and group.

Mary Douglas' (1982) grid and group work has been applied extensively to various organizations through different time periods. After adjustments in the quadrants, this theory accurately portrays the cosmologies of an organization making this theory an excellent tool for incoming principals. Although grid and group would not tell the story of the school, it would tell the principal about the current relationship status among the faculty. Are they Individualist with few rules or traditions, are they Bureaucratic with a strong set of order, are they Corporate with tendencies to keep outsiders away, or are they Collectivist with the likelihood to reject authority.

This information could tailor decisions and strategies allowing the new principal to proceed in an effective manner towards his/her vision and goals for the school.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter was written to describe the choice of research methods and participants of the study along with details concerning the data collection and analysis used in completing this study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) gave 14 characteristics for naturalistic inquiry. Some of the basic characteristics included: must take place in a natural setting, human based instrument, use of tacit or intuitive knowledge, qualitative methods, purposive sampling versus random, inductive data analysis emergent design, and case study reporting. From this list of characteristics, it was clear that this research falls into the category of Naturalistic Inquiry due to the study revolving around human interactions and their perceptions towards the interactions. This method would allow themes to develop and emerge through the research process. According to Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen (1993), a naturalistic inquiry method best provides for understanding and making predictions about social settings. Naturalistic inquiry allows the researcher to enter into the organization to collect data without separating the participants from their environment (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Patton (2002) further stated that the beauty of naturalist inquiry is the ability to watch real-world situations as they unfold naturally without researcher manipulation. This field data is categorized into units that are

defined by the collected data rather than preexisting categories. The researcher then looks for connections among categories. Finally, the researcher converts this data into a descriptive, analytical case study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Participants

The Cooperative Council for Oklahoma School Administrators (CCOSA) is an organization that many Oklahoma's school principals join. This organization was able to provide a list of principals that were assigned to a new building for the upcoming school year. From this list, principals were divided by school size and location, looking for two principals in schools of similar size and demographics. It was desired to find a principal and school within the suburbs of the closest metropolitan area. The reason for this was that most rural Oklahoma schools only have one or two school sites for each district while in the metro area, schools vary in size and demographics which creates an extra dimension to the school other than just the administrator change. Phone calls were made to principals in these areas requesting participation in this case study. Two sitting principals that were newly hired and assigned to a building, one in May and the other in July, volunteered as the main participants of this study and granted permission for access to other functions of the school and the faculty including school data and artifacts to obtain a complete picture of a school year. Data were collected in February and the interviews and observations were conducted in March of the first year for the newly assigned principals. At this point in time, the principal had been on the new job for approximately eight months.

One school, referred to as Marlin in this study, is a grade 9-12 high school with an enrollment of 357 students and 25 teachers. Ethnically Marlin is 76% Caucasian, 10% Hispanic and 10% Native American. Fifty percent of the students enrolled at Marlin qualified for the

federal free/reduced lunch program. The school is located within 50 miles of the metropolitan area. The second school, with the pseudonym Argon, also fell within 50 miles of the metropolitan area in a counter direction. Argon High School had a 9-12 student population of 340 with 25 teachers. The 340 students had been identified as 66% Caucasian, 7% Hispanic and 26% Native American. Fifty-six of the students enrolled at Argon High School qualified for meal assistance. While the schools were almost parallel in demographics, their academic performances differed. Marlin High School had an Academic Performance Index (API) of 1387 on a 1500 point scale while Argon High School scored much lower with an 1132. English II EOI scores were only one percentage point apart with Marlin 86 percent of students passing and Argon posting 87 percent passage rate. However, Algebra I scores were 32 percentage points apart. Ninety-two percent of Marlin’s students passed the Algebra I test while only 60 percent of Argon’s students passed the same test (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2009-2010; Education Oversight Board, 2010). This information is provided in Figure 3.1 for better comparison.

Figure 3.1 School Comparisons

School	Marlin	Argon
Teachers	25	25
Enrollment	357	340
Caucasian	76%	66%
Hispanic	10%	7%
Native American	10%	26%
Economic Dis.	50%	56%
API	1387	1132
English II EOI	86%	87%
Algebra I EOI	92%	60%

The new principal at Marlin High School had been in education for 21 years, serving the last nine years as a middle school principal. Last year he was named the State Principal of the Year. He was new to Marlin High School and new to the Marlin District. The principal at Argon High school had been in education 15 years. He was previously serving as a head principal at another school in the same district before taking the job at Argon High School.

To create a complete picture of these schools and principals, teachers and support employees working in the school where the principal had recently been assigned were also asked to participate in the case study. All employees were asked to complete the grid and group analysis tool in order to indicate which quadrant the school fell. Next, a smaller group of two teachers, one counselor, and the principal at each school, which was between 10 and 25 percent of the faculty, volunteered to participate at a more in-depth level by consenting to be interviewed. Participants were allowed to select the time and location of the interview to help maintain privacy. They were also given an informed consent document as approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (Appendix C).

Data Collection

According to Erlandson et al. (1993), the purpose of gathering data in naturalistic inquiry is to gain an understanding or construct reality by experiencing events as the organization experiences them and looking at the organization from the view of the members. This approach is possible by gathering information in a variety of ways and sources. In this case study, data collection began by researching the demographics and backgrounds on schools and principals. Next, teachers and support staff were asked to complete a questionnaire which was then followed up with interviews and observations. Because data was collected from multiple sources triangulation was possible.

Questionnaire

Although participants were voluntarily involved in a case study that was conducted in its natural setting, as suggested by Creswell (2009), in a manner that captured the whole culture of the school, I first asked all school employees to complete the standardized grid and group analysis tool created by Mary Douglas (1982) (Appendix A). I did this with the principals' help. They first sent an e-mail to all employees informing them that I had permission to request the survey. I was carbon copied on the e-mail which then gave me everyone's e-mail address. By replying to the original e-mail, I sent the survey to the teachers with the informed consent information (Appendix C). Participants were given two weeks to complete the study. These survey results allowed for multiple data sources from a number of participants and fulfilled the purpose of finding the quadrant that best described the culture of the school. The questionnaire and quadrant system were developed by Mary Douglas (1982) as a framework for organizational culture based on four quadrants or four cosmologies found in organizations throughout her research. It is important to note that the questionnaire was sent out in February which was seven months into the school year. This survey captured the cultural feelings of the school at one moment in time. Another interesting note was only about one-third of the employees responded to the questionnaire. Results could vary if more had participated.

Interviews

While the survey provided the information concerning what quadrant the majority of the organization identified with, interviews provided the history and events that created this culture. Through interviews I could understand the interpersonal, social, and cultural aspects of the organization (Erlandson et al., 1993). Interviews can range from scripted no-variance one-on-one questions to open dialogue even to focus group (Creswell, 2009). For this case study,

interviews began with set questions (Appendix B) which were prepared according to Patton's (2002) suggestions such as sequencing questions from present to past then to future and wording questions in a neutral, open-ended singular manner. Probing or follow-up questions were asked to clarify answers and to go deeper into initial interviewee's responses. After preparing the questions, I prepped for the interview to assure compliance with suggestions from Erlandson et al. (1993). These suggestions included: remain natural, begin with a broad question, move towards more specific questions, prompt the interviewee to give examples or reactions, remember the person being interviewed is the expert on how he or she feels, and finally, conclude by reviewing or summarizing with the interviewee.

Interviews were conducted at a location suggested by each participant. Some interviews were in classrooms, one was in the teacher's lounge, two in a conference room and three in an office. Each interviewee was informed that the interview was being recorded and assured of confidentiality of the recording and the responses through the use of pseudonyms. All of this information was given to the participants prior to the interview through the informed consent document approved by the IRB (Appendix C). All interviews were asked the same basic set of questions (Appendix B) with varying follow-up questions to gather more information. This allowed for better comparison of answers among the participants.

The interviews were later transcribed and coded for data collection. Coding began during the transcription process. While I was transcribing, I kept a list of themes as they were mentioned by the participant. Later, the transcriptions were copied on colored paper with a different color of paper for each interview. Statements regarding different themes were cut apart and placed together. This allowed for themes to develop across participants.

Observations

I spent time observing the school during a regular school day for the purpose of seeing the organization in action through the eyes of the researcher. Detailed notes or field notes were taken during these observations. This data allowed me to directly capture the here-and-now void of organizational biases. Data was collected according to Merriam's (1988) suggestions: document the environmental setting, describe the participants, note the actions and interactions among the participants, keep a record of time, and look for subtle factors such as nonverbal communication. Field notes were immediately converted to text and coded.

Data Analysis

Creswell (2009) described qualitative data analysis as the process of making sense out of text and image data in order to find the larger meaning of the data through analysis. The first step in this process was data collection which included collecting data on site then preparing the data for analysis, which was done immediately after the data was collected. Once the final data was collected and prepared through the coding process, I moved from data collection to data analysis. Erlandson et al. (1993) explained that this process is what separates naturalistic inquiry from traditional research. First, the triangulation process seeks data from multiple sources and types to create a balanced picture. The second step is the great divide. This is where the human instrument responds to the data and making connections and creating links that point to cause and effect scenarios. These can be interpreted as a working hypothesis. Finally, the researcher begins the process of testing the relationship of events or the hypotheses, which includes looking for events among other data sources that further supports the hypotheses derived from the original source.

This study took the data from the coded interview transcripts, the documents retrieved from each site and the observation coded field notes in order to analyze them and transform them into a thick, rich descriptive narrative detailing the themes that emerged from the data. Mary Douglas' (1970) grid and group served as a tool to describe each school site and as a lens for the data coding.

During the data analysis and as the overall narrative began to emerge, I started to realize that grid and group theory had limitations in explaining the situation of principal succession in these schools. It was useful in explaining the participants' perceptions of the current cultural atmosphere. However, because in each school the leadership succession was immersed in the forming stage of transition the theory did not explain the many cultural changes that were occurring. It also did not explain that employees no matter where they were on the quadrants expressed the same basic needs and desires from the new principal. Thus, it became apparent that my purpose and research questions should be modified to better fit the emergent design of the study.

My committee advised that my purpose and research questions be modified to read as follows:

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to explain the succession process in selected schools.

Research Questions

1. In each selected school, how does a principal who is new to a school adapt his/her leadership to the culture of the school?
2. In each school, how do school members adapt to the new principal?

3. How useful is Douglas' typology of grid and group in explaining school leadership succession?
4. What other realities are revealed in this study?

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF CASES

The purpose of this study was to apply grid and group and describe the experiences that happened when a school underwent a principal succession. Two similar high schools that had new principals were chosen. In order to eliminate the factor of lack of experience, both of the principals had multiple years of head principal experience.

Data collected through interviews, observations, and documents from the two schools, referred to as Marlin High School and Argon High School, are presented in this chapter as two case studies. The presentation is seen through the eyes of the researcher and participants, such as teachers, counselors and the new principal who volunteered to tell their story. First, each participant will be introduced. Then, the description of each school and the participants' experiences will follow.

Marlin High School

Participants

Tom, New Principal. The new principal at Marlin High School (MHS), Tom, had 13 years of principal experience. He started out as a basketball coach, after eight years, he became an assistant principal for three years before becoming a head middle school principal. He held this position for 10 years and was prepared to finish his career there until the position at Marlin

was opened. He sought the MHS position for two reasons. One, the school was well known as a high achieving school academically and athletically, and he believed it would be an honor to serve as the principal of such a well-known and respected school. Two, his son was going to be a sophomore and could benefit by participating in Marlin athletics. As a side note, his son quickly moved into the starting quarterback position left vacant by a graduating senior, and the football team made it to the semi-finals in the state play-offs this year.

Although Tom was very successful at the middle school level where his school won multiple awards and was recognized as the State Middle-Level Principal of the Year by the Cooperative Council of School Administrators, he admitted that he was intimidated coming to Marlin High School. Tom described this as, “I thought my biggest challenge was going to be to step up to their expectation because of what I had envisioned they were like, just from looking in from the outside.” It did not take him long to realize the success at MHS was reached through means different from how success happened in his previous school. His previous school was successful because of the team he built there over the past ten years. He cited this success as, “I had hired everyone, had an excellent staff, we won lots of awards because of the staff we had assembled there.”

Tom agreed to participate in the study when I told him I received his name from CCOSA. He was on the board of one of the CCOSA branches, and was more than willing to help if it would help me as a fellow CCOSA member even though we had never met previously. Tom was serious about his profession and was willing to contribute to the profession.

Kami, High School Counselor. Kami, the Counselor at MHS, was new to this position this year. She worked as the Family and Consumer Science teacher at MHS for 10 years, and all three of her children graduated from MHS. After completing her counseling degree, she took a

high school counseling job at a neighboring district and commuted for two years. When the counseling position opened at MHS, she applied and was eager to return to the community where she lived and the school she knew so well.

Kami agreed to be interviewed because she recognized my name. We both attended a conference about three years ago and were placed in a small group together during that conference. We have not seen each other or communicated since then, but she wanted to help me because we did work together for the two days of that conference. By knowing me just a little, she felt safe and was very forthcoming in her interview.

John, Part-time Journalism Teacher. John has taught at Marlin High School since he left the military in 1973. He has taught English, yearbook, journalism, psychology, as well as speech and debate. He is currently retired and works as a part-time teacher of journalism, psychology and videography. He holds an administrative degree and even his PhD in school administration; however, he has remained in the classroom and does not plan to ever seek an administrative position. He also holds the unofficial title of school historian.

Besides the two principals, John was the very first to volunteer for an interview. He remembered what it was like when he was working on his Ph.D. and wanted to provide any help he could. His interview lasted almost two hours and covered topics far outside the realm of the interview questions such as the Civil Rights Movement and teacher evaluation models. He was a well-versed and interesting man.

Katrina, Veteran Business Teacher. Katrina, a veteran Marlin High School teacher is a Certified Public Accountant that received her alternative teacher certification when her children were young so she could work in the school system and be home with her children in the summers. Her youngest child, a sophomore, is the only one left in school. She planned to return

to an accounting position once he graduated from MHS. As a side note, her youngest son was the starting running back for MHS and last year was named as one of the freshman athletes with the most potential for their high school career by a state athletic magazine. Her oldest son was also involved in athletics at MHS and was an All-State football player. Katrina taught business, accounting, and financial literacy. She admitted that she is part of a group of teachers dedicated to keeping MHS true to its roots, and that they were very opposed to change. This group referred to themselves as “The Firm.”

Katrina started the interview by telling me why she volunteered. She volunteered to make sure the views of her group were told. She even asked me if I was sure I wanted to hear what she had to say before we started. I will admit, this made me very eager to hear what she had to say.

Time Stands Still at Marlin High School

Marlin High School opened in 1891 with one man filling the role of both superintendent and principal for the next twenty years. He was followed successively by three more men that fulfilled dual roles before the superintendent and principal positions were separated in 1920. In 1924, the first and only female principal was hired at MHS. She was the principal at this school for four years. More recently, MHS employed eight principals in the last fifteen years resulting in an average tenure of two years. Just after the turn of the century, the principal was promoted to an Associate Superintendent position only to return to the high school as the principal four years later. He remained there for six years until retirement in 2011. His replacement was the principal succession described in this study.

The outside of the Marlin High School building was cream brick with very little landscaping, except for several new sapling trees that had been planted out front. In the parking

lot at the front doors, spaces were reserved for administration, secretaries and counselors with only three parking spots for visitors. Figure 4.1 portrays an aerial view of MHS.

Figure 4.1 Aerial view of Marlin High School



When one entered the building, the hallways surrounding the office were plastered with pictures of war veterans that had graduated from MHS in chronological order dating back to the early 1900's. One large picture behind the office counter was a blue matted poster that had a picture of every principal that has worked at MHS. Every time I entered the building, no students were in the halls, office aides were sitting on stools at the front counter, and the office employees were working at their desks. The student office aides always greeted me, but in all visits, not once did an adult even speak to me or address my presence at the office counter.

The classroom layout was a large square block of classrooms with one hall or row of classrooms in the middle, making two rectangles. On the one side of this middle group of classrooms was a hall with lockers. On the front side was a commons area or open area for students. In this commons area a few cafeteria tables were scattered about, but mostly there was

just open space. There were new TV monitors with school information and announcements scrolling through as a Power Point. These modern flat screen monitors almost seemed out of place with the surroundings. The walls had pictures of the past Teachers of the Year recipients. The teachers' lounge was arranged with three separate sitting areas. At one end, two sofas were back to back in the middle of the room dividing the room into two sitting areas with both areas having lounge chairs opposite of the sofas. The third area consisted of a small table with six chairs. The cafeteria is to the north of all the classrooms with fold-down tables and attached round stools that were orange and green in color from the 1970's.

The gym was attached to the building on the south side of all the classrooms. To get to the gym, one walked up a ramp that curved around a brick planter filled with plastic plants. The gym was one of the nicest gyms in the district for a school this size which meant they often hosted regional and area tournaments. On the west side of the student parking lot was the football field and the football practice fields where new construction was taking place for an indoor football practice facility donated by a local telecommunication company. The baseball and softball fields were across the street to the east.

Not only were the school facilities dated in appearance, but many school policies were dated as well. For example, male students were not allowed to have any facial hair and female students were not allowed to wear athletic cut shorts in the school. No one questioned these policies even in the community because this was the standard at MHS. Another antiquated practice fell in the area of remediation. While schools across the state are creating interventions and making sure every student is ready to graduate by passing the state mandated end of instruction tests, the most prevalent attitude at MHS was that each student is responsible for his/her success. By the time students are in high school, teachers should not have to chase

homework or re-teach if a student did not get a concept the first time. Katrina summed this up by saying:

The old principal was very successful here. He had high expectations for teachers and kids overall, in appearance and how they acted. This is high school where students are grown up now and have to take responsibility. The bar has been set high here.

The academic success at Marlin High School was evident. According to the Oklahoma State Department of Education 2010 Annual Report Card, Marlin High School had an enrollment of 357 students 76% of which are Caucasian, 10% Hispanic and 10% Native American in a community with a population of 6,611. The high school employees were 24.6 teachers. MHS reports a 100% graduation rate with an average ACT score of 22.8. Test scores at MHS were above the state average with 39% of their students scoring advanced on the English II test and 52% scoring proficient. Algebra I scores were very similar with 33% advanced and 55% proficient (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2009-2010; Education Oversight Board, 2010). According to the school district website, MHS offered Advanced Placement classes in calculus, physics, and English. They also offered concurrent enrollment through Redlands Community College for students who wished to take college classes during their senior year. Seventy three percent of the students at MHS attended college after graduation.

First Impressions

John expressed original concern about the new principal due to the fact that the new principal had been a coach, and he did not have high school administrative experience. Time though was creating pleasant surprises. John stated his first concern and then relief:

His administrative career had been at a middle school, and he was a previous

coach. I didn't think it would be an easy transition for him. He does spend time with the sports program, but you don't see the kind of favoritism that I was expecting, so I am real pleased with that.

According to John, the new principal's most impressive trait was his desire to learn:

He's very eager. He visits frequently with the more experienced staff, very respectful toward the experienced staff and their ideas. I mean it's just part of the process and there's no way you can come into it prepared in everything. So he's doing fine.

Katrina had concerns from the time the new principal was hired. One of her biggest concerns was the fact that the new principal had been a coach and had been a middle school principal instead of a high school principal. Although she was pleased to hear that he had been the State Principal of the Year for middle school, she was worried about his priorities:

It's really more about fun now. He's very, very athletic minded, and I feel like academics have really taken a downturn. Although I have kids that are athletes, I really wanted somebody that was really going to be strict academically and my fear was that because he was a previous coach that it would be loose and that athletics would take over and that's what we're seeing.

For example, the school took, according to her, "a whole week off to play dodge ball." She believed that, "Now kids are called to the office all the time and out in the hall during classes constantly."

Kami was able to speak with the new principal before school started when she interviewed for the counselor's position. She could tell from those first impressions that he was a very positive person. She also observed:

I expected him to be a team builder, and I think he has attempted to do that. On the negative side, I was a little hesitant about him having not been in a high school before, but he has been very willing to learn and understand.

Kami also was concerned about how the fit with the faculty would work. For example, she commented, “I was a little fearful that some of the negative in the building might completely run him off. I thought, he’s positive, and this is going to be great if he’ll last.”

The Great Divide

Every participant spoke of the division among the faculty. This division was centered around the perception that coaches and their programs are favored over academics. Tom learned of this immediately after he accepted the position. He recalled:

After I got the job, I started hearing stories about a group of teachers. I was even told they had a name for themselves, and they thrive on making principals miserable. I didn’t think they would do that to me. I thought they would like me because the teachers at my other school liked me.

Because of the success of Marlin High School, the principal could not imagine that the teachers were not collaborative and goal oriented. His hopes were not reality. He quickly found out the school was incredibly territorial. He described the teacher attitude as, “Don’t come in my room, don’t mess with my room, don’t mess with my schedule, don’t mess with how I do this, don’t mess with my class time, and don’t mess with anything.” However, once the new principal walked into the classrooms and made observations, he then knew why they were so successful.

He pointed out:

They are excellent teachers or should I say they teach very well. They are like two different people. Their classroom demeanor is not the same as their social

demeanor outside the classroom. It was just odd to see two different personalities out of the one teacher. They have their teacher personality, and then they have their workroom personality.

This was such a cultural change for the new principal that at one point he went home and told his wife, "We've moved to hell because this is awful."

Kami described the faculty as, "This faculty is extremely divided. It is the office against faculty, faculty against coaches, and faculty against faculty. Everyone is on separate islands in small groups by themselves." She worried about the new principal because as he tried to work with each group, the other groups watched everything. This was true to the extent that one teacher came to Kami and complained because Tom was talking to one of the coaches for 15 minutes before school started. She actually timed their conversation.

Kami described the first of the year as teachers lined up in the office to complain compared to now where teachers were in his office collaborating on a schedule for next year. Although there were some obvious climate changes, the counselor was concerned that a group of teachers were just sitting back waiting for a reason to get him. She warned, "We are in a critical environment, and still are even though we've come a little ways. I want to tell him they're watching and listening to everything." She described this particular block of teachers as a group that "feels like they run the school. They've been here for years and so they do. No matter what you set up, they're going to complain about it and then do it however they want to do it."

When John talked about the staff division he described the following:

It's been there for 20 years. Obviously it's mostly between coaches and not coaches. Part of it's a community thing. Part of it is the perception that there's so much money pouring into athletic programs that's unfair. For the most part it (the

rift) hinges around two or three people that are just unhappy and as unprofessional and negative as they could possibly be, and yet do a great job in the classroom.

While this may not be completely desirable, it hasn't altered the performance of our school.

Before the interview even began, Katrina introduced herself as a part of the "The Firm." The reason she volunteered to participate in the interview was to represent the opinion and views of the "The Firm" and let me know everything that the new principal was doing. She strongly believed the unfair workload and lack of fairness was evident from the duty schedule to class assignments. This was not new this year, but she was not convinced that it was going to change. She believed:

We have a division in our faculty and over the last couple of years it has gotten worse, and his task should be to fix that. Everybody needs to be treated fairly and there needs to be some accountability for everybody. We feel like now he's one of them instead of boss overall.

Katrina's opinions of the new principal were not private or censored. She truly spoke as if she was speaking on behalf of her group.

Changes

Teacher Climate. Upon arrival, the new principal planned on making no changes, just spending the first year getting to know the teachers and kids. He felt this would be best based on the school's reputation. After realizing the challenges the faculty faced concerning the segregation, he could not just sit back and let the school remain the same. He felt the atmosphere and climate of the school needed to be lightened for both the teachers and the students and could

not wait. He began planning professional and social group activities. When describing one of the social events that he planned for the faculty, he commented:

We have made big progress, because they got to see everybody just a little bit different. For lack of a better word, she wasn't the old battle ax I thought she was. She's kind of fun. I'm trying to help them see each other from a different perspective.

This situation continues to be one of the main concerns for the new principal and a focus for change.

When talking about trying to get the division among the faculty to change, John had a unique perspective:

I think he was given as one of his missions to heal this rift. I think he's finding out it's not as easy as he thought. I told him the other day that sometimes you just have to wait for people to die because that's the only way it's going get changed. He is trying to get people together away from school and have different kinds of interactions besides just the professional ones, but it's a slow process.

Student Climate. Tom recognized that the climate was about more than just the teachers. He was equally concerned about the high school experience for the students at Marlin High School. Although the students were receiving a top-notch education academically, their high school experience had no fun or nothing memorable to it. He first relaxed some of the rules such as allowing male students to have any facial hair and female students to wear athletic shorts. These were just two changes that he made to help the students feel more comfortable and relaxed at school.

The new principal had determined that Marlin High School had the potential to be cutting edge where students should have every opportunity available to them. He stated his purpose as, “I don’t want students to graduate from here and say our school didn’t let me do that or my school didn’t offer that.” This was especially true with technology and learning opportunities. The new principal is bringing in new elective classes for next year such as t-shirt design and opening up technology such as wireless access that had been locked down by the teachers and previous administration. He had also increased time in next year’s schedule for remediation with a focus on the students that were not making appropriate academic progress, because there was a tendency to leave those students behind at MHS. The new principal feels, “if a student isn’t getting it, it is believed to be the student’s fault and responsibility.”

He had made those things happen and more.

The biggest change happened about a month into school. Kami told of a shifting incident:

He walked into my office and said, “There’s no fun in this place. Where’s the fun? I can’t believe these kids aren’t more depressed than they are because it’s just not a fun place at all.” He has worked continuously to make that change.

He installed benches outside the cafeteria where upper classmen can eat on nice days; he relaxed the dress code, and had some student charity fundraisers that were fun such as a dodge ball tournament.

While John worked at Marlin High School for over thirty years, he was a part of the faculty that saw the need for changes and that some changes could be productive, but still did not think everything needs to change. John bragged:

We’re fifth or sixth in the state on the API scores. And everybody who comes in

comes in with the idea that I can make things better and sometimes when you try to make things better you may actually make things worse. So you've got to proceed cautiously. And I was very pleased. He made no overt changes. Just minor tweaking kinds of things. Even those were grumbled about by some teachers, but I think most people agree they've been beneficial.

When asked what the small tweaks or changes were, John referred to the dress code changes:

One of the things that have [sic] been causing problems for years was the dress code. Boys had to be clean shaven. Everyday there was somebody I had to send to the office for that. Many of us asked, "Why do we have to do this? What difference does it make?" He just set it aside, and it's made no difference at all except that we have far fewer problems now. There is a group that has said, 'You're making it too easy.' But really all that has happened is we have a few scraggly kids running around here now.

Katrina saw the changes that Tom made as predominately negative. She described the changes as, "It's really more about fun now. He's very, very athletic minded, and I feel like academics have really taken a downturn." For example, the school took, according to her, "a whole week off to play dodge ball." She believed that, "Now kids are called to the office all the time and out in the hall during classes constantly." Many of Katrina's concerns stemmed from the lowered expectations:

He hasn't made the transition from middle school to high school where the students are grown up now and have to take responsibility. It's still kind of back on the teachers, what can we do to make that better for that kid instead of saying to the kids you need to turn in your homework. The bar has been set high here and

we want to continue those things.

Not only did she feel there was a lowering of standards academically, but this was particularly true in her mind concerning the dress code and the allowance of facial hair. Her comments included, “It’s not that it’s good or bad because some people think it’s okay, but it was always we don’t do that here. Tattoos were covered, no extra piercings, we just drew a line and said we’re not gonna do that here.” However, this year after a few months of school, an e-mail was sent to the teachers telling them that some changes had been made to the dress code. When asked what problems had resulted from these changes, she remarked, “We haven’t had any real disasters. I just don’t know how much longer that will last.”

Leadership Style. Kami recognized that changes were taking place as well and changes that were for the best. From her perspective, the biggest change was in the whole manner of how issues were addressed at the school. In the past, everything was punitive to now where there was a more rewarding environment. The past principal was known as iron fisted where now it was a more relaxed atmosphere through the entire school. When this attitude was first revealed, she was concerned that it would not last. When asked about how the new principal was handling the negative attitudes and the division, Kami responded:

in strange and unusual ways. I mean he is so surprising to me. Sometimes I just want him to handle things, but he doesn’t always do that. He takes kind of a backdoor approach, almost always. He isn’t confrontational, but he has a method to his madness. I’ve learned a lot from him actually because he isn’t a doormat, but he has a back way of kind of getting them to pull back in and be back on our page, to the more positive page. I think it is part of his personality.

Kami referred to the new principal as an idea guy. “He is always questioning why aren’t we doing that? Why can’t we do that? He will push it, and he’ll fight for things he believes in.” This was evident in the technology changes. “Wireless and YouTube have been taboo around here,” stated the counselor, but not anymore.

According to John, the most positive change he saw was the new principal’s willingness to engage the staff in discussions. He described the change:

Just last week we had a meeting on the schedule. He handed out his preliminary schedule and asked, “What do we need to do differently? How do we tweak this?”

That was something we had not had previously because our previous principal had been here so long he just did it.

John recognized that the new principal was the same way with the students. He noted:

He spends much more time in the classroom observing and is more interactive with the kids. The kids really enjoy it. In fact, he actually came to my class and presented the kids with some ideas he was looking at, and had a forthright discussion, and afterwards the kids said they were surprised, first, that he even talked to them, and secondly how open he was to listening to what they had to say. It’s been an excellent change.

No matter how unhappy Katrina was with the new principal, she could not help but make some positive comments. When talking about his lack of discipline she admitted, “I’ve seen him just tear into kids for being disrespectful to a teacher. He will get on to the kids, but his expectations just aren’t what the last principal had.” She was impressed with him as a person and the changes he was implementing concerning technology. Among her complaints, Katrina admitted that “He is well spoken and impressive as a person. I truly believe he is passionate

about his family and the students here.” She even commented, “He really cares about people; I just think his style of management is way different than what I’ve ever seen around here.” Some examples that she gave of his caring for people included the fact that he came into the teachers’ lounge and talked to the teachers or once he covered a class for a teacher that had a family emergency and needed to leave suddenly. Still, these acts were overshadowed by her concerns for the change in dress code rules and less focus on academics. Coming from a business background and as a numbers person, Katrina recognized that she is a black and white type of person that probably needed to meet him somewhere in the middle

Argon High School

Participants

Ryan, The New Principal. Ryan, the new principal at Argon High School (AHS), was a graduate of the school. He was also a math teacher for nine years there before becoming an assistant principal at the high school. After two years as the high school assistant principal with the main duty of discipline, he took the head principal position at the middle school for two years. This year he was named as the head principal at the high school. Many of the teachers at AHS were teaching there when he taught there as well. Interestingly, when Ryan was in elementary school and middle school, his dad was the principal at AHS holding that position for thirteen years. Although recently remodeled, his current office was his dad’s office where he used to play after school as a child.

When I called Ryan to request his participation, he told about how his dad worked on his Doctoral Degree when Ryan was little but never finished. He also asked me several questions about the process for his own information. He was very willing to participate and hopes to seek his Doctoral Degree in the future.

Robin, High School Counselor. Robin was a veteran counselor with a long history at the school. She not only knew every student at AHS, but she also knew their family and family history. Even though she was a main stay at AHS, her office was the only office not decorated in red and white. Her walls were painted cream with encouraging quotes painted on the walls. Although her title was counselor, and that was her passion, her duties were consumed with testing and graduation requirements as evident by the stacks of enrollment forms on the floor behind her desk. Her experience was also evident in the way she approached the principal transitions. Her first comment was, “I’ve done this with several principals. So you know it’s nothing new to me.”

On one of the days that I was visiting Argon High School, I was waiting in the office and Robin began chatting with me about why I was there. At that time, she volunteered for an interview. I was pleased to get another participant and just happened to have an informed consent document and my recorder with me.

Brooke, High School Math Teacher. Brooke, an AHS teacher, was Nationally Board Certified. Argon was the only place where she had taught. Uniquely, she was also a graduate of AHS and actually graduated in the class the year after the new principal’s graduating class. We met in her room during her planning time. As we were talking, students were often coming to the door to ask for help with their math. She would just motion for them to come back later, and they knew what she meant. Some of them she waved on in, and the student either turned in a paper or got a book off the shelf without any disruption to the interview. It was obvious that she was the type of teacher that was there for her students and the students had a close relationship with her.

When Brooke responded to the e-mail volunteering for an interview, I am not sure she understood that it was optional. I explained to her that it was completely voluntary, and she went ahead and agreed even volunteering to help me find more teachers.

Katie, Advanced Placement Teacher. Katie was an upper level, pre-Advanced Placement and Advanced Placement, science teacher at Argon High School. AHS was the third school where she had taught. She began her teaching career teaching seven years ago in a much larger community before her family moved to Argon. At that time there was no science opening at Argon, so she took a teaching position at an even smaller school system that was 10 miles west of Argon. After teaching there for three years, she was able to get a position at AHS once a science position became available. She has been the science teacher at AHS for five years now. Katie took a great deal of pride in the high expectations she set for her students. She was very pleased to be working at Argon and enjoyed the small classes she had due to the fact that she taught upper level classes. We did her interview in the office area during her plan time because her room was set up for a science experiment.

Later in the day after talking to Brooke on the phone, Katie e-mailed and volunteered for an interview. She never stated why nor did she provide any extra information than the information requested. Her interview was relatively short and very much just to the point with many answers amounting to just one or two sentence answers.

The World of Argon: Red and White

Argon High School had seen many changes over the years. The original high school was still the central part of the existing high school, which had been expanded through multiple additions and remodels. Figure 4.2 portrays an aerial view of Argon High School.

Figure 4.2 Aerial view of Argon High School



Surrounded by large and beautifully shaped trees, the original façade and entrance of Argon High School faced the main highway that ran through town, yet there was no parking at the front of the building.

The front of the building was tan brick with rock corners and brown trim and guttering. Brown painted letters spelling Argon Public Schools hung over an entrance that was obviously part of the original building. In the back of the building, a more modern facade existed with breeze-ways connecting multiple buildings sprinkled with red picnic tables and red trash can receptacles in the open areas. It was easy to tell that each wing of the building had been built at different times due to the changes in brick color. The brown trim from the front was replaced with red guttering, red trim and red poles in the back. They tied all parts of the building together and were also found on the outlying buildings which included an agriculture building, gym, and more classrooms. Crosswalks were interlaced across the high school parking lot in multiple directions where students went from building to building. The intermediate school and

elementary school were also on the same campus and these students walked across the high school parking lot to go to physical education and music classes. Just outside of the unconnected buildings were the football, baseball and softball fields.

In the 1990's, a 2.25 million dollar bond issue was passed to update the Argon school facilities. This was evident when one walked inside. The walls were tiled half-way up with a red tile border separating the two portions of the wall. The floors were red and white tiled as well. The cafeteria was open, clean and modern with round tables and red chairs. Outside on the main patio area there were multiple red picnic tables where often students were gathered even though it appeared to be class time. The decorations in the halls were student-made spirit posters mirroring the school colors that were found everywhere in the building.

When I first entered the building, students were in the halls going places in an orderly manner even though it wasn't passing time. Because of the multiple buildings and large number of doors on the back of the building, signage was very clear as to how to get to the office. I was immediately greeted by a friendly adult sitting behind a desk that was covered with red and white Argon High School memorabilia. These same types of decorations were on shelves all around the office area. Before the receptionist went to get the principal, she offered me water or coffee. While waiting, the assistant principal stepped out of his office wearing a red Argon shirt and khaki pants. He asked if I had been helped and then went on down the hall. Students freely came in and out of the office signing in for tardies and looking for the counselor or one of the principals. When the principal came into the office, he too was dressed in a red Argon High School polo shirt and khaki pants. In his office there was actually a stack of red hoodies and red polo shirts along with of numerous Argon knickknacks probably purchased from years of

organization fundraisers. AHS exhibited a relaxed atmosphere where everyone felt right at home whether they had gone to school there their whole life or were just visiting.

Beginnings and Expectations

Before being named the head principal at Argon High School, Ryan was nervous about coming to the high school as the principal because according to him:

That's where I coached. That's where I taught. I had a relationship with most of the teachers. A lot of them worked with me. They knew that I was professional enough that we could have conversations and talk, but hopefully not coming in telling me how to do my job kinda deal. Still there were those questions or there was a little apprehension about it and a little – just how everything would work. I worked with those people and now I'm gonna be their boss [sic].

As Ryan approached his recent promotion, he was apprehensive about the climate of the school. Budget cuts had resulted in larger class sizes and extra responsibilities. His plan was to: just try to be involved and let the teachers know I care while making their job more enjoyable. I'm dropping in, checking on them, asking them how their day went. I mean just trying to be involved. I want to make sure they know that I care about their classroom. I want them to understand that my main priority is them and these kids. That is something I can take care of. I feel like I can make it more enjoyable, do a couple of nice things for the teachers every once in a while, have a meal during this, or having a meal during that.

When asked if those apprehensions were still present, he explained:

Not really. The teachers seem to be very content with everything. If I need to tell them they are doing something wrong or I felt like they were doing something

wrong, I've been able to do that and still keep the good – really good teacher principal relationship climate here right now.

Another area he was focusing on to improve the climate was to provide more discipline.

This was brought to his attention by multiple teachers. He stated:

I'm a firm believer in that discipline will take care of 90 percent of your problems. I look at it that as long as I'm establishing discipline and the climate is acceptable to the teachers, I just feel like that the teachers are gonna wanna work and they're gonna wanna teach and they're gonna wanna [sic] do their job.

As a counselor, Robin had expectations as well. Before the principal was hired what Robin wanted to know more than anything was, as she put it, "I wanted to know his views of different things such as discipline and, of course, I think everyone wants to know where the new principal is from or what his background is." After the new principal was named, Robin admitted that her biggest fear revolved around his age. She phrased it by saying:

I'm older. I've been here a long time. He's just so young, but that's okay because young people can have great ideas and probably more innovative, but it is a bit of concern for me here in the office. Maybe this is selfish, but we have to work together, and I don't have time to be his mother.

She was also worried that he was coming from a middle school even though he had previously been at the high school. In passing she said, "I just hope he hasn't forgotten what high school is like." Consequently, she believed this transition had been easier because they knew the principal stating, "Change is hard for everybody, but I think it helped a bit that we already knew him."

What she wanted most from a principal was a principal that would listen. She expressed her desires as, "Again, you want someone who's going to listen to you and address some of the

concerns that we have. There's good and bad with every principal, and so you hope it's going to be someone that listens to your concerns." When it came to listening, Brooke wanted the principal to listen, but still did not want big changes. Her explanation of this was, "Don't change everything. Look at what needs to be adjusted, but don't change everything just for change sake. Listen to your teachers. They - if you listen, they will tell you what's wrong and what really needs to change."

When Katie was asked what she wanted from a new principal, she commented, "Better communication, someone who is approachable that we could feel like if we were having trouble or that we could approach him." She also felt strongly about the need for the new principal to have a really good discipline policy. Her biggest fear revolved around the fact that a principal would be hired that wanted to change everything. Ironically, when the new principal was named and it was someone from within, Katie described how her fears changed as, "Because we did know him and he had been the assistant principal here I felt things were gonna be better than what they had been. And so maybe the biggest fear now would be that nothing would change." Katie described the principal succession as more about the fear of the unknown. She related it to, "It's kind of like sometimes I think the situation can be the devil we know is better than the devil we don't know." The concern about expectation such as what a new principal would want was also a challenge during principal succession according to Katie. The questions were, "What kind of demands are they gonna have? Will he expect very detailed lesson plans? Will he try to catch you not teaching bell to bell? The unknown is the hardest part."

Her other fears revolved around support and expectations. She described her other fears: Not knowing how well they'll support you. Just wondering what kind of situation you're going into next with like are they gonna back me up when I have issues

and are they gonna be there to support me? Can I depend on them to help me out when I need them especially when it comes to discipline?

Summer Transition Meetings

Robin, the counselor was pleased to get to work with the principal over the summer. She felt this time to work with him and “train” him was valuable. She described this experience as:

Since he was hired in May and everyone knew him, we got to spend time with him over the summer. He called teachers in all summer to talk to them. Just too often when they would ask for something, he agreed to everything, and now he is having trouble keeping up with all the promises. I wish he would have talked to some of the office people first or checked things out more thoroughly with us before making so many promises. It just backfires on you or on someone else.

Many of these promises had to do with schedules and the counselor was trying to make a schedule for next year that included all of his promises.

During those summer meetings Robin wanted to hear that there would not be any big changes made. She said of any principal transition:

Making too many changes is a problem. I think making too many changes hurts no matter even if you know it's for the good of the school. I just think when you come in and you try to change everything it's going to be a problem. People have to embrace the changes.

According to Robin, the new principal had not made big changes for this year, but she was uneasy about how he would accomplish all the changes that were promised for the next year.

Brooke believed the time together over the summer was what made the transition so smooth. She told:

This has been a very smooth transition. We worked together before as teachers so you kind of already had a little bit of an idea of what he was going to do. And he talked to us during the summer. He had us start getting ideas what are things that we might change or how he could help. So we could already get some changes made during the summer.

Brooke admitted that even though the transition had been very smooth that she was concerned about follow through from the summer meetings. When asked what advice she would give the new principal now, she answered:

Kinda go back and check some of that follow through. What were things that were suggested that maybe you had – were planning on doing or promised, but it's overwhelming now. Go back and look at that list again and see what has kinda fell by the wayside.

Even though Katie was apprehensive about the new principal, these fears eased when the new principal began meeting with teachers over the summer. She conveyed the experience as, “He actually did listen. He met with some of us and kind of got suggestions as to things that we felt like needed to be addressed. We talked to him about discipline and communication.”

According to Katie:

We could tell that initially just even by him contacting us over the summer and asking what needs to happen this next year and what concerns do you have and what do you think needs to be addressed? What do I need to make my top priorities? That really set it off on a good foot. A good foundation where you felt like he cares about my opinion. It put you at ease that he's very supportive.

When asked how she knew he was listening to the teachers, Katie responded, “Body language is the key. I had experiences with principals who had terrible body language. You knew that they were not listening. You felt you were putting them out.” She described the new principal as, “He’s very approachable, and he takes you seriously. He listens with respect and at no point do you feel like you’re bothering him or being silly.”

Strategies and Changes

The principal history at Argon High School created some concern for Ryan. In the last 13 years, there had been seven different principals. One even left mid-year due to health reasons. He described it as, “I won’t wanna say disgruntledness, but just kinda like what’s this principal gonna be like? What’s he gonna expect me to do?” To help with these concerns, Ryan was not making any demands at first. He saw the needs of the teachers as the desire for stability. To illustrate that point he said:

Again, go back into my coaching days, stability is everything. If you’ve got a good coach and he treats the kids right and he has good discipline and he’s there for 20 years, you’re gonna be very successful. Not saying you’re gonna win state championships, but you’re gonna be successful. I just want that stability for these teachers.

Ryan was just now in March sitting down with teachers to look at their test scores and look for ways to help them improve instruction because he did not want them to feel that pressure from him initially. Ryan himself did not look at the scores or the statistics for Argon High School until just recently. It had not been a priority for him. According to the State Department of Education, AHS had an enrollment of 340 students. Among these 340 students, 66% was Caucasian, 26% Native American and 7% Hispanic. For these students 24.5 teachers

were employed for the classrooms. The graduation rate at Argon High School was 97.5% with only 47.4% going on to college. The community that Argon serves had a population of 7,942 of whom. Even with lower than average college attendance, state tests scores were at the state average. On the English II state tests, 36% of the students scored advanced and 54% scored proficient. For the Algebra I state tests, 18% scored advanced and 53% scored proficient (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 2009-2010; Education Oversight Board, 2010). Argon High School offered Advanced Placement courses in math science and history along with concurrent enrollment for seniors.

Because discipline was a concern mentioned by teachers over the summer, Ryan was asked about his plan to improve discipline at AHS. One strategy that Ryan felt worked with the students was to develop a leadership team of students from different groups. He portrayed the group as:

I've got the sweet little cheerleader, the cute little girl, the captain of the football team, and I've got the somewhat of the thug that's walking down the alleyway smoking cigarettes in between class. And I put them all on a team. I explained to every one of them that there's reasons why you're here. They aren't all running around together now, but there's that understanding 'hey they're like me' which has really helped with the few bullying situations that we have.

During assemblies, Ryan honored all walks of life. Ryan did not have football assemblies; instead he held recognition assemblies and honored everything.

While Ryan felt that he had been successful for the most part in accomplishing a better climate at the school, there were some problems that he did not anticipate even though he had worked in the school previously. For example, "There's a few things that surprised me, and

they're not teacher related, student related or testing related. It's the small things like can we not get somebody to clean these bathrooms a little better?" Ryan admitted that there were problems that he did not even notice until they were pointed out to him, but they were easy to resolve. There were also some teacher relationships that on the surface or even when he was a teacher in the building seemed fine until he became the principal. He stated there were problems that he previously, as a teacher, never realized, but:

as a principal you hear this English teacher saying this English teacher isn't doing what she is supposed to be doing. I was like, now wait a second. That's not what I perceived it to be. It just popped up and surprised me a little bit, but they were easy to talk to and to work through the problems and conflicts.

While some participants expressed concerns about the New Principal's age or lack of experience, Brooke felt it was a positive. She stated, "I think it was good partially because he'd been a principal, but it wasn't that long ago that he was a teacher. So he kinda remembered some of the problems you have as a teacher that administrators see differently." The other comfort that the new principal provided for Brooke was the openness the principal expressed. She portrayed it as:

He was kinda open like "give me your suggestions" he wasn't "I'm here and I'm taking over, and we're changing." I always worry then they're changing everything because what works at one school or their previous school may not work at another school. You can't just change everything.

Overall participants at Argon High School were satisfied with the new principal especially since he met with them this summer, but they were now sensing a lack of follow through with what was promised this summer. While Ryan felt confident that he was doing the

right thing by approaching the school as a coach would, the participants' initial impression was beginning to dwindle, particularly in the areas of discipline, communication and follow-through.

Summary of Case Studies

The two case studies presented above were narrative portraits based on data collected through surveys, interviews, observations and artifacts. In each of the two schools, educators respectively expressed their interpretation of what happened when their school underwent principal succession. In the next chapter, I will analyze the data presented in terms of Douglas' (1982) grid and group typology.

CHAPTER V

RESEARCH ANALYSIS

The previous chapter presented the case studies of two high schools that were experiencing a principal succession this year. The case studies were developed through interviews, observations, document analysis and surveys. The surveys served as a tool to determine the quadrant where individual members and the high schools as a whole fell in Mary Douglas' Grid and Group cultural analysis.

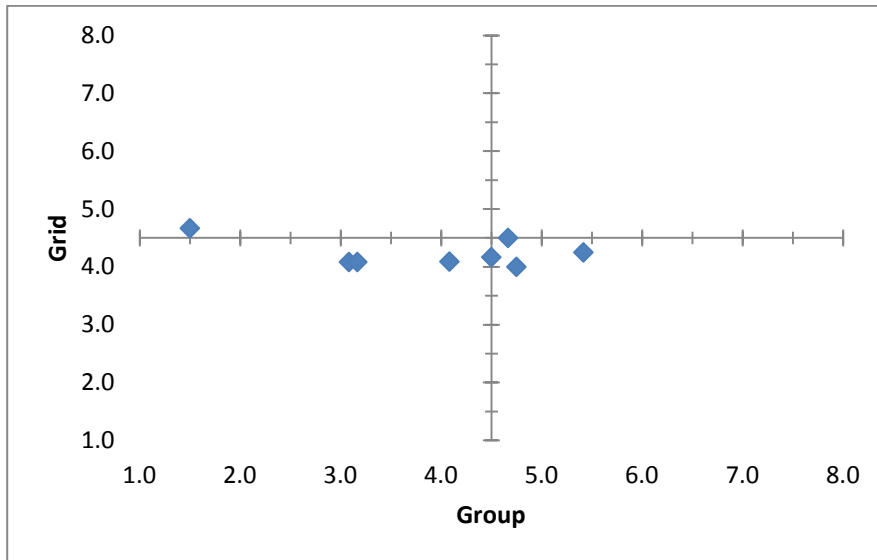
This chapter provides an analysis of the two case studies by first reporting and comparing the grid and group survey results and then comparing the participants' interview comments concerning their views of the principal succession experience and how they related to the grid and group cultural setting.

Marlin High School

For Marlin High School eight out of 25 employees responded to the survey. The respondents included an encumbrance clerk, principal, assistant principal, counselor, and four teachers. Their overall quadrants were varying with two collectivist, one bureaucratic, three individualists, and two border line responses. One border line was almost exactly in the middle of all four quadrants. When the survey results for each participant were averaged, they just barely fell into the individualist quadrant which was weak group and weak grid. The grid score

was very close to the border between individualists and bureaucratic. This is seen in Figure 5.1 below.

Figure 5.1 Marlin High School Grid and Group quadrant placements



Grid Interpretation

Weak-Grid Areas. The questions where the Marlin employees ranked themselves weak-grid were questions one, five, six, and nine. Question one was over the centralization of authority where they ranked decentralized or non-hierarchical. From the interviews it was evident that one group of teachers tried to take on authority at the school and make decisions. Kami described it as, “There is a block of teachers that feel like they run the school...no matter what you set up, they’re going to do it however they want to do it.”

Question five scored weak-grid by defining teachers as having full autonomy in choosing instructional methods or strategies. To demonstrate this, Kami described a situation where one of the teachers that was teaching concurrent enrollment would not give Kami the requirements for concurrent enrollment or the names of the students that the teacher had enrolled in her concurrent classes, because she wanted control over the class and who would be in it. Kami, as

the counselor needed this information so she could finish schedules. Similarly, when John was talking about principal expectations, he made a comment stating a desire that the new principal would not, “be foolish enough to think he knew how to evaluate or control content in every subject area, but smart enough to just stick to evaluating instructional methods.”

Another weak-grid question was question six which related to student ownership of their education. The Marlin respondents believed that students had ownership in their education.

Katrina explained this when she said:

“He (Tom) has not made the transition to high school where students are grown up and they have to take responsibility. He is still putting it back on the teachers, what can you do to make that better for the kid instead of saying to the kid you need to turn in your homework.”

The final weak-grid question was number nine asking about teachers’ motivation which was described as intrinsic by the Marlin participants. Whether it was from the division among the teachers or the small number of teachers in each subject area, the teachers were motivated to succeed for their own reasons, not the reasons of the group.

Strong-Grid Areas. The Marlin employees had some areas that were strong-grid among their responses. These were questions two, ten and eleven. First was question two which described the job responsibilities as well-defined. Tom, the new principal, described the teachers in the classroom as, “They are excellent teachers. They teach very well. They know how to teach and have it down to a science.” The teachers were confident in what was expected in the classroom and how to accomplish it.

Next was question ten which scored the lack of teacher input concerning school hiring decisions as high. Hiring decisions were never discussed in interviews. The new principal had

not made any hiring decisions at this point, so this response would have been based on the previous principal.

The final strong-grid question was number eleven which along with question ten described the lack of input teachers had, however, this time it referred to input in class schedules. Tom had been gathering input on the schedule for next year, but John described the past principal by saying, “Our previous principal had been here so long that we just kind of used the schedule from the previous year. He didn’t consult anyone about it. He just did it.”

Individualist Characteristics. An individualist environment was described by Harris (2005) as environments that “are not constrained by imposed formal rules or traditions. Role status and rewards are competitive and are contingent upon existing, temporal standard” (p. 41). Individuals seek their own opportunities for rewards with little regard for the school as a whole. This was reflected in the low grid questions where the Marlin High School employees marked the authority as non-hierarchical.

Furthermore, promotions or rewards were not seen as earned through seniority, but through individual efforts. An individualist environment was also evident in several comments concerning coaches and part-time retired teachers. Coaches had less seniority than most teachers, yet they were perceived to get anything they wanted. Katrina commented, “Everybody needs to be treated fairly and there needs to be some accountability for everybody.” Teachers were making almost all instructional decisions individually. This could be partially due to the fact that this was a small school where there was not a science department, but there was a science teacher. Just as the Marlin participants responded that students were encouraged to participate in educational decisions, interview participants were unanimous in describing the high quality of student that graduated from MHS. However, there was some resentment to the new freedom that

had been given to students in areas of dress code and required remediation. Katrina expressed her concern as, “He (Tom) is very athletic minded and I feel like academics have really taken a downturn... We’ve always been very strict on dress code and it’s very, very lax now.”

The last of the low grid areas indicating an individualist culture was the intrinsic motivation of teachers. Often high school teachers saw themselves as islands of expertise in their subject area. Test scores were also separated out into subject areas by teachers. This could be what contributed to the intrinsic motivation at MHS.

Non-Individualist Characteristics. Grid areas that conflicted with the individualist school were found in the area of a well defined job. During the interviews, Katrina referred to the duty schedule and the structure of the past principal to hold teachers accountable for performing their duties. This top-down leadership was more of a bureaucratic leadership than how the new principal was described. The second high grid area concerned lack of input in hiring. From the interviews and the teacher experience rate, most teachers at Marlin High School had been there for over ten years. The biggest turn over came in the area of coaching where teachers probably did not have much input creating the resentment that was so prevalent in the culture of the school. The final area was lack of input concerning schedules. During the interview with the principal at Marlin High School, he commented that the previous principal did the schedule for so long that he did not ask questions. He just did it. This year the new principal was gathering input from the teachers and making changes.

Group Interpretation

Marlin High School indicated a weak-group score portraying loose social ties with weak relationships among the employees. When combined with the weak-grid score, the culture fell into the individualist quadrant. However, there were four questions that pointed to a strong-

group, and two of the weak-group questions fell right in the middle which created a picture of a culture that was torn between strong and weak group tendencies.

Weak-Group Areas. The lowest scores were questions three, six, eight and nine with two questions averaging a 3.2 and the other two averaging a 3.3 on an eight point scale.

Question three reflected that rewards were primarily for individual benefit. While the school had received many rewards for high API scores, the credit for those scores went primarily to English and math teachers. The school also won many championships, but those rewards were given to coaches.

Question six described a climate where teachers worked in isolation toward goals and objectives. This was expressed when participants were asked about teacher meetings or department meetings. Katrina described these meetings as, “We don’t have very many faculty meetings. They are only for when something urgent comes up like the drug dogs are coming.”

Communications were the low area for question eight describing communication as individual and informal. When I requested documents, there was not a weekly calendar or weekly memo from the principal to the teachers that kept teachers informed in a formal manner. The final weak-group question was number nine that reflected resources as individually owned and controlled.

Strong-Group Areas. Of the four questions that scored above the median which was considered strong group, two of the highest questions were number five and number ten. In question number five, the respondents felt that they were evaluated according to group goals and priorities. This high score was unexpected and contradictory since the participants felt they were rewarded individually while they felt they were evaluated as a group. This was most likely due to the sense of pride that every participant expressed. John stated, “Marlin was a very highly

rated school.” Kami described Marlin as, “I had been working in another district for the past three years and could not wait to get back to Marlin. It is just an amazing, high achieving school.” Even Katrina stated, “We have always been a good school with lots of success.”

Not only was this sense of pride established in the participants’ comments, it was also evident in the responses to question number ten. Question ten which was the highest of all group questions pertained to a strong school loyalty and allegiance the respondents felt towards the school. While the participants were not pleased with the division in the faculty, there was a strong sense of pride as seen from the statements above.

Individualist Characteristics. A weak-group culture indicated either an individualist or a bureaucratic culture where strong relationships were lacking with few social tendencies. Marlin’s grid and group survey indicated an individualist culture. The two lowest areas of the group scores were both 3.2 on an 8 point scale. These were questions describing rewards as benefiting the individual and isolation toward goals and objectives. The second one could again be attributed towards the small faculty at Marlin High School where teachers were not a part of department communities that work together but still described the overall climate where teachers felt isolated at MHS. It also reflected the jealousy that was depicted towards the success of the athletics at MHS. The academic teachers did not feel a part of those rewards. The next two questions that were weak-group scores were both 3.3 on the same scale. The informal communication was evident in many interviews. The principal described that he would just go in the teachers’ lounge and ask teachers what they thought about different changes. He did not establish a system where teachers had equal opportunities for input. John during his interview referred to both the group of teachers that met in the lounge and also the group of teachers that met in the workroom. According to him, each group had its own communication system that

was separate from the school as a whole. The final of the four lowest areas concerned resources. Marlin employees saw resources as belonging to the individuals not to the group as a whole. When Katrina talked about the new computers in her classroom, she referred to them as “my” computers. Even John talked about “his” equipment when talking about the videography class that he taught.

Non-individualist Characteristics. The two areas that were not in the individualist quadrant were from questions five and 10. Question five pertained to teaching performance and whether it was related to individual or group goals. Marlin participants marked group goals in this area indicating a strong-group culture in this area. From the interviews a collective pride was evident in the academic success at Marlin High School where everyone felt they were a contributing factor. John was proud to report, “MHS is very highly rated – like fifth or sixth in the state on the API scores.”

The second strong-group response was question 10 concerning school loyalties. The strong school loyalty expressed by MHS participants was likely due to the small school atmosphere. This was the community where they live and where their children go to school. All surrounding schools were rivals creating a strong allegiance to the school.

Argon High School

Nine employees at Argon High School were willing to participate in the grid and group survey. This included eight teachers and one library assistant. Three of the teachers taught non-core subject such as art or vocal. Two science teachers, an English teacher and one teacher not specified also participated. The principal and counselor who volunteered for interviews did not participate in the survey. The survey results showed the climate of the school according to these participants as two corporate, five individualists, and two bureaucratic.

This represented four strong-grid scores and five weak-grid scores. Concerning the group scores, there were seven weak-group scores and two strong-group scores. One strong group score was 4.6 with 4.5 as the middle between weak and strong group. This picture clearly defined the culture as weak group, but there was a division as to how the participants fell in the area of grid or regulations. The results were plotted in Figure 5.2 below.

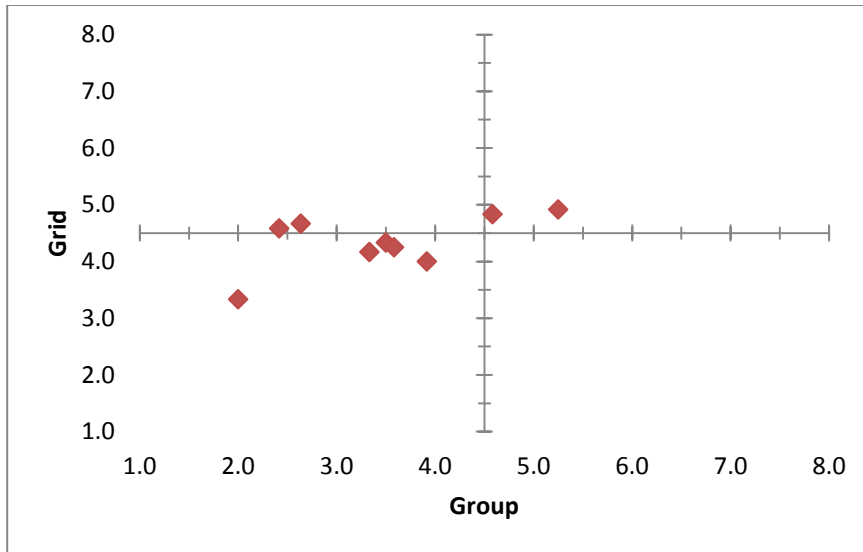


Figure 5.2 Argon High School Grid and Group quadrant placements

Grid Interpretations

Weak-Grid Areas. Of the twelve grid questions, Argon High School employees rated their culture as low grid on six questions with four of those extremely low. The lowest was question five which averaged a 1.8 on an eight point scale. This question pertained to the degree of autonomy teachers had in choosing instructional methods. The employees felt they had full autonomy in choosing instructional methods and strategies. When Brooke was asked about her expectations for the new principal, she explained that she wanted, “mainly someone that would kinda keep the good things and maybe address the bad things, but let teachers teach in the classrooms like they know how to do.” Later she stated, “I know what I’m doing. I’ve been

through college. Let me do my job. You (principal) take care of your stuff. You let me take care of mine.”

The next lowest question was question nine concerning teacher motivation. AHS perceived that teachers there were intrinsically motivated. When Ryan was talking about changes, he made the point that he was not putting a lot of pressure on teachers. One strategy pertained to state tests scores. He explained, “I’ve had a few teachers come in and want to see their scores, but I just haven’t addressed test scores with the entire faculty.” This exemplified that each teacher was working in isolation towards academic goals when the entire faculty has not seen the school’s state tests results.

Questions three and six were also at the low end of the grid scores. These questions were over textbook selection and students’ participation in their own education. Textbook selection was never discussed in the interviews, but student apathy was. Ryan had established a leadership group to try and build leaders that would change the climate with the students. He described it as, “I took leaders from all walks of life. I’ve got the sweet little cheerleader to the somewhat of a thug that’s walking down the alleyway smoking cigarettes. I put them all on a team to help them understand each other and pull the student body together. Robin, the school counselor, alluded to the lack of student decisions when she described her concern over schedule changes. She explained, “We basically run the same schedule every year. I know what classes students need, and I tell them when to take them. Now that teachers want changes in the schedule, we are going to have problems meeting everyone’s wishes.”

Strong-Grid Areas. Of the six questions that were strong-grid, the two questions that were the highest scores in the grid component were questions 10 and 11. These two questions related to hiring practices and class schedules. These two questions were clearly in the high or

strong grid area scoring a 7.7 and 7.3 on an 8 point scale. When the teachers were called in to meet with Ryan over the summer, changes in the schedule were some of their main concerns. Katie mentioned her concerns as, “When I met with him (Ryan) over the summer, I was able to tell him about our needs concerning the schedule, discipline and communication.” Brooke was explaining that Ryan needed to go back and look at what the teachers said over the summer. She suggested he, “go back and check some of that follow through. What were things that were suggested that maybe you were planning on, but it’s overwhelming. I know many suggestions were given for the schedule, but I don’t think Robin, the counselor, is trying very hard to make any schedule changes.”

Individualist Characteristics vs. Non-Individualist Characteristics. Argon High School participants were mixed on their perceptions of grid at the school. Grid was described by Harris (2005) as “the degree to which an individual’s choices are constrained within a social system by imposed prescriptions such as role expectations, rules, and procedures” (p.34). The average scores of the participants ranged from 7.7 on question 10 to 1.8 on question five. From this information and from the interviews, there were areas where teachers had complete autonomy such as choosing textbooks or deciding instructional strategies and other areas where the principal alone made the decision such as with hiring procedures as suggested by question 10. This was most likely due to the principal’s lack of expertise in every subject area taught at a high school; therefore, the subject area teacher was the expert and the decision maker when instruction was the basis for the decision. However, when it came to decisions such as hiring, the principal was the primary person involved in those decisions.

Scheduling was another area that the participants rated with strong grid or as they stated it in the interviews, lack of input. Sometimes lack of input was confused with not getting what

you want. The teachers and the principal at Argon High School all commented on the input teachers were able to give the principal over the summer. However, the schedule for this year would have already been set by the previous principal. Therefore the input that was given to the principal over the summer could not be put into action until April of the next year when the schedule was built for the upcoming year. Brooke even commented that she hoped the principal would go back and look over the comments that were given him over the summer as he was building the new schedule.

Group Interpretations

Weak-Group Areas. Of the 12 group questions, 11 questions portrayed a low or weak group with nine of the questions scoring a three or below. The lowest of the scores was question eight which scored a 2.3 on an eight point scale. This question referred to communication and how it flowed. Argon High School employees felt their communication primarily flowed through individual networks as opposed to formal networks. Ryan had no form of formal communication to the faculty. He stated, that he communicates by, “I just have to get out of my office and walk the halls to talk to teachers. I want to make sure that they know I care about them and their classroom. There are a few times I’ve talked to a teacher out in the hall by her classroom five or ten minutes into the class, but I look at it as I’m drawing that connection to them.”

Curricular goals were also seen as individually generated as indicated by the low score, 2.8, on question seven. Ryan felt that his main purpose was to motivate teachers, and they would work on their own to do a good job. He stated:

The way I look at it is that as long as I’m establishing the climate that is acceptable to the teachers, I just feel like that’s something that makes the teachers where they are gonna

wanna work and they're gonna wanna teach and they're gonna want do their job. [sic] I don't need to tell them how to do their job.

Strong-Group Areas. There was only one question response of the twelve group questions that fell on the strong-group side. This was question 10 with a score of 5.9. This question reflected an allegiance and loyalty to the school and even it was not exceptionally strong. Ryan and Brooke attended high school at AHS and returned there to teach. The counselor had worked for AHS for over 20 years, and Katie waited for three years to get a coveted teaching position at AHS. The desire to work at AHS demonstrated a loyalty and sense of pride in the school and the community.

Individualist Characteristics. The overwhelming sense of low group at Argon High School was described as a school without traditions or a social system. There was little concern for the school as a whole. This lack of bonding or loyalty could be due to the principal turnover that the school had experienced during the last ten years where there had been six different principals. Teachers were just doing their own thing because the principal probably would not be there long and the next principal would want something different.

There was a sense of everyone doing their own thing in many of the interviews.

Stephanie described her desires as:

Don't micromanage everything. I am an educated person. I've been through college. I know what I'm doing. Sometimes let me do my job and don't get in the way. You (principal) take care of your stuff and let me take care of mine.

This feeling was indicated in the score on question six relating to whether teachers work in isolation or as a group. This was one of AHS's lowest group scores.

Argon and Marlin Comparisons

Grid Comparison

Both Marlin High School and Argon High School were in the weak group with their overall average, but both schools had mixed individual scores. Looking at the 12 individual questions, MHS had five strong grid and seven weak grid responses while AHS had six strong grids and six weak grids. One of the biggest differences was the range. The responses on AHS's grid responses ranged from 1.8 to 7.7 while MHS's responses only ranged from 2.6 to 6.6. Question number seven was the only question that was not the same for the two schools. This question related to how teachers obtained instructional resources. MHS participants perceived that individual teachers had to negotiate for their own resources while AHS participants responded with the belief that allocation of resources went through the school administrators. This could be partially due to the number of grants that teachers at MHS had written. Katrina had computers in her room that she received with a grant, and John had video equipment in his room that he had received from a donation. MHS also had a private company in the community that provided grants and donations for teachers as well as a strong school foundation that had a grant program. At no time during interviews or observations was anything mentioned about the community or grants at AHS. When a teacher writes and receives a grant there is a strong feeling of ownership in the products received even though it is legally school property and on the school inventory.

Group Comparison

While both schools' average group score indicated weak group, there were major differences in their individual participant's scores. Marlin High School's actual responses were almost split between weak and strong group with the average calculating as weak group unlike

Argon High School where almost every question response indicated low group. This indicated that MHS had some areas where the group needs, interactions and allegiance were stronger than the individual needs; consequently, there were almost equal areas where the individual ranked higher than the group concerning needs, roles, and allegiance. This split was very different from the AHS results where responses overwhelmingly indicated a weak group culture.

Two areas were similar between the two schools. Both schools saw communication as an individual effort with little group organization to it, and both schools felt an allegiance or loyalty to their school. The communication component was an area that a principal could address and work to improve. The strong allegiance and loyalty could possibly be due to the size of the school and community. Every employee that I talked to lived in the community and many of them grew up in the community or raised their children in the community. This possibly created a loyalty to the school that overrode the individualistic culture at the high school.

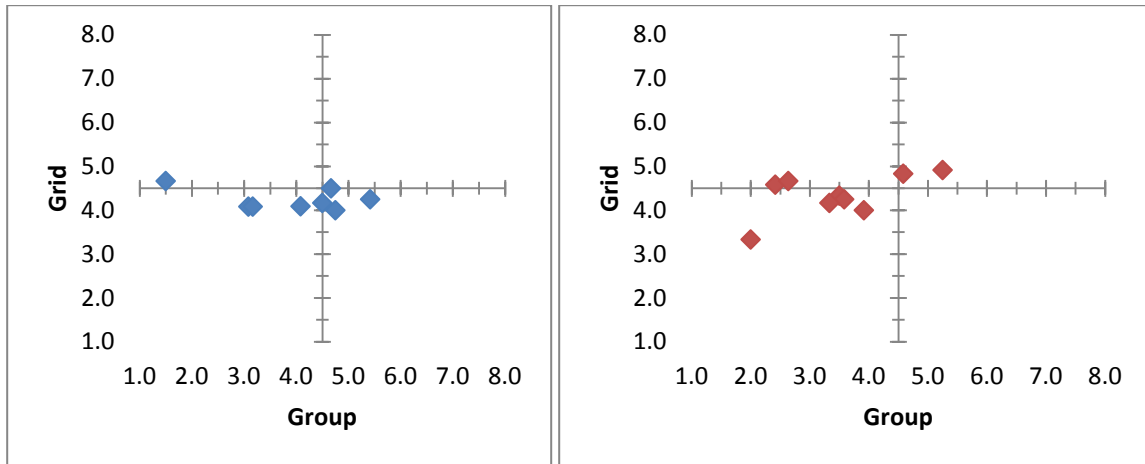
Summary

The above assessment indicated that while two schools might both fall in the individualist quadrant of weak-group and weak-grid, there will be similarities, but there can also be remarkable differences. No two schools are alike and all schools must be analyzed for both the individual qualities and the organizational qualities to understand the bigger picture. Figure 5.3 below shows how each school, although both individualists have distinct differences.

Figure 5.3 Argon High School and Marlin High School Grid and Group quadrant placements

Marlin

Argon



Interviews

Interviews consisted of questions around expectations for the new principal, advice that would be given to the new principal, and fears when first informed there would be a new principal. Although there were comments that were site specific or teacher specific, overall there were many commonalities despite any grid and group differences. Six themes emerged from the interviews as these topics were mentioned by all or almost all of the employees interviewed at both schools. Figure 5.4 demonstrated the consistency among the interviews pertaining to these topics.

Figure 5.4 Reoccurring themes from participant interviews

Themes	Katie	Brooke	Robin	Kami	Katrina	John
Background	■		■	■	■	■
Know Expectations		■	■	■		
Principal that will listen	■	■			■	■
Principal provides transition	■	■	■	■		
Doesn't want changes	■		■	■	■	■
Desires input	■	■	■	■	■	■
Mentioned once	■					
Mentioned multiple times	■					

Background

Overwhelmingly every interviewee first expressed an interest in the new principal’s background such as where he taught or where he was a principal. Since both of the principals had previously been coaches and middle school principals, there was concern that they would lack the experience needed to be a high school principal. One comment was, “It helps, I think, to know what school or where they come from and what they’re used to. You know our school system is totally different from the school system he came from.” Another teacher commented:

The new guy that came in had previous experience, but it was at a middle school level. I knew that middle schools are not like high schools. We had heard that he was like the principal of the year or something for middle school so we were excited about that.

One teacher explained the desire to learn more about the principal as, “I think the situation can be the devil we know is better than the devil we don’t know.” Finally a teacher described his first actions after learning who the new principal would be as:

I was primed. His former district had an excellent website, so I was able to find out all kinds of information about him. I also made some phone calls and others who knew him

told me how lucky we were to get him.

In comparison to the grid and group surveys, this common trend did not necessarily correlate with the individualist quadrant or any other quadrant. The desire by all participants to know more about the new principal was probably due to the human curiosity and the fear of the unknown. However, as the teachers were researching and investigating the new principal, one of the qualities the teachers were looking for was how the new principal would fit into this school. In other words, individualists were looking for a principal that would promote or preserve an individualist culture as well. This was evident by all of the comments about not wanting big changes.

Transition Meeting

The desire to learn more about the principal was often relieved with a transition meeting or interviewees at least expressed a desire for a transition meeting. For example, “at the end of the year last year when we knew he was coming, he had us meet and start getting ideas on what we might change or how he could help.” A counselor described the meeting as, “We got to know him prior in May. That helped a little bit to get to know him in May before we actually worked with him later on.” When one of the principals was asked if there was something he would do differently, he responded:

I would have gotten up here sooner and gotten [sic] involved with the teachers earlier.

With a vacation we had planned and the move, it just didn't happen. I didn't realize how important getting to know the teachers and the system would be.

One of the counselors described an effective action that a principal in her past did to make a smooth transition. She explained that a survey was sent out to all teachers before the first of school with an invitation to come to the school and meet the new principal. She said:

It was a big deal to all the teachers. We felt like you're asking me what I think, and that's a big deal to teachers because they are professionals, and they need to be asked what their thoughts are. It was a great start.

As with the desire to learn more about the principal, the need for a transition meeting was more about getting to know the new principal than it was about a common trait of an individualist culture. This was the meeting where the teachers first began to see if the new principal was going to fit into the quadrant where they were or try to move them to a different quadrant.

Input & Listening

It was hard to define the difference between teachers having input and a principal that was willing to listen to teachers. These two topics were the top two topics mentioned by interviewees. The desire for input was the most talked about topic with some interviewees mentioning it up to four and five times. Listening was mentioned almost as many times as input. When reading the two in the context of the interviews, input and listening could often be used interchangeably. For example in one interview, the interviewee commented, "You want someone that's going to listen to you or address your concerns." Later in the same interview she commented, "I wanted someone that would ask for input and suggestions, not just be like I'm here and I'm taking over." These two comments were very similar. As another teacher described the new principal's desirable qualities, she stated, "He takes me seriously, and he listens with respect and at no point do you feel like you're bothering him." When asked about advice to give the new principal, a counselor explained the importance of getting input from others in the office by saying, "Check out the background before you make a promise. Because sometimes what works in your old school system would be just fine may not be a good idea here

because of past experiences.” In an answer to the interview question about what advice you would give the new principal, one teacher responded, “keep listening” and another responded, “listen, listen, listen.”

In a weak-grid culture, power and authority are decentralized in a manner that allows individuals freedom in decisions. The overwhelming concern about listening and input was important to an individualist culture that does not want to lose the power to make decisions that are relevant to their needs. While teachers desired an organized, structured form of input evident by the popularity of the summer meetings, the most important factor was that the principal listened and did not approach changes from a strong-grid, bureaucratic manner where he just made decisions with little or no regard for teacher input.

The desire for input could also be attributed to the weak-group culture in both schools. In a weak-group culture, individuals are looking out for their own needs over the needs of the group. During the interviews, participants did not express a desire for the new principal to listen to a representative; participants wanted the new principal to listen to them.

Changes

A major concern teachers expressed was that a principal would come in and make changes that would upset their will or changes that were not necessary. When responding to the question about giving the principal advice, three interviewees commented that they would tell the principal not to make changes. One interviewee stated, “Don’t change everything just for change sake. What works at one school may not work at another school. You can’t change everything.” A counselor referred to change when talking about what she wanted to hear at the first meeting with the new principal. She reminisced, “I’m not gonna change a lot right now; that is what I wanted to hear. I’m going to look at what you’re doing and evaluate it, but not make a whole lot

of changes.” In all seriousness, two teachers talked about what too many changes could do to a school. One stated, “I think making too many changes hurts no matter if you know the school or not. Change is hard on teachers.” Another participant commented, “First of all I don’t think you can come in and just change everything right now because that would just throw everybody into a tizzy.”

While both schools were in the weak-group quadrant, they both indicated a contradictory strong allegiance to the school. Along with the strong allegiance and loyalty came the desire to hold true to traditions and current practices. There was also a strong desire to protect the current state of the school because it was what was known and what was comfortable. The survey and the interviews both indicated this.

Interestingly, while there were differences in the grid and group cultural analysis, most interviewees at both schools had the same desires and expectations for the new principal with only a few site specific differences.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS BENEFITS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Study

The final chapter of this case study summarizes and concludes the research then states the benefits and makes recommendations for application and further research. Included in this chapter are the revised research questions and the answers that were found through the research conducted.

Every year a number of principals move to other principal positions, move to central office positions or retire creating open positions that must be filled. Maxwell (1993) stated, “Everything rises and falls on leadership” (p. 150). Every open position leaves a school community in limbo waiting for the new principal to be hired. These newly hired principals need information and guidance concerning how to traverse the new culture where they have just been placed.

This study was designed to help understand this process using the lens of Mary Douglas’ (1982) Grid and Group Typology. However, per the emergent design of the study, grid and group had limited application. Thus, modifications were made to the purpose and research questions. The modified purpose of this study is to explain the succession process in selected schools in a way that the following research questions would be answered:

1. In each selected school, how does a principal who is new to a school adapt his/her leadership to the culture of the school?
2. In each selected school, how do school members adapt to the new principal?
3. How useful is Douglas' typology of grid and group in explaining school leadership succession?
4. What other realities are revealed in this study?

The participants in this study were principals, teachers and support employees from two small rural schools that each had a new principal this year. Each principal had previous head principal experience in order to eliminate the lack of experience. One principal was replacing a long-time principal while another was entering a school that had experienced multiple principal successions in the last decade.

I utilized multiple methods in order to achieve maximum results. First, an on-line grid and group survey was sent to every employee at both schools. Follow-up interviews were then conducted with volunteer participants. Observations and reviews of school documents complimented the two other methods to complete the picture of principal succession at both schools in reference to Douglas' (1982) Grid and Group Typology. Findings were presented first through rich, thick description then through grid and group analysis and comparisons along with interview analysis and comparisons.

Data analysis took place immediately after each interview and each observation in a way that data could be recorded correctly before lost or contorted with time. Interviews were transcribed and coded while observations were documented with field notes which were converted to text and coded as well. Through the interviews, observations and surveys, triangulation was accomplished in order to create an accurate picture of each principal

succession. I submitted my work on a regular basis for advisor checks throughout the research process to assure quality control.

One limitation to this study was created when the average score for both schools fell in the individualist quadrant. While each school had differences on individual questions and differences when participants were plotted, the overall average placed both schools in the same quadrant. Ideally the two schools in the research would have been in opposite quadrants for better comparison or a broader picture. This limitation opens the door for further research in this area.

It is important to note that this study captured one moment in time during the year as well as point out the facts concerning the number of participants. Both schools employ 25 teachers plus a number of non-certified staff. Only about one-third of the employees participated in the survey and only 4 employees volunteered for an interview. If there had been a larger participation rate, the findings and conclusions might have been different.

A final point of interest is the timing of the research. Principal succession is a process or a journey. This research captured one point in time during this process. Results might have been different if the research would have been conducted at a different time in the school year.

Findings

Findings were based according to each research question that guided this case study.

Question One

In each selected school, how does a principal who is new to a school adapt his/her leadership to the culture of the school? The initial needs for the new principal did not seem to matter based on the grid and group quadrant. These needs were universal in both schools: the need for background knowledge, the desire for input and the hope of no changes. However, once

these needs were satisfied, the principal seemed to have the open door to make cultural changes. When it comes to adapting leadership style, it appears that it is more about meeting basic employee needs first, then the employees are more willing to change and adapt to the leader.

This was evident at MHS where the new principal was beginning to make some changes that were guiding the school from a less desirable quadrant to a better functioning, higher group quadrant. First he met with them and talked about his background including his family. Even Katrina was pleased with this saying, “I was impressed after our first meeting. He was very well spoken. He got really emotional when he talked about his family.” He also made himself available for input. John described this as, “He (principal) is likely to engage the staff in discussions and get input before making any decisions.” With the basic needs of the faculty met, now the principal was beginning to conduct social gatherings and events trying to change the culture. Tom saw this as:

I knew everyone would be concerned and think ‘oh great, they hired a coach.’ I felt I needed for them to get to know me as an administrator and what I had done as an administrator and as a person....I tried to do things that would make me one of them. We met together and ate together....I didn’t change their schedule, I didn’t move anyone. I didn’t ruffle anyone’s feathers.

Now that he accomplished earning their trust by meeting the needs that were expressed in this research, Tom was able to implement ideas that would hopefully result in a higher group culture for which he saw as a need. Another example Tom provided:

One evening we loaded up a bus and went to a murder mystery theater in the city just so my teachers could see a different side, outside of school, of how everybody was. That made big progress because they got to see everybody just a little bit different.

The same could be seen at AHS. The teachers were relieved when someone was hired that they already knew, although they still began asking teachers that worked for him what he was like as a principal. Ryan immediately began meeting with the teachers over the summer gathering input from them, and he did not make any big changes. However, the difference between MHS and AHS centered around the fact that the principal at AHS was not taking any initiative to make changes in the school or the culture although the teachers were ready. Brooke commented that Ryan needed to, “go back and check some of that follow through. What were things that were suggested that maybe you had planned on, but it’s just overwhelming because there’s so much to do.”

In summary, both principals had different leadership styles, but both took steps to meet the needs this research found essential: they let teachers know about their background, gathered input and listened to teachers, and did not make big changes at first. Now the employees were more willing and trusting to follow the leadership of the new principal as opposed to the new principal changing to meet them. This was when grid and group could be useful to the principal. Grid and group or really any tested cultural analysis, could help him or her understand where the school fell in accordance to culture to give the principal a true picture of the school culture. In the case of this research Tom saw a need for the culture to change at MHS because he could see how the individualistic culture in this case was dividing the faculty. However, if he saw the grid and group results, he would have more accurate data to support his perception and to guide his direction. Furthermore, Ryan did not see any need for the culture of AHS to change, which could be the case because no one in the interviews expressed a need for change. However, at some point if the school is looking for ways to improve, the results from the grid and group survey would identify the low areas of group which might be place to begin.

Question Two

In each selected school, how do school members adapt to the new principal? It appeared that no matter the strength or weakness of grid and group, the teachers did not want the principal to make changes initially. They wanted the principal to adapt to them by listening to their input and not making changes. This could be due to the fact they were comfortable in their world currently or they were afraid of what the changes would be. There was an obvious adjustment period where everyone was watching and learning. Kamie described this as “They’re judging him and everything he does.”

Despite both schools scoring a weak-group culture with AHS score even lower than MHS, both schools were strong-group when they answered question 10 concerning school loyalties. This demonstrated a strong tie to the school, its traditions and its values creating an environment that might be more resistant to change than others. The new principal was the outsider and must prove to the faculty that he/she had the same loyalty to the school and held the school in high regard as well as not wanting to change the system that was a sense of pride for all of the members. As individualist, members needed to see how changes were going to benefit them, however with such a strong loyalty to the school, the principal could approach changes if he/she could prove they were in the best interest of the school. This was an instance where the grid and group information would have been helpful to the new principal. For example, although, Katrina did not want any changes, she does make some suggestions for changes that would benefit the school. She responded, “We have been talking about one lunch again because there are some people we never see.”

As school members strongly expressed the desire for input to help them adjust to the new principal, input and listening are forms of communication. Question eight on the group survey

asked whether communication flowed through formal or informal networks. Both schools ranked question eight as low group: 3.3 for MHS 2.3 for AHS. When I requested documents, neither principal had weekly memos or calendars that were sent to the faculty as a form of communication. Both principals just sent individual or group e-mails or made announcements over the intercom as their main source of communication with the faculty. In order to help the school members adapt to a new principal and move to a higher group culture, it appeared that formal communication was a need.

This research found that grid and group did not play a significant role in how the school adapted to the new principal because all participants no matter what quadrant expressed the desire for no or just little changes. This demonstrated that employees were comfortable in the quadrant where they resided and would be initially resistant to change until the principal earned their trust.

Question Three

How useful is Douglas' typology of grid and group in explaining school leadership succession? Grid and group would be more useful for the incoming principal to guide the direction of the school once the initial needs such as background knowledge and opportunity for input were met than it was to help the principal know how to approach the new position. It appeared the beginning needs were the same, but the direction the principal needed to take the school next could benefit from the information provided by the grid and group survey results. Tom at MHS was able to see the need for more social activities and the need to bring the faculty together because the division was so apparent. However, Ryan was completely unaware of the extremely low group culture in his new school. This could also be partially due to the fact that he taught in this building previously and worked there as an assistant principal before becoming

the principal there. Argon school district was also the only district where he had worked, so he did not have any other frame of reference to know how productive a higher group culture could be, or he might just not recognize the need for change as much as a principal coming completely from outside with no experiences in the culture. This further proved how beneficial the results of the grid and group survey could be to help him get a direction and a focus for the needed change by providing an objective view of the school culture and needs.

Other theories that were considered were Change Theory and Situational Leadership Theory. Change Theory would be beneficial if the school needed to change, but not all schools need a major overhaul just because they are getting a new leader. Situational Leadership Theory could be beneficial to principals, but it does not address that the principal is new to the environment and possibly not acclimated or accepted by the culture.

Question Four

What other realities are revealed in this study? While both principals felt they were gathering input and actually were the teachers at AHS were able to recognize it better because it was conducted in an organized and equal manner. Ryan called each teacher in over the summer, talked to them and listened to them. This gave the teachers a sense of security and importance. Tom was gathering input as well, but in an informal manner or a manner where there might not have been an equal voice for every teacher. He was going into the teachers' lounge and asking questions or asking questions in a faculty meeting. Even though all teachers were in the faculty meeting, not everyone felt comfortable saying what they thought in an open setting. Asking these questions through e-mail, surveys or one-on-one would have given teachers a stronger sense of input.

John described Tom's communication as, "He visits frequently with the staff. He is much more likely to engage with the staff in discussions." Contrary to this, Brooke described Ryan's communication as, "He talked to each one of us during the summer getting ideas about what we might change or how he could help."

Question six on the group survey was one of the lowest for both schools. This question rated whether teachers worked in isolation or as a group towards goals. Tom was gathering input from groups and some teachers saw it as unequal, while Ryan was gathering input individually from every teacher and the teachers appreciated it. This corresponded with the survey results.

When it became clear that Douglas' (1982) grid and group was not the driving factor, but just served as a typology to describe the two schools and could serve to benefit the principals understanding of the school later in the succession process, it became clear that many other cultural typologies could serve this purpose as well. It would not be necessary for the principal to solely use Douglas' (1982) grid and group, but the principal could use another cultural analysis tool to provide the cultural picture of the school and give the new principal direction.

Conclusions

Conclusions in this study indicated that school employees initially expressed the same similar desires of a new principal despite the grid and group cultural classification. While both schools were similar in grid scores, creating a lack of contrast, the individuals interviewed were located in different quadrants. No matter whether the individual was weak or strong in either grid or group, the first desire was to know more information about the new principal and his or her background. Next, there was a clear hope for the principal to come in and not make big changes. The participants also indicated a strong desire for a principal that would listen or allow

for teacher input. Finally, it was important for the new principal to show action towards the input submitted by the teachers in order to earn trust and credibility.

Credibility

Whether it was just curiosity or more likely the desire to find out information about the unknown, teachers were overwhelmingly concerned about the newly hired principal's background and experiences. Five of the six faculty members interviewed talked about wanting to know more about the principal or about concerns regarding the principal's background. Robin stated, "I wanted to know his views on different things as far as discipline. Of course it helps I think to know what school or where they come from and what they're used to." John immediately began researching the new principal as soon as the new principal was hired. He checked out his website and made phone calls to teachers in other districts that might know him just to find out what the new principal was like. Aside from the concerns about the new principal's background three teachers expressed similar concerns about expectations. Katie described these feelings as, "I think just the uncertainty is probably the biggest scare for teachers. You don't know what kind of person he will be or what kind of demands he's gonna have." In the case of Tom at Marlin High School, he had areas where he did not have experience. His willingness to admit this and learn helped him through the transition and helped him gain respect. Kami described this situation by saying, "I was worried him having not been in a high school before, hesitant about how it might be, but he's very willing to learn especially about credits and schedules. He's learning as we're going through the process. He is doing just fine." One might conclude that an incoming principal could gain influence with the employees by showing how he or she is qualified for the job, by conveying past experiences and by being willing to learn in areas where experience is lacking.

In addition to this research, other studies have found similar results. For example, Watkins (2003) described this phenomenon as part of establishing credibility. He found the opinion-forming process happens quickly, and a principal must be proactive in building a positive opinion. It is important that teachers learn about the new principal's background to add credentials to his or her reputation. When Britz (2007) was studying the importance of the first 90 days for a new principal, she found that principals had to quickly establish relationships, build a team of leaders and let the staff know who they are and what they are about in order to become an effective leader in that school.

Stability

A second conclusion revolved around the importance that a newly hired principal does not come into an organization and make big changes. The importance of no big changes was requested by five of the six interview participants and multiple times by two of them. John complimented his new principal by saying:

I was very pleased. He made no overt changes, just minor tweaking kind of things. I was worried that somebody would come in here with the idea that "I can make things better" and sometimes when you try too quickly to make things better, you may actually make things worse.

When asked about advice that she would give a new principal, Robin responded, "Check things out before you (new principal) make changes. Just because you think it is a good idea or just because it worked at your last school doesn't mean it will work here. Those kind of changes just backfire on you." Therefore, this study found that it was imperative for a principal new to a building be aware that big changes will not be seen as positive and will most likely be met with resistance.

Literature supported that changes usually began to hit at the heart or culture of the school. Robbins and Alvy (2003) wrote that while a principal new to the building may be able to see with outside eyes what is positive and motivating about the culture along with what is negative and draining, members of the school organization are not quickly receptive to changes. Changing a school's culture is one of the major obstacles facing a principal. Hence, changing a school's culture will take time and cannot be rushed.

Listen and Gather Input

From the interviews, it appeared extremely important to the faculty for the new principal to listen to teachers and gather input. All six of the participants stressed the value of a principal that would listen. Three of them mentioned it multiple times. Ryan, the new principal at AHS, was able to set up a time to talk to each teacher over the summer. All three of the participants talked about how important that was. Brooke described the summer meetings as, "He had us come in this summer to start getting ideas about what are things we might change or how he could help." Because of his start date, Tom, the new principal at MHS, was not able to get to meet teachers until the first meetings in August. He felt this put him at a real disadvantage. He began gathering input as soon as school started, but in a non-formal manner. Kami described Tom's method of gathering input as just stopping by the lounge and asking questions or talking to teachers in the hall about what they thought. While Kami and John saw this as gathering input, Katrina saw it as playing favorites. She stated, "Everybody needs to be treated fairly. If he (Tom) would listen to everyone not just his friends, that would do more for the overall good of the school than anything." From these statements, it was evident that not only was it critical for a newly assigned principal to gather input from teachers, but input must be gathered in a

manner where all teachers had an opportunity for input in an equal way to avoid the perception of unfairness.

New principals using the Watkins (2003) transition plan found they had better success when they, “held structured interviews with new staff not only to provide an advanced opportunity to initiate contact with faculty members, but to also reap much valuable information. By asking everyone the same set of questions, principals were able to begin seeing any trends in ideas or opinions” (Gross, 2008 p.62). Fink and Brayman (2006) studied leadership succession for over 30 years. In schools where principals were able to gather inbound knowledge from teachers and other stakeholders, the succession process was easier with better results. Sometimes inbound knowledge could not be shared prior to beginning the job. Often this was due to rapid principal rotation or mid-year principal replacements. In these situations, the schools experienced a more difficult transition.

Trust and Respect

Although it was not specifically mentioned during the interviews, it became evident in the observations that as Tom listened to his teachers, he was making small changes they desired and thereby earned their trust. John talked about this by saying:

He engages the staff in discussions. He is always asking teachers “How do we tweak this?” “What do we need to do differently?” One of the problems we brought to his attention was the dress code. It had been causing problems for years. He listened to us and just set it aside.

On the other hand, Ryan sought input from all teachers but was not taking action on the input. The teachers were becoming skeptical of his leadership. All three participants discussed how even though they had been asked for input, they were still waiting for action. Katie desired

that Ryan would, “After talking to all of us, I just want him to say ‘We can do this or we can’t do this.’ You know actually take our suggestions and do something.” Brooke felt the same. She requested, “Go back and check some of that follow through. What were things that were suggested that maybe you were planning on,Go back and look at that list again and see what fell by the wayside.” After analyzing these reactions, it became clear that not only must a principal gather input, but the principal must take action on the input as soon as possible to earn trust and respect.

While Grosse (2009) was studying an accelerated transition plan for new principals, one participant in the study described a positive experience when she was able to secure some early wins by addressing a security issue that many teachers had brought to her attention concerning the student check-out system. This action allowed teachers to see her as a principal that would listen and then get things accomplished.

Benefits

The potential to benefit practice, theory and research could be provided by the findings in this research.

Practice

This study provided insights that were helpful for incoming principals and for central office administration. As an incoming principal it was important to understand the basic needs that the teachers expressed throughout the interviews. If a principal were to enter a new position with resistance to telling about his/her background, with avoidance to listening to teacher input or with pre-determined changes planned for implementation, that principal most likely would lead only in title and not in action. For a newly assigned principal to motivate teachers or earn

the trust of the teachers in a way that allowed effective leadership, the findings of this research could be extremely valuable.

The ability to use Douglas' (1982) grid and group has also been found in this research to provide guidance for a newly assigned principal. Once the principal has established credibility among the school members, the grid and group survey results can provide the principal an insight to what changes would be most productive for the faculty or what modes of communication will most likely be received the best as stated earlier in group versus individual communication and the need for social events.

The findings in this research would also benefit principal training programs to prepare principals for the succession process prior to placement in a principal position. This would allow potential principals time to make observations and evaluate the principal succession process with a deeper understanding before they are the key participant.

Central office personnel place principals in new buildings almost every year. When working through this process, the central office is a source of guidance and direction for the new principal. This research gives central office mentors explicit information to help principals in newly placed positions. The grid and group survey results would be especially helpful to central office leaders because they only know the school and the faculty from a distance. The detailed information from the survey would even help in the hiring process as they were interviewing and looking for a principal to place in the building.

Theory

Much of the literature on principal succession is based around leadership theory or change theory with little or no regard to the existing organizational culture of the school. Mary Douglas' (1970) grid and group theory explained that the social context of an organization

affects the individuals' choices due to social constraints. This research can help fill the gap in lack of prominence for cultural nuances in principal succession. In these findings, for both the roles of the individual teacher and the entire school organization, culture is an important aspect to consider when making changes.

Grid and group theory gives researchers and practitioners a common language to discuss the culture of a school. However, Douglas narrows the options of possible cultures to four distinct prototypes that can be understood and discussed with common vocabulary for researchers, principals, and principal mentors. Principals could use grid and group to understand and navigate through the culture based on the cultural mindset of the organization.

In this study, the typology was useful in focusing cultural context issues such as school loyalty and pride as well as decision making responsibilities. This information is crucial to a new principal to help the leader understand and adjust to the culture in an effective way that will allow for productive changes.

Research

Principal succession research is often found in the areas of change or leadership, but less research is available for school administrators to look at the culture of the school and align the succession approach accordingly. The use of Mary Douglas' (1982) grid and group in the research adds to this smaller body of research.

Fink & Brayman (2004) stated that to understand principal succession two levels must be present: organization and individual. This research contributes to existing research that through the use of Mary Douglas' grid and group survey, the incoming principal can look at individual question responses and placements in the quadrants along with organizational responses to questions and quadrant placement.

Baker (2006) found through a case study of a newly assigned principal that growth could occur during leadership succession in some instances, but not in others often do to situational circumstances such as what the previous leader was like and what the teachers wanted in the new leader. This research contributes to that research by adding that the basic teacher desires are the same and if the principal listens to the input, the site specific needs can be addressed as well in a way that leads to successful leadership succession.

While MacFarlane (2009) was looking at leadership theory in principal succession, she found the importance of understanding each person's role in the organization. This research supports that Mary Douglas' grid and group could help a new principal identify the roles of the individual through the grid and group survey as well as the roll of the organizational parts.

In a seven year study, Fink and Brayman (2004, 2006) found that principal successions were successful or not based on the amount of inbound and outbound knowledge the new principal received. This research supported that as each principal talked about the need for communication for the outbound principal. Ryan received that information and Tom did not. When Tom was asked what he would do over, that need for that inbound knowledge is what he requested.

While looking into the importance of the first 90 days for a new principal, Vanporth (2000) found that personal skills outweigh professional skills when it comes to first impressions. This is supported in some ways, but contradicted in others according to this research. Every teacher wanted to know about the principal's professional background and was concerned there would be a lack of professional skills. However, when talking about first impressions, components that were recognized as impressive had to do with how well spoken the principal

was, how he seemed trustworthy or how the principal portrayed his family. The second part supported Vanporth's findings that personal skills were important

Recommendations

Multiple applications of this research should be considered for further study. While this study focused on using Douglas' grid and group theory for incoming principals, further research would be valuable to understand if the same benefits would be true for a sitting principal. A research question might pose: Can a current principal use Douglas' grid and group theory to help move a school organization from one quadrant to another in the same way a newly assigned principal? Furthermore, it would be beneficial to expand this research to school cultures that fell strongly into the corporate and/or collectivist quadrants to confirm the same results.

Further research would be beneficial that followed a newly assigned principal past the first year and into the second year or even further to see if changes could be implemented with positive, lasting results. This research could also be extended by conducting the same research at different educational levels such as elementary schools or urban schools.

It would also be interesting to conduct a research similar to this one, but in a format where participants could be interviewed before the principal was named during the first year and then after the first year. This research could show the changes in desires from before a principal was named to after the principal was named through the time that the principal was imbedded in the organization. In this manner, the research would depend less on institutional memory.

Other methodologies such as a quantitative study could be beneficial as well. For example, it would be relative to study data such as test scores, dropout rates, and other student data to see if any changes occurred during principal successions. A mixed study that incorporated the quantitative data of tests scores, dropout rates and other school data alongside

the qualitative data from faculty surveys and interviews could be very revealing of not only what do teachers want, but also what is most effective for students.

Other theories that could prove insightful into the principal succession could be Barnes' Social Network Theory or Fiedler's Contingency Theory. In this research, Marlin High School had a clear division among the faculty. Barnes' Social Network Theory is based on relevant ties between individuals focusing on the relationships between people rather than the attributes of people (Wade, 2005). Social Network Theory could be useful to the incoming principal in a way that he or she could identify the key personnel that crossed the divide and had ties with both groups. These faculty members would potentially be the most influential people on staff, and the people who the new principal needed to bring the faculty together or needed to move the faculty in a positive direction.

In Fiedler's Contingency Theory, it was believed that there was no right or wrong way or no best way to lead or change an organization. Every decision must be based on what was needed for that organization (Wade & Tomasevic, 2006). While the research conducted for this paper concluded that a principal needed to gather input, it also concluded that some action needed to be taken on that input. This action would be different in every school setting supporting Fiedler's theory that decisions have to be based on the various constraints of each organization.

Comments

As a principal that has been placed in two different schools and now a central office employee who is responsible for placing and advising principals, I found this research very explanatory to events I have witnessed. I now have a better understanding of why these events happened. Both times I was placed in a principal position, I had multiple teachers warn me that

either being a principal was not the same as being an assistant or being a middle school principal was not the same as an elementary principal. From this research I now understand they were aware of my background and wanted me to know I was going to have to change to fit them. They were not changing to fit my background.

Since the time this research was conducted, the district where I work had two principal openings. I used some of these findings to form our interview questions. Two specific interview questions based on this research were, “What will you do to help the teachers get to know you?” and “Which is more important, should you adapt to the school or the school adapt to you?” Follow up questions were then based on the original answers. It was interesting that some principals with previous experience felt they knew exactly how to run a school. They had done it before and would do it again just the same without any thought to the existing culture. This information was valuable in helping us make our hiring decisions.

Once the new principal was hired, I helped her send out a grid and group survey. Next, she sent a letter to the teachers in the mail that introduced her to the faculty and told them about her previous experiences as a principal. She also included an input form that had a picture of a chalkboard and a picture of a SMART Board. She asked the teachers to put down what they liked about the school and wanted to keep on the chalkboard and to put down new ideas for the school on the SMART Board. She is working with her leadership team to develop a plan that will use the input from the teachers to make changes and meet the needs of the teachers in a way that is beneficial for the school and in a way that will establish her as a leader that is going to listen to them and work for them. Our goal was that once this trust was established, the new principal would be able to implement the changes that were needed but were not teacher

initiated. It is my hope that this research will help others to understand their own cultural context for a more successful principal succession.

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APPENDIX A
QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS

Administrator Questions

1. Tell me a little bit about your background and what you did before taking this new position.
2. What are your perceptions of your new school?
3. How are you going to approach this transition?
4. What do you think will be your biggest challenge?
5. What priorities have you established?
6. What do you plan to accomplish in your new position?
7. Describe your biggest success.
8. Describe your biggest failure.
9. What do you perceive that the school needs the most from you?
10. What has been your biggest challenge?
11. What are you going to do next?

TEACHER/STAFF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me a little bit about what you teach and what extra duties you do at the school.
2. What did you expect from your new principal?
3. What were your biggest fears concerning this leadership change?

4. If you could give the new principal some advice, what would it be?
5. As far as the new principal is concerned, what is your impression so far?
6. What has impressed you the most about the new principal?
7. How do your peers feel about the new principal?
8. What would you change about the new principal if you could?

APPENDIX B

GRID/GROUP TYPOLOGY QUESTIONNAIRE

Grid & Group Assessment Tool ~ Cultural Assessment ~

Please provide your school or organization name here:

Please indicate your position or title:

- Teacher (specify position title)
- Support Staff (specify position title)
- Administrator (specify position title)
- Other (please explain)

INSTRUCTIONS

Below are 24 items. Each item reflects a continuum from 1 to 8. For each item, read the entire item and choose the statement that you think best represents your school site or organization. Then, on the continuum, mark the button that represents the degree to which that statement applies to your school site or organization.

GRID CONSIDERATIONS

1. Authority structures are:

Decentralized/ non-hierarchical 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Centralized/ hierarchical

2. Job responsibilities are:

Ill-defined 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Well defined

3. Individual teachers have:

Full autonomy in textbook selection 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 No autonomy in textbook selection

4. Individual teachers have:

Full autonomy in generating their educational goals 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 No autonomy in generating their educational goals

5. Individual teachers have:

Full autonomy in choosing instructional methods/strategies 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 No autonomy in choosing instructional methods/strategies

6. Students are:

Encouraged to participate/take ownership of their education 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Discouraged from participating/taking ownership of their education

7. Teachers obtain instructional resources through:

Individual negotiation 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Administrative allocation

8. Instruction is:

Personalized for each student 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Not personalized for each student

9. Individual teachers are motivated by:

Intrinsic/self-defined interests 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Extrinsic/institutional rewards

10. Hiring decision are made:

With teacher input 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Without teacher input

11. Class schedules are determined through:

With teacher input 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Without teacher input

12. Rules and procedures are:

Few 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Numerous

GROUP CONSIDERATIONS

1. Chain of command is:

Individual teachers working alone 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 All educators working collaboratively

2. Educators' socialization and work are:

Separate/dichotomous activities 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Incorporated/united activities

3. Extrinsic rewards primarily benefit:

The individual 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Everyone at the school site

4. Teaching and learning are planned/organized around:

Individual teacher goals/interests 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Group goals/interests

5. Teaching performance is evaluated according to:

Individual teacher goals, priorities, and criteria 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Group goals, priorities, and criteria

6. Teachers work:

In isolation toward goals and objectives 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Collaboratively toward goals and objectives

7. Curricular goals are generated:

Individually 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Collaboratively

8. Communication flows primarily through:

Individual, informal Corporate, formal

networks

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

networks

9. Instructional resources are controlled/owned:

Individually

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

Collaboratively

10. People hold:

No allegiance/loyalty
to the school

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

Much allegiance/loyalty
to the school

11. Responsibilities of teachers and administrators are:

Ambiguous/fragmented
with no accountability

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

Clear/communal with
much accountability

12. Most decisions are made:

Privately by factions or
independent verdict

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

Corporately by
consensus or group
approval

Submit Form

Reset Form

~ Cultural Preferences ~

Appendix C

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Monday, February 06, 2012

IRB Application No ED11203

Proposal Title: Principal Succession: A View Through the Lens of Mary Douglas' Grid and Group

Reviewed and Processed as: Expedited

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 2/5/2013

Principal Investigator(s):

Angela Mills
4343 WOKC 150th
Okarche, OK 73762

Edward Harris
308 Willard
Stillwater, OK 74078

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.


The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Shelia Kennison, Chair
Institutional Review Board

Superintendent Phone Script

Hello, my name is Angela Mills. I need to ask you a favor. I'm working on my doctoral dissertation which is over principal succession. I need two high school principals that are experienced, yet now working at a different school to participate in my research. I would like to use your high school which has a new principal as one of these sites. This would include asking all employees at the site to voluntarily fill out an on-line survey for the purpose of describing the school culture, after that I would want to interview 10-20 percent of the site employees and the high school principal for further information. I would also like to make observations and collect any documents the principal would feel comfortable sharing. (pause)

I want to assure you that this is voluntary for the teachers and principal and that all data will be kept confidential. Do you have any questions about how that will be done?

Can you send me a letter granting permission on school letterhead?

Okla. State Univ. IRB Approved <u>2/6/12</u> Expires <u>2/5/13</u> IRB # <u>ED11203</u>

Phone Script
Request for Principal Participation

Hello, my name is Angela Mills. I am a Doctoral Candidate working on a research project for my dissertation. My topic is principal succession. Your name was given to me from CCOSA as an experienced principal working in a different building this year.

Is this correct?

(if yes, proceed. If no, thank them & end the call.)

If you are interested in helping, what I will be asking to send out a 24 question survey to your faculty and staff that will provide me with information about the culture of your school. After that, I will need to interview you and 10-20 percent of the school employees. I would also like to observe a faculty meeting or some committee meetings. Any questions so far?

Just so you will know, everything will be kept confidential. The interviews will be recorded, but all recordings will be kept secure and erased after the research is complete. All names or identifying information will be changed to a pseudonym. There will be consent forms to sign at the time of the interviews.

(pause for more questions)

Exchange contact information

Thank you, I look forward to working with you.

Okla. State Univ. IRB Approved <i>2/6/12</i> Expires <i>2/5/13</i> IRB # <i>ED-11-203</i>

Principal to Teachers & Staff
E-mail Script

I wanted to let you know that Angela Mills, a Doctorial Candidate from OSU is using our school for a research project concerning principal succession. She will be sending out more information and requesting you to fill out a survey. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary, and your responses will be submitted anonymously. Again, this is not a requirement or a request from me. I am just letting you know that it has been approved for her to request this information.

Okla. State Univ.
IRB
Approved *2/6/12*
Expires *2/5/13*
IRB # *EDU003*

E-mail to Teacher & Staff Script

My name is Angela Mills. I am conducting research for my doctoral dissertation. My topic is principal succession. Your school has been chosen because you have a different principal this year than you did last year. I have been given permission from _____ (superintendent) and _____ (principal) to request your input on a completely voluntary basis.

Below is a link to an on-line survey. This is a 24 question survey that should take no more than 10-15 minutes to complete. You will be asked to rate your school on a scale of 1-8 between two points.

Your survey results will be collected through Oklahoma State University in a secure manner that cannot be traced back to the participant. I will receive an excel spread sheet of the group responses only.

I also need to interview some employees at the high school. If you are willing to volunteer for an interview or would like more information about the interview process, respond to this e-mail. Otherwise, no response is necessary.

(link)

Thank you for any help you have been willing to provide.

Oklahoma State Univ. IRB Approved <i>2-16-12</i> Expires <i>2-5-13</i> IRB # <i>ED-11-203</i>

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Employee Interview

Project Title: Principal Succession: A view through the Lens of Mary Douglas' Grid and Group

Investigator: Angela Mills, Doctoral Candidate, Oklahoma State University

Purpose: This study is designed to understand the principal succession process through the experiences of teachers, staff and administrators. Because the school where you work is experiencing the principal succession process first hand this year, I am interviewing employees at your school. Interviews are based on approximately 10, pre-determined questions with follow-up and clarification questions as needed. The purpose of the interview is to record your experiences and perceptions during the principal succession process.

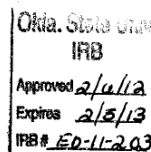
Procedures: Interview volunteers will be asked if they want to conduct the interview on or off campus. If they desire off campus, a mutually agreed upon location will be determined. Interviewees will be asked to fill out a demographic page prior the interview and bring it with them. During the interview, participants will be asked to describe expectations, concerns and experiences during the succession process. Interviews will be recorded for the purpose of protecting the integrity of the responses.

Risks of Participation: There are no known risks associated with this project which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

Benefits: There are no benefits to the participants in this research other than contributing to the knowledge base of principal succession for the betterment of educational practices.

Confidentiality: Interview recordings will be stored on a secure, password protected server only accessible by the researcher. Transcriptions and reporting will use pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants. Demographic pages will be coded to match interviews numerically not by name. Demographic pages, researcher notes and transcriptions will be stored in a locking in a file cabinet. Any report made to the public will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. It is possible that the consent process and data collection will be observed by research oversight staff responsible for safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of people who participate in research.

Compensation: None



Contacts: If you have any questions regarding the project, please contact the principal investigator or the committee chair:

Primary Investigator	Committee Chair
Angela Mills	Dr. Ed Harris
Doctorial Candidate	Professor
Oklahoma State University	Oklahoma State University
angela.mills@okstate.edu	ed.harris@okstate.edu
405-373-5136	405-744-7932

If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact Dr. Shelia Kennison, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu.

Participant Rights: Your participation is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to discontinue participation at any time without reprisal, prejudice, penalty or consequences of any kind..

Signatures:

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this form has been given to me.

Signature of Participant

Date

I certify that I have personally explained this document before requesting that the participant sign it.

Signature of Researcher

Date

Okla. State Univ.
IRB
Approved 2/16/12
Expires 2/5/13
IRB # ED-11-203

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT
Principal

Project Title: Principal Succession: A view through the Lens of Mary Douglas' Grid and Group

Investigator: Angela Mills, Doctoral Candidate, Oklahoma State University

Purpose: This study is designed to understand the principal succession process through the experiences of teachers, staff and administrators. Because the school where you work is experiencing the principal succession process first hand this year, I am interviewing employees at your school. Interviews are based on approximately 10, pre-determined questions with follow-up and clarification questions as needed. The purpose of the interview is to record your experiences and perceptions during the principal succession process.

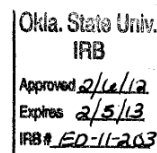
Procedures: Interview volunteers will be asked if they want to conduct the interview on or off campus. If they desire off campus, a mutually agreed upon location will be determined. Interviewees will be asked to fill out a demographic page prior the interview and bring it with them. During the interview, participants will be asked to describe expectations, concerns and experiences during the succession process. Interviews will be recorded for the purpose of protecting the integrity of the responses.

Risks of Participation: There are no known risks associated with this project which are greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

Benefits: There are no benefits to the participants in this research other than contributing to the knowledge base of principal succession for the betterment of educational practices.

Confidentiality: Interview recordings will be stored on a secure, password protected server only accessible by the researcher. Transcriptions and reporting will use pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants. Demographic pages will be coded to match interviews numerically not by name. Demographic pages, researcher notes and transcriptions will be stored in a locking in a file cabinet. Any report made to the public will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. It is possible that the consent process and data collection will be observed by research oversight staff responsible for safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of people who participate in research.

Compensation: None



Contacts: If you have any questions regarding the project, please contact the principal investigator or the committee chair:

Primary Investigator	Committee Chair
Angela Mills	Dr. Ed Harris
Doctorial Candidate	Professor
Oklahoma State University	Oklahoma State University
angela.mills@okstate.edu	ed.harris@okstate.edu
405-373-5136	405-744-7932

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Signatures:

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy of this form has been given to me.

Signature of Participant

Date

I certify that I have personally explained this document before requesting that the participant sign it.

Signature of Researcher

Date



**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY**

Title: Principal Succession: A View Through the Lens of Mary Douglas² Grid and Group

Investigator(s): Angela Mills, OSU Doctorial Candidate

Purpose: This study is designed to understand the principal succession process through the experiences of teachers, staff and administrators. Because the school where you work is experiencing the principal succession process first hand this year, I am surveying employees at your school to help understand the culture in your building.

What to Expect: This research study is administered online. Participation in will involve the completion of 24 questions. You must complete each question before moving on to the next. It should take you about 15 minutes to complete. This survey needs to be completed within the next two weeks. You do not have to respond to this e-mail unless you want to participate in a follow-up interview.

Risks: There are no risks associated with this project which are expected to be greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life.

Benefits: There are no benefits to the participants in this research other than contributing to the knowledge base of principal succession for the betterment of educational practices.

Compensation: None

Your Rights and Confidentiality: Your participation in this research is voluntary. There is no penalty for refusal to participate, and you are free to withdraw your consent and participation in this project at any time, without penalty.

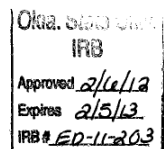
Confidentiality: You will not be identified individually; data will be presented as a group rather than individually. As a researcher I will only receive an excel document with responses for each question.

Contacts: You may contact any of the researchers at the following addresses and phone numbers, should you desire to discuss your participation in the study and/or request information about the results of the study:

Primary Investigator
Angela Mills
Doctorial Candidate
Oklahoma State University
angela.mills@okstate.edu
405-373-5136

Committee Chair
Dr. Ed Harris
Professor
Oklahoma State University
ed.harris@okstate.edu
405-744-7932

If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact Dr. Shelia Kennison, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu



If you choose to participate: Please, click NEXT if you choose to participate. By clicking NEXT, you are indicating that you freely and voluntarily and agree to participate in this study and you also acknowledge that you are at least 18 years of age.

It is recommended that you print a copy of this consent page for your records before you begin the study by clicking below.

Olda. State Univ.
IRB
Approved *2/6/12*
Expires *2/5/13*
IRB # *ED-11-203*

VITA

Angela Mills

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy/Education

Thesis: PRINCIPAL SUCCESSION: A VIEW THROUGH THE LENS OF
MARY DOUGLAS' GRID AND GROUP

Major Field: Educational Leadership Studies

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Education in your major at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in July, 2012.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in School Administration at Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Weatherford, Oklahoma in 2001.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education at Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Weatherford, Oklahoma in 1989.

Experience:

2011 – Present Director of Curriculum, Piedmonts Public Schools
2008 – 2011 Middle School Principal, Sequoyah Middle School, Edmond Public Schools
2004 – 2008 Elementary Principal, Charles Haskell Elementary, Edmond Public Schools
2003 – 2004 Assistant Elementary Principal, Charles Haskell Elementary, Edmond Public Schools
2000 – 2003 5th grade teacher, El Reno Public Schools
1998 – 2000 3rd & 4th grade teacher, Leedey Public Schools
1992 – 1998 6th, 7th & 8th grade language arts, El Reno Public Schools
1990 – 1992 2nd grade teacher, Snyder Public Schools
1989 – 1990 School Secretary, Snyder Public Schools

Professional Memberships:

- Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, ASCD
- Oklahoma Associations of Elementary School Principals, OAESP
- Oklahoma Middle Level Education Association, OMLEA
 - Board Member and Conference Committee

Name: Angela Mills

Date of Degree: July, 2012

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: PRINCIPAL SUCCESSION: A VIEW THROUGH
THE LENS OF MARY DOUGLAS' GRID AND GROUP

Pages in Study: 137

Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Major Field: School Administration

Scope and Method of Study: This Naturalistic Inquiry Case Study examines principal succession at two small, rural high schools through naturalistic inquiry presented through the lens of Mary Douglas' grid and group cultural typology. A grid and group cultural analysis survey was sent to all school employees then in-depth, follow-up interviews and observations were conducted in order to gather the personal side of the principal succession process. This method provided a constructivist perspective.

Findings and Conclusions: The results of this study are meant to contribute to the body of literature on principal succession. The findings provide insights that are helpful for incoming principals as they traverse through the first year in a new assignment and for central office administration as they place and mentor principals placed in new positions. Findings included the need for the principal to provide credibility, stability, listen and gather input and to earn trust and respect before any cultural changes could be accomplished.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Dr. Ed. Harris
