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THE UTILITY OF A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
OF A CULTURE OF LEADERSHIP

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Education

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Educational Leadership

By

James E. Wortman

May 2017

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James E. Wortman

2017

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
ED.D. IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Education (Ed.D.)

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March 2, 2017

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ABSTRACT

THE UTILITY OF A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF A SCHOOL CULTURE LEADERSHIP

By

James E. Wortman

May 2017

Dissertation supervised by Connie M. Moss, Ed.D.

The purpose of this study is to determine the utility of a Culture of Leadership Framework for both evaluating and contributing to the formation of a dynamic school culture that infuses leadership up, down, and throughout the membership of the school learning community with students as a central figure. The Culture of Leadership Framework emerged from an extensive review of the literature and includes four distinct dimensions (indicators) that become critical to analyzing the data: Leadership Orientation, Leveraging Leadership, Leadership for Learning, and Leadership Growth. The researcher used a general interpretive process of close reading to develop themes from extant feedback and survey data from a ten-year period and an online narrative response from participants at the end of the ten-year period. Using a constant comparative analysis of the themes through the lens of the Culture of Leadership and established look-

for success criteria from the four dimensions, the researcher organized the findings from the data across the ten-year timeline. The data showed positive participant language and action changes over time with regard to the leadership principles aligned with the Culture of Leadership Framework. The participants also acknowledged and celebrated student involvement, engagement, and actions related to their exposure to their leadership learning and opportunity. Having established the utility of the Culture of Leadership Framework, the researcher concludes with a practical discussion and an application workshop for a building principal to use to intentionally and purposefully implement a Culture of Leadership Theory of Action.

DEDICATION

“Life is not accumulation; it is about contribution.” –Stephen Covey

I dedicate this Dissertation of Practice to my family—my parents, siblings, children, grandchildren, and my wife. My understanding of both culture and leadership is rooted in the lessons I learned at a very early age from my father and mother and from the lively interactions I experienced growing up in a home with four brothers (Ken, Dan, Rob, and Tom) and five sisters (Cindy, Ginny, Pam, Barb, and Missie) in the rural community of St. Marys, PA. Dad modeled the patience, meticulousness, and work ethic associated with great leadership. Mom displayed an incredible ability to differentiate to the individual strengths of each family member and found unique ways to empower all ten of us to become the very best version of ourselves. More importantly, my mother and father loved and laughed freely while providing a rich family-first culture that continues to influence my thoughts and actions as a brother, father, and husband.

I can't begin to enumerate the many ways my brothers and sisters impacted my life. Suffice it to say they represent the loving, caring, supportive, and cohesive legacy of Ivan and Ruby Wortman. All the best a brother could ask for.

My own daughters—Jamie, Rachelle, and Danielle—are my pride and joy and the inspiration I channeled during my writing and researching. Their love continues to bring out the best in me as a father and they have been cheering and supporting this academic effort from the very start. Finally, this work is dedicated to my loving wife Kathy. She is the love of my life and she makes me a better person. She has been patient, encouraging, and amazingly supportive during this long journey. More so, she has been my devoted life partner and the genuine leader in nurturing a loving family culture for our children and grandchildren.

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“Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, but the parent of all others.” –Cicero

First and foremost, I acknowledge Dr. Connie Moss as my committee chair. Dr. Moss provided me challenge after challenge to deliver scholarship worthy work. At the same time, she supported each challenge with personal action—close reading, sharp editing, structural adjustment, and relentless feed forward. She is a shining exemplar of teaching practice and she motivated me to be a scholarly practitioner. Second, I acknowledge Dr. Carol Park and Dr. Glenn Smartschan as valuable members of my committee. Dr. Park served as expert guide to the methods in my study and provided major support for my literature review and important insight for refining my final manuscript. Dr. Smartschan added his leadership and culture expertise to help me stay relevant and focused on the research, the writing, and my practice as a school leader. Third, I acknowledge my doctoral cohort colleagues—in particular, Dr. Don Accamando and Dr. Stephanie McHugh. In the immortal words of songwriter Warren Zevon: “you maketh my spirit to shine.”

I also acknowledge the St. Marys Area Middle school family that served as the focus of this study. With sincerest of pride, I recognize the teachers and support staff as passionate middle level educators with a genuine dedication to nurturing a “Culture of Leadership” with students as a central figure.

Finally, I acknowledge my mentor teacher and friend, Mr. Robert J. Schreiber, Jr. Rob set the compass of my career to a true north of unrelenting professionalism nearly forty years ago and served as a model and a concrete pillar of the practice of teaching and learning during my principal tenure and throughout this study.

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CHAPTER I

RATIONALE AND INTRODUCTION

The broad issue of leadership, school culture, and change is dominated by discussions and markers that measure actions, interactions, and relationships associated with the adults in the school setting (Boyce, 2003; Gallucci, 2008; Hallinger, 2003; Honig, 2008; Louis Seashore, 2008; Stein & Coburn, 2008). The literature consistently encourages school leaders to be the change agent catalysts (Barth, 2002; Fullan, 2006a; Kondokci & Beycioglu, 2014; Payne, 2008) while also noting that teachers involved in professional learning communities have the wherewithal to change the existing culture and drive the daily work of the school (DuFour, 2015; DuFour & Fullan, 2013; DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2010). What if we move the markers, measures, and discussion to yet another level? The adults involved in school culture, and focused on instructional improvement have only taken us so far. Fullan (2002) argues:

The principal as instructional leader has taken us only so far in the quest for continuous improvement. We now must raise our sights and focus on principals as leaders in a culture of change and the associated conditions that will make this possible on a large scale, sustainable basis (p. 20).

What if we seek out the necessary continuous improvement with principals “raising their sights,” and going well beyond the en vogue instructional leadership? Though I’m not certain of the “associated conditions” Fullan (2002, p.20) had in mind to obtain large scale and sustainable improvement, I propose nurturing and developing a much more dynamic school culture that infuses leadership up, down, and throughout the membership of the school learning community with students as a central figure.

To add substance and structure to my proposal, the present study examines 10 years of artifacts that tell the story of my own school culture journey at a rural middle school in St. Marys, Pennsylvania. It is a journey characterized by a great deal of action, reflection, and dialogue. The study supports my argument for encouraging similar journeys in schools that fit Fielding's (2006) description as "places that involve young people in...reflection and dialogue, places where humanity emerges from and guides our learning together" (p. 312). What follows is the story of the school culture that emerged from actions that began ten years ago (then). It is also the story of how that culture continues to influence all members of the school community they continue to shape and build in the present (now). To put the story and the analysis of the artifacts of that cultural influence in context, I offer a theory to explain how things transpired and to advocate for similar cultural journeys.

Introduction

It was a homecoming of sorts. I arrived to the principalship of the St. Marys Area Middle School in March of 2006 after nearly three years of middle school leadership in a neighboring school district. I was now the instructional leader in my hometown's public middle school in the same community where I had been both an educator and educational leader in the Catholic school system for twenty years. My journey from Catholic High School teacher and principal to public education in the middle school setting included valuable K-8 Catholic school leadership and an eye-opening year as an entrepreneur and Director of Education for Explore Creative Learning Center in the state of North Carolina. I returned to my Pennsylvania education roots when the business venture in North Carolina floundered. Upon returning, I was fortunate to be selected as the new middle school principal in a small rural setting that provided me a wide-open opportunity to learn about and experience public education at the intriguing middle level. Each

step of my journey uniquely contributed to my awareness and understanding of the meaning and import of school culture and leadership in the school learning community. Here before me was an opportunity to put all my prior school leadership knowledge and experience toward impacting a different school culture.

St. Marys Area Middle School Culture – Then

I have vivid memories of my initial interactions with the staff and students of the St. Marys Area Middle School (SMAMS). Arriving to the school leader position in March allowed me a tailor made opportunity to observe, listen, and learn. My fourth different stint at leading a school community was beginning near the fourth quarter of the school year and, as a result, the organization, anticipation, pressure, and anxiety associated with school start-up was not on my shoulders. In retrospect, this was a major blessing. I was able to forge relationships and to interact, reflect, and discern with an eye to the future and without a responsibility for the past. Organizational culture expert, Edgar Schein (1992; 2004; 2010) identifies three levels of culture: the more outward view level of artifacts, and the two more inward view levels of espoused beliefs and basic assumptions. It would take me time to determine the inward view mind-set, philosophy, and ideologies that were foundational to the underlying assumptions driving the actions and behavior at SMAMS. The more outward view artifacts (e.g., anecdotes, symbols, language physical arrangements, norms, traditions) and espoused values and beliefs (e.g., commitments, ethic, feelings, justifications, purpose) were readily available for my interpretation of the school culture (Elder & Paul, 2012; Fullan, 2001; Geertz, 1973; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010; Peterson & Cosner, 2006; Schein, 2010; Sullivan, 2009). The outgoing middle school principal (who was also the newly appointed superintendent) introduced me to the staff in the Large Group Instruction (LGI) room at the end of the March 1,

2006 school day. The teachers were scattered about in the two-hundred plus seat mini-auditorium. Most in attendance were seated in the rear seats. I distinctly noted their seating arrangement (one of my earliest visual artifacts) because having the fifty-person group spread out in the large space made it a challenge for me to communicate effectively. My mentor teacher from my first year as an educator and two of my former student-athletes were among the teaching staff I was addressing. I also remember noticing an avant-garde community legend science instructor and a highly successful varsity wrestling coach that I was familiar with by way of reputation. I made it my goal to get to know the others members of the team.

The Military Leadership Influence

My perceptions of the sporadic seating and the predominance of individuals in the back seats of the LGI proved to be symbolic of what I learned about the staff in the early days of my tenure. I found little evidence of a unifying vision or mission among the professional staff. The outgoing principal was a Colonel in the Army National Guard and had a well documented reputation as a top-down delegator of responsibility with a transactional style of leadership. The principal was well liked, but his tenure followed five different school leader transitions over a ten-year period. The lack of consistency in vision and mission I perceived was likely the result of the many changes in leadership. The outgoing superintendent was also particularly authoritarian.

The staff was responsible and dutifully waited to be told what to do and when from the administration. There was a fairly equal gender distribution among the staff and a balanced mixture of veteran and younger staff. There were a handful of dominant and highly respected voices on the teacher roster. In combination with the military status of the outgoing principal, it is worth noting that the most respected teacher voice was a military veteran. Additionally, the serving Dean of Students was an active member of the Air National Guard. Early on, I

remember reflecting on the responsiveness of the staff to any directive and how curiously they reacted to my asking for their thoughts and input. The professional staff seemed quite accustomed to receiving and following orders without question. The more I got to know each member of the school community, the more I became aware of their dedication as educators and their desire to be “good soldiers” for their school leader. Because I noted the staff looking so prominently to me to lead them, I recall feeling a deep sense of responsibility for moving the school in the right direction on behalf of students. At the same time, it wasn’t long before I detected school culture characteristics that were troubling to me and challenging to my personal and professional philosophy and my leadership style.

This philosophy underscored my perception of the overall school culture as toxic as a result of the well intended, top-down, punitive, and oppressive approach to student performance. I came to believe that the carrot-stick style of rewards and punishments could have contributed to a school culture with significant academic failure and retention rates, exceptionally high discipline referrals, and pervasive negativity among stakeholders. In addition to the aforementioned turnover rate in the principal position, the lack of professional development and exposure to middle level effective practice was a contributing factor to the negative school culture. To be fair, there were attempts to move in the direction of a more positive, inviting, and high performance school culture. Nevertheless, the overarching philosophy of using extrinsic means to force student compliance and a belief in restricting student participation as a discipline consequence ran counter to my assumptions regarding effective ways to gain student and parent buy-in.

The middle school was averaging over 2,000 discipline referrals per year in the five years prior to my arrival and hit a high water mark of 2,267 referrals during the 2005-06 school year—

the very year that I came on board. Many referrals were classic example of the cardinal sin of mixing behavior and academics. Three incomplete homework assignments resulted in a discipline referral and often students also received a grade of zero for those missing assignments. Failures were rampant. Seventy-six students failed 134 classes in the very first marking period of the 2006-07 school year. There were no student remediation opportunities in place (i.e., afterschool homework or peer tutoring) and summer school was not available for middle school students who needed to recover from failing grades to avoid retention. As a result, many students were retained at each grade level and some students remained in the middle school for five years.

Failing students were frequently restricted from assemblies and activities as punishment and placed in large supervised study halls to make up their work. Grades and appropriate behavior were used as compensation. The well compensated students were provided privileges and the poorly compensated were deemed undeserving of participation. Poorly compensated students were angry and would frequently build-up to disrespectful outbursts with staff out of frustration. Parents were angry because their students came home angry. Forms requiring signatures from home were used as bargaining chips for attending frequently held school wide dances during afternoon activity periods—no returned form, no dance. Failing classes—no dance. Discipline issues—no dance. Again, students were angry.

These conditions were difficult to witness yet justified by the staff as an important means of teaching responsibility and respect for authority. Confrontational phone calls from parents challenging discipline practices and activity restrictions were not uncommon. In an effort to be more transparent and informative, past practice was to begin the sixth grade start of the year orientation with parents and new students by sharing new expectations of middle school through a PowerPoint presentation of the school rules and the distribution of a pocket-size school rules

and regulations book. The orientation exercise was handled entirely by the administration and held in the gymnasium with parents seated in the bleachers. Ethical questions of a just, fair, and caring environment resonated with me as I considered the existing student management practices. At the same time, I was also learning about the academic and student activity practices and protocols in my new school.

Academic Practice

The movement toward the middle school concept (6-8 or 5-8) from junior high schools (7-9) grew steadily from the mid 1960's. By the year 2000 sixty-nine percent of the schools in the United States were middle schools (National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform, 2001). Accordingly, middle level effective practice was also growing and developing. Despite this growth and notoriety, recognized and research-based mid-level practices like grade level teacher teaming and cross curricular collaboration on interdisciplinary projects were absent in the St. Marys Area Middle School (SMAMS). Academic tracking practices that had fallen out of favor in effective middle schools were still the norm at SMAMS. Highly qualified and praxis certified teachers from the sixth grade level taught seventh and eighth grade courses in core subject areas that were titled "adaptive." Praxis certified teachers at the seventh and eighth grade level were also assigned to "adaptive" sections in subject areas outside of their main certification. These "adaptive" classes were less populated sections of core subjects (e.g., Math, Science, or Reading) designed to more effectively meet the needs of students with lower ability. In reality, the sections became an attractive placement option for students who lacked motivation or had become discipline problems. As a result, the adaptive sections were viewed negatively by teachers because of the additional preparation required and the instructional delivery in a more challenging classroom environment.

Students with high ability and interest in academics were provided opportunities in upper level science, upper level math, English literature, and foreign language. Students who were less academically inclined were placed in reading, basic math, and basic science. Students were keenly aware of their placement, concluded why, and then actively expressed their response by way of compromised cooperation and engagement. Students were further stigmatized by the mental health support practice known as Therapeutic Staff Support (TSS). The TSS workers were assigned to specific students and followed them from classroom to classroom through their scheduled day in order to provide behavior and mental health support at the classroom level. Instructional aides (hired by the school district) were also assigned to accompany identified “high needs” special education students. Inclusion practices of adaptation and accommodation were a declared expectation for the regular education teachers, but little had been done in the way of professional development to assist them with the practice. There were no co-teaching situations of special education staff working alongside regular education staff to provide effective inclusion instruction. And, although basic cost-effective student planners made at the local intermediate unit print shop were distributed to all students, there was no consistent use of the planners by either students or staff.

Co-Curricular Activity

The systems in place at SMAMS worked against an effective co-curricular environment. There was no advisory period designated to build student-teacher relationships and develop an adult advocate for every student. There were no class officers or student council to help students experience democratic practice. Each grade level conducted its own fundraiser to build up the class treasury for an eighth grade trip. The resultant fundraisers took place at three different times of the school year with class-advisor teachers coordinating the effort. Inevitably, the class

fundraisers were high effort low reward affairs. Rare class meetings were typically scheduled for the purpose of distributing important paperwork (i.e., fundraising information). A forty-five minute daily homeroom period served as the student club period two days out of the week and allowed opportunity for the band and chorus to meet the other three days. Students who did not choose band or chorus class were involved in study hall time for individual work, available for make-up work with teachers, or pulled out for tutoring based on being below proficiency on the state assessment in math or reading. The great potential of the two days of student club activity was mitigated by a lack of exciting, engaging, and viable clubs for every student. Some staff members were gung-ho and went all out for their club activity, while others who were less than enthused only met the bare minimum requirement of hosting a club. And, even though grade levels rotated sign-up order to open equal opportunity for the most desired club activities, the strategy always left a portion of the student body involved with a club that was a shallow placeholder and not their first or second choice.

Outliers as Building Blocks

Despite all the shortcomings and challenges, I observed in the school culture, there were outlier pockets of positive practice and impactful activity that rose to an obviously different standard. The band and chorus were exceptional and had notable student involvement. The Civil War Club was full of engaged students who met all year long, made an annual field trip to Gettysburg, held a Tea Party or Civil War Ball, and hosted a school wide Civil War Encampment in the spring. Several teachers were passionately involved in the brainstorming, planning, and construction of an Outdoor Classroom complex with a vision of hands-on science for students. At the time of my arrival, there was a fully operational trout nursery on the middle school campus and a group of ambitious students engaged in the task of raising over 500 trout from

fingerlings in the fall to stream stocking size in the spring. One outlier event immediately caught my attention for a catalyst for changing professional practice and the school culture—the off-site two day 8th Grade outing at a regional Boy Scout facility called Camp Mountain Run (CMR).

The CMR outing had undergone several evolutions over the years and had its beginning in 1997 as an isolated event intended to strengthen relationships among the eighth grade students. The initial two-day voluntary overnight excursion involved approximately seventy-five percent of the eighth grade students and also included about thirty-five percent of their parents. Ironically, by the late spring, many eighth graders were restricted from attending this outing as a result of disciplinary consequences for their poor behavior or grades over the course of the school year. Some of the students who needed to learn appropriate social interaction skills were eliminated from participation. Even after the CMR outing was moved to the beginning of the school year several years prior to my coming to the school in 2006, participation still suffered. By late September some students were already restricted from attending for behavior or grade issues and many eighth graders simply chose not to attend. Nonetheless, my first exposure to the student-student and teacher-student interaction and activity at Camp Mountain Run left me wondering how I might replicate and build on the engagement level, teamwork, learning, and cooperative spirit that I witnessed. Nurturing and developing a school culture of leadership based on this powerful off-site outing held enormous possibility. Inherently, the CMR took students and staff out of their comfort zone and away from deeply embedded norms, habits, beliefs, values and underlying assumptions that were driving their daily actions. This factor held vast potential as something to capitalize on moving forward.

St. Marys Area Middle School Culture – Now

Flash forward to the 2015-16 school year. The middle school library is filled with a mixture of excitement, anxiety, and anticipation. Teachers and support staff are busy enjoying coffee, juice, and breakfast snacks while talking with one another and establishing seats for the inservice presentations. Ten middle school professionals will take turns to share their insights from the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) national conference they attended in October. The ten teachers had given a brief overview to their colleagues at the November faculty meeting and also presented to the school board in December. This is different. This is colleague-to-colleague. The presenters are nervous, and I am excited. This is going to be a significant step in our journey of nurturing our school culture of leadership. Teacher leaders are about to become agents of change beyond their classroom walls and much of what they will offer to their fellow educators focuses on making a deep commitment to developing relationships with students by meeting them where they are socially, emotionally, and academically. One of our SMAMS espoused beliefs (captured in a banner artifact in our main lobby) is about to come alive in our library: *Through these doors walk the most passionate middle school teachers in the world.*

Visionary Leadership Influence

The Large Group Instruction (LGI) mini-auditorium setting has long since given way to the more intimate school library for all staff meetings. To the degree possible, each gathering includes breaking of bread together—snacks, breakfasts, lunches, and refreshments. After ten years, this tradition is well ingrained and the food facilitates the camaraderie and congeniality that establishes the groundwork for the collegiality and collaboration that are necessary for continuous improvement (DuFour, 2015; Fullan, 2001, 2007, 2014). The school vision—what

we aspire to be at our ideal best—is prominently on display as you enter the front lobby: *A World-Class Education...with the Rural Advantage!* Our core values—how we treat each other—are also displayed on banners in the main lobby with each value connected to a corresponding phrase to clarify the meaning for all who enter: *Respect—Like I Want to be Treated; Responsibility—Because it is up to me; Effort—to do my best every day.* The vision and core values were developed through a collaborative process. To promote student ownership, creative motivational posters focusing on Respect, Responsibility, Effort, and Leadership are designed each year by eighth graders and adorned with a quote along and a unique photo involving classmates. Six different sets of these student designed core value posters are on display as artifacts throughout the building. All members of the school community share leadership of the school’s vision and core values.

Our collective mission—what we are all about on a daily basis—establishes the cultural foundation: *Empowering learners for the 21st Century **S**ocially, **M**orally, and **A**cademically with a **S**tandards aligned system using **D**ata informed decisions.* The concise and easily memorized form is—*Empowering learners SMASD.* We revisit and discuss the vision, mission, and core values as the school year opens, at class meetings, and at faculty meetings. We share and compile academic data, attendance data, discipline referral data, participation data, and fundraising data as evidence of progress toward the mission. Our collective scorekeeping and regular reporting of the score has the net effect of holding all of us in the learning community accountable at all times. There is a transparency of both expectations and results.

Ten years of stability in the principal position has played a role in the alignment and consistency between words and actions associated with the school vision, mission, and core values. Nevertheless, it is the institutionalizing of the leadership efforts associated with these

principles at all levels that ensures the sustainability of our school culture change. The distributive ownership moved us from an extrinsic carrot-stick mentality to a commitment to the intrinsically motivating belief in doing what is ethical. As a consequence, the top-down punitive culture of controlling students to comply with rules has been replaced by an intentional journey of cooperative creativity and purposeful mutual benefit. Discipline referrals have been reduced fourteen-hundred percent (from 2,267 to 162) and per quarter failure rates have also significantly reduced. Grade level retention is nominal and remediation opportunity is plentiful with daily homework club, consistent grade checking and caring connections during advisory period, and academic assemblies to recognize and promote achievement as well as effort toward continuous improvement.

Student ambassadors from the upper grades welcome new students to the school and provide guided tours at the opening of the year sixth grade orientation. Representatives from the teaching staff meet with parents in small group sessions to open the lines of communication and afford opportunity for a genuine discussion of concerns about the transition to middle school. For the first forty-five days of the school year every sixth grader is scheduled for a course entitled Success @ Sixth where they are involved in team building, time management, study skills, and middle school expectations. Success @ Sixth is facilitated by all sixth grade teaching staff and all specials subject teachers to ensure every new student is generously welcomed to their new school and has a number of adult advocate possibilities to help them adjust.

Academic Advancements

As a result of regularly scheduled teacher collaboration time, teaming practice at the sixth grade level, and my guidance and direction, academic tracking slowly and steadily diminished in the name of providing equal opportunity curriculum access to all students. Adaptive classes

were the first to fall because teachers were quick to recognize they were not meeting the intended outcome of a specialized and more appropriately paced instruction for students with lower abilities. This consensus decision opened the opportunity to create heterogeneous groupings for English Language Arts and level the playing field for all students in science came next. The most serious de-tracking challenge came in the Math department. Common Core rigor demands, along with staff discussions of the success of heterogeneous groupings in other subject areas, won over the math instructors. All curriculum decisions were made after deliberate research and with an effective middle level practice foundation. Stakeholder involvement proved critical to making team supported curriculum decisions and increased the likelihood of a successful outcome.

Responsible inclusion replaced the declared expectation for regular education teachers to “figure out” inclusion accommodations and adaptations. Co-teaching practices that partnered classroom teachers with special educators created valuable embedded professional development for members of the co-teaching team. Para-professionals moved from being assigned to specific students to broaden their involvement with inclusion support to full classroom settings over an entire grade level. Instead of instruction from praxis certified special education teachers, all students gained access to high caliber content experts in regular education classrooms where specially designed instruction was supported by either paraprofessionals or a co-teacher. This artful utilization of resources for special education instruction represents the type of ethical leadership, and specifically, the ethic of a community that is process oriented and based on relationships with others involving communication, dialogue, and collaboration (Furman, 2002). In the end, the most marginalized students were provided a social arrangement more responsive to their human and social rights (Starratt, 1994).

Quarterly Academic Assemblies per grade level were instituted to highlight class achievements that are documented on banners that hang in the cafeteria setting. Honor roll students are called forward individually for personal congratulations from a designated peer group (i.e., class officers) and given an honor card along with a redeemable certificate from a local restaurant. During the second and third quarter Academic Assembly all students who improved their Grade Point Average are recognized and provided a certificate as well.

Recognizing improvement corresponds directly with our core value of effort and allows a visible and public acknowledgment that we may not all be able to achieve the honor roll, but we can all get better.

Co-Curricular Exemplars

Prior to 2006, facts, fear, and force (Deutschman, 2007) dominated almost all change efforts at the St. Marys Area Middle School. The change process is rational, but change is emotional and requires strict attention to relationships, feelings, repetition, and vision (Deutschman, 2007; Fullan, 2011a; Kotter, 2008; Kotter & Cohen, 2002). It was my contention that the deep-seated underlying assumption and espoused belief (Schein, 1992) that respect is a “one-way student to authority figure demand” and communication is a “one-way authority figure to student phenomenon” needed challenged and changed. We took a number of calculated steps to move the entire school culture in the direction of fully modeling and embracing our core values of respect, responsibility, and effort. Many of these change steps took place in the co-curricular realm, and two key comprehensive program actions exemplify the total effort: Success @ Sixth for the entering middle school students and the Intentional Leadership Program at the eighth grade level.

It seemed prudent to make significant changes at the sixth grade level by involving team six core subject teachers, all specials subject teachers, the new students, and the new parents. Establishing a foothold with these teachers, the new students, and their parents, I believed, would allow them to eventually become vocal leaders and models of the school's vision, mission, and core values. We recognized that by getting the pathway for sixth graders right from the start, we were building values, norms, and beliefs at a grade level that would then contribute to the school culture for another two years. Orientation to the middle school was re-designed to include three separate and aligned events: a sixth grade teacher visit to fifth grade at each of the three elementary schools; a day-long visit to the middle school for all fifth graders; and a start-up orientation that is more welcoming and representative of the existing school culture. The three pronged approach purposely involved the teaching staff in general and the sixth grade staff in particular. The sixth grade staff was allotted a team prep to accompany their individual prep as a means of more consistently coordinating, aligning, and delivering their new approach and maintaining alignment the full school year. Additionally, as a means of entering student voice, current middle school students were given ambassador roles at the spring fifth grade visit and the August orientation. The ambassadors were provided a lead part in question and answer sessions with the new students who were entering the middle school from their respective elementary alma mater. In order to deliver a consistently accurate middle school culture message, all involved were called to deeply reflect on and take rightful ownership of the SMAMS philosophy, mission, beliefs, and core values.

At the very same time, I recognized it as critical to capitalize on the existing eighth grade activities and to call on these students as leaders to model our core values with their peers and with students from other grade levels. The two day eighth grade off-site Camp Mountain Run

(CMR) relationship building affair provided a great start but it lacked specific focus and staying power. In the past, the two days off-site were more of an activity during the fall of the school year rather than the beginning of a powerful and influential eighth grade leadership journey. With involvement from key teacher-leaders and the eighth grade class advisor we re-designed and re-framed the two-day outing as a leadership initiative and instituted ways and means to keep the CMR gains and message alive for the duration of the year. We solicited the involvement of newly elected 8th grade class officers and they assisted in making refinements and improvements from the student perspective. This collaborative effort of key stakeholders catapulted the mission and goals of the two-day Camp Mountain Run event into a widespread year-long 8th Grade Leadership program.

Leadership sets the tone and strongly influences the culture in any organization (Elder & Paul, 2012; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Peterson & Cosner, 2006; Schein, 2010; Sullivan, 2009). Designated leaders have responsibility by job description and, in a school setting, the administration and the teaching staff are the identified leaders of students. With the advent of the newly designed 8th Grade Leadership Program, we came to recognize the natural leadership role potential among the student body in our school. It is traditional to tell 8th graders they are the leaders and models for other students in the school community. The Leadership Program moved us from simply telling our 8th grade students to lead to teaching them how to lead and giving them noteworthy opportunity to practice leadership skills and behaviors. In a ten-year period, we have gone from expecting 8th grade leadership and modeling to emerge by chance or movement from the previous grade level to a making an intentional and purposeful commitment by way of a planned program designed to nurture and develop student leaders.

The 8th Grade Leadership program at the St. Marys Area Middle School continues to grow and improve through a collective desire to nurture the cultural impact associated with providing leadership knowledge, skills, and opportunities at an ideal developmental age. The baseline goal of the program is for 8th graders to put their acquired knowledge and skill in the direction of self-leadership. In turn, they become influential models for each other and for the younger students in our middle school. The 8th Grade Leadership program also presents opportunities for learning and practicing teamwork and collaboration. At a critical developmental stage in the K-12 school journey our 8th Grade Leadership program provides a foundation and framework for both individual and interpersonal effectiveness.

Extending leadership to students has influenced our school community. The present school culture of leadership finds 8th grade student voice and action involved in a variety of other ways. Members of the 8th grade write, produce, direct, and perform a daily television broadcast to the school community. The MS-TV announcement show regularly includes elected class officers from the sixth and seventh grade, the student council, and other clubs and activities. In addition to the typical school announcements, the morning show features school culture highlights and commonly places middle school students on the air for music performances, success stories in sports, cultural events, service fundraising, seasonal specific fun, and positive student and staff sponsored initiatives. Our 8th graders can be counted on to lead school-wide surveys and to secure suggestions for policy changes (e.g., appropriate use of electronic devices; lunch menu selections). In addition to leadership practice opportunities, 8th graders receive monthly reinforcing leadership messages from school or community guests who use the framework from the Camp Mountain Run mission and values to deliver a uniquely connected message. These extended leadership influence opportunities served as the basis of a presentation

delivered at the October, 2015 Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) conference. Ten SMAMS professionals lead a discussion about the 8th Grade Leadership Program and the program framework for other middle schools during a conference breakout session.

While Success @ Sixth and the 8th Grade Leadership program serve as models of the vision, mission, and core beliefs in action, there are other co-curricular activities that also complement the cultural shift to student voice and leadership. In lieu of separate grade level fundraisers for each class treasury, for example, a single “One for All and All for One” fundraiser is held each fall with a kick-off assembly, friendly class competitions with teacher-coaches per grade level, and a finale pep rally drawing designed to promote school spirit and effort recognition. The fundraiser provides each class and student council with seed money to use for school projects and for specific grade level activities. Democratic decisions on the use of treasury funds for school projects rest in the hands of the elected class officers, student council, and advisors. In 2015, an ambitious member of the 8th grade class led a successful initiative for a Gym Club during the homeroom activity period. This young man recruited teacher advisors, sought out permission from administration with impressive documentation of his proposal, spoke at a class meeting to recruit membership, conducted a sign-up, and followed through with the plan while troubleshooting issues as they arose. His is a case study of releasing the potential of student voice and allowing leadership action to unfold.

Our annual Day of Giving is the culmination of a series of grade level initiatives that put “others before self.” The initiatives are led by class officers and student council and are intended to engender a spirit of charity and stewardship for worthy causes. At the Day of Giving 2015, the middle school students’ contribution to charity and community organizations reached a monetary value of over \$8,000, and also included in-kind service. Over the ten years, our foundational

clubs have gained in status, momentum, and involvement. They have moved from bright spot outliers to representations of positive student contribution opportunities in a growing lineup of possibility. The Civil War Club activities and encampment are a source of pride for a large contingent of students and represents period authentic support for the early American History content of eighth grade social studies. In addition to increasing the trout population in the campus trout nursery from 500 to 1,500, the outdoor classroom initiative now includes a greenhouse, raised bed gardens, a windmill, and alternate energy models. Students embrace environmental stewardship through their steady work at the outdoor classroom venue.

The transformation of the St. Marys Area Middle School culture has been the extraordinary aftermath of this rewarding and eventful journey. This journey, with specific attention to nurturing and developing student leadership, was informed by a wide spectrum of research on effective practice for a school leader. The next section narrows the spectrum, to the most understood, considered, and utilized by the author over the course of the ten-year journey.

A Culture of Leadership – Why and How

“When the pupil is ready the teacher will come.” –Chinese Proverb

I viewed it as urgent to change what I perceived as principles associated with a toxic culture at the St. Marys Area Middle School. Blaine Lee, author of the *The Power Principle: Influence with Honor* offers the following insight: “The principles you live by create the world you live in; if you change the principles you live by, you will change your world” (Lee, p. 1, 1997). I fully recognized and accepted my role as a change agent with the power to transform principles when I took the job as school leader in St. Marys. Change guru Kotter (2008) identifies a sense of urgency as the initial and most crucial step to leading changes of any magnitude. Accordingly, I shed light on the 2,267 discipline referrals, the retention rates that led

to five year terms for middle school students who turned sixteen in their tenure, and a frenetic and reactive scurrying about to put out fires of negativity and challenge that erupted from angry students, parents, or staff. There were principles of leadership available to take SMAMS to a better place and I had extensive experience with leadership. When I assumed the leadership role in SMAMS I was also facilitating the executive development of leaders across the state of Pennsylvania, and a passionate student of leadership research. Still, I wondered how to proceed. What did it make sense to attend to first? What would prove most effective in getting the school on track to serving students? The pupil seemed ready; was I the right teacher?

Ten years after the fact and with a dynamic and positive school culture, I could offer that the wisdom of my vision all along was to nurture and develop students as central figures of the leadership. To say so would be less than truthful. Driving the student level leadership message and opportunity came much later in the game and was an outgrowth of a powerful culture influencing itself. Nevertheless, it is accurate and honest for me to say that I intended to maximize my own leadership strength and extend my leadership knowledge and skills to the highest degree possible to lead a change in the school culture.

I knew it was all about people not programs (Whitaker, 2003), getting the right people on the bus (Collins, 2001), building a guiding coalition (Kotter, 1996; 2012), and striving for collegiality not simple congeniality (Fullan, 2011a). I took central aim at distributing leadership to the teachers and the staff and I did so by nurturing and developing their leadership skills and knowledge. I took advantage of every faculty meeting, inservice, and professional development opportunity to share the best of the best from my leadership resources. My solitary motivation was to help the teachers and staff gain enough of an understanding and knowledge of leadership principles so that they could comfortably share it with their students. As it were, the teacher

sharing of leadership with students twisted the culture in a new direction and, at times, the students became the teachers and the teachers became the students. This phenomenon of a dynamic culture of leadership, then, becomes the crux of my scholarly research. The narrowing of my possible research topics and the justification for doing so follows.

A Culture of Leadership – The Scholarly Topics

“Wisdom begins with wonder.” --Socrates

There is no shortage of research, opinion, or literature on the topic of leadership. Fortunately, the study of school leadership has come to the forefront with the recognition of the principal as a major influence in the development of school culture and student achievement (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010; Hallinger, 2003; Hallinger and Heck, 1996; Wallace Foundation, 2013). With this in mind, it makes sense to establish a foundation for this study of a school culture of leadership by way of a brief history of the principal position and a closer look at the current expectations of the position outlined in Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (formerly the ISLLC Standards).

In consideration of the Professional Standards and the influence they have on the National Institute for School Leader (NISL) Executive Development Program in Pennsylvania, three prominent areas of foundational leadership principles stood out for in-depth scholarly analysis. The influence of visionary, ethical, and change agent thinking grew above and beyond the other choices as instrumental in transforming the culture at SMAMS so that students became both receivers and initiators of leadership thought and action.

The literature review that follows begins with an in depth study of these leadership principles. Then the review examines the school culture literature and scholarly research associated with how these leadership principles are related to effective school leader actions that

effectively impact school culture. This examination includes connections to principal history and research findings about principle-centered thinking and actions related school culture. The review ends with a proposed theoretical framework of a Culture of Leadership. This framework, which emerges from the reviewed literature, serves as the lens through which the 10-year cultural development journey of the St. Marys Area Middle School, is then examined and evaluated.

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF THE RELEVANT LITERATURE

A Brief History of the Principal Position in Public Schools

The principal position in American public schools is complex, contradictory, and misunderstood. A principal, with core training and identity as a classroom teacher serves as employer, supervisor, professional figurehead and inspirational leader. The principal is a director of state education policy and a building manager. The principal is an agent of change but must provide organizational stability. The principal has a responsibility for student learning, while, at the same time, being increasingly pulled further from the classroom. In fact, of many organizational changes in public education that occurred during the turn of the last century, few have had greater impact on the school than the development of the principalship (Rousmaniere, 2013). Therefore, a look at the evolution of the position is important for contextualizing the present challenges associated with the role of principal.

The principal essentially serves as a middle manager with a responsibility to the large bureaucratic system at the state level for implementing state policy and a day-to-day responsibility with students, teachers, and parents at the local school level. The idea of the principal serving the central office of the district and the classroom in the school from a position in the middle of both is two centuries old (Rousmaniere, 2013; Spring, 2011).

The power associated with the principal position and the principal as manager and/or leader emerges while studying the role. At the very outset Cronin (1973) identifies late nineteenth century reform of school boards as reducing the power of ward bosses and, thereby, increasing administrative power. In contrast, researchers challenge the power of school leadership and place the early principalship on par with teachers (Cuban, 1988) or argue that

public school leaders have been continuously susceptible to dominant business and government forces (Callahan, 1962). In the early nineteenth century, the Industrial Revolution popularized scientific management, or “Taylorism,” and advanced the idea of management from the factory floor to the school house. Accordingly, efficiency became the mantra, and school became a hierarchical organization with top down decisions based on scientific studies and cost effectiveness as the professional focus for school leaders (Spring, 2011). As standardization became the order of the day, the principal in the public school became a manager thoroughly prepared by university course work that focused on the principles of management and placed scholarship and learning in the distant background (Callahan, 1962). The standardization and lock-step orientation of grade levels, teaching materials and curricula, and curricula tracking were the framework used in training generations of administrators dedicated to a “one size fits all” (Callahan, 1962) approach. Brooks and Miles (2008) characterized this approach as a “first wave of scientific management” (p. 101-102). This business approach to the principalship likens the role to the factory foreman and mid-level executive who hold responsibility for day-to-day operations but are not expected or authorized to engage in visionary thinking, systems thinking, strategic thinking or policy decisions on the front line (Rousmaniere, 2013).

And so, the one room schoolhouse with a group of students supervised by a single teacher advanced to a collection of teachers supervised by one administrator—at that time, a teaching administrator. In the early 20th Century the administrator served as the principal teacher and as recently as 1958, 17 percent of principal survey respondents remained teaching principals. Forty years later in 1998 only 1 percent described themselves as teaching principals (Protheroe, 2008). Essentially, the increasing demands and complexity of the principal position in this forty-year period almost eliminated classroom teaching from the principal position. With the source of

authority in the school shifting to the office of principal, in some cases, the mid 20th Century administrator became like other middle managers—at the mercy of a distant supervisor and an increasingly complex state education bureaucracy wielding top down directives. Scientific management and a professionalization of the position of principal improved the stature of the principal’s office. But according to Rousmaniere (2013), professionalization of the principal position also “formalized the division between teachers and administrators, between classroom and office, body and mind, and experience and intellect” (p. 17). A commitment to scientific management and professionalization placed emphasis on administration and bureaucracy in lieu of teaching and learning in the school house.

To be fair, there were critics of educational administration’s wholesale adoption of scientific management, cost effectiveness, and a business mindset. In fact, Spring (2011) references a 1925 National Education Association meeting where NEA president Jesse Newton warned his colleagues, stating: “administrators must be students of the social sciences, of all that is included in the fields of history, sociology, economics, psychology...the educational leader must be a reader and a student” (p. 277). Scholarship and learning had an advocate at the NEA. Another perspective of this same early 20th century period is offered by Tyack (1974) who identifies an alignment of interests, values, and purposes between civic elites, reform groups, and a new breed of progressive administrators. Educational reform was top down and it is difficult to say whether networks of administrators were responding and reacting to civic elites on school boards or actually had their own common culture (Tyack 1974). Tyack states: “Educational administration drew elaborate comparisons between the roles of business leaders and superintendents” (p. 144), and the comparison persists to this day.

It appears there is evidence of both the historic role and the contemporary role of the principal being positioned between state and board policy on one hand, and the classroom teachers on the other (Cuban, 1988). A major contrast and challenge to the historic role of the principal having a singular focus on scientific management and efficiency utilizes individual narratives of several very successful school leaders of the first century of public education. Using well know school leaders Horace Mann and Ella Flagg Young and four other prominent, but lesser recognized, school leaders, Bogotch (2010) challenges the depiction of school leaders of the time period as dependent and vulnerable. Among the notable findings were the nurturing of teachers' judgments rather than imposing methods on them; minimizing the impact of business practices and centralization; and context-specific strategic leadership choices. In reference to the school leaders in his study, Bogotch (2010) says: "These school leaders were efficient system builders, not loyal, obedient, and efficient system managers" (p. 21).

The strategic actions of the six school leaders of the first century of public education studied by Bogotch can be characterized by eight historical dimensions of school leadership: school leadership that is democratic; leadership with in-depth knowledge of curriculum and instruction; leaders as system builders; leaders with community and social activism; leaders as communicators; leaders with connections with higher education and their professional community; and leaders with radicalism as a disposition (Bogotch, 2010). In contrast, Rousmanerie (2010) finds modern principals having more responsibility and less involvement with student learning while having more responsibility in upholding administrative structures and responding to public pressures. The federal government is consistently increasing pressure on states for improving academic performance. Consequently, states are busy developing incentives for local boards and superintendents to raise school performance. At the end of the

line are principals with pressure from boards, superintendents, and the public (Tucker & Coddling, 2002). Principals are pressured to lead their school to unprecedented levels of student achievement.

Over the last two decades principal responsibilities have increased enormously. Fullan (2014) characterizes the modern principal responsibility as follows: “They are expected to run a smooth school; manage health, safety, and the building; innovate without upsetting anyone; connect with students and teachers; be responsive to parents and the community; answer to their districts; and above all deliver results” (p. 6). The new role of the principal is evolving and looking to be redefined. Collaboration, learning communities, and capacity building are being heralded in the research on school leadership (DuFour & Marzano, 2009; Dufour & Fullan, 2013; Fullan, 2010; Leithwood & Seashore Louis, 2012). Fullan and Hargreaves (2012) are in agreement and expand even further with the concept of the principal making every effort to impact the professional capital of teachers as a high yield strategy.

An optimistic outlook likens the 21st century reforms of vouchers, prescriptive drill-focused reading and writing programs, and the role of high-stakes standardized tests to the first century scientific-management focus faced by the school leaders studied by Bogotch (2010). It is likely that Bogotch’s six school leaders would have opposed and challenged today’s reforms on the basis of their belief in the principal as both instructional leader and manager and not just manager. Furthermore, they would find even more points of debate on the grounds of democratic leadership, community education (Fielding, 2006; Decker, 1975), and social justice (Furman & Shields, 2003).

Efforts have been made to shape and focus the development and performance of school leaders. In the late 20th Century there was growing pressure to reform the quality of America’s

schools and their leaders. So much so that in 1994 the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) commissioned the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) to provide a set of empirically grounded principles and best practices to shape and focus the development of school leaders. The document developed—the ISLLC Standards for School Leaders—became the “gold standard” which most states use for K-12 administrator credentialing and performance criteria (Murphy, 2003; Usdan, McCloud, & Podmostko, 2000). In the next section I will provide the background and context for the ISLLC Standards. The section will conclude with the ISLLC replacement standards—the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders published by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration in October of 2015.

School Leadership – The Standards

We are in an era of standardization with every effort being made to exercise quality control by way of defining industry specific standards. More than a million organizations in the business world use worldwide standards and certification published by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). The most recent iteration, ISO 9001, emerged to ensure that products and services are safe, reliable and of good quality, (ISO 9001, 2008). In the academic realm, a recent and notable example of the trend toward standardization is the Common Core State Standards developed by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers (2010) and adopted by 46 states. The Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium Standards (InTASC), from Council of Chief State School Officers (2011), provide another example. In fact, InTASC serves as the foundation for the highly recognized teacher effectiveness standards in the form of a Framework for Teaching from Charlotte Danielson (Adams, G., Danielson, C., Moilanen, G., & Association

for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2009). Finally, and most relevant to preparing, evaluating, guiding, and developing the performance of school administrators, there are the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards.

The ISLLC standards for school leadership were established in 1996 and became the “gold standard” for most states to shape K-12 administrator credentialing and performance criteria (Murphy, 2003; Usdan, McCloud, & Podmostko, 2000). The standards were revised in 2008 (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2007) with the intent to strengthen their alignment with the educational and leadership needs of 21st Century schools. Former Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) executive director Gene Wilhoit describes the ISLLC 2008 standards as, “the first step toward creating comprehensive, locally tailored practice standards and other approaches for developing and retaining high-quality school leaders” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008, p.5). The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (previously ISLLC Standards), were approved in Fall 2015 and have been published by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA).

The 2008 ISLLC Standards were only a modest update utilizing the empirical research available at that time. On the other hand, the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders represent a response to the rapidly changing global landscape, the 21st Century workplace needs, technology advancements, and the conditions and characteristics of children. In addition, accountability, tightened budgets, control shifts, and competition loom large in any discussion of education (NPBEA, 2015). Changes present challenges for educational leaders, but also open opportunity for inspiration, innovation, and creativity with regard to student learning. At the same time, research and effective practice have expanded the knowledge base on effective school leadership and, according the NPBEA (2015), “educational leaders exert influence on student

achievement by creating challenging but also caring and supporting conditions conducive to each student's learning" (p. 1).

Extensive research on educational leadership leads to new considerations in the 2015 Standards. First, these Standards show a stronger, clearer emphasis on students and student learning with an outline of foundational principles of leadership. In every realm of their work—teacher evaluation, central office interaction, data analysis—the school leader should have one question in mind: “How will this help our students excel as learners?” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 3). Second, the Standards herald the importance of human relationships at the leadership level, but also with respect to teaching and student learning. Optimism, strength development, and human potential are reflected in the positive approach of these Standards. Third, the Standards have a future-oriented perspective and are written with both recognition of and an expectation for the changing world. Therefore, the 2015 Standards invite school leaders to expect future challenges and to aspire to transform their practice and envision success amid new opportunities. Finally, the 2015 Standards challenge the profession, professional associations, policy makers, higher education, and other organizations that support educational leaders to “move beyond established practices and systems and to strive for a better future” (p. 3). The Standards have the flexibility to inspire school leaders to stretch to excellence regardless of their career stage (NPBEA, 2015).

One of the organizations that supports educational leaders in the pursuit of meeting these recently published Professional Standards for Educational Leaders is the National Institute for School Leadership (NISL). I single out NISL because of the ten-year relationship between the Pennsylvania Department of Education and NISL for Executive Development of school leaders in Pennsylvania. The NISL curriculum is utilized in the Executive Development Program identified in legislation as the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership Program (PIL). NISL is a

division of Criterion Education, LLC, which is a subsidiary of the not-for-profit National Center on Education and Economy (NCEE), and in turn, NISL is considered a not-for-profit entity. NISL draws on the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards; standards of the major associations of principals and administrators; and the performance standards for major themes within the Executive Development Program (NISL, 2015). A graphic representation of the NISL curriculum foundational leadership principles and the NISL Leader Thinking using Ways (how we do it) and Means (what we use) to reach Ends (where we go) within a specific context can be seen in Figure 1.

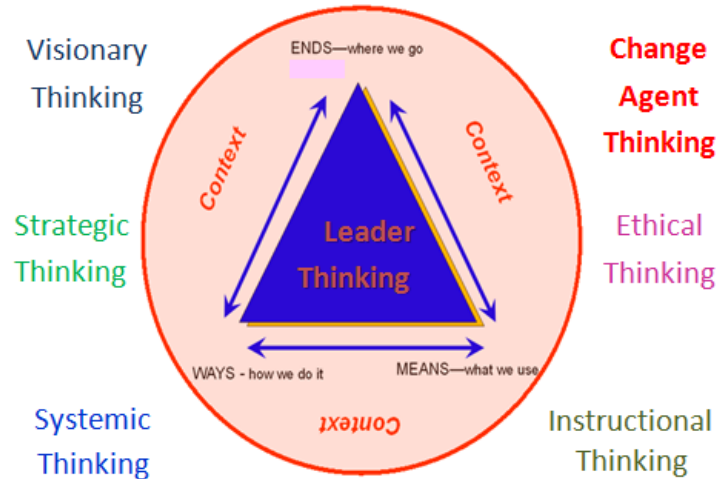


Figure 2.1. NISL Leader Thinking based on ISLLC Standards

NISL and the PA Inspired Leadership program focus on six major foundational principles in the form of Leader Thinking. With the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (formerly ISLLC Standards) only recently published, the official NISL alignment to The Standards is subject to interpretation. However, the close alignment of the NISL program to ISLLC, the performance standards associated with ISLLC, and the standards of the major associations of principals and administrators, it is reasonable to connect the Leader Thinking from Figure 2.1 to Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (see Appendix A for a

full summary of The Standards). Drawing from The Standard title, the succinct statement that defines the work of effective leaders in that realm, and the series of elements that elaborate the necessary work to meet the standard, Figure 2.2 shows each of the new Standards and the corresponding Leader Thinking relationship with NISL curriculum roots and direct connection to the PA Inspired Leadership (PIL) program.

Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015	Corresponding NISL and PA Inspired Leadership Thinking
1. Mission, Vision, and Core Values	Visionary Thinking Ethical Thinking Change Agent Thinking
2. Ethics and Professional Norms	Ethical Thinking
3. Equity and Cultural Responsiveness	Ethical Thinking Change Agent Thinking
4. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment	Instructional Thinking Systems Thinking
5. Community of Care and Support for Students	Ethical Thinking
6. Professional Capacity of School Personnel	Instructional Thinking Strategic Thinking
7. Professional Community for Teachers and Staff	Instructional Thinking Ethical Thinking
8. Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community	Ethical Thinking Strategic Thinking
9. Operations and Management	Strategic Thinking
10. School Improvement	Change Agent Thinking

Figure 2.2 Professional Standards for Educational Leaders and corresponding NISL Leader Thinking

All ten of the Professional Standards are important just as each of the six types of Leader Thinking are crucial to effective leadership. Systems thinking emerges to explain the overlap between and among The Standards, as well among and across the Leader Thinking components. For the purpose of definition and discussion, they can be posted neatly and separately, but system thinking suggests a more complex relationship. Fullan (2010), and Senge et al. (2012) are among the most prominently published researchers on systems thinking and both heavily

promote interrelationships and interdependencies in learning organizations. Senge (2012) defines a system as “any perceived structure whose elements hang together because they continually affect each other over time” (p.124). Fullan (2011a) argues against any fragmented and linear approach to school leadership but rather, recognizes the significant impact of leaders working across the system. With regard to effective school leadership for any improvement or reform he points to addressing a few key components “conceived and pursued as a coherent whole” and “as mutually supportive and interactively corrective” (Fullan, 2011b, p. 18). His argument is supported by more recent systems thinker researchers Shaker and Schechter (2013) who find that “systems thinking enables the development of highly performing schools and therefore offers a way for schools to meet currently high expectations in the contemporary era of accountability” (p. 785). The collective of systems thinking researchers led by Senge and Fullan would see the integration of the Professional Standards and the Leader Thinking principles as a way for, as Shaker and Schechter (2013) go on to say, “the school leader to think less linearly and more strategically, less concretely and more holistically, less specifically and more synergistically—basically, they need to see wholes” (p. 786).

Mindful of the interdependent relationship promoted by systems thinking, this literature review focuses on the research related to visionary thinking, ethical thinking, and change agent thinking. To this aim, I will provide a foundation and a current research review of these three thinking principles to intentionally establish a scholarly backdrop to their synergism as a whole. With due respect to the systems thinking definition as “any perceived structure whose elements hang together because they continually affecting each other over time” (Senge, 2012, p. 124), there has to be a defined starting point when one takes on the role of school leader. In my case, I made the strategic thinking decision to begin with vision thinking because of ethical issues

within the school culture with direct impact on student learning. Accordingly, change agent thinking became prominent and necessary. In this next section I will address research related to visionary thinking.

Visionary Thinking

Visionary thinking on the part of a leader begins with an understanding of vision. Historically, the educational leadership literature (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1984; Murphy, 1988), assigns meaning to the term vision through two primary definition directions. The first direction describes vision in general terms of a particular leader's skill to foresee a compelling image of an organization; while the second, more specific definition, involves goals or targets toward an improved future. Since organizational vision has been a prominent and significant topic in leadership for such a long period of time it is important to provide a sufficient historical foundation before addressing a more current perspective.

Casting vision as foreseeing. Bennis and Nanus (1985) focus on vision as an image of the future of the organization and a direction to be taken by explaining vision as “a mental image of a possible and desirable future state of the organization” (p. 89). A similar tone is presented by Covey (2005) who states “vision is seeing with the mind's eye what is possible in people, in projects, in causes, and in enterprises and results when our mind joins need with possibility” (p. 65). Vision as “seeing where the system fits in the larger context...a description outlining a possible future that lifts and moves people...or a discerning, in the clutter and confusion of the present, the elements that determine what is to come,” is contributed by prominent leadership expert John Gardner (1990, p. 130). Another foreseeing type definition is offered by Daft (1999), who defined vision as “an attractive ideal future that is credible yet not readily attainable” (p. 126). In a study of the positive relationship between teacher perceptions of

organizational health and the relative robustness of their school vision, Licata and Harper (2001) added the word robust to vision to create a slightly different tone. Robust vision “is a view of a more desirable future that is relatively high in dramatic content for teachers” (p. 9). The robust vision dramatizes the discrepancy between the challenges in the present and the more desired future and may well arouse individuals to take ongoing action. “Adjectives such as interesting, action-packed, powerful, fresh, and challenging rather than boring, uneventful, weak, stale, or dull would likely be the way individuals describe a robust school vision” (p. 10).

Casting vision in terms of goals and targets. On the other hand, the goals and targets definition of vision is utilized in the work of Conger and Kanungo (1987) with vision as “a set of clear ideal objectives, well-defined, which the leader would like the organization to achieve in the future” (p. 640). In the same vein, Kirkpatrick and Locke (1996) define vision as “a general transcendent ideal that represents shared values; it is ideological in nature and has moral overtones” (p. 37). Also in agreement, Sergiovanni (2009) coins the term thick vision. With this term, Sergiovanni promotes a values-based approach by defining thick vision as “contracts, even covenants, that spell out roles and responsibilities...these images include goals and pathways that help a school calibrate its direction...help a school create the frameworks, structures, norms, and other means to succeed” (p. 30).

In summary, there appears to be consensus in the leadership literature that vision includes both the image of the future, provide direction and express a sense of purpose, and also illuminate a set of ideals in the form of goals and targets. It is through both of these definitional paths that we can examine the connections between vision and leadership.

Vision and Leadership

Vision and educational leadership have been intricately woven together. In general, vision serves to begin transformation processes (Collins & Porras, 1984; Dinham, 2005; Hunt, 1991; Kotter, 1990; Strange & Mumford, 2002, 2005) and is an essential foundation for action for leaders of learning organizations (Hallinger, 2003; Johnson, 2002; Senge et al., 2012).

According to Nanus (1992), “There is no more powerful engine driving an organization toward excellence and long-range success than an attractive, worthwhile vision of the future that is widely shared” (p. 3). Transformational leadership places vision prominently as a motivator of effort and performance in people in school settings (Hallinger, 2003; Harris, 2005; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; Stewart, 2006). In many cases, vision is considered the essence of leadership creating a binding purpose among teachers that drives them to reach aspirations and ambitious goals (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; Ylimaki, 2006). Leadership involves the development and promotion of lofty aspirations—a compelling vision. A vision that is shared by all stakeholders has the possibility of propelling an organization toward a desired future.

Willower and Lilcata (1997) contend that a vision of a more desirable future accompanied by ways to its implementation can be a relatively valuable structural feature of school organization. A compelling vision can provide natural energy for the members of a school community because of their ability to more clearly see what might be. Learning organization expert Peter Senge (2000) hones in on the critical nature of vision with the principle of creative tension. Creative tension emerges from the gap between where we want to be—vision—and the truth about where we are—our current reality. In a more contemporary research publication, Senge (2012) identifies shared vision as one of the disciplines that “establishes a focus on mutual purpose” (p.

7). Clearly, vision is vital to creative tension and results in a natural energy because according to Senge (2012):

People with a common purpose (e.g., the teachers, administrators, and staff in a school) can learn to nourish a sense of commitment in a group or organization by developing shared images of the future they seek to create and the strategies, principles, and guiding practices by which they hope to get there. (p. 7)

Over the past twenty years or so, scholars have advised leaders to utilize vision to guide a change process and to identify clear, measurable change targets that provide educators with a shared purpose (Boyd, 1992; Bryk, 1998; Fullan, 1999).

Developing the Vision

Vision is critical for the school leader but how the vision is developed and implemented has importance as well. Current researchers report that the principal is typically the critical figure in making certain that a school vision is created (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, Wahlstrom, 2004; Murphy, Elliott, Goldring, & Porter, 2007). Notably, there is strong historical foundation to suggest that teachers are more likely to support a school vision that comes from a collaborative process involving the views of the principal, teachers and others (Licata, Teddlie, & Greenfield, 1990). Blumberg and Greenfield (1986) studied school principals with what they termed moral imagination. Essentially the term moral imagination aligns with vision in their study as Blumberg and Greenfield refer to moral imagination as principal's ability to turn insights about the present into a compelling vision of what ought to be for their school. In this case, the principal's sharing of moral imagination was inspiring and served as a guide for action toward imagined possibilities. Nonetheless, the study also revealed a wearying emotional cost for principals who had to implement school vision in a social environment full of change inhibitors.

The genuine involvement of stakeholders in vision development continued to hold up in follow-up research over the next ten years (Blase & Blase, 1997; Greenfield, 1988; Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996; Smith & Stolp, 1995). This involvement of teachers in visioning yielded additional positives in a school setting. Teachers perceive principals as robust in their leadership and effective as instructional supervisors when the principal exchanges ideas with them about the school vision and encourage sacrifices to accomplish the vision (Greenfield, Licata, & Johnson, 1992).

The process of formulating a vision can be long and complex when involving others in a collaborative fashion. Where does this process begin? What is at the root of an effective organizational vision? According to Katz (1999), the process usually begins with the leader's unique personal ethos. Within this personal ethos, the leader is "...trying to trace what it motivates him to influence, trying to identify what reality he wishes to promote, and trying to learn from the people who influenced him and past experience" (p. 135). The ethos then, reflects the leader's patterns of thinking and acting (Katz, 1999), and as such significantly affects the leader's personal vision of the organization. In as much as there have been studies focused on characteristics of and definitions of organizational vision, there has not been much study of the relationship between the process of developing a vision and its content (Larwood, Falbe, Kriger & Miesing, 1995). Models of vision development offer insight about the importance of the personal vision and character and are worth further consideration.

The organizational vision development process has a significant impact on the success of the vision. Katz (1999) and Nanus (1992) present a five-step model of how to create a vision and realize it. The model stipulates:

1. The leader's formulation of a personal ethos;

2. The creation of an organizational vision by the leader in cooperation with other members of the organization;
3. Formulating and focusing the organizational vision;
4. Making the vision tangible by identifying opportunities for assimilating it;
5. Integrating the vision into organizational activity and making it “real.”

Chance (1992) submits a similar model for school principals as an aid for them to develop an individualized school vision. The model has three stages:

1. Principal self evaluation and development of a personal vision;
2. Formulating a school vision
3. Communicating and assimilating the school vision

Finally, Senge (2012) submits another five-step model for building a shared vision. Senge recognizes shared vision strategies as developmental because his stages are part of a process that ultimately helps build the leadership capacity of everyone in the living system. The five-stages move developmentally from dependency on a strong leader to a high level of active involvement and collaboration. The stages are as follows:

1. Telling: Top down informing people directly, clearly, and consistently.
2. Selling: Enrolling people by way of relationships and a level of commitment.
3. Testing: Asking opinion and inviting consideration with revisions and rethinking.
4. Consulting: A team approach with open-ended questions and leader final control.
5. Co-Creating: Shared involvement in a creative orientation toward a desired future.

Communication strategies become paramount for an effective shared vision. Senge (2012) confirms what earlier researches argued in that “a vision is not really shared unless it has staying

power and an evolving life force that lasts for years, propelling people through a continuous cycle of action learning and reflection” (p. 87).

In each of these models of vision development, the initial step focuses at the individual level with either the personal ethos or personal vision of the leader. In kind, Foster and Akdere (2007) cite the visionary leader as having a personal impact on the definition of the vision in addition to being a promoter of the vision by inspiring people. The personal vision of the leader is the starting point for the organizational vision and a base for getting to a shared vision (Crossans & Mazutis, 2008; Manasse, 1986).

The leader’s personal ethos—used in context as the character and the ethical stance of the leader—affects his personal vision. The ethos is rooted in, shaped, and molded by way of personal experiences, professional experiences, needs and desires, values, personality, and abilities (Katz, 1999). Ylimaki (2006) studied visionary archetypes and used that lens to suggest a new conceptualization of vision—“namely, that vision is dynamic interaction among inner human resources (e.g., insight, intuition, and perception), an outward perspective (on larger educational ideals, research, and policies), and the context of a particular situation” (p. 620).

Once again, the personal values of a leader are deemed essential to comprehending personal vision. In turn, the leader’s personal vision makes way to and influences the organizational vision. Yoeli & Berkovich (2010) state it as follows, “The elements of personal ethos that the leader impresses on the organizational vision are the elements which stimulate his commitment to spread it and win the support of others” (p. 454). At the same time, the personal vision of a leader and the organizational vision do not automatically align. Bogler and Nir (2001) point to a need for an ongoing open dialogue between the leader and organizational members as a means of cross checking how the organizational vision and his personal vision are being

received in the existing context. Visionary leaders make strong connections between personal vision and the organizational vision (Shamir & Eilam, 2005), and visionary leadership has been identified as a critical element in changing organizational climate as well as helping followers identify with the plans of the leader (Larwood, Falbe, Kriger, & Miesing, 1995).

Researchers Yoeli and Berkovich (2010) provide an innovative contribution regarding the role that personal vision plays in the leader's organizational vision. Using narrative interviews, the study focused on visionary leader stories. "The research findings describe the relationship between the leader's personal ethos and his interpretation of the vision content he promotes" (p. 463). Prior to this study, most of the discussion and findings in the literature regarding the personal ethos of the leader dealt with the development of the leader's capabilities. The relationship between personal ethos, leader professional vision, and organizational vision was captured in this qualitative study:

This study's findings reinforce the claim that values are essential to the development of vision due to their role as a behavioral motivator (Chance, 1992; Katz, 1999; Hemingway, 2005), but additionally it elaborates and points to other important influences on the development of a personal and organizational vision, such as family influences, professional ones, and identity formulation experiences which the individual has experienced during his life (pp. 463-64).

Based on these findings, it seems prudent for educational leaders to seriously engage in a process of self-reflection in order to develop a clear and passionate personal vision as a foundation to opening a dialogue with school stakeholders and constructing a shared vision.

Ethical Thinking

Preston (2007) positions ethics in the context of relationships with others. At the same time, Ehrich and Knight (1998) contend that leadership is a human centered relational activity. Therefore, ethical leadership can be defined as a social, relational practice with a moral purpose (Angus, 2006). In this professional context, it follows that ethical leaders are those who act with fairness and justice. Ethical leaders are viewed as caring, as honest, and as principle centered and they make evenhanded decisions and communicate to their stakeholders on the significance of ethics and ethical behavior (Brown & Trevino, 2006). Sergiovanni (2009) frames ethical leadership as the combination of management know-how with values and ethics. Sergiovanni goes on to say, “Leadership practice, as a result, is always concerned both with what is effective and what is good; what works and what makes sense; doing things right and doing right things” (p. 8). The creation of a just, fair, and caring community of learners must be at the core of all decision making in the school. The school principal’s guidance, direction and support of a just, fair, and caring community of learners serves as the foundation of ethical thinking and is explicitly identified in the elements that elaborate the work needed to meet the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (NPBEA, 2015).

The challenges and demands placed on the principal are increasingly complex. Principals have a full spectrum of responsibility at the individual student health, safety and welfare level up to high level innovation that is both pleasing and accepted by students, parents, and the community. At every level, they are accountable for concrete results (Fullan, 2014). Additionally, from the start of the 21st Century, there has been an increased focus on and expectation for the school leader to be transformative and to attend to social justice (Bogotch, Beachum, Blount, Brooks & English, 2008; Marshall & Oliva, 2006; Shields, 2004; Shoho,

Merchant, & Lugg, 2005). Therefore, a moral and ethical component of leadership accompanies the obvious academic and instructional leadership expectation for the school leader. In fact, Bogotch (2002) makes reference to both social justice and education as a “deliberate intervention that requires the moral use of power” (p. 140). All in all, increased attention on social justice heightens a focus on the moral purposes of leadership in schools as well as how to achieve these purposes (Furman, 2003).

Theorists on educational leadership have offered both singular and multi-dimensional frameworks to help clarify ethical leadership. According to Eyal, Berkovich, and Schwartz (2011), the early approach to understanding ethics and ethical leadership was a more singular and simple approach. For example, an ethic of care has been singled out as the most prominent value as well as a personal and professional focus for guiding ethical leader actions (Noddings, 1984; Beck, 1992). In contrast, the multi-dimensional approach of ethical leadership (i.e., the just, fair, and caring ethical leadership in the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders and the PIL program) is supported in the work of Starratt (1991; 1996; 2009) and his colleagues (Furman 2004; Langlois & Lapointe, 2007; Shapiro & Gross, 2013; Stefkovich & Begley, 2007). Because of its common use in education, Starratt’s integrated framework—the ethic of care, the ethic of justice, and the ethic of critique—warrants a closer examination.

Starratt’s integrated framework. Starratt (1991;1996) claims that three “ethics” underlie ethical practice: the ethic of care; the ethic of justice; and the ethic of critique. These ethics are interconnected and complement one another with each needed to build an ethical school. The ethic of care that early ethical theorists promoted as the singular approach is only one of the three ethic areas that complement and enrich one another in the Starratt’s (1991;1996) work. In Starratt’s (1996) framework, an ethic of care references a regard for an individual’s dignity and

worth that “requires fidelity to persons, a willingness to acknowledge their right to be who they are, an openness to encountering them in their authentic individuality, a loyalty to the relationship” (p.163). The focus of the ethic of care is squarely on one-to-one relationships and individuals having responsibility to be caring in their relationships with others. The relationship-centric ethic of care makes way for the ethic of justice that focuses on treating people fairly and equitably (Starratt, 1996). The ethic of justice requires that we “govern ourselves by observing justice—we treat each other according to some standard of justice which is uniformly applied to all our relationships” (Starratt, 1994, p. 49). The ethic of justice moves leaders to build an environment of democratic practice and with a strong community spirit (Starratt, 1991; 1996). Finally, the ethic of critique expects leaders to critically evaluate power structures within relationships and within the organization. If the ethic of justice focuses on fairness, then the ethic of care examines barriers to fairness. The ethic of critique serves as a foundation for leaders to challenge systems and structures when policies and practices are unjust or exploitive and fail to consider the needs of all members of the community (Starratt, 1991; 1996). This ethic of critique is important and necessary because:

No social arrangement is neutral. Every social arrangement, no matter how it presents itself as natural, necessary or simply “the way things are,” is artificial. It is usually structured to benefit some segments of society at the expense of others.

The ethical challenge is to make these social arrangements more responsive to the human and social rights of all the citizens (Starratt, 1994, p. 47).

Starratt’s framework has been influential and highly utilized in the field of educational leadership. Shapiro and Stefkovich (2001), re-emphasize the tri-partite frame by Starratt and go beyond it by adding an ethic of the profession they claim captures the moral aspect unique to

education—a moral imperative to “serve the best interests of the students” (p. 23). The ethic of the profession places “students at the center of the ethical decision-making process” (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001, p. 23).

The ethic of community. Furman (2004) contributes to the research on ethical leadership by adding the ethic of community. According to Furman, traditionally the term community tends to signify an entity or tangible thing. In contrast to tradition, Furman (2002) concluded that: “...community is processual. The sense of community—of connection with others—is based on relationships which depend on the ongoing processes of communication, dialogue, and collaboration...an ongoing set of processes facilitated by educators” (p. 285). The ethic of community means that administrators, teachers, school staffs, students, parents, and other community members interested in schools feel a moral responsibility to engage in communal processes during the day-to-day life and work of school that seeks out the moral purpose of schooling. As such, moral agency shifts from the individual to the community as a whole. Fielding (2006) would make absolutely certain students are a prominent part of this dialogic community stating: “There is a new wave of what many now call ‘student voice’ ranging over a huge vista of activities encouraging the involvement of young people which echoes the energy, if not the aspirations of the 1960’s and 1970’s” (p. 299). Furthermore, this evolves to a practice of moral leadership that is distributed and with foundation in interpersonal and group skills such as:

- listening with respect;
- striving for knowing and understanding others;
- communicating effectively;
- working in teams;
- engaging in ongoing dialogue; and

- creating forums that allow all voices to be heard. (Furman, 2004, p. 222)

The ethic of community expands on and complements what was developed by Starratt (1994) and Shapiro and Stefkovich (2001) and shifts focus to the communal rather than the individual. The expanded frame illustrated below in Figure 2.3.

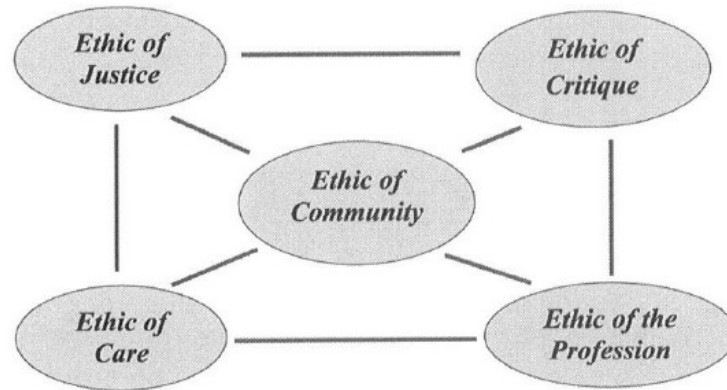


Figure 2.3. Ethical framework. Centered in the ethic of community (Furman, 2004, p 222)

The ethics of justice, critique, and care exemplify values a leader can use as a guide for ethical practices and Furman (2004) positions this ethical practice within the processes of community. Additionally, the ethic of community challenges one of the recurring problems associated with research in the field of educational leadership – the impractical supposition that “singularly operating “heroic” leaders can provide the vision and expertise to overcome the many challenges facing public schooling in the twenty-first century and lead schools in transformative directions (Bogotch, 2002)” (p. 222).

Ethical, moral, and value-based school leadership. Scholarship related to ethical, moral, and value-based school leadership follows two distinct pathways: theoretical and normative discussion or empirical studies. Frick and Gutierrez (2008) identify justice, care, critique, community, and profession as the established theoretical and normative frameworks in educational leadership. The authors also identify ethical and moral leadership practices from empirical studies. School leader practices as a culture mediator and builder or the school leader

as a values-informed decision maker emerge from a range of diverse studies. At the same time, Frick and Gutierrez revisit an earlier claim by Shapiro and Stefkovich (2001) asserting they failed to see anything morally and ethically unique to the profession of educational leadership within the pathways outlined in the scholarly literature. “The ethical frameworks espouse, argue for, and logically defend moral ideals but they do not fully isolate the moral uniqueness of the principal’s work” (p. 39).

The empirical studies resulted in two disparate sets of findings. One set poses that principals can be in step with ethics while methodically building culture around decisions and actions focused on the needs of students. The other findings point out the moral intent of school leaders being “lost to rationally derived, policy-compliance-oriented decision making and bureaucratized rule following” (p. 39). Frick and Gutierrez claim there are unquestionably unique moral qualities and judgments that can accompany the role of school leader and conducted a much needed study to support their claim. Researchers Frick and Gutierrez were seeking to narrow the focus of the ethics of profession, “to serve the best interests of the students” (Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2001), to something more tangible and granular.

Through a phenomenological-like research method the participants in the study clearly articulated several moral considerations unique to the profession of educational administration. Frick and Gutierrez (2008) found that principals indicated a morality unique to their profession in terms of dispositions and practices:

“Such as possessing a commitment for assuming responsibilities to children and youth, leading and supporting the moral enterprise of teaching and learning, answering to and balancing out the requests of many constituents by negotiating compromise, being a role model under close public scrutiny inside and outside the

work environment, and feeling committed or duty bound to work-life expectations” (p. 44).

Special fiduciary responsibilities to children and youth and a clear emphasis on the teaching and learning enterprise served as the primary unique professional morality research findings for the work of a school leader in the research study (Frick & Gutierrez, 2008). Serving student best interests, a personal and professional responsibility to work with kids, fulfilling student needs, a sacred community trust, and the doctrine of *in loco parentis*—substitute parents, are some of the ways school leader participants overwhelmingly indicated their commitment to children and youth. The concept of fiduciary duty—acting solely on the interest of another party—extends to the second primary finding involving teaching and learning. Here the clear emphasis for principals in the study revolved around encouraging, supporting, and expecting high-quality teaching methods of standards-based content that included rigorous thinking for all students. Principal comments aligned with teaching and learning included a moral obligation to push people beyond their comfort zone and a responsibility to provide pedagogy and programs that afford students the best possible learning opportunity and advance the positive results of academic achievement. Additionally, study participants pointed out a moral call to help teachers embrace the mission of public education, to be willing to teach all students, and to accept the premise that all kids can learn. Principals in the Frick and Gutierrez study (2008) believed that “directing the moral enterprise of teaching and learning was an essential component of their moral responsibility to student” (p. 47).

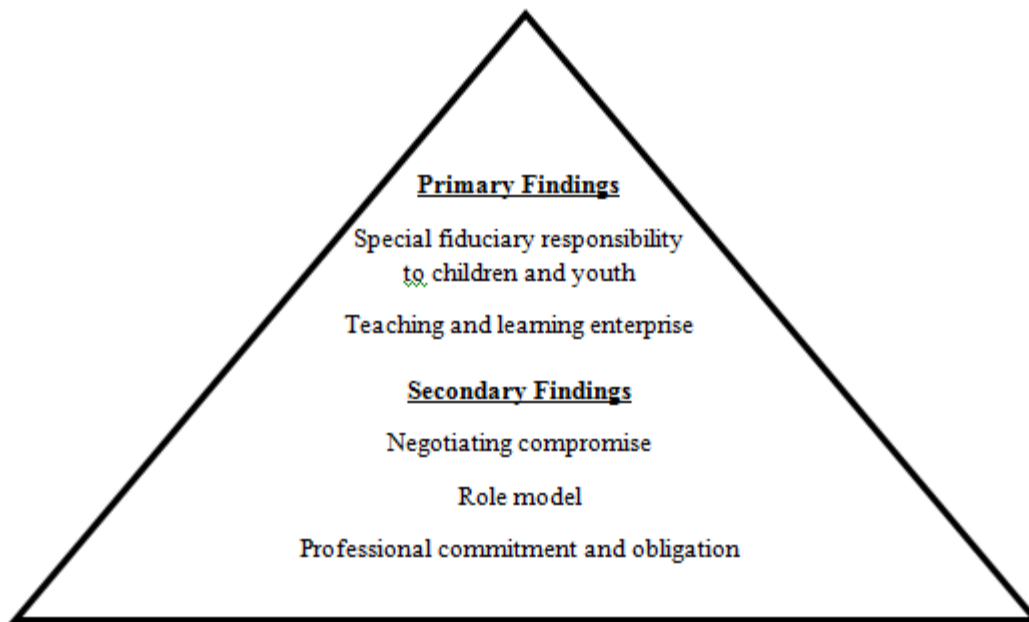


Figure 2.4. Hierarchy of primary and secondary findings: Unique or indicative work related professional moral attributes of school leadership (Frick & Gutierrez, 2008, p. 48)

There were secondary findings in the study that did not emerge as consistently or explicitly. Accordingly, this allowed for a hierarchy (see Figure 2.4) of unique morality for the primary and secondary findings and the factors to be considered in ethical school leadership. Negotiating compromise was expressed as a moral requirement with the principal managing competing moral values across stakeholders. Mediating, buffering, and balancing claims and interests all come into play for the school leader. Role model status, both internal and external to the school, provided another secondary finding with an obligation to uphold both school and community values, mores and expectations. Finally, professional commitment and obligation stood out as a moral uniqueness to the school leader. Principal participants referenced respect for the chain of command as well as feeling duty bound to laws, policies, rules, institutional procedures, and professional expectations. At the same time, the professional commitment and obligation was not blind and uncritical but one of patience, flexibility, going deeper, and doing

more because of a focus on students and a moral obligation to assume a posture that exceeds those of other professions (Frick & Gutierrez, 2008).

Ethical school leadership as an imperative in the context of increasing performance-driven accountability was the focus of a very recent research study conducted with school leaders in Australia. Ehrich, Harris, Klenowski, Smeed and Spina (2015) set out to examine the ethical use of data and school principals' perceptions of how they understand ethical leadership. In line with the primary findings of Frick and Gutierrez (2008), Ehrich, et al. (2015) noted "the leaders in the study were able to articulate their own understandings of ethics, which were tied closely to the notions of care and equity for all students and working to achieve students' best interests" (p. 208). The findings point to the pervasive use of data to inform principals' ethical practices and their work with teachers. Additionally, the leaders in the study provided many examples of the three inter-connected ethics of Staratt's (1991, 1996) model of ethical leadership. Ethics of care, justice, critique were all evident in the accounts provided by leaders.

With a shared and supported vision of a just, fair, and caring school culture, it remains for the school leader to set about on a continuous improvement path. An effective school leader will fully consider the extensive scholarly change literature as related to change agent thinking.

Change Agent Thinking

If vision thinking and ethical thinking finds the school leader imagining, directing, guiding, and supporting a desired future state in a school system that is just, fair, and caring, then change agent thinking will provide a means to the end. However, even with a compelling vision and an ethical stance, the principal will encounter major challenges while enacting change. Barth (2002) states: "Probably the most important—and the most difficult—job of an instructional leader is to change the prevailing culture of a school" (p. 6). Kondokci and Beycioglu (2014)

identify change and development as a prevalent issue for schools and education systems as a consequence of the revival of educational effectiveness and improvement movements. Thus, informed and calculated principal change agent thinking and leadership become key ingredients of change intervention for positive educational outcomes. An understanding of current change perspective, theory, and practice is in order.

The degree of complexity involved with change in the field of education is captured in scholarly research by Fullan (2006a) and Payne (2008) who decry the lack of system-wide and sustained change despite a dedicated focus on change intervention. Several other researchers are in agreement on the general lack of impact of change intervention (Hallinger, 2010; Harris, 2011; Levin, 2010). Similarly, Cuban (2013) maintained recurrent changes in school structure, curriculum, and culture have led to only nominal improvement in teaching practices. The limited effectiveness of change intervention in meeting intended results is not exclusive to education since research in organization science is congruent with these findings (e.g. Clegg & Walsh, 2004; Dahl, 2011; Jansson, 2013).

The shortcomings of change in education are well documented, but Kondokci and Beycioglu (2014) further explore the debate with the following: “We believe the intensified dissatisfaction about educational change theory and practice is a source of dynamism, plurality, and theoretical richness rather than indicator of stagnation in the educational field” (Guest Editorial, para. 3). According to several education change scholars, the dominant change perspective of planned, top-down, fragmented, and discontinuous falls short of explaining the reality of change and an alternate perspective is in order (Gallucci, 2008; Honig, 2008; Louis Seashore, 2008; Stein & Coburn, 2008). More specifically, the literature supports the

perspective of change as more continuous, unfolding, and incremental as opposed to planned and top-down (Louis Seashore, 2008).

Fullan (2006a) takes exception to this individualized and incremental perspective on change since he finds it to be slow and lacking staying power. He strongly advocates for more systemic impact with change. First of all, he stresses the need to focus on a small number of ambitious goals and, among other key elements, he points to the need for collective capacity building—cultivating leaders at many levels with a premium on years of experience, on the job professional development, and effective succession planning to increase the likelihood of change sustainability (Fullan, 2002; Fullan 2012). A single change agent rarely has the knowledge, experience, and stamina to sustain change over time as the lone-wolf. In confirmation of Fullan’s conceptualization, there is more recent research on collective capacity and distributed leadership as effective strategies for change agent thinking. Hallinger (2003) argues for change sustainability via distributed leadership by pointing out that “principals who share leadership responsibilities with others would be less subject to burnout than principal ‘heroes’ who attempt the challenges and complexities of leadership alone” (p. 345). Additionally, the work of Stein and Coburn (2008) on building networks and practice communities as well as the sustaining of collective learning (Boyce, 2003) both align with Fullan. At the same time, it is worth mentioning school context as an important consideration in change agent thinking. If school improvement and change is viewed as a journey, initially, a more forceful, directive, and top-down type of change agent thinking might be called for to get an at-risk school moving in the desired direction (Hallinger, 2003). However, according to Hallinger (2003), “it is safe to say that long-term, sustained improvement will ultimately depend upon the staff assuming increasing

levels of ownership over proposed changes in the school” (p. 347). It is clear that change agent thinking needs to have a degree of flexibility and to adjust to the context.

Change Challenges

Change is difficult. Change is very difficult. At the organizational level change the success rate of change initiative is less than 30 percent (Al-Haddad & Kotnour, 2015). This success rate shouldn't be surprising when put in perspective with the success rate at the individual level. Consider the following from Deutschman (2005):

Change or Die. What if you were given that choice?...What if it weren't just hyperbolic rhetoric that conflates corporate performance with life and death?...actual life or death now. What if a well-informed, trusted authority figure said you had to make difficult and enduring changes in the way you think and act?...Could you change when change really mattered?...Yes, you say? You're probably deluding yourself. You wouldn't change...Here are the odds, the scientifically studied odds: nine to one. That's nine to one against you (p. 54).

Journalist and author Alan Deutschman heard these odds from the dean of Johns Hopkins at a conference on the future of healthcare and in relation to what happens to cardiac patients when they're told to change or die. His surprise at the odds led to an in-depth analysis of individual and organizational change. He notes that changing the behavior of people isn't just the biggest challenge in health care but also the most important challenge in business and makes reference to Harvard Business School change guru John Kotter (2002) who states: “The central issue is never strategy, structure, culture, or systems. The core of the matter is always about changing the behavior of people and behavior change happens in highly successful situations mostly by speaking to people's feelings.” (p. x). Changing the behavior of people is at least as crucial and

challenging in education as it is in healthcare and business. Accordingly, Deutschman's analysis and conclusion confront three common sense misconceptions about change—our trust in facts, fear, and force, (the three F's). Instead, he provides a simple, but powerfully compelling change model: The three R's of change- Relate, Repeat, and Reframe (Deutschman, 2005; 2007; Freedman, 2007).

A logical and typical approach by a change agent leader looking to enlist change is to call on facts, fear, and force (the three F's). According to Freedman (2007), "The common sense notion is that a forceful presentation of facts will instill fear causing employees to take the message seriously...and with no room for dissent" (p. 2). The shockingly grim statistics of ninety percent of the change or die cardiac patients failing to respond to facts, fear, and force are convincing enough to defy the three F's logic, but Deutschman found notable outliers in a published medical study, a justice department study, and a business case study. His in-depth analysis conveys other case studies, however, the common denominators in each of these three case study outliers account for simple replacement of facts, fear, and force with what he terms "the three keys to change" (p. 13).

The major "Change or Die" stark contrast outlier case studies came from the medical field, the criminal justice arena, and business workers. Dr. Dean Ornish from the University of California at San Francisco and Mutual of Omaha insurance company teamed up to help 194 patients with severely clogged arteries who were bypass surgery or angioplasty eligible. Instead these patients joined in the Ornish experimental trial and changed their diet, their social habits, and added exercising to their daily routine. The program lasted only a year, but "three years later 77 percent of the patients had stuck with these lifestyle changes...they had halted—or in many cases, reversed—the progress of their disease" (Deutschman, 2007, p. 4).

The Delancey Street Foundation in San Francisco is residence for five hundred criminals—most labeled psychopaths—living together and working together. Judges send these felony offenders with serious addiction problems to Delancey from state prisons. One professional staffer, Dr. Mimi Silbert cofounded the program thirty-five years ago and resides with the felons without guards or supervisors. “Delancey street would sound crazy if it hadn’t worked so brilliantly for so long” (Deutschman, 2007, p. 8). The residents help each other earn a high school equivalency degree and they all learn at least three marketable skills. They run a moving company, an up-scale restaurant, a bookstore-café, and a print shop. Delancey supports itself with profits from its businesses. Remarkably, after a four year stay at Delancey, “most of the residents graduate and go out on their own...nearly 60 percent of the people who enter the program make it through and sustain productive lives on the outside” (Deutschman, 2007, p.9).

Six in ten make it out of Delancey to lawful citizenry while the same six in ten return to crime in the criminal justice system. Deutchman (2007) references a 2002 Justice Department study on recidivism which was the largest ever conducted in the United States and revealed that 30 percent of former inmates were rearrested in six months and 68 percent were rearrested within three years. These rates of recidivism remain dismal according to a Justice Department study by Cooper, Durose, and Snyder (2014) who found the 6-month re-arrest rate at 37 percent and the three-year re-arrest rate still 68 percent. These statistics support the belief of many psychologists and criminologists that most criminals can’t change their lives. At least some of this belief is borne out of the average score of male inmates in North America as moderately psychopathic on “The Hare” test for psychopathy developed by University of British Columbia expert Dr. Robert Hare (Deutschman, 2007). Nonetheless, somehow these unchangeable psychopaths change their lives at Delancey.

Finally, the case study of a declared unmanageable workforce of some five thousand workers at a General Motors plant represents another contrast to the only one of nine individuals taking up change when confronted with the message of change or die. In this situation the ongoing worker and management battle had GM closing down the auto factory because of their belief that workers were impossibly resistant to change. Strangely, Toyota offered to revive the plant and produce a GM Chevrolet there under the name New United Motor Manufacturing Inc.—Nummi (sounds like new me). Toyota preferred new hires to the laid off GM workers but the United Auto Workers insisted otherwise. In spite of distrust and strong feelings about the Japanese partnership, within three months of operation, Nummi was producing quality cars—some of the best cars ever for GM. This was happening with half as many workers, a reduction in absenteeism from 20 percent to 2 percent, and despite Toyota banning longstanding worker boredom coping practices of smoking and listening to the radio (Deutschmann, 2007).

Top GM executives assumed the results to be related to cutting-edge technology, but upon inspection, Nummi's machinery was three decades behind and 1950 technology. The improvements in Nummi stemmed from the previously unmanageable and hostile union workers who were now constantly contributing ideas for both quality and cost cutting. "These were the very same workers who had been so hostile and embittered. Now they talked unabashedly about the sense of 'family' they felt at the Nummi factory. Toyota's secret wasn't the technology it applied; it was the psychology" (p. 10).

The different situations of the Ornish patients, the Delancey ex-convicts, and the Nummi autoworkers serve to challenge our beliefs on change—namely that we can use the three F's of Facts, Fear, and Force. We believe a rational presentation of accurate information will make people change. Nine of 10 heart patients don't change and ex-convicts don't either. We resort to

scare tactics if facts fail to impart change but the fear of death wasn't motivating enough for the heart patients to change, the fear of losing jobs didn't change the hostile autoworkers, and the fear of longer prison sentences doesn't intimidate criminals. Finally, the failure of facts and fear leads us to desperate measures and we believe we can become more authoritative (think bypass surgery, life sentences, and plant closings) to try and force change with the heroic effort "to save people from themselves and from one another" (Deutschmann, 2007, p 12).

The bare bones of the three keys to change by Deutschmann (2007) are what he calls the three R's: Relate, Repeat, and Reframe. Relate, the first key to change, means "forming a new emotional relationship with a person or a community that inspires and sustains hope" (p. 14). The second key to change, Repeat, suggests "the new relationship helps you learn, practice, and master the new habits and skills that you'll need" (p. 14). And with Reframe, the third key, "the new relationship helps you learn new ways of thinking about your situation and your life" (p. 15). These three keys to change: Relate, Repeat, Reframe seem so simple. Deutschmann (2007) nicely rephrases the keys as "new hope, new skills, and new thinking" (p.16). The three previously addressed case studies involving health care, the criminal justice system, and a major corporation, captured exceptions and outliers that involve the use the three keys to change. Seemingly simple, the three keys of relate, repeat, reframe are rooted in some of the very best research and incorporate important ideas from the fields of cognitive science, neuroscience, and linguistics (Deutschmann, 2007). The three keys may be common knowledge individually, but they are complex as a whole and apparently a challenge to apply. Consequently, there are models of change in the research to assist in their application.

Change Models and Motivation Related to Change

Change begins at the individual level. Covey (2005) argues “most of the great cultural shifts—ones that have built great organizations that sustain long-term growth, prosperity, and contribution to the world—started with the choice of one person”. Covey goes on to say, “This one person first changed from the inside out. Their character, their competence, initiative, and positive energy—in short their moral authority—inspired and lifted others” (p. 25). In line with this type of thinking Fullan (2006b) strongly advocates for a focus on motivation by pointing out the volumes of research on change have messages that “all boil down to one word: motivation” (p. 8). Fullan’s attention to the necessity of motivation confirms what Deutschmann (2007) revealed with his research in the case studies that defied the one in nine change or die odds by way of relationships, repetition, and reframing the situation. Any change model actions that do not motivate people as individuals and collectively will not get results (Fullan, 2006b). Given that organizations are made up of a collection of individuals, changing the organization will require attention to motivation (Fullan, 2006b; 2011a) and a one person at a time inside out (Covey, 2005) change approach. It would follow that effective change models give attention to motivation at both the individual and group level. The next sections look first at motivation and then conclude with an examination of the literature related to two specific change models.

Motivation related to change. Author and researcher Daniel Pink (2009) draws on four decades of scientific research on human motivation to expose a mismatch between what science knows and what business does. Using a computer metaphor, Pink (2009) suggest societies, like computers have operating systems or sets of assumptions and protocols about how the world works and how humans behave that run beneath our laws, economic arrangements, and business practices. Motivation 1.0 presumed humans were biological creatures only motivated by the

basic needs for food, security, and sex. Motivation 2.0 dominated the 20th century and presumed we responded to rewards and punishments. Motivation 3.0 is the necessary upgrade we need and presumes we have a drive to learn, create, and to better the world. The upgrade from the extrinsic carrot and stick approach associated with Motivation 2.0 involves movement to the three intrinsic elements of Motivation 3.0 that Pink (2009) identifies as autonomy, mastery, and purpose.

Autonomy corresponds with self-direction and having opportunity for choice over task, time, team, and technique. According to Pink (2009) autonomy and accountability are compatible ends because people have a desire to be accountable but the autonomy they are provided allows them a chosen path to high performance. Supporting this notion, researchers at Cornell University studied 320 small businesses, half with worker autonomy and the other half with a top-down philosophy. The businesses that offered autonomy grew at four times the rate of the control-oriented firms and had one-third the turnover (Baard, Deci, & Ryan, 2004).

The Motivation 3.0 element of mastery departs from the compliance and control of Motivation 2.0 that was so prevalent during the industrial age and throughout the 20th century. Spring (2011) characterizes school settings during this era and well beyond as being influenced by the scientific management principles of the Industrial Revolution. Accordingly, efficiency became the mantra, and school became a hierarchical organization with top down decisions based on scientific studies and cost effectiveness as the professional focus for school leaders (Spring, 2011). On the other hand, mastery requires engagement and “an inquiring mind with the willingness to experiment one’s way to a fresh solution” (Pink, 2009, p. 111). We have an innate desire to pursue getting better at something that matters (Pink, 2009). Reinforcing the innate desire for mastery, Csikszentmihalyi (2000) coined the term “flow” in his research to

capture the optimal moments people experience when the challenges they face seem perfectly matched to their interests and abilities. The flow moment descriptions from these studies are powerful, magical, and absent awareness of time and complement the engagement associated with mastery. Pink (2009) identifies three rules that are peculiar to mastery. First, mastery as a mindset maps with the work of Dweck (2006) and her signature insight that what people believe shapes what people achieve. Mastery requires us to see our abilities as infinitely improvable and, therefore we value choosing learning goals over performance goals. Second, mastery is pain and calls for effort, practice, and a newly identified predictor of success from research termed “grit”—defined as perseverance and passion for long term goals (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007). The final rule, mastery is an asymptote that requires understanding of the algebra concept of asymptote—a straight line that a curve approaches but never quite reaches. Translated, this means “You can approach mastery. You can get really, really, really close to it. But like in the algebra concept, you can never touch it. This rule makes mastery both frustrating and alluring (Pink, 2009).

Purpose provides both context and the third leg of the tripod to accompany the other two legs of autonomy and mastery. Purpose is simply a nicety and a platitude in Motivation 2.0 but it dare not get in the way of profit making. At the same time Pink (2009) finds the most deeply motivating connected “to a cause greater and more enduring than themselves” (p. 133). Studies suggest the current stage of life for baby boomers may be compelling them to more purpose driven motivation—something beyond compensation engagement. Strategist guru Hamel (2009) relates saying: “As an emotional catalyst, wealth maximization lacks the power to fully mobilize human energies” (p. 91). A similar focus is conveyed by Covey (2005) who identifies purpose with his Leaving a Legacy and one of the L’s that accompany Live, Learn, and Love. Bolman

and Deal (2001) are also in support with their characterization of purpose as a powerful 21st century “search for soul and spirit, for depth and meaning in our lives” (p. 4). Finally, in the same vein, Blanchard (2007) finds “when work is meaningful and connected to what we truly desire, we can unleash a productive and creative power we never imagined” (p. 29). Giving employees control over giving back to the community; work that emphasizes more than self interest; and establishing policies that allow people to pursue purpose on their own terms lead to purpose maximization and feeds the purpose motive (Pink, 2009).

An understanding of motivation and the role autonomy, mastery, and purpose serve as key elements of motivation will allow a critical analysis of two different change models.

Change models. Al-Haddad and Kotnour (2015) acknowledge the different definitions and methods proposed to manage change as well as the low success rate organizations—less than 30 percent of the time—report on their change initiatives. In their research, Haddad and Kotnour examined the relationships between change types and methods and how this relationship can affect the change outcomes. In part, their research concluded, “to increase the probability of success, it is important to plan for change...it is important to adopt a structured methodological process...and the change method has to be well aligned with the organizational change type” (p. 254).

Initially Al-Haddad and Kotnour (2015) defined change methods as “actions carried out by managers to deal with change [that] are grouped under two categories: first, systemic change methods and second, change management methods” (p. 244). According to Zook (2007), systemic change methods involve certain processes and tools that help management teams make a series of start, stop, and continue decisions. Although processes and tools are important, I will give more attention to change management methods. As opposed to systematic change methods,

change management methods are broad and conceptual and help with deal with change on a large scale and include a range of intervention strategies (Worren, Ruddle, & Moore, 1999). This piece of the literature review will focus on change management methods since these methods help keep change aligned with the overall mission and organizational strategy by way of planning and creating a vision that involves people in the change (Grover, 1999). Of the many possible change management methods, two match well with the conclusion reached by Al-Haddad and Kotnour (2015) that the change method needs alignment with the organizational change type.

Two change theorists, Lewin (1946) and Kotter (1996) present useful frameworks for change. To foreshadow the discussion that follows, Figure 5 compares Lewin’s method to Kotter’s Leading Change Method.

Lewin's Method (1946)	Leading Change Method Kotter (1996)
1. Unfreeze	1. Establish a sense of Urgency
	2. Form a powerful guiding coalition
	3. Create a vision
	4. Communicate the vision
	5. Empower others to act on the vision
2. Act and move	6. Plan for and create short term wins
	7. Consolidate improvements and produce more change
3. Refreeze	8. Institutionalize more changes

Figure 2.5. Change Management Methods

Lewin (1948), a pioneer in social psychology, group dynamics, and organizational development provides a simple three-step change management method. Renowned Harvard Business School Professor, John Kotter (1996), outlines an eight-step change management model that is widely recognized and utilized as a result of his status as an expert in the field of organizational change.

Lewin breaks change into three steps: unfreezing, changing, and refreezing. In his studying of Lewin's model Armstrong (2011) provides more detail of the simple process:

- Unfreezing – is altering the present state equilibrium which supports existing behaviors and attitudes. Incentives need consideration during this process in order to motivate the people affected to accept the inherent threat that change presents.
- Changing – developing new responses and implementing desired changes by selecting the right leadership style.
- Refreezing – stabilizing the change by introducing the new responses into the personalities of those concerned (Armstrong, 2011).

Lewin's (1948) three-step model at the organizational level can be related to Deutschmann's (2007) relate, repeat, reframe at the individual level in that Lewin's model can be compared to changing bad habits by replacing them with new and better habits. The right leadership style (e.g., a relationship orientation) might allow for an opening for individuals in the organization seeing things differently (reframing) and with commitment to supporting, guiding, and reinforcing new responses over time (repeating), the organizational change has opportunity to be sustained or stabilized by the individuals that have accepted the change and made the best of it.

John P. Kotter has developed one of the eminent change management models. He first published the model in a 1995 article in the Harvard Business review. A year later the model was published with accompanying detail in his book titled *Leading Change*. Atypical in academic

circles, neither Kotter's (1995) article nor his 1996 book referenced outside sources. Kotter's personal business and research experience provided the basis for his model (Appelbaum, Habashy, Malo, & Shafiq, 2012). Despite the lack of empirical evidence, Kotter's change management model became a raging success and his *Leading Change* book became a business best-seller. According to Appelbaum et al. (2012) Kotter's *Leading Change* book became the best-selling book of its kind with hundreds of researchers making reference to one or other of Kotter's publications with the model also featured prominently in academic textbooks (e.g., Langton, Robbins, & Judge, 2010).

At the outset of developing his change management model, Kotter (1996) was attuned to the major change efforts in organizations that were the result of changing economic conditions, global competition, and a high quality-low cost consumer expectation. He also witnessed too many situations where "the improvements have been disappointing and the carnage has been appalling, with wasted resources and burned-out, scared, or frustrated employees" (p. 4). Acknowledging some of the downside of change as inevitable, Kotter (1996) pointed to some of the most common errors he felt could be avoided or mitigated with understanding, awareness, and skill. Figure 2.6 captures the eight common errors Kotter identified:

Common Errors
➤ Allowing too much complacency
➤ Failing to create a sufficiently powerful guiding coalition
➤ Underestimating the power of vision
➤ Undercommunicating the vision by a factor of 10 (or 100 or even 1,000)
➤ Permitting obstacles to block the new vision
➤ Failing to create short-term wins
➤ Declaring victory too soon
➤ Neglecting to anchor changes firmly in the corporate culture

Figure 2.6. Eight Errors Common to Organizational Change Efforts (Kotter, 1996, p. 16)

The eight common and fundamental errors led to the development of an eight stage model with each stage associated with one of the errors (Kotter, 1995; 1996). Each of the eight stages is named alongside Lewin’s (1948) three-step change management model in Figure 2.5. Below, Figure 2.7 provides additional detail to aid understanding of the eight steps necessary to effectively transform an organization during a change initiative.

The Eight-Stage Process of Creating Major Change	
1.	Establish a sense of urgency about the need to achieve change – people will not change if they cannot see the need to do so.
2.	Create a guiding coalition – assemble a group with power, energy, and influence in the organization to lead the change.
3.	Develop a vision and strategy – create a vision of what the change is about, tell people why the change is needed and how it will be achieved.
4.	Communicate the change vision – tell people, in every possible way and at every opportunity, about the why, what, and how of the changes.
5.	Empower broad-based action – involve people in the change effort, get people to think about the changes and how to achieve them rather than thinking about why they do not like the changes and how to stop them.
6.	Generate short-term wins – seeing the changes happening and working and recognizing the work being done by people towards achieving the change is critical.
7.	Consolidate gains and produce more change – create momentum for change by building on successes in the change, invigorate people through the changes, develop people as change agents.
8.	Anchor new approaches in the corporate culture – this is critical to long-term success and institutionalizing the changes. Failure to do so may mean that changes achieved through hard work and effort slip away with people’s tendency to revert to the old and comfortable ways of doing things

Figure 2.7. Kotter’s Change Model with supporting detail (Kotter, 1996, p. 21; Smith, 2005, p. 154)

Consistent with the “Unfreezing” step in Lewin’s (1948) three-step model, the concept emerges in Kotter’s (1996) own language when he states, “The first four steps in the transformation process help defrost a hardened status quo” (p. 22). Kotter goes on to quantify his change model steps five to seven as the phases where new practices are introduced. Once again there is a parallel to Lewin’s second step identified as “Act and Move.” Finally grounding the change in

the culture with Kotter's concluding step eight aligns with Lewin's third and final step of "Refreezing." The comparison points between Lewin and Kotter strengthen the most prominent steps of each model while creating consideration for the expansion from three steps to eight steps as addition of detail to afford a greater chance of success in a change initiative.

Kotter (1996) intentionally outlines his eight steps as sequential and invariant. Major change produces pressure for results but rushing through or skipping steps comes with peril and he claims, "Although one normally operates in multiple phases at once, skipping even a single step or getting too far ahead without a solid base almost always creates a problem" (p. 23). Kotter's warning against rushing the change process harkens back to the Deutchman's (2007) change or die assertions. Deutchman recognizes the three F's (Facts, Fear, and Force) as efficient; however, they lose out in change efforts in comparison to the three R's of Relate, Repeat, and Reframe that require an investment of time but are more effective in the long run.

Kotter's classic book, *Leading Change*, has neither footnotes nor references despite the profound impact his eight step model has had on change efforts and its universal acceptance and popularity. Fifteen years after Kotter published his book, researchers Appelbaum, Habashy, Malo, and Shafiq (2012) gathered arguments and counterarguments related to the change management model and identified some limitations while testing the model "with empirical and practitioner literature that was not evident in the original text" (p. 764). Essentially, Applebaum et al. (2012) concluded that the model was not applicable to all types of change and might need modifications in certain circumstances. For example, the lockstep rigidity and prescriptive nature of the Kotter model may not prove to be a match to an organization's culture. Some steps not being relevant in some contexts (i.e., skipping Step 7 and 8 when making equipment or software changes that are irreversible or making a change requiring secrecy that would run

counter to the intent of Steps 1 and 4) served as another limitation (Applebaum et al, 2012). Finally, resistance to change and commitment to change (a challenge to the level of detail in Kotter's model), and difficulty with studying a change process that uses Kotter's model were both mentioned by in the research by Applebaum et al, (2012). These limitations acknowledged, Appelbaum, Habashy, Malo, and Shafiq (2012) stressed:

Emperical support exists for most of the steps, although no formal studies were found covering the entire spectrum and structure of the model. No evidence was found against Kotter's change management model and it remains a recommendable reference. The model would be most useful as an implementation planning tool, but complementary tools should also be used during the implementation process to adapt to contextual factors or obstacles. (p. 764)

Kotter himself appears to have recognized and responded to the limitations reported by Applebaum, et. al, (2012) with his follow-up publications. Kotter's very next book, *The Heart of Change*, was full of case studies with validating evidence and data compiled by Kotter himself. Kotter and Cohen (2002) identified a strong Masters in Business Administration (M.B.A) program emphasis on thinking and analysis of quantitative measurement. For the M.B.A. graduate a pathway to organizational change required analysis and thinking—analyze-think-change. Sounds a lot like Deutschman's (2007) *Change or Die* less effective (but very common) change strategy that uses the three F's of Facts, Fear, and Force. In contrast to the traditional, information laden, and intellectual M.B.A. style analysis -think-change approach, Kotter and Cohen (2002) espouse the more emotional see-feel-change pattern. "In highly successful change efforts, people find ways to help others see the problems or solutions in ways that influence

emotions, not just thoughts” (Kotter & Cohen, 2002, p. x). Here again, this is complementary to Deutschman (2007) and the three R’s of *Change or Die*: Relate, Repeat, and Reframe. Neither Deutschman (2007) nor Kotter and Cohen (2002) dismiss data gathering, analysis, and presentation. Facts remain important. Fear is a reality. At times, forceful action is a necessity. Analysis of the facts may result in behavior change that sends a person into a see-feel-change process (Kotter & Cohen, 2002).

At the outset of this section of the literature review, motivation was prominently highlighted as the means of changing individuals one at a time in order to impact an entire organization (Covey, 2005; Fullan, 2006b; 2011a). According to Kotter and Cohen (2002) motivation is a feeling word, not a thinking word and, in many cases, in-depth analysis isn’t necessary to reveal the big truths. Using Deutschman *Change or Die* language, how much analysis is required to understand a doctor’s challenge to change or die? Analysis simply doesn’t have the power to get individuals running out the door and taking action. Feeling a connection (relating) and seeing urgency (reframing) in combination with relentless persistence (repeating) move the rational process of change to the emotional level required to motivate change (Deutschman, 2007; Kotter & Cohen, 2002).

Two additional and important Kotter change management model contributions emerge from the literature: urgency emphasis and buy-in. First of all, in response to being asked to identify the single biggest error people make when they try to change, Kotter (2008) stated: “After reflection, I decided the answer was that they did not create a high enough sense of urgency among enough people to set the stage for making a challenging leap into some new direction” (p. viii). Kotter’s sentiments might be interpreted as a promotion of the fear Deutschman (2007) identifies as less effective in change efforts. However, upon closer

inspection Kotter (2008) is actually emphasizing reframing a challenge and addressing the natural and comfortable complacency and state of equilibrium we tend toward out of habit and routine. Complacency comes from actual or perceived success; complacent people don't recognize their complacency; complacent people are content with the status quo; and complacent people rely on what has worked for them in the past (Kotter, 2008). According to Kotter (2008) the movement from complacency to a true sense of urgency requires an "aim for the heart" (p. 44). In a powerful and passionate revisit to his earlier conclusions from *The Heart of Change*, Kotter (2008) points to the centuries old maxim: "Great leaders win over the hearts and minds of others" (p. 45). It's not simply mind and not solely heart. And the expression distinctly and purposely places heart in the primary position and, with respect to this, Kotter (2008) concludes that "feelings in the heart" (p.45), are the key to unleashing complacency and moving toward the true sense of urgency required for change. After strategically acting to influence the heart and the mind, Kotter (2008) claimed the need for leaders to utilize four tactics to establish a credible and effective level of urgency in people. Tactic one is *Bring the Outside in* and involves getting emotional and external people, data, videos, or stories into the organization. Tactic two is to *Behave with Urgency Every Day* and involves never being content while presenting consistent and visible personal urgency without anxiousness or anger. Tactic three is *Find Opportunity in Crisis* and stresses very cautiously making friends with crisis as a means of confronting complacency. Tactic four, *Deal with the NoNos*, addresses what to do with urgency-killers, skeptics, and status-quo complacent (pgs. 58-61).

Kotter and Whitehead (2010) combined efforts to further address tactic four, *Deal with the NoNos*, realizing the need to help change agents effectively confront the inevitable resistance they will face. Appelbaum, Habashy, Malo, and Shafiq (2012) identified addressing resistance

to change and commitment to change as a limitation of the Kotter eight-step change model. As mentioned, Kotter may have concluded he lacked appropriate detail to address resisters when he published *Leading Change*. In the book *Buy-In: Saving Your Good Idea From Getting Shot Down*, Kotter and Whitehead (2010) use “extensive observations and an ongoing flow of research” (p. ix), to provide a counterintuitive approach to addressing resistance. Essentially, their approach invites opposition to the forefront and encourages openness and transparency. Consider the following about the approach emphasized by Kotter and Whitehead (2010):

The method doesn't keep the naysayers out of the room. It doesn't try to build a power base or use a powerful personality to steamroller over the unfair opposition. It actually treats the unfair, illogical, and sneaky with a large degree of respect. It doesn't try to overwhelm attackers, or preempt their advance, with selling-selling-selling, complex manipulations, or long, logical lists of reasons-reasons-reasons. Instead, it responds to attacks in ways that are simple, clear, crisp, and filled with common sense. (p. ix)

Fear mongering, delay, confusion, and ridicule (character assassination) are outlined as strategies typically employed by people to keep a change idea from moving forward (Kotter & Whitehead, 2010). The counterintuitive method for dealing with these strategies involves inviting the attackers in and letting them attack; winning the hearts of the relevant audience by showing respect (even for attackers); winning the minds of the relevant audience with clear common sense; and monitoring both the hearts and minds of the much needed relevant audience (Kotter & Whitehead, 2010). Connections with Deutschman's (2007) three R's of relate, repeat, and reframe come to mind yet again when analyzing the Kotter and Whitehead proposed methods for dealing with resistance. Allowing the resisters a voice and showing them respect corresponds

with relate. Repeating is evident in the monitoring the hearts and minds of the greater audience (not just the resistors) to assess next-step actions and messages. Finally, winning the hearts and minds via simple and clear commonsense is compatible with the reframing associated with *Change or Die*.

The research reviewed in this section made a strong case for a one-person-at-a-time motivation at the forefront framework of change agent thinking and proposed effective change models to assist with the process. The next section addresses school culture as the focal point of the leader's change mindset and action.

School Climate and School Culture

School climate and school culture are used interchangeably by some, but there are crucial distinctions between the two that are important to consider. Researchers Van Houtte and Van Maele (2011) observed the following:

During the 1990s, the concepts of climate and culture started to appear together, and a discussion was launched about their similarities and difference. One of the prominent questions was how to relate climate with culture. More specifically, there was no consensus as to whether climate was the broader, all-inclusive concept encompassing culture, or vice versa. (p. 507)

The ongoing debate about the definition, measurement, and school effectiveness impact of school culture and school climate is highlighted within contrasting assertions in the literature. Van Houtte (2005) claims school culture is a sub component of school climate. He also concludes studying school culture is a better frame for studying school effectiveness and school improvement. In contrast, Schoen and Teddlie (2008) propose school climate as a subset of school culture while, at the same time, concurring with Van Houtte regarding the value of

examining school culture as the more appropriate means of examining school change. It seems a separate examination of school culture and school climate is in order. A brief review of prominent literature on both school culture and school climate follows and leads to a practical comparison of school culture with school climate.

School Culture

Culture has roots in the field of sociology and there are a number of experts who have made effort to define culture. From a historical perspective, Geertz noted that culture “is not a part of experimental science in search of laws, but an interpretive one in search of meaning” (Geertz, 1973, p. 5). Thus culture as interpretive versus scientific begins the conversation and opens up the challenge to concretely define the term. In line with Geertz’s interpretive viewpoint, Schein (1992) explained culture as a social indoctrination of unwritten rules that people learn as they try to fit in a particular group. Peterson and Cosner (2006) shape the definition of culture similarly and bring the concept of culture to the school setting as “the set of norms, values, and beliefs and other cultural features that characterize the expected pattern of behavior, thinking, and feeling for those who work and learn in the school” (p. 250). Sullivan (2009, p 462) is in agreement and mentions “patterns of activity and the structures governing interaction that are fashioned by the assumptions, beliefs, values, norms, symbols, and tangible artifacts of a system.” It is apparent from the definitions of these experts that culture provides a framework for a group, organization, or school and helps shape group behavior as well as give structure to the perceptions of the membership.

Culture is such a strong construct and a powerful part of any organization that it is passed on to new members by the experienced members. There is widespread agreement on culture being shared by most or all members of a group and sensed by those members but there is also

agreement that it is difficult to express explicitly (Elder & Paul, 2012; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Peterson & Cosner, 2006; Sullivan, 2009). While we have a keen awareness of everything that happens in a school as a function of culture to some degree, Gruenert and Whitaker (2015) posit that “we struggle to empirically prove that culture even exists” (p. 27). Writers and prominent school culture researchers such as Seymour Sarason, Michael Fullan, Andy Hargreaves, Mike Schmoker, Terry Deal, and Kent Peterson all agree culture is vital to understand and also a difficult topic to pin down (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015).

Perhaps the difficulty inherent in efforts to pin down the topic of school culture explains why school culture has not been a more explicit part of major education reform efforts. The notable No Child Left Behind Act and the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 provide evidence of the lack of attention to school culture as a school improvement strategy. President George W. Bush signed the bi-partisan supported No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) into law in 2001 and ushered in a new era of education reform. In this Act, accountability, flexibility, and choice were focus points designed to close the long-standing achievement gap between white and minority students and between students from high- and low-income families. There are eight primary areas of focus in NCLB: closing the achievement gap, improving literacy by putting reading first, expanding flexibility, reducing bureaucracy, rewarding success and sanctioning failure, promoting informed parental choice, improving teacher quality, and making school safer for the 21st century. There was a clear description of each of these areas in the No Child Left Behind document (No Child Left Behind, 2001, p.3-6). Data-driven decisions followed in schools around the nation as the NCLB Act contained little emphasis on school culture.

A much less advertised bill, the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002, explicitly placed emphasis on research as opposed to school culture. The Act eliminated the Department of

Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement and established the Institute of Educational Sciences (IES). The goal of IES was to support scientifically based research for state and local educational programs and school interventions. Here again, there was a research focus and little emphasis on school culture. "Several authors and researchers (Levine & LeZotte, 1995; Sizer, 1998; Phillips, 1996; Peterson & Deal, 1998; Frieberg, 1998) agree and refer to school climate, and more specifically to school culture, as an important but often-overlooked component of school improvement" (Wagner, 2006, p. 41).

School Climate

In as much as school culture is a challenge to pin down, the definition of school climate is also debated in the research. In fact, it is prevalent for school climate to refer to the intangibles that can affect the feelings and attitudes of the students, teachers, staff, and parents (Alsbury, 2006; Franco, 2010; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Lehr, 2005; Sullivan, 2009). References to intangibles, feelings, and attitudes invite a challenge to be definitive in describing school climate. The initial mention of school climate in the literature comes from Arthur C. Perry in his 1907 work, *The Management of a City School* (Franco, 2010). Early educational reformers Dewey (1916) and Durkheim (1961) recognized how the climate of a school affects the life and learning of its students. The importance of the feelings of students, staff, and parents as well as students' feelings of safety and the moral/ethical development of the child have origins with Franco (2010).

The publication of studies of business organizational climate made way for systematic study of school climate in the 1980's because of the observation that school-specific processes accounted for variation in student achievement (Anderson, 1982; Kreft, 1993; Purkey & Smith, 1983). School climate study is just over three decades young, but is being increasingly

recognized by researchers and educators as a school reform that contributes to success for all stakeholders (Alsbury, 2006; Franco, 2010; Lehr & Christenson, 2002). The increased importance has led to the National School Climate Council (2007) recommending that “school climate” and a “positive and sustained school climate” be defined in the following ways:

School climate is based on patterns of people’s experiences of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures.

As sustained, positive school climate fosters youth development and learning necessary for a productive, contributive, and satisfying life in a democratic society. This climate includes norms, values, and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally and physically safe. People are engaged and respected. Students, families and educators work together to develop, live, and contribute to a shared school vision. Educators model and nurture an attitude that emphasizes the benefits of, and satisfaction from, learning. Each person contributes to the operations of the school as well as the care of the physical environment. (p. 4)

The National School Climate Council definitions of school climate includes norms, goals, and values. The definition serves to show the overlap with school culture and adds to the confusion between the terms. A practical comparison between the climate and culture and an effective explanation of the synergy between the two will follow.

Comparing School Climate and School Culture

A foundation for understanding school culture involves a side-by-side contrast with school climate. Gruenert and Whitaker (2015) provide an everyday language version of some of the differences between school climate and culture in Figure 2.8.

Culture...	Climate...
...is the group's personality.	...is the group's attitude.
...gives Mondays permission to be miserable.	...differs from Monday to Friday, February to May.
...provides for a limited way of thinking.	...creates a state of mind.
...takes years to evolve.	...is easy to change.
...is based on values and beliefs.	...is based on perceptions.
...can't be felt, even by group members.	...can be felt when you enter a room.
...is part of us.	...surrounds us.
...is "the way we do things around here."	...is "the way we feel around here."
...determines whether or not improvement is possible.	...is the first thing that improves when positive change is made.
...is in your head	

Figure 2.8. Some Differences between Climate and Culture (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015, p 10)

Both school culture and school climate are important, but the differences identified by Gruenert and Whitaker (2015) establish a power differential between the two with the language the researchers used in making their contrast. For example, in the personality versus attitude metaphor, an individual's personality clearly carries more power and seems more longstanding than an individual's attitude. Personality carries a permanent and weighty status and attitude suggests fleeting and shallow. This simple starting point propels the Gruenert and Whitaker (2010) comparison down an understandable pathway of culture as "the box (*or normal*) when people try to think outside the box" (p. 14); "a change in climate occurring instantly while a

change in culture as a slow evolution” (p. 15); and, “culture influencing our values and beliefs with climate constituting those values and beliefs in action” (p. 22).

In a similar manner, Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) offer a computer metaphor that suggests a culture and climate hierarchy by contending that culture is like the operating system for a group while climate is what makes way to desktop. Continuing the computer metaphor, culture is always running in the background and exerting significant control while climate shows up in the more visible forefront.

A more scholarly comparison claims climate and culture as very similar, “though emanating from different research traditions and research communities” (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008, p. 133). The literature shows school climate viewed from the psychological vantage point using quantitative analysis and school culture from an anthropological point of view and, most often, researched with qualitative methods (Freiberg, 1999; Freiberg & Stein, 1999; Hoy, Tarter, & Bliss, 1990; Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991; Owens, 2001) As such, Freiberg (1999) argued for studying climate with validated survey instruments and studying school culture via stories, discussions, student drawings, teacher and student journals, interviews, and videos. Despite the generalized differences, Schoen and Teddlie (2008) offer one possibility to explain the similarity between the concepts and the confusion between them stating: “climate and culture were not actually separate constructs, but components of one broader construct that had been explored separately, in different ways by diverse research communities” (p. 133). Accordingly, Schoen and Teddlie (2008) utilized an intense literature review of culture and climate to propose a new theoretical framework for school culture study and the school level. Following is a brief synopsis of their journey and key elements.

A New Model of School Culture

For the purpose of this study, a new model of school culture as a complex construct comprised of four dimensions that exist at three different levels (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008) will inform a theoretical framework. Schoen and Teddlie's (2008) new model provides a foundation for adaptations that better reflect the characteristics of a leadership development culture that sees administrators, teachers, students, staff and community members as vital stakeholders. This refined theoretical framework will better serve the purpose of this study of school culture. To better understand this theoretical framework, each piece of contributing research is briefly described in turn.

The initial contribution toward Schoen and Teddlie's (2008) new model comes from the work of Schein (1992) and is illustrated below in Figure 2.9.

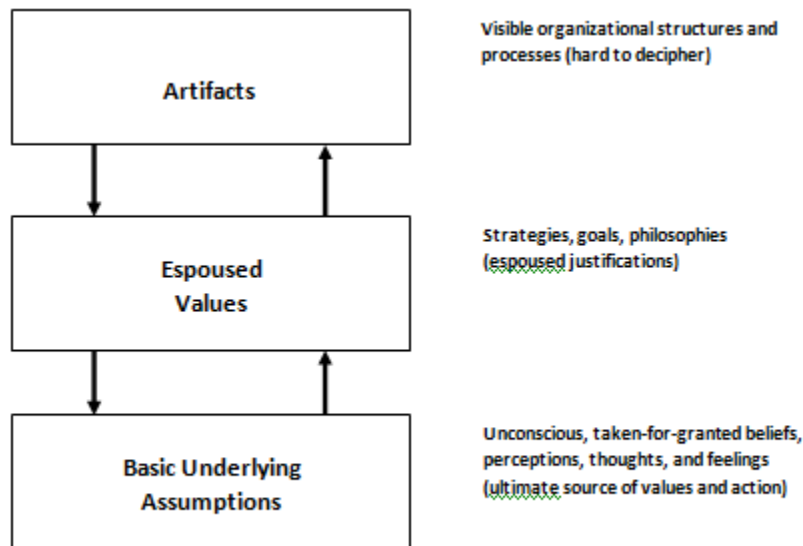


Figure 2.9. Uncovering the levels of culture (Schein, 1992, p. 17)

Schein's figure shows organizational culture at three distinct levels: artifacts, espoused beliefs, and basic assumptions. The top level is least abstract and is made up of visible artifacts or expressive symbols (Schein, 1992; 2004). Schein (1992) references this artifact level as "at the surface and aspects easily discerned, yet hard to understand" (p. 17). The artifacts are visible but

need interpretation. Schein (2004) noted: “The problem is that symbols are ambiguous, and one can only test one’s insight into what something may mean if one has also experienced the culture at the deeper levels of values and assumptions” (p. 27). By further exploring the other two levels of culture, artifacts take on deeper and more accurate meaning. At Schein’s (1992; 2004) middle level, the espoused beliefs, and perceptions of members of the organization come into play and are typically researched via surveying participant beliefs and attitudes. This aggregate data from perception surveys is consistent with “what is used to describe the psychosocial construct of school climate” (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008, p. 138). The base level of basic assumptions is the most abstract and, according to Schein (1992; 2004), this level is the essence of culture consisting of what members of a group really feel, believe, or think. Schein (2004) emphasized the critical nature of the basic assumption level of culture noting: “To understand a group’s culture, one must attempt to get at its shared basic assumptions and one must understand the learning process by which such basic assumptions come to be” (p. 36).

Anthropological research type methods like ethnographic observations or interviews are required to study the basic assumptions level of Schein’s (1992; 2004) culture. The shared tacit understandings at this level are taken for granted and are operating on the unconscious level. In Figure 2.10, Schoen and Teddlie (2008) continue to build toward their new model of school culture by showing the connections and relationship between levels of culture and the separate but similar types of school effectiveness research carried out within organizational culture.

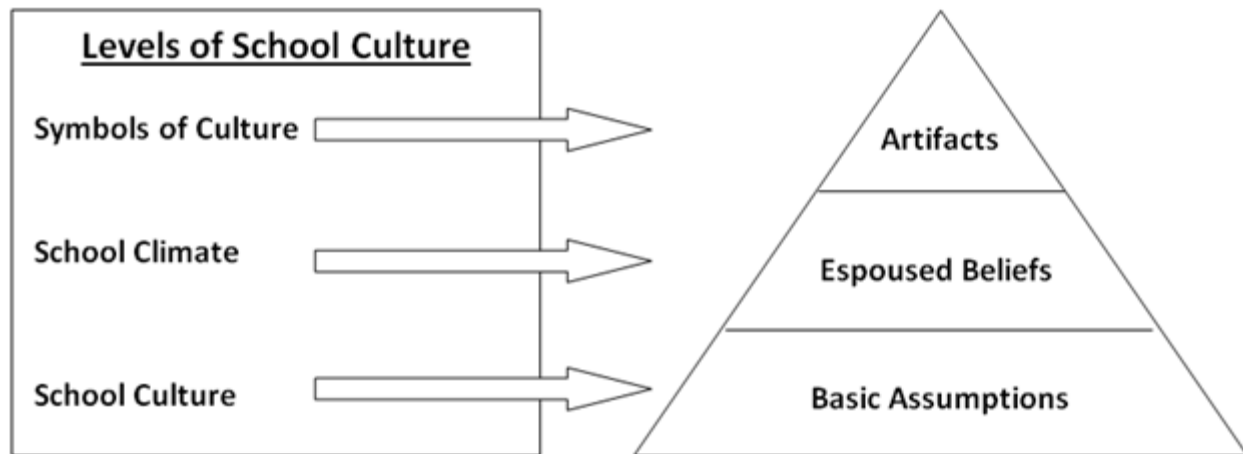


Figure 2.10. Integration of school effectiveness research into Schein's (1992) levels of organizational culture (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008, p. 138).

In summary, both the artifacts and basic assumptions levels are associated with the social science discipline of Anthropology and are best researched with observations and loosely structured interviews. The espoused belief level, however, is more closely associated with the social science disciplines of Psychology, Social Psychology, and Sociology with surveys and structured interviews as appropriate research method (Schein, 1992; 2004).

The penultimate step taken by Schoen and Teddlie (2008) toward their new model of school culture framework involved “compiling a list indicators of culture from variables, attributes, characteristics, terms, and concepts found in the literature” (p. 139). The compilation resulted in four separate groups of indicators identified as Dimensions of Culture. The process led to a new definition of school culture that included the four Dimensions of Culture:

School culture is the shared basic assumptions and espoused beliefs that exist in the Professional Orientation, Organizational Structure, Quality of the Learning Environment, and Student-Centered Focus of the school that determine and sustain the norms of behavior, traditions, and processes particular to a specific school. (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008, p. 139)

Schoen and Teddlie’s (2008) resultant definition incorporates both culture and climate while giving attention to the levels of culture as well. The artifact level is not mentioned explicitly, however, artifacts emerge as physical symbols of espoused values or basic assumptions. Additionally, their definition includes intentionally selected titles to the four Dimensions of Culture. Additional detail and definition of the four Dimensions of Culture are evident in Figure 2.11.

<p>I. Professional Orientation</p> <p>The activities and attitudes that characterize the degree of professionalism present in the faculty.</p>	<p>II. Organizational Structure</p> <p>The style of leadership, communication, and processes that characterized the way the school conducts business.</p>
<p>III. Quality of the Learning Environment</p>	<p>IV. Student-Centered Focus</p>
<p>The intellectual merit of the activities in which students are typically engaged.</p>	<p>The collective efforts and programs offered to support student achievement.</p>

Figure 2.11. Definitions of the dimensions of school culture (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008, p. 140)

The teacher as a professional serves as the focus of the Professional Orientation dimension of school culture. By choosing the term orientation, Schoen and Teddlie (2008) are able to include both psychological and attitudinal constructs of teacher professionals. The Organizational Structure dimension involves recognized “elements of leadership, governance, structure, roles, relationships, and responsibilities” (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008, p. 141). The Quality of the Learning Environment dimension of school culture hones in on academic rigor and how students construct, use, and apply knowledge. Finally, according to Schoen and Teddlie (2008) the Student-Centered Focus dimension of school culture addresses how well “the needs of individual students are met by the school’s programs, policies, rituals, routines, and traditions” (p. 141).

Figure 2.12 pieces the four Dimensions of Culture (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008) together with the three different levels of culture (artifacts, espoused beliefs, and basic assumptions) identified by Schein (1992; 2004).

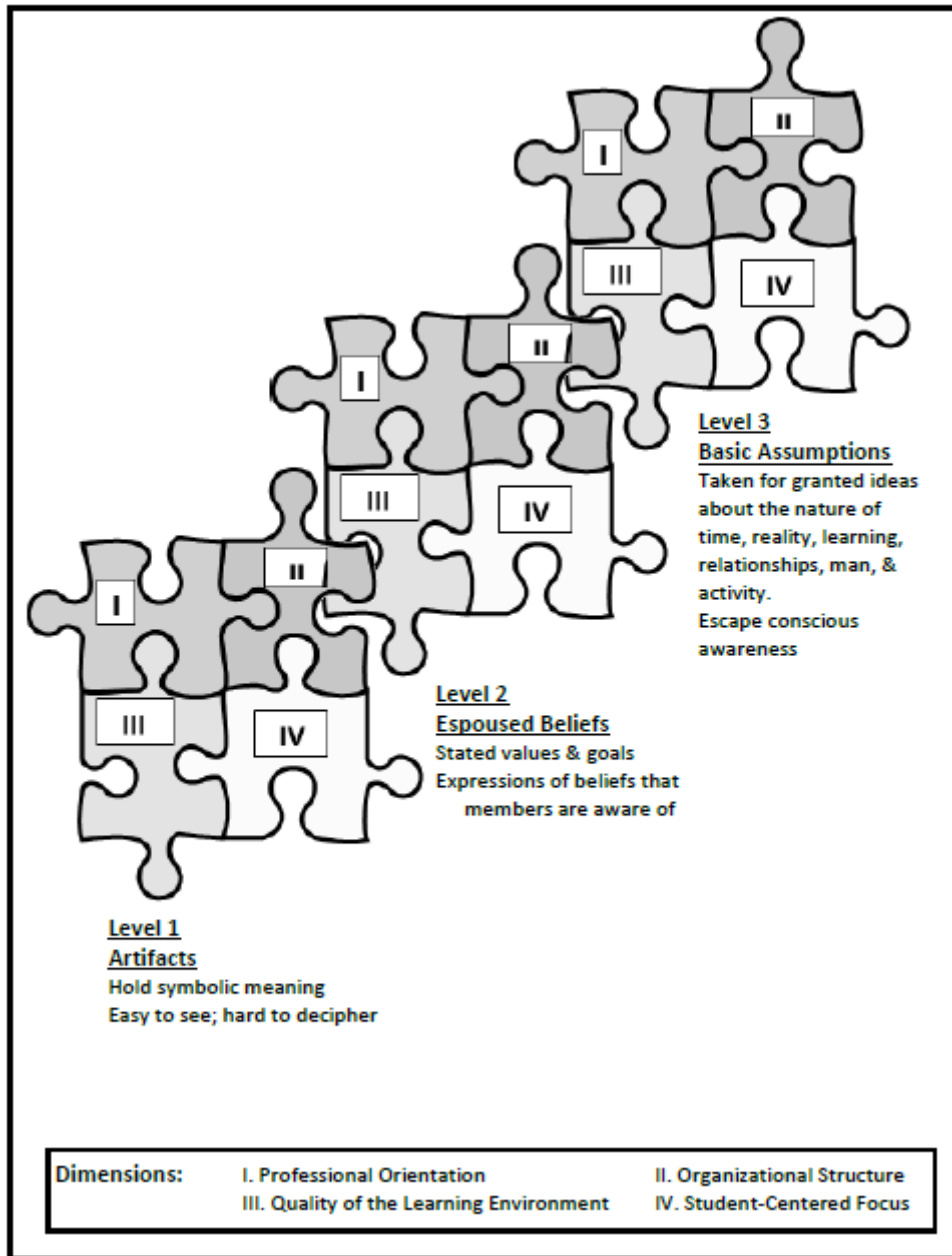


Figure 2.12. A new model of school culture (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008, p. 142)

The interlocking puzzle pieces show both overlapping and a complementary relationship between the dimensions. Schoen and Teddlie (2008) offer an example of overlap by way of

teacher leadership which could be considered either Professional Orientation (if the teacher leader tries to improve curriculum) or Organizational Structure (if the teacher leader was part of shared decision-making).

Principal Effectiveness Actions Related to School Culture

The importance of the principal as school leader is increasingly the focus of those who are working hard to determine the most significant ingredients of a high-quality school. A focus on the principal only makes sense that given Schmidt-Davis & Bottoms (2011) reported that “a principal can impact the lives of anywhere from a few hundred to a few thousand students during a year” (p. 2). School principals play an essential role in the development of school culture and, in turn, the school culture impacts the function and well being of teachers and student achievement (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010; Hallinger, 2003; Hallinger and Heck, 1996; Wallace Foundation, 2013). Change agent and school culture expert Michael Fullan (2001; 2006a) identifies a strong association between effective principals and learning-centered school cultures. Fullan (2001; 2011; 2012; 2014) repeatedly stresses that the most effective use of time for principals seeking to impact teaching and learning is a focus on transforming the school culture. What’s more, as “school principals [seek] to improve student performance...[by] improving the school’s culture [they should do that] by getting the relationships right between themselves, their teachers, students, and parents” (Macneil, Prater, & Busch, 2009, p. 77-78)). It is not surprising, then, that both the newly published Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (NPBEA, 2015) and the list of key practices of effective principals established by the Wallace Foundation (2013) both underscore the role that effective leaders play in fostering and maintaining productive school cultures.

Comparing the Most Recent Principal Effectiveness Publications

The recently approved Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (previously ISLLC Standards), directly address expectations related to school culture. Additionally, the Wallace Foundation has worked for over a decade to improve leadership in public schools. Funding projects in 28 states and schools in those states, Wallace (2013) has published more than 70 research reports related to the principalship and has put forth the Wallace Perspective, noted as “a culling of our lessons to describe what it is that effective principals do” (p. 4). To initiate the journey toward principal effectiveness actions related to school culture, I outline specific school culture connections identified in the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders and the Wallace Perspective.

The Professional Standard 1, Mission, Vision, and Core Values, points out that “effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 9). This primary standard calls on effective leaders to operate in collaboration with members of the school community “to develop an educational mission...to develop and promote a vision...and, to articulate, advocate, and cultivate core values that define the school’s culture” (p. 9). Definitions of leadership often incorporate vision with action. “Leadership is all about organizational improvement; more specifically, it is about establishing agreed-upon and worthwhile directions for the organization in question, and doing whatever it takes to prod and support people to move in those directions” (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson 2010 pp. 9-10).

The literature on school culture prominently establishes the definition of culture in relation to patterns of actions, thoughts, feelings, and interactions stemming from assumptions,

norms, values, beliefs, symbols and tangible artifacts (Elder & Paul, 2012; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Peterson & Cosner, 2006; Schein, 1992; Sullivan, 2009). In developing this initial standard for effective school leaders, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA, 2015) was abundantly clear about the need for leaders to “develop a shared understanding and commitment to vision, mission, and core values” (p. 9), but to also call on educational leaders to “model and pursue the school’s mission, vision, and core values in all aspects of leadership” (p. 9). At the very outset, the NPBEA recognized that, in order to be effective, school leaders need to institute patterns of actions, thoughts, and feelings with connections to a vision, mission, and core values.

The Wallace Foundation (2013) identified five key practices of effective principal leadership they believe need to be performed well and called these the Wallace Perspective. Paralleling the Professional Standards initial item, the Wallace Perspective begins with “Shaping a vision of academic success for all students” (Wallace, 2013, p. 4). The Wallace Perspective key practice of vision shaping is followed by four additional effective principal practices: “Creating a climate hospitable to education; cultivating leadership in others; improving instruction; and managing people, data, and processes to foster school improvement” (Wallace, 2013, p. 4). Though listed separately, the five key practice responsibilities are very much interrelated. Consider this qualifier from the Wallace Foundation (2013):

Each of these five tasks needs to interact with the other four for any part to succeed. It’s hard to carry out a vision of student success, for example, if the school climate is characterized by student disengagement, or teachers don’t know what instructional methods work best for their students, or test data are clumsily

analyzed. When all five tasks are well carried out, however, leadership is at work.

(p. 7)

Essentially, school leaders are challenged to guide, direct, support, and sustain a carefully framed school culture in order to meet with effectiveness.

Continuing the comparison, the Equity and Cultural Responsiveness (Standard 3) and Community of Care and Support for Students (Standard 5) of the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (NPBEA, 2015) align well with the Wallace Foundation's (2013) key practice for school leaders of "creating a climate hospitable to education in order that safety, a cooperative spirit, and other foundations of fruitful interaction prevail" (p. 6). Standard Three of the Professional Standards elaborates on this "hospitable climate" to explicitly call on effective leaders to strive for "equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices" (NPBEA, 2015, p. 11). Standard Five further explains and details what constitutes hospitable climate by suggesting effective educational leaders "cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community" (NPBEA, 2015, p. 13). An expectation for the effective principal to ensure fair and respectful treatment of all students with positive and unbiased misconduct policies (NPBEA, 2015) also aligns well with the Wallace Perspective language for the principal to generate "other foundations of fruitful interaction" (Wallace Foundation, 2013, p. 6). According to the NPBEA (2015), equity and cultural responsiveness also mean "recognizing, respecting, and employing student strengths, diversity, and culture as assets for teaching and learning" (p. 11). Here again a Wallace Foundation (2015) association can be made with the effective principal practice promoting "a cooperative spirit" (p. 6). Meeting the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student along with fully embracing, engaging and

getting to know each student are school culture goal requirements for effective school leaders (NPBEA, 2015; Wallace Foundation, 2013).

Ethical actions according to professional norms have detail in the Professional Standards publication with powerful words like trust, integrity, fairness, transparency, collaboration, perseverance and continuous improvement (NPBEA, 2015). Accompanying these principle-centered terms with invitations invokes a positive school culture foundation as effective leaders are called to: “provide moral direction for the school” and “place children at the center of education and accept responsibility for each student’s academic success and well being” (p. 10). Wallace Foundation (2015) findings support moral direction as a productive practice for effective principals noting that “principals at schools with high teacher ratings for ‘instructional climate’ outrank other principals in developing an atmosphere of caring and trust...and their teachers are more likely than faculty members elsewhere to find their motives and intentions are good” (p. 8). The ethics and professional norms standard also calls on school leaders to “safeguard and promote the values of democracy, individual freedom and responsibility, equity, social justice, community, and diversity” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 10). Leading with communication skills, social-emotional insight, and understanding, (NPBEA, 2015) is reminiscent of school leadership expert Leithwood’s (2005) mantra: “Achieving success as a leader by virtually any definition requires doing right things right” (p. 3). The Wallace Perspective complement to the ethics standard denotes “respect for every member of the school community; an upbeat, welcoming, solution-oriented, no-blame, professional environment; and efforts to involve staff and students in a variety of activities, many of them schoolwide” (Wallace Foundation, 2013, p. 9). Once again, effective practice stresses faithful actions by a school leader in relation to both the ethics standard and the Wallace Perspective as a means to achieve a specific school culture.

The Wallace Perspective of effective leaders cultivating leadership in others (Wallace Foundation, 2013) is also prominently acknowledged in the Professional Standards (NPBEA, 2015) with an expectation for school leaders to develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel (Standard Six) as well as foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff (Standard Seven). Spurring leadership in others only makes sense when recognizing the obvious challenge that exists to accomplish goals, carry out the mission, and make progress toward an ambitious vision. There is significant and longstanding agreement that leaders need others to help accomplish a group's purpose and need to develop leaders across the organization (Gardner, 1983; Kouzes & Posner, 2008; Yukl, 2012). The Professional Standards (NPBEA, 2015) specifically articulate effective school leader responsibility for teacher and staff knowledge, practice and skill development; for teacher and staff empowerment and motivation; and "to develop the capacity, opportunities, and support for teacher leadership and leadership from other members of the school community" (p. 14). A strong climate for instruction in a school finds teachers in the school rating their principals with high accolades for promoting faculty leadership (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010), The Wallace Foundation (2013) is also clear that school leader sharing of leadership is a strengthening of influence and authority and not a weakening. "School leadership is not a zero-sum game...principals' authority doesn't wax wane as others' waxes" (Wallace Foundation, 2013, p. 10).

The effective leader needs to have a continuous improvement mindset and create a workplace with conditions fertile for professional development, mutual accountability, and job-embedded leadership opportunity as a means to the end of developing the necessary level of leadership capacity in the school community (NPBEA, 2015). The Wallace Perspective adds the following: "When principals and teachers share leadership, teachers' working relationships with

one another are stronger and student achievement is higher” (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010, p. 282) The interconnectedness of the Professional Standards of effective school leader *expectations* with the extensive Wallace Foundation research on effective school leader *practice* bolster the targets for school leaders desiring an optimal school culture.

Research Supporting Principal Effectiveness Practice and School Culture

Specific research results serve as support of the Professional for Standards Educational Leaders and the Wallace Perspective. The content in these documents can materialize as directive and dogmatic if not connected to literature from the schoolhouse domain of the effective principal. A powerfully supportive study involving New Jersey principals and the Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards replicates a previously published study conducted with a national sample of superintendents who were applying ISLLC to principal evaluation. Both shed light on which ISLLC 2008 Standards are perceived as most applicable to the principal role and most essential to effective leadership that meets the challenge of positively impacting student learning. First, I’ll present the New Jersey study and then add relevant connections to the associated national level research.

Just published in October of 2015, the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders have been written from research as opposed to being available as the focus of research. On the other hand, their predecessor—ISLLC 2008—is in fair play for researchers. An ISLLC 2008 study was conducted by Ramaswami (2013) and involves a random sampling of 270 New Jersey Principals asked to rank the ISLLC 2008 Standards “footprints” (the main descriptor coupled with each of the six ISLLC 2008 Standards) in order of importance. Researcher Ramaswami (2013) set out to determine the hierarchy of importance from principals at the operational level by having participants rank order the six principles (footprints) of ISSLC 2008 from “most vital

to least vital to being a successful building principal” (p. 47). Results deduced that Standard II (Instruction and Student Achievement) was the most important footprint and suggests “the primary responsibility of a New Jersey principal is to advocate, nurture, and sustain a school culture and instruction that promote student learning and professional growth” (Ramaswami, 2013, p. 47). Explicit mention of advocating, nurturing, and sustaining in the context of school culture supports the serious attention and effective principal needs to provide to culture building. ISLLC 2008 Standard I (vision) was ranked first by 25 percent of the respondents (Ramaswami, 2013) and suggests how important the cultural contribution of facilitating the development, articulation, and implementation of a vision is to principals. Managing the Organization (Standard III) ranked third; Acting in an Ethical Manner (Standard V) ranked fourth; Collaborating with Community (Standard IV) was fifth; and Understanding the Larger Context (Standard VI) ranked sixth.

These New Jersey principal findings proved to be almost identical to a previous study involving a national sample of superintendents evaluating principals. In that study (Babo & Ramaswami, 2011) found the superintendents also ranking the importance of a culture of instruction and learning (Standard II) as first and followed by developing and implementing a vision (Standard I). The discrepancy between the two studies occurred at the third position with the principals identifying managing the organization as more vital than acting in an ethical manner and the superintendents vice versa (Ramaswami, 2013).

A sophisticated but less extensive study focuses more on the profile of principals that effectively shape school culture toward teaching and learning. Engel, Hotton, Devos, Bouckenooghe and Aelterman (2008) use mixed methods and involved 46 schools with questionnaires for principals and teachers as well as semi-structure interviews with the

principals. Despite the complexity associated with leadership, a pattern of important features of the principal who is able to shape a strong school culture stands out” (Engel et al., 2008, p. 171). Principals that effectively shape school culture have a Type A achievement orientation and use their energy for active involvement in combination with a driven ambition for improvement and high quality to transform the school culture (Engel et al., 2008). Culture shaping principals are perceived by teachers as strong and supportive leaders and this generates “a purposeful and innovative attitude in their teams” (Engel et al., 2008, p. 171). The principal profile of high support and encouragement alongside identified structure, clear vision, strong communication and flexibility (Engel et al., 2008) is consistent with transformational leadership and transformational culture (Sergiovanni, 2009). Principals that are effective in changing school culture “not only identify with a role of transformational leader, but are able to manage their time so as to spend a considerable part of it encouraging high quality and innovative teaching and learning” (Engel et al., 2008, p. 171). In summary, the study by Engels et al. (2008) showed positive school culture principals as transformational Type A achievement-oriented individuals that devote time to identified preferences of the people and tasks involved with education-specific matters.

Consistent findings were illustrated in a later study. Using 15 randomly selected elementary schools and 349 teachers, Turan and Bektas (2013) focused on the relationship between school culture and leadership practice. Turan and Bektas (2013) concluded that leadership practices such as leader guidance, vision creation, process questioning, and personnel encouragement accounted for significant differences between variance in school culture scores between schools. The findings of the study established that school culture can be used by leaders “as a tool to influence and direct other people or to establish coordination among employees”

(Turan & Bektas, 2013, p. 156). As such, Turan and Bektas (2013) suggests school leaders take action “as cultural and moral guides who pioneer the creation and development of fundamental values in school” (p. 156). These suggestions by Turan and Bektas (2013) are also transformational in nature and complementary to the culture shaping principal profile offered by Engel, Hotton, Devos, Bouckenooghe and Aelterman (2008). Furthermore, both findings can be traced forward to the language utilized in the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders and the Wallace Perspective.

In conclusion, I enter a small but powerful study to invite curiosity about the school climate and school culture impact of consistently and intentionally distributing leadership fully through the school community including perhaps the most important community member—the students. Distributing leadership to teachers and staff is well documented as effective school leaders practice to impact school culture (Gardner, 1983; Kouzes & Posner, 2008; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010; Yukl, 2012). What happens when those same teacher leaders distribute leadership to their students? A student leadership ambassador program yielded an opportunity to study the school climate impact of distributing leadership roles to students. Additionally, the student ambassador program offered a chance to assess leadership practices by program facilitators that impacted any change in the school climate. Student leadership distribution findings suggest that “student-led leadership roles within the school community have an impact on creating a positive school climate; a positive impact on their own development; and a positive influence on their peers” (Pederson, Yager, & Yager, 2012, p. 1) Furthermore, Pederson, Yager, and Yager (2012) were able to identify “cultural themes” within the schools involved that contributed to the success of the program and among the themes were “school-wide collaboration and trust; adequate time for growth and development; and leadership

support teams” (pp. 4-6). Collaboration, trust, time, and support have consistently been a part of the identified topics for effective school leader actions and attributes.

A Proposed Theoretical Framework for School Culture

“Culture eats strategy for breakfast.” –Peter Drucker

Culture is powerful. Culture has often been misunderstood and referenced a soft, nice-to-have component in an organization. Management consultant and social ecologist Peter Drucker famously offered the above quotation that culture eats strategy for breakfast. A strict interpretation of his words might conclude him declaring strategy insignificant. In reality, he was establishing a clear cut priority of culture over strategy as the pathway to organizational success. In fact, strategy does matter. However, strategy will only be successful if executed within the parameters of an appropriate culture. Gruenert and Whitaker’s (2015) distinguished culture as “the way we do things around here...based on values and beliefs...that determines whether or not improvement is possible” (p.10). Place an evidenced-based anti-bullying program (strategy) within a toxic culture and prepare to have it fall well short of its grand expectations to remedy students’ lack of respect for each other. Implement a research-based cooperative learning initiative (strategy) noted for improving student achievement in math with a teaching staff that largely believes students belong in desks in rows, and recognize that student achievement in math may actually go downhill. Culture is a most important driver and Fullan (1999; 2007) contends school improvement efforts are effective to the degree they are carried out alongside a “re-culturing” mindset.

With a foundation of culture established as the crucial element for sustainable success I propose a theoretical framework for school culture based on a 360-degree application of the principles of leadership and involving the entire school community. First, a revisit of Figure 12

that pieces the four Dimensions of Culture (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008) together with the three different levels of culture (artifacts, espoused beliefs, and basic assumptions) identified by Schein (1992; 2004):

The structure of Schoen and Teddlie's new model is portrayed as static, linear, and definitive. The boxes and puzzle pieces suggest clean distinctions between the levels and minimal overlap with a particularly noticeable separation between the artifact level (level one) and the basic assumption level (level three). Additionally, the language used in defining the four dimensions of culture is top-down and hierarchical. The entire model is described from the point of view of the adults in the building. The assumption of the framework, evident in its design, is a consistent, one one way interaction of teacher-to-student that places students in an "acted on and passive" posture as opposed to "going with and active" stance. And while the model was developed in a logical progression using exceptional and reputable levels of organizational culture foundation from Harvard graduate and MIT Sloan Professor of Management Emeritus, Edgar Schein (1992; 2004); the new model falls short of useful application for the purposes of this study. By adapting both the descriptive language used in the four dimensions of culture and the graphic depiction of the model in action, the dimensions become more holistic, reciprocal, and denote a shared leadership direction. Specifically, the graphic representation of the four dimensions of school culture and Schein's (1992; 2004) three abstract levels of artifacts, espoused beliefs, and basic assumptions deserves a more fluid, dynamic, generative and interactive tone.

Figure 2.13 shows the transition from the language and the titles used for the four dimensions of culture by (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008) to the proposed theoretical framework dimensions:

I. Professional Orientation	II. Organizational Structure
The activities and attitudes that characterize the degree of professionalism present in the faculty.	The style of leadership, communication, and processes that characterized the way the school conducts business.
III. Quality of the Learning Environment	IV. Student-Centered Focus
The intellectual merit of the activities in which students are typically engaged.	The collective efforts and programs offered to support student achievement.

Figure 2.11. Definitions of the dimensions of school culture (Schoen & Teddlie, 2008, p. 140)

I. Leadership Orientation	II. Leveraging Leadership
The actions and attitudes that characterize the degree of leadership present in the members of the school community.	The intentional organizational structure--communication and processes--that promote the skills and core competencies of leadership and characterize how the school community conducts business.
III. Leadership for Learning	IV. Leadership Growth
The merit and the contribution of the leadership actions taken by the members of the school community.	The collective and collaborative efforts and the programs that support leadership development of the members of the school community.

Figure 2.13. Definitions of the dimensions of a school culture of leadership (adapted from Schoen & Teddlie, 2008, p. 140)

In the proposed theoretical framework of a Culture of Leadership, Schoen and Teddlie’s (2008) Professional Orientation dimension of school culture is reframed as a Leadership Orientation and the focus broadens to all members of the school community—staff, students, and community members—as opposed to solely teaching professionals. Actions and attitudes replace activities and attitudes in the Leadership Orientation definition to denote an intentional and purposeful involvement (actions) as opposed to simple and passive participation (activities). “Doing-with” versus “done-to” becomes a key distinction in the theoretical framework of a school culture of

leadership. The term orientation remains in the title as chosen by Schoen and Teddlie (2008) in order to include both psychological and attitudinal constructs related to leadership. Schoen and Teddlie's (2008) Organizational Structure dimension is reframed as Leveraging Leadership in the proposed theoretical framework and recognizes organizational structure, but declares a clear leadership purpose and intent for the organizational structure. The style of leadership, communication, and processes within the organization is intentionally leveraged to promote the skills and core competencies of leadership and characterize how the school community conducts business.

Leadership for Learning replaces the Quality of the Learning Environment dimension in the proposed theoretical framework. Once again, the language Schoen and Teddlie associated with the Leadership for Learning dimension is reframed to include the full school membership. Additionally, the Leadership for Learning dimension measurement now includes the merits of both leadership contribution and leadership actions. This dimension stresses an active involvement by the school community members for the purpose of learning to use and to apply leadership principles. Finally, the Student-Centered Focus dimension is reframed as Leadership Growth with full school community member involvement and benefit from collaborative leadership development efforts. The Leadership Growth dimension of culture also includes school community members growing in leadership capacity as a result of programs, policies, rituals, routines, and traditions.

Further justification of reframing the language of the four dimensions of school culture in the proposed theoretical framework unfolds through a closer examination of the nature of the encounters within the school culture. The interaction between the members of the school community can be characterized as either functional or personal using terminology from Fielding

(2006) who makes a contemporary application of concepts from early twentieth century philosopher John Macmurray (1933). “Functional or instrumental relations are typical of those encounters that help us to get things done in order to achieve our purposes” (Fielding, 2006, p. 301). By contrast, “personal relations exist in order to help us be and become ourselves in and through our relations with others” (Fielding, 2006, p. 301). Fielding (2006) yields to Macmurray’s “the functional is for the sake of the personal” (p. 301) as a natural and desired interdependence, but he also adds to the thinking in a transformative way in stating: “the functional should be expressive of the personal” (p. 301). Essentially, the school community member interactions that occur to get things done (the functional) have to be all about the formation and the interpersonal development of the membership (the personal).

Fielding (2006) contributes a typology of the interpersonal orientation of organizations and compares a high performance school to a person-centered school. He characterizes a high performance school as an effective learning organization where “the personal is used for the sake of the functional” (Fielding, 2006, p. 302). In a high performance organization, “the main rationale for student voice lies...in the use of student voice for particular kinds of adult purposes...particularly in terms of high status measurable outcomes” (Fielding, 2006, p. 306). In Fielding’s high performance school, student voice matters and is valid to the degree it serves as a means to the school’s high performing end. The punitive accountability challenges associated with the declared ends of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) era may have unwittingly compromised students and student voice in the name of high performance.

In stark contrast, Fielding (2006) identifies a person-centered school as morally and instrumentally successful learning community where the functional is used for the sake of the personal. The person-centered learning community is relationship centric; has integrity of means

and ends; challenges role boundaries with its inclusiveness; and articulates a public and personal making of meaning together. In contrast to the high performance approaches “Student voice operating in person-centered mode is explicitly and engagingly mutual in its orientation towards widely conceived educational ends that will often include measurable results, but are not constituted or constrained by them” (Fielding, 2006, p. 308). Herein, students and teachers are genuinely working and learning together as partners within relationships based on mutual trust, care, autonomy and respect.

The autonomy and respect connection is confirmed by Sennett (2003) who believes respect comes from the mutual engagement of others while, at the same time, recognizing their autonomy and distinctiveness. Sennett (2003) puts it this way: “in sensing how you differ from me, I know more about who I am as a distinct person” (p. 121). A central argument for student voice and involvement is drawn from a specific Sennett example referencing students in school. Given that our society provides a relative autonomy to doctors and teachers, he suggests “the same autonomy ought to be granted to the pupil or the patient because they know things about learning or being sick which the person teaching or treating them might not fathom” (Sennett, 2003, p. 122). A school culture of leadership will necessarily be one of reciprocity and mutual respect among the members of the learning community. A sequence of two graphics follows to show a more reciprocal, mutual, fluid, and flexible integration of the Dimensions of a Culture of Leadership. Figure 2.14 shows each of the four Dimensions of School Leadership embedded in the new framework along with the new language.

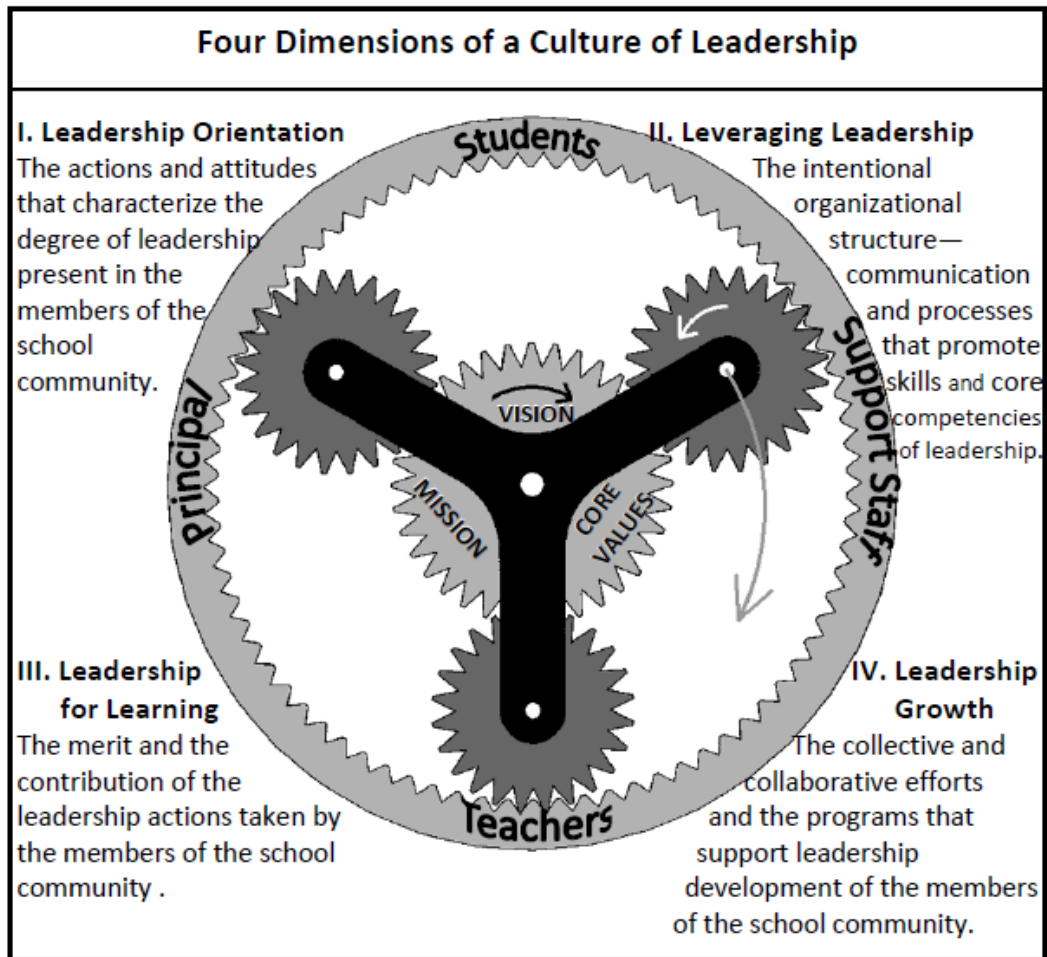


Figure 2.14. Definitions of the dimensions of a school culture of leadership integrated with vision, mission, core values, and school community members. (adapted from Schoen & Teddlie, 2008, p. 142)

The above framework clearly shows both internal and external movement to genuinely represent the dynamic cultural interaction involving leadership principles and the school community. The outside ring consists of students, teachers, the principal, and the support staff. The ring moves and the school community members are both influenced by and are also exerting influence on the four dimensions. In other words, the people continuously co-create the culture and the current culture helps to form the leadership identities of the members of the school community. The inside gear movement is made obvious as well (with the arrows). Theoretically, all movement is made with respect to the school vision, mission, and core values depicted at the center of the

graphic. Again, there is a reciprocal relationship between the school community and the vision, mission, and core values that contributes significantly to the school culture. Figure 2.15 illustrates the levels of culture.

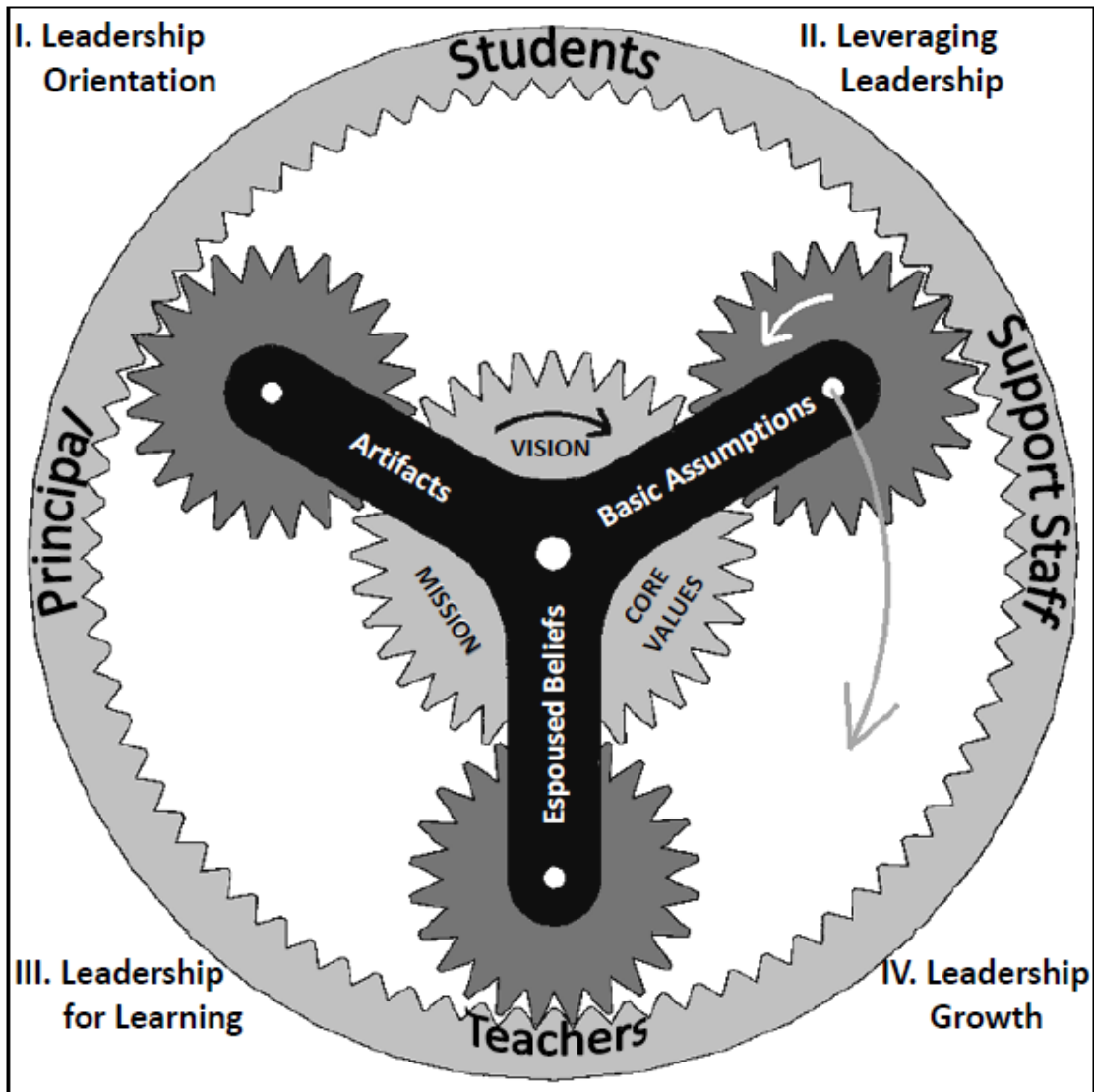


Figure 2.15. A new model of a school culture of leadership (adapted from Schoen & Teddlie, 2008, p. 142)

The proposed theoretical framework for a Culture of Leadership, while adapting Schoen & Teddlie’s (2008) work, deliberately reframes the process as organic and departs from Schoen and Teddlie’s characterization represented by the very rigid and static puzzle graphic. What’s more the proposed framework clearly incorporates the three levels of culture: artifacts, espoused

beliefs, and basic assumptions from Schein (1992; 2004). The Culture of Leadership is now in high gear with all three levels; the four dimensions; vision, mission, and core values; and school community members both forming the members of the community and constantly growing and changing as the community reforms the culture. Moved by passion and dedication and pulled toward true north by a clear vision, the school community membership shares leadership opportunity by way of dynamic learning and interaction and, over the course of time, creates a unique culture.

In accordance with the person-centered learning community of Fielding (2006), the language of the theoretical framework of the Culture of Leadership is inclusive and values driven; enduringly collegial; co-constructive and collaborative; and dialogic with students and between students and staff. The critical importance of this unique culture development journey is captured by renowned organizational culture expert Edgar Schien (2010) who stated: “The only thing of importance that leaders do is to create and manage culture” (p. 22). My proposed theoretical framework of a Culture of Leadership can serve as a key resource to study and analyze the important creation and management of culture identified by Edgar Schien.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Introduction

The methods in this chapter address the question: Does a theoretical lens of a Culture of Leadership have utility for both evaluating and contributing to the formation of a dynamic school culture that infuses leadership up, down, and throughout the membership of the school learning community with students as a central figure? The effects of school culture can be seen in every aspect of the life of the school and the members of the school community. When it comes to leading change, leaders often focus on aspects of culture. This study argues that one of the most important contributors to that culture—the students—have been overlooked.

Leadership in general has garnered an extraordinary amount of study. *School* leadership, in particular, is steadily moving to the forefront of school reform research in recognition of the significant impact of the principal on all facets of a school's culture. Rousmaniere (2012) maintains the development of the principalship is one of the most impactful organizational changes in public education in the turn of the century. There is increased pressure on school leaders to improve academic performance along with the expectation to fulfill a growing responsibility list that includes teacher supervision, innovation, safety, health, and responsiveness (Fullan, 2012; Tucker & Coddling, 2003). The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (NPBEA, 2015) and the Wallace Perspective (Wallace, 2013) document the considerable efforts made to translate research on school leadership to standards of effective practice.

Clearly, effective practices should result in an effective school. That is why school culture has become a focal point for researchers seeking to understand the cultural characteristics

that contribute to an effective school. School culture and vision development were self-reported as top ranked characteristics by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards (ISLLC) in two separate and extensive studies—one at a national level with superintendents and one at the state level (Ramaswami, 2011; 2013). Findings show that culture shaping principals make a positive difference for teachers (Engel, Hotton, Devos, Bouckenooghe, & Aelterman, 2008), open up influence and coordination efforts with staff (Turan & Bektas, 2013), and engender a trickle-down effect that contributes directly to student growth and development (Pederson, Yager, & Yager, 2012). School vision, mission, and core values are pillar elements of culture and addressed in the Professional Standards (NPBEA, 2015), the Wallace Perspective (2013), and within scholarly definitions of leadership (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010).

This study is important because it focuses on school culture, leadership principles, and the impact of being inclusive of all members of the learning community—including the students themselves. This recognition of and focus on students as leaders positions the study to inform past research and point the way toward deeper understanding of the contributions of the students to the school culture and the impacts of the culture of the leadership potential of the students. Developing leaders across the organization to accomplish a purpose is a significant and longstanding point of emphasis for the effective leader (Gardner, 1990; Kouzes & Posner, 2008; Yukl, 2012). This study deliberately analyzes and evaluates the actions, discussions, and relationships of the adults in the school setting in terms of school culture and leadership. More importantly, this study analyzes and evaluates the impact of student involvement in the development of a school culture of leadership. This evaluation contributes to our understanding of a learning community of teachers, administrators, staff *and* students as key contributors to

school culture. In light of the complexity of the modern day principal position, there is increased emphasis on collaboration, learning communities, and capacity building in the research on school leadership (DuFour & Marzano, 2009; Dufour & Fullan, 2013; Fullan, 2010; Leithwood & Seashore Louis, 2012).

Research Design/Purpose of the Study

The study examined the utility of a theory of a school culture of leadership for evaluating the outcomes of ten years of cultural development at St. Marys Middle School between 2006 and 2016. The study purposefully contributes to aforementioned existing scholarship with particular emphasis school culture development that utilizes leadership as a main point of emphasis. With leadership knowledge, skills, and application as the vehicle, the study addresses the more specific high yield strategy of impacting the professional capital of teachers (Fullan & Hargreaves, 2012) along with an exploration of the contributing capital of the students themselves.

Procedures/Methodology

The qualitative study utilized a two-phase design. During phase one, extant staff surveys and feedback, collected and used as part of school leadership and improvement efforts, were analyzed. During phase two, an online survey was sent to school staff who had been part of the St.Mary's School personnel for the full ten years. Figure 3.1 displays the two phases of the school culture study along with the names of the instruments, the years the data were collected.

School Year	PHASE I
2006	Initial Staff Culture Survey
2007	Mid-Year Feedback #1
2008	Mid-Year Feedback #2
2013	Mid-Year Feedback #3
2014	Mid-Year Feedback #4
	<u>Phase II</u>
2016	Final Staff Culture Survey

Figure 3.1. School Culture study phases and instruments from 2006 through 2016

Figure 3.1 displays the timeline of the first phase of the study and the instruments used to collect data. Two of the instruments—the initial staff survey and the mid-year feedback surveys—represent teacher voice across the years of the study. Phase two of the study allowed a final opportunity for collecting teacher voice in the form of an open-ended question.

Data Collection

Figure 3.2 displays the timeline of data collection and data sources for the study. The blue star denotes the beginning of my term as principal on March 1st, 2006. The dates displayed in the red timeline show each of the ten years analyzed for the study and the color-coded flags highlight the six data collection points involving teacher voice. The green-flag below 2006 on the timeline notes the starting date of the existing data source, the Initial Staff Culture Survey, which serves as a baseline for the teacher voice in the study. Teacher voice is also represented in the Mid-Year Feedback Surveys (blue flags above the timeline), that were completed by the teachers in January of 2007, 2008, 2013, and 2014. Although Mid-Year Feedback was collected from staff on an annual basis, all years were not available for use in the study. Despite the limitation of missing four years of surveys from 2009 – 2012, there were three surveys that occurred at beginning of the timeline that were compared to the three surveys at end of the timeline. Overall, six years of surveys provided the sources for teacher voice analyzed in the study. The red flag below the year 2016 on the timeline denotes the only data collection source

for the study. This data source, an open-ended survey of nineteen staff who were employed at the school for all ten years depicted in the timeline, was collected beginning on May 31, 2016. Finally, because of the consistent reference to student discipline in the teacher voice data sources, the student discipline summaries from 2006 to 2016 are depicted in the blue arrow. These data sources were included to provide context for this frequently mentioned topic.

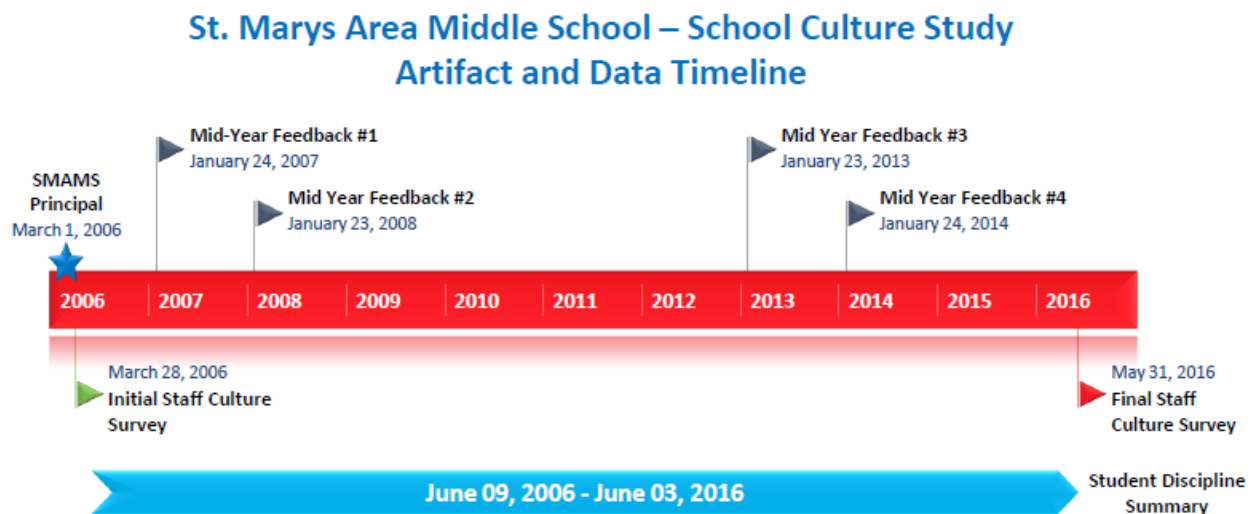


Figure 3.2. School Culture Study timeline, instrument identification, and supporting context.

For Phase I of the study, clerical staff accessed hard copy survey data that was stored in my office filing cabinet. The data were selected because of their strong relation to:

Three Levels of Culture (Schein, 1992; 2004; 2010)

- Artifacts
- Espoused Beliefs
- Basic Assumptions

Four Dimensions of a Culture of Leadership

- I. Leadership Orientation
- II. Leveraging Leadership

III. Leadership for Learning

IV. Leadership Growth

For Phase II of the study, I used an open-ended questionnaire to gather the personal narratives from existing staff members about their impressions, the directions taken, and the outcomes relative to the culture of St. Marys Area Middle School. The data were gathered using an individual open-ended questionnaire that was distributed to twenty-four potential participants using email and the online survey resource google forms.

Selection and Recruitment of Participants.

Participants were selected from the present SMAMS faculty and staff. Forty potential participant candidates make up the present faculty and staff. However, the study only recruited participation from current members with a full tenure over the targeted ten-year period of 2006-2016. A total of twenty-four teachers and support staff met the criteria. Because of the critical nature of the role of the Dean of Students, this individual was also invited to be included in the survey despite being present only eight of the ten years. Participation in the online survey was solicited from an independent third party so as to preserve the anonymous nature of the narrative responses within the survey tool. During the recruitment process, faculty and staff were informed of their rights and consent options.

Instruments from Phase I

Initial Staff Culture Survey. Originally created in March of 2006, the Initial Staff Culture Survey contained the following four open ended-prompts that resulted in short answers from the staff:

1. The ONE thing I am most proud of about the St. Marys Area Middle School is...
2. If I could change ONE thing at the St. Marys Area Middle School, it would be...

3. The ONE thing I am most proud of in my classroom / area of responsibility is...
4. If I could change ONE thing in my classroom/ area of responsibility, it would be...

Mid-Year Feedback. This instrument was a simple feedback survey of staff at the halfway mark of each school year. The instrument cues staff to step back and take a more global and school wide view of the middle school and respond to the following three open-ended prompts:

1. Continue doing what?
2. Start doing what?
3. Stop doing what?

Instrument from Phase II

Final Staff Culture Survey. The final instrument, an open-ended questionnaire, was distributed to participants via an email that provided access to the survey online. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. The open-ended questionnaire asked participants to contribute personal reflections and perceptions on the school culture change at St. Mary's Middle School. Participants were asked to respond to the following open-ended prompt:

Thinking about the past 10 years from 2006 to 2016 and your tenure at St. Marys Area Middle School, please comment on how and in what ways you have seen the school culture change. In crafting your response, please focus on not just the role of the faculty, but also the role of the students as you consider:

- How has the school culture changed?
- What have we (faculty, staff, and students) started doing that has impacted the culture?

- What have we (faculty, staff, and students) stopped doing that has impacted the culture?
- What is unique about the culture of SMAMS--for faculty, staff, and students--when compared to the cultures of other middle schools?

A Culture of Leadership. A theoretical framework (Figure 2.15 – A Culture of Leadership) was used to examine extant survey responses and the final survey responses for their contribution to school culture. The data was evaluated relative to connections to vision, mission, and core values, the three levels of culture (Schein, 1992; 2004; 2010) and the four dimensions of a school culture of leadership that are detailed in the proposed model of a Culture of Leadership.

Method of Data Analysis

I utilized the general interpretive process of close reading to analyze all three data sources from Phases I and II. The close reading process involved identifying patterns of thinking and acting in order to discover regularities and uncover anomalies (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana 2014). Because of the nature of the text, this involved thematic coding categories that were analyzable by writing propositions about meaning. The researcher taking several passes through the data tested the trustworthiness of information. I used the emerging themes (Gibbs, 2007) culled through constant comparative analysis to examine the utility of my proposed theoretical framework to produce a comprehensive account of the findings. Ultimately, by analyzing existing data (Phase I) and the personal narratives of the educators involved in the cultural journey (Phase II), I sought to understand the factors that contribute to an effective school culture and the utility of the proposed theoretical framework of a Culture of Leadership.

The proposed theoretical framework is derived from an extensive literature review that researches visionary, ethical, and change agent leadership as well as school re-culturing as a critical driver (Fullan, 1999; 2007) in school improvement efforts. A critical distinction between the proposed theoretical framework and prior school culture models is the 360-degree application of the principles of leadership and the placement of students as a central figure.

Schoen and Teddlie (2008) offered a new model of school culture that incorporates levels of culture—artifacts, espoused beliefs, and underlying assumptions (Schein, 1992)—and four dimensions of culture which were top-down, hierarchical, and adult focused. Data analysis and evaluation using this model would not allow for examination of the efforts made to inculcate the development, growth, and application of leadership principles in the school culture with students and across the entire learning community. Looking at data through the lens of the proposed framework will open up opportunity to evaluate the cultural impact of involving student leadership in the culture and to evaluate the utility of the framework.

The key departures from the static, linear, and top-down Schoen and Teddlie model (2008) are two-fold. The first departure occurs in changing the four dimensions of culture to a more holistic, reciprocal, and inclusive language of leadership. The language change intentionally and purposely incorporates the term leadership and includes the full membership of the school community and a deliberate movement to students. The second departure involves the graphic representation (see figure 2.15) of the three levels and the four dimensions of culture with a fluid, dynamic, generative, and interactive tone. The proposed model intentionally illustrates all members of the school culture continuously co-creating the culture as a consequence of applying effective leadership principles. These two departures from a past

model of school culture led to analyses of the data through the lens of the proposed theoretical framework of a Culture of Leadership.

To complete the analysis of the data the researcher supported the definitions of each of the four dimensions of the framework by describing each dimension as it would function in optimal and ideal best terms. Then, the researcher further clarified each dimension by constructing an “*answers to the question*” component. Finally, the researcher established a set of look-fors (Moss & Brookhart, 2012; 2015) or success criteria. The look-fors function as “descriptions of characteristics of quality” (Moss & Brookhart, 2015, p, 119) that leaders can essentially look-for in their school communities to learn how well the community is functioning when compared to each dimension of the Culture of Leadership Framework. The researcher then used the list of look-fors from each dimension to organize the findings from the data across the ten-year timeline.

What follows in Figures 3.3 through 3.6 is an outline of each of the four dimensions from the Culture of Leadership Framework along with the definition of each, the question(s), the dimension at an ideal best, and a set of look-fors that establish the level of quality that exists at the optimal levels of the school community.

Definition of Leadership Orientation	The actions and attitudes that characterize the degree of leadership present in members of the school community.
Answers the question	Are the actions and attitudes of the members rooted in the research-based and effective principles of leadership?
When Leadership Orientation is optimal and at its ideal best:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a clear movement of both action and attitude away from “what you can do for ME” toward “what I can do for myself,” and ultimately, “what WE can do together.” (from Dependence to Independence to Interdependence) • Everyone recognizes that teaching and learning involves a reciprocal relationship. • The teaching and learning process is everyone’s responsibility; everyone is a teacher, and everyone is a learner.
Look-fors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaboration and teamwork: principal – teacher; teacher – teacher; teacher – student; student – teacher, student – student. 2. High levels of engagement from teachers, students, and administration where the whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. 3. A focus on learning results and learner actions versus teaching strategies and teacher actions. 4. An “abundance mentality” where there is effort to create meaningful involvement for everyone by way of a mutual benefit perspective and Win-Win thinking. 5. Excitement about what is possible versus settling for the status quo or a fear of failure.

Figure 3.3. Expansion of Leadership Orientation Dimension

Definition of Leveraging Leadership	The intentional organizational structure—style of leadership, communication, and processes—that promote the skills and core competencies of leadership and characterize how the members of the school community conduct business.
Answers the questions	How do we do things around here? How do we treat one another? Who does what?
When Leveraging Leadership is optimal and at its ideal best:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a common, shared, and communicated vision, mission, and core values. • Leadership is collaborative and the organizational structure is flat (vs. top-down) • Leadership is about opportunity not position. Therefore, leadership is shared, rotated, and visible within the members of the school community at any given time. • The leadership style is strengths oriented and seeks to empower those strengths (Who can best lead now? Who is the best fit for this initiative?) • Feedback is requested often; feedback is given attention; and feedback results in action. • Roles and responsibility lines are blurred – anyone can and should contribute. • There is mutual respect amid the members of the school community.
Look-fors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Common language and common goals among the members. 2. Meaningful relationships amid school community members that have foundation in a commitment to the common vision and mission and core values. 3. Respectful interaction between school community members with both recognition and celebration of differences. 4. An abundance of both formal and informal leadership opportunity (i.e., department head, initiative leaders, class advisors, class officers, student council officers, student council reps, club officers).

Figure 3.4. Expansion of Leveraging Leadership Dimension

Definition of Leadership for Learning	The merit and contribution of the leadership actions taken by the members of the school community.
Answers the questions	So what? What difference did these actions make relative to the established vision, mission, and core values?
When Leadership for Learning is optimal and at its ideal best:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All members of the learning community—principal, teachers, and students—use school vision, mission, and core values to initiate actions and involve others. • There is continuous effort given by all involved in the school community to improve the learning environment by way of their active involvement.
Look-fors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vision, mission, and core value specific ideas, initiatives, and actions from all members—including students—that add value to the learning environment. 2. Excitement about change and risk taking as a purposeful and necessary part of improvement and growth. 3. Expressions and feelings of pride in the learning environment, accomplishments, and actions related to the vision, mission, and core values.

Figure 3.5. Expansion of Leadership for Learning Dimension

Definition of Leadership Growth	The collective and collaborative efforts and the programs that support leadership development of the members of the school community. (e.g., programs, policies, rituals, routines, and traditions).
Answers the questions	Did the effort help someone lead himself or herself in a better way? Did these efforts result in leadership synergy with others?
When Leadership Growth is optimal and at its ideal best:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are intentional and purposeful actions to teach, apply, and practice effective leadership principles—to “grow” leaders across the school community membership. • There is an ongoing creation of opportunity for members (especially students) to situate themselves in leadership roles.
Look-fors	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leadership development; leadership formation; leadership facilitation; leadership application. 2. The “language” of leadership (vision, mission, and core values) utilized across the membership of the learning community. 3. Programs, activities, events, rituals, or traditions with leadership connections that are initiated, developed, and led by the members—including students.

Figure 3.6. Expansion of Leadership Growth Dimension

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Phase I: Introduction and Connecting the Survey Instruments

The ten year St. Marys Area Middle School Culture Study began in March of 2006 is told through the perceptions of the teachers who formed and were formed by the culture. Teacher voice data were gathered through an initial survey; four separate mid-year feedback solicitations; and a final culture survey. Supporting information and data for the context of the teacher voice included discipline data across the full ten-year timeline.

The Initial Culture Survey and the Mid-Year Feedback Survey given to the teachers did not utilize the same prompts. Nevertheless, I was able to compare the responses from the different prompts using similar constructs. The responses elicited through the The “ONE thing you are most proud of” prompts #1 and #3 from the Initial Culture Survey were compared to responses from prompt #1 of the Mid-Year Feedback Surveys that asked what the staff would want to “continue doing. This comparison seems logical since having a high level of pride in something can be compared to the desire to continue forward with more of the same; both prompts assess similar constructs. One typically *continues* doing what one is *proud of* doing.

Prompts #2 and #4 from the Initial Culture Survey ask participants about “the ONE thing you would change.” A change involves *starting* to do something, starting to do something differently, or *stopping* something. Therefore, comparisons between these two change prompts from the Initial Culture Survey can be made with the Mid-Year Feedback prompt #2: “Start doing what?” and prompt #3: “Stop doing what?” Despite the different prompts in the two data collection instruments from Phase I of the study, these logical associations allow for careful analyses and comparison.

Initial Staff Culture Survey Data and Analysis

The surveys were analyzed to reveal themes that emerged. The Initial Staff Culture Survey included input from the staff and utilized four prompts: Prompt #1-The ONE thing I am most proud of about the St. Marys Area Middle School; Prompt #2-The ONE thing I would change at the St. Marys Area Middle School; Prompt #3-The ONE thing I am most proud of in my classroom; and Prompt #4-The ONE thing I would change in my classroom.

Tables 4.1 through 4.4 display the themes that emerged from the analyses of the data derived from the prompts in the Initial Culture Survey from March of 2006 followed by a description of the findings. To aid in the presentation of the findings, the theme areas are noted in italics.

Table 4.1. Responses to Initial Staff School Culture Survey prompt #1: *the ONE thing I am most proud of about the St. Marys Area Middle School (3-28-06)*

Faculty Togetherness

FT1	The team, almost family approach to our daily routine.
FT2	The teamwork, collegiality, and support of each other.
FT3	Everyone works together for the betterment of students. Everyone counts here.
FT4	The working atmosphere with co-workers...we get along extremely well.
FT5	Faculty works together to produce the best atmosphere of learning...
FT6	The supportive staff members and their “one-team” mindset.
FT7	Teaching is not a contest for us, and we are very willing to share any and all ‘tricks’ we have that actually work.
FT8	Everyone tries to back one another. We all understand that a “well-rounded” education is a team effort.
FT9	We have a team of truly professional people here...a group that works well together and creates the right kind of environment.
FT10	The way teachers support each other. The qualities of a close knit staff allow us to rely on each other for resources, flexibility, and friendship.

Us versus Them Bonding

UT1	Our willingness to be innovators under a repressive system (imagine what we could do with a more forward thinking and proactive mindset.)
UT2	Teachers like to be left alone to do their job.
UT3	We do great things without the need for recognition.
UT4	We do not sweep anything under the rug or pretend there is not a problem.
UT5	The faculty nucleus in this building has shown such great resilience...despite the tenure of some past principals who had no touch with the reality of “survival” here and practically brought this building to its knees.

Students as Receivers

- SR1 Understanding how to make adjustments for the sake of individual students.
- SR2 Opportunities made available to students.
- SR3 Helping students understand concepts and ideas.
- SR4 Teachers genuinely care about the students and look for their strengths...
- SR5 Working to ensure the students are receiving the best possible education.

Student Discipline

- SD1 Cleaned-up school...kids feel safe...consistent discipline...equal treatment.
- SD2 Students discipline is a measure of character building rather than punishment for wrong doing.
- SD3 Rules are applied consistently in the classrooms and for disciplinary issues regardless of the social status of the student.
- SD4 We rarely pass the problem along to the next grade...passing on is an injustice.
- SD5 Students are generally well behaved—with exceptions.

Most Proud of in the School (Table 4.1) Theme Synopsis

The “ONE thing you are most proud of” prompt from the initial school climate / culture survey revealed four main themes from the school faculty. Table 4.1 captured the four themes and showed a self-identified sense of *Faculty Togetherness* as the most prominent of the four themes. Team or together were directly and explicitly mentioned in every one of the ten feedback responses from this theme. The faculty had pride in one another and also clearly expressed pride in their ability to work cooperatively with each other. A second Table 4.1 theme was an *Us versus Them Bonding* mentality that displayed the root of the faculty’s sense of team and the heavy reliance on one another. The bonding responses had a tone of anger at times—“innovators in a repressive system...imagine what we could do with forward thinking” (UT1); “past principals...with no sense of reality of ‘survival’...brought this building to its knees” (UT5)—and these statements coupled with the others in this theme conjured up a sense that the faculty had held tight with one another against difficult circumstances of some nature.

Students were on the receiving end of the bonded teamwork of the faculty and there were pride filled responses related to service to students in the *Students as Receivers theme* within Table 4.1. Adjusting for the sake of individual students (SR1), helping students (SR3), genuinely

caring about students and seeking out their strengths (SR4), and ensuring students are receiving the best possible education (SR5) are examples from this theme.

Finally, *Student Discipline* surfaced as the fourth of the major themes. Consistency in the application of the rules and the consequences were explicitly mentioned and the results of the consistency—“school cleaned-up,” kids feel safe,” and “generally well behaved,”—was a source of pride for many of the faculty. One of the strongest and most interesting insights cut across all four major themes:

It sometimes takes years to recover from such ineptness and this recovery is credited to this faculty and then being led by someone “an administrator” who honestly understands what is important and what is not. Those who were consumed over whether or not the teachers filled out form X-Y-Z correctly failed and failed miserably! Those who made sure the students were “kept in line” and freed the teachers to be their diverse and unique selves and adults were the bosses under which the SMAMS flourished rather than floundered!

Pride in the faculty, the “we-they” bonding agent, and the feeling that students were on the receiving end of discipline and management all materialized in this single prompt response.

Table 4.2. Responses to Initial Staff School Culture Survey prompt #2: *The ONE thing I would change at the St. Marys Area Middle School (3-28-06)*

Attention to At-risk

- | | |
|-----|--|
| AA1 | Have more time to spend or devote to the ‘majority’ of the student population rather than just on the small percentage of the highly at-risk. |
| AA2 | Something or some way to deal with—perhaps an alternative classroom—the chronic repeaters who represent the majority of our discipline problems. |
| AA3 | The disrespectful attitude that quite a few of the students seem to have toward teachers or others in position of authority. This is simply not acceptable behavior |
| AA4 | The practice of giving students multiple chances to clean-up their actions—the continually disruptive and disrespectful individuals. |
| AA5 | The motivation of the students—the desire to learn. The number of students ‘failing’ classes should be addressed. We have unwittingly created a very negative academic view and groups of defeated students. |
| AA6 | We need to find a better way to handle the extreme cases of underachievers. |
| AA7 | The length of time that it takes for the disruptive to be kept out of the regular classroom. |
| AA8 | Less tolerance of those students who constantly disrupt our classes and who are insolent to our teachers. |

Reward the Good; Remove the Bad

- RG1 We need a positive recognition photo gallery for the average kids.
- RG2 Rewarding and praising the students who always cooperate and do what is expected.
- RG3 Reward the good kids and the bad kids who try to be good.
- RB1 Alternative classroom – chronic repeaters impede the other students who would like to learn.
- RB2 After four or five incidents, it is time for OSS or Expulsion. They have no right to interfere with the educational process.
- RB3 In a “real” school, there is no place for the constantly disruptive and insolent.

Schoolwide Changes

- S1 Appropriate and applicable inservice—current issues, standards, students, etc.
- S2 Departmental meeting and grade level content area meetings to share expertise.
- S3 Informative assemblies addressing healthy social, behavioral, and personal choice
- S4 Constantly requesting the same team members to repeat tasks while others sit by and watch. Doer’s are asked to do even more; others not even asked to pitch in.
- S5 Unreasonable homework policies.
- S6 Dissolve clubs and utilize 3rd period homeroom more effectively.

Personal Changes

- P1 Less bureaucratic paperwork, testing, and interference with class/teaching time.
- P2 Less preps (one or two subjects instead of four)
- P3 Newer computer or newer model to make charting and reporting easier.

Change About the School (Table 4.2) Theme Synopsis

Responses to the prompt on “changing ONE thing about the SMAMS, ” showed four themes. The *Attention to At-risk* emerged from the change prompt and captured the time and effort associated with at-risk students as the area in which the teaching staff most desired to have change. The responses in this theme showed “at-risk” extending from the disruptive and disrespectful students (AA3, AA4, AA7) to the un-motivated students (AA5) and the academically failing and underachieving students (AA6). It was apparent the at-risk audience was challenging the time and effort of the staff since they offered subtheme suggestions that were directly related to their openly expressed frustration.

The *Reward the Good; Remove the Bad* theme described a dilemma. On one hand, there was awareness of a need to provide recognition and reward to, what the staff refers to as, the “good kids.” The inference was that the time spent with the at-risk did not allow enough time and

attention for the remaining student population. On the other hand, the subtheme “Remove the bad kids” (i.e., Table 4.2 responses RB1, RB2, and RB3) showed a harsh and intolerant approach for the disruptive and disrespectful with suggestions for an alternate setting, out of school suspension, and even expulsion of middle level adolescents. Here again, the supposition was that more time would be available for other students.

Responses to the “changing one thing” prompt” revealed *Schoolwide Changes* and *Personal Changes* as lesser pronounced themes from Table 4.2. Some staff were interested in making change that tended toward teaching and learning in the *Schoolwide Changes* theme. Notable responses were about inservices (S1) and staff collaboration (S2). Other school wide themes were more structural or procedural, for instance, more effective use of homeroom time and a more equitable distribution of tasks (open to interpretation as co-curricular or the day-to-day extras of schools like hall monitoring, bus duty, after school help, etc.). A few of the desired changes were very individualized and only impactful to the specific staff making the response (e.g., fewer preps, new computer).

Two contributions on making a change stood out as uniquely interesting. First, “get the Dean of Students out teaching in the classroom for two or three periods a day,” was different than most responses. At the same time, this suggestion didn’t appear connected to the dominant theme of time and effort on at-risk students. Secondly, response AA5 rendered a unique piece of insight by pointing out failing students with a negative and defeated view and the suggestion that staff may have “unwittingly created” the scenario. This staff level ownership stood out in sharp contrast to the harsh and intolerant responses (Table 4.2 - AA1, AA2, and AA3) that promoted removing at-risk students from classrooms and the school setting. The great majority of the desired change mentioned from the prompt for changing one thing in the school was associated

with devoting less time and effort to the most challenging students in order to allow more time and attention to the remaining student population.

Table 4.3. Responses to Initial Staff School Culture Survey prompt #3: *the ONE thing I am most proud of in my classroom (3-28-06)*

Learning Environment

- LE1 An activity based learning environment and augmenting my classroom with student produced work.
- LE2 That most students enjoy experiencing their classroom time in the program I've given new life.
- LE3 Incorporating fun activities that help the students learn (e.g., getting students who rarely read books to read).
- LE4 Providing students an atmosphere conducive to working with and through the important concepts of our social studies courses.
- LE5 Diversity of methods, additional information, and materials I use to enhance lessons to make student learning more exciting and enjoyable.

Connections with Students

- CS1 My ability to communicate with students.
- CS2 To give the students that person to talk to...helping them adapt and compensate so they can move on socially, emotionally, or academically. Being there when no one seems to understand or things are getting rough.
- CS3 My good relationships with students.
- CS4 My ability to relate to the students and still get them to do their best.
- CS5 My rapport with students. I always come to feel very "connected."
- CS6 I do not give up on any kid. I push all the kids to do the best they can.

Structure, Organization, Respect, or Discipline

- SORD1 A structured classroom environment that encourages learning and offers a climate where students can learn and be successful.
- SORD2 A well contained, organized, and managed classroom with students well aware of their responsibilities.
- SORD3 Rules are fair and strictly enforced and are designed to promote a consistent environment for learning that is free of interruption.
- SORD4 The students know what is expected of them both behavior wise and educationally
- SORD5 My organization and class projects.
- SORD6 I am organized. Day-to-day I know where I'm going next and what I need.
- SORD7 My students respect me and I don't have many discipline problems.
- SORD8 My discipline and handling of the classroom as I conduct my teaching.
- SORD9 Fairness to all students and accommodating students on a moments notice.

Personal Best Contribution

- PB1 Striving to be the best as a department despite using old textbooks.
- PB2 My excellent training in my field.
- PB3 I believe I do my best daily to teach math concepts to students.
- PB4 Great ownership and responsibility for the reading program in 7th and 8th grade.
- PB5 I know I am teaching and they are learning.
- PB6 Knowing the subject material and knowing how to present it.

PB8 Growing and improving my role of helping kids.

Most Proud of in the Classroom (Table 4.3) Theme Synopsis

The three themes in Table 4.3 represented the staff response to “one thing they are most proud of in their classroom or area of responsibility”. The majority of the responses related to students. The staff pride associated with students noted two themes: the *Learning Environment* for students and *Connections with Students*. Several staff identified pride in the type of learning environment they created for their students and mentioned an activity based learning environment (LE1), enjoyable and fun activities (LE2, LE3), and lesson enhancement via diversity of methods and materials. Relationships with students were also a highlighted source of pride for the staff with specific mention of communication, rapport, and perseverance with students.

The second most mentioned staff theme from the prompt on classroom or area of responsibility pride linked to *Structure, Organization, Respect, or Discipline*. Managing an organized classroom (SORD2) with clear expectations of respect (e.g., SORD7) and discipline (SORD8) while acting in a fair manner (SORD9) showed up as important to the staff. The *Structure, Organization, Respect, or Discipline* theme was aligned with the pride responses associated with creating and optimal learning environment for students.

Personal Best Contribution was the final theme that emerged from this more narrowed prompt. Within this theme, respondent responses mentioned “striving to be the best or doing their best” (PB1, PB3), “training, ownership and responsibility for a program” (PB2, PB4, PB6), and some level of continuous improvement (PB8). In summary, the initial staff survey requesting a response to one thing you are most proud of in your classroom revealed staff

offering their pride in the learning environment they had created for students, the connections they had with students, and the fact that they were offering their personal best to the job.

Table 4.4. Responses to Initial Staff School Culture Survey prompt #4: *Changing ONE thing in my classroom (3-28-06)*

Workload or Time

- WT1 That I never teach the number of Special Education students like I am this year.
- WT2 I would have to only deal with the learning support students I am assigned IEP's. There's not enough time in the day for learning support and emotional support.
- WT3 I do not have adequate days to teach many of the concepts to general math kids.
- WT4 The ability to control how many students come for help during homeroom period.
- WT5 Amount of paperwork. Tracking HW or missed lessons for absent students.
- WT6 I would like to lose cafeteria duty so I could teach more.
- WT7 The extra class prep from taking the praxis certification for another area of study.
- WT8 The lack of convenient Act 48 credits...after teaching all day travel to courses.

Frustration with NCLB

- FN1 Keeping the federal government's fingers out of my classroom.
- FN2 The push to finish the math textbook before the PSSA's.
- FN3 To be able to do the activities / lessons I have developed for my curriculum in the past. Our time has be disciplined to teach to the anchors (PSSA eligible content). It is demanding, boring, and everything my college courses taught me NOT to do.
- FN4 The lack of time to prepare students effectively for the PSSA test. I have videos, projects, and computer research but I have to use worksheets to instruct because of time constraints.
- FN5 The pressure that has come with teaching to the PSSA test and the prep time that goes with it. I really feel the overall job that I'm doing has deteriorated.

Material Changes

- MC1 Blackboard conversion to dustless writing system with brightly colored markers.
- MC2 The district needs to adopt a series of textbooks that address the needs of students.
- MC3 I would like my outside windows washed at least three times a year.
- MC4 I truly need better resources to meet the needs of my students.
- MC5 Textbooks for 7th and 8th grade literature.
- MC6 The color of the carpet and a working copy machine.
- MC7 To have a printer available in my classroom.

Change About the Classroom (Table 4.4) Theme Synopsis

Three notable themes were displayed in Table 4.4 that compiled the survey responses to the initial staff survey prompt on “*changing ONE thing in the classroom or area of responsibility.*” *Workload or Time* constituted the most notable theme. Regarding workload, staff desired less learning support students (WT1) or only their assigned learning support

students (WT2), sought to control the number of students with access to them (WT4), or wanted fewer subject area preparations than they currently have (WT7). Available time was mentioned in relation to not enough days to teach math concepts, increased paperwork responsibility, and cafeteria duty.

The *Frustration with No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) requirements found staff looking for changes that allowed them to feel better and do better on behalf of their students. Desired change was sought by staff for: “Pushing to finish math textbooks prior to PSSA;” “teaching only anchors and PSSA eligible content without activities;” “the worksheet emphasis because of time constraints;” and “pressure that has come from teaching to the PSSA test.” Response FN1 summarized the desired change associated with staff frustration: “keep the federal government’s fingers out of my classroom.”

The third change theme from Table 4.4 was specific to *Material Changes* like resources, physical classroom appearance, and textbooks. The responses included a change to actually having literature textbooks (MC5) and adopting a series of textbooks that address student needs (MC2). Printers and a working copier were specifically mentioned as a desired change (MC7, MC6) and respondents also addressed simple physical changes like clean windows, carpet, and blackboard to whiteboard conversion.

Analysis of Initial Staff Culture Survey with a Culture of Leadership Framework

Application of the Culture of Leadership Framework to the responses to the Initial Staff Culture Survey from March 2006 allowed for a baseline interpretation of teacher responses with regard to vision, mission, and core values; the three levels of culture; and the four dimensions of a Culture of Leadership (Figure 2.15). The baseline interpretation of the Initial Staff Culture Survey themes displayed in Tables 4.1-4.4 resulted from the application of each of the four

quadrant dimensions in turn: I. Leadership Orientation, II. Leveraging Leadership, III. Leadership for Learning, and IV. Leadership Growth.

What follows are the findings from an analysis of the themes using the look-for criteria for each dimension (see Figures 3.3 – 3.6). To aid in the presentation of the findings, the theme areas are noted in italics followed by the identification of the table where responses comprising the theme can be found. Following the analysis of the Initial Survey Responses by dimension look-fors, the overall findings from the analysis are summarized for each dimension.

Leadership Orientation Dimension Analysis

Schools that function at the optimal level of the Leadership Orientation dimension of a Culture of Leadership demonstrate notable interdependence, a reciprocal teaching and learning relationship between the membership, and the recognition that all involved with the school are both teachers and learners. To gauge the level of Leadership Orientation found in the Initial Staff Culture Survey, the look-fors related to Leadership Orientation were applied to the responses. The discussion of the findings is organized by each look-for criteria (see Figure 3.3).

Collaboration and teamwork. The respondents referred to “team” and “teamwork” in the *Faculty Togetherness* theme (Table 4.1). This sense of team and collaboration, however, is entirely restricted to the teachers. There were no responses showing a desire to collaborate beyond teacher-to-teacher. In fact, the teachers noted strong feelings against administration and a high level of independence that falls well short of the optimal leadership orientation of “what WE can do together”; a culture where all members of the school community function interdependently for the same end. The *Students as Receivers* theme (Table 4.1) and the *Structure, Organization, Respect or Discipline* theme (Table 4.3) showed teacher actions and attitudes that depicted teaching as a one-way activity in stark contrast with the ideal reciprocal

relationship between the teacher and the learner and where all members of the community are viewed as both teachers and learners of leadership.

High levels of engagement from teachers, students, and administration where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Here again, descriptions of engagement were predominantly by the teachers and between the teachers in the Initial Staff Culture Survey. The *Faculty Togetherness* theme (Table 4.1) provided the strongest support for teacher engagement and also showed teacher pride in *not* engaging with administration. One respondent stated the perception that teachers had a desire “to be left alone to do their job.” The themes of *Attention to At-Risk and Reward the Good; Remove the Bad* (Table 4.2) also run counter to engagement across the entire school community since both themes involve a desire to disenfranchise a part of the student population. The themes of *Workload or Time and Frustrations with No Child Left Behind* associated with classroom level changes desired by teachers (Table 4.4) actually listed a host of obstacles to high levels of engagement with references to the Special Education students, paperwork, extra preparation, and state assessments. The *Frustration with No Child Left Behind* theme response (Table 4.4), “Our time has to be disciplined to teach to the PSSA eligible content and it is demanding, boring, and everything my college courses taught me NOT to do,” serves as a prime example of teacher identified engagement obstacles from the Initial Staff Culture Survey.

A focus on learning results and learner actions versus teacher strategies and teacher actions. There was some mention of learning results in the Initial Staff Culture Survey but the perspective was typically very general and from the point of view of the teacher. “I know that I am teaching and they are learning,” from the *Personal Best Contribution* theme (Table 4.3) served as one example. Other examples came from the *Learning Environment* theme (Table 4.3)

that generally referenced learning results in “student produced work” and “student enjoyment.” The *Connections with Students* theme (Table 4.3) contained another broad and nebulous description of learners in the phrase: “get them (students) to do their best”. Learner action references within the survey were restricted to at-risk and discipline issues in the themes of *Attention to At-risk* and *Reward the Good; Remove the Bad* (Table 4.2). Teacher actions were prominent within the *Students as Receivers* theme (Table 4.1), noted in responses like “...make adjustments for the sake of individual students,” “...working to ensure the students are receiving the best possible education.”

Ideally, the Leadership Orientation dimension focuses on the needs of the learner and recognizes the reciprocal relationship between the teacher and the learner. The themes of *Workload or Time* and *Frustration with No Child Left Behind* (Table 4.4) revealed responses dominated by the challenges faced by the teacher, situations that interfered with teacher strategy, and without mention of learner results or learner actions. The teacher perspective, teacher actions, and teaching challenges controlled the Initial Staff Culture Survey themes. Learning results and learner actions—including teacher-learning results and actions (i.e., professional development)—were rare exceptions.

An “abundance mentality” where there is effort to create meaningful involvement for everyone by way of a mutual benefit perspective and Win-Win thinking. Meaningful involvement was characterized as teacher involvement based on the responses from the Initial Staff Culture Survey. Respondents described at-risk and challenging students as interfering with teaching and taking up valuable teaching time in the *Attention to At-risk* theme (Table 4.2). The mutual benefit perspective of win-win thinking was missing from the responses. The staff demonstrated more of a win-lose attitude for the at-risk group as suggested in the *Reward the*

Good; Removing the Bad theme (Table 4.2). There was also evidence of a desire for the staff to be free of the challenging parts of teaching (*Personal Changes, Workload or Time*); to work independently (*Us versus Them*), and to teach without any outside interference (*Frustration with No Child Left Behind*). The *Schoolwide Change* theme (Table 4.2), displays responses like “dissolve all clubs,” and “stop requesting the same team members for tasks while others sit by and watch,” and also suggests a win-lose mentality. The more myopic *Material Change* theme responses (Table 4.4) fall well short of the leadership orientation ideal of high-level interdependence.

Excitement about what is possible versus settling for the status quo or a fear of failure. There was no detectable excitement or enthusiasm for the future of the school community in the responses to the Initial Staff Culture Survey. As mentioned, there was great teacher pride in one another as evident in the *Faculty Togetherness* theme (Table 4.1). Still, even responses in that theme were stated in the present tense as opposed to descriptions of a foundation for a more desirable future. If anything, the responses within the themes of *Work Load or Time, Frustration with No Child Left Behind,* and *Material Changes* (Table 4.4) offered a dismal picture of the future. Resource needs, too many special education students to deal with, too much paperwork, too many preps, state assessment pressure, and the divide between the teaching staff from administration (*Us versus Them*) contributed to the bleak outlook amid the self-declared teacher connectedness to one another. The *Student Discipline* theme (Table 4.1) and the *Structure, Organization, Respect, or Discipline* theme (Table 4.3) provided foundational language and insight on a teacher topic that had significant history and was evidenced in the response “we’ve finally cleaned-up the school...kids feel safe...we have consistent discipline...equal treatment.”

Leveraging Leadership Dimension Analysis

Schools that function at an optimal level of the Leveraging Leadership dimension of a Culture of Leadership have a shared and communicated vision, mission, and common core values. Additionally, leadership is collaborative, empowering, and strengths oriented within a flattened organizational hierarchy. There is mutual respect amid the members of the school community that result in sharing and rotating leadership roles and responsibilities based on appropriate expertise and greatest opportunity for contribution. An open-forum for feedback is the ideal in this dimension and the solicited feedback translates to continuous improvement action. To gauge the level of Leveraging Leadership found in the Initial Staff Culture Survey, the look-fors related to Leveraging Leadership were applied to the responses. The discussion of the findings is organized by each look-for criteria (see Figure 3.4).

Common language and common goals among the members. Other than the common response language associated with *Faculty Togetherness* (Table 4.1), the Initial Staff Culture Survey revealed little evidence of common language or goals.

Meaningful relationships amid school community members that have foundation in a commitment to the common vision and mission and core values. There was no explicit mention of vision, mission, or core values within the responses. The teaching staff reflected on their support of one another, their teamwork, and their working relationship in the *Faculty Togetherness* theme (Table 4.1) and potentially a core value (i.e., non-negotiables that guide all actions and interactions). However, staff togetherness appeared to be forged more out of a necessity to rely on one another because of a lack of support and leadership (*Us versus Them Bonding*) than a purposeful collective commitment to a common vision, mission, or core values. The meaningful relationships also appeared to be restricted to teachers. The responses from the

Us versus Them Bonding theme (Table 4.1) about working “under a repressive system,” “wanting to be left alone to do their job,” “not needing recognition,” and “showing great resilience,” showed that something about the organizational structure was disturbing and challenging the staff. The *Us versus Them Bonding* responses combined with *Faculty Togetherness* theme (Table 4.1) characterized an organizational structure where teachers closed themselves off from the outside. They openly stated that they had each other, they counted on and supported each other, and they did not need anyone else.

Respectful interaction between school community members with both recognition and celebration of differences. Within the *Student Discipline* theme (Table 4.1), teacher pride was expressed in “cleaning up the school,” “student discipline as character building,” and “a consistent application of the discipline rules regardless of social status of the student.” The frustration expressed within the *Attention to At-Risk* theme (Table 4.2) along with the explicit intolerance and removal of student responses in the *Reward the Good; Remove the Bad* theme (Table 4.2) were in contrast to respectful interactions and recognition and celebration of differences. On one hand, the staff expressed a desire to create positive rewards for those students they referred to as the “good” kids and also expressed pride in positive relationships in the *Connections with Students* theme (Table 4.3). In sharp contrast, at least some behavior differences have risen to the level of zero tolerance and the respondents expressed a desire to discard the “bad” kids with noted differences. Responses like “...it is time for OSS or Expulsion,” “they have no right to interfere with the educational process,” and “in a ‘real’ school, there is no place for the constantly disruptive and insolent,” revealed staff’s desire to eliminate students with certain differences from the school community. The volatility and intolerance in these responses showed respectful interaction as selective to only some of the

student population and the “good kid—bad kid” references were inconsistent with the criteria for development of relationships and celebrating differences.

An abundance of both formal and informal leadership opportunity (i.e., department chair, initiative leadership, class advisors, class officers, student council officers and representatives, club advisors, and club officers). As shown in the *Structure, Organization, Respect, or Discipline* theme (Table 4.3), classroom level pride in structure, organization, management, strict rule enforcement, and freedom of interruption revealed a consensus for a style of leadership and communication with the teachers in charge. Responses showed leadership under the control of the teaching adults in the school community and teachers as the unilateral leaders at the classroom level. The respondents proudly expressed togetherness (*Faculty Togetherness*) with each other and independence (*Us versus Them bonding*) from district leadership as well as resilience from “out of touch” building level leadership (Table 4.1). Teachers assumed the leadership role and embraced and advertised their top position in the school hierarchy. There was no mention of student leadership opportunity.

The Leadership for Learning Dimension Analysis

Schools that function at the optimal level of the Leadership for Learning dimension of a Culture of Leadership use the school vision, mission, and core values to initiate actions and involve others. Furthermore, all members of the school community are actively involved in a continuous effort to improve the learning environment. To gauge the level of the Leadership for Learning found in the Initial Staff Culture Survey, the look-fors related to Leadership for Learning were applied to the responses. The discussion of the findings is organized by each look-for criteria (see Figure 3.5).

Vision, mission, and core value specific ideas, initiatives, and actions from all members—including students—that add value to the learning environment. Absent a stated or identifiable vision or mission, the Initial Staff Culture Survey responses could not be connected to adding vision or mission specific value to the learning environment. The lack of vision and mission explained the wide spectrum of responses to the survey prompts. As mentioned previously, the *Faculty Togetherness* theme (Table 4.) showed criteria of a core value. Therefore, responses that contributed to the teamwork, support, and positive working environment noted in the *Faculty Togetherness* theme would add value to the learning environment. The *Schoolwide Changes* theme (Table 4.2) mentioned “appropriate and applicable inservice” as well as “departmental meetings and grade level content area meetings to share expertise.” These two responses fit the success criteria of the look for even though they were more passive suggestions than actions. Nonetheless, there was not a single value-added follow-up suggestion or idea related to this core value among the twenty responses (Table 4.4) to the classroom level change prompt

In fact, the remaining changes noted from both Table 4.2 and from Table 4.4 were less about contribution and more about subtraction. Responses like, “get the at-risk, unmotivated, and disruptive into some alternate setting;” “alleviate the workload and things like paperwork, cafeteria duty, and extra preps;” and “do something to get the demands of the federal government’s NCLB out of my way;” were takeaways. No mention was made of student contribution of ideas, initiatives, or actions to add value to the learning environment.

Excitement about change and risk taking as purposeful and necessary part of improvement and growth. Two specific responses from the *Us versus Them Bonding* theme (Table 4.1) stood out in relation to this look-for. “Our willingness to be innovators under a

repressive system (imagine what we could do with a more forward thinking and proactive mindset),” clearly met the criteria for excitement about change. As did the response: “We do great things without the need for recognition.” All other responses related to change in the Initial Staff Culture Survey were negative in nature (e.g., less bureaucratic paperwork, less interference with class/teaching time, never teaching the number of Special Education students (inclusion) that I have this year, and the extra prep and work I have as a result of my additional praxis certification). There were no direct or indirect references to risk-taking in the responses.

Responses within the *Frustration with No Child Left Behind* theme (Table 4.4) indicated a step back in classroom level practice and risk-taking associated with the use of technology. The respondents justified and explained the change and their diminished use of technology with the extra time and preparation involved in getting students ready for the state assessment.

Expressions and feelings of pride in the learning environment, accomplishments, and actions related to the vision, mission, and core values. Prompt 1 (Table 4.1) solicited teacher pride from a more school-wide perspective and prompt 3 (Table 4.3) addressed teacher pride at the classroom level. However, without a clearly established vision, mission, and core values, the expressed pride of the respondents was simply individual preference. The *Faculty Togetherness* theme (Table 4.1) showed respondents proud of each other and their work. The *Us versus Them Bonding* theme (Table 4.1) described respondent pride about survival amid repression and a lack of direction or support. Responses also revealed pride in getting the school to a “cleaned-up” and “safe” level with strong “discipline” in the *Student Discipline* theme (Table 4.1). If the school vision and mission focused on teamwork, survival, and student discipline then the responses met the look-for criteria. In this case, though these were admirable

sources of pride, the Table 4.1 expressions were individual preferences and not connected to a detectable vision or mission.

The classroom level pride prompt (Table 4.3) had twenty-eight responses and four identified themes. The most frequent responses (eleven) involved students in two separate themes: *Learning Environment* and *Connections with Students*. Nine responses were within the *Structure, Organization, Respect, or Discipline* theme and the final eight responses represented the *Personal Best contribution* theme. Once again, if these twenty-eight responses connected to a school vision and mission of establishing relationships in the learning environment, high-level classroom management, and giving individual effort that meets potential, the look-for criteria was satisfied. As it stands, the responses to the classroom level pride prompt showed personalized sources of pride that were not connected to an identifiable vision or mission. It was noteworthy that all eleven learning environment and relationship responses of pride depicted teacher actions or accomplishments as opposed to student actions or accomplishments.

Leadership Growth Dimension Analysis

Schools that function at the optimal level of the Leadership Growth dimension of a Culture of Leadership exhibit an effort to “grow” leaders across the school community by providing access to leadership roles. In addition, the school community focuses on the teaching, application, and practice of effective leadership principles. To gauge the level of Leadership Growth found in the Initial Staff Culture Survey, the look-fors related to Leadership Growth were applied to the responses. The discussion of the findings is organized by each look-for criteria (see Figure 3.6).

Leadership development; leadership formation; leadership facilitation; leadership application. There was no mention of the word leadership in the responses to the Initial Staff

Culture Survey and no explicit or implicit reference to this success criteria. The closest any response came (possibly leadership application) was a very generic and broad based response from the *Students as Receivers* theme (Table 4.1): “Opportunities made available to students.” As it relates to a Culture of Leadership Framework, there was a notable lack of global or classroom pride associated with leadership or desired change to involve any level of leadership development, formation, facilitation, or application.

The “language” of leadership (vision, mission, and core values) utilized across the membership of the learning community. The responses to the Initial Staff Culture Survey did not utilize the “language” of leadership (i.e., vision, mission, core values).

Programs, activities, events, rituals, or traditions with leadership connections that are initiated, developed, and led by the members—including students. The responses from the Initial Staff Culture Survey failed to mention any effort related to this look-for criteria. A respondent in the *Personal Best contribution* theme (Table 3) came close and mentioned “growing and improving my role of helping kids.” However, a single acknowledgement of personal improvement activity failed to meet the highly involved leadership criteria of this dimension.

Initial Staff Survey Dimension Analysis Summary

The Leadership Orientation dimension from the baseline Initial Staff Survey was relatively weak with only a teacher-teacher focus and a lack of the high-level interdependence and reciprocal teaching that constitutes the ideal. The Leveraging Leadership dimension was deficient in a shared and communicated vision, mission, and common core values but showed forged faculty togetherness with respect for and pride in one another. However, the top-down and punitive student management style falls short of the optimal collaborative, empowering, and

strengths oriented school community. Because of the deficiency in school vision, mission, and core values, it was difficult to determine if there were responses connected with adding value. This seriously compromised any chance at declaring strength in the Leadership for Learning dimension. Finally, the Leadership Growth dimension requires attention to growing leaders and providing access to leadership roles. The Initial Staff Survey responses failed to display leadership opportunity or development. The single isolated strength displayed in the Initial Staff Survey was teacher-teacher respect and pride in one another.

With the baseline for comparison established from Initial Staff Culture Survey and an analysis through the lens of the Culture of Leadership Framework, the Mid-Year Feedback Survey themes and narratives from January 2007 and 2008 follow.

Mid-Year Feedback Surveys 2007 and 2008

Four annually delivered Mid-Year Feedback Surveys were used in this study. Each Mid-Year Feedback Survey included input from the staff and utilized the same three prompts: Prompt #1-Continue doing what? Prompt #2-Start doing what? and Prompt #3-Stop doing what?

Mid-Year Feedback Survey January 2007

The first of four annually delivered Mid-Year Feedback Surveys used in this study contains staff input from January of 2007. Table 4.5 of the initial Mid-Year Feedback Survey reveals two prominent thematic categories. In the *Positivity with Students theme* from January of 2007, the staff strongly desired to continue the level of positive student support, the positive student focus, and the positive student rewards. In the *Student Accountability* theme, the staff wanted accountability, structure, and student management to continue in the school.

Table 4.5. Responses to Mid Year Feedback prompt #1: *Continue doing what? (1-24-07)*

Positivity with Students

- PS1 Student support
- PS2 Meeting the needs of students.

- PS3 To think of what is right for each student. To reward the kids who do good things.
- PS4 The emphasis on positive attributes of students.
- PS5 Responding to each student individually and with respect. Trying to see the whold child who instinctively wants to do well.
- PS6 Continue to encourage excellence.
- PS7 Working to get kids on the “excellence path.”
- PS8 I love the “positive” approach to the team working with the students.
- PS9 Finding strengths and taking the time to point them out.
- PS10 Enabling students to explore, engage, and enjoy many aspects of our learning environment.
- PS11 Trying to provide the best learning environment for our students.
- PS12 Being positive and upbeat and focusing on what students are doing right.
- PS13 Positive feedback to students where behaviors and academics are progressing.
- PS14 Having assemblies for students—they enjoy them.
- PS15 Providing kids with chances to succeed. Teaching with creativity. Caring for kids.
- PS16 Rewarding students who receive good grades.
- PS17 Positive “fun” things for students
- PS18 Some “fun” things for students to look forward to.
- PS19 Special lunch activities for the kids.
- PS20 Providing opportunities for the good kids.
- PS21 Academic Assemblies. Students need to realize academics are important and they should try hard to get good grades. Keeping score turns good grades into a game, and at this level, competition speaks volumes.
- PS22 Rewarding the good kids.

Student Accountability

- SA1 Student Management
- SA2 To follow our discipline code—it does work.
- SA3 The “middle school” structure, discipline, and responsibility need stressed.
- SA4 The importance of planners and grading planners.
- SA5 To make students accountable for their behavior.
- SA6 Teaching students self-responsibility.
- SA7 Admin hallway and classroom visibility to know what’s really happening.
- SA8 Open mindedness on student behaviors...why they behave the way they do.
- SA9 Emphasizing respect and discipline.
- SA10 Having students take seats in the cafeteria instead of standing in line.
- SA11 Building understanding in our students that respect for others and proper conduct makes all the difference in our school community.

2007 Continue Doing What? (Table 4.5) Theme Synopsis

In their responses from the *Positivity with Students theme*, the staff distinctly noted the attention to individual student needs (PS2, PS3, PS5) as well as the focus on students in general through responses like: “I love the positive approach to the team working with students” (PS8), and “continue to find strengths and take the time to point them out” (PS9). A high expectation

for students also showed up in the feedback from the staff within responses like the following: “continue to encourage excellence” (P6) and “continue working to get kids on the excellence path” (PS8). Student needs, student attributes, student strengths, and respect were explicitly identified by staff in the responses about what to continue doing in January of 2007.

The positive support for students within this thematic category was also seen in multiple mentions of continuing extrinsic rewards for students. Specifically, there was reference to assemblies, “fun” things, special lunches, opportunities, and academic assemblies. “Good kids” and rewards and opportunities for “good kids” were mentioned in several ways. Response P16 referenced rewarding students who receive good grades and responses P20 and P22 talked directly about opportunities and rewards for “good kids.” The high volume of responses about continuing to promote student centered activity stood out in this initial Mid-Year Feedback Survey.

The second theme that emerged from the “Continue to do what?” prompt was *Student Accountability* in relation to structure as well as student management. This theme includes both direct and indirect references. Response SA1 specifically stated: “student management” and response SA5 referenced “student accountability.” Discipline (SA2, SA3, SA9), behavior (SA5, SA8), and conduct (SA11) depicted the staff ‘s desire for structure, order, and a high level of control over student actions. In summary, the staff input from mid-year 2007 strongly favored continuing a positive approach with students and, at the same time, clearly showed a deliberate desire to increase a disciplined and structure school environment.

Table 4.6 charts the three themes from school year 2006-07 and the January 2007 Mid-Year Feedback prompt: Start doing what? *Student Discipline Action; Failure Help; and Collaboration, Time, and Motivation*, were themes identified from staff responses.

Table 4.6. Responses to Mid Year Feedback prompt #2: *Start doing what? (1-24-07)*

Student Discipline Actions

- SDA1 Consistency with discipline.
- SDA2 Disciplining the kids tougher. I encounter kids in the hall, cafeteria, classroom.,,the disrespect needs addressed.
- SDA3 Being consistent in our enforcement of: homework policy, gum chewing rule, use of planners, and going to lockers between periods.
- SDA4 Writing kids up for gum...too many inconsistencies.
- SDA5 Calling parents about habitual problems and attitudes.
- SDA6 More teachers and administrators in the hallways between classes.
- SDA7 More discipline in the hallways needed.
- SDA8 Taking more time with repeat offenders...a little one-on-one may just make a difference.
- SDA9 Make students who do not do any of their work a discipline problem—detention.

Failure Help

- FH1 Improvement on homework help—maybe a homework helpline.
- FH2 Help all students recognize that they don't have to fail and doing homework regularly can be a positive thing in helping raise their grade.
- FH3 Child studies on students who are failing.
- FH4 Sending those who are constant offenders to homework club. Use more common sense with those students who fail on purpose.
- FH5 Restrict failing students from participation in snacks, band, chorus, etc.
- FH6 Making an effort on all fronts to eliminate the attitude that passing is what counts and replacing it with a working for excellence makes so much sense.

Collaboration, Time, Motivation.

- CTM1 More mini-research projects across the curriculum so students have use of these skills before high school.
- CTM2 More department time together—not just grade level. Need on the same page.
- CTM3 Meetings as subject area teams.
- CTM4 Spending more time motivating students in the classroom, in large groups, and in the home would pay fantastic dividends.

2007 Start Doing What? (Table 4.6) Theme Synopsis

The theme of *Student Discipline Actions* was represented with contributions from nine staff members. More than anything else, the faculty and support staff was clear and straightforward in their collective desire for consistency with discipline (SDA1, SDA3, SDA4). In addition, the responses suggested a show of strength in the area of school wide student discipline with responses like “Disciplining the kids tougher” (SDA2) and “More hallway presence for both teachers and administrators” (SDA6, SDA7). Two of the responses delved

deeper into solutions to student behavior as opposed to strict enforcement. Response SDA5 suggested including parents and response SDA8 explicitly identified “taking time with repeat offenders” with hope that the “one-on-one may just make a difference.” These two responses stood apart from the others with their solution-oriented and time investment focus for addressing student behavior challenges.

Failure Help with an emphasis on homework completion was the second of the themes the faculty and staff offered in response to the “start doing” prompt. Given that the feedback was solicited near the end of the second quarter of the school year and students had ample time to perform, it makes sense that teachers saw it as time to start providing definitive help to struggling students. Homework completion or homework help was mentioned in three of the six responses (FH1, FH2, FH4). Other strategies included child study sessions (a school counselor organized meeting that brings parents together with students), activity restriction, and motivational tactics. Here again, one of the responses (FH6) looked deeper into student failure and suggested that failing was everybody’s issue in saying there is a need to start: “making an effort on all fronts to eliminate the attitude that passing is what counts and replacing it with a working for excellence.” The proposal provided in this response was to sweep up and reduce failure by moving the expectation target for students well beyond the bare minimum of passing. The proposed action was different from the others mentioned in this theme since it addressed failure at the school system level in a proactive manner. The other responses tended toward treating the symptoms of failure through homework completion, activity restriction, or parent conferencing.

A few of the responses from the “start doing” prompt fell into a more academic theme of *Collaboration, Time, and Motivation*. Some staff responded to this prompt with suggestions for

improving things with either a curriculum change (CTM1), collaboration with colleagues (CTM2, CTM3), or a school wide motivational campaign (CTM4).

With an opportunity to reply to what to “Stop doing” in January of 2007, the staff themes that emerged from the responses are illustrated in Table 4.7 and consisted of *Staff Morale* related reflections, individual opinions on *Flawed Academic Improvements*, and areas of *Student Discipline Lapses* that faculty saw as lacking.

Table 4.7. Responses to Mid Year Feedback prompt #3: *Stop doing what? (1-24-07)*

Staff Morale

- SM1 Making negative comments about each other. I hear a lot of “_____ doesn’t do anything.” I don’t think it’s fair to make those judgments and it certainly doesn’t support teamwork.
- SM2 Complaining in general.
- SM3 Being too narrow minded—not seeing the other side of the picture.
- SM4 Let’s not put people down in public. Stop putting our need to be in charge before the child’s need to be respected.
- SM5 Trying to prove that we are right, and to resolve NOT to contribute to negativity. Stop blaming; start suggesting ideas rather than telling others what to do.
- SM6 Expecting us to produce more when we can’t finish what we started.
- SM7 Teacher Portfolios
- SM8 Every chance you can cut down on paperwork...please do.
- SM9 I’m afraid that all the “extra” paperwork is a bit much.
- SM10 New homework policy seems to me has just added more unnecessary paperwork for the teachers and we are not informed if or when students are taken to the next level of action after homework club referrals.
- SM11 Holding teachers accountable for the students who are failing their class. Most teachers give their students plenty of ways to pass their class. It’s time for a lot of students who are failing to start doing their part.
- SM12 We need to look at the homework situation. The chronic “no homework” people don’t usually need the “extra help” from anyone—it is a behavior issue. They are blatantly choosing not to do their work which is insubordination. I’m sympathetic to those who can’t—not to those who won’t.

Flawed Academic Improvements

- FAI1 Pushing through math books by March.
- FAI2 Giving zero’s--Make students do the work for at least some grade.
- FAI3 Grading procedures that are not evaluations of what a student knows but, rather, are a combination of knowledge and deportment or responsibility and are not fair to students.

FAI4 As a district it seems we are focused on the quantity of education, not the quality. In covering some math classes, I've noted students stressed over the amount of information presented to them in such a small amount of time. I believe the pace students are learning new material allows no time for correlation and remediation.

Student Discipline Lapses

SDL1 Gum chewing school wide. I see a mess somewhere each day through the irresponsibility of a small number of our students.

SDL2 Being as patient with the repeat offenders (students) who seemingly understand nothing else than stern measures and discipline practices.

2007 Stop Doing What? (Table 4.7) Theme Synopsis

The *Staff Morale* theme contained two distinguishable response groups: reflections on personal actions or attitudes and reflections related to new initiatives. Negativity (SM1, SM5), complaining (SM2), and blaming (SM4, SM5) were attitudes and actions the staff wanted stopped. Additionally, there was pushback on new initiatives that appeared to have had a morale impact. Additional paperwork stood out as an area that garnered strong opposition from the staff. There were three responses that explicitly mentioned the need to stop additional paperwork (SM8, SM9, SM10) and the new initiative of teacher portfolios was also named directly as something to stop doing in response SM7. A new homework policy was the other initiative mentioned explicitly as something to halt. The new policy involved making referrals to a homework club during homeroom time as opposed to imposing school discipline in the form of either during school or after school detention. Several of the staff viewed this new strategy as an ineffective means of addressing homework issues.

Flawed Academic Improvements constituted the second of the three themes for the “stop doing” prompt. Several staff members took exception to the pace of math curriculum delivery (FAI1, FAI4). Others honed in on what they considered unreasonable or unfair grading procedures—“giving zero’s instead of requiring at least some work to be done” (FAI2) and, “unfairly grading by including deportment and responsibility along with gaining knowledge”

(FAI3). The impression by one individual that the school district focused on “the quantity of increased student stress and a lack of opportunity for learning connections and remediation time. Despite having limited responses, this theme addressed the core of school practice—student learning.

Finally, two respondents rendered an opinion on *Student Discipline Lapses*. One response indicated the need to stop gum chewing, while the other called something more significant into play by suggesting “being as patient with repeat offenders (students) who seemingly understand nothing else than stern measures and discipline practices.”

Mid-Year Feedback Survey January 2008

The second of four annually delivered Mid-Year Feedback Surveys used in this study contains staff input from January of 2008. Each Mid-Year Feedback Survey included input from the staff and utilized the same three prompts: Prompt #1-Continue doing what?; Prompt #2-Start doing what?; and Prompt #3-Stop doing what?

Table 4.8 of the Mid-Year Feedback Survey from January of 2008 showed three prominent thematic categories: the *Positive Strengths Approach* theme, the *Collaboration and Resource Sharing* theme, and the *Student Discipline* theme.

Table 4.8. Responses to Mid Year Feedback prompt #1: *Continue doing what? (1-23-08)*

Positive Strengths Approach

PSA1	Positive approach. Focus on what each student can do and build on what they cannot.
PSA2	Visiting classrooms b/c kids enjoy your visibility and this promotes good discipline.
PSA3	Recognizing students that perform well in each quarter and students who improve their GPA.
PSA4	Encouraging Staff
PSA5	Being positive with students without being false to them.
PSA6	I enjoy the positive atmosphere and the fact that we are treated as professionals. Personally, I feel I am listened to when I have a concern. I try not to bother you, but when I really need your support, it is always there.
PSA7	Encouraging of teachers.

- PSA8 Being out and about and being seen!
- PSA9 Focusing on the students, especially the good kids who deserve recognition.
- PSA10 Success @ 6th / Study Skills first quarter orientation to middle school for 6th grade
- PSA11 Praising and rewarding academics. Finding new ways to provide incentives.

Collaboration and Resource Sharing

- CRS1 The Middle School specific shared network drive for resources
- CRS2 Time for technology training.
- CRS3 Allowing time for departmental meetings on a routine schedule as well as during assemblies, etc.
- CRS4 Giving us a chance to collaborate—It has benefitted us a lot.
- CRS5 Having clear goals so we know where we want to be.
- CRS6 Overlapping curriculum and subject areas.

Student Discipline

- SD1 Visiting classrooms b/c kids enjoy your visibility and this promotes good discipline
- SD2 Immediate discipline.
- SD3 Rules of behavior during dances are great.

2008 Continue Doing What? (Table 4.8) Theme Synopsis

The mid-year feedback from January 2008 was captured in Table 4.8. Two of the three themes were very similar to themes from the prior year's responses to the "Continue doing what?" prompt. A *Positive Strengths Approach* with students and staff paralleled with *Positivity with Students* and the *Student Discipline* theme related items were similar to the 2007 theme of *Student Accountability*. However, the theme of *Collaboration and Resource Sharing* emerged as a new area that staff expressed a desire to continue. A total of eleven respondents contributed responses connected to recognition of strengths or positive attitudes and actions. Responses PSA1: "Continue with the positive approach and the focus on what each student can do and build on what they cannot" and PSA3 "Continue with recognizing students that perform well in each quarter and who improve their GPA," served as exemplars of being positive and strength oriented with students. Staff responses in this theme spoke directly about encouragement, listening, visible support, and always being there (PSA2, PSA4, PSA7, PSA8). An exemplar

from response PSA6 provided a summary statement for the theme area as it related to staff:

“Continue with the positive atmosphere and treating us as professionals.”

Previously absent, the theme of *Collaboration and Resource Sharing* from Table 4.8 indicated a staff desire to continue with opportunities to work together and to share technology (CRS2); curriculum as a department (CRS3, CRS6); and school wide goals (CRS5). The desire to continue with collaboration and resource sharing was represented in response CS4: “Continue with giving us a chance to collaborate—it has benefitted us a lot.” Allotting time together, putting resources in a place for access by all, and establishing clear goals were actions staff expressly wished to continue. Finally, establishing rules (SD3), classroom visitation as preventive discipline (SD1), and immediate discipline action (SD2) provided the *Student Discipline* theme for the “continue with” prompt from Table 4.8.

Four major theme areas developed from the “Start doing what?” prompt and are shown in Table 4.9 from January of 2008. The *Failing Student Help* theme was the most populated of the themes. *Student Supervision and Management*, *Academic Improvements*, and *Rewards and Incentives* were also identified as themes.

Table 4.9. Responses to Mid Year Feedback prompt #2: *Start doing what? (1-23-08)*

Failing Student Help

- FSH1 Study skills and organizational strategies for 7th grade.
- FSH2 More child studies or IEP meetings for students failing multiple subjects.
- FSH3 More involvement between students and guidance. Tutors work with failure list.
- FSH4 More proactive with failing and frequent absent students.
- FSH5 Guidance more involved with parents / team meetings.
- FSH6 Immediate interventions with failures.
- FSH7 Every homeroom period should for at least 30 minutes be used for academics (a study hall for teacher help, etc.). Should not be a play period.
- FSH8 Anyone on failure list –automatically get remedial help.

Student Supervision and Management

- SSM1 A different strategy for Morning Bus Duty...visibility by Admin (Principal & Dean of Students).
- SSM2 Reminding students to be quiet in the hallways when classes are in session. Students coming back from lunch (especially 6th graders) are very loud.

- SSM3 Maybe we could be sure that ALL staff help with bus duty, assemblies, dances, morning duty, clubs, etc.
- SSM4 Accountability of all staff (guidance / discipline) with building duties – morning, bus, dances.
- SSM5 Better club period management.
- SSM6 All kids to go UP the DOWN stairs IF THEY ARE NOT IN USE.

Academic Improvements

- AI1 Swap the club and homeroom period from 3rd period to 8th period. Students are distracted and too tired for academic courses at the end of the school day.
- AI2 Inservice time: NOW. We need at least a day to touch base with our subject area teachers. (We have so much science “stuff” that we won’t get to use b/c there’s no time to learn how to use the equipment properly and we need to talk about what’s working and why).
- AI3 I want to know more about the PSSA Science test...it’s looming in front of us and I don’t know what I should be doing to prepare the kids.
- AI4 Start mixing all the reading levels together for scheduling now that Literature is a full year course. More effective student grouping could occur.

Rewards and Incentives

- RI1 Different student incentive activities to replace the school time dances.
- RI2 I think that incentives are great if they are truly incentives. We need to seek out genuine student incentives.
- RI3 Creative use of incentives for kids...develop a committee this year for next year.
- RI4 Have a Winter Carnival or something instead of school time student dances.

2008 Start Doing What? (Table 4.9) Theme Synopsis

Failing Student Help, which revealed responses related to getting help to failing and struggling students, was the most prominent theme from staff in Table 4.9. Responses included suggestions for: study and organizational strategies (FSH1, FSH8); the initiation of interventions such as child study (a school counselor initiated meeting between teachers, parents, and the student), tutoring, and Individualized Education Plan meetings (FSH2, FSH3, FSH4, FSH5, FSH6).

The *Student Supervision and Management* theme from Table 4.9 identified areas where the control of students could be improved and more fully shared. The morning supervision of students during bus duty was mentioned in three of the six responses. Response SSM3, “Maybe we could be sure that ALL staff help with bus duty, assemblies, dances, morning duty, clubs,

etc.” and SSM4, “Accountability of all staff with building duties,” stood out as recognition of the fact that improvements and challenges require everyone’s involvement.

Academic Improvements represented the third theme from the “Start doing” prompt in Table 4.9. Several staff identified an opportunity to impact the academic landscape of the school and made suggestions like: better timing for the club / homeroom period (AI1), inservice on science or high stakes assessment (AI2, AI3), and heterogeneous grouping of students for reading instruction (AI4).

In the responses from the *Rewards and Incentives* theme, staff showed a desire for a change in the current student reward and incentive strategy of a during school time fundraising dance. Feedback revealed a desire to find a more creative and truly incentive oriented reward strategy for students.

Staff responses from Table 4.10 were in response to the “stop doing what?” prompt from Mid-Year Feedback Survey January 2008. Responses to the “Stop doing” prompt were limited to only eleven responses and showed two themes: the *Frustrations Impacting Morale* theme and the *Management Issues* theme.

Table 4.10. Responses to Mid Year Feedback prompt #3: *Stop doing what? (1-23-08)*

Frustrations Impacting Morale

- | | |
|-----|---|
| FM1 | Focusing on obstacles such as “We are fighting a losing battle w/reading because they have limited experience, poor vocab, no support at home” etc. Rather...try all the known strategies over and over—slowly they may work. |
| FM2 | Having teacher schedule NOT be fair builds dissention among staff |
| FM3 | Having tutors that are not booked solid with kids all day long. |
| FM4 | Micromanagement by Assistant Superintendent and not knowing what might be coming next as a directive from that office. |
| FM5 | I’m totally frustrated by the amount of time we are spending on a few students. I’m ready to STOP focusing totally on them and begin working with the other 168 students who really want to learn. |
| FM6 | Having the same kids grouped together all day. Some need to be separated (need teacher input on scheduling!) |

- FM7 Having band and/or chorus individual student lessons scheduled during general math class sessions. I know we can refuse to let them go, but that doesn't seem fair.
- FM8 Providing privileges to students without something in return or without restrictions (going to lockers, up the down stairs, etc.)

Management Issues

- MI1 The present Morning Bus Duty strategy. It's not working.
- MI2 Faculty meetings are too lengthy
- MI3 Morning Bus Duty.

2008 Stop Doing What? (Table 4.10) Theme Synopsis

Frustrations Impacting Morale was the primary theme that emerged from the prompt and responses described obstacles and frustrations that impacted staff morale in relation to either attitude or students. One of the four morale/attitude responses (FM1) took the tone of positive self-talk to stop focusing on things beyond school control (i.e., home support, experience) and to work on “known strategies over and over...” The three other morale / attitude related staff responses dealt with the fairness of teacher schedules (FM2), fairness of workload (FM3), and perceived micromanagement actions from central office.

Based on the contributed feedback responses, student related frustrations were also viewed as impacting staff morale and there was interest in eliminating certain behaviors. Frustrating practices related to students that the staff wanted stopped included: “the same kids getting grouped together all day” (FM2); the time and attention required for a select few students in comparison to others (FM1); and “scheduling individual band and/or chorus lessons during general math class” or “providing privileges without something in return” (FM3, FM4).

The *Management Issues* theme was nominal and two of the responses to the “stop doing” prompt were consistent with the morning bus duty and morning supervision improvement areas mentioned by staff in response to the “start doing” prompt. It is worth noting that there were only one-half the number of responses from staff in response to the “stop doing” prompt in

comparison to number of responses to the “continue doing” and “start doing” prompts that had twenty-two and twenty-four responses respectively.

Analysis of Mid-Year Feedback Surveys from 2007 and 2008

Application of the Culture of Leadership Framework to the responses to the Mid-Year Feedback Surveys of January 2007 and 2008 allowed an analysis of the teacher responses with regard to vision, mission, and core values; the three levels of culture; and the four dimensions of a Culture of Leadership (Figure 2.15). The analysis of the Mid-Year Feedback themes displayed in Tables 4.5-4.10 resulted from the application of each of the four quadrant dimensions in turn: I. Leadership Orientation, II. Leveraging Leadership, III. Leadership for Learning, and IV. Leadership Growth.

What follows are the findings from an analysis of the themes using the look-for criteria for each dimension (see Figures 3.3 – 3.6). To aid in the presentation of the findings, the theme areas are noted in italics followed by the identification of the table where responses comprising the theme can be found. Following the analysis of the Mid-Year Feedback responses by dimension look-fors, the overall findings from the analysis are summarized for each dimension.

Leadership Orientation Dimension Analysis

Schools that function at the optimal level of the Leadership Orientation dimension of a Culture of Leadership demonstrate notable interdependence, a reciprocal teaching and learning relationship between the membership, and the recognition that all involved with the school are both teachers and learners. To gauge the level of Leadership Orientation found in the Mid-Year Feedback Survey, the look-fors related to Leadership Orientation were applied to the responses. The discussion of the findings is organized by each look-for criteria (see Figure 3.3).

Collaboration and teamwork. The *Collaboration, Time, and Motivation* theme (Table 4.6) emerged in response to the “Start doing” prompt in 2007 and *Collaboration and Resource Sharing* became a theme that emerged from the responses to the “Continue doing” prompt from the 2008 survey (Table 4.8). Teacher-to-teacher collaboration time was the prominent response to the “start doing” prompt in 2007 and all six of the responses from the “continue doing” prompt from 2008 were at the teacher level. The movement of the two themes involving collaboration from the “start doing” prompt responses in 2007 to the “continue doing” prompt responses in 2008 showed a gain in momentum for collaboration and provided evidence that leadership orientation was on the rise. Sharing resources and technology expertise, department meetings, and curriculum overlap was also mentioned in the *Collaboration and Resource Sharing* theme (Table 4.8) and was indicative of the development of teamwork.

High levels of engagement from teachers, students, and administration where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. In 2007, the *Positivity with Students* theme (Table 4.5) comprised twenty-two responses and each one referred to effort made by either teachers or administrators toward student engagement. Specific responses like, “thinking of what is right for each student,” “emphasizing the positive attributes of students,” and “finding strengths and taking the time to point them out,” established foundational language for the *Positive Strengths Approach* theme from Mid-Year Feedback Survey of 2008 (Table 4.8). Student engagement remained the emphasis, but the *Positive Strengths Approach* theme responses indicated a greater awareness of teacher-student engagement effort as well as administrator-teacher and administrator-teacher engagement. Responses like (continue) “encouraging staff,” “visiting classrooms,” and “listening” were new additions in the January 2008 Mid-Year Feedback and

were related to engagement efforts that extended beyond the teachers and to the students and other members of the school community.

The *Staff Morale* theme (Table 4.7) that emerged from the “Stop doing” prompt displayed responses of self-regulation and self-talk related to ways to have more productive engagement. On the other hand, the *Staff Morale* theme also revealed a number of responses that were critical of recent leadership action and initiatives (expressed in response to the “stop doing” prompt) and issued a warning about the potential for less teacher engagement.

A focus on learning results and learner actions versus teacher strategies and teacher actions. Teacher strategies and teacher level action continued to dominate the responses in the Mid-Year Feedback Surveys. This was especially evident in the *Student Accountability* theme (Table 4.5), the *Student Discipline Actions* theme (Table 4.6), and the *Student Supervision, and Management* theme (Table 4.9). The themes were characterized by what teachers were doing *to* students as opposed to what they were doing *with* students. References to learner results emerged in the *Positivity with Students* theme (Table 4.5) and the *Positive Strengths Approach* theme (Table 4.8). The quarterly Academic Assembly was singled out as a concrete means of recognizing honor roll results and academic improvement—both learning results. Learner focused responses from these same themes mentioned “fun things” for students, rewards for grades, working to get kids on the “excellence path,” and the orientation to middle school class called Success @ 6th.

An “abundance mentality” where there is effort to create meaningful involvement for everyone by way of a mutual benefit perspective and Win-Win thinking. The *Positivity with Students* theme (Table 4.5) included exemplars of effort to create meaningful involvement for everyone and mutual benefit thinking like “enabling students to explore, engage, and enjoy

the many aspects of our learning environment,” and “trying to see the whole child who instinctively wants to do well.” Nonetheless, control over both the behavior and the academic performance of students in more of a win-lose manner continued to be evident the *Student Discipline Actions* theme (Table 4.6), *Staff Moral* theme (Table 4.7), *Flawed Academic Improvements* theme (Table 4.7) and *Student Discipline Lapse* theme (Table 4.7) from 2007. The win-lose thinking making gains at the expense of others also showed up in Mid-Year Feedback 2008 in the *Rewards and Incentives* theme (Table 4.9) and the *Frustrations Impacting Morale* theme (Table 4.10). Though less so than one year earlier, responses that focused on providing rewards as the main means to get results and frustrations over perceptions of unfair schedules or work habits of colleagues highlighted flaws in the optimal win-win thinking patterns.

Excitement about what is possible versus settling for the status quo or a fear of failure. The *Positivity with Students* theme (Table 4.5) had twenty-two responses that displayed a sincere excitement over interactions with students in the Mid-Year Feedback of January 2007. At the same time, the *Student Discipline Actions* theme (Table 4.6) responses like “start disciplining the kids tougher,” and “make students who do not do any of their work a discipline problem—detention,” described negative reactions to change. The *Staff Moral* theme (Table 4.7) noted both a worry and frustration with change characterized by responses like, “stop expecting us to produce more work when we can’t even finish what we started,” “stop Teacher Portfolios,” and “stop holding teachers accountable for the students who are failing their class.”

In mid-year 2008, both the *Positive Strengths Approach* and *Collaboration and Resource Sharing* themes (Table 4.8) contained numerous responses that showed enthusiasm for what was ahead. Also, the number of responses to the “stop doing” prompt (Table 4.10) was only eleven

items in 2008 as compared to the eighteen “stop doing” prompt responses from 2007. The reduction in number of responses potentially showed a greater tolerance or acceptance of change initiatives over the year between Mid-Year Feedback Surveys.

Leveraging Leadership Dimension Analysis

Schools that function at an optimal level of the Leveraging Leadership dimension of a Culture of Leadership have a shared and communicated vision, mission, and common core values. Additionally, leadership is collaborative, empowering, and strengths oriented within a flattened organizational hierarchy. There is mutual respect amid the members of the school community that result in sharing and rotating leadership roles and responsibilities based on appropriate expertise and greatest opportunity for contribution. An open-forum for feedback is the ideal in this dimension and the solicited feedback translates to continuous improvement action. To gauge the level of Leveraging Leadership found in the Initial Staff Culture Survey, the look-fors related to Leveraging Leadership were applied to the responses. The discussion of the findings are organized by each look-for criteria (see Figure 3.4).

Common language and common goals among the members. The *Positivity with Students* theme (Table 4.5) and the *Positive Strengths Approach* (Table 4.8) revealed a starting point to a common language among the staff with the treatment of students and one another as the focal point. There was a notable majority of responses to the “continue doing” prompt from the staff in the *Positivity with Students* theme in January of 2007. Two-thirds of the responses (twenty-two of thirty-three) from the Mid-Year Feedback Survey fell within this single theme. The momentum in this theme continued through the Mid-Year Feedback Survey of January of 2008 with over one-half of the responses in the *Positive Strengths Approach* theme. In comparison with common language, common goals from the respondents were less obvious

across the two years of Mid-Year Feedback responses. Nonetheless, the *Student Accountability* theme (Table 4.5), the *Student Discipline Actions* theme (Table 4.6), the *Student Discipline* theme (Table 4.8), and the *Student Supervision and Management* theme (Table 4.9) showed responses with high-level interest in topics related to the discipline, accountability, management, and control of students.

Meaningful relationship amid school community members that are built on a commitment to the common vision, mission, and core values. There was no explicit mention of vision or mission in the two years of Mid-Year Feedback Surveys. Similar to what was mentioned in the common language and common goal look-for analysis, the *Positivity with Students* theme (Table 4.5) and the *Positive Strengths Approach* (Table 4.8) suggested a starting point to meaningful relationships among school community members. The positive treatment of students and one another were mentioned in a majority of responses. Based on the prominence of the aforementioned themes, a potential core value (i.e., a non-negotiable that guides all actions and interactions) related to positive interaction emerged from the respondents. In addition, the *Collaboration, Time, Motivation* theme (Table 4.6 in 2007) responses requested “more” opportunity for collaboration and the *Collaboration and Resource Sharing* theme (Table 4.8 in 2008) responses asked for the collaborations to continue. The persistent mention and growth of the collaboration responses in these two themes support collaboration as another potential core value.

Respectful interaction with both recognition and celebration of differences. Included in the *Positivity with Students* theme (Table 4.5 in 2007) were responses specific to respect and recognition of differences: “Continue to think of what is right for each student,” “Continue finding strengths and taking time to point them out,” “Continue being positive and upbeat and

focusing on what students are doing right,” and “Continue the emphasis on the positive attributes of the students.” The *Positive Strengths Approach* theme (Table 4.8 in 2008) also characterized interactions with genuine respect and a recognition of differences, “Continue the positive approach that focuses on what each student can do and build on what they cannot” and “Continue being positive with students without being false to them.” The *Positive Strengths Approach* theme responses noted respectful interaction with staff as well: “Continue encouraging teachers and staff,” “Continue treating us as professionals and providing support,” and “Continue visiting classrooms, being out and about, being seen, and praising academics.”

The *Student Accountability* theme (Table 4.5) also had direct connections to respectful interactions and recognizing differences with responses like, “Continue open mindedness on student behaviors...why they behave the way they do,” “Continue emphasizing respect and discipline,” and “Continue building understanding in our students that respect for others and proper conduct makes all the difference in our school community.” A response in the *Student Discipline Action* theme (Table 4.6) stood in contrast to the noted intolerance of some of the responses from the Initial Staff Culture Survey: “Start taking more time with repeat offenders...a little one-on-one may just make a difference.” The intolerance tendency from the Initial Staff Culture Survey diminished but did not vanish as the *Student Discipline Lapses* theme (Table 4.7 in 2007) contained the following response: “Stop being as patient with the repeat offenders (students) who seemingly understand nothing else than stern measures and discipline practices.”

Recognizing differences was also described in providing assistance to the academically different students and was revealed in the *Failure Help* theme (Table 4.6 in 2007) and the *Failing Student Help* theme (Table 4.9 in 2008). Both theme responses focused on struggling students but the *Failing Student Help* theme responses from 2008 showed more proactive and

preventive language in contrast with some of the more restrictive approaches from the *Failure Help* theme in 2007. For example, “Study skills and organizational strategies for 7th grade” or “Anyone on the failure list automatically gets remedial help” (Table 4.9) in comparison to “Restrict failing students from participation in snacks, band, chorus, etc.” (Table 4.6).

An abundance of both formal and informal leadership opportunity (i.e., department chair, initiative leadership, class advisors, class officers, student council officers and representatives, club advisors, and club officers). The Mid-Year Feedback Survey responses from 2007 described very little formal or informal leadership opportunity for students. The *Student Accountability* theme (Table 4.5) and the *Student Discipline Actions* (Table 4.6) placed leadership responsibility with the adults with responses like, “Continue to make students accountable for their behavior,” “Disciplining kids tougher,” and “Being consistent in our enforcements of...” The 2008 themes of *Student Discipline* (Table 4.8) and *Student Supervision and Management* (Table 4.9) noted similar descriptions of adult control over students. At the same time, the *Collaboration, Time, Motivation* theme (Table 4.6) and the *Collaboration and Resource Sharing* (Table 4.8) theme responses described increased informal leadership opportunity for staff by way of department and grade level collaboration time. In and of itself, the high volume of staff input and responses in the annual Mid-Year Feedback Surveys demonstrated informal leadership opportunity.

Leadership for Learning Dimension Analysis

Schools that function at the optimal level of the Leadership for Learning dimension of a Culture of Leadership use the school vision, mission, and core values to initiate actions and involve others. Furthermore, all members of the school community are actively involved in a continuous effort to improve the learning environment. To gauge the level of the Leadership for

Learning found in the Initial Staff Culture Survey, the look-fors related to Leadership for Learning were applied to the responses. The discussion of the findings are organized by each look-for criteria (see Figure 3.5).

Vision, mission, and core value specific ideas, initiatives, and actions from all members—including students—that add value to the learning environment. There was no explicit reference to vision or mission in either the 2007 Mid-Year Feedback Survey or the 2008 Mid-Year Feedback Survey. However, both the *Positivity with Students* theme responses (Table 4.5) and *Positive Strengths Approach* theme responses (Table 4.8) described adding value to the learning environment with attention to the emerging core value of personalized and positive interaction with students. Within these two themes, teacher responses mentioned maximizing student strengths, meeting individual needs, rewarding students, holding assemblies, and doing “fun” and “special” things with students. Academic Assemblies and Success @ Sixth were two specific initiatives noted as adding value with the former recognizing learning achievement and the latter orienting and transitioning students to the middle level setting.

Excitement about change and risk taking as purposeful and necessary part of improvement and growth. The *Positivity with Students* theme (Table 4.5) contained one-third of the total responses in 2007 from the “continue doing” prompt. The *Positive Strengths Approach* theme (Table 4.8) had one-half of the total “continue-doing” prompt responses in 2008. The increased number of responses in these two themes demonstrated growing excitement about positive change focused on interaction with and the treatment of students. On the other hand, the *Student Discipline Actions* theme responses (Table 4.6) and the *Staff Morale* theme responses (Table 4.7) highlighted pushback from teachers on change initiatives. The pushback was evident in responses to the “start doing” prompt: “Start making students who do not do any

of their work a discipline problem,” “Stop Teacher Portfolios,” “Stop holding teachers accountable for the students who are failing,” and “Stop expecting us to produce more when we can’t finish what we started.” The *Flawed Academic Improvements* theme responses (Table 4.7) and the *Student Discipline Lapses* theme responses (Table 4.7) also referenced a desire to stop newly initiated changes.

There was less pushback on change initiatives in the *Frustration Impacting Morale* theme response (Table 4.10 from 2008) than in the 2007 Mid-Year Feedback responses. Nevertheless, some of the attempted improvement and growth efforts (i.e., creative scheduling and increased student privileges) resulted in “stop doing” prompt responses. For example, relative to changing teacher schedules to allow for more collaboration, a respondent noted: “Having teacher schedules NOT be fair builds dissention among staff.” On providing more student freedom and privileges, a respondent stated: “Stop providing privileges to students without something in return or without restrictions.”

As a matter of progress, it is worth noting that the *Academic Improvements* theme responses and *Rewards and Incentive* theme responses (Table 4.9) from the 2008 Mid-Year Feedback Survey revealed teacher input and ideas on potential new change and improvement (e.g., mixing reading levels, different and creative student incentives, and changing homeroom / club period to the end of the school day).

Expressions and feelings of pride in the learning environment, accomplishments, and actions related to the vision, mission, and core values. Vision and mission were not mentioned by respondents. As previously mentioned, the *Positivity with Student* theme responses (Table 4.5) and the *Positive Strengths Approach* theme responses (Table 4.8) revealed positive and individualized staff-student relationships as an emerging core value. The responses

in both of these themes proudly described action items teachers desired to continue: “enabling students to explore, engage, and enjoy many aspects of our learning environment,” “working to get kids on the excellence path,” “Academic Assembly—keeping score with grades,” and “praising and rewarding academics.” The responses in the themes were more general and broad-based, but they clearly showed feelings of pride in the learning environment and with actions taken in the school community.

Leadership Growth Dimension Analysis

Schools that function at the optimal level of the Leadership Growth dimension of a Culture of Leadership exhibit an effort to “grow” leaders across the school community by providing access to leadership roles. In addition, the school community focuses on the teaching, application, and practice of effective leadership principles. To gauge the level of Leadership Growth found in the Initial Staff Culture Survey, the look-fors related to Leadership Growth were applied to the responses. The discussion of the findings are organized by each look-for criteria (see Figure 3.6).

Leadership development; leadership formation; leadership facilitation; leadership application. There was no mention of the word leadership in any of the responses to the Mid-Year Feedback Survey prompts from 2007 or 2008. A single response of “Continue teaching students self-responsibility” from the *Student Accountability* theme (Table 4.5) was loosely connected to leadership facilitation for students. The *Collaboration and Sharing* theme responses (Table 4.8) referenced both departmental meetings and clear goals as helpful to “know where we want to be” and revealed another loose connection to leadership facilitation—in this case, for teachers.

The “language” of leadership (vision, mission, and core values) utilized across the membership of the learning community. The responses to the Mid-Year Feedback Survey prompts from 2007 and 2008 did not utilize the “language” of leadership (i.e., vision, mission, core values). However, several of the *Staff Morale* theme responses (Table 4.7) and the *Frustrations Impacting Morale* theme responses (Table 4.10) revealed a heightened self-awareness of what was needed to move in the language of leadership direction. Responses to the “stop doing” prompt, like the following, were indicators of progress toward leadership language: “Stop making negative comments about each other...I don’t think it’s fair to make judgments...it certainly doesn’t support teamwork,” “Stop being too narrow minded—not seeing the other side of the picture,” “Stop focusing on obstacles...try known strategies...slowly, they may work,” and “Stop blaming...start suggesting ideas.”

Programs, activities, events, rituals, or traditions with leadership connections that are initiated, developed, and led by the members—including students. The responses from the Mid-Year Feedback Survey offered two programs and a consistent activity related to this look-for criteria. Academic Assemblies for students were mentioned by several respondents within both the *Positivity with Students* theme responses (Table 4.5) and the *Positive Strength Approach* theme responses (Table 4.8). In addition, the Success @ 6th orientation class for all sixth graders was mentioned by one respondent in the *Positive Strengths Approach* theme. Department meeting activity, grade level meetings, and specific subject area results were noted in the *Collaboration, Time, Motivation* theme (Table 4.6) and the *Collaboration and Resource Sharing* theme (Table 4.8).

2007 and 2008 Mid-Year Feedback Survey Dimension Summary

The Leadership Orientation dimension from the 2007 and 2008 Mid-Year Feedback Surveys showed distinct advancement in collaboration and teacher-student engagement, but remained weak in reciprocal teaching and the high-level interdependence that constitutes the ideal. The Leveraging Leadership dimension still lacked a shared and communicated vision, or mission, but potential common core values emerged in relation to the positive treatment of students, a focus on strengths, and emphasis on staff collaboration. Teacher control over student actions and interactions (i.e., discipline, accountability, and management) continued to be prominent in the responses. At the same time, progress was made toward the optimal collaborative, empowering, and strengths oriented school community characterized in this dimension.

Adding value with leadership action is the critical element of the Leadership for Learning dimension. The absence of a school vision and mission made it a challenge to determine if there were responses connected with adding value. However, since potential core values emerged from the Mid-Year Feedback Survey responses, there was evidence of value-added leadership actions and improvement initiatives that supported the positive treatment of students, a focus on strengths, and emphasis on staff collaboration (e.g., quarterly Academic Assemblies and Success @ Sixth). Finally, the Leadership Growth dimension requires attention to growing leaders and providing access to leadership roles. There was some evidence of deliberate attention to this dimension. The Mid-Year Feedback Survey responses displayed the beginnings of department and grade level activities that offered informal leadership opportunity for staff. The Academic Assemblies and the Success @ Sixth class also emerged from the responses and showed the start of leadership development for students.

Mid-Year Feedback Surveys 2013 and 2014

With a comparison established from the 2007 and 2007 Mid-Year Feedback Survey prompts and an analysis through the lens of the Culture of Leadership Framework, the two remaining Mid-Year Feedback Survey themes and narratives from January 2013 and 2014 follow.

Mid-Year Feedback Survey January 2013

The third of four annually delivered Mid-Year Feedback Surveys used in this study contains staff input from January of 2013. Each Mid-Year Feedback Survey included input from the staff and utilized the same three prompts: Prompt #1-Continue doing what? Prompt #2-Start doing what? and Prompt #3-Stop doing what?

The Mid-Year Feedback Survey from January of 2013 began with the “continue doing” prompt responses shown in Table 4.11. Two prominent themes along with two minor themes emerged from the analysis of the responses.

Table 4.11. Responses to Mid Year Feedback prompt #1: *Continue doing what? (1-23-13)*
Student Involvement and Celebrations

SIC1	Academic Assemblies. Spirit Days / Schoolwide fundraiser / Penny Wars/ Pie your Teacher / Door Decorating. Exercises during 1 st Period
SIC2	Academic Assemblies. 1st Period Exercises. Spirit Days / Community Awareness. Fundraising.
SIC3	Rewarding students for “good”things.
SIC4	Success @ 6th – the kids NEED it. Recognizing students for achievements. Schoolwide fundraiser: takes a lot of pressure off!
SIC5	Academic Assemblies for student improvement and honor roll.
SIC6	Being a supportive and structured environment for our students. Success @ 6th really helps the students.
SIC7	Clubs...great release for the kids. Beginning of year fundraiser “all for one”.
SIC8	The big fundraiser in the fall. Student Council Activities. Homework Assistance. After school homework assistance.
SIC9	Morning TV announcements.
SIC10	Student Council Activities. Homework Assistance. After school homework assistance. Building relationships with kids.
SIC11	HW Club. Academic Assemblies.
SIC12	Promoting students to get involved and to be more involved.

- SIC13 Success @ 6th
- SIC14 Academic Assemblies – they are so important to our students.
- SIC15 Encouraging participation in the many school events. Success @ 6th
- SIC16 Success @ 6th and Academic Assemblies

Collaboration, Teamwork, and Alignment

- CTA1 Working together toward individualized / differentiated instruction. I’m very proud of how our teachers are adapting to student needs.
- CTA2 Giving teachers time to meet (I know it’s challenging to create time for some, but it’s a worthwhile sacrifice for our end result).
- CTA3 Great communication and teamwork between the teaching staff.
- CTA4 Working toward common goals and aligning curriculum for all grade levels.
- CTA5 Making it possible for departments to get together during 3rd period and assemblies.
- CTA6 Collaborating with others in the department with meeting time and sharing ideas. (Would love MORE collaboration time).
- CTA7 Co-teaching – a great experience. Collaboration time during study hall assignment.
- CTA8 Co-teaching with inclusion classes. Teaming at the 6th grade level.
- CTA9 Team building activities for staff.
- CTA10 Teacher collaboration with the Library Media Center.
- CTA11 Aligning our subject areas—it works!
- CTA12 Co-teaching. Para-professional support with Learning Support students.
- CTA13 Alignment of Reading and ELA and Cross-Curricular work (writing prompts).
- CTA14 Strong support for each subject area.

Structure and Direction

- SD1 Reading the bulletin during 3rd period homeroom. Monitoring the halls and trouble areas to cut down on problems.
- SD2 Making students show responsibility for their school work and behavior.
- SD3 Checking grades and planners during during 3rd period and monitoring halls.
- SD4 3rd Period attendance and bulletin reading for accountability.
- SD5 Bus duty strategy that establishes order and creates a good environment to start each day.
- SD6 Two club rotations instead of three rotations...much more smooth operation.

Team Pride

- OP1 Our commitment to the middle school model and a great work ethic.
- OP2 Having a great teaching staff that is dedicated to the success of our students.
- OP3 Being a school “family.” This is a really good place where people care for one another and help each other when possible. Let’s not lose sight of that!
- OP4 The excellent working environment at the middle school.

2013 Continue Doing What? (Table 4.11) Theme Synopsis

Sixteen of the “continue doing” prompt responses in the 2013 Mid-Year feedback Survey fell into the *Student Involvement and Celebrations* theme. Another fourteen responses revealed

the staff's desire to continue activities that fell within the *Collaboration, Teamwork, and Alignment* theme. In the *Student Involvement and Celebrations* theme, staff consistently identified student involvement and student celebration activities by a specific name. Response SIC1 served as a prime example of the named activities with the following: "Continue doing Academic Assemblies, Spirit Days, the school wide fundraiser, Penny Wars, Pie your Teacher, Door Decorating contests, and fitness exercises before 1st period class." Specific activities from other responses in this most significant theme from the "continue doing" prompt included: Success @ 6th (SIC4, SIC13, SIC16); Homework Club and after school Homework Assistance (SIC8, SIC10, SIC11); and Morning MS-TV announcements (SIC9, SIC12). Additionally, the *Student Involvement and Celebrations* theme responses directly noted promoting, stressing and encouraging student involvement (SIC6, SIC7, SIC10, SIC12, SIC15).

The high number of Mid-Year Feedback Survey responses within the *Collaboration, Teamwork, and Alignment* theme from Table 4.11 demonstrated the staff's strong desire to continue working together. Co-teaching was directly recognized and explicitly named as an appealing approach to continue to utilize (CTA7, CTA8, CTA12). Creative use of time for department meeting collaboration was also singled out as highly beneficial (CTA2, CTA5, CTA6). Other responses were more general, but recognized and appealed for opportunity to continue to: work together on individualizing and differentiating instruction to serve student needs (CTA1); to work together for curriculum alignment and common goals (CTA4, CTA11, CTA13, CTA14); and to use time to learn to work together as a team (CTA3, CTA9, CTA10). "Would love more collaboration time" in response CTA6 exemplified the hunger of the staff for the gift of time to work together.

Two less prominent themes emerged from “continue with” prompt in Table 4.11. The *Structure and Direction* theme responses identified student direction strategies within the day-to-day school structure. For example, 3rd period homeroom items like bulletin reading, planner accountability, or grade checks (SD1, SD3, SD4) and preventive student direction management practices like hall monitoring (SD1), new morning bus duty strategy (SD5), or making students more responsible (SD2)—were viewed as working and worth continuing. Finally, there was the *Team Pride* theme. The Mid-Year Feedback Survey *Team Pride* theme responses identified areas to continue doing like “commitment to the middle school model and a great work ethic,” “dedication to the success of our students,” and “being a school family.” The responses within the *Team Pride* theme suggested that staff recognized both one another and the school as a special place. This sentiment was described in an excerpt from response OP3: “This is a really good place where people care for one another and help each other when possible. Let’s not lose sight of that!”

The January 2013 Mid-Year Feedback Survey themes from the “start doing” prompt are displayed in Table 4.12. Three themes emerged from the staff responses: *Student Discipline and Management; More Collaboration and Alignment; and Prevention or Help.*

Table 4.12. Responses to Mid Year Feedback prompt #2: *Start doing what? (1-23-13)*

Student Discipline and Management;

SDM1	Listing detention students on the daily bulletin
SDM2	Enforcing our hair color / wardrobe guidelines. The students are starting to look pretty shabby (rips, tears, pink hair, leggings, and shorts. Maybe a MS-TV morning announcement on proper attire.
SDM3	Giving student discipline for cheating and copying—not having teachers deal with this behavior.
SDM4	Addressing academic concerns with student discipline—cheating, unprepared, etc. Putting students in after school detention earlier and more consistently.
SDM5	More adults in the cafeteria for lunch monitoring to make it as positive as possible and easier to monitor behavior.

- SDM6 More discipline referrals having a result of discipline. If the student needs guidance, they can be directed to a counselor or a nurse but a result or action needs to be given for a discipline referral.
- SDM7 Discipline for cheating or plagiarizing on papers.
- SDM8 Discipline that is firm and fair.
- SDM9 Viewing plagiarism as a serious discipline issue—it is theft. Sending students to after school HW assistance for incomplete projects (or 3rd period homework club). A project should count as three missed homework assignments.
- SDM10 Making students stay for after school homework. I have a student with 30+ missed assignments and they haven't been forced into staying after school.

More Collaboration and Alignment

- MCA1 Having Rdg and ELA meetings every other 6-day cycle or combining.
- MCA2 Working for more consistency among the staff to help students with our Core Values of Respect, Responsibility, and Effort.
- MCA3 Better alignment of 6th – 7th -8th Reading and ELA. I know there are strong personalities there, but it's not about US – do what's best for the students (Sometimes the workers MUST do what the boss says).
- MCA4 We should start getting the MS working with the Elementary Schools as a peer mentoring program.
- MCA5 Better communication with our affiliated outside agency connections (e.g., Crossroads)
- MCA6 More time for collaboration on district-wide inservice days.
- MCA7 Allowing more collaboration time during inservices.
- MCA8 Better communication and collaboration between guidance and staff.
- MCA9 Inservice collaboration increase for departmental work.

Prevention or Help

- PH1 After school homework assistance early and before students are in a “trouble” situation.
- PH2 Homework assistance after school and right away in the school year. Homework assistance during Success @ 6th.
- PH3 Child studies done right away when problems start—beginning of the year. More guidance assistance with students who are failing and near failing.
- PH4 Contacting parents sooner regarding student absence patterns.
- PH5 Mandatory 3rd period Academic Assistance for failing students.
- PH6 Early academic intervention before students fall hopelessly behind.

2013 Start Doing What? (Table 4.12) Theme Synopsis

The *Student Discipline and Management* theme contained ten responses from staff.

Student plagiarism and cheating (SDM3, SDM4, SDM7, SDM9) was mentioned the most in the “start doing” prompt responses in the *Student Discipline and Management* theme. Respondents showed a desire to start issuing discipline consequences for cheating and plagiarizing offenses.

Other responses included: listing the names of detention students on the daily bulleting (SMD1); enforcing the dress code (SDM2); more discipline consequences (SDM6); and “discipline that is firm and fair” (SDM8). Requiring after school homework and providing additional lunch monitoring support were also mentioned.

The *More Collaboration and Alignment* theme from the “start doing” prompt responses in Table 4.12 were complementary to the very prominent *Collaboration, Teamwork, and Alignment* theme from the “continue doing” prompt responses in Table 4.11. Alignment and working together toward common goals were characterized in responses like, “more consistency...with core values of Respect, Responsibility, and Effort,” and “better alignment of 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Reading and English Language Arts.” The *More Collaboration and Alignment* theme was also highlighted in other responses. “Start collaboration work with the elementary schools” (MCA4); “start utilizing district in-service time for collaboration” (MCA6, MCA8, MCA9); and “start more communication and collaboration externally with outside support agencies (MCA5) and internally, between guidance counselors and staff” (MCA8), made it apparent that the staff was embracing collaboration and as well as goal and curriculum alignment.

Prevention or Help with academics was the final theme from the “start doing” prompt responses in Table 4.12. Prevention was highlighted in five of the six responses (PH1, PH2, PH3, PH4, PH6). Each response called for some form of early intervention or remediation opportunity for struggling students as a means of getting them on a better academic track prior to serious urgency and failure.

Table 4.13 provides the January 2013 Mid-Year Feedback Survey themes from the “stop doing” responses. Two noteworthy themes emerged from the responses along with two minor themes.

Table 4.13. Responses to Mid Year Feedback prompt #3: *Stop doing what? (1-23-13)*

Management Issues

- MI1 Adding so much extra to morning announcements—becoming too long.
- MI2 Shortening only morning classes for special assemblies (cut back equally).
- MI3 Stipend for newspaper advisor.
- MI4 7th and 8th period Prep for sixth grade teachers because of flak and judgment from others.
- MI5 Lengthy morning announcements
- MI6 Rescheduling clubs. Lengthy morning announcements.
- MI7 Changing clubs to different days.
- MI8 DARE sessions on Club days.
- MI9 Making people who don’t want morning bus duty do it.
- MI10 Doing so many morning announcements.
- MI11 Morning Bus Duty
- MI12 Making the (PA) announcement to read the daily bulletin during 3rd period

Student Discipline Concerns

- SD1 Gum chewing. Allowing students to leave classes before the bell.
- SD2 Gum chewing.
- SD3 Having music at 8th grade lunches on Fridays...makes students “hyper.”
- SD4 Pushing discipline off on teachers calling parents and not making the incident a violation.
- SD5 Giving liberties to students serving detention or ISS. Giving so many warnings to students. Teachers give warnings before writing students up.
- SD6 Providing warnings for discipline referrals. The discipline form is a teacher’s last resort and if nothing is done, it’s just a waste of time.
- SD7 Pushing discipline off on teachers.

Morale Related

- M1 Complaining (and begin to be part of the solution and not the problem)
- M2 Don’t let the darkness get the better of us. These are tough months—days are long; weather is cold and dark. People start to feel the need for a “break.”
- M3 Teaching in fear of numbers and standardized assessments.

Poor Professional Development

- PPD1 Inservice days with no value.
- PPD2 Inservice with IU9 presenters.

2013 Stop Doing What? (Table 4.13) Theme Synopsis

The *Management Issues* theme from Table 4.13 contained responses that referenced stopping lengthy morning announcements (MI1, MI5, MI6, MI10) and club day conflicts (MI6,

MI7, MI8). The other responses within the *Management Issue* theme were more singular in nature with responses like, stop morning bus duty, stop the public address system direction to read the daily bulletin 3rd period, stop the stipend for the newspaper advisor, and stop shortening only morning classes to accommodate for special school assemblies.

The *Student Discipline Concerns* theme was the second of the major themes from Table 4.13 and the “stop doing” prompt. A couple of the responses showed pushback on teacher ownership of classroom level discipline and referred to “stop pushing discipline off on teachers” (SD4, SD7). Discipline referrals that result in warnings also generated “stop doing” feedback from staff (SD5, SD6). The remaining responses within the *Student Discipline Concerns* theme took issue with a school policy change that allowed gum chewing (SD1, SD2) and the 8th grade privilege of playing music during Friday lunches (SD3).

The *Morale Related* theme and the *Poor Professional Development* theme concluded the feedback generated “stop doing” prompt in Table 4.13. The three morale responses were positive self-talk items that referenced stopping counterproductive actions or attitudes. Finally, two responses stated a desire to stop poorly done in-service professional development.

Mid-Year Feedback Survey January 2014

The fourth, and final, annual Mid-Year Feedback Survey used in this study contained staff input from January of 2014. Each Mid-Year Feedback Survey included input from the staff and utilized the same three prompts: Prompt #1-Continue doing what? Prompt #2-Start doing what? and Prompt #3-Stop doing what?

The Mid-Year Feedback Survey from January of 2014 began with the “continue doing” prompt responses shown in Table 4.14. Three separate themes surfaced from the responses:

Student Enrichment and Empowerment; Inspiring and Motivational Actions; and Collaboration and Alignment.

Table 4.14. Responses to Mid Year Feedback prompt #1: *Continue doing what? (1-24-14)*

Student Enrichment and Empowerment

- SEE1 Providing data to students at Academic Assemblies. They seem to be motivated by the “scorekeeping.” Success @ 6th –It really does help get the 6th graders adjusted to the middle school.
- SEE2 Allowing students freedom and trust (access to lockers at any time, chewing gum, school program and club ideas, etc.). The creativity and level of student involvement in the morning MS-TV announcements. The morning exercises.
- SEE3 Providing more and more things for and with students. Making the Outdoor Classroom better.
- SEE4 Student involvement in “good” activities (student council direction and leadership).
- SEE5 3rd period homeroom activities (support, grade checking, clubs, media center projects, maker space creativity, etc)
- SEE6 Having the fun and structured activities to practice social skills, leadership skills, and age appropriate behaviors.
- SEE7 I love the student creativity on morning MS-TV announcements. I love walking through the halls and seeing student designed motivation posters with our students, student work, art class projects, etc.
- SEE8 Morning calisthenics.
- SEE9 Caring about the kids, knowing how much they want us to “like” them, recognizing the amount of influence we DO have on/with them.
- SEE10 Keeping kids involved in activities. Reminding kids to continue to step up with our core values of Respect, Responsibility, and Effort.
- SEE11 Academic Award Assemblies with class officers representing “peer” congratulations by shaking hands and presenting honor cards. Band, Chorus, and student led assemblies.
- SEE12 The time for our 3rd period clubs.
- SEE13 This building is amazing with supporting individual needs of students—social needs, moral needs, AND academic needs. Holistic education!

Inspiring and Motivational Actions

- IM1 Placing teachers in areas that they have passion and interest. It’s hard to get the kids excited about things if the teacher is not enjoying it.
- IM2 Pushing it “out there” goals like CREATIVITY. This sparks much more passion that goals like “10 percent more proficient and advanced on the PSSA.”
- IM3 Accountability for your actions. Making all professional challenges (new evaluation system, student growth model, SLO’s, etc) make sense to us and relating them to our middle school world that emphasizes the whole student.
- IM4 Talking things out and not having “blanket” or “black and white” rules or regulations that are insensitive to individual needs.
- IM5 Positive attitude and solution focus--no matter the challenge.

- IM6 What you are doing! I appreciate your willingness to help and your ability to lead. Thanks!
- IM7 Reminding us of the most effective ways of meeting the needs of our unique “middle school kids” and not letting us fall back into “our ruts and routines.”
- IM8 Inspired leadership using leading philosophies. It is always helpful to know how our trajectory matches the standards set by cutting-edge organizations.

Collaboration and Alignment

- CA1 Keeping a balance between curriculum, data, and classroom reality by working together on priorities. Department meetings with the right department makeup—the really can be productive.
- CA2 Allowing or creating the time for the Success @ 6th teachers to collaborate and plan for the delivery of the program by reflecting on student feedback and talking about fresh ideas for the mission of the program.
- CA3 Allowing time for alignment.
- CA4 Department meetings, curriculum alignment within both grade level and subject area.
- CA5 Department meetings. They get more productive every year (at least so far).
- CA6 Time to meet with departments for curriculum and school vision, mission, and core value alignment: “A world class education...with the rural advantage.”

2014 Continue Doing What? (Table 4.14) Theme Synopsis

The most significant of the themes from the 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey is the *Student Enrichment and Empowerment* theme. Within this theme, staff provided expanded responses on day-to-day student activity and opportunity. Academic Assemblies with data and scorekeeping as motivation alongside peer recognition and congratulations (SEE1, SEE11) represented the type of student involvement the staff singled out to continue. Responses from staff about student life enrichment like “allowing students freedom and trust;” “having fun and structured activities for students to practice social skills and leadership skills;” “providing more and more things for and with students;” and “the creativity and level of student involvement in the morning MS-TV announcements,” revealed a deep commitment to the continued increase in student involvement.

Empowerment related responses also emerged from the “continue doing” prompt. Staff acknowledgment of empowerment was evident in all of the following “continue” responses:

“Success @ 6th—it really does help get 6th graders adjusted to the middle school;” “student designed motivation posters involving photos of our own students;” “keeping kids involved in activities and reminding kids to continue to step up with our core values of Respect, Responsibility, and Effort;” “Band, chorus and student led assemblies;” and “student council direction and leadership of student involvement in ‘good’ activities.” Additionally, the responses in the *Student Enrichment and Empowerment* theme identified continuing the morning callisthenic initiative, improving the Outdoor Classroom, and continuing the library media-center projects. One final response characterized this theme and noted a desire to continue the holistic education they described as “supporting individual needs of students—social needs, moral needs, and academic needs.”

The *Inspiring and Motivational Actions* theme represented the second of the three themes from Table 4.14 and the “continue doing” prompt. Staff responses within this theme described appropriate placement of staff in areas of passion (IM1); identifying ambitious goals (IM2); and utilizing cutting-edge leadership practices and philosophies (IM8). A flexible approach—“talking things out and not having ‘blanket or ‘black and white’ rules or regulations that are insensitive to individual needs” was a response appreciatively offered by one staff member. Another staff response addressed sensible middle school related personal accountability in the following manner: “Continue with accountability for actions and continue making all professional challenges make sense to us and relating them to our middle school world that emphasizes the whole student.” Response IM7 also mentioned effectiveness within the unique nature of middle school and expressed interest in continuing with middle level specific leadership.

The final theme from January 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey and the “continue doing” prompt responses was *Collaboration and Alignment*. Staff responses made explicit references to department meetings (CA1, CA4, CA5, CA6) and also included data, curriculum, and school vision, mission, and core value alignment. One respondent identified using time to meet as a department to align to the school vision of “A world class education...with the rural advantage” (CA6).

The Mid-Year Feedback Survey responses from the “start doing” prompt were compiled into three different themes: *Academic Enhancement*, *Student Program Enrichment*, and *Discipline and Student Management*. Table 4.15 displays the three themes.

Table 4.15. Responses to Mid Year Feedback prompt #2: *Start doing what? (1-24-14)*

Academic Enhancement

- AE1 Providing real professional development “in-house” related to the ambitious goals we set. At the district level our attempts at inservice are, at best, futile and not matched up with our goals. At times, these inservices are demotivating.
- AE2 Becoming increasingly aligned as a department—especially important with our new hires.
- AE3 A black and white homework / project policy made public and promoted as an example of our commitment to “home excellence.”
- AE4 If at all possible, start creating time for the district Physical Education staff to collaborate on inservice days so as to align our curriculum K-12.
- AE5 Collaborating with elementary science teachers. It would be nice to have continuity 4th through 9th. I recently had a 5th grade teacher ask what I thought would be best to cover to prepare her students for the challenges of 6th grade science. Let’s capitalize on the interest!
- AE6 Incorporating MLA techniques in all research lessons and incorporating more non-fiction and cross-curricular articles to better match the Common Core.
- AE7 Align our written essay and research report formatting expectation to the MLA standard within our English Language Arts Department. Follow the department alignment with consistency across all content areas.
- AE8 More inservice time for cooperative planning with other core content areas.

Student Program Enrichment

- SPE1 6th Grade field trip to the Elk Visitor Center to experience alternate energy and “rural advantage” organisms they’ve not had exposure to.
- SPE2 Maybe switch up the morning calisthenics with additional exercises to keep the interest at a high level. Variety and change is good for students this age.
- SPE3 Create more time—by way of prioritizing—for student-to-student interaction as we involve more and more technology in our classroom instruction.

- SPE4 Allowing some type of 6th-7th field trip that complements the hugely successful 8th grade Camp Mountain Run Leadership outing and the 8th grade class trip. Something career based, perhaps, to get them thinking of the world beyond middle school walls.
- SPE5 Getting students more involve with goal setting and checking on progress toward those goals regularly. This may help to put more responsibility for their education in their capable hands.
- SPE6 What about the possibility of student hall monitors for 3rd period? Our leadership oriented 8th graders? Or Student Council members?

Discipline and Student Management;

- DSM1 A consistent rule list that there are NO negotiations for (locker visit times, stair use, lunch dismissal, lateness, gum chewing, holes in jeans, dye in hair). Too many variations right now and if you tell us what the rules are, we'll do our best to enforce them. Right now the variations are confusing to the kids and the adults. Having a larger presence in the “No Man’s Land” of the middle school (Locker areas, hallways by the Library and cafeteria. It doesn’t take long for the kids to figure out where supervision is lacking.)
- DSM2 Holding students accountable for fundraising...All students are expected to fund raise to at least: \$_____.
- DSM3 Make it a school wide rule: 3rd period homeroom silent study hall until 10:00 am.
- DSM4 Holding students more accountable for their actions. Signing planners. Consequences.

2014 Start Doing What? (Table 4.15) Theme Synopsis

The *Academic Enhancement* theme responses from the “start doing” prompt displayed a desire for legitimate professional development (AE1). Five of the eight responses from the *Academic Enhancement* theme noted district and school level professional development among their own colleagues as having the highest benefit for students (AE2, AE4, AE5, AE7, AE8). The *Academic Enhancement* theme responses from the “start doing” prompt that related to enhancing academics connected directly to the *Collaboration and Alignment* theme responses from “continue doing” prompt. The responses within both of these themes looked toward a greater degree of K-12 involvement to accompany the current collaboration efforts.

The *Student Program Enrichment* theme was the second major theme from January 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey “start doing” prompt. The *Student Program Enrichment* theme responses in Table 4.15 showed staff energy within suggestions to start doing: additional student

field trips (SPE1, SPE4); creative use of time for more student-to-student interaction (SPE3); a higher level of student involvement in goal setting and progress toward established goals (SPE5); and peer-to-peer leadership and assistance with monitoring and supervision (SPE6).

Discipline and Student Management remained a theme in the “start doing” prompt from January 2014. Four different responses suggested ways to hold students more accountable to school rules and regulations (DSM1, DSM3, DSM4) as well as fundraising activities (DSM2).

Table 4.16 displays the three January 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey themes from “stop doing” prompt. The *De-Motivating Actions and Behavior* theme, the *Student Discipline* theme, and the *Teacher Schedule / Management Issues* theme had only eleven response total in comparison to the twenty-seven responses from the Table 4.14 “continue doing” prompt and the twenty-one responses from the Table 4.15 “start doing” prompt.

Table 4.16. Responses to Mid Year Feedback prompt 3: *Stop doing what? (1-24-14)*

De-Motivating Actions and Behaviors

- DAB1 Complaining (I know it will be a challenge...but it is a wish).
- DAB1 Blaming all behaviors on “raging hormones.” One size does not fit all.
- DAB3 Being involved in any gossip.
- DAB4 Taking others works and actions so personally.
- DAB5 Always pointing out others faults. I’m doing better with this, but need to continue to be a “bucket filler.”

Student Discipline

- SD1 Saying that cheating isn’t an academic concern. We need to come up with a policy that addresses the situation and deters kids from doing this. The plagiarizing needs to be addressed so it doesn’t grow.
- SD2 Allowing students to go anywhere during 3rd period homeroom without a pass. I know we keep coming back to this at meetings, but we need someone checking for a pass. (Maybe hall monitors?)
- SD3 Allowing all students to attend the fundraiser rewards / incentives (pizza party – grade level dance) even if they didn’t sell or participate. (these students didn’t earn the reward.
- SD4 Chewing gum—it’s distracting and looks awful when substitute teachers and guest speakers come to our school.

Teacher Schedule / Management Issues

- TMI1 Having shared teachers between the middle school and the high school. This causes illogical schedules that limit assembly times and results in a loss of educational time.

TM2 Sharing teachers with the high school--especially when they are not shy about having no interest in doing the job. Out kid deserve better!

2014 Stop Doing What? (Table 4.16) Theme Synopsis

The *De-Motivating Actions* theme contained five of the eleven responses. Responses to the “stop doing” prompt included: stop complaining, stop blaming, stop gossiping, stop taking things personal, and stop judging others.

Another four responses to the “stop doing” prompt were part of the *Student Discipline* theme. Each response addressed something different, but the common ground was a desire to stop doing things that were rule or regulation oriented. Two of the four responses in the theme were related to plagiarizing and response SD1 stated there was a need to stop “saying that cheating isn’t an academic concern” and suggested to “address plagiarizing with a deterring policy so it doesn’t grow.”

Two responses recommended stopping the practice of sharing teachers between the high school and middle school. Illogical schedules resulting in the loss of educational time and teacher disinterest were offered as rational for discontinuing the teacher sharing practice.

Analysis of Mid-Year Feedback Surveys from 2013 and 2014

Application of the Culture of Leadership Framework to the responses to the Mid-Year Feedback Surveys of January 2013 and 2014 allowed an analysis of the teacher responses with regard to vision, mission, and core values; the three levels of culture; and the four dimensions of a Culture of Leadership (Figure 2.15). The analysis of the Mid-Year Feedback themes displayed in Tables 4.11-4.16 resulted from the application of each of the four quadrant dimensions in turn: I. Leadership Orientation, II. Leveraging Leadership, III. Leadership for Learning, and IV. Leadership Growth.

What follows are the findings from an analysis of the themes using the look-for criteria for each dimension (see Figures 3.3 – 3.6). To aid in the presentation of the findings, the theme areas are noted in italics followed by the identification of the table where responses comprising the theme can be found. Following the analysis of the Mid-Year Feedback responses by dimension look-fors, the overall findings from the analysis are summarized for each dimension.

Leadership Orientation Dimension Analysis

Schools that function at the optimal level of the Leadership Orientation dimension of a Culture of Leadership demonstrate notable interdependence, a reciprocal teaching and learning relationship between the membership, and the recognition that all involved with the school are both teachers and learners. To gauge the level of Leadership Orientation found in the Mid-Year Feedback Survey, the look-fors related to Leadership Orientation were applied to the responses. The discussion of the findings is organized by each look-for criteria (see Figure 3.3).

Collaboration and teamwork. The *Collaboration, Teamwork, and Alignment* theme (Table 4.11) from the Mid-Year Feedback Survey showed fourteen specific responses from the “continue doing” prompt with a direct connection to this Leadership Orientation look for. There was strong sentiment among the staff for continuing forward with working together “toward individualized / differentiated instruction,” communicating with one another “on common goals,” co-teaching “with inclusion class,” team building, and aligning curriculum “within and across subject areas.” In addition, the “start doing” prompt responses from the Mid-Year Feedback Survey of 2013 revealed a *More Collaboration and Alignment* theme (Table 4.12) and the staff seeking greater opportunity to work together for consistency on behalf of students. *Collaboration and Alignment* was noted yet again as a theme from the 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey responses to the “continue doing” prompt. The momentum for collaboration and

teamwork translated to very specific action items in the *Academic Enhancement* theme (Table 4.15) from the “start doing” prompt. Here again, respondents stated their desire for more collaboration time, but they also referenced collaboration outcomes in their responses and looked to extend the collaboration and teamwork to the district level.

Student–teacher and student–student collaboration and teamwork emerged within the *Student Involvement and Celebrations* theme (Table 4.11) and the *Student Enrichment and Empowerment* theme (Table 4.14). Both of these themes noted the importance student interaction with one another and referenced student influence and involvement with school programs and activities.

High levels of engagement from teachers, students, and administration where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The *Student Involvement and Celebrations* theme (Table 4.11) from the 2013 Mid-Year Feedback Survey and the *Student Enrichment and Empowerment* theme (Table 4.14) from the 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey indicated a new and higher standard of student engagement in the school community. In the former theme, the responses focused on continuing the high level of specific student involvement initiatives with examples such as the MS-TV morning announcements program, Academic Assemblies, Spirit Days, the school-wide fundraiser, Student Council, Success @ 6th, Penny Wars, seasonal door decorating contests, and daily calisthenics. Within the *Student Enrichment and Empowerment* theme (Table 4.14), thirteen of the responses highlighted an interest in continuing with even more opportunity for student voice in the school community as student officers, motivational poster makers, club idea generators, and creative contributors to a variety of clubs and activities.

A high levels of teacher engagement was also prominent across the 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Surveys within the fourteen responses in *Collaboration, Teamwork, and*

Alignment theme (Table 4.11); the nine responses in the *More Collaboration and Alignment* theme (Table 4.12); the six responses from the *Collaboration and Alignment* theme (Table 4.14); and the eight responses from the *Academic Enhancement* theme (Table 4.15). Teachers described their engagement actions within department meetings, co-teaching opportunities, curriculum alignment, data review sessions, cross-curricular sharing, and professional development.

Finally, the *Inspiring and Motivational Actions* theme (Table 4.14) from the “continue doing” prompt responses in the 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey brought administrator engagement into play. Respondents described actions like, “placing teachers in areas that they have passion and interest “goals like creativity,” “matching professional challenges to the middle school world,” and “positive attitude and solutions focus—no matter the challenge.”

A focus on learning results and learner actions versus teacher strategies and teacher actions. The *Student Program Enrichment* theme responses from the “start doing” prompt in the 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey best displayed a focus on learning results and learning actions. Responses in this theme described teacher interest in affording learner enrichment opportunity with high interest field trips, variety of activities, technology integration, student-to-student social interaction, goal setting with progress monitoring, and additional leadership involvement.

The *Student Involvement and Celebrations* theme (Table 4.11) and the *Student Enrichment and Empowerment* theme (4.14) were the themes with the largest number of responses from the Mid-Year Feedback Surveys of January 2013 and 2014 with sixteen and thirteen responses respectively. Student actions and students as learners were highlighted in both themes.

Although the various collaboration themes from the two years of mid-year feedback were characterized by teacher strategies and teacher actions, the strategies and actions increasingly referenced the learner and learning results. As an example, individualization, differentiation, and adapting to students' needs were mentioned in the *Collaboration, Teamwork, and Alignment* theme (Table 4.11). In addition, core value consistency to help students, doing what is best for students, and peer mentoring emerged from responses in *the More Collaboration and Alignment* theme (Table 4.12) and served as indicators of teacher collaboration with a learner focus.

An “abundance mentality” where there is effort to create meaningful involvement for everyone by way of a mutual benefit perspective and Win-Win thinking. Meaningful involvement highlighted the responses in the *Student Involvement and Celebrations* theme (Table 4.11) from the “continue doing” prompt and the January 2013 Mid-Year Feedback. Amid the host of specifically identified involvement opportunities, several responses captured the essence of the theme with emphasis on the look-for term “meaningful.” For example, “Continue building relationships;” “continue promoting students to get involved and be more involved;” and “continue encouraging participation in the many school events.” The *Team Pride* theme (Table 4.11) noted an interest in continuing the middle school model, a dedication to the success of all students, and being a “family” where people care for and help one another. The interdependence associated with an optimal level of leadership orientation was evident in these examples.

The January 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey added to the responses connected to “meaningful” involvement in the *Student Enrichment and Empowerment* theme (Table 4.11) responses from the “continue doing” prompt. Student freedom and trust were identified in a response that also referenced creativity and high-level student involvement. Responses like

“continue supporting social, moral, and academic needs—holistic education,” “continue providing more and more things for the students,” and “continue having the fun and structured activities to practice social skills, leadership skills, and age appropriate behaviors,” showed teacher commitment and awareness of the mutual benefit of meaningful student involvement.

Meaningful involvement for teachers was characterized in the three separate collaboration themes (*Collaboration, Teamwork, and Alignment* theme (Table 4.11); *More Collaboration and Alignment* (Table 4.12); and *Collaboration and Alignment* (Table 4.14)) identified in the 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Surveys. Thirty different responses from these themes referenced some benefit from or desire for collaboration by teachers and served as strong evidence of actions and attitudes that recognized the power of moving from “I” thinking to “We” thinking—from independence to interdependence.

Excitement about what is possible versus settling for the status quo or a fear of failure. The 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey theme titles and the volume of responses to the “continue doing” and “start doing” prompts indicated excitement and enthusiasm for what is possible with change as opposed to settling for the status quo or a fear of failure. The “continue doing” prompt from the 2013 Mid-Year Feedback Survey elicited forty responses—the highest from any of the four years of surveys (2007, 2008, 2013, and 2014). Theme titles like *Student Involvement and Celebrations; Collaboration, Teamwork, and Alignment; Structure and Direction; and Team Pride* (Table 4.11) displayed an optimism and possibility orientation.

The themes from the “continue doing” prompt from the 2014 Mid-Year Feedback were much the same: *Student Enrichment and Empowerment; Inspiring and Motivational Actions; and Collaboration and Alignment*. All themes showed excitement for possibility and contained statements about actions and attitudes associated with the optimal level of leadership where

teaching and learning are everyone's responsibility and everyone is a teacher and everyone is a learner.

The 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey themes from the "start doing" prompt highlighted additional excitement about possibilities for the future and the specific responses within the themes suggested attitudes and actions for change. In the *More Collaboration and Alignment* theme (Table 4.12) teachers specifically sought collaboration with elementary educators across the school district and requested inservice time for increased departmental work and curriculum alignment. In other words, teacher demonstrated that they were unwilling to settle for the status quo. In the *Prevention or Help* theme (Table 4.12) responses focused on changes to the status quo that would be proactive and prevent student failure.

A year later in the 2014 Mid-Year feedback Survey, the most prominent themes from the "start doing" prompt were *Academic Enhancement* and *Student Program Enrichment* (Table 4.15). The responses within these two themes were even more ambitious and change oriented than the year prior and addressed such topics as professional development, homework policy, K-8 science alignment, research and writing consistency across the curriculum, expansion of field trips, leadership programs, and increased student involvement with student council.

The single area with status quo indications was student discipline and student management. In both 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback there were "start doing" and "stop doing" themes related to this topic. In the *Student Discipline and Management* theme (Table 4.12) and *Student Discipline Concerns* (Table 4.13) teachers challenged changes made in school wide student discipline strategies. The teacher response challenges were less prominent in the 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey than in 2013, but remained within the *Discipline and Student*

Management theme (Table 4.15) and the *Student Discipline* theme (Table 4.16). Consistently evident as fear of failure in the area of student discipline.

Leveraging Leadership Dimension Analysis

Schools that function at an optimal level of the Leveraging Leadership dimension of a Culture of Leadership have a shared and communicated vision, mission, and common core values. Additionally, leadership is collaborative, empowering, and strengths oriented within a flattened organizational hierarchy. There is mutual respect amid the members of the school community that result in sharing and rotating leadership roles and responsibilities based on appropriate expertise and greatest opportunity for contribution. An open-forum for feedback is the ideal in this dimension and the solicited feedback translates to continuous improvement action. To gauge the level of Leveraging Leadership found in the Initial Staff Culture Survey, the look-fors related to Leveraging Leadership were applied to the responses. The following discussion of the findings is organized by each look-for criteria (see Figure 3.4).

Common language and common goals among the members. Common language and common goals emerged from the 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Surveys. Both common teacher language and common student language was evident and progress was noted in these two areas between the 2013 and 2014 surveys. The *Collaboration, Teamwork, and Alignment* theme (Table 4.11) responses from the “continue doing” prompt of the 2103 Mid-Year Feedback Survey showed teacher acknowledgment of department work on common curricular goals across grade levels. Alignment by way of collaboration was literally stated in many of the responses within this theme. The “start doing” prompt from the 2013 Mid-Year Feedback Survey contained a *More Collaboration and Alignment* theme (Table 4.12) as further evidence of the staff desire to work together and align curriculum. This theme also contained a response that

referenced “working for more consistency among the staff to help students with our Core Values of Respect, Responsibility and Effort.”

The 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey contained a *Collaboration and Alignment* theme (Table 4.14) from the “continue doing” prompt. Within this theme curriculum alignment was consistently and explicitly stated as something teachers wanted to continue. Collaboration and curriculum alignment had become common language among the staff and collaboration time was utilized as the means of developing curriculum alignment across grade levels in subject areas. Mission and vision were mentioned in responses in the *Collaboration and Alignment* theme and one particular response captured it this way: “Continue with time to meet with departments for curriculum and school vision, mission, and core value alignment—A World Class Education...with the Rural Advantage.” The *Academic Enhancement* theme responses (Table 4.15) from the “start doing” prompt displayed even more specific common language and common goal development within responses. Among other items, teachers mentioned a commitment to “home excellence” for initiating a consistent homework policy; inquiry-based science curriculum continuity grades 4 through 9; incorporating Modern Language Association (MLA) techniques in all research lessons; and integrating Common Core principles across all content areas.

There was also significant attention to the development of common language with and among students. Within the *Student Involvement and Celebrations* theme (Table 4.11) from the 2013 Mid-Year Feedback Survey, common goals and common language were described in responses about specific school programs and activities. Responses included a desire to continue with the quarterly Academic Assemblies that recognized and promoted academic performance; the Success @ 6th class that welcomed and oriented sixth graders to the world of middle school,

and Student Council activities that created leadership and involvement opportunity for all students.

References to these common language and common goal programs and activities continued to be prevalent in the *Student Enrichment and Empowerment* theme and the *Inspiring and Motivational Actions* themes (Table 4.14) from the 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey. The core values of respect, responsibility, and effort were highlighted in two responses. In addition, Middle School TV morning announcements (MS-TV) were described as contributing to common language along with student designed motivational posters, student council hallway displays, and “activities to practice social skills, leadership skills, and age appropriate behaviors.” The *Inspiring and Motivational Actions* theme (Table 4.14) contained several references to middle school effective practice and philosophy in addition to cutting-edge leadership language. The multiple mentions of these topics showed evidence of common language development among the membership.

Meaningful relationship amid school community members that are build on a commitment to the common vision, mission, and core values. The *Team Pride* theme (Table 4.11) response from the “continue doing” prompt in the 2013 Mid-Year Feedback Survey displayed a foundation for evidence of teachers involved in meaningful relationships that were built on commitment to a common vision, mission, and values. One response stated: “Continue our commitment to the middle school model and a great work ethic.” The literal reference to core values occurred for the first time in the *More Collaboration and Alignment* theme (Table 4.12) and the response described an interest in “working for more consistency among the staff to help students with our Core Values of Respect, Responsibility, and Effort.”

The core values of respect, responsibility, and effort were explicitly addressed again in both the *Student Enrichment and Empowerment* theme responses (Table 4.14) and the *Collaboration and Alignment* theme responses (Table 4.14) to the “continue doing” prompt from the 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey. There was also explicit mention of the vision statement—A World Class Education...with the Rural Advantage—within the *Collaboration and Alignment* theme (Table 4.14) in a response that called for “continuing department meeting time for curriculum and school vision, mission, and core value alignment.”

In addition to the explicit mention of vision, mission, and core values, many of the 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey themes described meaningful relationships. The *Student Involvement and Celebrations* theme (Table 4.11), the *Student Enrichment and Empowerment* theme (Table 4.14), and the *Student Program Enrichment* theme (Table 4.15) focused on teacher-student, and student-student relationships. Responses in these themes were characterized by phrases such as “recognizing students for achievements,” “being a supportive and structured environment for our students,” “building relationships with and among kids,” “allowing students freedom and trust,” “peer-to-peer congratulations and shaking hands and presenting honor roll cards,” and “getting students more involved with their own goal setting and checking on those goals.”

The *Collaboration, Teamwork, and Alignment* theme (Table 4.11), the *More Collaboration and Alignment* theme (Table 4.12), the *Collaboration and Alignment* theme (Table 4.14), and the *Academic Enhancement* theme (Table 4.15) revealed relationship language connected to a commitment to the shared mission of teacher-teacher and teacher-student collaboration for the purpose of curriculum alignment. Responses in these themes noted

teamwork and team building, great communication, sharing ideas, co-teaching, and professional development related to ambitious goals.

Respectful interaction with both recognition and celebration of differences. The aforementioned meaningful relationship development between teachers, between teachers and students, and between students was strongly evident in both the 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey themes and translated easily to meeting this look-for criteria. Amid the emphasis on common language and common goals and the increased attention to vision, mission, and core values, there remained a high level of individualization and recognition of differences. Each one of the student focused themes—*Student Involvement and Celebrations* (Table 4.11) and *Student Enrichment and Empowerment* (Table 4.14)—contained responses with emphasis on the full complement of involvement possibilities for students, supports for students, and encouragement for students as individuals with different abilities, talents, and needs. Participation emphasis, caring emphasis, differentiation language, and the core value of respect were described in responses within these themes.

The core values of respect, responsibility and effort were not limited to students. The *Team Pride* theme (Table 4.11) and *De-Motivating Actions and Behaviors* theme (Table 4.16) each have responses that revealed teacher recognition and appreciation of differences in one another. A “school family” and a “really good place where people care for one another and help each other,” was noted. “Understanding other people and their job responsibilities...and be a bucket filler,” revealed another recognition of differences. And “stop doing” responses like “stop blaming all behaviors on raging hormones—one size does not fit all” and “stop being involved in any gossip or pointing out others faults,” showed teacher desire to minimize negative attitudes and behaviors.

Similar to 2007 and 2008 Mid-Year Feedback Surveys, there were direct responses associated with student discipline in the 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Surveys. However, despite the presence of these themes, none of the responses showed the previous level of harsh intolerance of poor student behavior. In the *Student Discipline and Management* theme (Table 4.12), several responses to the “start doing” prompt addressed differences of opinion about plagiarism and homework completion as discipline issues. The *Student Discipline Concerns* theme (Table 4.13) responses to the “stop doing” prompt showed discontent with warnings issued by the Dean of Students and resistance to teacher level handling of classroom discipline topics. The seventeen total responses present in the previous two 2013 Mid-Year Feedback Survey themes were reduced to only eight total responses for the two 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey themes. And, even though response topics remained mostly the same, the harsh intolerance for behavior differences was no longer part of the teachers’ responses.

An abundance of both formal and informal leadership opportunity (i.e., department chair, initiative leadership, class advisors, class officers, student council officers and representatives, club advisors, and club officers). Class Officers, Student Council Officers, and Club Officers were noted as formal leadership opportunities in the *Student Involvement and Celebration* theme (Table 4.11) and the *Student Enrichment and Empowerment* theme (Table 4.14). In addition, responses in both themes highlighted an abundance of informal leadership opportunities within Student Council activities such as homeroom level contests, daily MS-TV announcements, motivational poster design, Academic Assembly roles, and the Success @ 6th orientation class.

Most of the teacher level leadership opportunity was demonstrated by an emphasis on collaboration efforts. The *Collaboration, Teamwork, and Alignment* and *Structure and Direction*

theme (Table 4.11) showed both grade level and subject level leadership opportunity for interested teachers. Responses in these two themes also described co-teaching, homeroom, and club leadership roles that were available to teachers. Additional teacher leadership roles emerged within the Success @ 6th orientation, grade level field trips, and the 8th grade Camp Mountain Run Leadership outing and were described in the *Collaboration and Alignment* theme (Table 4.14) and the *Student Program Enrichment* theme (Table 4.15).

In-house professional development and a host of the most prominent student involvement co-curriculars (e.g., Wallops Island, the Civil War Encampment, Class Advisors, and the Gettysburg Trip) revealed even more formal and informal staff leadership roles characterized within the *Academic Enhancement* theme (Table 4.15).

Leadership for Learning Dimension Analysis

Schools that function at the optimal level of the Leadership for Learning dimension of a Culture of Leadership use the school vision, mission, and core values to initiate actions and involve others. Furthermore, all members of the school community are actively involved in a continuous effort to improve the learning environment. To gauge the level of the Leadership for Learning found in the Initial Staff Culture Survey, the look-fors related to Leadership for Learning were applied to the responses. The discussion of the findings is organized by each look-for criteria (see Figure 3.5).

Vision, mission, and core value specific ideas, initiatives, and actions from all members—including students—that add value to the learning environment. The core values of respect, responsibility, and effort emerged in the 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Surveys. Core values were implicit within the 2006 Initial Staff Culture Survey and the 2007 and 2008 Mid-Year Feedback Surveys. However, responses in the *More Collaboration and*

Alignment theme (Table 4.12) and the *Student Enrichment and Empowerment* theme (Table 4.14) made explicit mention of respect, responsibility, and effort as shared core values. Additionally, the *Collaboration and Alignment* theme (Table 4.14) responses from the “continue doing” prompt specifically noted continuing “department meeting time for curriculum and school vision, mission, and core value alignment: A World Class Education...with the Rural Advantage.” This theme also noted the importance of reflecting on student feedback for the effectiveness of the Success @ 6th program and “developing fresh ideas for the mission of the program.”

Several student-related core value initiatives and actions that added value were described in the *Student Involvement and Celebrations* theme (Table 4.11), the *Structure and Direction* theme (Table 4.11), and the *Student Enrichment and Empowerment* theme (Table 4.14). The quarterly Academic Assemblies that exemplify student responsibility and effort were mentioned in ten different responses. The full first quarter sixth grade orientation to middle school program—Success @ 6th—embodies all three core values and was highlighted in eight teacher responses. Additional responses displayed the core value of respect with reference to building relationships, the supportive environment, individualized attention, and caring for one another. The core value effort was continually characterized within initiatives like the daily morning calisthenics, the homework club, grade and planner checks during homeroom, and the encouragement student involvement and participation. Many of the Student Council initiatives that connected to the shared core values emerged from the student audience. Spirit Days, Door Decorating Contests, Penny Wars, and Community Awareness and Stewardship activities serve as specifically highlighted student initiatives.

Attention to the identified and shared core values was not restricted to student actions that added value. Teachers shared in the core values as well. The *Collaboration, Teamwork, and*

Alignment theme (Table 4.11) responses from the “continue doing” prompt included “great communication and teamwork” (respect); “working toward common goals” (responsibility); and “strong support for each subject area” (effort) as examples. The *Student Enrichment and Empowerment* theme (Table 4.14) responses revealed teacher language with direct connection to the shared core values like: “allowing students freedom and trust” and “supporting individual social, moral, and academic needs” (respect); “providing data and scorekeeping at Academic Assemblies” (responsibility); and “having fun and structured activities to practice social skills, leadership skills, and age appropriate behaviors” (effort).

Excitement about change and risk taking as purposeful and necessary part of improvement and growth. The 2013 Mid-Year Feedback Survey themes showed some excitement about change and risk taking (i.e., co-teaching, cross-curricular work, and team building activities). However, the 2014 Mid-Year Feedback themes revealed a genuine enthusiasm and excitement for change and even pushed for more change. The *Inspiring and Motivational Actions* theme (Table 4.14) responses from the “continue doing” prompt showed a number of examples of the enthusiasm and excitement. Enthusiasm was evident in responses such as: “continue placing teachers in areas they have passion and interest;” “continue pushing it ‘out there’ with goals like creativity that spark passion;” “continue inspired leadership using leading philosophies...it’s helpful to know how our trajectory matches the standards set by cutting-edge organizations.”

Teachers offered their own change and risk taking ideas in the 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey. The *Academic Enhancement* and *Student Program Enrichment* themes (Table 4.15) from the “start doing” prompt responses were characterized by requests for “professional development related to the ambitious goals we set,” collaboration across the district in different subject areas,

creative field trips to “experience alternate energy and ‘rural advantage’ organisms,” and “creating more student-to-student interaction time.”

Changes and risk taking with regard to student discipline were less challenged in the 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey than in the 2013 Mid-Year Feedback Survey. In 2013, the *Student Discipline and Management* theme (Table 4.12) and the *Student Discipline* theme (Table 4.13) contained seventeen responses while the *Discipline and Student Management* theme (Table 4.15) and the *Student Discipline* theme (Table 4.16) from 2014 only contained eight responses.

Expressions and feelings of pride in the learning environment, accomplishments, and actions related to the vision, mission, and core values. The *Team Pride* theme (Table 4.11) responses from the “continue doing” prompt provided a notable connection to this look-for. Among the responses connected to the mission and core values were: “continue the commitment to the middle school model and work ethic;” “continue being a ‘family’ where people care for one another and help each other;” and “continue the excellent working environment in the middle school...dedicated to the success of students.” Within the *Student Involvement and Celebrations* theme (Table 4.11) the consistent mention of Student Council activities (e.g., Spirit Days, Penny Wars, Pie your Teacher, Door Decorating contests) displayed pride in student contribution. The high number of responses referencing the Academic Assemblies showed pride in the way the core values of responsibility and effort were promoted within the learning environment.

Two exceptional examples of the expression of pride in the core value of respect emerged within the *Student Enrichment and Empowerment* theme (Table 4.14). One response stated: “I love walking through the halls and seeing student designed motivation posters with our students, student work, art class projects, etc.” The second response stated: “continue caring about kids,

knowing how much they want us to ‘like’ them and recognizing the amount of influence we DO have on / with them.” An *Inspiring and Motivational Action* theme (Table 4.14) response highlighted pride in the core value of effort actions with the following: “continue the positive attitude and solution focus—no matter the challenge.”

Leadership Growth Dimension Analysis

Schools that function at the optimal level of the Leadership Growth dimension of a Culture of Leadership exhibit an effort to “grow” leaders across the school community by providing access to leadership roles. In addition, the school community focuses on the teaching, application, and practice of effective leadership principles. To gauge the level of Leadership Growth found in the Initial Staff Culture Survey, the look-fors related to Leadership Growth were applied to the responses. The discussion of the findings is organized by each look-for criteria (see Figure 3.6).

Leadership development; leadership formation; leadership facilitation; leadership application. Teacher leadership growth and opportunity showed in the prominence of collaboration, teamwork, and alignment themes in both the 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Surveys. The *Collaboration, Teamwork, and Alignment* theme (Table 4.11) responses from the “continue doing” prompt revealed significant teacher interest in leadership opportunity to develop common goals and align curriculum. The *More Collaboration and Alignment* theme (Table 4.12) responses from the “start doing” prompt contained leadership application language and teachers repeatedly requested additional opportunity to impact curriculum, core values, and school goals.

The leadership opportunity momentum continued through 2014 in the *Collaboration and Alignment* theme (Table 4.14) responses from the “start doing” prompt. Even greater evidence of

leadership application emerged from “start doing” prompt responses compiled in the *Academic Enhancement* and *Student Program Enrichment* themes (Table 4.15). The thirteen teacher responses in these two themes were characterized by leadership application within the detailed input, ideas, and suggestions for identified school improvement efforts.

Student leadership opportunity and application were also evident in the 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey theme responses. The 2014 Survey responses specifically addressed the Camp Mountain Run Leadership outing and the 8th grade leadership development program. The *Student Involvement and Celebrations* theme (Table 4.11) responses from the 2013 Mid-Year Feedback Survey contained a number of Student Council references and highlighted student led Student Council activities. The *Student Enrichment and Empowerment* theme (Table 4.14) responses from the “continue doing” prompt also revealed specific student leadership opportunities such as Student Council, MS-TV broadcasters, class officers, and club officers.

The “language” of leadership (vision, mission, and core values) utilized across the membership of the learning community. As previously noted, vision, mission, and core values were explicitly stated in the 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Surveys. Responses related to the core values of respect, responsibility and effort emerged both years. However, the 2014 Mid-Year Feedback themes of *Student Enrichment and Empowerment*, *Inspiring and Motivational Actions*, and *Collaboration and Alignment* (Table 4.14) from the “continue doing” prompt noted the core values of respect, responsibility, and effort and described actions and initiatives (e.g., student freedom and trust; high level student involvement; peer-to-peer congratulations at Academic Assemblies; student led assemblies; and Success @ 6th) connected to the language of leadership. The vision of “A World Class Education...with the Rural Advantage” was also stated in the *Inspiring and Motivational Actions* theme (Table 4.14).

Programs, activities, events, rituals, or traditions with leadership connections that are initiated, developed, and led by the members—including students. The strongest evidence of this look-for emerged in “continue doing” prompt responses from both the 2013 and the 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Surveys. The *Student Involvement and Celebrations* theme from 2013 (Table 4.11) described Student Council activities (led by students), Academic Assemblies (with peer-to-peer congratulations), Success @ 6th (orienting 6th graders to the vision, mission, and core values of the middle school) and daily MS-TV announcements (student led and delivered). The *Student Enrichment and Empowerment* theme from 2014 (Table 4.14) highlighted the same programs and activities and added language that described the high level of student involvement and teacher recognition how powerful student involvement had become. Responses like: “continue fun and structured activities to practice social skills and leadership skills....” and “continue with supporting individual needs of students—social needs, moral needs, and academic needs—holistic education,” revealed teacher recognition of the role of student involvement in leadership development.

Teacher leadership connections were also evident in the 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Surveys. The prominence of themes associated with teacher collaboration, teamwork, and alignment across the two years of Mid-Year Feedback Surveys showed how significantly teachers valued the opportunity to contribute to the vision, mission, and core values. Thirty responses emerged from collaboration, teamwork and alignment themes over the two years. The *Academic Enhancement* and *Student Program Enrichment* themes (Table 4.15) from the “start doing” prompt responses described actions, activities, programs, and tradition enhancements and enrichments that teachers wanted to both contribute to and lead. Responses such as “start a 6th grade field trip to the Elk Visitor Center to experience alternate energy and ‘rural advantage’

organisms,” and “start some type of 6th and 7th field trip that complements the hugely successful 8th grade Camp Mountain Run Leadership outing...something career based perhaps...to get them thinking about the world beyond the middle school walls,” revealed a direct connection between the school vision and what teachers had the desire to initiate. These teacher responses noted existing programs and tradition while looking for additional ways to lead more students toward the shared vision of “A World Class Education...with the Rural Advantage.”

2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey Dimension Summary

The Leadership Orientation dimension from the 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback surveys was exceptionally strong with a high degree of collaboration and teacher-student engagement. There was a notable increase in reciprocal teaching relationships and a greater degree of interdependence that included student involvement, learning results, and learner actions in comparison to the 2007 and 2008 Mid-Year Feedback and the 2006 Initial Staff Culture Survey. The Leveraging Leadership dimension advanced significantly since a shared and communicated vision, mission, and common core values emerged. Core values of respect, responsibility, and effort were made explicit within the theme responses. These core values were highlighted in the positive involvement of students, the strength-oriented focus between staff and students, and the prominence of staff collaboration. Meaningful relationships among the school community membership largely replaced the high degree of teacher control over student actions and interactions (i.e., discipline, accountability, and management) that was a strong presence in the 2007 and 2008 Mid-Year Feedback Surveys and the 2006 Initial Staff Culture Survey. Significant progress was evident toward the optimal collaborative, empowering, and strengths oriented school community characterized in this dimension.

Adding value with leadership action is the critical element of the Leadership for Learning dimension. In contrast to prior year survey data, a school vision, mission and core values of respect, responsibility and effort emerged in the 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Surveys. Therefore, value-added connections could be determined from the response themes. There was strong evidence of value-added leadership actions, improvement initiatives, and feelings of pride that supported the purposeful involvement of students, a focus on strengths, and emphasis on staff collaboration (e.g., department meetings, quarterly Academic Assemblies, Student Council activities, and Success @ Sixth). Finally, the Leadership Growth dimension requires attention to growing leaders and providing access to leadership roles. Leadership opportunity for teachers advanced to a great extent with the increased collaboration opportunity provided and there was a consistent plea by teachers for even more opportunity. However, the greatest advancement in this dimension was characterized by the high degree of student leadership involvement, development, and opportunity. Student Council, Class Officers, MS-TV announcements, and the Camp Mountain Run Leadership outing and follow-up, joined the Academic Assemblies and Success @ 6th program as intentional efforts to support student involvement and leadership development.

The 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey responses revealed significant evidence of positive impact in each of the four dimensions of the Culture of Leadership Framework.

Phase II: The Final Staff Culture Survey

Phase I of the school culture study included the Initial Staff Culture Survey from 2006 and the Mid-Year Feedback Surveys from 2007, 2008, 2013, and 2014. Phase II began with the Final Staff Culture Survey instrument issued in May of 2016. The open-ended questionnaire was distributed to participants via an email link that provided access to the online survey. Eligible participants included school staff who had been part of the St. Mary's Middle School personnel

for the full ten years and 24 district personnel fit the eligibility criteria. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Nineteen of the twenty-four eligible participants consented to participate and contributed personal reflections on the school culture change at the St. Marys Middle School. Participants responded to the following open-ended prompt:

Thinking about the past 10 years from 2006 to 2016 and your tenure at St. Marys Area Middle School, please comment on how and in what ways you have seen the school culture change. In crafting your response, please focus on not just the role of the faculty, but also the role of the students as you consider:

- How has the school culture changed?
- What have we (faculty, staff, and students) started doing that has impacted the culture?
- What have we (faculty, staff, and students) stopped doing that has impacted the culture?
- What is unique about the culture of SMAMS--for faculty, staff, and students--when compared to the cultures of other middle schools?

To analyze the narrative data, I utilized the general interpretive process of close reading to look for patterns of thinking and acting. One-hundred key statements were extracted and analyzed from the narrative responses. This analysis resulted in the seven themes (Table 4.17) that emerged from repeated passes through the narrative responses to the open-ended questionnaire of the Final Staff Culture Survey. To further analyze the narrative data, I made additional close reading passes through the seven themes and 100 key statements to apply the look-for criteria from each of the four dimensions of the Culture of Leadership Framework (Figure 2.15). During this analytical process I identified the appropriate dimension and precise

look-for criteria that corresponded to each key statement. Because of the richness of the key statements, many statements aligned with several look-for criteria.

Table 4.17 displays the seven themes and 100 key statements selected from the narrative responses. To aid in the presentation of these findings, each key statement is preceded with the abbreviation of its theme and followed by the dimension(s) of the Culture of Leadership Framework and the specific look-for criteria that aligned with the statement (see Figures 3.3 – 3.6). Each of the four dimensions are noted by a Roman numeral (*I, II, III, or IV*) and the look-for criteria are identified by numbers (*1, 2, 3, 4, or 5*) with both in italics. The dimension and look-for criteria notations are followed by an italicized and concise version of the look-for (e.g., *I.1 Collaboration; II.2 Meaningful Relationships; III.3 Pride—Core Values or IV.2 Language of Leadership*). As an example from Table 4.17 below, key statement FLL1 is followed by a parenthetical *I.1 Collaboration; I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions*. Accordingly, this means key statement FLL1 is aligned with Dimension I of the Culture of Leadership Framework (Leadership Orientation) and look-for criteria number 1 (Collaboration) as well as Dimension I and look-for criteria number 3.

Table 4.17. Key Statements from the Final Staff Culture Survey Prompt (*May 2016*)

Key Statements Theme 1: Focus on Learning and Learners

FLL1	Even though it often feels like there is no time to provide creativity and hands on opportunities, using a cross-curricular approach meets the many possibilities for students to generate and utilize what they learn. (<i>I.1 Collaboration; I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions</i>)
FLL2	There is ever more opportunity to raise the bar for each student by allowing them to be independent thinkers by asking questions that promote reflection, opinion, develop communication skills and evaluation of information providing relevance and internalization at all levels. (<i>I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; II.2 Meaningful Relationships—Core Values</i>)
FLL3	Students are more tech savvy. They are not afraid to apply opinion and relevance to their learning. (<i>I.2 High Level Engagement; I.4 Meaningful Involvement</i>)
FLL4	Anyone can approach the group to find answers, solve problems, and address glitches that may occur in grade level activities and skill attainment (<i>I.3 Learning</i>

Results—Learner Actions; II.3 Respectful Interaction—Roles & Responsibilities Blurred)

- FLL5 Tutors have impacted the ability of teachers to reach students and to fine tune and support students helping to improve skills where identified students fall behind. *(I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; II.3 Respectful Interaction—Differences)*
- FLL6 The writing and communication efforts of staff has developed students who are able to express themselves. *(I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions)*
- FLL7 While I do not want to discredit academics, I feel as though we used to stress that, and only that. I have seen teachers, including myself, coming to the realization that we need to educate the whole child, not just the math, or the science, or the reading part of the child. We are teaching them to be independent thinkers, and to be more aware of what is happening in the outside world. We stress compassion and empathy to an age of students who, by nature, can be very apathetic. *(I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; II.2 Meaningful Relationships; II.3 Respectful Interaction—Differences; III.1 Vision, Mission, Core Value Action; IV.1 Leadership Development)*
- FLL8 In a time when many districts are only placing importance on the "important" subjects, I feel we are stressing the importance of all subjects and how they can be related to each other, quite easily *(II.1 Common Language—Common Goals)*
- FLL9 We have continued to focus on education as a primary goal, but began making education more fun and celebrating achievements of all, no matter how small. Students are proud when they improve and strive to maintain this. *(I.2 High Level Engagement; I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; I.4 Abundance Mentality; III.3 Pride—Core Values)*
- FLL10 We have continued to attempt to understand our students on a personal level, and provide opportunities to succeed. We have started sharing information and including the classroom teachers in our attempts to care for the "whole child". *(I.1 Collaboration; II.2 Meaningful Relationships—Core Values)*
- FLL11 We celebrate successes and acknowledge areas for improvement. Our school is about starting each day with a clean slate and giving each other the opportunity to be the best version of ourselves that we can be. Mistakes can be opportunities to learn just as much as successes. *(I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; I.4 Abundance Mentality—Win-Win Thinking; II.3 Respectful Interaction—Differences)*
- FLL12 The staff has worked hard to make our lessons and classroom atmosphere positive and hands on, with students engaged and learning from bell to bell. I have found in my own room, that this works!! *(I.2 High Level Engagement)*
- FLL13 Our climate is now one of understanding that the students come first. Even though we as a staff are so much more busy, we are doing the extra things because we want to do it for the students. *(I.2 High Level Engagement; I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions)*
- FLL14 There are more clubs, more activities, and meeting that the kids have to do. We barter and trade with each other for the time that the students have. Even though the kids are busier they come to and leave school with smiles on their faces from day 1 through 180. *(I.2 High Level Engagement; I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; II.2 Meaningful Relationships)*

- FLL15 We need to continue to show the students that there is more to school than just the classroom. This starts with 6 grade orientation and telling the students about all the activities they can become involved with as long as their grades come first. *(I.2 High Level Engagement)*
- FLL16 This is unique to our school that we have so, so many things for our students to do. We are constantly busy doing something extra co-curricular. *(I.2 High Level Engagement)*
- FLL17 We show ourselves to the public time and time again though our involvement in the many causes that we support. With all the involvement and co-curricular activity, we still maintain high standards for excellence in the classroom. *(I.2 High Level Engagement; III.3 Pride—Core Values)*
- FLL18 We have continued to offer students so many different learning activities to be involved in that it is considered to be rare if a student is not involved in some additional school activity. This has led to an atmosphere that no one considers to be more hectic but rather one of the many positives of our "rural advantage" as a middle school. Kids buy in, faculty buys in, everyone wins!! *(I.2 High Level Engagement; I.4 Abundance Mentality—Win-Win Thinking; III.1 Vision—Added Value; III.3 Pride—Vision)*
- FLL19 Student success across all learning levels, through meaningful active instruction. *(I.2 High Level Engagement; I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; II.3 Respectful Interaction—Differences)*
- FLL20 The Principal created an Academic Assembly for each grade level honoring academic achievement, honor roll, and academic improvement. Students are recognized for their efforts in gaining academic success. This is at the forefront of our teachers' beliefs and they instill that belief in our students. We stopped treating academic shortfalls as a discipline infraction and put it in the category of achievement; punishment does not support academic success – nurturing does. *(I.2 High Level Engagement; I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; I.4 Abundance Mentality—Win-Win Thinking; II.1 Common Language—Common Goals; III.1 Vision, Mission, Core Values Initiatives and Actions; III.2 Excitement About Change)*
- FLL21 Dealing with the 'whole' child in a multimodal manner, addressing adolescent developmental issues and needs and providing appropriate supports where needed *(I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; II.2 Meaningful Relationships; II.3 Respectful Interaction—Differences)*
- FLL22 Our wrapping around of the sixth graders to welcome them-not scare the crap out of them and show them who is in charge, the focus on improvement, and treating everyone with respect. We have continued to be professionals, but with a much more consistent and pedagogically sound focus. *(I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; II.1 Common Language—Common Goals; II.2 Meaningful Relationships; II.3 Respectful Interactions—Differences; III.2 Excitement About Change)*

Key Statement Theme 2: Vision, Mission, and Core Values

- VMV1 We have 3 ideals that we expect our students to subscribe to: RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY and EFFORT. We preach these concepts to our students on a daily basis. We model our expectations, and we spend huge amounts of time

- explaining how to put them into practice. Our cultural language is built around them. It is what we expect. *(II.1 Common Language—Common Goals; IV.2 Language of Leadership)*
- VMV2 Every student can repeat our 3 ideals. *(II.1 Common Language—Common Goals; IV.2 Language of Leadership)*
- VMV3 The faculty and staff are no longer adversaries but work with each other toward common goals. *(I.1 Collaboration; II.1 Common Language—Common Goals)*
- VMV4 Some of the new things that we have begun in the last decade include having a common language. *(II.1 Common Language—Common Goals; IV.2 Language of Leadership)*
- VMV5 I like the motivational framed pictures of our students hanging on the walls, and the banner as they walk in the building. Both are visual representations of our Vision, Mission, and Core Values. While it might not seem like much, I do think that it promotes a sense of pride and accomplishment for students and faculty alike. *(I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; II.1 Common Language—Common Goals; II.4 Formal and Informal Leadership Opportunity; III.1 Vision, Mission, Core Value Initiative—Students; III.3 Pride—Vision, Mission, Core Values; IV.2 Language of Leadership; IV.3 Leadership Connections—Tradition)*
- VMV6 I feel as though we, as a faculty, have a more CLear definition of what our goals for our students are, and that those goals involve all subject areas. *(I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; II.1 Common Language—Common Goals)*
- VMV7 The terminology and dialogue used with the student body reflects some basic principles of respect, responsibility, and effort. In my experience, this is a more "goal-oriented" approach, with a focus on achieving. *(II.1 Common Language—Common Goals; IV.2 Language of Leadership)*
- VMV8 The emphasis on respect, responsibility, and effort has been a positive one for students and staff. *(II.1 Common Language—Common Goals; III.2 Excitement About Change; III.3 Pride—Core Values; IV.2 Language of Leadership)*
- VMV9 We now can focus even more of our energy on making our students better and continuing to create a culture of respect, responsibility, and effort for our school. *(I.5 Excitement About Possibility; II.1 Common Language—Common Goals; IV.2 Language of Leadership)*
- VMV10 Now there seems to be a common vision... and a desire to be on the same page. *(II.1 Common Language—Common Goals)*
- VMV11 When you walk into the building lobby a sign reads "Through these hallways walk the most passionate middle school teachers in the world". It is a bold statement, however, it is a statement believed by our leadership and every faculty member in the school. This statement written boldly and proudly for all to see suggests that we have made a difference, and our school community believes in what is happening here at our school. *(I.2 High Level Engagement; II.1 Common Language—Common Goals; III.1 Vision, Mission, Core Value Action; III.3 Pride—Core Values; IV.2 Language of Leadership; IV.3 Leadership Connections—Tradition)*
- VMV12 Our middle school culture has undergone positive changes in the past 10 years with the greatest change occurring because of three simple words Respect, Responsibility, and Effort. These three words are our foundation that binds us

together and is used in all situations in all spaces for everyone, students and adults, in our school community. We expect our students and adults to live up to these core values whether it is for meeting a deadline, communicating, disciplining, achieving academic success, recognizing differences, accepting our roles, or preparing for the future. *(I.2 High Level Engagement; II.1 Common Language—Common Goals; III.1 Vision, Mission, Core Value Actions; III.2 Excitement About Change; III.3 Pride—Core Values; IV.2 Language of Leadership; IV.3 Leadership Connections—Activities)*

VMV13 Respect, responsibility, and effort are the basis that we live by and are connected to in all aspects of our school life. These three words are the glue that holds us together and will continue to help move us ahead. *(I.5 Excitement About Possibility; II.1 Common Language—Common Goals; IV.2 Language of Leadership)*

VMV14 Playing by our rules of RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, EFFORT. This is applicable to students, colleagues, parents, administration, board members, and community. *(II.1 Common Language—Common Goals; II.2 Meaningful Relationships; IV.2 Language of Leadership)*

VMV15 I love the culture here, of respect, responsibility, and effort and the giving that we do here at the middle school. *(I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; II.1 Common Language—Common Goals; III.1 Vision, Mission, Core Value Action; III.3 Pride—Core Values; IV.2 Language of Leadership; IV.3 Leadership Connections—Programs)*

VMV16 Our new vision, “A world class education with the rural advantage” sounded great, but many of us doubted our rural advantage or how great we were professionally. Ten years later after helping to frame some of the giant steps we’ve taken, like eliminating high track science and aligning and refining the curriculum to one that makes sense and flows, I feel pride at how far we have come. From the changing our vision, the work of putting it into action has taken many small steps. *(I.5 Excitement About Possibility; II.1 Common Language—Common Goals; III.1 Vision, Mission, Core Value Actions; III.2 Excitement About Change; III.3 Pride—Vision; IV.2 Language of Leadership; IV.3 Leadership Connections—Programs)*

VMV17 Students seem to take much more responsibility for their actions. They all truly understand respect, responsibility, and effort *(I.2 High Level Engagement; I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; II.1 Common Language and Common Goals; III. 3 Pride—Core Values; IV.2 Language of Leadership)*

Key Statement Theme 3: Teamwork, Collaboration, and Professional Growth

TCP1 We as staff and faculty have been pressed to work as a unified team across the board. Departmental meetings and planning have helped to direct lessons and outcomes. *(I.1 Collaboration; II.2 Meaningful Relationships; II.4 Leadership Opportunity; III.2 Excitement About Change; IV.1 Leadership Application)*

TCP2 Faculty and staff pull together to address new ideas, outcomes, common core requirements, etc. and pull resources that can benefit all who need support *(I.1 Collaboration; I.2 High Level Engagement; I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; II.4 Leadership Application; III.2 Excitement About Change; III.3 Pride—Mission; IV.3 Leadership Connections—Programs)*

- TCP3 We are a team. We are interested in best efforts and support each other's efforts. We mentor each other when in need. We are a family. *(I.1 Collaboration and Teamwork; I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; I.4 Abundance Mentality – Mutual Benefit; II.2 Meaningful Relationships; II.4 Leadership Opportunity; III.3 Pride—Mission; IV.1 Leadership Application)*
- TCP4 What the faculty, staff, and students have continued doing that has impacted the culture is work together. The staff is a unified group that works together, helping each other which in turn benefits the staff themselves and ultimately the students. Everyone is willing to lend a helping hand to all faculty, staff and the students. *(I.1 Collaboration and Teamwork; I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; I.4 Abundance Mentality—Mutual Benefit; II.2 Meaningful Relationships; II.4 Leadership Opportunity; III.3 Pride—Mission; IV.1 Leadership Application)*
- TCP5 Common planning times for departments and grade levels have been established. *(II.4 Leadership Opportunity; III.1 Vision, Mission, Core Value Initiative; IV.3 Leadership Connections—Activities)*
- TCP6 Teachers have been permitted to attend seminars and conventions to improve their skills and attitudes. *(I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; III.1 Vision, Mission, Core Value Action; IV.1 Leadership Development)*
- TCP7 The faculty and staff are also encouraged to attend conferences to figure out what some of the best educators are doing across the country. *(I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; III.1 Vision, Mission, Core Value Action; IV.1 Leadership Development)*
- TCP8 Building level In-service and Act 80 days have been a great opportunity to help strengthen the connection between the subjects. The increase in technology, as well as having a technology coach available has also had a positive affect in this area. *(I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; I.4 Abundance Mentality—Mutual Benefit; III.1 Vision, Mission, Core Values Actions; III.2 Excitement About Change)*
- TCP9 I see teamwork among my colleagues that is not always present in other middle schools, and staff is included as part of the team. *(I.1 Collaboration and Teamwork; III.3 Pride—Core Values)*
- TCP10 There are many faculty collaboration sessions and a desire to be on the same page. *(I.1 Collaboration; II.1 Common Language—Common Goals; II.4 Leadership Opportunity)*
- TCP11 I have never worked in a place that had more collaboration or faculty/staff rapport. *(I.1 Collaboration; II.2 Meaningful Relationships; III.3 Pride—Core Values)*
- TCP12 With trust as a basis, students and adults accept challenges and create solutions together; thus, improving our cultural ties. *(I.1 Collaboration; I.2 High Level Engagement—Student Inclusion; I.3 Abundance Mentality—Mutual Benefit; II.2 Meaningful Relationships; II.4 Leadership Opportunity; III.1 Vision, Mission, Core Value Initiatives and Actions)*
- TCP13 Shared decision making, collaborative environment, shared power, partnerships, and goals. *(I.1 Collaboration; I.2 High Level Engagement; I.3 Abundance Mentality—Mutual Benefit; II.1 Common Language—Common Goals; II.4 Leadership Opportunity; IV.3 Leadership Connections--Routines)*

- TCP14 The creation of common planning time. *(I.1 Collaboration; III.1 Vision, Mission, Core Value Actions; IV.1 Leadership Application)*
- TCP15 The forming of us into a learning community maximizing our rural advantages has only begun the never-ending process of change and I am glad to have been part of its ever continuing evolution. *(I.1 Collaboration; II.2 Meaningful Relationships; I.5 Excitement About Possibility; II.1 Common Language—Common Goals; III.1 Vision, Mission, Core Value Actions; III.2 Excitement About Change; III.3 Pride—Mission; IV.3 Leadership Connections—Routines)*
- TCP16 The main thing that our school started doing is taking professional development seriously. We've had many teacher groups attend conferences together which allowed us to see what great things other teachers are doing. Also, having small groups of teachers attend conferences together facilitated positive relationships among faculty and further opened the doors to collaboration. *(I.1 Collaboration; I.2 High Level Engagement—Teachers; I.4 Abundance Mentality—Mutual Benefit; II.2 Meaningful Relationships; III.1 Vision, Mission, Core Value Actions; IV.1 Leadership Development)*
- TCP17 We know each other well, respect each other's teaching style, and collaborate frequently. *(I.1 Collaboration; II.2 Meaningful Relationships; II.3 Respectful Interactions; III.3 Pride—Core Value Actions)*
- TCP18 One of the things that we started to do to change the culture in the last ten years is that we have collaborated with one another much more. We have been required to work with our department and meet with our department. We had to get out of our own "little box." We have been asked over and over to share our practices with other members of the faculty. It has become more than just do your job well. It is now help others to do their job well. *(I.1 Collaboration; I.2 High Level Engagement—Teachers; I.4 Abundance Mentality—Mutual Benefit; II.4 Formal and Informal Leadership Opportunity; III.1 Vision, Mission, Core Value Actions; IV.1 Leadership Application and Development)*

Key Statement Theme 4: Relationships with Care and Support

- RCS1 What makes our school unique is that we know and care about our students and each other in a way that feels very much like a family. *(II.2 Meaningful Relationships; III.3 Pride—Core Values)*
- RCS2 What we do differently is care about each other and continue to strive for self-betterment and allow those around us to do the same. *(II.2 Meaningful Relationships; III.3 Excitement About Change)*
- RCS3 Unbelievable support for each other both professionally and personally. Definitely a close-knit team of professionals with the utmost respect for each other and their specific content area. *(II.2 Meaningful Relationships; II.3 Respectful Interactions; III.3 Pride—Core Values)*
- RCS4 The culture has changed dramatically to one of respect, nurturing and caring. There is a feeling of trust between all parties. *(II.2 Meaningful Relationships; II.3 Respectful Interactions; III.2 Excitement About Change; III.3 Pride—Core Values)*
- RCS5 As a staff, we have continued to be supportive of each other and the time fellow colleagues need to work with different students. *(I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; II.2 Meaningful Relationships; II.3 Respectful Interactions)*

- RCS6 I find it hard to imagine that there are middle schools out there with a closer staff. Everyone works hard and expects the most from each other each day. We are unconditionally supportive of each other both in and out of school. Whenever a fellow colleague is going through tough times outside of school, everyone pulls together to do something kind and let them know just how much we care. Truly an unbelievable place to work in and be a part of. *(II.2 Meaningful Relationships; II.3 Respectful Interactions; III.2 Excitement About Change; III.3 Pride—Core Values; IV.3 Leadership Connections—Rituals and Traditions)*
- RCS7 Instead of a faculty, I feel as if we are more of a family of teachers. Respect for one another's teaching philosophy, the Effort of every teacher, and the sense of Responsibility cannot be matched. *(II.2 Meaningful Relationships; II.3 Respectful Interactions; III.3 Pride—Core Values; IV.2 Language of Leadership—Core Values)*
- RCS8 Our school culture has become much more cohesive over the past decade. We "think & act" as a team, supporting each other whenever needed. It does not matter if the situation needs a discussion or action, we as individuals know we can find support here in our building. *(II.2 Meaningful Relationships; II.3 Respectful Interactions; III.2 Excitement About Change; III.3 Pride—Core Values; IV.2 Language of Leadership—Core Values)*
- RCS9 The supportive culture is evident in the 'past' students who visit frequently, sharing good memories of their middle school years. Humor and collegiality make it a great place to 'go to school' as a student or to 'come to work' as an educator! *(I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; II.2 Meaningful Relationships; II.3 Respectful Interactions; III.3 Pride—Core Values)*
- RCS10 I believe our school is unique because our faculty acts as a family. We model positive attitudes and relationships for the students, and they respond well to that sincerity. *(I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; II.2 Meaningful Relationships; II.3 Respectful Interactions; III.3 Pride—Core Values)*
- RCS11 I have never been a part of a faculty that is more like a family since I have joined SMAMS. I know if I need anything I can go to just about anyone in this building without batting an eye, and to me, that means a lot. I trust my coworkers and know they trust me and truly care about my life, family, and me as a person. *(II.2 Meaningful Relationships; II.3 Respectful Interactions; III.3 Pride—Core Values)*
- RCS12 The culture that I am talking about is one of family. Families don't always agree with one another but they are always there to support one another. *(II.2 Meaningful Relationships; II.3 Respectful Interactions; III.3 Pride—Core Values)*
- RCS13 I feel this family culture has led to a much better school environment for our students. I truly believe that the students in general follow the leadership of the adults in the building. When the faculty and staff act as family it allows the students to model this culture. Families are not perfect, but they protect and support and give a sense of belonging. I believe that because of the family atmosphere that has been developed that our most vulnerable students and faculty have had the opportunity to succeed at a higher rate. They trust that they will receive the support found in a family setting. It takes a long time to build a family and it has been fun to be part of the culture development at the middle school. *(I.3*

Learning Results—Learner Actions; II.2 Meaningful Relationships; II.3 Respectful Interactions; III.3 Pride—Core Values)

RCS14 My teacher colleague passion for their profession as well as their genuine love and concern for their students makes me feel as though this is a second family. *(I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; II.2 Meaningful Relationships; III.3 Pride—Core Values)*

RCS15 Students seem to be much more supportive and positive with each other. Students want to help and they want to help each other. The overall kindness of the students is the most noticeable to me personally. *(I.2 High Level Engagement – Students; I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; II.2 Meaningful Relationships; II.3 Respectful Interactions; III.3 Pride—Core Values)*

Key Statement Theme 5: Leadership Emphasis

LE1 Students are joined and encouraged to become one through the Success at Six which then carries into 7th and 8th grade with team reference to be the best and encourage the best of each other. *(I. Collaboration – Students; I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; II.2 Meaningful Relationships; II.3 Respectful Interactions; III.1 Vision, Mission, Core Value Initiative; III.3 Pride—Core Values; IV.2 Language of Leadership; IV.3 Leadership Connections—Programs)*

LE2 We have provided numerous opportunities for students to get excited about education, show empathy for each other, and take on a leadership role. *(I.2 High Level Engagement – Students; I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; II.2 Meaningful Relationships; II.3 Respectful Interactions; II.4 Leadership Opportunity; IV.3 Leadership Connections—Programs, Activities, Events, Rituals, and Traditions)*

LE3 Assemblies for the students that emphasize academics and leadership have been established as well. We have strengthened involvement in student government and community service programs. We have continued stressing academics and developed an enhanced version of the 8th grade Camp Mountain Run outing to emphasize leadership their role as school leaders. *(I.2 High Level Engagement – Students; I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; II.4 Leadership Opportunity; III.1 Vision, Mission, Core Value Initiatives; IV.1 Leadership Development; IV.3 Leadership Connections—Programs, Activities, Events, Rituals, and Traditions)*

LE4 In the past 10 years, I have seen our students begin to take more of a leadership role within the building. There is more of a focus on "the bigger picture" so to speak. *(I.2 High Level Engagement—Students; I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; II.4 Leadership Opportunity; IV.1 Leadership Development)*

LE5 There is a focus on team-building within each grade level with increased responsibility as role models and leaders for the older students. *(I.2 High Level Engagement – Students; I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; II.4 Meaningful Relationships; IV.1 Leadership Development; IV.3 Leadership Connections—Programs, Activities, Events, Rituals, and Traditions)*

LE6 The culture has changed from a more controlled, strict, or military type environment to a "culture of trust" whereby high expectations and personal leadership guide decision making as opposed to assuming the worst will happen if the reigns are loosened. *(I.4 Abundance Mentality—Meaningful Involvement; II.2*

- Meaningful Relationships; II.4 Leadership Opportunity; IV.2 Language of Leadership)*
- LE7 Because of our core values we, students and adults, are able to move forward in a variety of ways including problem solving, academic achievement, and leadership roles. *(I.4 Abundance Mentality—Meaningful Involvement; II.4 Leadership Opportunity; III.1 Vision, Mission, Core Value Actions; IV.2 Language of Leadership)*
- LE8 Our culture also gained positive momentum when Principal Wortman expected and supported 8th grade students to accept leadership roles as class officers, student government positions, and within other activities. Teachers opened the doors to many leadership roles for students. 8th grade leadership roles were the catalyst which created opportunities for the 7th and 6th grade students to emulate and become leaders for their classes and clubs. Creating a school culture of adults and students who are leaders, academically oriented, and socially respectable toward others have truly enhanced our school culture and elevated our school community both academically and socially. One person cannot do this alone. The principal leads this goal and through his actions gets the teachers on board who in turn gets the students on board and then the culture begins to grow in a positive direction *(I.1 Collaboration; I.2 High Level Engagement; I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; I.4 Abundance Mentality--Meaningful Involvement; II.2 Meaningful Relationships; II.4 Leadership Opportunity; III.1 Vision, Mission, Core Value Initiatives; III.2 Excitement About Change; III.3 Pride—Vision, Mission, Core Value Actions; IV.1 Leadership Development; IV.2 Language of Leadership; IV.3 Leadership Connections—Programs, Activities, Traditions)*
- LE9 Now we are nearly 100% committed to being student focused with an eye to promoting our local and regional advantages. Leading by example and growing student leaders is much more effective than leading by force and fear from the top. *(I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; II.1 Common Language—Common Goals; III.2 Excitement About Change; III.3 Pride—Vision, Mission, Core Values; IV.1 Leadership Development; IV.2 Language of Leadership)*
- LE10 As the Student Council Advisor I went from taking on a new group that only had a few ideas to add to the school, to becoming one of our biggest clubs. Student Council teaches students to be better people, to give back, and to put others first all the while keeping school spirit and community alive—to be leaders. Four years ago we began the "Day of Giving" to show students all we have accomplished as a team to the giving back aspect. I have been overwhelmed and impressed by our students' way of coming together for the common good. *(I.2 High Level Engagement; I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; I.4 Abundance Mentality—Meaningful Involvement; II.2 Meaningful Relationships; II.4 Leadership Opportunity; III.1 Vision, Mission, Core Value Initiatives; III.3 Pride—Vision, Mission, and Core Value Actions; IV.1 Leadership Development; IV.2 Language of Leadership; IV.3 Leadership Connections—Programs, Activities, Traditions)*
- LE11 I have found over the course of my twenty years in the teaching profession that the leadership within the school building plays a large role in the overall effectiveness of the school operating at a high level. The leadership of the

Principal, the Dean of students and the office staff becomes more contagious with the faculty which trickles down to the student body. This leadership has led to an outstanding culture within the middle school. *(I.2 High Level Engagement; II.4 Leadership Opportunity; III.3 Pride—Core Values; IV.1 Leadership Facilitation; IV.3 Leadership Connections)*

Key Statement Theme 6: Student Discipline Evolution

- SDE1 We have stopped mixing academic consequences with behavioral consequences. *(I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; II.3 Respectful Interactions; III.1 Vision, Mission, Core Value Actions)*
- SDE2 The atmosphere is one of mutual respect—not without problems of course. *(II.3 Respectful Interactions; III.1 Vision, Mission, Core Value Actions)*
- SDE3 The culture has changed at the school from a place where everyone got yelled at all of the time to a place where people and students actually talk to one another and try to figure things out. Not everything is completely perfect but everyone seems to do their best to make students learn from their mistakes. *(I.1 Collaboration; I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; II.3 Respectful Interactions; III.1 Vision, Mission, Core Value Actions; III.3 Pride—Core Values)*
- SDE4 I felt before students were written up for anything and everything. This did not really help out the situation at all. *(II.3 Respectful Interactions)*
- SDE5 It is difficult to write about our school 10 years ago without understanding the previous 5 or 6 years. Those years were characterized by an attempt of the faculty to gain control over the behavior of our students. It was a time of punishment, harshness, discipline referrals and suspensions. Ten years ago our school culture still reflected a "we versus them" mentality. Every offense, even minor ones (dress code, chewing gum, using the wrong stairway, going to lockers during change of class, etc.) were acted upon. The faculty was not going to allow the "animals to run the zoo." Kids often showed a lack of respect for teachers, staff and each other. Some of the things we stopped doing was yelling, stressing punishment and consequences. Ten years ago each class was brought to the cafeteria for a 30 minute tirade on the rules and punishments; no longer. The "carrot/stick" approach has diminished. In and out of school suspensions hardly ever occur. We have stopped "adaptive" classes which isolated low achieving students. *(I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; II.2 Meaningful Relationships; II.3 Respectful Interaction; III.1 Vision, Mission, Core Value Initiatives; III.2 Excitement About Change)*
- SDE6 The culture has changed dramatically to one of respect, nurturing and caring. Gum chewing, going to lockers between classes, cell phones, etc. are today all permitted and there are no problems as a result. There are very few discipline referrals. Teachers feel supported by administrators and are not on a limb. *(I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions;; II.3 Respectful Interaction; III.1 Vision, Mission, Core Values Initiatives; III.3 Pride—Core Values)*
- SDE7 Putting discipline into the hands of the teachers, and requiring them to reach out to parents and make phone calls, and meet with students has created a better environment, in the classrooms of those staff who choose to participate. *(I.1 Excitement About Possibility; II.1 Common Language—Common Goals; III.1 Vision, Mission, Core Value Initiative)*

- SDE8 The main thing that we stopped doing is treating laziness as a discipline problem. Students who give poor effort or who have little interest in improving their academic standing are not considered discipline problems. This has been a very positive step in improving how teachers view students and how students view school. *(I.3 Learning Results—Learner Actions; I.5 Excitement About Possibility; II.3 Respectful Interaction; III.1 Vision, Mission Core Value Initiative; III.3 Pride—Core Values)*
- SDE9 What the faculty has stopped doing that has impacted the culture of the students is implementing discipline for students. I do not feel that administration backs the teachers as much as they did in earlier years when it comes to disciplining a student.
- SDE10 The only problem I see here is teacher frustration with discipline.
- SDE11 I feel that the students are well behaved as a result of more discipline being handled in the classroom. I also feel that faculty morale is lower than before for that same reason.

Key Statement Theme 7: Energy for the Future

- EF1 We have been on a continuous climb for getting the best and making the best with what we have. *(I.5 Excitement About Possibility; III.2 Excitement About Change; III.3 Pride—Vision, Mission, Core Values)*
- EF2 Faculty are energetic and open to new forms of instruction and technology enhancement. *(III.2 Excitement About Change)*
- EF3 The principal is a strong proponent of not becoming stagnant and inspires and reflects with teachers. He also allows and supports nonconventional teaching strategies and techniques. He is very open to change. All of which interests and excites and led to our cultural change *(I.5 Excitement About Possibility; III.2 Excitement About Change; III.3 Pride—Vision, Mission, Core Values)*
- EF4 We are thinking and solving problems by shifting our paradigm. Being encouraged by a true leader in education to look at different options, to network, to "think outside the box", opening our doors and our minds to possibilities of success through alternate methods, and ultimately creating a positive school climate. We have stopped insisting on doing things "the way we have always done it", regardless of efficacy. *(I.1 Collaboration; I.5 Excitement About Possibility; III.2 Excitement About Change; III.3 Pride—Vision, Mission, Core Values)*
- EF5 There has been a movement to get materials and technology into the hands of teachers and students. That has helped very much and hopefully will continue to upgrade. *(I.5 Excitement About Possibility; III.2 Excitement About Change; III.3 Pride—Vision, Mission, Core Values)*
- EF6 What the faculty, staff and students started doing that has impacted the culture is implementing technology in so many new and beneficial ways for the faculty and students. Google classroom. Surfaces for the classroom. Kahoot. 3D printer. Coding. Morning announcement studio...just to name a few. *(I.5 Excitement About Possibility; III.2 Excitement About Change; III.3 Pride—Vision, Mission, Core Values)*

Applying Dimensions of the Culture of Leadership to the Final Staff Survey

Application of the Culture of Leadership Framework to the key statements from the Final Staff Culture Survey of May 2016 allowed an analysis of the nineteen participant narratives with regard to vision, mission, and core values; the three levels of culture; and the four dimensions of the Culture of Leadership Framework (Figure 2.15). The analysis of the Final Staff Culture Survey themes displayed in Table 4.17 resulted from the application of each of the four quadrant dimensions in turn: I. Leadership Orientation, II. Leveraging Leadership, III. Leadership for Learning, and IV. Leadership Growth.

Due to the richness of the participant narratives from the Final Staff Culture Survey, many of the 100 key statements aligned with more than one dimension of the Culture of Leadership Framework. Table 4.18 displays the alignment of the 100 key statements across the dimensions.

Table 4.18. The Alignment of the 100 Key Statements from the Final Staff Culture Survey with the Four Dimensions of the Culture of Leadership Framework

Dimension of a Culture of Leadership Framework	Number of the 100 Key Statements in Alignment
Dimension I: Leadership Orientation	76
Dimension II: Leveraging Leadership	76
Dimension III: Leadership for Learning	63
Dimension IV: Leadership Growth	41

The analysis of the statements by dimension, revealed the strength and prominence of both Dimension I: Leadership Orientation (76 key statements) and Dimension II: Leveraging Leadership (76 key statements). It is not surprising that more of the key statements aligned with these two dimensions. Clearly, Leadership Orientation—the actions and attitudes that characterize the degree of leadership present in the membership—is important. The style of leadership, communication, and processes relate strongly to how the members conduct business

resulting in the Leveraging Leadership dimension of the Culture of Leadership being equally as strong (76 key statements).

At the lower end of the alignment of the key statements with the four Dimensions of the Culture of Leadership Framework, 41 of the 100 key statements aligned with Dimension IV: Leadership Growth. Though Leadership Growth was found to have the smallest number of aligned key statements (41), it is important to note that almost half of the key statements described the leadership development of the members of the school community. Finally, 63 of the 100 key statements aligned with Dimension III: Leadership for Learning. This dimension focuses on the merit and contribution of the leadership actions taken by the members of the school community. The relative strengths of the four dimensions of the Culture of Leadership told only part of the story and warranted a more detailed analysis within each dimension.

What follows in Tables 4.19 – 4.22 is a closer look at how the 100 key statements from the Final Staff Culture Survey aligned with the respective look-for criteria from each of the four dimensions of the Culture of Leadership Framework. Again, it is important to note that because of the richness of the statements themselves, many of the statements aligned with more than one look-for criteria within each dimension.

Analysis and Findings from Dimension I: Leadership Orientation

Table 4.19 displays the alignment of the 76 key statements from Dimension I: Leadership Orientation of the Culture of Leadership Framework with the look-for criteria that characterize the dimension to further highlight the story told by the narratives from the Final Staff Culture Survey. It appears that the growth of leadership actions and attitudes within the school community membership has been steady across the ten years highlighted in this study. The 100 key statements from the 2016 Final Staff Culture Survey were most tightly aligned with look-for

criteria from Dimension I making it the most prominent of the four dimensions of the Culture of Leadership Framework. Following is the look-for breakout from the 76 key statements aligned with Dimension I: Leadership Orientation (Table 4.19) and an analysis of the growth and progress the data show from the Initial Staff Culture Survey of 2006 to the Final Staff Culture Survey of 2016.

Table 4.19. Criterial Analysis of 76 Key Statements from the Final Staff Culture Survey that Aligned with Dimension I: Leadership Orientation

Description of Dimension I: Leadership Orientation	
The actions and attitudes that characterize the degree of leadership present in the members of the school community.	
Look For:	Key Statements Aligned
1. Collaboration and teamwork: principal – teacher; teacher – teacher; teacher – student; student – teacher: student – student. <i>(Collaboration and Teamwork)</i>	21 of 76
2. High levels of engagement from teachers, students, and administration where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. <i>(High-Level Engagement)</i>	27 of 76
3. A focus on learning results and learner actions versus teaching strategies and teacher actions. <i>(Learning Results and Learner Actions)</i>	46 of 76
4. An “abundance mentality” where there is effort to create meaningful involvement for everyone by way of a mutual benefit perspective and Win-Win thinking. <i>(Mutual Benefit—Win-Win Thinking)</i>	15 of 76
5. Excitement about what is possible versus settling for the status quo or a fear of failure. <i>(Excitement about Possibility)</i>	11 of 76

Table 4.19 data represents a great deal of growth when compared to the Initial Staff Culture Survey of 2006 that found the Leadership Orientation Dimension to be relatively weak and characterized by only a teacher-to-teacher focus and a lack of high-level interdependence and reciprocal teaching that constitutes the ideal level of this Dimension.

Initial Staff Culture Survey of 2006 and Dimension I: Leadership Orientation

The 2006 Initial Staff Culture response themes of *Faculty Togetherness*, *Us versus Them Bonding*, and *Students as Receivers* showed only minimal evidence of the look-for criteria associated with the Leadership Orientation Dimension. Staff responses from the *Us versus Them Bonding* theme (Table 4.1) best displayed the root of the faculty's sense of team and the heavy reliance on one another. Staff responses such as "We are innovators in a repressive system...imagine what we could do with forward thinking" (UT1); "past principals...with no sense of reality of 'survival'...brought this building to its knees" (UT5) captured the inward looking perspective of staff at the outset of this study.

Mid-Year Feedback Surveys of 2007 and 2008 and Dimension I: Leadership Orientation

Nonetheless, progress within Dimension I: Leadership Orientation was noted in the 2007 and 2008 Mid-Year Feedback Survey. A prime example of staff desire for movement toward the Leadership Orientation Dimension was captured in the 2007 Mid-Year Feedback Survey theme of *Collaboration, Time, Motivation* and the staff response: "Start more department time together—not just grade level...need on the same page" (see Table 4.6, response CTM2). More evidence of the Leadership Orientation Dimension growth emerged in the Mid-Year Feedback Survey of 2008. The *Collaboration and Resource Sharing* theme (Table 4.8), the *Failing Student Help* theme (Table 4.9), and *Academic Improvements* theme (Table 4.9) from 2008 aligned with Leadership Orientation Dimension look-for criteria related to collaboration, learning results, and learner engagement. Staff responses from the 2008 Mid-Year Feedback Survey like the following are exemplary of progress in the Leadership Orientation Dimension: "Continue allowing time for departmental meetings on a routine schedule as well as during assemblies, etc." (see Table 4.8, response CRS3); "Start study skills and organizational

strategies...more involvement between students and guidance...more proactive action with failing and frequent absent students” (see Table 4.9, responses FSH1, FSH3, FSH4); and “Start mixing all reading levels together for scheduling now that Literature is a full year course. More effective student grouping could occur” (see Table 4.9, response AI4).

Mid-Year Feedback Surveys of 2013 and 2014 and Dimension I: Leadership Orientation

What’s more, a high degree of collaboration and teacher-student engagement characterized the 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey analysis with identifiable progress made in the Leadership Orientation Dimension. The Leadership Orientation Dimension look-for criteria of reciprocal teaching relationships and a greater degree of interdependence that included student involvement, learning results, and learner actions was revealed in both 2013 and 2014 data. Sixteen different staff responses populated the *Student Involvement and Celebrations* theme from the 2013 Mid-Year Feedback Survey and another 14 responses from staff comprised the *Collaboration, Teamwork, and Alignment* theme (Table 4.11). The Leadership Orientation Dimension look-for criteria includes meaningful involvement, student engagement, collaboration, and excitement about what is possible versus settling for the status quo. The high volume of staff responses (30) from the 2013 Mid-Year Feedback Survey in these two themes that so closely aligned with the look-for criteria of the Leadership Orientation Dimension showed the growth and strong progress made from the weak alignment of the culture to Leadership Orientation Dimension at the start of the study in 2006. Along with the noted progress, the *More Collaboration and Alignment* theme responses (Table 4.12) can be interpreted as directly aligned with an attitude of excitement about what is possible as opposed to settling for the status quo or a fear of failure (see look-for criterion 5, Table 4.19). For example, staff responses from Mid-Year Feedback Survey 2013 like, “Start working for more consistency

among the staff to help students with our core values of Respect, Responsibility, and Effort”; “Start getting the middle school working with elementary schools as a peer mentoring program”; and “Start allowing more time for collaboration on district-wide inservice days” (see Table 4.12, responses MCA2, MCA4, MCA4) were indicative of the desire for even more Leadership Orientation progress.

The 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey response themes of *Student Enrichment and Empowerment, Inspiring and Motivational Actions, and Collaboration and Alignment* (Table 4.14) revealed further strengthening of the Leadership Orientation Dimension of the Culture of Leadership Framework. A statement from the 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey staff response, “Continue allowing students freedom and trust; continue the creativity and level of student involvement in the morning MS-TV announcements; and continue the schoolwide morning calisthenics” (see Table 4.14, response SEE2), revealed a strong Leadership Orientation Dimension alignment and stood in stark contrast to a statement from the 2006 Initial Staff Culture Survey: “we need to change the disrespectful attitude that quite a few of the students seem to have toward teachers or others in positions of authority” (see Table 4.2, response AA3). The contrast in responses illustrates the look-for criteria of engagement and meaningful that frames the Leadership Orientation Dimension. Clearly, by 2014, a stronger leadership orientation had largely replaced the enforcement and control orientation from 2006.

Additional responses from the 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey aligned with specific look-for criteria from the Leadership Orientation Dimension and provided evidence of a high degree of progress in the Culture of Leadership Framework. Staff responses focused heavily on *Learning Results and Learner Actions* (see Look-For criterion 3, Table 4.19) and *High-Level Engagement* (see Look-For criterion 2, Table 4.19). For example, the following statement

strongly aligned with of *Learning Results and Learner Actions* (see Look-For criterion 3, Table 4.19) “This building is amazing with supporting individual needs of students—social needs, moral needs, AND academic needs. Holistic education!” (see Table 4.14, response SEE13). *High-Level Engagement* (see Look-For criterion 2, Table 4.19) look-for criteria was exemplified in statements such as, “Continue the Success @ Sixth orientation program—it really does help get 6th graders adjusted to the middle school”; “continue student designed motivation posters involving photos of our own students”; “continue keeping kids involved in activities and reminding kids to continue to step up with our core values of Respect, Responsibility, and Effort”; “continue band, chorus, and student led assemblies”; and “continue student council direction and their leadership of student involvement in ‘good’ activities” (see Table 4.14).

Final Staff Culture Survey of 2016 and Dimension I: Leadership Orientation

Finally, the alignment of 46 different key statements with *Learning Results and Learner Actions* (see Look-For criterion 3, Table 4.19) points to just how strong the Leadership Orientation dimension was in May, 2016 (See Final Staff Culture Survey, Table 4.17). The *Learner Results and Learner Actions* look-for was almost two times greater than the remaining four look-fors combined within the Leadership Orientation Dimension and revealed an emphatic change from the near exclusive focus on teacher strategies and teacher actions from ten years earlier. In sharp contrast to the 2006 Initial Staff culture survey, where the staff focused primarily inward and on one another, key statements from the 2016 Final Staff Culture Survey illustrate the progress made:

While I do not want to discredit academics, I feel as though we used to stress that, and only that. I have seen teachers, including myself, coming to the realization that we need to educate the whole child, not just the math, or the science, or the reading part of the child. We are teaching them to be independent thinkers, and to be more aware of what is happening in the outside world. We stress compassion

and empathy to an age of students who, by nature, can be very apathetic (see Table 4.17, key statement FLL7).

We have continued to offer students so many different learning activities to be involved in that it is considered to be rare if a student is not involved in some additional school activity. This has led to an atmosphere that no one considers to be more hectic but rather one of the many positives of our "rural advantage" as a middle school. Kids buy in, faculty buys in, everyone wins!! (see Table 4.17, key statement FLL18).

Our wrapping around of the sixth graders to welcome them—not scare the crap out of them—and show them who is in charge, the focus on improvement, and treating everyone with respect. We have continued to be professionals, but with a much more consistent and pedagogically sound focus. (see Table 4.17, key statement FLL22)

The strength of the Leadership Orientation Dimension of the Culture of Leadership Framework was also revealed in the 27 key statements that aligned with *High-Level Engagement* (see look-for criterion 2, Table 4.19) and the 21 key statements aligned with *Collaboration and Teamwork* (see Look-for criterion 1, Table 4.19). These two look-for criteria were also perceived as strengths in the 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback but the collaboration and engagement in the key statements from the 2016 Final Staff Culture Survey included a notable extension to student-teacher and student-student collaborative efforts. For example, one key statement from the 2016 Final Staff Culture Survey characterized both *High-Level Engagement* and *Collaboration and Teamwork* as follows: “With trust as a basis, students and adults accept challenges and create solutions together; thus, improving our cultural ties” (see Table 4.17, key statement TPC12). Another key statement from staff simply stated it this way: “Shared decision making, collaborative environment, shared power, partnerships, and goals” (see Table 4.17, key statement TPC13). Yet another key statement offered: “Students seem to be much more supportive and positive with each other. Students want to help and they want to help each other.

The overall kindness of the students is the most noticeable to me personally” (see Table 4.17, key statement RCS15).

The *Mutual Benefit—Win-Win Thinking* (see look-for criterion 4, Table 4.19) and *Excitement about Possibility* (see look-for criterion 5, Table 4.19) contained 15 and 11 connections to key statements respectively. Although these look-for criteria represent the lowest of the five look-for criteria within the Leadership Orientation Dimension, they represented robust strengthening of the Dimension since alignment with these criteria was completely missing in the Initial Staff Culture Survey from 2006 as well as the 2007 and 2008 Mid-Year Feedback Surveys. Several key statements from the 2016 Final Staff Culture Survey exemplified the staff’s movement to the Leadership Orientation Dimension’s abundance mentality associated with *Mutual Benefit—Win-Win Thinking* (see look-for criterion 4, Table 4.19). One key statement from staff in 2016 stated: “We have continued to focus on education as a primary goal, but began making education more fun and celebrating achievements of all, no matter how small. Students are proud when they improve and strive to maintain this” (see Table 4.17, key statement FLL9). Another key statement captured the abundance mentality of the Leadership Orientation Dimension this way: “We celebrate successes and acknowledge areas for improvement. Our school is about starting each day with a clean slate and giving each other the opportunity to be the best version of ourselves that we can be. Mistakes can be opportunities to learn just as much as successes” (see Table 4.17, key statement FLL11). The following key statement from 2016 displayed the ripple effect of *Mutual Benefit—Win-Win Thinking* (see look-for criterion 4, Table 4.19) from the Leadership Orientation Dimension:

What the faculty, staff, and students have continued doing that has impacted the culture is work together. The staff is a unified group that works together, helping each other which in turn benefits the staff themselves and ultimately the students.

Everyone is willing to lend a helping hand to all faculty, staff and the students. (see Table 4.17, key statement TPC4).

The Leadership Orientation Dimension of the Culture of Leadership Framework includes an *Excitement about Possibility* (see look-for criterion 5, Table 4.19). The criteria from this look-for contrasts status quo thinking and a fear of failure with an excitement about possibility and what the future holds. At least eleven key statements from the 2016 Final Staff Culture Survey fully aligned with the *Excitement about Possibility* look for criteria. For example, one key statement from staff in 2016 noted: “The forming of us into a learning community maximizing our rural advantages has only begun the never-ending process of change and I am glad to have been part of its ever continuing evolution” (see Table 4.17, key statement TPC15). Two additional key statements from the narrative responses in the 2016 Final Staff Culture Survey revealed the strengthened *Excitement about Possibility* look-for alignment in the school culture:

The principal is a strong proponent of not becoming stagnant and inspires and reflects with teachers. He also allows and supports nonconventional teaching strategies and techniques. He is very open to change. All of which interests and excites and led to our cultural change (see Table 4.17, key statement EF3).

We are thinking and solving problems by shifting our paradigm. Being encouraged by a true leader in education to look at different options, to network, to "think outside the box", opening our doors and our minds to possibilities of success through alternate methods, and ultimately creating a positive school climate. We have stopped insisting on doing things "the way we have always done it," regardless of efficacy (see Table 4.17, key statement EF4).

While the analysis of the Leadership Orientation Dimension in isolation demonstrates significant growth, it is important to note that the genuine power of the Culture of Leadership Framework is the dynamic interplay between the four dimensions. Those connections provide insights into the style of leadership, communication, and processes that worked together to enhance the Leadership Orientation Dimension. The interplay of the dimensions also highlight

the way of the school community did things and treated one another to cultivate a Culture of Leadership. To further illustrate this point, an analysis of the progress and growth of Dimension II: Leveraging Leadership of the Culture of Leadership Framework from 2006 through 2016 follows.

Analysis and Findings from Dimension II: Leveraging Leadership

Tables 4.20 provides a closer look at how 76 of the 100 key statements from the Final Staff Culture Survey of 2016 aligned with the look-for criteria from Dimension II: Leveraging Leadership of the Culture of Leadership Framework.

Table 4.20. Critical Analysis of 76 Key Statements from the Final Staff Culture Survey that Aligned with Dimension II: Leveraging Leadership

Description of Dimension II: Leveraging Leadership	
The style of leadership, communication, and processes that characterize how the members of the school community conduct business. (e.g., elements of leadership, governance, structure, roles, relationships, and responsibilities).	
Look For:	Key Statements Aligned
1. Common language and common goals among the members. (<i>Common Language—Common Goals</i>)	24 of 76
2. Meaningful relationships amid school community members that have foundation in a commitment to the common vision and mission and core values. (<i>Meaningful Relationships</i>)	37 of 76
3. Respectful interaction between school community members with both recognition and celebration of differences. (<i>Respectful Interactions—Celebration of Differences</i>)	28 of 76
4. An abundance of both formal and informal leadership opportunity. (<i>Leadership Opportunity</i>)	17 of 76

Table 4.20 displays strong alignment between the key statements from the 2016 Final Staff Culture Survey and the look-for criteria associated with Dimension II: Leveraging Leadership of the Culture of Leadership Framework. The Leveraging Leadership dimension—how we do things around here and how we treat each other—matches the high-level look-for alignment of the Leadership Orientation dimension (Table 4.19). Meaningful relationships and

respectful interactions between the staff were evident at the outset of the ten-year study, but were built primarily around staff encouragement and support of one another (teacher-to-teacher). Over the course of the ten years, however, common language and common goals emerged amid the development of the school vision, mission, and core and shifted the focus from teachers as leaders to promoting leadership across the school community.

A primary driver for the shift is the forging of the shared vision, mission, and core values into a solid foundation for the entire school membership. Meaningful relationships and respectful interactions became a cultural expectation for everyone as opposed to guides for teacher-to-teacher relationships. The adult initiated and top-down actions prevalent in the 2006 Initial Survey gradually evolved into shared and collaborative actions that included both teacher and student voice. In addition, formal and informal shared leadership opportunities for adults and students blurred the lines of roles and responsibilities and opened the door for contributions from all members of the school community.

Initial Staff Culture Survey of 2006 and Dimension II: Leveraging Leadership

The analysis of the Initial Staff Culture Survey of 2006 against the criteria of Dimension II: Leveraging Leadership, characterized the culture as deficient, and lacking in a shared and communicated vision, mission, and common core values. It did, however, reveal forged faculty togetherness with respect for and pride in one another. The *Faculty Togetherness* theme (Table 4.1) contained ten statements in response to the prompt “the ONE thing I am most proud of about the St. Marys Area Middle School.” It was the most populated theme from the 2006 Initial Staff Culture Survey. Across all ten responses, team or together were directly or explicitly mentioned. The togetherness as described, however, was borne out of difficult circumstances of some nature—as captured by the *Us versus Them Bonding* theme (Table 4.1)—and did not illustrate an

intentional or purposeful common language. One staff response, “Teachers like to be left alone to do their job” (see Table 4.1, response UT2), was typical of the staff sentiment of the time. Pride in and dedication to student discipline and student control also emerged as one of the strongest and most interesting insights of the 2006 Initial Staff Survey. The following statement best captured the status of the Leveraging Leadership Dimension at the outset of the study:

It sometimes takes years to recover from such ineptness and this recovery is credited to this faculty and then being led by someone (an administrator) who honestly understands what is important and what is not. Those who were consumed over whether or not the teachers filled out form X-Y-Z correctly failed and failed miserably! Those who made sure the students were “kept in line” and freed the teachers to be their diverse and unique selves and adults were the bosses under which the SMAMS flourished rather than floundered! (Table 4.1, response UT6)

Clearly, the top-down and punitive student management style adopted in 2006 fell short of the optimal collaborative, empowering and strengths oriented community embedded in the Culture of Leadership Framework.

Mid-Year Feedback Surveys of 2007 and 2008 and Dimension II: Leveraging Leadership

The analysis of the Mid-Year Feedback Surveys of 2007 and 2008 using Dimension II: Leveraging Leadership, lacked a shared and communicated vision or mission. Nonetheless, potential core values emerged in relation to the positive treatment of students, a focus on strengths, and emphasis on staff collaboration. Evidence of potential core values emerged from the 2007 Mid-Year Feedback Survey responses such as “continue to think of what is right for each student. To reward the kids who do good things”; “continue the emphasis on positive attributes of students”; and “continue responding to each student individually and with respect” (see Table 4.5, responses PS3, PS4, PS9). The strength focused and positive approach with students was again noted in the 2008 Mid-Year Feedback Survey responses and suggested that a way of doing things and a way of treating one another (i.e., Leveraging Leadership Dimension of

the Culture of Leadership) had emerged. For example, two responses: “continue being positive with students without being false to them” and “continue praising and rewarding academics and finding new ways to provide incentives” (see Table 4.8, responses PSA5, PSA11) illustrate this shift.

Student discipline and student control was a source of pride in the 2006 Initial Staff Culture survey and remained a focal point in the Mid-Year Feedback Survey of 2007. Even though many responses showed a growth in the Dimension II: Leveraging Leadership look-for criteria of meaningful relationships and respectful interactions between all school members, there remained a presence of punishment and control as a primary means of maintaining an effective learning environment. Contrary to the ideal Leveraging Leadership Dimension of the Culture of Leadership Framework, several staff responses illustrated the control and punish mentality. A 2007 Mid-Year Feedback Survey response stated: “start disciplining kids tougher...the disrespect needs addressed” (see Table 4.6, response SDA2). Another 2007 response was more emphatic: “stop being patient with repeat offenders (students) who seemingly understand nothing else than stern measures and discipline practices” (see Table 4.7, response SDL2).

A change in the student discipline language from the 2008 Mid-Year Feedback staff responses—less emphasis on control and more tolerance—provided evidence of the Leveraging Leadership Dimension of the Culture of Leadership moving toward the more optimal and ideal best of meaningful relationships and respectful interactions across the entire school community. Staff responses in 2008 revealed increased acceptance and appreciation for proactive measures. For example, “continue visiting classrooms because kids enjoy your visibility and this promotes good discipline” (see Table 4.8, response SD1). Student control measures as a favored Leveraging Leadership, however, did not disappear entirely as marked by the following 2008

response: “stop providing privileges to students without something in return or without restrictions (going to lockers, up the down stairs, etc.)” (see Table 4.10, response FM8).

Mid-Year Feedback Surveys of 2013 and 2014 and Dimension II: Leveraging Leadership

Over the years, the Dimension II: Leveraging Leadership of the Culture of Leadership Framework advanced. Notably, in the 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Surveys, an identifiable and shared vision, mission and core values emerged. Vision and mission were mentioned less frequently, but the core values of respect, responsibility, and effort were made explicit in the theme responses. The core values of respect, responsibility, and effort were highlighted in the positive involvement of students, the strengths-oriented focus between staff and students, and the prominence of staff collaboration. A number of Mid-Year Feedback Survey responses in 2013 exemplified growth in the Leveraging Leadership Dimension but the 2014 Mid-Year Feedback responses took *Meaningful Relationships* (see look-for criterion 2, Table 4.20) and *Respectful Interactions—Celebration of Differences* (see look-for criterion 3, Table 4.20) to an even greater level.

For example, one staff response in 2014 stated: “Continue allowing freedom and trust (access to lockers at any time, chewing gum, student school program and club ideas, etc.). Continue creativity and the level of student involvement “ (see Table 4.14, response SEE2). Another staff member offered: “Continue caring about kids, continue knowing how much they want us to ‘like’ them, and continue recognizing the amount of influence we DO have on/with them” (see Table 4.14, SEE9). And, on the *Celebration of Differences* look-for criteria, a staff response pleaded: “Continue talking things out and not having ‘blanket’ or ‘black and white’ rules or regulations that are insensitive to individual needs” (see Table 4.14, response IM4). *Meaningful Relationships* among the full school community membership largely replaced the

high degree of teacher control over student actions and interactions that was such a strong presence in the 2007 and 2008 Mid-Year Feedback Surveys and the 2006 Initial Staff Culture Survey.

Final Staff Culture Survey of 2016 and Dimension II: Organizational Culture

This growth is further underscored in the Final Staff Culture Survey of 2016 where the alignment of 37 different key statements with *Meaningful Relationships* (see look-for criterion 2, Table 4.20) revealed the strong growth and momentum of Dimension II: Leveraging Leadership from just two years earlier. The high number of key statements aligned with this particular look-for criteria revealed the ongoing progress of the school culture toward an ideal best state where all relationships have their foundation in a commitment to common and shared vision, mission, and core values. The relationships between staff members that were evident from the 2006 data at the beginning of the study, continued to grow through 2016 but were strengthened and made more meaningful amid the clearly stated and shared core values. Consider the following key statements that are exemplary of the alignment with *Meaningful Relationships* (see look-for criterion 2, Table 4.20) from the Leveraging Leadership Dimension of the Culture of Leadership Framework:

Instead of a faculty, I feel as if we are more of a family of teachers. Respect for one another's teaching philosophy, the Effort of every teacher, and the sense of Responsibility cannot be matched (see Table 4.17, key statement RCS7).

Our school culture has become much more cohesive over the past decade. We "think & act" as a team, supporting each other whenever needed. It does not matter if the situation needs a discussion or action, we as individuals know we can find support here in our building (See Table 4.17, key statement RCS8).

I find it hard to imagine that there are middle schools out there with a closer staff. Everyone works hard and expects the most from each other each day. We are unconditionally supportive of each other both in and out of school. Whenever a fellow colleague is going through tough times outside of school, everyone pulls together to do something kind and let them know just how much we care. Truly

an unbelievable place to work in and be a part of (see Table 4.17, key statement RCS6).

What's more, the *Meaningful Relationships* (see look-for criterion 2, Table 4.20) have been displayed across the entire school community membership and particularly with and among students. Two of the key statements described the *Meaningful Relationship* look-for criteria extension to students:

The supportive culture is evident in the 'past' students who visit frequently, sharing good memories of their middle school years. Humor and collegiality make it a great place to 'go to school' as a student or to 'come to work' as an educator! (see Table 4.17, key statement RCS9).

I feel this family culture has lead to a much better school environment for our students. I truly believe that the students in general follow the leadership of the adults in the building. When the faculty and staff act as family it allows the students to model this culture. Families are not perfect, but they protect and support and give a sense of belonging. I believe that because of the family atmosphere that has been developed that our most vulnerable students and faculty have had the opportunity to succeed at a higher rate. They trust that they will receive the support found in a family setting. It takes a long time to build a family and it has been fun to be part of the culture development at the middle school (see Table 4.17, key statement RCS13).

The alignment between 24 key statements and a *Common Language—Common Goals* (see look-for criterion 1, Table 4.20) provided evidentiary statements for how much the school community membership recognized and utilized the established the core values of respect, responsibility and effort on a daily basis. To a lesser extent, there was also evidence of a common vision and mission in these same statements. The consistency of language within the key statements from the 2016 Final Staff Culture Survey was frequently associated with interactions between school community members. As a result, 28 key statements aligned with *Respectful Interactions—Celebration of Differences* (see look-for criterion 3, Table 4.20) and provided a stark contrast to the top-down and punitive management style of student differences—particularly behavioral differences—noted in the Initial Staff Survey of 2006.

When the Leveraging Leadership Dimension of the Culture of Leadership Framework is at its ideal best, there is a common vision, mission and core values. Accordingly, there is a *Common Language—Common Goals* (see look-for criterion 1, Table 4.20). The following key statements from the 2016 Final Staff Culture Survey characterized the growth, development, and application of a common language in the school culture:

We have 3 ideals that we expect our students to subscribe to: RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY and EFFORT. We preach these concepts to our students on a daily basis. We model our expectations, and we spend huge amounts of time explaining how to put them into practice. Our cultural language is built around them. It is what we expect (see Table 4.17, key statement VMV1).

Our middle school culture has undergone positive changes in the past 10 years with the greatest change occurring because of three simple words Respect, Responsibility, and Effort. These three words are our foundation that binds us together and is used in all situations in all spaces for everyone, students and adults, in our school community. We expect our students and adults to live up to these core values whether it is for meeting a deadline, communicating, disciplining, achieving academic success, recognizing differences, accepting our roles, or preparing for the future (see Table 4.17, key statement VMV12).

When you walk into the building lobby a sign reads "Through these hallways walk the most passionate middle school teachers in the world". It is a bold statement, however, it is a statement believed by our leadership and every faculty member in the school. This statement written boldly and proudly for all to see suggests that we have made a difference, and our school community believes in what is happening here at our school (see Table 4.17, key statement VMV11).

Our new vision, "A world class education with the rural advantage" sounded great, but many of us doubted our rural advantage or how great we were professionally. Ten years later after helping to frame some of the giant steps we've taken, like eliminating high track science and aligning and refining the curriculum to one that makes sense and flows, I feel pride at how far we have come. From the changing our vision, the work of putting it into action has taken many small steps. (see Table 4.17, key statement VMV16).

The Leveraging Leadership Dimension's *Common Language—Common Goals* look-for criteria was very apparent in the school culture 2016 and was revealed in the language used by the staff. Evidence of this common language and the common goals translating to actions and

interactions among school community members, however, is even more abundant within the 28 key statements aligned with *Respectful Interactions—Celebration of Differences* (see look-for criterion 3, Table 4.20). Before identifying key statements that characterized the Leveraging Leadership Dimension of 2016 school culture the following key statement established important context from 2006 and prior to the beginning of the study:

It is difficult to write about our school 10 years ago without understanding the previous 5 or 6 years. Those years were characterized by an attempt of the faculty to gain control over the behavior of our students. It was a time of punishment, harshness, discipline referrals and suspensions. Ten years ago our school culture still reflected a "we versus them" mentality. Every offense, even minor ones (dress code, chewing gum, using the wrong stairway, going to lockers during change of class, etc.) were acted upon. The faculty was not going to allow the "animals to run the zoo." Kids often showed a lack of respect for teachers, staff and each other. Some of the things we stopped doing was yelling, stressing punishment and consequences. Ten years ago each class was brought to the cafeteria for a 30 minute tirade on the rules and punishments; no longer. The "carrot/stick" approach has diminished. In and out of school suspensions hardly ever occur. We have stopped "adaptive" classes which isolated low achieving students (See Table 4.17, key statement SDE5).

Control, punishment, harshness, and discipline referrals characterized the school culture up through 2006 and was captured by responses in the Initial Staff Culture Survey. By 2016, commonly shared core values of respect, responsibility, and effort contributed to a consistent pattern of mutual respect within the school culture. The following key statements from the 2016 Final Culture Survey aligned with the look-for criteria for *Respectful Interactions—Celebration of Differences*. The statements reveal how the school membership treated one another in 2016 and characterize the cultural change that had occurred over the ten year period:

The culture has changed at the school from a place where everyone got yelled at all of the time to a place where people and students actually talk to one another and try to figure things out. Not everything is completely perfect but everyone seems to do their best to make students learn from their mistakes (see Table 4.17, key statement SDE3).

The culture has changed dramatically to one of respect, nurturing and caring. Gum chewing, going to lockers between classes, cell phones, etc. are today all permitted and there are no problems as a result. There are very few discipline referrals. Teachers feel supported by administrators and are not on a limb (see Table 4.17, key statement SDE6).

The main thing that we stopped doing is treating laziness as a discipline problem. Students who give poor effort or who have little interest in improving their academic standing are not considered discipline problems. This has been a very positive step in improving how teachers view students and how students view school (see Table 4.17, key statement SDE8).

There were no responses in the Initial Staff Survey of 2006 that related to the *Leadership Opportunity* theme (see look-for criterion 4, Table 4.20) of the Leveraging Leadership Dimension of the Culture of Leadership Framework. Ten years later, 17 key statements from the 2016 Final Staff Culture Survey aligned with *Leadership Opportunity*. This is not surprising since the *Leadership Opportunity* theme had a strong presence in the 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Surveys as many formal and informal leadership opportunities became the norm for staff and there was identifiable growth in leadership options for students. For example, staff *Leadership Opportunity* for department level work, co-teaching, and teaming was documented in 2013 staff responses like: “Continue working toward common goals and aligning curriculum for all grade levels by making it possible for departments to get together during 3rd period homeroom and assemblies”; “Continue Co-teaching with inclusion classes—a great experience”; and “Continue the middle school best practice of ‘teaming’ at the 6th grade level” (see Table 4.11, CTA5, CTA7, CTA8).

Growth in *Leadership Opportunity* from the Leveraging Leadership Dimension of the Culture of Leadership Framework continued to be strong within the 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey responses. Staff reported ongoing interest in leading collaboration and curriculum alignment efforts (see Table 4.14), and also expressed desire to add to their leadership roles. As

an example, one staff member stated: “Start providing real professional development with ‘in-house’ expertise related to the ambitious goals we set” (see Table 4.15, AE1). Another put it this way: “Start collaborating with elementary science teachers...it would be nice to have continuity 4th through 9th” (see Table 4.15, AE5).

Compared with responses from 2006, 2007, and 2008, the 2013 and 2014 responses that aligned with the *Leadership Opportunity* look-for criteria provided a clear and positive distinction in that leadership was seen and being fostered within the students themselves. Class Officers, Student Council Officers, and Club Officers were noted as formal leadership opportunities in both the 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Surveys (see Table 4.11, Table 4.14). In addition, theme responses in 2013 and 2014 highlighted an abundance of informal leadership opportunities for students within various Student Council activities such as homeroom level contests, daily MS-TV announcements, motivational poster design, Academic Assembly roles, and the Success @ 6th orientation to the middle school culture for the new 6th graders.

In key statements from the Final Staff Culture Survey of 2016, *Leadership Opportunity* was described in statements like: “We as staff and faculty have been pressed to work as a unified team across the board. Departmental meetings and planning have helped to direct lessons and outcomes” (see Table 4.17, TPC1). Another staff member characterized Leadership Opportunity this way: “Shared decision making, collaborative environment, shared power, partnerships, and goals” (see Table 4.17, TPC13).

More importantly, key statements from the 2016 Final Staff Culture Survey identified increased student level *Leadership Opportunity*. In fact, 12 of the 17 key statements that aligned with the *Leadership Opportunity* look-for criteria contained references to student leadership. For example, one staff member highlighted student involvement in Leadership Opportunity this way:

“We have provided numerous opportunities for students to get excited about education, show empathy for each other, and take on a leadership role” (see Table 4.17, LE2). Another staff member noted: “In the past 10 years, I have seen our students begin to take more of a leadership role within the building. There is more of a focus on "the bigger picture" so to speak” (see Table 4.17, LE4). (e.g., class officers, student council officers, student club development, and school service projects). This shift from talking about leadership as the sole privilege of the adults in the building, to leveraging leadership in the students is a major finding of the analysis. This shift is personified in a key statement from the Final Staff Culture Survey of 2016 that aligned with Dimension II: Leveraging Leadership of the Culture of Leadership Framework and the *Leadership Opportunity* look-for criteria:

Our culture also gained positive momentum when Principal Wortman expected and supported 8th grade students to accept leadership roles as class officers, student government positions, and within other activities. Teachers opened the doors to many leadership roles for students. 8th grade leadership roles were the catalyst which created opportunities for the 7th and 6th grade students to emulate and become leaders for their classes and clubs. Creating a school culture of adults and students who are leaders, academically oriented, and socially respectable toward others have truly enhanced our school culture and elevated our school community both academically and socially. One person cannot do this alone. The principal leads this goal and through his actions gets the teachers on board who in turn gets the students on board and then the culture begins to grow in a positive direction (see Table 4.17, LE8).

The Leveraging Leadership Dimension of Culture of Leadership Framework focuses on the ways that the style of leadership, communication, and processes of the school community work to intentionally foster leadership growth across the school community. It was evident from the data that the culture—the way of doing things and treating one another--aligned more strongly with the optimal and ideal levels of Leveraging Leadership in 2016 as compared to culture that was described in 2006. In particular, there was leadership action from all school community members guided by a set of core values of respect, responsibility, and effort that

redefined relationships and interactions. And while the growth in Leveraging Leadership is critical, it is important to keep in mind that the Culture of Leadership Framework is composed of four interrelated dimensions. What follows is an analysis the growth of Dimension III of the Framework: Leadership for Learning from 2006 through 2016.

Analysis and Findings from Dimension III: Leadership for Learning

Table 4.21 provides a closer look at how 63 of the 100 key statements from the 2016 Final Staff Culture Survey aligned with the look-for criteria from Dimension III of the Culture of Leadership Framework: Leadership for Learning.

Table 4.21. Critical Analysis of 63 Key Statements from the Final Staff Culture Survey that Aligned with Dimension III: Leadership for Learning

Description of Dimension III: Leadership for Learning	
The merit and contribution of the leadership actions taken by the members of the school community.	
Look For:	Key Statements Aligned
1. Vision, mission, and core value specific ideas, initiatives, and actions from all members—including students—that add value to the learning environment. (<i>Value-Added Ideas, Initiatives, and Actions</i>)	30 of 63
2. Excitement about change and risk taking as a purposeful and necessary part of improvement and growth. (<i>Excitement About Change</i>)	22 of 63
3. Expressions and feelings of pride in the learning environment, accomplishments, and actions related to the vision, mission, and core values. (<i>Expressions and Feelings of Pride</i>)	44 of 63

In the key statements that aligned with Dimension III: Leadership for Learning, school members described adding value that was specific to the reframed vision, mission, and core values. Table 4.21 shows 63 of the 100 key statements from the Final Staff Culture Survey that connected with the three look-for criteria associated with this dimension. These 63 statements document remarkable growth in the merit and contribution of the leadership actions taken by members of the school community. Forty-four of the 63 key statements in the Dimension III

were grouped in the theme *Expressions and Feelings of Pride*. These key statements described pride in learning environment accomplishments and the actions that added value to the common and shared vision, mission, and core values of respect, responsibility, and effort (see look-for criteria 3, Table 4.21). Thirty of the 63 key statements noted ideas, initiatives, and actions from all members—including students—that added value to the learning environment or *Value-Added Ideas, Initiatives, and Actions* (see look-for criteria 1, Table 4.21). Twenty-two of the 63 key statements associated with Dimension III revealed *Excitement About Change*. This excitement about change and risk-taking recognized change as a necessary component of growth and improvement (see look-for criteria 2, Table 4.21).

Initial Staff Culture Survey of 2006 and Dimension III: Leadership for Learning

As documented in the 2006 Initial Staff Culture Survey, none of the responses aligned with the look-for criteria of Dimension III: Leadership for Learning. This can be attributed to the lack of commonly shared school vision, mission, and core values. Leadership was seen as residing in the adults and those adults were split into factions. An us against them mentality prevailed with the staff seeing themselves as surviving the poor leadership decisions of the administration.

Mid-Year Feedback Surveys of 2007 and 2008 and Dimension III: Leadership for Learning

Initial indicators of this growth in Dimension III: Leadership for Learning, were seen in the Mid-Year Feedback Surveys of 2007 and 2008. Although mentions of vision and mission did not occur in the 2007 and 2008 survey responses, potential core values emerged in the response themes. There was evidence of value-added leadership actions and improvement initiatives that supported the positive treatment of students, a focus on strengths, and an emphasis on staff collaboration. Value-added contribution connected with the potential core values is key

to meeting look-for alignment in the Leadership for Learning Dimension. Alignment with value-added actions is exemplified in the positive and collaborative approach with students mentioned in the 2007 Mid-Year Feedback *Positivity with Students* theme: “Continue enabling students to explore, engage, and enjoy the many aspects of our learning environment” and “I love the positive approach to the team working with students” (see Table 4.5, responses P8, P10). In the 2008 Mid-Year Feedback there was a steady emphasis on increased student strength as a value-added action aligned with core values resulting in the *Positive Strengths Approach* theme illustrated with responses like “Continue with the positive approach and the focus on what each student can do and build on what they cannot” and “Continue with (Academic Assemblies) recognizing students that perform well in each quarter and who improve their GPA” (see Table 4.8, responses PSA1, PSA3). The responses in the *Positive Strengths Approach* theme also supported the emergence of value-added action aligned with potential core values for all members of the learning community, exemplified by the following summary statement: “Continue with the positive atmosphere and treating us as professionals” (see Table 4.8, response PSA6).

Mid-Year Feedback Surveys of 2013 and 2014 and Dimension III: Leadership for Learning

Even stronger indicators of clear progress in school vision, mission, and core values of respect, responsibility, and effort emerged in the 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Surveys. This growth was captured in the response theme *Value-Added Ideas, Initiatives, and Actions* (see look-for Criterion 1, Table 4.21). The statements in this theme aligned with the declared and shared core values of respect, responsibility, and effort and provided strong evidence of growth in the Leadership for Learning Dimension. A number of responses from both 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Surveys identified quarterly Academic Assemblies, various Student Council

activities, student club activity, and student academic assistance initiatives as important and worth continued focus and effort. Staff responses also identified individualized and differentiated instruction, subject area alignment, teambuilding, Library Media Center collaboration and cross-curricular work as worthwhile initiatives. These *Value-Added Ideas, Initiatives, and Actions* were repeatedly and specifically noted in the 2013 and 2014 data.

In addition to the staff responses that showed value-added action and involvement, a summary response from the 2013 Mid-Year Feedback surveys captured the *Expressions and Feelings of Pride* (see look-for criterion 3, Table 4.21) associated with the Leadership for Learning Dimension: “Continue our commitment to the middle school model and a great work ethic (see Table 4.11, OP1). Another aligned response from the 2014 Mid-Year Feedback survey stated: “Continue pushing it ‘out there’ with goals like CREATIVITY. This sparks passion” (see Table 4.14, IM2). *Expressions and Feelings of Pride* aligned with student involvement were revealed in this 2014 Mid-Year Feedback response: “Continue the Academic Award Assemblies with class officers presenting ‘peer’ congratulations by shaking hands and presenting honor roll cards to classmates and the Band, Chorus, and student led assemblies.”

Final Staff Culture Survey of 2016 and Dimension III: Leadership for Learning

The growth in Leadership for Learning documented in the Mid-Year Feedback Surveys of 2013 and 2014 led to even strong statements in the 2016 Final Staff Culture Survey. Thirty key statements from the Final Staff Culture Survey aligned with *Value-Added Ideas, Initiatives, and Actions* (see look-for Criterion 1, Table 4.21) and were indicative of feelings of increased empowerment on behalf of the school community members as they continued to internalize a common and shared vision, mission, and core values. In addition, they were more actively engaged in continuous improvement efforts that involved both staff and students. Three key

statements characterized the look-for alignment with staff level *Value-Added Ideas, Initiatives, and Actions* from the Leadership for Learning Dimension: “Common planning time for departments and grade levels have been established”; “Teachers have been permitted to attend seminars and conventions to improve their skills and attitudes”; and, “The faculty and staff are also encouraged to attend conferences to figure out what some of the best educators are doing across the country” (see Table 4.17, TPC5, TPC6, TPC7).

Other key statements aligned with *Value-Added Ideas, Initiatives, and Actions* from the Leadership for Learning Dimension recognized student level merit and contribution. One key statement noted: “Students are joined and encouraged to become one through the Success at 6th (6th grade Orientation course) which then carries into 7th and 8th grade with team references to be the best and encourage the best of each other” (see Table 4.17, LE1). The following key statement described the ripple effect of *Value-Added Ideas, Initiatives, and Actions*:

The Principal created an Academic Assembly for each grade level honoring academic achievement, honor roll, and academic improvement. Students are recognized for their efforts in gaining academic success. This is at the forefront of our teachers’ beliefs and they instill that belief in our students. We stopped treating academic shortfalls as a discipline infraction and put it in the category of achievement; punishment does not support academic success – nurturing does (see Table 4.17, FLL20).

Another factor that documents the degree of growth and clear recognition of the positive cultural impact made in the Leadership for Learning dimension is found in the alignment of 44 of the 63 key statements within the *Expressions and Feelings of Pride* theme (see look-for criterion 3, Table 4.21). The responses from the Initial Staff Culture Survey of 2006, found the faculty proud of one another, bonded with one another as survivors, and taking pride in managing and strictly disciplining students (Table 4.1). These expressions of pride in 2006 were descriptions of individual preference and had nothing to do with adding value to a particular school vision,

mission, or core values. In comparison, the 44 key statements from the 2016 Final Staff Culture Survey contained in the *Expressions and Feelings of Pride* theme describe a full school membership that was not only empowered, but openly proud of their collective contribution to the vision, mission, and core values.

Key statements from the 2016 Final Staff Culture Survey aligned with *Expressions and Feelings of Pride* emphasized strongly engrained core values of respect, responsibility, and effort. Two very simple key statements served as exemplars: “The emphasis on respect, responsibility, and effort has been a positive one for students and staff” and “I love the culture here, of respect, responsibility, and effort and the giving that we do here at the middle school” (see Table 4.17, VMV8, VMV15). The *Expressions and Feelings of Pride* went beyond simply naming the core values, however, and extended to actions and attitudes related to these core values. The following key statements characterized actions and attitudes: “We are a team. We are interested in best efforts and support each other’s efforts. We mentor each other when in need. We are a family”; “Unbelievable support for each other both professionally and personally. Definitely a close-knit team of professionals with the utmost respect for each other and their specific content area”; and, “I believe our school is unique because our faculty acts as a family. We model positive attitudes and relationships for the students, and they respond well to that sincerity” (see Table 4.17, TPC3, RCS3, RCS10).

What’s more, 22 of the 63 key statements that aligned with the Leadership for Learning Dimension described a level of excitement about the change and risk-taking present in the school community resulting in the *Excitement About Change* theme (see look-for criterion 2, Table 4.21). Purposeful change efforts to improve the learning environment were seen by the faculty as

both expected and necessary factors of improvement and growth and were recognizable sources of pride in the school community. One staff member described the excitement as follows:

Building level In-service and Act 80 days have been a great opportunity to help strengthen the connection between the subjects. The increase in technology, as well as having a technology coach available has also had a positive affect in this area (see Table 4.17, TPC8).

Another key statement from the 2016 Final Staff Culture Survey that aligned with *Excitement About Change* further characterized the school culture change in the Leadership for Learning Dimension:

Now we are nearly 100% committed to being student focused with an eye to promoting our local and regional advantages. Leading by example and growing student leaders is much more effective than leading by force and fear from the top (see Table 4.17, LE9).

In contrast, language from the 2006 Initial Staff Culture Survey was dominated by attention to disruptive, un-motivated, and disrespectful students and issues with workload and No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Clearly, the Final Staff Survey of 2016 provides evidence of great strides within the school over the ten-year period examined in this study. In 2006 the staff mentioned removing problem students as a strategy. But, ten years later, the staff described a culture of mutual respect as documented in this key statement: “Faculty and staff pull together to address new ideas, outcomes, common core requirements, etc. and pull resources that can benefit all who need support” (see Table 4.17, TPC2). In 2006 the staff was waiting for administrators to initiate top-down change to occur and offering resistance. In comparison, the responses from 2016 describe excitement and pride in ideas and change actions that were initiated by all school community members—including students—and that utilized school vision, mission, and core values as a focus for value-added effort and active involvement.

The Leadership for Learning Dimension of the Culture of Leadership Framework was measured against the merit and contribution of leadership actions relative to vision, mission, and core values. The data tell the story of stronger Leadership for Learning (i.e. more vision, mission and core value specific action) in 2016 as compared to 2006. But, is there effort to support the leadership development of the members of the school community? Having established greater alignment with the Leadership Orientation, Leveraging Leadership, and Leadership for Learning Dimensions of the Culture of Leadership, what follows is an analysis of the final dimension of the School Culture of Leadership Framework--Dimension IV: Leadership Growth from 2006 through 2016.

Analysis and Findings from Dimension IV: Leadership Growth

Tables 4.22 provides a closer look at how 41 of the 100 key statements from the Final Staff Culture Survey of 2016 aligned with the look-for criteria from Dimension IV: Leadership Growth of the Culture of Leadership Framework.

Table 4.22. Criterial Analysis of 41 Key Statements from the Final Staff Culture Survey that Aligned with Dimension IV: Leadership Growth

Description of Dimension IV: Leadership Growth	
The collective and collaborative efforts and the programs that support leadership development of the members of the school community. (e.g., programs, policies, rituals, routines, and traditions).	
Look For:	Key Statements Aligned
1. Leadership development; leadership formation; leadership facilitation; leadership application. (<i>Leadership Development</i>)	16 of 41
2. The “language” of leadership (vision, mission, and core values) utilized across the membership of the learning community. (<i>Language of Leadership</i>)	22 of 41
3. Programs, activities, events, rituals, or traditions with leadership connections that are initiated, developed, and led by the members—including students. (<i>Leadership Connections</i>)	17 of 41

The Leadership Growth Dimension had the smallest number of aligned key statements (41) of the four dimensions that comprise the Culture of Leadership Framework. And while the number of statements that aligned with the criteria for Dimension IV was smaller than the number of statements that aligned with the criteria for the other three dimensions, Table 4.22 documents significant growth when compared to the data from the Initial Staff Culture Survey of 2006. In 2006 the staff responses failed to display leadership opportunity or development.

Initial Staff Culture Survey of 2006 and Dimension IV: Leadership Growth

To align with the criteria for the Leadership Growth Dimension statements must speak to growing leaders, providing access to leadership roles, and use the language of leadership in the school community. There was no mention of the word leadership in the responses from the 2006 Initial Staff Culture Survey and no explicit or implicit statements that aligned with the criteria of Leadership Growth Dimension of the Culture of Leadership. As a result, the single isolated strength of the 2006 Initial Staff Culture survey was teacher-teacher respect and pride in one another seen in the 2006 response theme *Us versus Them Bonding*. This theme revealed staff sentiment regarding leadership. At the time, at least some staff viewed the designated leadership (i.e., administration) as an opposing entity—“Teachers like to be left alone to do their job” (see Table 4.1, UT2)—and looked to one another for support and not to leadership—“We do great things without the need for recognition” (see Table 4.1, UT3). Additionally, the 2006 Initial Staff Culture Survey response themes of *Students as Receivers*, *Student Discipline*, and *Reward the Good—Remove the Bad* showed that the staff rarely considered students for leadership involvement. On the contrary, the staff mentioned pride in their contribution to the role of students as controlled, passive, and compliant as seen in these 2006 responses: “One thing we are most proud of is... cleaning up the school...issuing consistent discipline...providing

equal treatment for all...student discipline as character building...not passing problems to the next grade” (see Table 4.1, SD1, SD2, SD4).

Mid-Year Feedback Surveys of 2007 and 2008 and Dimension IV: Leadership Growth

The word leadership did not appear in any of the responses to the Mid-Year Feedback Survey prompts from 2007 or 2008. One 2007 response was loosely connected to leadership facilitation for students and noted: “Continue teaching student self-responsibility” (see Table 4.5, SA6). Another minimal leadership connection emerged in the *Collaboration and Sharing* theme in the 2008 Mid-Year Feedback Survey in a response referencing department meetings and clear goals as helpful to “know where we want to be” (see Table 4.8, CRS5).

The Leadership Growth Dimension language of leadership criteria (i.e., vision, mission, and core values) was not utilized by staff in the 2007 and 2008 Mid-Year Feedback Survey responses. Several responses, however, referenced Academic Assemblies and the first quarter 6th grade orientation class entitled Success @ 6th. These programs were consistent with *Leadership Connections* (see look-for criterion 3, Table 4.22) from the Leadership Growth Dimension and marked a starting point for students in the dimension. Staff level alignment with *Leadership Connections* emerged as well. There was some interest in getting started with department level activity in the 2007 Mid-Year Feedback Survey. The 2008 Mid-Year Feedback Survey response, “Continue with allowing time for departmental meetings on a routine schedule” (see Table 4.8, CRS3) indicated that informal leadership opportunity for staff was initiated. The data showed the Leadership Growth Dimension had advanced from 2006, but remained a weak dimension in the Culture of Leadership through 2008.

Mid-Year Feedback Surveys of 2013 and 2014 and Dimension IV: Leadership Growth

The Leadership Growth Dimension of the Culture of Leadership Framework aligned more strongly with all three look-for criteria areas in 2013 and 2014. Intentional efforts to support the leadership development of the staff and students were put in motion. *Leadership Development* (see look-for criterion 1, Table 4.22) from the Leadership Growth Dimension was documented by the prominence of statements referring to collaboration, teamwork, and alignment themes in both the 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Surveys. Numerous staff responses from both surveys revealed strong interest in leadership opportunity to develop common goals and align curriculum. Even more so, leadership application emerged in the 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey responses noting forms of input, ideas, and suggestions for school improvement efforts. Staff seized the opportunity to both issue and take ownership of specific leadership initiatives as exemplified in excerpts from 2014 responses: “Start becoming increasingly aligned as a department—especially important with our new hires”; “Start creating time for the district Physical Education staff to collaborate on inservice days so as to align our curriculum K-12”; and “Start incorporating Modern Language Association (MLA) techniques in all research lessons and incorporating more non-fiction and cross-curricular articles to better match the Common Core” (see Table 4.15, AE2, AE4, AE6).

Student leadership opportunity and application were also evident in statements from the 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Surveys resulting in the *Leadership Development* theme. The 2013 Mid-Year Feedback responses contained a number of Student Council references and highlighted student led Student Council activities. The 2014 Survey responses specifically addressed the two-day off-site Camp Mountain Run Leadership outing as well as the 8th Grade

Leadership Development program. Both of these initiatives were intentionally designed to promote leadership growth at the student level.

The *Language of Leadership* (see look-for criterion 2, Table 4.22) emerged explicitly in the 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Surveys. The survey data showed that both students and staff utilized leadership language in the school community. Language specific to vision, mission, and core values gained use over the two survey years, but responses related to the core values of respect, responsibility, and effort were noted most. By 2014 survey responses described specific core values, actions, and initiatives (e.g., student freedom and trust; high level student involvement; peer-to-peer congratulations at Academic Assemblies; student led assemblies; and 6th grade orientation). These examples document the strong alignment of the data with the *Language of Leadership* theme in the Leadership Growth Dimension.

Many of the responses from the 2013 and 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Surveys aligned strongly with the theme *Leadership Connections* (see look-for criterion 3, Table 4.22) from the Leadership Growth Dimension. Student leadership involvement was especially evident. Daily MS-TV announcements (student led and delivered), Student Council activities (led by students), Academic Assemblies (with peer-to-peer congratulations), and Success @ 6th (orienting 6th graders to the vision, mission, and values of the middle school) were described in survey responses and characterized the commitment to student leadership and involvement.

Staff *Leadership Connections* were strong as well. Two responses from the 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey characterized the kind of teacher leadership that existed at the time: “Start a 6th grade field trip to the Elk Visitor Center to experience alternate energy and ‘rural advantage’ organisms they’ve not had exposure to” and “Start some type of 6th and 7th field trip that complements the hugely successful 8th grade Camp Mountain Run Leadership

outing...something career based perhaps...to get them thinking about the world beyond the middle school walls” (see Table 4.15, SPE1, SPE4). These responses not only noted existing programs and traditions, but also looked for additional ways to lead and enhance the shared vision of “A World Class Education...with the Rural Advantage.”

Final Staff Culture Survey of 2016 and Dimension IV: Leadership Growth

Key statements that aligned with Dimension IV: Leadership Growth were characterized by staff describing efforts and programs that supported leadership development of all members of the school community. Table 4.22 showed 41 of the 100 key statements from the Final Staff Culture Survey connected with the three look-for criteria associated with this dimension of the Culture of Leadership Framework. These 41 key statements provided evidence of intentional and purposeful actions within the school culture to grow leaders and to create opportunity for members to situate themselves in leadership roles. Twenty-two of the 41 key statements in the Leadership Growth Dimension were aligned with the *Language of Leadership* theme (see look-for criterion 2, Table 4.22). Seventeen of the 41 key statements in the Leadership Growth Dimension of the Culture of Leadership Framework were characterized by *Leadership Connections* (see look-for criterion 3, Table 4.22). Sixteen of the 41 key statements in the Leadership Growth Dimension aligned with Leadership Development (see look-for criterion 1, Table 4.22).

Analysis of the key statements against the criteria for the *Language of Leadership* theme in the Leadership Growth Dimension revealed 12 of the 22 statements in that theme that explicitly mentioned the core values of respect, responsibility, and effort. Staff repeatedly referenced the three core values as ideals and expectations to be modeled, displayed, and utilized across the membership of the learning community. Two key statements noted the importance of

the core values: “Respect, responsibility, and effort are the basis that we live by and are connected to in all aspects of our school life. These three words are the glue that holds us together and will continue to help move us ahead” and “the terminology and dialogue used with the student body reflects some basic principles of respect, responsibility, and effort. In my experience, this is a more "goal-oriented" approach, with a focus on achieving” (see Table 4.17, VMV13, VMV7). Another key statement described the practical application of the core values: “We now can focus even more of our energy on making our students better and continuing to create a culture of respect, responsibility, and effort for our school” (see Table 4.17, VMV9). And others captured the inclusiveness of the leadership language: “Playing by our rules of RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, EFFORT. This is applicable to students, colleagues, parents, administration, board members, and community” and “every student can repeat our 3 ideals” (see Table 4.17, VMV14, VMV2). Though not nearly as explicit, there were key statements that aligned with the *Language of Leadership* vision and mission look-for criteria as well.

The root and foundation of the Leadership Growth Dimension of the Culture of Leadership Framework is the *Language of Leadership*. The leadership language rings hollow, however, in the absence of *Leadership Development* (see look-for criterion 1, Table 4.22) and programs, activities, events, rituals, or traditions with *Leadership Connections* (see look-for criterion 3, Table 4.22). Staff responses aligned with *Leadership Development* in 16 key statements on the 2016 Final Staff Culture Survey. Two key statements isolated professional development and the subsequent collaboration with one another as the synergistic means to their leadership growth:

The main thing that our school started doing is taking professional development seriously to see what great things other teachers are doing. Also, having small groups of teachers attend conferences together facilitated positive relationships

among faculty and further opened the doors to collaboration (see Table 4.17, TPC16).

One of the things that we started to do to change the culture in the last ten years is that we have collaborated with one another much more. We have been required to work with our department and meet with our department. We had to get out of our own "little box." We have been asked over and over to share our practices with other members of the faculty. It has become more than just do your job well. It is now help others to do their job well (see Table 4.17, TPC18).

In an optimal and ideal best state, the Leadership Growth Dimension of the Culture of Leadership fosters ongoing teaching and application of leadership principles in an intentional effort to grow leaders across the full school community. Key statements in both *Leadership Development* and *Leadership Connections* themes characterized the Leadership Growth Dimension exceptionally well. Student involvement in leadership growth and leadership activity was highlighted in the following key statement: "There is a focus on team-building within each grade level with increased responsibility as role models and leaders for the older students" (see Table 4.17, LE5). The extent to which student specific programs, events, and traditions aligned with criteria for both the *Leadership Development* and *Leadership Connections* themes was exemplified by this key statement from the 2016 Final Staff Culture Survey:

Assemblies for the students that emphasize academics and leadership have been established as well. We have strengthened involvement in student government and community service programs. We have continued stressing academics and developed an enhanced version of the 8th grade Camp Mountain Run outing to emphasize leadership their role as school leaders (see Table 4.17, LE3).

The powerful impact of intentional and purposeful actions to teach and apply leadership principles was characterized in yet another key statement with crossover alignment between the *Leadership Development* and *Leadership Connections* themes:

I have found over the course of my twenty years in the teaching profession that the leadership within the school building plays a large role in the overall effectiveness of the school operating at a high level. The leadership of the Principal, the Dean of students and the office staff becomes more contagious with

the faculty which trickles down to the student body. This leadership has led to an outstanding culture within the middle school (see Table 4.17, LE11).

The Leadership Growth Dimension of the Culture of Leadership Framework capitalizes on the contagious effect documented in the above key statement especially when this dimension is dynamically integrated with the other three dimensions of Leadership Orientation, Leveraging Leadership, and Leadership for Learning. One final 2016 key statement aligned with the *Leadership Development* and *Leadership Connections* themes within the Leadership Growth Dimension not only exemplified the positive and potent cultural change for both staff and students but also the power of the interplay between all four dimensions of the Culture of Leadership Framework:

As the Student Council Advisor I went from taking on a new group that only had a few ideas to add to the school, to becoming one of our biggest clubs. Student Council teaches students to be better people, to give back, and to put others first all the while keeping school spirit and community alive—to be leaders. Four years ago we began the "Day of Giving" to show students all we have accomplished as a team to the giving back aspect. I have been overwhelmed and impressed by our students' way of coming together for the common good (see Table 4.17, LE10).

This key statement provides an excellent opportunity to portray the dynamic nature of the Culture of Leadership Framework. By the end of the ten-year study, all four dimensions were in play in the school culture. The Student Council Advisor and membership were empowered for action by an attitude of leadership in the school culture (Dimension I: Leadership Orientation). In turn, the Student Council Advisor acted with a spirit of respectful interaction and a foundation of meaningful relationships to release membership potential for action in accordance with a common language and vision (Dimension II: Leveraging Leadership). Unwilling to settle for serving only self and their school community, the Student Council membership moved beyond the walls of the school and themselves with a "Day of Giving" leadership action that showed

significant merit and contribution (Dimension III: Leadership for Learning). In turn, the Student Council Advisor, membership, and program collaborated to both “grow” leaders and to allow those very leaders to situate themselves in leadership roles (Dimension IV: Leadership Growth).

Student Discipline: Context for the Culture of Leadership Framework

The theme of student discipline emerged in all six of the surveys across the ten-year study and told a revealing story regarding the evolution of the Culture of Leadership Framework in the St. Marys Middle School. A just, fair, and caring school tops the responsibility of an ethical leader (NPBEA, 2015; Sergiovanni, 2009). Additionally, from the start of the 21st Century, there has been an increased focus on and expectation for the school leader to be transformative and to attend to social justice (Bogotch, Beachum, Blount, Brooks & English, 2008; Marshall & Oliva, 2006; Shields, 2004; Shoho, Merchant, & Lugg, 2005). A social justice expectation for a just, fair, and caring school places student discipline in the limelight for a school leader. Moreover, because of the prominence and consistency of the student discipline theme, the topic warrants closer analysis and attention and provides context for the impact of the Culture of Leadership Framework.

The Initial Staff Culture Survey from 2006 contained response themes of staff pride in *Student Discipline* (at the school level) and *Structure, Organization, Respect, or Discipline* (at the classroom level). At the same time, when asked about “one thing to change,” the top two 2006 Survey response themes highlighted *Attention to At-Risk* and *Reward the Good—Remove the Bad*. The staff noted great pride in the discipline and control they had achieved within the school culture and yet frustration with the time, effort, and attention required to do so.

These statements can be better understood in the context of the discipline referral history from the St. Marys Middle School for the five years prior to this study (2001-2005). Those data

revealed an average of 2,000+ discipline referrals per year as displayed in Figure 4.1 that shows the student discipline referral history from 2006 through 2016.

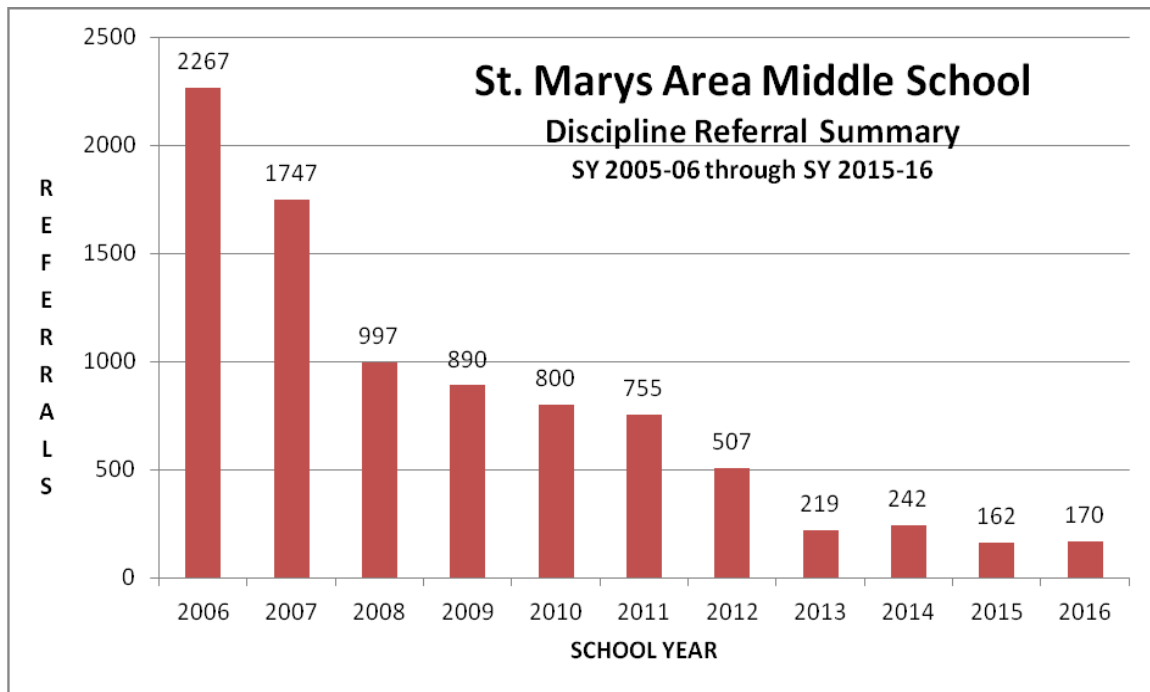


Figure 4.1. School Discipline referral statistics from 2006 through 2016.

As mentioned, the 2006 Initial Staff Culture Survey response themes distinctly noted pride in the staff’s ability to discipline and control of students. Figure 4.1 shows 2006 as the highest number of discipline referrals (2,267) and documents a steady decline in discipline referrals across the ten years of this study. While a student enrollment decrease of 64 students—579 students in 2006 to 515 students in 2016—could account for some of the decline in referrals, clearly that small decline could not be the cause of the drastic reduction in discipline referrals.

2007—2008 Student Discipline: Context for the Culture of Leadership

To be fair, the average discipline referrals of over 2,000 per year prior to the study and the 2006 peak rate of 2,267 referrals, included staff discipline referrals for students who failed to complete homework. The practice of submitting homework incompleteness as a discipline referral

was discontinued in 2007 and could account for the drop in over 500 discipline referrals that year (from 2,267 referrals in 2006 to 1,747 referrals in 2007). Yet, this would not explain the steady decline in the subsequent year: a drop of 750 discipline referrals from 2007 to 2008 (see Figure 4.1). To better understand the cultural changes that contributed to the discipline decline, I tracked the response themes from the 2007 and 2008 Mid-Year Feedback Surveys to provide a potential explanation.

As mentioned, student discipline related themes emerged across the ten year study. But, as early as the 2007 and 2008 Mid-Year Feedback response themes, there was a noted shift in staff sentiment from student control and management to the empowerment as characterized in the Leadership Orientation and the Leveraging Leadership Dimensions of the Culture of Leadership Framework. When staff responded to the “Continue doing what?” prompt in the 2007 Mid-Year Feedback Survey (see Table 4.5), the *Positivity with Students* theme responses (22 responses) literally doubled the *Student Accountability* theme responses (11 responses). The same “Continue doing what?” prompt in the 2008 Mid-Year Feedback Survey (see Table 4.8) elicited 11 staff responses in the *Positive Strengths Approach* theme as compared to only 3 staff responses in the *Student Discipline* theme. The data showed that staff desire for controlling and disciplining students remained. Nevertheless, student engagement and involvement; staff collaboration; the development of meaningful relationships, and respectful interaction—the look-for criteria that characterized the Culture of Leadership Framework—gained a foothold early in the study.

2013—2014 Student Discipline: Context for the Culture of Leadership

Figure 4.1 showed the dramatic decline in student discipline referrals from 2006 to 2008 followed by the very steady and consistent decline in referrals of 80 per year from 2009 through

2011. There were 755 discipline referrals in 2011 and that constituted a difference of over 1,500 referrals over the first five years of this study. School year 2012 showed another significant drop of nearly one-third less than the prior year (755 referrals in 2011 and 507 in 2012). The 2013 referral total (219) was less than half of the previous year. The Dean of Students assumed additional leadership roles with MS-TV announcements and the enrichment program during the 2012 and 2013 school years and there was an increased emphasis on classroom teachers managing students. The expanded leadership role for the Dean of Students and a reliance on classroom teacher leadership of students is consistent with the Culture of Leadership Framework and the associated dimensions: Leadership Orientation, Leveraging Leadership, Leadership for Learning, and Leadership.

As evidence, when staff responded to the “Continue doing what?” prompt in the 2013 Mid-Year Feedback Survey (see Table 4.11), the high volume of *Student Involvement and Celebrations* theme responses (16 responses) and the *Collaboration, Teamwork, and Alignment* theme responses (14 responses) far outweighed any staff desire for student control in the *Structure and Direction* theme responses (6 responses). And, the “Continue doing what?” prompt in the 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey (see Table 4.14) resulted in 27 staff responses within three themes *Student Enrichment and Empowerment; Inspiring and Motivational Actions; and Collaboration and Alignment*. Notably, there was no student discipline related theme from the 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey “Continue doing what?” prompt. The data showed, however, this was not a total and magical transformation embracing the Culture of Leadership Framework. Staff continued to express concern about student discipline, but their feedback suggested an identifiable change of perspective.

The Culture of Leadership Framework pillars of growing leaders, involving both staff and students in leadership roles, releasing control over students, and empowering the school community with a common core value language of respect, responsibility, and effort remained a challenge. The “Start doing what?” prompt from the 2013 Mid-Year Feedback Survey posted 10 responses in the *Student Discipline and Management* theme (see Table 4.12). Several of the responses, however, contained more of a preventive tone (e.g., more adults in the cafeteria for lunch monitoring and listing detention students on the daily bulletin). Four of the 10 theme responses focused on singular item: the debate about plagiarism as a discipline issue, an academic issue, or both.

By 2014, the “Start doing what?” prompt of the Mid-Year Feedback Survey contained only four response in the *Discipline and Student Management* theme (see Table 4.15). The other “Start doing what?” themes of *Academic Enhancement* (eight responses) and *Student Program Enrichment* (six responses) revealed an important change in staff focus and emphasis. Controlling and managing students gave way to look-for criteria from the Leadership Orientation, Leadership for Learning, and Leadership Growth Dimensions. Evidence of a Culture of Leadership was mounting. The discipline referral rate alone provides compelling evidence.

In comparison to a discipline referral average of over 1,200 per year from the first six years of the study, discipline referrals averaged 230 per year over the two year period of 2013 and 2014. Over the next two years of 2015 and 2016 the referral rate averaged only 165 discipline referrals per year. The discipline referral numbers had changed dramatically from 2006 and so had the student discipline topics of discussion, focus, and staff language.

For example, the Initial Staff Culture Suvery of 2006, showed staff responses in the *Reward the Good—Remove the Bad* and the *Attention to At-risk* themes that were characterized

by the following (In response to the prompt, “The one thing I’d like to change in the St. Marys Middle School is...): “The disrespectful attitude that quite a few of the students seem to have toward teachers or others in positions of authority”; “The practice of giving students multiple chances to clean up their actions”; and “Something or some way to deal with—perhaps an alternative classroom—the chronic repeaters who represent the majority of our discipline problems” (see Table 4.2, AA3, AA4, AA2). In contrast, the “Stop doing what?” prompt from the 2014 Mid-Year Feedback Survey showed staff responses like the following in the *Student Discipline* theme: “Stop allowing students to go anywhere during 3rd period homeroom without a pass...we need someone checking for a pass (maybe student hall monitors?)”; “Stop allowing students to attend fundraiser rewards if they didn’t sell or participate (these students didn’t earn the reward)”; and “Stop students from chewing gum—it’s distracting and looks awful when substitute teachers and guest speakers come to our school” (see Table 4.16, SD2, SD3, SD4).

The serious discipline related respect issues staff noted in the 2006 staff feedback were reduced to hall pass, participation, and gum chewing concerns by 2014. The contrast in responses from the 2014 Mid-Year Feedback to the 2006 Initial Staff Survey Feedback provided evidence of greater look-for criteria alignment in each of the four dimensions of the Culture of Leadership Framework. For example, involving students and staff to a greater degree (the Leadership Orientation Dimension) and communicating and following a common vision, mission, and set of core values (the Leveraging Leadership Dimension) led to less of a need for student control and consequences. Opening opportunity for value added initiatives (the Leadership for Learning Dimension) and supporting the leadership development of the school community membership (the Leadership Growth Dimension) resulted in positive staff and student initiated activities and shared leadership roles. Student discipline remained a theme in

some of the key statements from the 2016 Final Staff Culture Survey, but staff language continued the strong trend of recognizing positive growth.

2016 Student Discipline: Context for the Culture of Leadership

Eleven key statements from the 2016 Final Staff Culture Survey contained references to student discipline and were categorized in the appropriately named *Student Discipline Evolution* theme (see Table 4.17). Nine of the key statements noted the positive direction of student discipline and two noted faculty frustration with having more student management responsibility. The 2006 Initial Staff Survey and the 2007 and 2008 Mid-Year Feedback Survey’s consistently had responses in the various student discipline themes that expressed concern and were critical of releasing control and shifting from consequences to opportunity—perspectives that challenged the tenets of the Culture of Leadership.

The past attitudes and actions in conflict with the Culture of Leadership were highlighted in some of the key statements. For instance one key statement stated, “It is difficult to write about our school 10 years ago without understanding the previous 5 or 6 years. Those years...characterized by an attempt of the faculty to gain control over behavior of students. It was a time of punishment, harshness, discipline referrals and suspensions” (Table 4.17, SDE5). Another key statement began, “The culture has changed at the school from a place where everyone go yelled at at all of the time...” (Table 4.17, SDE3). And another, “We have stopped mixing academic consequences with behavioral consequences” (Table 4.14, SDE1). These key statements clearly recognized the high volume discipline referral years from 2006 and the beginning of this study.

The low discipline referral average of less than 200 referrals per year from 2012 through 2016 revealed a remarkable evolution from the 2006 school year high point of over 2,200

referrals. The language of the key statements, however, characterized the evolution even more so and exemplified the transformation to a Culture of Leadership. Key statements like the following captured the transformation: “The atmosphere is one of mutual respect”; “...a place where people and students talk to one another and try to figure things out”; “the culture has changed dramatically to one of respect, nurturing, and caring”; and “the carrot /stick approach has diminished and in and out of school suspensions hardly ever occur” (see Table 4.17, SDE2, SDE3, SDE5, SDE6).

What’s more, eight of the eleven key statements from the *Student Discipline Evolution* theme of the 2016 Final Staff Culture Survey contained look-for criteria associated with the Leveraging Leadership Dimension. These eight statements highlighted the respectful interaction criterion was most frequently. Learning results—learner actions look-for criteria associated with the Leadership Orientation Dimension were part of seven of the eleven key statements in the *Student Discipline Evolution* theme. And seven of the eleven key statements in the theme contained references to the core values look-for criteria from the Leadership for Learning Dimension. The data from the six surveys across the ten years, along with the discipline referral history from 2006 through 2016 (see Figure 4.1), provide strong evidence that the application of the principles of the Culture of Leadership Framework resulted in a positive perspective change as well as impact on the sensitive, persistent, and important topic of student discipline in the St. Marys Middle School.

Limitations of the Culture of Leadership Framework and Study

The limitations of the Culture of Leadership Framework and the study are either bias or process limitations. In part, the bias limitations are the result of the researcher also serving as the writer of the study and leader of the school involved in the ten-year study. First, study

participants were apprised of informed consent protocol, however, there is no getting around the fact that participants were responding to their direct supervisor. Accordingly, their responses may not necessarily be as objective as desired. Second, the researcher created the Culture of Leadership Framework utilized for the study. The framework emerged from an extensive review of the literature. Nevertheless, the researcher making application of his very creation is a limitation of this study no matter the effort made to remain neutral to the data. In the same vein, the researcher constructed all the themes associated with the six different surveys that comprised the ten-year study. Finally, the researcher was the only individual involved in the analysis of the data and applying the look-for criteria associated with the Culture of Leadership Framework.

Two process limitations come to the forefront of this Culture of Leadership study: survey differences and the absence of student input. There were six surveys involved in the study. Using the same study six times over would have provided the ideal scenario. In fact, there were three different surveys and clear effort to associate and connect the data (see Chapter IV, Data Analysis and Findings). In Phase I of the study, the Initial Staff Culture Survey from 2006 is different from the four identical Mid-Year Feedback Surveys (2007, 2008, 2013, 2014). The researcher aligned the prompts from these two surveys as closely as possible to analyze the results. In Phase II, the 2016 Final Staff Culture Survey served as the only instrument to gather data specifically for the purpose of the study. Compiling the data from each survey into major themes and then analyzing against the look-for criteria of the Culture of Leadership Framework mitigates some of the survey differences. The adults in the school setting provided the survey data for analysis and student input is not a part of the study. Time constraints, consent challenges, and the fact that reliable and legitimate student input was not available from the outset of the study led to this limitation.

Concluding, a mention of student achievement in relation to a Culture of Leadership is in order. The absence of student achievement from this study is not a limitation, but rather, a topic for future research. The principal is a major influence in the development of school culture and student achievement (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010; Hallinger, 2003; Hallinger and Heck, 1996; Wallace Foundation, 2013). This study focuses on the intentional and purposeful development of a school culture of leadership. There is no denying the holy grail of school is student achievement. School culture as a vital precursor or, at the very least, a necessary partner to a focus on student achievement. Fullan (2010), and Senge et al. (2012) are among the most prominently published researchers on systems thinking and both heavily promote interrelationships and interdependencies in learning organizations and a focus on culture. I propose there is a strong relationship between a Culture of Leadership and student achievement because of the interrelationships and interdependence culture factor alluded to by both Fullan and Senge. Adding strength to this argument, Senge (2012) defines a system as “any perceived structure whose elements hang together because they continually affect each other over time” (p.124). With this in mind, the Culture of Leadership will inherently influence student achievement and vice-versa. A formal study of how the elements of the Culture of Leadership and student achievement “hang together” and affect each other offers an intriguing topic for future study.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION: APPLICATION AND PROMISE

The Culture of Leadership Utility and Literature Alignment

The ten-year study provides evidence of the utility of the Culture of Leadership Framework. The framework emerged from an extensive literature review and was applied to the St. Marys Area Middle School setting and analyzed for utility in an *after the fact* manner. Prior to a concluding discussion and a practical application guide showing the promise of the Culture of Leadership, following is a brief summary of the framework’s fundamental alignment with the research. Figure 5.1 presents a visual to assist with the literature connections.

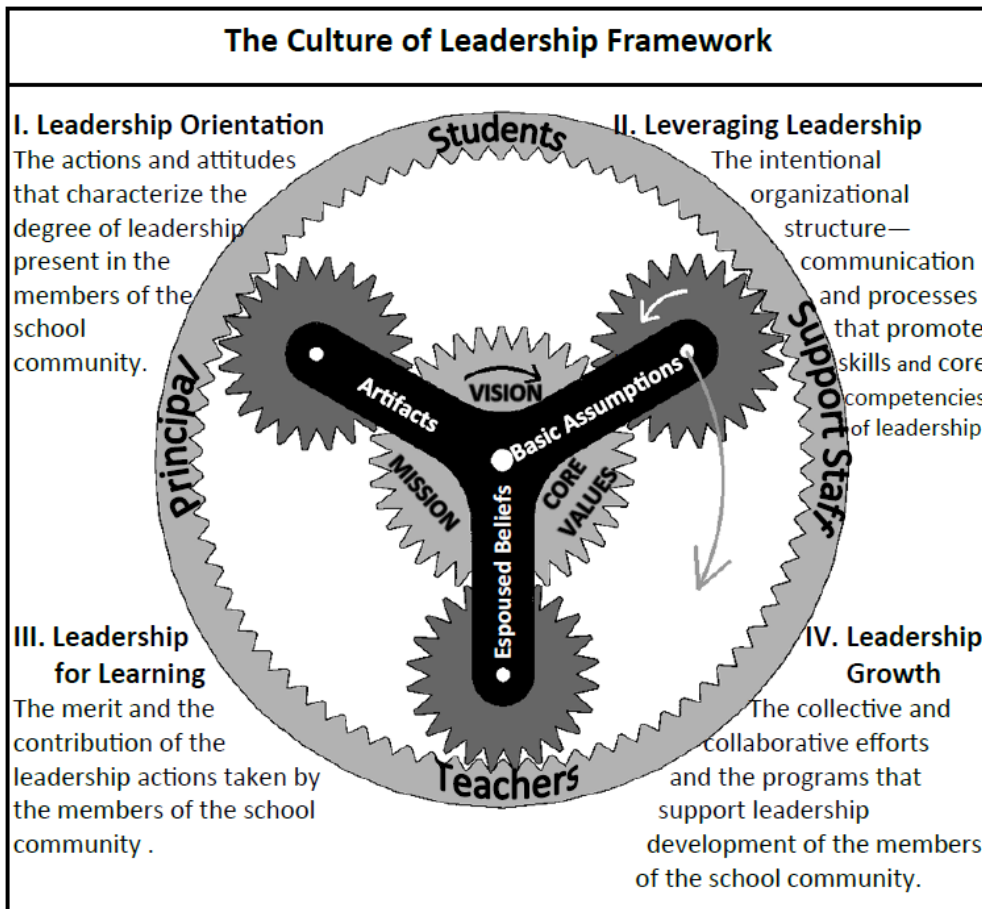


Figure 5.1. The Culture of Leadership Framework populated with Vision, Mission, and Core Values; the Three Levels of Culture (Schein, 1992); and the Four Dimensions.

The Culture of Leadership Framework serves as a means for nurturing and developing a much more dynamic school culture that infuses leadership up, down, and throughout the membership of the school learning community with students as a central figure. Accordingly, the Culture of Leadership Framework includes four separate groups of indicators identified as Dimensions of a Culture of Leadership—*Dimension I: Leadership Orientation; Dimension II: Leveraging Leadership; Dimension III: Leadership for Learning; and Dimension IV: Leadership Growth*. Each of the Dimensions of a Culture of Leadership is defined, described in an optimal and ideal state, and is measured against look-for criteria that serve as indicators of their presence and relative strength in the school culture (see Figures 3.3—3.6).

The Culture of Leadership Framework intentionally places students as the central figure and this concept is rooted in ethical leadership. Sergiovanni (2009) frames ethical leadership as the combination of management know-how with values and ethics. Sergiovanni goes on to say, “Leadership practice, as a result, is always concerned both with what is effective and what is good; what works and what makes sense; doing things right and doing right things” (p. 8). The creation of a just, fair, and caring community of learners must be at the core of all decision making in the school. The school principal’s guidance, direction and support of a just, fair, and caring community of learners serves as the foundation of ethical thinking and is explicitly identified in the elements that elaborate the work needed to meet the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (NPBEA, 2015). There is also an increased focus on and expectation for the school leader to be transformative and to attend to social justice (Bogotch, Beachum, Blount, Brooks & English, 2008; Marshall & Oliva, 2006; Shields, 2004; Shoho, Merchant, & Lugg, 2005). The Culture of Leadership focus on developing the leadership capacity of students aligns with attention to social justice and challenges traditional systems and structures with policies and

practices that fail to consider the needs of all members of the community. In fact, increased attention on social justice and unjust power structures heightens a focus on the moral purposes of leadership in schools as well as how to achieve these purposes (Furman, 2003). The Culture of Leadership Framework intentionally establishes leadership practice, application, and growth—with students as a central figure—as the “how” referenced by Furman.

Leadership and culture are the key and foundational components of the Culture of Leadership Framework and both have strong research support. Leadership sets the tone and strongly influences the culture in any organization (Elder & Paul, 2012; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Peterson & Cosner, 2006; Schein, 2010; Sullivan, 2009). The literature on school culture prominently establishes the definition of culture in relation to patterns of actions, thoughts, feelings, and interactions stemming from assumptions, norms, values, beliefs, symbols and tangible artifacts (Elder & Paul, 2012; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Peterson & Cosner, 2006; Schein, 1992, 2004; Sullivan, 2009). Gruenert and Whitaker (2015) distinguished culture as “the way we do things around here...based on values and beliefs...that determines whether or not improvement is possible” (p.10). Culture is a most important driver and Fullan (1999; 2007) contends school improvement efforts are effective to the degree they are carried out alongside a “re-culturing” mindset.

As much as leadership and culture provide the foundation for the Culture of Leadership, the dynamic interactions of the components of the framework generate the enormous potential and power. The framework intentionally conveys an inside out approach with vision, mission, and core values as the primary and central cog in the Culture of Leadership Framework. Vision and educational leadership are intricately woven together. In general, vision serves to begin transformation processes (Collins & Porras, 1984; Dinham, 2005; Hunt, 1991; Kotter, 1990;

Strange & Mumford, 2002, 2005) and is an essential foundation for action for leaders of learning organizations (Hallinger, 2003; Johnson, 2002; Senge et al., 2012).

The critical nature of vision, mission, and core values to creating school culture is supported in the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015 (previously ISLLC Standards). The Professional Standard 1, Mission, Vision, and Core Values, points out that “effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student” (NPBEA, 2015, p. 9). This primary standard calls on effective leaders to operate in collaboration with members of the school community “to develop an educational mission...to develop and promote a vision...and, to articulate, advocate, and cultivate core values that define the school’s culture” (p. 9). In developing this initial standard for effective school leaders, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA, 2015) was abundantly clear about the need for leaders to “develop a shared understanding and commitment to vision, mission, and core values” (p. 9), but to also call on educational leaders to “model and pursue the school’s mission, vision, and core values in all aspects of leadership” (p. 9). At the very outset, the NPBEA recognized that, in order to be effective, school leaders need to institute patterns of actions, thoughts, and feelings with connections to a vision, mission, and core values.

Three constantly moving and evolving levels of culture cogs that surround the central cog of vision, mission, and core value institute patterns of actions, thoughts, and feelings within the framework. According to Schein (1992; 2004), actions and interactions in the school community create cultural representations on three levels: artifacts, espoused beliefs, and basic assumptions. The school culture impact of the actions and interactions involving vision, mission, and core values and the three levels of culture is powerful and pervasive. In fact, the literature on school

culture prominently establishes the definition of culture in relation to these very patterns of actions, thoughts, feelings, and interactions stemming from assumptions, norms, values, beliefs, symbols and tangible artifacts (Elder & Paul, 2012; Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015; Peterson & Cosner, 2006; Schein, 1992, 2004; Sullivan, 2009).

The outside moving gear ring of the Culture of Leadership Framework identifies the all-important human capital in the school community: the principal, support staff, teachers, and students. Focusing on and leveraging the leadership potential of the entire school community membership accelerates the development of a school culture of leadership (Collins, 2001; Fullan, 2011a; Kotter, 1996, 2012; Whitaker, 2003). Collaboration, learning communities, and capacity building is heralded in the research on school leadership (DuFour & Marzano, 2009; Dufour & Fullan, 2013; Fullan, 2010; Leithwood & Seashore Louis, 2012). Spurring leadership in others only makes sense when recognizing the obvious challenge that exists to accomplish goals, carry out the mission, and make progress toward an ambitious vision. There is significant and longstanding agreement that leaders need others to help accomplish a group's purpose and need to develop leaders across the organization (Gardner, 1983; Kouzes & Posner, 2008; Yukl, 2012).

The Culture of Leadership Framework clearly shows both internal and external movement and more genuinely represent the dynamic cultural interaction involving leadership principles and the school community. The outside ring consists of students, teachers, the principal, and the support staff. The ring moves and the school community members both influence and are exerting influence on the four dimensions. In other words, the people continuously co-create the culture and the current culture helps to form the leadership identities of the members of the school community. The inside gear movement is made obvious as well (with the arrows). Theoretically, all movement is made with respect to the school vision,

mission, and core values depicted at the center of the graphic. Again, a reciprocal relationship between the school community and the vision, mission, and core values contributes significantly to the school culture.

A Culture of Leadership is one of reciprocity and mutual respect among the members of the learning community. Fielding (2006), used the person-centered descriptor and characterized the learning community as a place where students and teachers are genuinely working and learning together as partners within relationships based on mutual trust, care, autonomy and respect. In accordance with the person-centered learning community of Fielding (2006), the language of the theoretical framework of the Culture of Leadership is inclusive and values driven; enduringly collegial; co-constructive and collaborative; and dialogic with students and between students and staff. Renowned organizational culture expert Edgar Schien (2010) who stated: “The only thing of importance that leaders do is to create and manage culture” (p. 22), captures the critical importance of this unique culture development journey. The theoretical framework of a Culture of Leadership serves as a key resource to study and analyze the important creation and management of culture. What’s more, by applying the Culture of Leadership theory of action to a district, building, or classroom, leadership principles and action become the most significant driver of the culture. Following is a practical application at the building level that further shows the utility and promise of the Culture of Leadership Framework.

A Culture of Leadership Theory of Action for Building Leaders

“Culture and leadership are two sides of the same coin. Leaders manage the culture or the culture manages them.” –Edgar Schein

The Rationale for a Culture of Leadership Theory of Action

Few changes in public education during the turn of the last century have had greater impact on the school than the development of the principalship (Rousmaniere, 2013). Fullan (2014) characterizes the modern principal responsibility as follows: “They are expected to run a smooth school; manage health, safety, and the building; innovate without upsetting anyone; connect with students and teachers; be responsive to parents and the community; answer to their districts; and above all deliver results” (p. 6). The new role of the principal is evolving and looking to be redefined. The research on school leadership is heralding collaboration, learning communities, and capacity building (DuFour & Marzano, 2009; Dufour & Fullan, 2013; Fullan, 2010; Leithwood & Seashore Louis, 2012). Fullan and Hargreaves (2012) agree and expand even further with the concept of the principal making every effort to impact the professional capital of teachers as a high yield strategy.

To be certain the high yield strategy to impact the professional capital of teachers is every bit a part of the Culture of Leadership theory of action. Teachers must be included if there is any chance for effective change in school practice. The literature consistently encourages school leaders to be the change agent catalysts (Barth, 2002; Fullan, 2006a; Kondokci & Beycioglu, 2014; Payne, 2008) while also noting that teachers involved in professional learning communities have the wherewithal to change the existing culture and drive the daily work of the school (DuFour, 2015; DuFour & Fullan, 2013; DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2010). The Culture of Leadership includes teachers but moves the markers, measures, and discussion to yet

another level because the adults involved in school culture and focused on instructional improvement have only taken us so far. Fullan (2002) argues:

The principal as instructional leader has taken us only so far in the quest for continuous improvement. We now must raise our sights and focus on principals as leaders in a culture of change and the associated conditions that will make this possible on a large scale, sustainable basis (p. 20).

The Culture of Leadership theory of action provides opportunity for continuous improvement with principals “raising their sights,” and going well beyond the en vogue instructional leadership. Building principals can use the Culture of Leadership Framework to establish the “associated conditions” Fullan (2002, p.20) had in mind to obtain large scale and sustainable improvement.

The school and school leader challenge to make significant change is more significant than ever. At least part of the urgency is borne out of a public perception that schools are failing. Plugging “failing schools” into the searchable database Nexis resulted in 544 hits in newspapers and wire stories for the month of January 2012 (Farhi, 2012). The number of failing schools according to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) criteria, the lackluster performance by students on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessment that makes up the Nation’s Report Card, and the mediocre ranking of American students on international assessments like PISA and TIMSS are used as rationale for attacking educators (DuFour, 2015). The legitimacy and merit of the critique is a source of much controversy and debate. Nonetheless, the result is a firestorm of reform initiatives and pressures that land in lap of school leaders. Charter schools, vouchers, more testing, intense supervision and evaluation of teachers, student growth measures as a part of teacher effectiveness, merit pay, and closing low

performing school are just a few of the reform strategies. School leaders are under serious scrutiny and need a concrete and principle-centered approach to help handle the everyday challenge of educating the youth that come to their classrooms. Accordingly, I propose the Culture of Leadership theory of action to confront the challenge.

It is my contention that intentionally nurturing and developing a much more dynamic school culture that infuses leadership up, down, and throughout the membership of the school learning community with students as a central figure opens opportunity for reframing, incorporating, and implementing meaningful initiatives. A Culture of Leadership promotes leadership opportunity and development across the entire school. A Culture of Leadership provides the ways and means for the school leader to share the challenges of change, to release the leadership potential in all members of the school community, and fully involves the learning community in their own destiny. In particular, a Culture of Leadership goes beyond building the leadership capacity of the adults in the school setting and focuses on releasing the leadership potential in students. Ultimately, a Culture of Leadership provides students a strong and steady voice in their own educational journey. A Culture of Leadership has the net effect of evolving the school, as Fielding (2006) puts it, to “a place that involves young people in reflection and dialogue, a place where humanity emerges from and guides the learning together” (p. 312). What follows is a guide for the building principal to apply the Culture of Leadership Framework.

Applying the Culture of Leadership Theory of Action

*“Coming together is a beginning;
keeping together is progress;
working together is success.”* –Henry Ford

To apply the Culture of Leadership Framework at the building level the school principal begins by honoring the research associated with organizational change. The literature review in this dissertation of practice gives considerable credence to leading change. Effectively leading

change is a critical function for the modern school principal. And so, using the eight sequential and invariant steps for managing change from John Kotter’s (1996, 2012) best-selling book *Leading Change* makes great sense for a school principal looking at the Culture of Leadership Framework. Below, Figure 5.2 provides detail of the eight steps necessary to effectively transform an organization during a change initiative.

The Eight-Stage Process of Creating Major Change	
1.	Establish a sense of urgency about the need to achieve change – people will not change if they cannot see the need to do so.
2.	Create a guiding coalition – assemble a group with power, energy, and influence in the organization to lead the change.
3.	Develop a vision and strategy – create a vision of what the change is about, tell people why the change is needed and how it will be achieved.
4.	Communicate the change vision – tell people, in every possible way and at every opportunity, about the why, what, and how of the changes.
5.	Empower broad-based action – involve people in the change effort, get people to think about the changes and how to achieve them rather than thinking about why they do not like the changes and how to stop them.
6.	Generate short-term wins – seeing the changes happening and working and recognizing the work being done by people towards achieving the change is critical.
7.	Consolidate gains and produce more change – create momentum for change by building on successes in the change, invigorate people through the changes, develop people as change agents.
8.	Anchor new approaches in the corporate culture – this is critical to long-term success and institutionalizing the changes. Failure to do so may mean that changes achieved through hard work and effort slip away with people’s tendency to revert to the old and comfortable ways of doing things

Figure 5.2. Kotter’s Change Model with supporting detail (Kotter, 1996, p. 21; Smith, 2005, p. 154)

The initial stage advocated by Kotter (1996, 2012) is to establish a sense of urgency. In fact, Kotter followed-up on the critical nature of this first stage with an entire monograph entitled *A Sense of Urgency*. In response to being asked to identify the single biggest error people make when they try to change, Kotter (2008) stated: “After reflection, I decided the answer was that they did not create a high enough sense of urgency among enough people to set the stage for making a challenging leap into some new direction” (p. viii).

The Culture of Leadership Collaborative Inquiry – Establishing Urgency

In the interest of establishing a sense of urgency, the first step the principal takes in applying the Culture of Leadership is conducting a collaborative inquiry. Below, Figure 5.3 represents a sample of the Culture of Leadership Collaborative Inquiry for Dimension I: Leadership Orientation. The complete collaborative inquiry is in Appendix A.

A Culture of Leadership Collaborative Inquiry		
Levels of Practice	1 = Does not happen, or happens in less than 10% of observable practices.	
	2 = Happens infrequently, or happens in less than 25% of observable practices.	
	3 = Happens sometimes, or happens in at least 50% of observable practices.	
	4 = Happens frequently, or happens in at least 75% of observable practices.	
	5 = Happens all the time, or happens in at least 90% of observable practices.	
Dimension I: Leadership Orientation		
The actions and attitudes that characterize the degree of leadership present in members of the school community.		
Look-For		
1. Collaboration and teamwork: principal--teacher; teacher--teacher; teacher--student; student-student		
1.a	The principal values teachers' ideas and trusts the professional judgments of teachers.	1 2 3 4 5
1.b	Teachers are involved in the decision making process and are taken seriously.	1 2 3 4 5
1.c	The principal facilitates teachers working together and keeps them informed on current issues.	1 2 3 4 5
1.d	Teachers have opportunity for dialogue and planning together and spend time together planning	1 2 3 4 5
1.e	Teachers take time to talk "classroom practice" and/or observe each other teaching.	1 2 3 4 5
1.f	Teachers are generally aware of what other teachers are teaching.	1 2 3 4 5
1.g	Teachers work together to develop and evaluate programs and projects	1 2 3 4 5
1.h	The principal, teachers and students work together on expectations in the school community	1 2 3 4 5
1.j	Teachers believe student voice is an important part of the effectiveness of the school community.	1 2 3 4 5
1.k	Students are involved in decision making and kept informed of current issues in the school	1 2 3 4 5
1.l	Students work together for each others' success and the success of the school in general	1 2 3 4 5
2. High levels of engagement from teachers, students, and administration where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.		
2.a	The principal is attentive, optimistic, and passionate about the school as a learning community.	1 2 3 4 5
2.b	The teachers are attentive, optimistic, and passionate about the school as a learning community.	1 2 3 4 5
2.c	The students are attentive, optimistic and passionate about the school as a learning community.	1 2 3 4 5
2.d	There is evidence of the principal, teachers, and students working together and having great interest and motivation to join hands for the betterment of the learning community.	1 2 3 4 5
2.e	There is evidence that the members of the school community recognize the benefit and power of working together as opposed to territorialism and each group working on their own behalf.	1 2 3 4 5
3. A focus on learning results and learner actions versus teaching strategies and teacher actions.		
3.a	The principal focuses the school membership attention to learning and the learners in the community.	1 2 3 4 5
3.b	Teachers measure themselves against the performance of students as learners.	1 2 3 4 5
3.c	Teacher reflection and talk with one another focuses on students and learning (as opposed to teaching).	1 2 3 4 5
3d	Students acknowledge and recognize the number one goal of school as learning.	1 2 3 4 5
3e	All members of the school community consider themselves learners and teachers.	1 2 3 4 5
3f	Actions considered and taken in the school are focused on the learner and impact on learning.	1 2 3 4 5

Figure 5.3. Dimension I: Leadership Orientation Collaborative Inquiry excerpt

The Culture of Leadership Collaborative Inquiry shows a Levels of Practice rubric with a rating from 1 to 5 (low to high level of practice). Each rating includes a frequency percentage as well as an observable practice reference to cue the survey participant toward having evidence and a

strong justification for their chosen rating. The collaborative inquiry begins with the dimension definition—in this case, Dimension I: Leadership Orientation—and is followed by the sequentially numbered look-for criteria associated with the dimension. More specific culture indicators are listed below each major look-for of the dimension. For example, the initial look-for associated with Leadership Orientation is: 1. Collaboration and Teamwork. Collaboration and Teamwork is detailed with eleven indicators 1.a, 1.b, 1.c, etc. and each can be rated against the Level of Practice rubric. Below, Figure 5.4 displays the very same pattern for Dimension II: Leveraging Leadership.

A Culture of Leadership Collaborative Inquiry

Levels of Practice	1 = Does not happen, or happens in less than 10% of observable practices. 2 = Happens infrequently, or happens in less than 25% of observable practices. 3 = Happens sometimes, or happens in at least 50% of observable practices. 4 = Happens frequently, or happens in at least 75% of observable practices. 5 = Happens all the time, or happens in at least 90% of observable practices.
Dimension II: Leveraging Leadership	
The intentional organizational structure—style of leadership, communication, and processes—that promote the skills and core competencies of leadership and characterize how the members of the school community conduct business.	
Look-For	
1. Common language and common goals among the members.	
1.a	Vision ("what we aspire to be") has been developed and is known, shared, and communicated by the school membership. 1 2 3 4 5
1.b	Mission ("what we are all about on a daily basis") has been developed and is known, shared, and communicated by the school membership. 1 2 3 4 5
1.c	Core Values ("expectations for how we treat one another around here") are developed, known, shared and communicated by the school membership. 1 2 3 4 5
1.d	Differences in key terminology--Vision, Mission, Core Values--are understood and can be explained by school members. 1 2 3 4 5
1.e	The vision, mission, and core values have been developed with a collaborative process involving the school membership. 1 2 3 4 5
1.f	The vision, mission, and core values are compelling and provide a clear sense of direction for the school membership. 1 2 3 4 5
1.g	The most important goals of the organization (Wildly Important Goals - W.I.G.'s) have been developed with a collaborative process, are known, and can be clearly identified by the school membership. School members--including students--can explain their role in the achieving the goals. 1 2 3 4 5

Figure 5.4. Dimension II: Leveraging Leadership Collaborative Inquiry excerpt.

The principal completes the Culture of Leadership Collaborative Inquiry and also distributes the collaborative inquiry to the teaching and support staff for completion. In a high school or middle school setting, a random sampling of students can also be involved in the collaborative inquiry. Including students sets a tone for their involvement and the importance of

their voice right from the outset. Upon compiling the results of the collaborative inquiry, the principal will identify the current status of the school culture with respect to the Culture of Leadership Framework. An analysis of the results reveals both strengths and weaknesses in the four dimensions and within each of the look-fors. This collaborative inquiry analysis provides the critical sense of urgency platform that allows the principal to get meaningful change underway.

At this point, honoring the literature on change again is critical for the principal. Armed with the collaborative inquiry analysis, the principal might possibly be a tempted to fire off facts to instill a sense of fear and rush to a forceful and fast action plan. Journalist, author, and change researcher Alan Deutschman (2005; 2007) labels this logical and typical strategy as the facts, fear, and force (three F's) approach. Deutschman found the common sense notion of the three F's to be a woefully poor approach and his in-depth analysis of successful change initiatives outliers resulted in a simple replacement of facts, fear, and force with what he terms the three R's of change: Relate, Repeat, and Reframe (Deutschman, 2005, 2007; Freedman, 2007). Deutschman's simple but powerful contribution is consistent with, and reinforces, stage two of Kotter's (1996, 2012) process for managing major change: Creating a guiding coalition. Deutschman stresses relationship as a key to meaningful change and Kotter suggests getting a group of people together with the power, energy, and influence to lead change in the organization. With this change insight in mind, and fortified with the results of the collaborative inquiry, the principal needs to fully understand the hierarchy of the four Dimensions of the Culture of Leadership Framework before proceeding.

The Hierarchy of the Dimensions of the Culture of Leadership Framework

Dimension I: Leadership Orientation

“Unity is strength...when there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved.” –Mattie Stepanek

There is a definite hierarchy of importance and implementation associated with the four dimensions of the Culture of Leadership Framework. For the sake of example, let’s say that the collaborative inquiry revealed a weakness in Dimension I: Leadership Orientation. What to do? Fact is, weakness in this dimension stands in the way of change of any type or form. Leadership Orientation is the first dimension for good reason...it is the foundational dimension of the Culture of Leadership. A principal looking to apply the framework as a theory of action needs to know that it’s all about people not programs (Whitaker, 2003), getting the right people on the bus and in the right seats (Collins, 2001), building a guiding coalition (Kotter, 1996; 2012), striving for collegiality not simple congeniality (Fullan, 2011a) and relationships (Deutschman, 2005; 2007). The Leadership Orientation Dimension—the actions and attitudes that characterize the degree of leadership present in the members of the school community—must be the primary focal point for the building principal. If this dimension is weak, the principal begins with purpose and intention to foster collaboration, teamwork, high level engagement, a learning and learner focus, involvement with mutual benefit, and excitement about the future. If this dimension is strong, the principal acts with diligence and persistence to cultivate and maintain this essential strength while moving attention and action to the other dimensions of the Culture of Leadership. The details of the collaborative inquiry provide a road map for principal next steps and action items. All action begins with involving the staff and students in the process. In as much as the Leadership Dimension is foundational, the initial look-for—*Collaboration and*

Teamwork—is also foundational and research supported. As leadership expert Stephen Covey (1998) puts it: “no involvement, no commitment” (p. 143).

Eleven measurable indicators make up the *Collaboration and Teamwork* look-for and this look-for is consistent with the principal building a guiding coalition (Kotter, 1996; 2012).

Collaboration and Teamwork is also consistent with establishing strong relationships within the coalition membership (Deutschman, 2005; 2007). The principal needs a strong relationship with a guiding coalition to assist with a school wide effort to improve on the results of the collaborative inquiry. For instance, if the results of the collaborative inquiry revealed that the principal values teachers’ ideas and trusts the professional judgment of teachers (see indicator 1.a, Figure 5.3) *infrequently, or in less than 25% of observable practices*, the guiding coalition assists the principal with ideas to improve in this key area of the Leadership Orientation Dimension. Likewise, if the collaborative inquiry showed that students are involved in decision making and kept informed of current issues in the school (see indicator 1.k, Figure 5.3) *sometimes, or in at least 50% of observable practices*, the guiding coalition helps with actions that would improve student involvement and make certain these actions showed up as observable practice. Essentially, the principal uses the foundational look-for of *Collaboration and Teamwork* to examine each look-for as well as all indicators associated with each look-for.

Subsequently, the principal determines purposeful improvement action.

Dimension II: Leveraging Leadership

“As we look ahead into the next century, leaders will be those who empower others.” –Bill Gates

Suppose the collaborative inquiry indicates the culture is strong with observable practice in the Leadership Orientation Dimension. The principal and guiding coalition then apply reinforcement and maintenance action in this dimension—the Repeat of Deutschman’s (2005;

2007) three R's of change—and shift their focus to Dimension II: Leveraging Leadership.

Leveraging Leadership is the second dimension in the hierarchy and involves a very intentional organizational structure—style of leadership, communication, and processes—that promote the skills and core competencies of leadership and characterize how the members of the school community conduct business. The key levers of this dimension are the school vision, mission, and core values and, once again, the primary look-for—*Common language and common goals among the members*—serves as a major indicator and foundation for this dimension. As such, the principal and guiding coalition gives particular attention to explaining the terminology and generates a full and complete understanding of the distinction among these three terms while en route to developing and formulating them for the school community. For the purpose of use with the Culture of Leadership theory of action, following is a distinction of terms.

- Vision: What we aspire to be.
- Mission: What we are all about on a daily basis.
- Core Values: Expectations for how we treat one another around here.

The school community cannot leverage leadership amid confusion between terms or with only some of the membership understanding the language.

Kotter's (1996; 2012) third stage in the process of creating major changes is developing vision and strategy and Deutschman (2005; 2007) follows Relate and Repeat with his third R: Reframe. Using the collaborative inquiry results from the Leveraging Leadership Dimension of the Culture of Leadership theory of action allows the principal and guiding coalition to intentionally reframe the language, relationships, interactions, and leadership opportunities around a well-defined school vision, mission, and core values. There is a sound foundation in the literature for vision as a critical part of leadership. I acknowledge taking liberty to extend this

foundation to mission and core values as equally critical parts. In general, vision serves to begin transformation processes (Collins & Porras, 1984; Dinham, 2005; Hunt, 1991; Kotter, 1990; Strange & Mumford, 2002, 2005) and is an essential foundation for action for leaders of learning organizations (Hallinger, 2003; Johnson, 2002; Senge et al., 2012). According to Nanus (1992), “There is no more powerful engine driving an organization toward excellence and long-range success than an attractive, worthwhile vision of the future that is widely shared” (p. 3).

Transformational leadership places vision prominently as a motivator of effort and performance in people in school settings (Hallinger, 2003; Harris, 2005; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; Stewart, 2006). In many cases, vision is considered the essence of leadership creating a binding purpose among teachers that drives them to reach aspirations and ambitious goals (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; Ylimaki, 2006). Learning organization expert Peter Senge (2000) hones in on the critical nature of vision with the principle of creative tension. Creative tension emerges from the gap between where we want to be—vision—and the truth about where we are—our current reality.

The Culture of Leadership collaborative inquiry provides the creative tension Senge (2000) references. Within the Leveraging Leadership Dimension, the creative tension may well expose the lack of a developed, shared, and communicated vision, mission, and core values and/or confusion about these terms. Given the fact that vision, mission, and core values serve as the main cog at the very center of the Culture of Leadership Framework, they must be collaboratively developed, shared, and communicated. The principal cannot underestimate communicating the shared vision. Telling people in every possible way and at every opportunity, about the why, what, and how of the changes—Communicating the Change Vision is the fourth stage of Kotter’s (1996; 2012) change process. Of course, this is an extremely worthwhile

process albeit time-consuming and painstaking process. As a reinforcement of the hierarchical nature of the four dimensions, the process of developing the vision, mission, and core values in the Leveraging Leadership Dimension is much more doable and possible with a strong foundational dimension of Leadership Orientation. The time and energy the principal and guiding coalition give to improving Leadership Orientation pays huge dividends when tasked with developing the vision, mission, and core values that serve as the key indicators for observable evidence in the Leveraging Leadership Dimension.

As critical as the school vision, mission, and core values are to Leveraging Leadership, the most effective process for collaborative development of them is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Nonetheless the following five-step model from Senge (2012) offers a valuable perspective on building a shared vision and connects well to the style of leadership, communication, and processes of the Leveraging Leadership Dimension—particularly the involvement of students. Senge recognizes shared vision strategies as developmental because his stages are part of a process that ultimately helps build the leadership capacity of everyone in the living system. The five-stages move developmentally from dependency on a strong leader to the high level of active involvement and collaboration that is consistent with the Leadership Orientation Dimension of the Culture of Leadership. The stages are as follows:

1. Telling: Top down informing people directly, clearly, and consistently.
2. Selling: Enrolling people by way of relationships and a level of commitment.
3. Testing: Asking opinion and inviting consideration with revisions and rethinking.
4. Consulting: A team approach with open-ended questions and leader final control.
5. Co-Creating: Shared involvement in a creative orientation toward a desired future.

Communication strategies become paramount for an effective shared vision. Senge (2012) confirms what earlier researches argued in that “a vision is not really shared unless it has staying power and an evolving life force that lasts for years, propelling people through a continuous cycle of action learning and reflection” (p. 87).

Additionally, a few key points from the literature about collaborative vision development are worthy of mention to the principal who applies the Culture of Leadership theory of action. (Again, I consider mission and core value development as deserving of the same perspective the literature offers vision development). Current researchers report that the principal is typically the critical figure in making certain that a school vision is created (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, Wahlstrom, 2004; Murphy, Elliott, Goldring, & Porter, 2007). Notably, there is strong historical foundation to suggest that teachers are more likely to support a school vision that comes from a collaborative process involving the views of the principal, teachers and others (Licata, Teddlie, & Greenfield, 1990). The genuine involvement of stakeholders in vision development continued to hold up in follow-up research over the next ten years (Blase & Blase, 1997; Greenfield, 1988; Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996; Smith & Stolp, 1995). The involvement of teachers in visioning yielded additional positives in a school setting. Teachers perceive principals as robust in their leadership and effective as instructional supervisors when the principal exchanges ideas with them about the school vision and encourage sacrifices to accomplish the vision (Greenfield, Licata, & Johnson, 1992).

The literature supports the principal as the point person in the vision, mission, core value development. The literature is also clear about the effectiveness and positives of involving teachers and “other” stakeholders. While students may or not be an intended part of the “other” stakeholders in the literature, the Culture of Leadership theory of action is explicit with student

involvement in the development, communication, and application of the school vision, mission, and core values. Certainly, student involvement poses a challenge and requires due consideration of age appropriate participation. Still, student voice is the hallmark of the Culture of Leadership and student involvement is critical to the effective application of this theory of action. The principal gauges the level of observable practice that involves students in the Leveraging Leadership Dimension with specific look-for indicators on the collaborative inquiry. If necessary, the principal takes action alongside the guiding coalition to very intentionally ramp up student involvement. In a Culture of Leadership theory of action, the language, the goals, and all relationships and interactions of the school connect to the vision, mission, and core values. Accordingly, the involvement of students—the end users and primary beneficiary of school activity—only makes sense.

Dimension III: Leadership for Learning

“Leadership and learning are indispensable to one another.” –John F. Kennedy

After doing the worthwhile work associated with the first two dimensions of the Culture of Leadership, the principal and guiding coalition enter the exciting realm of Dimension III: Leadership for Learning. Indicators in the third dimension of the hierarchy focus the merit and contribution of the leadership actions taken by the members of the school community. Value-added ideas, actions, and initiatives—specific to the vision, mission, and core values—highlight these contributions to the learning environment. The Leadership for Learning look-fors criteria zero in on excitement about change and risk taking; expressions and feelings of pride in the learning environment and accomplishments; and actions related to vision, mission, and core values. These look-for criteria are in harmony with Kotter’s (1996; 2012) major change process stages of Empowering Broad-Based Action and Generating Short-Term Wins.

As an example of applying the Leadership for Learning Dimension, imagine that students in a given school community used the school vision and mission to propose a campus greenhouse as a cross-curricular addition to the school. This particular school community worked at and strengthened their Leadership Orientation and Leveraging Leadership Dimensions. They established a shared and communicated school vision: “A World Class Education...with the Rural Advantage.” Accordingly, serious consideration is given to making the campus greenhouse a reality since cross-curricular suggests a problem-based academic discipline collaboration (arguably a “world class” strategy). The greenhouse also plays into the rural advantage piece of the shared and communicated vision. Further application of the Leadership for Learning Dimension emerges within the stakeholder reaction to the actual addition of a greenhouse to the campus. Suppose the teaching staff frequently embraces the addition positively as an innovative opportunity to engage students in science, logbook journal entries, and gardening calculations despite the departure from the neat and tidy structure of the classroom setting. In this case, there is observable evidence of a strong Leadership for Learning Dimension. As a contrast, it is possible for the teaching staff to resist out of concern over the risk of the problem-based greenhouse activity taking time and attention away from deliberate classroom science, math, and ELA instruction measured on state assessments. Now, there is observable evidence of the next level of Leadership for Learning Dimension work for the principal and the guiding coalition. The Culture of Leadership Collaborative Inquiry detail (Appendix A) is the guide, the measurement resource, and the set of targets for the principal to use to strengthen the Leadership for Learning Dimension.

Given a successful greenhouse initiative, it is not hard to visualize the pride-filled storytelling and conversation about the unique manner that students are now learning their

science, ELA, and math. The principal openly ties the successful project to the school vision and mission and proudly congratulates all those involved. Students show up to school in their Green Thumb logo t-shirts that the downtown Master Gardeners so graciously donated to them. In addition to the Green Thumb t-shirt gift, the Master Gardeners serve as the community storytellers of their legacy opportunity to share and hand-off years of gardening expertise. Teacher conversations are dominated by pride and surprise about how student involvement in and ownership of the herb garden in the greenhouse is so prevalent. Many of these same students rarely took ownership in anything. The successful greenhouse scenario shows observable practice of a healthy and vibrant Leadership for Learning Dimension. If this fictional story were true, the principal and guiding coalition excitedly directs attention to the fourth and final dimension of the Culture of Leadership Framework: Leadership Growth.

Dimension IV: Leadership Growth

“Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others.” –Jack Welch

Although the Culture of Leadership Framework designates Leadership Growth fourth in the hierarchy, it is highly likely that efforts to meet look-for criteria in the other three dimensions influenced Leadership Growth by default. But, chance action and efforts are not nearly effective enough. Leadership Growth actions in a Culture of Leadership are intentional and purposeful. The principal and guiding coalition’s attention to Leadership Growth is easily linked to stage seven of Kotter’s (1996; 2012) change process—consolidating change and producing more change. Encouraging and supporting leadership development and releasing the leadership potential of both students and staff has the net impact of inviting more and more positive change into the school community. It is Kotter’s eighth stage—anchoring new approaches in the culture—however, that genuinely captures the power of this dimension of the Culture of

Leadership. The Leadership Growth dimension is the very essence of the theory of action framework because of the literal focus and intent to develop and grow a community of leaders. The lowest common denominator for Leadership Growth Dimension is to empower each individual in the school community to lead themselves. Then as an empowered leader, individual community members readily recognize the synergistic impact of teaming with others. The teaming of empowered individual leaders has a powerful multiplier impact because as Covey (1998) reflects, “Synergy tests whether teachers and students are really open to the principle of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts” (p. 265). Finally, at the highest level, the Leadership Growth Dimension indicators show a school community with purpose and intent behind building leadership capacity in every stakeholder; routinely modeling leadership practice; and day-to-day utilization of the language (vision, mission, core values) of leadership.

Fully exploiting the Culture of Leadership theory of action, calls for the principal and guiding coalition to focus on the leadership growth and development of students. The core of the Leadership Growth dimension and leadership growth for students begins with teachers as both leadership learners and leadership practitioners. Teachers are encouraged to seek out professional learning that enhances their own leadership capacity. In turn, teachers practice, model, and share leadership practices with students. Leadership principles become commonplace and common practice and the vision, mission, and core value communication and application accelerates and becomes pervasive in the school culture. Teachers and students apply their leadership capacity within unique programs, value-added activities, and special events in the school setting. What’s more, they seek out leadership examples and opportunities in the greater community to reinforce and even further develop their leadership capacity. The simple, grassroots, and personal leadership actions are encouraged, noted, and appreciated across

the school membership. At the same time, there are established rituals and traditions that highlight all leaders—especially student leaders—in the school community. Intentional and purposeful effort in the Leadership Growth Dimension sustains, institutionalizes, and anchors the Culture of Leadership theory of action for the school membership.

Adaptations of the Culture of Leadership Theory of Action

“What good is an idea if it remains an idea? Try. Experiment. Iterate. Fail. Try again. Change the world.” –Simon Sinek

The Culture of Leadership theory of action works for leaders of all levels. With modification to the language and terminology of the four dimensions, the Culture of Leadership is applicable to an entire district, to grade levels, or to individual classrooms. A superintendent can modify the look-for language and indicators with a vision of a Culture of Leadership across an entire district. School board members, central office staff, transportation, cafeteria, and multiple buildings are all candidates for impact from a district level application of the Culture of Leadership. In similar fashion, a teacher could apply the four dimensions of the Culture of Leadership in the classroom with the intention of fully empowering students and building personalized leadership capacity at that level. In both situations, the journey starts with the use of the Culture of Leadership Collaborative Inquiry (see Appendix A) followed by a reflective analysis of the current culture. The observable practice in each of the four dimensions with respect to the dimension hierarchy determines the next level of action necessary to reach the desired and optimal Culture of Leadership.

The Promise of a Culture of Leadership Theory of Action

“If you get the culture right, most of the other stuff will just take care of itself.” –Tony Hsieh

The Culture of Leadership theory of action uses vision, mission, and core values within four dimensions: Leadership Orientation, Leveraging Leadership, Leadership for Learning, and

Leadership Growth. When in high gear, a Culture of Leadership clearly exhibits leadership principles at all three levels of culture: artifacts, espoused beliefs, and basic assumptions (Schein, 1992; 2004). At the same time, school community individuals—and especially students—are both building the leadership capacity of the members of the community and constantly growing and changing as the community reforms the culture. Moved by passion and dedication and pulled toward true north by a clear vision, the school community membership shares leadership opportunity by way of dynamic learning and interaction and, over the course of time, creates a unique culture. Fielding (2006) would make absolutely certain students are a prominent part of this unique Culture of Leadership stating: “There is a new wave of what many now call ‘student voice’ ranging over a huge vista of activities encouraging the involvement of young people which echoes the energy, if not the aspirations of the 1960’s and 1970’s” (p. 299).

Eighteenth century Englishman and author, John Dryden stated: “We first make our habits and then our habits make us.” I use Dryden’s sentiment and a degree of poetic license to issue the promise of the Culture of Leadership: “We first make our culture and then our culture makes us.” In the final analysis, a Culture of Leadership theory of action nurtures and develops a unique and dynamic school culture that infuses leadership up, down, and throughout the membership of the school learning community with students as a central figure.

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Appendix A

A Culture of School Leadership Collaborative Inquiry

A Culture of Leadership Collaborative Inquiry

Levels of Practice	1 = Does not happen, or happens in less than 10% of observable practices. 2 = Happens infrequently, or happens in less than 25% of observable practices. 3 = Happens sometimes, or happens in at least 50% of observable practices. 4 = Happens frequently, or happens in at least 75% of observable practices. 5 = Happens all the time, or happens in at least 90% of observable practices.	
Dimension I: Leadership Orientation		
The actions and attitudes that characterize the degree of leadership present in members of the school community.		
Look-For		
1. Collaboration and teamwork: principal--teacher; teacher--teacher; teacher--student; student-student		
1.a	The principal values teachers' ideas and trusts the professional judgments of teachers.	1 2 3 4 5
1.b	Teachers are involved in the decision making process and are taken seriously.	1 2 3 4 5
1.c	The principal facilitates teachers working together and keeps them informed on current issues.	1 2 3 4 5
1.d	Teachers have opportunity for dialogue and planning together and spend time together planning	1 2 3 4 5
1.e	Teachers take time to talk "classroom practice" and/or observe each other teaching.	1 2 3 4 5
1.f	Teachers are generally aware of what other teachers are teaching.	1 2 3 4 5
1.g	Teachers work together to develop and evaluate programs and projects	1 2 3 4 5
1.h	The principal, teachers and students work together on expectations in the school community	1 2 3 4 5
1.j	Teachers believe student voice is an important part of the effectiveness of the school community.	1 2 3 4 5
1.k	Students are involved in decision making and kept informed of current issues in the school	1 2 3 4 5
1.l	Students work together for each others' success and the success of the school in general	1 2 3 4 5
2. High levels of engagement from teachers, students, and administration where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.		
2.a	The principal is attentive, optimistic, and passionate about the school as a learning community.	1 2 3 4 5
2.b	The teachers are attentive, optimistic, and passionate about the school as a learning community.	1 2 3 4 5
2.c	The students are attentive, optimistic and passionate about the school as a learning community.	1 2 3 4 5
2.d	There is evidence of the principal, teachers, and students working together and having great interest and motivation to join hands for the betterment of the learning community.	1 2 3 4 5
2.e	There is evidence that the members of the school community recognize the benefit and power of working together as opposed to territorialism and each group working on their own behalf.	1 2 3 4 5
3. A focus on learning results and learner actions versus teaching strategies and teacher actions.		
3.a	The principal focuses the school membership attention to learning and the learners in the community.	1 2 3 4 5
3.b	Teachers measure themselves against the performance of students as learners.	1 2 3 4 5
3.c	Teacher reflection and talk with one another focuses on students and learning (as opposed to teaching).	1 2 3 4 5
3.d	Students acknowledge and recognize the number one goal of school as learning.	1 2 3 4 5
3.e	All members of the school community consider themselves learners and teachers.	1 2 3 4 5
3.f	Actions considered and taken in the school are focused on the learner and impact on learning.	1 2 3 4 5
4. An "abundance mentality" where there is effort to create meaningful involvement for everyone by way of a mutual benefit perspective and Win-Win thinking.		
4.a	The principal consistently looks to create and add classes, activities, and programs so as to have "something meaningful for everyone" to be involved in at school.	1 2 3 4 5
4.b	Teachers are on the lookout for, listen to students, and suggest additions to the school community that create opportunity for "something meaningful for everyone" at school.	1 2 3 4 5
4.c	Students are invited to and feel comfortable making suggestions and contributing to classes, activities, and programs in order for there to be meaningful involvement opportunity for everyone.	1 2 3 4 5
4.d	Success stories in the school community (e.g., honor roll, band performance, sports team win, etc) are viewed as cause to celebrate and congratulate as a "WE" and "US" and not a source of jealousy.	1 2 3 4 5
4.e	The school membership has a belief system that there is abundant opportunity for success in the school community. There is no need to "get your piece of the pie," as if there's not enough to go around for all.	1 2 3 4 5
5. Excitement about what is possible versus settling for the status quo or fear of failure.		
5.a	The principal enthusiastically introduces and carefully leads new initiatives.	1 2 3 4 5
5.b	Teachers are open-minded on and involved in change initiatives and recognize the need for continuous improvement.	1 2 3 4 5
5.c	Students are comfortable contributing thoughts and ideas for changes in the learning community.	1 2 3 4 5
5.d	The school membership recognizes the risk-reward of making changes and desires to get better.	1 2 3 4 5
5.e	The school membership brings forward thought, ideas, and initiatives they see and hear about elsewhere.	1 2 3 4 5

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Dimension II: Leveraging Leadership		
The intentional organizational structure—style of leadership, communication, and processes—that promote the skills and core competencies of leadership and characterize how the members of the school community conduct business.		
Look-For		
1. Common language and common goals among the members.		
1.a	Vision ("what we aspire to be") has been developed and is known, shared, and communicated by the school membership.	1 2 3 4 5
1.b	Mission ("what we are all about on a daily basis") has been developed and is known, shared, and communicated by the school membership.	1 2 3 4 5
1.c	Core Values ("expectations for how we treat one another around here") are developed, known, shared and communicated by the school membership.	1 2 3 4 5
1.d	Differences in key terminology--Vision, Mission, Core Values--are understood and can be explained by school members.	1 2 3 4 5
1.e	The vision, mission, and core values have been developed with a collaborative process involving the school membership.	1 2 3 4 5
1.f	The vision, mission, and core values are compelling and provide a clear sense of direction for the school membership.	1 2 3 4 5
1.g	The most important goals of the organization (Wildly Important Goals - W.I.G.'s) have been developed with a collaborative process, are known, and can be clearly identified by the school membership. School members--including students--can explain their role in the achieving the goals.	1 2 3 4 5
1.h	The school membership can describe and explain what things look like, feels like, and sounds like when the learning community is at its ideal best.	1 2 3 4 5
2. Meaningful relationships amid school community members that have foundation in a commitment to the common vision, mission, and core values.		
2.a	The vision, mission, and core values provide the major purpose and significance for the principal-teachers relationships.	1 2 3 4 5
2.b	The vision, mission, and core values provide the major purpose and significance for the teacher-teacher relationships.	1 2 3 4 5
2.c	The vision, mission, and core values provide the major purpose and significance for the teachers-student relationships.	1 2 3 4 5
2.d	The members of the school community have a supportive and collegial relationship with one another in their effort to live up to the school vision, pursue the school mission, and act in accordance with the school core	1 2 3 4 5
2.e	To resolve relationship challenges, school members rely on the school vision, mission, and core values.	1 2 3 4 5
3. Respectful interaction between school community members with both recognition and celebration of differences.		
3.a	The principal consistently promotes differences in the school membership as strengths to be developed and fully utilized.	1 2 3 4 5
3.b	Teachers have mutual respect for one another, see differences as strengths, and take advantage of individual differences.	1 2 3 4 5
3.c	Students recognize and appreciate that they are different from one another and view their differences as a positive.	1 2 3 4 5
3.d	School programs, activities, and rituals allow for differences to be proudly on display and celebrated by the school community.	1 2 3 4 5
3.e	Feedback is sought out. Opinions are encouraged. Input is honored. Feedback is given attention. Feedback results in action.	1 2 3 4 5
4. An abundance of both formal and informal leadership opportunity (i.e., department head, initiative leaders, class advisors, class officers, student council officers, student council reps, club officers).		
4.a	The principal openly seeks collaboration and shared leadership from the school membership.	1 2 3 4 5
4.b	Leadership is strongly encouraged and leadership opportunity emerges based on strengths as opposed to power or position.	1 2 3 4 5
4.c	Roles and responsibilities are not exclusive with anyone having opportunity to lead and contribute at any given time.	1 2 3 4 5
4.d	School members--including students--feel comfortable identifying leadership opportunity and taking on leadership roles.	1 2 3 4 5
4.e	Taking the initiative to lead and sharing leadership is viewed as a positive and recognized as a healthy "working together."	1 2 3 4 5

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Dimension III: Leadership for Learning		
The merit and contribution of the leadership actions taken by the members of the school community.		
Look-For		
1. Vision, mission, and core value specific ideas, initiatives, and actions from all members—including students—that add value to the learning environment.		
1.a	The principal consistently and noticeably utilizes the school vision, mission, and core values as a means of proposing and/or making improvements in the learning environment.	1 2 3 4 5
1.b	Vision, mission, and core values are used by school members--including students--as the platform to propose new initiatives.	1 2 3 4 5
1.c	Performance measures for the school membership are intentionally connected the school vision, mission, and core values.	1 2 3 4 5
1.d	Performance measures for activities and programs are intentionally connected the school vision, mission, and core values.	1 2 3 4 5
1.e	Professional learning and growth is informed by and measured against the language and standards of the school vision, mission, and core values.	1 2 3 4 5
1.f	Student voice is routinely sought out for insight, feedback, and impact of initiative and actions.	1 2 3 4 5
2. Excitement about change and risk taking as a purposeful and necessary part of improvement and growth.		
2.a	The principal enthusiastically promotes change as a constant that is to be embraced by the school membership.	1 2 3 4 5
2.b	Change is introduced intentionally, collaboratively, and deliberately ("piloting") and handled in a systematic manner.	1 2 3 4 5
2.c	Change initiatives are aligned with the school vision, mission, and core values and not viewed as "change for change sake."	1 2 3 4 5
2.d	The school membership embraces and is positive about change in recognition of the need for continuous improvement.	1 2 3 4 5
2.e	Failure is viewed as learning and as a part of healthy growth. Accordingly, taking risks is regarded positively and supported.	1 2 3 4 5
3. Expressions and feelings of pride in the learning environment, accomplishments, and actions related to the vision, mission, and core values.		
3.a	The principal identifies, makes note of, encourages, and proudly congratulates school membership achievements and actions connected to the vision, mission, and core values.	1 2 3 4 5
3.b	Storytelling about actions, events, and efforts aligned to vision, mission, and core values is a common occurrence.	1 2 3 4 5
3.c	Teacher conversations and reflections exhibit pride in and personal ownership of school community accomplishments.	1 2 3 4 5
3d	Students openly exhibit their school pride (i.e., wearing school apparel, attending school sponsored activities, acting with class and dignity for guests, making positive contributions to school décor, etc.)	1 2 3 4 5
3e	Great space, hallway, and classroom signage and displays capture the essence of the school culture with special emphasis on student work, actions, and accomplishments aligned to the vision, mission, and core values.	1 2 3 4 5
3f	There are both internal and external public relation efforts (e.g., television, radio, newspaper, facebook, twitter, community service, stewardship for a cause, etc.) by the school membership that proudly share daily activities and achievements.	1 2 3 4 5

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Dimension IV: Leadership Growth		
The collective and collaborative efforts and the programs that support leadership development of the members of the school community. (e.g., programs, policies, rituals, routines, and traditions).		
Look-For		
1. Leadership development; leadership formation; leadership facilitation; leadership application.		
1.a	The principal supports, endorses, and locates resources for building leadership capacity in the school membership.	1 2 3 4 5
1.b	Teachers seek out professional learning that enhances their teacher-leader status and opportunity to build leader capacity.	1 2 3 4 5
1.c	Leadership growth and development with students is a purposeful and intentional goal in the school community.	1 2 3 4 5
1.d	Effective leadership practice is modeled and routinely shared across the school membership.	1 2 3 4 5
1.e	Resources and materials to support leadership growth and development are readily available to the school membership and are identified as priority items for discovering, purchasing, or updating.	1 2 3 4 5
2. The “language” of leadership (vision, mission, and core values) utilized across the membership of the learning community.		
2.a	The principal intentionally and consistently finds ways and means to communicate the school vision, mission, and core values (e.g., day-to-day interactions, meeting openers, social media, school signage and displays, letterhead, business cards, email signatures, assemblies, interviews).	1 2 3 4 5
2.b	Teachers fluently and accurately communicate the school vision, mission, and core values and make it a priority to connect these leadership elements to their daily actions in the school community.	1 2 3 4 5
2.c	Students fluently and accurately communicate the school vision, mission, and core values and make it a priority connect these leadership elements to their daily actions in the school community.	1 2 3 4 5
3. Programs, activities, events, rituals, or traditions with leadership connections that are initiated, developed, and led by the members—including students.		
3.a	Leadership development and growth is recognized as an ongoing priority and the school membership intentionally seeks out opportunities to build leadership capacity within current, new, and potential programs and activities.	1 2 3 4 5
3.b	Rituals, traditions, and ceremonies are in place that highlight leaders and leadership in the school community (i.e., student and teacher led orientations, assemblies, send-offs, celebrations, recognitions, bulletin boards, hall of fame).	1 2 3 4 5
3.c	The school membership utilizes leaders and leadership events of all kinds and types to reinforce and further develop leadership in the school community (i.e., international, national, and state leaders and events; community leaders and events; civic and community service leaders and events; sports, music, and the arts leaders and events; alumni leaders and events).	1 2 3 4 5
3d	Simple, day-to-day, and common place personal leadership actions are encouraged, noted, and appreciated by the school membership and serve as the grassroots reinforcement of the leadership potential in every individual.	1 2 3 4 5