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The Impact of Leadership Behaviors of Blue Ribbon Catholic School Principals on School Culture

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The Impact of Leadership Behaviors of Blue Ribbon

Catholic School Principals on School Culture

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty and Staff of the School of Education

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree
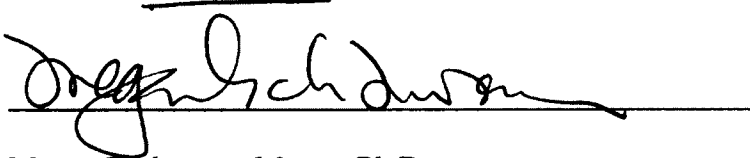
Doctor of Education

by

Rosaline Cardarelli

May 2014

The Impact of Leadership Behaviors of Blue Ribbon

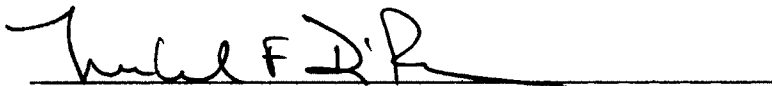**Catholic School Principals on School Culture**

by

Rosaline Cardarelli

Approved March 28, 2014

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my family for their continuous support and love. All of you have always understood my desire and need for life-long learning and achievement, and throughout my pursuits, you have sacrificed personally to allow me to reach my goals. I am grateful to my husband John, my daughter Renee, my granddaughter Lauren, my brother Michael and most of all to my parents who made all things possible and especially my mother, who always inspired me to be the best that I could be and to seek education as a means to that end.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to conduct an analysis of six successful Blue Ribbon Catholic schools to determine the relationship between principal's leadership behaviors, teacher's perceptions of principals and resulting school culture within six successful Blue Ribbon schools. A mixed methods approach for analysis was used through both qualitative and quantitative methods by means of principal interview data, observations, survey data, principal survey, and teacher survey. Participants in the survey included six principals and 80 teachers from elementary and high schools from rural as well as urban schools. The six schools in the study were all co-educational and ranged in size from 450 students to 1,200 students, with an average of 36 teachers per school and a 16:1 student teacher ratio.

The Bolman and Deal Four Frame Model (2008) provided the basis for the questions and surveys used to collect data concerning principal leadership, teacher's perceptions of principal leadership and overall school culture. The four frame organizational theory model components are described as: the Structural Frame, which focused on goals, rules, and policies; the Human Resource Frame, which addressed roles, norms, and relationships; the Political Frame, which focused on power, self-interest and aspirations; and the Symbolic Frame, which provided a view of culture, norms and values. Constraints included deviation from normal school schedules due to significant weather-related school closures and limited time for long term classroom observation. A correlation between principal leadership and overall school culture was validated overall

but there was no significant statistical difference among the values of the frames as they

apply to impact on school culture.

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The Impact of Leadership Behaviors of Blue Ribbon

Catholic School Principals on School Culture

Chapter 1

Of the many factors that impact the quality of education in America, culture is perhaps one of the least understood, yet most influential. Educators and educational administrators both need to have a better understanding of the impact of school culture on learning to improve their craft. Bolman and Deal (2010) quoted a phrase from former IBM CEO Lou Gerstner, "In business, culture is not part of the game; it is the only game" to assert their belief that "Culture is even more important in schools. The lag between instruction and outcomes makes teachers' full impact on students' visible only years later. Faith kindled by culture, rather than an immediate outcomes confirmed by data, defines a good school" (p.112). Noted education expert Ken Robinson (2013) recently reinforced the same idea when he stated,

> The real role of leadership in education -- and I think it's true at the national level, the state level, at the school level -- is not and should not be command and control. The real role of leadership is climate control, creating a climate of possibility. And if you do that, people will rise to it and achieve things that you completely did not anticipate and couldn't have expected.

Introduction

This study focuses on highly successful Catholic school principals in the Arlington Diocese in northern Virginia; it seeks to identify the key leadership behaviors contributing to their excellent school quality as indicated by the achievement of Blue Ribbon school designation, and to understand how their leadership behavior has

influenced school culture. Culture, which exists in every school, can manifest itself in many ways through customs, beliefs, rituals, behaviors, shared values and purpose and can be influenced by a leader's behavior and practice. In particular this study seeks to determine the dominant influences behind Catholic school success which foster a positive school culture, so that other school leaders might emulate that success.

Context of the Study

In 1982, a year prior to the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), Education Secretary Bell created the United States government's National Blue Ribbon Schools Program (NBRSP) to honor schools which had achieved high levels of performance or made significant improvements in closing the achievement gap among their students (U.S. Department of Education, 2013). Initially, the Blue Ribbon Schools program focused only on secondary schools, but it was later expanded to include elementary schools as well. It now honors high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools annually.

The National Blue Ribbon Schools Award Program was designed to bring national attention to the best schools in the United States and to recognize those schools whose students thrived and excelled. Nominated public schools must qualify as either (a) "Exemplary High Performing Schools" – high performing schools in their states as measured by state tests in both reading and mathematics or assessments referenced against national norms or (b) "Exemplary Improving School" – schools that have at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds and have improved student performance to high levels in reading and mathematics on state assessments or assessments against national norms. Disadvantaged is defined by each state but must

include students eligible for free or reduced-priced meals and may include students who receive Title I services, are limited English proficient, migrant, or in need of special services (USDOE, 2013). Private schools apply through the Council for American Private Education (CAPE), but the schools must still meet the minimum requirements established by the Department of Education (CAPE, 2014; found at www.capenet.org/brs.html). After nearly a half century of development the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program can be used to compare schools, whether public or private, urban or rural, to identify school excellence and highlight ways for schools to improve. It can help identify the factors that make some schools more successful than other schools.

In 2003, the program was restructured to bring it in line with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, which called for standardized testing, increased accountability, and closing the achievement gap. The goal of NCLB was to make all public school children proficient in reading and math by the year 2014. It also placed a stronger emphasis on state assessment data and required schools to demonstrate academic success. Now schools must show how data are interpreted and used and how curriculum, instruction, professional development and student support promote student success. Of the schools submitted for NBRSP recognition by each state, at least one third must meet the criterion of having 40% of their students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, thus ensuring that a broad spectrum of students are benefiting from the national effort to enhance school excellence.

The NBRSP is now accepted as a trademark of excellence, well recognized by parents and policymakers alike. In its most simple form, the NBRSP stimulates and focuses effort to improve educational effectiveness. "Regardless of the direction you're

going with in school improvement, the Blue Ribbon program gives you a vehicle to get on track. It gives you a framework and standards so you know where you stand" (USDOE, 1996, p. 5). The NBRSP identifies and recognizes schools that are models of excellence, makes self-assessment criteria available to other schools and encourages all schools to share best practices (USDOE, 1998). Thus, the NBRSP recognizes good schools, provides a path to excellence for those wanting to improve, and also brings focus to the educational community.

The NBRSP outlines eight categories of effort, based upon research that included practitioners, state education agencies and the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE, 1996). The eight common criteria of NBRSP categories include: Student Focus and Support; School Organization and Culture; Challenging Standards and Curriculum; Active Teaching and Learning; Professional Community; Leadership and Educational Vitality; School, Family and Community Partnerships; and Indicators of Academic Success. According to the Department of Education, these categories are designed to be comprehensive, interrelated, non-prescriptive and to provide a basis for collaborative self-assessment (USDOE, 1996). This study focuses most particularly on the category of "School Organization and Culture" in its effort to identify keys to success in schools.

The School System of Focus

The Arlington Diocese Catholic School System (ACS) is a network of 50 schools in a district spread across 13 counties in the state of Virginia. The ACS school system consists of: 39 elementary/middle schools; 6 high schools; and 5 pre-schools. The total student enrollment of the system is: 17,548 students, with a staff of 1,394. Thus the school system is broad both geographically (13 counties) and structurally (pre-school

through high school), but is also unified through similar values based on religious faith.

The mission of the school system includes the phrase "Our schools are committed to

providing an education rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ where doctrine and values,

and academic excellence prepare each student for a life of faith, service and integrity"

(Catholic Diocese of Arlington, 2014).

The leadership team of the ACS consists of: the Superintendent of Catholic

Schools, an Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education, an Assistant

Superintendent for Personnel and Instruction, a Special Services Coordinator, a School

Finance Officer, a Comptroller, and an Assistant for Professional Education. The school

system has a staff of 1,394 personnel supporting the 50 schools. Each school is led by a

principal, who is supported by a vice-principal and normally additional administrative

staff. Of note, the fact that 19 of the 50 schools within the ACS (38 percent) have been

designated as exemplary high performing National Blue Ribbon Schools may be the

highest such percentage in a single school system in the nation; thus, having such a high

number of successful schools in one system is justification for more in-depth analysis.

The schools participating in this study initially achieved their Blue Ribbon School status

from 1992- 2010.

There is much evidence to support the value of these approaches in the ACS

School System. Only some 5,200 of a total of over 133,300 k-12 schools in the United

States have been designated as Blue Ribbon Schools (National Center for Education

Statistics, 2011), which indicates a national success rate of less than four percent

compared to the 38 percent of schools in the ACS. This relatively rare designation is an

indication that excellence is being achieved in the Arlington Diocese Catholic Schools.

Using interviews, surveys, and direct observations of educational leaders, this analysis illustrates the keys to excellence that sets the Arlington Catholic Blue Ribbon Schools apart from others within their own school system. This research will provide the education community important insights into school leadership, school culture, and overall school success so that other schools can benefit from these results.

One of the greatest strengths of the schools within the ACS, and one fostered by its leadership, is the value-based approach that is central to the school system's educational philosophy. The schools of the Diocese of Arlington are considered a fundamental component in the educational ministry of the Catholic Church in the region. The ACS school system provides an education that is rooted within Catholic doctrine, wherein values and academic excellence are designed to prepare students for a life of faith, service and integrity. As education centers of excellence, where values are learned, practiced and become an integral part of a student's life, the goal of every school within the ACS is for the school to be a center for life-long learning. This concept is designed to both challenge and empower students both for the present and the future. It is the individual educator (principals and teachers) within this faith-based system who is the hub of the ACS values-based effort; each is entrusted to inspire students through adherence to a value-based leadership style and an operational ethos that is the essential example for superior student achievement.

Since the designation of over a third of the schools within the Diocese of Arlington Catholic School System as Blue Ribbon schools demonstrates (using the most widely accepted national standard) that those schools have achieved academic excellence, then one might expect that they have done so largely due to the effective use of strong

organizational and leadership approaches that foster excellence. But, there may also be important cultural factors at play within those schools that also contributed to their success. After a focused analysis of six successful Blue Ribbon Schools within the Arlington Catholic School System, this study identifies what specific leadership behaviors and cultural factors contributed most significantly to that success. This study assesses the relative roles/importance of leadership behaviors and their relationship to culture in the schools of the study group, and identifies what actions or characteristics could be used elsewhere to help other schools reach similarly high standards of educational achievement.

Statement of the Problem

"Effective principals recognize the difficulty of changing a person's lifelong beliefs. What's more, they know that sometimes what really matters is not beliefs, but behavior" (Whitaker, 2003, p. 57).

The principals of the Blue Ribbon schools in the ACS clearly foster a high quality learning environment. However, several important questions remain to be answered: is the environment produced primarily by principals employing specific leadership attributes that brought their individual schools to the high standards of educational excellence required by the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program; if so, what is their effect on Catholic school culture; and finally, are those schools excelling because they have a more cohesive and more influential culture? In order to answer these questions, this study of 6 among the 19 schools designated as Blue Ribbon Schools within the ACS seeks to determine the fundamental nature of the successful efforts of those educational

leaders (the 6 principals of the Blue Ribbon schools) within the Arlington Catholic School System.

From this analysis of the efforts of the six principals, a list of leadership behaviors demonstrated and highly valued by those principals was identified. The impact of the principal's behaviors on the school's culture and overall excellence was also assessed. Additionally, a series of recommendations are provided along with accompanying strategies needed to implement quality process recommendations for other school leaders in search of similar educational excellence.

Research Questions

1. What is the self-described leadership style of the principals of the six Blue Ribbon Catholic schools participating in this study?

2. What is the leadership style of principals participating in this study as perceived by their teachers?

3. According to the principal, what are the core values - shared principles that are communicated through rituals, ceremonies, norms, stories, myths, and humor - that undergird the school culture and how does his or her values align or differ from those values?

4. According to the teachers, what are the core values - shared principles that are communicated through rituals, ceremonies, norms, stories, myths, and humor - that undergird the school culture and how does his or her values align or differ from those values?

5. What do the principals and teachers perceive to be the important leadership characteristics that positively influence school culture?

Significance of the Study

In 1900, some 3,500 parochial schools existed in the United States. By the mid-1960s, well after public schooling was free, nearly 12 percent of all American elementary and secondary children were educated in Catholic schools, even though that number exceeded the percentage of American Catholics. Clearly this significant investment by parents indicated a desire to obtain a particular education offered by the Catholic Church even among those who were not Catholic. That trend towards increased enrollment in Catholic schools became evident coincidentally during a time when national school quality came into doubt. Over the following two decades of the 1970s and 1980s national scrutiny of school quality increased, and coupled with the release of several key governmental reports and initiatives, including the Coleman Report from 1966 (Coleman et al., 1996), the National Education Longitudinal Studies from 1972 (National Center for Education Statistics, 1994), and *A Nation at Risk* from 1983; eventually that scrutiny blossomed into a national effort to determine what contributed to educational success generally, what made specific schools successful, and how to maximize learning in all schools. Since that time, educational evaluation has evolved significantly, and now school systems have well identified criteria for excellence and a set of national standards, in the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program (NBRSP), that can be used both to clarify the essential elements of educational success and to aid schools in their self-improvement (USDOE, 1998).

This study builds on those previous efforts to analyze in detail the foundations of educational quality on a specific group of high performing schools, in order to help settle questions related to the relative influence of principal leadership and cultural factors on

success in high performing schools. Many Catholic schools remain in the United States; other private schools (Muslim and Jewish schools, military schools, even Montessori schools for example) share similar organizational and cultural characteristics that may produce some similar attributes. All schools can benefit from some aspect of a leader behavior analysis and school cultural assessment.

This study of leadership behavior and culture among a select group of successful Catholic schools provides insight into techniques that could be adopted to help other schools achieve a similar level of success such as Blue Ribbon School designation. Identification of successful principal leadership attributes and cultural influences should also shed light on desired qualities among schools and school quality in general. The study identifies certain other characteristics held in common by these schools in the same school system that might be useful in other school systems, public or parochial. Finally, this study should enrich the existing research concerning principal leadership as it relates to culture and school excellence.

Definitions of Terms

The following are definitions of some key, specialized terms used in this study:

- Catholic Schools: diocesan, parochial, private schools of the Catholic Church

- National Blue Ribbon School Program: A program that recognizes public and private schools where students perform at very high levels or achieve significant improvements or achievements.

- Parochial School: a school affiliated with a religious organization.

- Educational Leadership: guiding the talents and energies of teachers, staff, pupils, and parents toward achieving common educational aims.

- Leadership Effectiveness: the ability of an individual to achieve mission success; as categorized through the organizational frames (Structural, Human Resources, Political and Symbolic) developed by Bolman and Deal in 2008 to determine perceptions by principals and their teachers (Bolman, 2013).

- Trust: "Trust is one's willingness to be vulnerable to another based on the confidence that the other is benevolent, honest, open, reliable, and competent" (Tschannen-Moran, 2004, p. 17).

- Culture in schools: the deeper level of *basic assumptions* and *beliefs* that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic "taken for granted" fashion an organization's view of itself and its environment (Schein, 1985, p. 6).

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

This review of the literature focuses on Catholic Schools, Blue Ribbon Schools, School Culture and the Leadership Behaviors that contribute to school culture. Such a review provides the context for a study of the six Blue Ribbon schools within the Diocese of Arlington Catholic School System and the underlying factors that contributed to their achieving academic excellence. With such context, well-founded, effective analysis of those schools can determine what leadership behaviors and cultural influences were instrumental to the success of those schools and what actions could be taken to help other schools reach similarly high standards of educational achievement.

This literature review provides context for that analysis, identifying the unique attributes of Catholic schools in the United States and describing other studies that shed light on the factors of excellence that have contributed to the achievements of the high quality schools within the Diocese of Arlington Catholic School System. After a short historical overview of American Catholic education for foundational context, the key literature addressing each of these topics is reviewed, including James S. Coleman's influential assessment of the nation's schools in 1966. Then, that evidence is critiqued to identify strengths and weaknesses and to give needed perspective to the detailed study of the six blue-ribbon ACS schools (Coleman et al., 1966).

Catholic Schools in the United States

Catholic schools offer a superb venue to study educational leadership. Bryk, Lee and Holland (1993) noted "the American Catholic school system has had no parallel in

Europe or, for that matter, anywhere in the world" (p. 15). Catholic schools form the largest non-public school system in the United States. The system of Catholic schools began in the United States with the arrival of earliest immigrants during the nineteenth century. In 1606, Spanish Franciscan missionaries established a school in what is now St. Augustine, Florida. Later, in the 1770s, Junípero Serra and his Franciscans established the California mission system, whose ministry included the education of Native Americans in farming, Christian belief, skilled crafts, and other fields. In French New Orleans, the Franciscans opened a school for boys in 1718. By that time, Catholicism had also been introduced to the English colonies with the founding of the colony of Maryland by Jesuit settlers from England in 1634.

In 1782, Catholics in Philadelphia opened St. Mary's School, which is considered to have been the first parochial school in the newly formed United States. Not long after the Revolution, John Carroll established a Catholic college in Georgetown for boys aged 10 to 16. Ratification in 1791 of the Bill of Rights, with the First Amendment guarantee of religious freedom, helped Catholics further cement their place in post-Revolutionary America. The Maryland Society of Jesus was given supervision of Carroll's school in 1805, which became modern day Georgetown University. The United States Congress later issued Georgetown the first federal university charter in 1815, which allowed it to award degrees.

Catholic parochial schools were instituted in the United States during these early years as a reaction against a growing publicly-funded school system that was essentially Protestant in nature. In a predominantly Protestant country, the bible used in the classroom was generally accepted to be the King James Version of the Scriptures, which

did not reflect Catholic views. The Eliot School rebellion, an incident involving the beating of a Catholic boy who refused to read the King James version of the Ten Commandments aloud in a Boston Public School in 1859, led to the creation of the first parochial school in Massachusetts and, according to historian John McGreevy of the University of Notre Dame, sparked the growth of parochial schools nationwide (McGreevy, 2003). The middle of the 19th Century saw increasing Catholic interest in education in tandem with increasing Catholic immigration. Bishop John Neumann organized the first diocesan school system in the United States by creating a diocesan board to oversee the parochial schools in the Diocese of Philadelphia.

The first two decades of the 20th century was also a period of rapid growth for Catholic Schools. By 1900, an estimated 3,500 parochial elementary schools existed in the United States. Within 20 years, the number of such elementary schools had reached 6,551, enrolling 1,759,673 pupils taught by 41,581 teachers. Catholic secondary education likewise boomed. In 1900, there were only about 100 Catholic high schools, but by 1920 more than 1,500 were in operation. For more than two generations, enrollment in Catholic schools continued to climb. By the mid-1960s, enrollment in Catholic parochial schools had reached an all-time high of 4.5 million elementary school pupils, with about 1 million students in Catholic high schools (McDonald & Schultz, 2012), which was nearly 12 percent of all American elementary and secondary schools (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993, p. 32).

The growth in Catholic school attendance only began to reverse during the past three decades. More recently enrollment in Catholic schools has dropped, to less than half of its peak at five million students (Vitello & Hu, 2009). During the 2006-07 academic

year, the United States had 7,498 Catholic schools, including 6,288 elementary schools and 1,210 secondary schools; in total there were 2,320,651 Catholic school students, including 1,682,412 students in the elementary/middle schools and 638,239 in high schools. At their peak in 1965, the number of U.S. parochial schools had totaled more than 12,000, and roughly half of all Catholic children in America attended Catholic elementary schools; but by 2009, the Catholic school share was only about 15 percent (McDonald & Schultz, 2012).

According to the National Catholic Educational Association, the total Catholic school student enrollment for the 2012 - 2013 academic year was 2,031,455; 1,440,572 in elementary/middle schools, and 590,883 in secondary schools. Nineteen percent of Catholic school students were racial minorities, 13.9% were Hispanic/Latino and 6.5% were reported as unknown in the racial data collection; non-Catholic enrollment was 312,732, which was 15.4% of the total enrollment. In 2013, there were 6,841 Catholic schools: 5,636 elementary and 1,205 secondary schools. Thirty-four new schools were opened in 2013, but 167 consolidated or closed. Still, 1,951 of those nearly seven thousand total Catholic schools have a waiting list for admission (McDonald & Schultz, 2012). Something clearly draws parents to place their children in Catholic schools; something important enough that they are willing to support added costs and even some transportation challenges in order to offer family members a Catholic education.

Coleman's Assessment

For the past half century American school leaders have sought better ways of helping students learn. That effort gained new impetus in the decade of the 1960s when a number of studies began to identify specific factors that were reputed to be guarantees of

educational success. In 1966, James S. Coleman, later president of the American Sociological Association, authored "Equality of Educational Opportunity Study," later known as The Coleman Report (Coleman et al., 1966), a landmark document in policy research. Coleman's work was one of the first social scientific studies specifically commissioned by Congress in order to inform government policy. The research design used by Coleman, sometimes called "input/output studies," changed the direction of policy research in education and became a model for later researchers.

As powerful as Coleman's argument appeared initially, it was not accepted by everyone and written critiques soon followed. Even some of Coleman's later work (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987; Coleman, Hoffer, & Kilgore, 1982; Hoffer, Greeley, & Coleman, 1985) continued to suggest that, after controlling for background and other effects, pupils in Catholic schools did better than other students, largely due to the higher academic standards and the discipline in the Catholic schools, and also because of the family life and communities in which the Catholic children had been raised. Greeley (1982) went farther and suggested that Catholic schools particularly helped disadvantaged students because, in addition to the education, they seemed to bring discipline and a culture of values to the learning experience for students who may not normally have had such values at home.

Coleman's initial work inspired a number of subsequent studies (Edmonds, 1979; Shoemaker & Fraser, 1981; Sweeney, 1982; Weber, 1971) which focused on leadership and creating an atmosphere conducive to learning. Perhaps the most influential among these was Edmonds, who listed five ingredients of an "effective school": strong administrative leadership, high expectations for children's achievement, an orderly

atmosphere conducive to learning, an emphasis on basic-skill acquisition, and frequent monitoring of pupil progress. Other factors that were identified to have positively influenced student learning during that period included the topic of discipline (Brookover, Beady, Flood, Schweitzer, & Wisenbaker, 1979) and the "ethos" of the organization (Rutter, 1979). These efforts have been credited with leading to the effective schools movement that continues to this day.

Still others quickly found flaws with Coleman's methods and conclusions or proposed other factors rather than accept the Coleman-inspired argument. Many of these critiques were based on the first major empirical studies of school children in the United States. In 1972 the National Education Longitudinal Studies (NELS) program of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) began to study the educational, vocational, and personal development of young people beginning with their elementary or high school years, and following them over time as they began to take on adult roles and responsibilities. The *National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972* (NLS-72) was the hallmark of the longitudinal studies designed and conducted by the NCES (National Center for Education Statistics, 1994). NLS-72 followed the 1972 cohort of high school seniors through 1986, or fourteen years after most of this cohort completed high school. The *High School and Beyond* (HS&B) survey included two cohorts: the 1980 senior class, and the 1980 sophomore class. Both cohorts were surveyed every two years through 1986, and the 1980 sophomore class was also surveyed again in 1992 (National Center for Education Statistics, 1990a). HS&B formed the basis for many of the studies of the 1980s, including those of Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore (1982) and Greely (1982).

There was an early backlash against the results of these initial studies. The measures of effectiveness and database used by most were critiqued (Rowan, Bossert, & Dwyer, 1983), as was the sample size used in various studies (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987). Nearly twenty years after Coleman's landmark study the concept of modeling improvements on specific factors in schools was also cast in doubt (Purkey & Smith, 1983). Purkey and Smith summarized the research to that date saying,

> There remains an intuitive logic to the findings of the above research.
> Flaws in the original research should not discredit the notion of discovering effective school characteristics -- seeds for school improvement that can be sown elsewhere. However, the opposite approach -- of blanket acceptance -- would be dangerous.... However, adoption of the characteristics suggested by this review or by others is unlikely to work in all schools, may not work as expected in many schools, and may in fact be counterproductive in some schools. (pp. 439-440)

Most usefully, many of these authors also attempted to put together an overall strategy for increasing school effectiveness, which greatly enabled the efforts that followed.

Subsequently, the United States government published a report in 1983 directed by the Secretary of Education, Terrell H. Bell, which made improving the nations' schools a call to arms (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Entitled, *A Nation at Risk*, the report included the now famous phrase: "If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen to ourselves" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p.

5). Although the recommendations in the report remain controversial, it did serve to energize the educational community and focus researchers on the question: "what makes schools effective?" *A Nation at Risk* stimulated numerous studies that sought answers to those questions.

Several studies soon confirmed the value of the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program (NBRSP) approach. Lezotte (1991) identified several factors that were deemed key to an effective school, including a business-like atmosphere, with students helping each other, a climate of high expectations, a strong school principal, a focused mission, a focus on essential skills, frequent monitoring of student progress, and parents involved with their students. Others disagreed, and felt that efforts to determine student achievement differences among schools were unlikely to be sufficiently significant to be relevant to policymakers. For example, Witte (1992) conducted a study, but found his results to be inconclusive and proposed that similar research efforts would probably never adequately answer whether student achievement differences between public and private schools were significant.

In 1993, Bryk, Lee, and Holland published a ground breaking book, *Catholic Schools and the Common Good*, which both provided a thorough review of several of the studies written to date and produced reaffirming results of its own, based upon a study of seven Catholic schools from across the country. Two other landmark studies by Ogden and Germinario (1994, 1995) quickly reinforced the standards moving into place through the NBRSP. Both books took data from the Catholic schools selected for Blue Ribbon status to confirm the high standards and exclusive criteria used in the NBRSP.

In 1995, Evans and Schwab demonstrated that school outputs could be considered differently. They considered how many students finished high school and started college in an analysis of both public and Catholic schools. For those two authors such measures were more important indicators of school quality than standardized test scores. They found that for the typical student, attending a Catholic high school raised the probability of finishing high school or entering a four-year college by 13 percentage points.

Meanwhile, as time passed, the federal government-sponsored quantitative methodologies (and statistical research efforts more generally) grew ever more sophisticated. The *National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988* (NELS:88) (National Center for Education Statistics, 1990b) represented the first stage of this major longitudinal effort designed to provide trend data about critical transitions experienced by students as they leave middle or junior high school, and progress through high school and into postsecondary institutions or the work force. NELS: 88 took a nationally representative sample of eighth-graders (first surveyed in the spring of 1988) and then resurveyed them through four follow-up efforts in 1990, 1992, 1994, and 2000. In NELS: 88 students reported on a range of topics including: school, work, and home experiences; educational resources and support; the role in education of their parents and peers; neighborhood characteristics; educational and occupational aspirations; and other student perceptions. Students, teachers, parents, and even school administrators were also surveyed as a part of the effort.

Similarly, the *Education Longitudinal Study of 2002* (ELS:2002) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2005) was designed to monitor the transition of a national sample of young people as they progressed from tenth grade through high school and on

to postsecondary education and/or the world of work. ELS: 2002 began with a cohort of high school sophomores in 2002. This cohort was followed through 2012 (ELS: 2002 has yet to produce a written report with results). The *High School Longitudinal Study of 2009* (HSLS: 09) (Ingels, Dalton, Holder, Lauff, & Burns, 2011) is a nationally representative, longitudinal study of more than 21,000 9th graders in 944 schools, all of whom were followed throughout their secondary and postsecondary years (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). HSLS: 09 began with a cohort of ninth graders in 2009. The first follow-up was planned for 2012 when most of the students were high school juniors. HSLS: 09 has yet to produce a written report with results. All of these efforts simply demonstrate the scope of the effort and the depth of research conducted in order to better understand what makes schools successful.

Recent studies continue to confirm the value of a Catholic school education. One such study reported:

> Catholic high school students are far less likely to drop out of high school than their public school counterparts (0.03 versus 0.15), and are almost twice as likely to be enrolled in a four year college in 1994 (0.59 versus 0.29). Differences in twelfth grade test scores are more modest but still substantial—about 0.4 of a standard deviation higher for Catholic high school students. In the C8 sample the gap in the dropout rate is also very large (0.02 versus 0.10) as is the gap in the college attendance rate (0.62 versus 0.39). (Altonji, Elder, & Taber, 2000, p. 9)

The same year Grogger, Neal, Hanushek, and Schwab (2000) used HS&B and NELS: 88 data to demonstrate that Catholic students, including minority students, were more likely

to go on to college, primarily as a result of Catholic religious affiliation and other instrumental variables, thus confirming the positive effect of Catholic schools, but adding yet another caution concerning the real value of the data analysis.

In 2005, Dee examined the comparative effects of Catholic and public schools on adult voter participation and volunteering. He found that students who attended Catholic high schools were substantially more likely to vote as adults. That same year Jepsen (2003) compared the effectiveness of public and Catholic primary schools to see which students made better grades in reading and mathematics. He found that Catholic schooling had an insignificant impact on the achievement of high test scores; only absence-from-school rates were better in Catholic schools among the factors he considered, but the debate over public and private and causal factors continued. As time passed, more and more authors were attempting to identify those key factors outside the databases that might influence student productivity. For example, in 2004, Tschannen-Moran published *Trust Matters: Leadership for Successful Schools*, which focused the lens of excellence on the important role of trust in schools.

In 2005, a study of 4th, 8th and 12th grade students in year groups 2000, 2002, 2003, and 2005 analyzed results in reading, mathematics, science, and writing. In 2000, the average score in science for grade 12 students in Catholic schools was 6 points higher than for students in Lutheran schools, and in the 2000 mathematics assessment, a higher percentage of twelfth-graders in Catholic schools performed at or above *Proficient* than twelfth-graders in Conservative Christian schools (Perie, Vanneman, & Goldstein, 2005). In 2006, a similar study of 4th and 8th graders confirmed that Catholic school students

had better math and reading scores than their public school counterparts (Braun, Jenkins, & Grigg, 2006).

These numerous studies, done over decades and using different techniques and an array of approaches, all point to qualitative advantages in Catholic schools, as compared to their public school counterparts. Although some of these studies sought to determine why this qualitative difference existed, more analysis to determine the dominant influences behind Catholic school success are clearly justifiable.

Educational Culture and Its Effects

School culture can have a potent effect on student learning (Dimmock, 1993). Schein (1985) defined school culture as "the deeper level of *basic assumptions* and *beliefs* that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic 'taken for granted' fashion an organization's view of itself and its environment" (p. 6). In 1998, Stoll built upon Schein's work to identify factors that shape school culture and to analyze typologies of school culture to better understand how school culture relates to school effectiveness. She found values and underlying beliefs to be extremely powerful and concluded that no manner of organizational techniques can have a significant impact upon learning without a linked change in school culture. Still, other studies have reinforced the fact that school culture is multifaceted and difficult to assess (Maslowski, 2001; Staessens, 1990). Hinde (2004), in fact, while noting that school culture was the essential factor in any reform initiative , nonetheless called it elusive, constantly being constructed, and difficult to define. Others have at least been able to focus on specific activities, such as rituals and procedures, which shape school

culture and can be used effectively to improve learning (Hollins, 1996; McLauren, 1997), and even school facilities (Uline & Tschannen-Moran, 2008).

The Impact of Leadership on Educational Organizations

The impact of organizational approaches on educational effectiveness has also been long studied by many people from a variety of perspectives. Wilmore (2008), as well as Callan and Levinson (2011), are only two in a long series of studies, which highlight the powerful role played by leaders in educational success. Half a century ago Weber and Weber (1955) increased the focus on the long-held view that leaders played important, if not dominating roles in educational success nearly three decades before Bell made schools a cause for excitement and controversy with the NBRSP and *A Nation at Risk*. English and Anderson (2005) updated and continued that focus fifty years later. Along the way, numerous other studies have been pursued, focusing on both school principals and the school system superintendent in attempts to identify the scope of leader influence and the best practices of successful school leaders at both levels.

Many studies of school principals focused most commonly on the personal impact of local leaders and their ability to develop effective teams and rapport among teachers, parents and students (e.g., Barth & Guest, 1990; Cotton, 2003; Dunn & Dunn, 1983; Holland, 1981; Stronge, Richard, & Catano, 2008). Other similar studies dealt primarily with school superintendents, typically offering insights concerning the impact of broader policy initiatives and standardized approaches on educational success (e.g., Carter & Cunningham, 1997; Chapman, 1997; Duke, 2010; Houston, Blankstein, & Cole, 2008; Leithwood, 1995; Lowery & Harris,2003). This analysis confirmed the powerful

influence and impact of quality organizational processes on education in general and student learning in particular (Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012).

Leadership and School Culture

Several studies linking the role and impact of school principals with school culture have been done. Engles, Hotten, Devos, Bouckenooghe, and Aelterman (2008) found that achievement-oriented principals exhibiting transformational leadership and a focus on educational matters and people management could develop school cultures that were more stimulating for professional development and thus better learning environments. Fullan (2001) found that principals should focus more on transforming school culture as the best way to improve teaching and learning. Wagner (2006) noted that school culture was "the missing link" in the school improvement conundrum and offered a survey to help leaders understand the culture of the school where they work. Mees (2008) studied the relationships among principal leadership, school culture and student achievement in 79 Missouri middle schools to determine a direct relationship between leadership by principals and positive school culture – both of which aided student achievement.

So, there is reason to believe that both leadership behaviors and organizational culture can have a significant impact on educational success. But, there is clearly room for more research in this area – including more specific studies on the impacts of various people and approaches on culture in schools. One question that warrants further analysis and the purpose of this study is, to determine what specific leadership behaviors and attributes do principals in excellent schools feel contribute most to their educational excellence and what is the impact of culture on that success in a given context.

Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) asserted that an effective leader is one who is responsible for building a school culture that will have a positive effect on teachers, who will in turn positively influence students. They also emphasized that school leaders share a sense of responsibility to foster cultural beliefs that will promote staff cohesion, a sense of well-being felt by faculty, staff and students, and an understanding of purpose as well as a shared vision by all. A consistent theme for school leaders is to foster such a positive school culture that will affect student achievement and positive change.

Even with such strong evidence that supports the importance of leadership in efforts at excellence, there are important weaknesses and concerns that should be addressed. Despite the counter-arguments made by current scholars (Teddlie & Reynolds, 2001), the issues and concerns identified by Purkey and Smith (1983), Hallinger and Murphy (1987), and Witte (1992) remain valid; thus, current day efforts focused on school improvement must continue to take their critique into account. In 2000, Goldstein and Woodhouse continued to assert that many educational improvement studies were plagued by weak theoretical and empirical support and that the response of the academic community to such criticisms remained inadequate. Thrupp (2001) said much the same thing the following year. More recently, several other studies have continued to critique school improvement methodologies and offer recommended improvements (Thrupp, 2005; Townsend, 2007; Visscher & Witziers, 2005). Thrupp (2005) in particular critiqued the very nature of policy-related, educational improvement studies for their failure to venture beyond the policy and look for more holistic solutions. In short, there are still significant concerns about databases, the linkages between educational improvement and

other social factors and the limitations of policy-related educational research. Clearly there is an ongoing need for additional, focused studies analyzing both organizational leadership and cultural influences on educational success.

Conclusion

The scholarly research that has focused on Catholic schools has consistently found that such faith-based private schools can accomplish better outcomes – richer student learning and development – than their peer public institutions. It is acknowledged though that some of the reasons that non-public schools produce better results are due to selective admissions and the ability to dismiss undesirable students. These schools also typically have an associated parent population that demonstrates an interest in supporting their child's education and creating a home culture that values education. It is also clear that statistical data analysis can also lead to the identification of key factors that help schools of all kinds produce excellent results. Some believe the crisis predicted in *A Nation at Risk* may have been somewhat averted, in part due to the research and recommendations developed by Coleman, Murnane (1984), Rutter (1979) and many, many others who took on the challenge to improve education in the latter half of the 20th century. The criticisms of their work led to further improvements and the extensive longitudinal studies sponsored by the government over the past three decades have generated useful standards and real educational improvement. The NBRSP has helped improve education in the United States (including in Catholic schools). It is also clear that specific principles of educational leadership and organization have demonstrated their worth in the effort to improve school performance.

Still, Catholic schools have continued to make great strides and contributed to maintaining high educational outcomes in ways public schools could not over the last decades of the previous century (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993). Catholic Schools are inherently influenced by the spirit of Vatican ideals, which inspire human action and caring and not teacher self-interest and/or institutional gain. The ideology rooted in Catholic schools is based on values and the consequences of those values, resulting in a shared responsibility to foster a fair, just, and caring environment. Bryk, Lee and Holland indicated that this value-based educational philosophy when coupled with adequate resources, results in desirable academic and social consequences.

There is also little doubt that school and school system organization have tremendous potential influence on educational achievement and school excellence. Strong strategic planning, effective relationship building among stakeholders, clever resource decision-making and inspirational qualities and actions all clearly improve the effectiveness of schools as institutions. Many studies confirm that the principal and the teachers affect educational outcomes in ways far more powerfully than most parents realize. These positions seem particularly influential in Catholic schools, where leadership is infused with and enhanced by common values and where culture (due to significant ritual and common viewpoints) would be judged to be very strong in impact.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

Study Design

Principals are charged with the responsibility to create a positive environment and to minimize the negative factors which will shape a school's culture. A principal's behavior is very powerful in that it sets the moral compass for all to follow and the practice results in acceptance, success and expected achievement within the culture. This study examined the relationship between principal's leadership behaviors, teacher's perceptions of principals and resulting school culture within six successful Blue Ribbon schools.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the mixed methods approach using both qualitative and quantitative analysis employed in this study. This study sought to determine the relationship between leadership behaviors and school culture. This chapter is organized in the following sections: procedures, participants, data sources (including principal interview data, observations, survey data, principal survey, and teacher survey), demographics, data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations.

The research questions that guide this study are as follows:

1. What is the self-described leadership style of the principals of the six Blue Ribbon Catholic schools participating in this study?

2. What is the leadership style of principals participating in this study as perceived by their teachers?

3. According to the principal, what are the core values - shared principles that are communicated through rituals, ceremonies, norms, stories, myths, and humor - that undergird the school culture and how does his or her values align or differ from those values?

4. According to the teachers, what are the core values - shared principles that are communicated through rituals, ceremonies, norms, stories, myths, and humor - that undergird the school culture and how does the principal's values align or differ from those values?

5. What do the principals and teachers perceive to be the important leadership characteristics that positively influence school culture?

Procedures

This mixed methods study was conducted at six Blue Ribbon Catholic schools in two phases. The first phase consisted of a qualitative analysis involving face-to-face interviews with principals. Responses to questions addressing leadership and culture were coded and categorized. The second phase consisted of leadership orientation surveys administered to both principals and teachers to obtain other relevant data on leadership and culture in the school. The completed study provides a cross comparison of data to determine the relationships between principal leadership, teacher's perceptions of principal leadership and the general effects of principal leadership on school culture.

Demographic Data Analysis

The Superintendent of the Arlington Catholic School system granted permission for this study to occur, notified all principals within the school system about the research project, and solicited their participation. Principals from six Blue Ribbon Schools and 80

teachers from within their schools volunteered to serve as participants in the study. This sub-set included elementary and high schools as well as rural and urban schools. The six schools in the study are all co-educational and range in size from 450 students to 1,200 students, with an average of 36 teachers per school and a 16:1 student teacher ratio. While six principals elected to participate in the interviews, only five responded to the written survey, resulting in a written response rate of 83% for principals. The response rate for teachers was 37%.

Table 1

Demographics - Principals

Category	M	SD
Gender	.40	.55
Years as the Principal	9.30	5.00
Years of Experience as a Principal	12.50	4.64
Number of Students	672.80	287.01
Number of Teachers	51.75	33.33
Number Priests and Nuns	2.20	3.033

Gender coded: 0 for men and 1 for women.
Race was not provided

Table 2

Demographics - Teachers

Category	M	SD
Gender	.76	.43
Race	1.02	.13
Years Employed at Current School	8.12	7.22
Years of Experience as a Teacher	14.93	11.06

Gender coded: 0 for men and 1 for women.
Race coded: 1 for Caucasian and 2 for Hispanic

Principal Respondents. Of the five principals who responded to the survey, three were male and two were female. The average number of years that the respondents had been principals at their current school was 9 years. The average total number of years of experience as a principal was 13 years. The principals currently lead schools with an average of 673 students and an average of 52 teachers. Only two of the schools reported having priests and/or nuns as teachers or staff assigned to their school. None of the schools reported having students who qualified for free and reduced priced meal programs.

Teacher Respondents. Of the 80 teachers who responded to the survey, 75% identified themselves as being female. Of the teachers who specified their race, 75% responded as being Caucasian, and 1.3% as being Hispanic. The average number of years that the respondents reported as having been a teacher at their current school was 8 years. The average total number of years of experience as a teacher was reported at 15 years.

Data Sources

The Bolman and Deal Four Frame Model created in 2008 provided the basis for the interview questions and surveys used by the researcher to collect data concerning principal leadership, teacher's perceptions of principal leadership and overall school culture. The four frame organizational theory model components are described as: the Structural Frame, which focuses on goals, rules, and policies; the Human Resource Frame, which addresses roles, norms, and relationships; the Political Frame, which focuses on power, self-interest and aspirations; and the Symbolic Frame, which provides a view of culture, norms and values. These frames assisted in the evaluation of leader

effectiveness. Data for this mixed method study were collected using the following interview and survey processes:

Principal Interview Data. Principals are charged with overseeing the environment that influences culture and school success, thus, this research examined leadership behaviors and leadership influenced culture in highly successful religious schools. Data were obtained from the six participating schools through recorded and transcribed personal interviews with principals, written surveys distributed to principals and teachers, and direct observation of school settings, practices, and interactions of the principal and teachers with students during the researcher's school visits; observations were captured in field notes and collected and recorded by the researcher during school visits.

Principals of the six participating Catholic Schools were interviewed by the researcher using an interview questionnaire consisting of 20 questions addressing leadership and culture as seen through the symbolic lens of Bolman and Deal's Four Frame Model (See Appendix C). Using Bolman and Deal's frames construct as a guide, those six principals were asked about their perceptions of themselves as leaders, their behaviors as a leader, and their overall impact on school culture. For example, questions such as the following were posed, *what is your role in fostering culture in school; what are your core values and how do they align with those of the school; how is conflict of cultural norms handled in your school?*

Observations. Field notes were taken during all phases of the study, during school visits, when conducting direct interviews, during survey distribution and collection and during classroom visits. School visits were one to two day visits at each of

the participating schools and consisted of a tour of the school grounds and classrooms, an introduction to the staff, teachers and occasionally students. Each school was modern, in good appearance with ample parking, had peaceful settings absence of crowding or congestion and clearly the influence of faith and religion was obvious through statues, symbols and wall postings, as was sports and academic achievements in the form of trophies, ribbons and awards. The security in each school was maintained at the highest levels through staff observation, locked doors, visitor driver license verification and maintenance of a sign-in log for visitors.

Each school appeared to be adequately staffed with one or more administrative assistants; all principals and teachers were professionally dressed in appropriate attire. The classrooms were quiet during instruction and students were all in uniforms and well behaved. In every school, students appeared exceptionally happy and smiling as they moved through hallways, and in every case of a conversation between a principal, teacher or staff member and a student, the dialogue was caring, sincere and supportive. Students were always polite and helpful to visitors. Most notable was the sense of community and belonging. The schools all seemed to be a place where mentorship, caring and growth for students was an integral part of the essence of the culture.

Though Catholic faith is the fundamental center from which the vocation of education stems from in Catholic schools, education is profoundly conveyed by means of respect, human dignity and responsibility. Even when a child had an issue that needed to be addressed, it was done so kindly and lovingly. It was obvious that teachers had a passion for their jobs, knew their children and families well, and appeared to be actively engaged in classrooms, teacher, student and community activities at all times. It was

particularly interesting to note the creativity of the principals from a business perspective as they embraced international and religious diversity by opening their school doors to children from other countries. The enrollment of international students assists with their budgets, and the students are truly welcomed because their diversity contributes to U.S student growth and teacher compassion.

It was not surprising that the pace of technology required strategic vision and flexibility by all in the school system. Of particular note, there were an unusual number of school closure days during this study due to extreme winter weather and schools adjusted well by implementing distance learning in which teachers provided assignments and instructions through laptop computers and an intra-net system. The direct observations of the schools supported the findings of the interviews and survey results.

Survey Instruments. The data for this study were generated using two instruments: Principal Interview Questions and the Leadership Orientation Surveys created by Bolman and Deal. The Leadership Orientation survey consisted of four sections, with the first section containing 32 items. A five-point Likert scale was used for the following four categories of the instrument: Structure, Human Resource, Political, and Symbolic and the results were averaged for analysis. The survey asked principals to describe their own leadership behaviors and management style using the four frames, and teachers were also asked to describe their principals in terms of their leadership and management style using the same four frames.

In any data collection effort some respondents may not complete all data sets desired. In this case if a question in the Leadership Orientation survey did not have an annotated response, it can be assumed that the respondent did not know the answer to the

question or chose not to respond. To address the issue of missing values within data analysis, the mean of the responses from the respective category of either the principal or the teacher survey in question was calculated and then that result was substituted for the missing value. If there were missing values among the demographic data responses, information was obtained from interviews with the school principals and from the school's public website to fill in the omitted values.

Bolman and Deal's Leadership Orientation survey provided the means to study and understand leadership and its effects on many disciplines, to include education (Bolman, 2013). It has not been used in the past to specifically study the effects of leadership in Blue Ribbon Catholic Schools. The consistency of each frame of the survey instrument and the reliability on the data collected were examined for applicability to this study. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were computed for each frame of the principals' and teachers' survey instruments.

Structure was measured using eight-items and included phrases such as "Thinks very clearly and logically", and "Strongly emphasizes careful planning and clear time lines". The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.91 indicating a high reliability of the measure; Bolman and Deal's reported an alpha of 0.92 for this category. *Human Resource* was measured using eight-items and included such phrases as "Shows high levels of support and concern for others", and "Builds trust through open and collaborative relationships". The Cronbach's alpha was also a high 0.90, indicating strong reliability (and similar coefficient to Bolman and Deal's corresponding alpha of 0.93). *Political* was also measured using eight-items and included phrases such as "Shows exceptional ability to mobilize people and resources to get things done", and "Is

a very skillful and shrewd negotiator". The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was an acceptable 0.88; Bolman and Deal's reported a 0.91. The *Symbolic* frame was also measured using eight-items. Items included phrases such as "Inspires others to do their best", and "Is highly charismatic". The Cronbach's alpha was 0.90; Bolman and Deal's alpha was 0.93. The overall results indicated acceptably high coefficient alphas for all four frames.

Leadership style was furthered measured with Bolman and Deal's survey within another category consisting of six items; each of the items contained four descriptors. Respondents were asked to assign a number four to the phrase that best described the principal, and the number one to the phrase that was least like the principal. Principals rated their own leadership style. Section three asked principals to rate their overall effectiveness as a manager and their effectiveness as a leader on a scale of one to five (1 = bottom 20%, 5 = top 20%); teachers were also asked to rate their principals on the same questions using the same scale. The last section asked for demographic information.

Validity of the principal questionnaires and the principal and teacher surveys was supported through a review of Bolman and Deal's literature related to topics of leadership and culture. Furthermore, the questionnaire and survey instruments were reviewed and tested before the study began by a small group of individuals practiced in leadership and culture, to determine clarity of the instructions, understandability of the questions, and the capability of the survey to accurately solicit the responses desired about the topics of leadership, and school culture.

According to Bolman (2013), the reliability of the Leadership Orientation survey is supported by approximately 1,300 colleague ratings from a multi-sector sample of

managers in business and education (It can be found at:

http://www.leebolman.com/orientations.htm). Previous studies (DeLuca, 2009; King,

2006; Roddy, 2010) indicated that Bolman and Deal established internal reliability of the

instrument with a high Cronbach's alpha between .91 and .93 through pilot testing, and

validity of the instrument through regression analysis. In 2013, Al-Omari conducted an

internal pilot study of the Four Frame Model and obtained similar values in the reliability

and consistency of the survey instrument.

Permission to use the Leadership Orientation Survey for this study was granted by

the author (See Appendix G). The conditions of this permission included providing a

copy of the resulting publication to the author as well as a copy of the data file from the

research, if requested by the author.

Principal Survey. The Leadership Orientation Survey for Principals (see

Appendix D) with a cover letter of explanation was delivered by the researcher to the

school secretary or administrative staff of each of the six participating schools for

distribution to the principal. Questions in the survey asked the respondent principal to

indicate on a scale of 1 to 5 (never to always) how often they demonstrated certain leader

behaviors, for example *communicate a strong and challenging sense of vision and*

mission, or *set specific, measurable goals and hold people accountable for results*. The

survey instructions indicated that completed surveys were to be returned to the researcher

within two weeks of receipt in a sealed, self-addressed, stamped envelope, which was

provided by the researcher. The survey consisted of questions designed as a leader's self-

assessment and focused on issues that characterized Bolman and Deal's four-frame

organizational theory, depicting essential components of structure, human resources,

politics and symbols. The results of the principal's self-assessment surveys were compared and contrasted with the results from the teacher's version of the Leadership Orientation Survey to reveal the teacher's assessment of the school principal's leadership style.

Teacher Survey. All teachers are influenced by their principals, therefore, teachers in each of the six schools involved in the study were asked to participate in a Leadership Orientation Survey to obtain their views of the principal's role as a leader and the overall impact that principal behaviors have on school culture (see Appendix E). Questions in that survey asked the respondent teacher to indicate on a scale of 1 to 5 (never to always) what leader behaviors are demonstrated by their principals, for example *communicate a strong and challenging sense of vision and mission*, or *set specific, measurable goals and hold people accountable for results*. The survey instructions indicated that completed surveys were to be returned to the researcher within two weeks of receipt in a sealed, self-addressed, stamped envelope, which was provided by the researcher.

Data Collection

Phase 1. The principal interviews were scheduled by the researcher through the school secretaries and conducted in the offices of the principals at their schools; the lengths of the principal interviews were between 60 and 90 minutes. The interviews began with an introduction to the research, and continued after providing a signed consent form to the principal indicating his/her willingness to participate and ended with a series of interview questions. Responses to the interview questions were recorded as written notes and through audio tape-recordings. After the interview concluded, the

researcher personally toured and observed the school's activities first hand to obtain a sense of the school's culture.

Principals shared many stories during the interview which gave life to the responses in the interviews. It was interesting to note that a principal said their schools would succeed "no matter who was at the helm because regardless of the leader, the spirit and the culture of the school would prevail"…she wished "they could bottle it". Teachers appeared to love their schools and the work environment so much that one principal reported that a teacher had been offered a pay increase of nearly $30,000 at a competitive public school, but opted to stay in the current Catholic school system. Principals stated they have quality teachers because they hire "prayerfully" and carefully to ensure they fit the culture. It is these same teachers that are often asked to contribute to the value statements of their schools…one school principal uses the motto "Be the Change" with his teachers and he feels this motivates them in their daily activities. Principals indicated there were challenges sometimes with new teacher adjustments to workload and the demands because "they are not always taught how to plan in their educational preparation to become teachers"; the workload can be quite a surprise to them their first year if they are not coached along the way. But the contributions of these new teachers are so critical, one principal boasted of improved test scores and better curriculum because teachers identified that the school testing cycle was not in synch with opportunities for teachers to improve their academic programs; this action resulted in teachers being more accountable and achievements more measurable.

When asked to identify what actually brings cohesion to the school, the responses were passionate and verbose. Overwhelmingly, respondents indicated that their "faith

holds us together"; many specifically mentioned the "Holy Spirit" when describing the dominant role played by faith, whereas some listed more generic terms such as "Catholic identity," or "shared sense of traditions/uniqueness." Other commonly listed responses by principals and teachers included "a sense of family/community", "teacher camaraderie and dedication", "staff commitment and support", and a "shared sense of mission". Finally, "teamwork" and the "sincere appreciation for colleagues" were mentioned many times by all who described how carefully they selected their faculty when they were hired. Not surprising, priests and nuns, in addition to their principals, were mentioned by several respondents as bringing cohesion to the school even if they were not regularly visible in the school or classrooms. A common theme was evident throughout the study that principals and teachers felt everyone was "nice to each other," and "cared deeply about the student's success from a holistic perspective."

Phase 2. During the second phase of this study, the Principal (Self) Leadership Orientation and School Culture Survey and the Teacher Survey of Principal Leadership Orientation and School Culture were distributed and administered to all principals and teachers in the six participating schools. These surveys focused on assessing the principal's leadership and behavior, and their effects on school culture from both the principal's and teachers' perspectives. The survey instruments included a cover letter of explanation and were delivered by the researcher to the school secretary for distribution. The teacher's survey results were compared and contrasted with results from principal interviews and surveys to assess the school principal's leadership style. The survey instructions indicated that completed surveys were to be returned directly to the

researcher through the postal service in a sealed, self-addressed, stamped envelope provided for this purpose within two weeks after receipt.

Data Analysis

Bolman and Deal's Four Frame Model was used to conduct the analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data obtained from this study to determine the relationships between principal leadership and school culture. Mertens and Wilson (2012) indicated that the coding of interview data can be an effective qualitative analysis tool. Qualitative analysis of the principal interviews was conducted by means of audio-recording and by identifying common words from the interviews that describe the principals' perceptions of their leadership role, and the influence they have on the school's cultural environment. The principal interviews were then transcribed and coded by the researcher by clustering the resulting data to identify the most common words and themes. The identification of common words used by principals in their responses to the interview questions helped illuminate the desirable cultural setting and the leadership traits required in an excellent school culture. Similar processes were employed to identify the common words used by teachers to describe their principal's role and their interpretation of the school's cultural setting.

The quantitative data from the survey collection were analyzed to draw conclusions about behaviors, leadership style, effectiveness as a leader, and demographics. The surveys for the study were primarily descriptive in nature and consisted of cross-sectional, quantitative questions to determine leadership orientation as applied to school culture. Taken together, these two data sources provided an appropriate picture of the leadership behaviors of the six principals.

Bolman and Deal's survey instrument consists of four sections with the first section containing 32 items. A Likert type scale was used so that respondents could rate themselves on each question from 1-5 (1-Never, 2-Occasionally, 3- Sometimes, 4-Often and 5-Always). Principals could rate themselves, and teachers could rate their principals on each question from 1 to 5 (1-Never, 2-Occasionally, 3-Sometimes, 4-Often and 5-Always). While the questions were patterned in a consistent sequence of the structural frame (questions 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21, 25, and 29), human sources (questions 2, 6, 10, 14, 18, 22, 26 and 30), political (questions 3, 7, 11, 15, 19, 23, 27 and 31), and symbolic (questions 4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28 and 32), this study primarily focused on the symbolic aspects of leadership and culture. Section two contained six, forced-choice questions that addressed leadership styles with four possible options for a self-description, from "4" which best describes oneself to "1" being the least likely choice. A leadership frame becomes relevant when a mean score on a question in that section is equal to or above a 4.0

Section three asked participants to rate the principals compared with other individuals with comparable levels of experience and responsibilities and also asked participants to rate their effectiveness as a leader. The two items in Section three are rated on a 5-point scale with "5" being a top 20% rating, a "3" a middle 20% rating and "1" a bottom 20% rating. Section four asked for demographic data which included gender, race, years at the current school, years of experience, number of students enrolled and the proportion of students who qualified for free and reduced priced meals.

The data analysis was conducted in two parts. The first part was a descriptive analysis of the demographic data obtained from section four of the survey instrument.

The second part of the analysis was of the data obtained from the survey instrument as it applied to the five research questions of this study.

Research question one*: What is the self-described leadership style of the principals of the six Blue Ribbon Catholic schools participating in this study?*

To answer this question, the responses were obtained from descriptive analysis of the commonly coded terms provided by the principal interviews and Leadership Orientation survey results that were further summarized (See Appendix D).

Research question two: *What is the leadership style of principals participating in this study as perceived by their teachers?*

To answer this question, the responses were obtained from descriptive analysis of the commonly coded terms provided by the teacher surveys and summarized further (See Appendix E, part I).

Research question three*: According to the principal, what are the core values - shared principles that are communicated through rituals, ceremonies, norms, stories, myths, and humor - that undergird the school culture and how does his or her values align or differ from those values?*

To answer this question, the responses were obtained from descriptive analysis of the commonly coded terms provided by the principal interviews and Leadership Orientation survey results and summarized further (See Appendix C).

Research question four: *According to the teachers, what are the core values - shared principles that are communicated through rituals, ceremonies, norms, stories, myths, and humor - that undergird the school culture and how does his or her values align or differ from those values?*

To answer this question, the responses were obtained from descriptive analysis of the commonly coded terms provided by the teacher Leadership Orientation survey results and summarized further (See Appendix E, part II).

Research question five: *What do the principals and teachers perceive to be the important leadership characteristics that positively influence school culture?*

A mean score was obtained from the Likert scale for the 32 items in part 1 of the Leadership Orientation Survey for principals; the same was obtained from the teacher surveys (See Appendix D and E, part I). Each score was obtained by adding all the responses of each of the questions and computing a mean score and the standard deviation. All frames were analyzed, but there was an emphasis on the symbolic frame as determined by survey responses to questions 4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28 and 32, which supported the intent of this study as it examined a specific school culture.

This study compared resulting data to determine the relationship between self-perception of principal leadership, and teachers' perceptions of principal leadership and influence on school culture through a mixed measure approach of interviews, surveys and direct observation. The overall results of this study were intended to provide an opportunity for principals and teachers to reflect and look for opportunities to change or improve. Also, important leadership characteristics that have a positive impact on education were identified and finally, the analysis of the findings answered the five important research questions posed in this study.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were adhered to without compromise during this study and participation was voluntary, based on participants' signed consent. Upon receiving

permission from the dissertation committee to proceed with the study, a request was sent to the Education Internal Review Committee (EDIRC) for Human Subjects Research Approval. It was determined that this project was found to be in compliance with the appropriate ethical standards and was exempt from the need for formal review by The College of William and Mary Protection of Human Rights Committee and permission was received to continue with the study.

At all times, the data obtained for this study were held strictly confidential and protected by the researcher. Respondents of the survey submitted survey results directly to the researcher by means of a sealed, self-addressed, stamped envelope that was provided for this purpose. Survey information was secured in a locked file cabinet within a secure office until the data were entered into a protected data base for further analysis. The data were also compiled in the aggregate and were not distinguishable by school or individuals. Throughout the study and after its completion, the data have been physically secured and protected.

<div align="center">Assumptions, Limitations and Delimitations</div>

There were two significant assumptions associated with this study: (a) that identified positive principal behaviors may be transferred to different (non-Catholic) schools, and (b) that Catholic school culture and values are not so different from comparable school culture and values, that useful comparisons cannot be made. There may also be lessons to be learned from these schools that can be important to other schools.

There were several limitations of this study: (a) that principals and teachers at the six schools have been employed for varying lengths of time and their perspectives may

vary based on their employment duration, (b) while data were obtained from all principals, not all teachers were expected to comply with the request for survey responses, and (c) the study was conducted at six Blue Ribbon schools that randomly volunteered based upon a school district-wide request to participate in the study and might not be truly representative of other Catholic schools in other dioceses. Further research would serve to further explore whether the perspectives of principals and teachers were affected by their employment duration and data gathered from other Blue Ribbon schools might produce slightly different results.

A delimitation of this study is that it is focused only on high performing Catholic schools; being based on success among already successful schools, the attributes identified in the study might not be of much use in schools that are failing to meet standards because of other types of issues (infrastructure deficiencies, teacher flight, etc.).

Chapter 4: Analysis of Results

Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the results of the interviews with principals and the surveys with both principals and teachers, which were used to explore the relationship between principal leadership behaviors and school culture. This chapter is organized to focus on the five research questions of the study.

Principal and Teacher Data Results

Table 3 depicts the descriptive statistics results from the principal's surveys and Table 4 displays the survey results from the teachers. Table 5 depicts the self-reported Leadership Styles of the Principals, by response percentage, mean and standard deviation. For example, LS1a corresponds to leadership style question 1, descriptor 'a' of the Leadership Orientation survey. In this category, forty percent of the principals indicated that this descriptor best describes them (the individual's strongest skills being analytic skills) and twenty percent of the principals indicated that this descriptor describes them the least. Table 7 displays the leadership style of the principal as described by the teachers, by percentage, mean and standard deviation.

This study identified a set of notable leadership behaviors exhibited by the six successful principals involved in the study. Based upon the feedback of both principals and teachers the leadership behaviors identified in Tables 15, appear to have contributed directly to school excellence and might even be considered by other school leaders seeking similar achievements.

Principals generally felt that they needed to have concern for those they lead, be inspirational to their teachers and possess good management skills. Teachers generally wanted competent leadership that made good decisions based on good analytical skills and displayed clear and logical thinking, while caring and supporting them.

Table 3

Results of Principals Leadership Orientation Survey

Category	M	SD
Structure Frame	4.25	.61
Human Resources Frame	4.46	.29
Political Frame	3.74	.38
Symbolic Frame	3.90	.24
Effectiveness as a Manager	4.30	.45
Effectiveness as a Leader	4.30	.45

Table 4

Results of Teachers Leadership Orientation Survey

Category	M	SD
Structure Frame	3.99	.68
Human Resources Frame	3.93	.70
Political Frame	3.74	.62
Symbolic Frame	3.72	.74
Effectiveness as a Manager	3.98	.95
Effectiveness as a Leader	3.89	.91

Data Analysis of the Five Research Questions

The data analysis findings for the five research questions are presented in this section:

Research question one: *What is the self-described leadership style of the principals of the six Blue Ribbon Catholic schools participating in this study?*

The data used to answer this question were obtained from the Leadership Orientation survey results completed and returned by five of the six principals. Table 5 provides the principal's self-reported leadership styles by category and percentage of reporting. Per category, principals reported the highest and strongest agreement with questions LS1b - interpersonal skills (60%), LS2d - ability to inspire (60%), LS4b - concern for people (80%), LS5b- caring and supportive (60%) and LS6b - humanist (60%).

Table 5

Principals' self-reported leadership styles (percent by response)

Leadership Style	Percent				Mean	Standard Deviation
	1	2	3	4		
LS1a - Analytical Skill	20	20	20	40	2.8	1.3
LS1b - Interpersonal Skill	0	0	40	60	3.6	0.55
LS1c - Political Skill	60	20	20	0	1.6	0.89
LS1d - Ability to Motivate	20	60	20	0	2	0.71
LS2a - Technical Expert	60	40	0	0	1.4	0.55
LS2b - Good Listener	20	0	40	40	3	1.22
LS2c - Skilled Negotiator	20	40	40	0	2.2	0.84
LS2d - Inspirational Leader	0	20	20	60	3.4	0.89
LS3a - Make Good Decisions	0	0	80	20	3.2	0.45
LS3b - Coach and Develop People	0	40	20	40	3	1
LS3c - Build Strong Alliances	60	20	0	20	1.8	1.3
LS3d - Energize and Inspire	40	40	0	20	2	1.22
LS4a - Attention to Detail	60	20	20	0	1.6	0.89
LS4b - Concern for People	0	0	20	80	3.8	0.45
LS4c - Ability to Succeed	20	20	40	20	2.6	1.14
LS4d - Charisma	20	60	20	0	2	0.71
LS5a - Clear, Logical Thinking	40	0	60	0	2.2	1.1
LS5b - Caring and Supportive	0	0	40	60	3.6	0.55
LS5c - Toughness	60	40	0	0	1.4	0.55
LS5d - Imagination	0	60	0	40	2.8	1.1
LS6a – Analyst	20	20	60	0	2.4	0.89
LS6b - Humanist	0	20	20	60	3.4	0.89
LS6c - Politician	80	20	0	0	1.2	0.45
LS6d - Visionary	0	40	20	40	3	1

The following results reflect the six most common descriptive terms from the principal's self-described styles.

Table 6

Self-described leadership style of principals

Descriptive Term	Principal's Response	Response Rate (*n=5*)	Percentage

Strongest Skill	Interpersonal Skills	3/5	60
Best Description	Inspirational Leader	3/5	60
Best Action	Makes Good Decisions	3/5	60
Most Notable	Concern for People	3/5	60
Important Leadership Trait	Caring and Supportive of Others	3/5	60
Best Described	Humanist	4/5	80

Research question two: *What is the leadership style of principals participating in this study as perceived by their teachers?*

The data used to answer this question were obtained from the Leadership Orientation survey results obtained from 80 teachers among the six schools being studied. Table 7 reported the following results from teachersLS1a – analytical skill (39%), LS3a – make good decisions (43%), LS4b - concern for people (45%) and LS5a – clear, logical thinking (38%), LS6b - humanist (35%).

Table 7

Leadership style of principals as described by teachers (percent by response)

Leadership Style	Percent				Mean	Standard Deviation
	1	2	3	4		
LS1a - Analytical Skill	11.3	22.5	17.5	38.8	2.93	1.09
LS1b - Interpersonal Skill	12.5	25	20	32.5	2.81	1.08
LS1c - Political Skill	21.3	21.3	30	16.3	2.47	1.05
LS1d - Ability to Motivate	43.8	18.8	21.3	3.8	1.83	0.95
LS2a - Technical Expert	31.3	23.8	16.3	16.3	2.2	1.12
LS2b - Skilled Negotiator	8.8	15	36.3	27.5	2.94	0.95
LS2c - Skilled Negotiator	13.8	32.5	13.8	28.8	2.65	1.1
LS2d - Inspirational Leader	33.8	15	21.3	17.5	2.26	1.18
LS3a - Make Good Decisions	6.3	12.5	26.3	42.5	3.2	0.94

LS3b - Coach and Develop People	13.8	32.5	22.5	17.5	2.51	0.99
LS3c - Build Strong Alliances	22.5	17.5	26.3	22.5	2.55	1.13
LS3d - Energize and Inspire	45	23.8	12.5	7.5	1.8	0.98
LS4a - Attention to Detail	23.8	28.8	20	17.5	2.35	1.08
LS4b - Concern for People	10	13.8	23.8	45	3.12	1.03
LS4c - Ability to Succeed	13.8	28.8	25	22.5	2.63	1.03
LS4d - Charisma	42.5	17.5	21.3	7.5	1.93	1.03
LS5a - Clear, Logical Thinking	6.3	20	25	37.5	3.06	0.97
LS5b - - Caring and Supportive	10	5	36.3	40	3.16	0.96
LS5c - Toughness	51.3	20	6.3	11.3	1.75	1.05
LS5d - Imagination	21.3	42.5	21.3	2.5	2.06	0.78
LS6a - Analyst	23.8	17.5	21.3	25	2.54	1.18
LS6b - Humanist	10	22.5	22.5	35	2.92	1.04
LS6c - Politician	30	26.3	18.8	13.8	2.18	1.07
LS6d - Visionary	25	21.3	26.3	17.5	2.4	1.1

Results of Teacher's Leadership Surveys

When asked if they felt welcomed by the principal and other teachers when they joined the school, most teachers replied that they were very appreciative of the welcome they had received. Phrases such as "genuine warmth," incredibly welcoming," and "sense of family" among fellow teachers were also frequent. Techniques such as teacher mentors, "wingmates," "grade partners," and other sponsorship efforts were highly praised. The welcoming nature of the school "community" was also a commonly valued factor - thus extending the welcoming warmth to staff and perhaps students and parents as well. Principals were most commonly mentioned for "setting the right tone," and for hiring the best teachers and staff. Most teachers indicated that their relationship with other teachers was very important to them and the spirit of teamwork was highly valued.

When asked about the importance of sports events and student achievements (i.e. honor roll) to the school and how are they celebrated, the most common teacher responses focused on the importance of sports, (a few even noted that sports received too

much emphasis), and almost every respondent listed specific ways in which students were appropriately and publicly recognized for their academic achievements. Examples included pep rallies, award ceremonies, trophies and medals, and award evenings. Many teachers noted that the means used to recognize student achievements was commonly expanded to include newsletters, the school website and the school broadcasting system. Frequently these responses were linked to faith-related activities with prayer cards and religious knowledge competitions that mirrored spelling bees and similar public efforts to bring attention. Most agreed achievements, success and recognition were highly valued.

When asked to discuss special activities or events permitted at school (i.e., fund raisers, "Blue Jean Friday," soup drives, Catholic School Week etc.) and their opinions about such events, teachers overwhelmingly endorsed the utility of special activities because they created a sense of family and community, but many also expressed real concern that the time required for such events could be burdensome if too frequent. Dress down days were specifically applauded and appreciated by over a quarter of the teacher respondents. School spirit days, a school gala, and "Thunder Thursdays" were given as other examples of ways used to infuse energy into the school week. Sports could be "too celebrated" and sometimes at the disadvantage of other departments such as art and music. On the other hand, almost as many teachers responded that fund raisers (some have raised thousands and millions of dollars for the poor and needy) were worthy, but required significant time from teachers.

When asked to describe whether they felt energized or "energy drained," at the end of the work day, teachers frequently replied they were "energy drained." In fact, nearly one third of those teachers responding mentioned they were energy drained,

sometimes because the day was so filled with good energy. Although some teachers wrote that they felt "good drained" or "drained by administrative requirements, but energized by students; "some respondents felt challenged in meeting deadlines, expectations and new agendas. Some felt "ready to go" and a "great sense of accomplishment". One teacher said they were 70 years old and happily "on a roll". Another said they "get up every day very happy to be with students and to teach them". Some mentioned that they expect increased challenges in the next few years because they anticipate the number of students with special needs to increase.

When asked to discuss how special events (birthdays, retirements, Nurse's Day, Administrator's Day etc.) were valued and celebrated, teachers responded in some detail, listing the diverse array of various events that were recognized at school and valued by them. Birthdays, retirements, weddings, and the birth of babies were commonly celebrated and those celebrations were appreciated. Other social events such as pot-luck lunches, annual banquets, "happy hours" and more generic faculty gatherings were also listed with appreciation. Teachers also included Holy Days, "prayer," and Mass among the special events that they valued at school. It was evident that such special events were common among the schools and were special to teachers.

When asked to describe what happens when a teacher or student crosses the line of acceptable behavior, teachers most commonly replied that "verbal counseling" was the most typical response to crossing the line by students; demerits were also a common response to student disciplinary issues. The teachers who also replied mentioned that students have been dismissed and teachers have been "fired," "dismissed," or "non-renewed," as a consequence of crossing the line of acceptable behavior. Teachers

appeared to be very protective of their children and noted that they would sometimes

notify parents and not the school administration of disciplinary problems. A teacher

indicated that they had been tardy on several occasions and they were counseled privately

in a 1-1 session with the principal. Some teachers felt that parents can sometimes have an

influence on a teacher's class management. It was noted that guidelines and

consequences for behavior are available in student and teacher handbooks.

The following results reflect the leadership styles of the six principals according

to their teachers.

Table 8

Leadership style of principals as described by teachers

Descriptive Term	Teacher's Principal's Response	Response Rate (n=80)	Percentage
Strongest Skill	Analytical Skills	35/80	44
Best Description	Clear, Logical Thinking	26/80	33
Best Action	Makes Good Decisions	37/80	46
Most Notable	Concern for People	38/80	48
Important Leadership Trait	Caring and Supportive of Others	35/80	44
Best Described	Humanist	30/80	38

Research question three: *According to the principal, what are the core values - shared*

principles that are communicated through rituals, ceremonies, norms, stories, myths, and

humor - that undergird the school culture and how does his or her values align or differ

from those values?

The data to answer this question was obtained from the descriptive analysis of the common descriptive terms provided by the Principal Interviews conducted with six principals.

Results of Principals' Leadership Interviews

All principals of the six participating schools were interviewed using a questionnaire consisting of 20 questions addressing leadership and culture. Principals were asked about their perceptions of themselves as leaders, their behaviors as a leader, and their overall impact on school culture. Each of the six principals was enthusiastic about the study and voiced sincere interest in the role of leadership and culture in the development of excellence in his/her school. They also were truly appreciative of the National Blue Ribbon School Program and what it had contributed to their school.

The interviews of the six principals revealed a host of common approaches that could be used to describe the leadership environments developed through their leadership. They all agreed that faith was certainly the centerpiece and dominating factor in the culture they thought should typify their school learning environments. Faith seemed to permeate much of what they sought to foster and was deemed a crucial contributor to the school culture. Secondly, the concept of community, the critical link between administrators, teachers, students, parents and the local parishes was considered fundamental as well. Shared values were also a common area of emphasis among the principals; by shared values they seemed to mean commitment to a code of morality based on their religion. The fourth point that seemed important to the principals included establishing a positive learning environment while focusing on maximizing the potential of each student. Throughout the interview process these school leaders emphasized these

four elements of success in a variety of ways, sometimes in describing their leadership style, sometimes in discussions of their best practices and sometimes as they discussed the criticality of relationships, but they were quite consistent in their emphasis of these four themes: faith, community, fostering a positive environment and focusing on the potential of each student.

The principals also emphasized such things as: the importance of identity and traditions (Catholic, generational, and excellence), the importance of respect within the school (respect for teachers by students, respect for students by teachers and respect among the staff, as well as respect for instructional time required to produce good results), and the importance of trust (most often trust of students, but also trust by parents for teachers and principals with teachers). In their emphasis on maximizing the value, benefit and potential for every child, the principals didn't want to be elitist or exclude anyone, they welcomed diversity of race, religion and economic background, and they saw they could still maintain a combination of values shared by a diverse group while using diversity for the benefit of the learning of every student.

A clearer definition of Catholic school culture began to emerge as principals were asked to define culture as they understand it. A summary of their responses described culture as the way in which a group of people gather around a common purpose, and while based in faith, and rooted in tradition and shared values, it is also an environment committed to caring and educating the whole child in the most joyful, reverent and modest way for preparing for life and eternity. The schools embrace their Catholic identity completely and in many ways, the Catholic school education provides a sense of history and tradition, an understanding of how to conduct oneself and an azimuth that

applies to education as well as life in general. Children are expected to wear uniforms to represent their equality as well as to express an identity. A sense of pride was clearly evident in both the physical structure of the schools and in their use of many visible symbols (religious statues, trophies, ribbons and pictures) which seemed to represent a sacred, yet also celebratory place in which children could grow and learn.

Principals clearly took great pride in their schools; they noted the schools were a parent's "choice" and, unlike public schools they offered a package which included faith and formation of students and they were not subjected to school boards; they humbly understood the daunting responsibility, and the autonomy, bestowed upon them by their parish priests and the school superintendent. They said that tradition was important, but that transformation was equally as important since they needed to be schools that were adaptive to change. Principals felt they needed to be transformational educational leaders and not just administrators; they felt their innovative leadership should be based on best practices and sound research. They wanted to lead with humility and always by example. They understood that their responsibilities were subject to an environment that is constantly changing due to shifts in the demographics of their students, evolving technology and even in the areas of safety and security required to protect their children in every way possible. Principals were proud of their student diversity and ability to enroll international students. It was interesting to note that principals discussed the value of trust as essential to a school's cultural success and they felt that it required "constant attention" because new people were always being hired. They indicated that it was essential to have a high trust environment and they must always commit as the principal to set the example.

The following results depicted in Table 9 outline the core values which foster the school's culture and the principal's personal compatibility with values; this differed slightly from the teacher's responses which did not include: "values", "Catholic identity" or "positive environment".

Table 9

Principal's Identification of the School's Core Values and Compatibility

Descriptive Terms	Response Rate (*n*=6)	Agree Rate (%)	Differ Rate (%)
Faith	6/6	100	0
Community	6/6	100	0
Values	6/6	100	0
Catholic Identity	5/6	83	17
Academic Excellence	6/6	100	0
Positive Environment	6/6	100	0
Commitment to Students	6/6	100	0

Table 10 provides a collective list of the descriptive words principal's used to describe their school culture.

Table 10

Principal's Descriptive Words that Define School Culture

• Faith; Devotion to Jesus Christ
• Traditional but transformed
• Supported by parents, parish, community
• Parent's school "choice" for a school; positive environment
• Formation of students and the whole person
• Successful and confident students
• Shared values and respect for one another
• Responsibility to the global community
• Conflict = consequences, resolution, and reconciliation
• Teaching = mentorship, vocation for the student's benefit
• Schools are "leading" (successful), learning (failing) or "lucky" (not sure)
• Superintendent = instructional strategies, an educational leader
• Principals = influential problem solver, independent, but not sovereign
• Teachers = dedicated to students, committed to service and social justice
• innovative educators based on best practices and research
• managing the job with technology, data and empowering others

Principals had "wishes" that seemed to be primarily resource based and it was interesting to see that they had to think about this question for a moment because they were truly thankful for what they currently have in their schools. Most principals wanted to improve their current facilities and to be able to grow in physical space so they could accommodate an increase in students. They were also seeking to enhance their use of technology. They wanted to develop more student leaders and ensure they maintained a trustful school environment.

Table 11 depicts the principal's top ten wishes when collectively asked what they would want in the future, if anything were possible.

Table 11

Principal's Top Ten Wishes

1. More funding for initiatives
2. Facility expansion; more physical plant and green space
3. Speeding up capital projects
4. Affordable technology
5. Increased marketing for more students
6. More financial aid for students
7. Data driven analysis for academic planning
8. Student leadership and a supporting culture
9. The whole community feeling welcome
10. High levels of trust to support decisions

Research question four: *According to the teachers, what are the core values - shared principles that are communicated through rituals, ceremonies, norms, stories, myths, and humor - that undergird the school culture and how does his or her values align or differ from those values?*

The data to answer this question was obtained from the descriptive analysis of the commonly coded terms provided by the teacher Leadership Orientation Survey results, which were completed by 80 teachers. Table 12 outlines the core values of the schools according to the teachers and presents the seven most common descriptive terms provided by the teachers of their interpretation of the school's core values; the response rate of 80 teachers who responded to the surveys; and whether he or she agreed with the values which are associated with their school culture. This differed slightly from the principal's responses, which did not include: "teacher dedication", "sense of mission" and "teamwork".

Table 12

Teacher's Identification of the School's Core Values and Compatibility

Descriptive Terms	Response Rate (*n*=80)	Agree Rate (%)	Differ Rate (%)
Faith	64/80	80	20
Community	36/80	45	55
Teacher Dedication	67/80	84	16
Sense of Mission	24/80	30	70
Academic Excellence	49/80	61	39
Teamwork	61/80	76	24
Commitment to Student	52/80	65	35

Research question five: *What do the principals and teachers perceive to be the important leadership characteristics that positively influence school culture?*

The data to answer this question were obtained from coding the descriptive words provided by principals from their interviews and from the results of the principal and teacher surveys. A mean score and standard deviation was computed from the 32 survey questions in part 1 of the Leadership Orientation Survey for principals and teachers. All frames were analyzed with emphasis on the analysis of the symbolic frame, which was obtained from responses to survey questions 4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28 and 32, which supported the intent of this study to examine principal leadership and school culture.

Table 13 presents the means and standard deviations of the four leadership frames (structure, human resource, political and symbolic) as rated by the principals.

Table 13

Means and Standard Deviations of Leadership Frames as Rated by Principals

Frame	*n*=6	Mean	Standard Deviation
Structural	6	4.25	.61
Human Resource	6	4.46	.29
Political	6	3.74	.38
Symbolic	6	3.90	.24

Table 14 presents the means and standard deviations of the four leadership frames

(structure, human resource, political and symbolic) as rated by the teachers.

Table 14

Means and Standard Deviations of Leadership Frames as Rated by Teachers

Frame	n=80	Mean	Standard Deviation
Structural	80	3.99	.68
Human Resource	80	3.93	.70
Political	80	3.74	.62
Symbolic	80	3.72	.74

For principals, the human resources frame (M=4.46, SD=.29) had the highest

mean followed by the structural frame with a mean of (M=4.25, SD=61) and the symbolic

frame (M=3.90, SD=.24). The political frame had the lowest mean (M=3.74, SD=.24).

For teachers, the structural frame had the highest mean (M=3.99, SD=.68),

followed by the human resources frame (M=3.93, SD=.70) and the political frame

(M=3.74, SD=.62). The symbolic frame had the lowest mean (M=3.72, SD=.74).

Summary of Findings

This chapter provided the results of the data analysis of the principal's self-

described leadership, teacher's perceptions of principal leadership and the general effects

of principal leadership on school culture through the lens of the Bolman and Deal's

symbolic frame. The data were collected from interviews and two survey instruments

from a select population of principals and teachers within a Catholic Blue Ribbon School

district. Six principals and 219 teachers were invited to participate in this study and all

principals and nearly one third of the teachers responded to the request. There was a

response rate from 83% (6 interviewed; 5 completed written surveys) of the principals

and 37% (80 surveys returned) from the teachers of the six schools in the study. Within

the four leadership frames, the symbolic frame was the study's focus as it related

specifically to the relationship between leadership and school culture.

CHAPTER 5: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

This study focused on highly successful school principals in the Arlington Diocese in northern Virginia; it sought to identify whether their principal leadership behaviors contributed to their excellent school quality as indicated by the achievement of Blue Ribbon school designation, and to understand how their leadership behavior was able to influence their school culture, which exists in every school, can manifest itself in many ways through customs, beliefs, rituals, behaviors, shared values and purpose, and can be influenced by a leader's behavior and practice. Most particularly, this study sought to determine the dominant principal behaviors, which fostered a positive school culture, so that other school leaders might emulate that success.

In order to identify these behaviors, this study conducted an inquiry of 6 of 19 schools designated as Blue Ribbon Schools within the Arlington Catholic School System to determine the fundamental nature of the successful efforts of the 6 principals of these schools. The impact of the leader's behavior on the school's culture and overall success was assessed and a list of highly valued leadership behaviors was identified and is depicted in Table 15. Additionally, a series of ideas were generated along with accompanying strategies identified in the section on Implications for Practice for other school leaders seeking to achieve cultural excellence.

This chapter provides the recommendations that should be taken into consideration from the study. The findings of the study show that both principals and

teachers see certain leader behaviors as positively influencing school culture and school excellence, and also indicate that certain specific behaviors might be considered for emphasis by other leaders in other schools. Finally, it was clear from the findings that these six school leaders have a full and accurate appreciation of the impact of their leadership and the influences of school culture on their success.

Overview of the Findings

The principals of this study clearly foster a high quality learning environment. However, an important question about the relationships between their leadership and the impact on school culture was clarified. This study was designed to help show how school culture is influenced by principals employing certain leadership attributes that brought their individual schools to high standards of educational excellence as required by the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program; it was also intended to answer the question "are those schools excelling at least in part because they have a culture influenced by principal behaviors"?

These six schools were excellent at least in part because of principals that influenced school cultures that fostered a value based approach to school excellence, and those school cultures were created, at least in part, through the leadership behaviors of the six school principals. Thus, those principal leadership behaviors did positively influence school culture which fostered excellence in the schools.

Findings of the Study

This study built on previous efforts to analyze the sources of educational quality on a specific group of high performing schools, in order to help settle questions related to the relative influence of principal leadership and cultural factors on the success of high performing schools. A wide variety of schools exist in the United States and some (both public and private) share similar organizational and cultural characteristics to Catholic schools. These schools may be able to produce similar levels of excellence achieved through particular principal leadership behaviors that influence school culture. Certainly all schools can benefit from some aspect of leader reflection, and school cultural assessment.

The basic findings for each research question can be summarized as follows:

Research Question One: *What is the self-described leadership style of the principals of the six Blue Ribbon Catholic schools participating in this study?*

In answer to this question, the responses obtained from principal interviews and surveys (see Table 5 and 6) indicate:

1. Principals uniformly understood and valued the impact of their leadership and influence.

2. Principals also gave credit to faith-based culture as an important element of their school's ability to excel.

3. Principals had a very humble opinion of the impact of their leadership in spite of the positive effects on school quality.

4. Principals commonly noted that leading was challenging, they worked hard to become good leaders and felt their leadership was appreciated.

5. Principals valued their teachers and were driven by the desire to prepare their students.

Research Question Two: *What is the leadership style of principals participating in this study as perceived by their teachers?*

In answer to this question, the teachers indicated that their perceptions of principal leadership differed slightly from the self-assessment of the principals (see Tables 7 and 8). Whereas the most common terms used by principals focused on "interpersonal skills" and being "inspirational", when teachers commented about principal leadership they most commonly used the terms "analytical" and "clear, logical thinker". Not surprisingly, these differences indicate that the type of leadership approaches valued by principals and teachers were slightly dissimilar. Still, both principals and teachers listed the terms "good decision-maker", "concern for people", "caring and supportive" and "humanistic", which speaks to more commonly valued cultural approaches to leadership.

Research Question Three: *According to the principal, what are the core values - shared principles that are communicated through rituals, ceremonies, norms, stories, myths, and humor - that undergird the school culture and how does his or her values align or differ from those values?*

The responses provided by the principal interviews (see Table 9) showed "faith", "community", "values", "catholic identity", "academic excellence", "positive environment" and "commitment to students" as the most commonly mentioned values shared at their schools, with "tradition" and "formation of students" also frequently mentioned. It is interesting to note that principals did not cite the following which were

significant to teachers: "teacher dedication", "sense of mission", and "teamwork" (see Table 12).

Research Question Four: *According to the teachers, what are the core values - shared principles that are communicated through rituals, ceremonies, norms, stories, myths, and humor - that undergird the school culture and how does his or her values align or differ from those values?*

The core values according to teachers surveyed (see Table 12) included several of the same values listed by the school principals such as "faith", "community", "academic excellence", "commitment to students", but teachers did not mention "values", "Catholic identity" and the "positive environment" which was identified by principals. It is interesting to note that "academic excellence" was not rated as high in importance among teachers as it was with principals. As some might expect, the value one places on some cultural attributes differs depending upon the vantage point of the observer and this difference can most likely be attributed to teachers' closer relationship with each other and students, and the greater emphasis teachers must place on teamwork and consensus building. Principals have to maintain a more strategic vision and teachers a more immediate perspective. It is noted that "academic excellence" did not garner a higher result when assessing teacher's core values, but an assumption can be made that achievement is expected in these high performing schools, and might be reflected within other areas such as "teacher dedication" where excellence is expected to follow.

Research Question Five: *What do the principals and teachers perceive to be the important leadership characteristics that positively influence school culture?*

With emphasis on the symbolic frame (Leadership Orientation Survey questions 4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28 and 32); the mean score and standard deviations of the survey responses were computed and revealed that both principals and teachers perceive the following leadership characteristics important influencers of school culture:

Table 15

Leadership Orientation Survey Results - Highly Valued Leadership Behaviors

LS4b – Concern for People (principals & teachers)

LS5b – Caring and Supportive (principals & teachers)

LS1b – Interpersonal Skills (principals)

LS2d – Inspirational Leader (principals)

LS6b – Humanist (principals)

LS3a – Makes Good Decisions (teachers)

LS1a – Analytical (teachers)

LS5a – Clear and Logical Thinking (teachers)

The human resource and structure frames were most valued by principals, with the symbolic frame following, and politics being valued the least. Teachers also valued human resources and structure, followed by the politics and symbolic frames. Whereas there were some differences between the views of principals and teachers concerning general leadership styles, there was much more consistency by both groups when asked about the influence of leadership on school culture. Both principals and teachers referenced the positive impact of the principal's leadership on school culture and student performance. The only significant divergence between the views of principals and

teachers in this area was a slight preference by principals for participation in sports.

These responses supported the hypothesis that principal leadership does influence school

culture, which is an important factor that contributes to school excellence.

Findings Related to Leadership

This study reinforced the key role demonstrated by principals in school success by

identifying a sense of community, academic excellence and a commitment to students as

important to fostering school cultural norms that are positively related to school

excellence. Thus, other school principals might consider ways in which they might also

model such positive influences in their own schools in order to enhance culture and

improve overall quality for their students. Most specifically, the principals working in the

other non-Blue Ribbon schools within the ACS might scrutinize these factors to see how

they might be reinforced in their locations through self-reflection, best practices and

collaboration. Other school principals outside the ACS might also consider the positive

impacts of the resulting culture derived from activities judged as valuable by both

principals and teachers at these six schools, as they consider ways to improve school

excellence where they work.

Summary of the Findings

This study compared resulting data to determine the relationship between self-

perception of principal leadership, teachers' perceptions of principal leadership and

influence on school culture through a mixed-measure approach of interviews, surveys and

direct observation. The identification of a number of important leadership behaviors that

have a positive impact on education might prove useful to other principals in the ACS.

They may also be useful to a broader range of principals as they seek to positively

influence school culture and promote excellence in their schools through the dominant forces in school culture through the ability to inspire others to do their best; being an inspiration to others; being a highly imaginative and creative leader; having the ability to communicate a strong and challenging sense of vision and sense of mission; being able to see beyond current realities and to create exciting new opportunities; being able to generate loyalty and enthusiasm; and having the ability to serve as an influential model of organizational aspirations and values. Finally, the findings from the five important research questions posed in this study clearly advance the understanding of both school leadership and school culture and their relationship(s) to excellence in schools.

This study suggests that a principal is considered effective and has fostered the appropriate culture if the teachers determine that he or she is effective. It is the principal who sets the behavior example and leads the school's teachers, students and activities. While the sample size of the principals in this study was small, the teacher results yielded results that determined minimal statistical significance among the structure, human resources, politics and symbolic frames (see Tables 3 & 4). The frames concerning structure and human resources behaviors appear to be more significant predictors of effectiveness as a leader and not the aspects of symbolic or political behaviors as much.

Clearly, the high scores for principal's behavior and style as rated by teachers, and the similarity in the identification of the core values among principals and teachers, suggests that the principal can influence their culture. Table 10 depicts the common descriptive words of the dominant influences behind Catholic school culture that can be influenced by principals and their behaviors.

Implications for Practice

Any study of a sub-group of schools that is so distinctly different from the norm of other public schools of the nation should hold only modest expectations that approaches can be easily transferred from the sub-group to a broader set of schools. It is important to note that the schools participating in this study did not qualify or need to participate in a free and reduced lunch program, and were not categorized as "high need" as some comparable k-12 public schools. Certainly religiously-oriented schools accrue a certain distinctiveness from the presence of religious professionals, to the influence of parish priests who frequently see students both in the weekday school context, and also at services when they actively guide student's families. So values and behaviors that work so effectively in this sub-set of schools in the ACS may not easily be transferred elsewhere with equal success, but an appreciation of using these behaviors based on faith, community, values and a positive learning environment elsewhere should certainly not dissuade others from trying them if feasible.

So that other school leaders might emulate the success of these six schools of the ACS, this study suggests that principals who want to increase excellence in their schools should consider understanding the positive impact of both their behaviors and the resulting impact on culture generated from their leadership approaches in the attainment of excellence in schools. These findings from a small sample of high performing schools are neither predictive of success nor a short-cut to excellence, however they do provide relatively inexpensive and effective ways that every school principal can try to improve learning where they work.

The common descriptive words depicted in Table 10 identified by principals in

their response to interview and survey questions reveal desirable cultural setting

characteristics and leadership traits fostered in an ideal school culture; similar words used

by teachers in their survey responses to describe their role and their interpretation of the

school's cultural setting seem to confirm the positive impact of leadership behaviors on

school culture. These influences seem to foster a positive school culture and seem to lead

to an environment of success. Overall they cost very little if nothing to reinforce, but

seem to accrue significant benefits, thus making them easy to justify. The following

recommendations with accompanying strategies are offered for consideration by

principals seeking excellence (particularly those working to attain the Blue Ribbon

School designation):

Teamwork – as one of the commonly listed terms by principals and teachers,

teamwork by leaders seems to have a strong, positive impact on school culture and seems

to relate positively to excellence in schools, thus principals could: (a) emphasize

teamwork as a cornerstone of their leadership philosophy, (b) develop and implement

teambuilding exercises within the school, (c) speak often and passionately about teams

and teamwork to set a positive example, (d) encourage subordinates to focus on

teamwork at lower levels, and (e) include an emphasis on teams whenever confronting

challenges or opportunities.

Positive Environment – having a positive environment seems to have a significant

impact on the overall school culture, so principals could: (a) manage changes to

curriculum and teacher workload in support of transformation efforts, with teacher and

staff input, awareness and sensitivity, (b) reflect on time requirements for sports, art,

music, family and charitable activities with an effort to have a balance of activities in mind, and (c) develop and empower students to assume more leadership roles within the school for their development and teacher reliance.

Teacher Dedication – teachers have such a powerful influence among themselves and with the students, so they should be recognized for their faithful dedication and celebrated frequently, so principals could: (a) assign aides as often as resources will permit (b) provide frequent feedback and recognition for best practices, and (c) extend the teacher's ability to teach through with state of the art technology.

Directions for Future Research

This study confirmed the general trend outlined in the literature that Catholic schools do develop a special, unique culture that is valued by their principals, teachers, and communities alike and may contribute to their educational success. Few previous studies focused specifically on this aspect of educational success. Only Bryk, Lee, and Holland (1993) and Dee (2005) seemed to have found similar emphasis on culture in their studies, thus more studies of this kind are warranted to increase our understanding of this useful component of educational quality. In fact it seems likely that culture could positively affect a broad range of quality-focused programs and processes and the impact of culture might warrant further study in other disciplines as diverse as medicine, law enforcement, military and even political science.

Because this study focused only on high performing Catholic schools in a fairly wealthy locality, and thus helped clarify the maximum benefit of leadership and culture, the attributes identified in it might not be of much use in schools that are failing to meet standards because of other problematic issues (infrastructure deficiencies, teacher flight,

etc.), so further studies on less than successful Catholic schools might also be of use in an effort to determine the minimal impact of leadership and culture. Also, Blue Ribbon Catholic schools located in challenging socio-economic cities that might have to rely on vouchers and other forms of assistance could conceivably have different results. The success of Catholic schools appear to be grounded in belief, history, legacy, a system of structure based on equality with education being about the whole child and life and not just academics. The intersection of faith and values is critical for Catholic schools, but this may mean that fostering a foundation based on common purpose, rooted in tradition, of shared values and caring for the whole child, can be the key to success in other schools that are not specially faith based.

This study of leadership behavior and culture among a select group of successful Catholic schools provided insight into methods that could be considered by other schools to help reflect on ways to achieve a similar level of success. Although its findings cannot necessarily be applied immediately or directly in all other school contexts, identification of successful principal leadership behaviors and cultural influences from this study have illuminated some of the desired leadership focus for principals. The study also identified certain other cultural characteristics held in common by these schools in the same school system that might be useful in other school systems, public or otherwise. This study served to enrich the existing research concerning principal leadership as it relates to culture and school excellence.

Since there were several limitations of this study, further research might be conducted to further explore whether: (a) principals' and teachers' perspectives are affected by their employment duration and other demographic factors, (b) data gathered

from other Blue Ribbon schools in the system might produce slightly different results, and (c) the results demonstrated in these six schools of the Arlington Catholic Diocese might not be truly representative of other Catholic schools in other dioceses.

Specific research questions that could be used for future research in these three areas include: (a) "how does employment duration affect principal success", (b) "what demographic factors are most influential in determining the success of principals", (c) "what is the self-described leadership style of principals of other Blue Ribbon schools and do they differ significantly from the style of these six principals", (d) "do other Catholic schools display similar leadership and cultural characteristics", and (e) "how do infrastructure deficiencies and other problematic issues such as teacher flight, affect principal success", Larger research questions of value encouraged by this study might include specific studies on the intersection of faith and values; for example, "do schools with diversity in culture, not specifically of Catholic faith confluence, offer a different leadership challenge to principals, and if so, at what point is the culture impacted in one way or another" and "what is the influence of developing strong value systems in public schools". Another topic area that deserves further exploration is the conflict associated with sports – is there a happy, productive and healthy medium that satisfies all concerned. There were many responses in the study that indicated that sports is highly desired and definitely a student motivator, but can come with a cost that affects time in other areas such as art, music and even academics. The time devoted to sports might be a cause of concern among principals, teachers and parents alike.

Bolman and Deal's four leadership frames provided the framework (structural, human resources, political, symbolic) from which to evaluate priorities and perceptions

of principals and teachers, but perhaps a similar pursuit with other stakeholders such as school boards, governing boards, parents and even students might provide a platform for strategic planning and decision making on significant and critical issues – something that might be important to one group, may not be important to another. For example, since Catholic school principals have more autonomy than other principals, they can strictly enforce cultural norms while involving the whole community. As a result, the political frame would not have as much interest or concern as it might for public school principals.

Conclusion

The principals who participated in this study are proven performers with successful schools that exemplify the Blue Ribbon School standards. While the data did not yield statistically significant results, the analysis revealed a common theme that success was based on faith, community, fostering a positive environment while focusing on the full potential of each student. Faith can be a very personal matter, but if substituted with another conviction such as "trust", "values", "tradition" or "standards", to name a few, a school might be able to achieve similar success if coupled with a supportive community, a positive environment while always maximizing the full potential of students. The homogeneity of exemplary high performing schools may also be a relevant factor resulting in a student population that is easier to lead than one of cultural or economic diversity. This study showed that a school can be successful partly because they have a culture influenced by good principal behavior.

Appendix A

Cover Letter of Invitation for

Principals and Teachers

Rosaline Cardarelli
2181 Jamieson Avenue, No.705
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
January 6, 2014

Dear Principal,

I am a doctoral student at The College of William and Mary and currently completing an Ed.D. in Educational Policy, Planning and Leadership. I am writing to obtain your support so that I may gather the data I need for my research topic concerning the relationship between principal leadership, teacher's perception of principal leadership and the influence of that leadership on school culture.

I selected your school because it has been recognized as a Blue Ribbon School and as such, it possesses the special factors that contribute to excellence. I believe this is an important research topic and that other schools may benefit from what I learn. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to respond to any part of this study. The data will be collected in aggregate form without any personal identification; strict confidentiality will be maintained at all times. I will personally provide the materials for this survey to include self-addressed, stamped envelopes to return the completed survey results to me. I humbly request that the completed surveys be mailed to me within two weeks after you receive them from the school secretary.

I have attached the following for the purposes of conducting this academic research. The two surveys require about 20 minutes of your time:
-   Principal Consent Form (please sign and return with the surveys)
-   Leadership Survey with Instructions for Principals (please complete and return in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided by **January 24, 2014**)

I appreciate your time and support in this endeavor and realize your time is extremely valuable. I am providing a donation of $250.00 to your school for your participation. I will donate an additional $100.00 to each of the six schools I am studying if I receive a 50% return rate from all six schools combined. If you have any questions, I can be reached at: rcardarelli@email.wm.edu or by cell phone at (571) 332-2168.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rosaline Cardarelli

THIS PROJECT WAS FOUND TO COMPLY WITH APPROPRIATE ETHICAL STANDARDS AND WAS EXEMPTED FROM THE NEED FOR FORMAL REVIEW BY THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE (Phone 757-221-3966) ON 201401-01 AND EXPIRES ON 2015-01-01.

Rosaline Cardarelli
2181 Jamieson Avenue, No.705
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
January 6, 2014

Dear Teacher,

I am a doctoral student at The College of William and Mary and currently completing an Ed.D. in Educational Policy, Planning and Leadership. I am writing to obtain your support so that I may gather the data I need for my research topic concerning the relationship between principal leadership, teacher's perception of principal leadership and the influence of that leadership on school culture.

I selected your school because it has been recognized as a Blue Ribbon School and as such, it possesses the special factors that contribute to excellence. I believe this is an important research topic and that other schools may benefit from what I learn. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to respond to any part of this study. The data will be collected in aggregate form without any personal identification; strict confidentiality will be maintained at all times. I will personally provide the materials for this survey to include self-addressed, stamped envelopes to return the completed survey results to me. I humbly request that the completed surveys be mailed to me within two weeks after you receive them from the school secretary.

I have attached the following to be provided to all teachers for the purposes of conducting this academic research. The survey requires about 20 minutes of your time:
-   Teacher Consent Form (please sign and return with survey)
-   Leadership Survey with Instructions for Teachers (please complete and return in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided by **January 24, 2014**)

I appreciate your time and support in this endeavor and realize your time is extremely valuable. I am providing a donation of $250.00 to your school for your participation. I will donate an additional $100.00 to each of the six schools I am studying if I receive a 50% return rate from all six schools combined. If you have any questions, I can be reached at: rcardarelli@email.wm.edu or by cell phone at (571) 332-2168.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rosaline Cardarelli

Appendix B

Principal and Teacher Consent Forms

Principal Consent Form

The purpose of this study is to gather data from you and your teachers for my doctoral dissertation at The College of William and Mary. The study examines the relationship between principal leadership, teacher's perceptions of principal leadership and the influence of principal leadership on school culture. Your school has been designated as a Blue Ribbon School and as such, it possesses the special factors that contribute to excellence and is worthy of scholarly research. This study is important because the relationship of leadership to culture appears to have had positive impact on the success of Catholic Blue Ribbon schools.

Participation by you and your teachers is voluntary and you may choose not to respond to any part of this study. The data will be collected in aggregate form, without any personal identification; strict confidentiality will be maintained at all times and your input will only be used for purposes of this study. Neither principal or teacher survey responses, nor data from your school will be personally identifiable or attributable in any results. There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation. Please also encourage all of your teachers to participate in the survey.

It is important to identify best practices occurring in successful schools which may contribute to increased success and positive outcomes for other schools striving to become Blue Ribbon Schools like your wonderful school. Nation-wide, only 4% of our public schools have been designated with the Blue Ribbon School status. In the Arlington Diocese Catholic School System, 38% of the schools have achieved this prestigious status – you are doing something special.

Please sign the consent form and enclose it with the completed survey in the self-addressed, stamped envelope I have provided.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact me at:
rcardarelli@email.wm.edu
or Dr. Megan Tschannen-Moran at The College of William and Mary at:
mxtsch@wm.edu.   I can also be reached by cell phone at (571) 332-2168.

Thank you for your time and support.

_____
Principal's Signature and Date

Rosaline Cardarelli
Doctoral Student
The College of William and Mary

THIS PROJECT WAS FOUND TO COMPLY WITH APPROPRIATE ETHICAL STANDARDS AND WAS EXEMPTED FROM THE NEED FOR FORMAL REVIEW BY THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE (Phone 757-221-3966) ON 201401-01 AND EXPIRES ON 2015-01-01.

Teacher Consent Form

The purpose of this study is to gather data from teachers for my doctoral dissertation at The College of William and Mary. The study examines the relationship between principal leadership, teacher's perceptions of principal leadership and the influence of principal leadership on school culture. Your school has been designated as a Blue Ribbon School and as such, possesses the special factors that contribute to excellence and is worthy of scholarly research. This study is important because the relationship of leadership to culture appears to have had a positive impact on the success of Catholic Blue Ribbon schools.

Participation is voluntary and you may choose not to respond to any part of this study. The data will be collected in aggregate form without any personal identification and strict confidentiality will be maintained at all times. The data will only be used for purposes of this study. Neither teacher or principal survey responses, nor data from your school will be personally identifiable or attributable in any results. There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation.

Please participate in the survey. It is important to identify best practices occurring in successful schools which may contribute to increased success and positive outcomes for other schools striving to become Blue Ribbon Schools like your wonderful school. Nation-wide, only 4% of our public schools have been designated with the Blue Ribbon School status. In the Arlington Diocese Catholic School System, 38% of the schools have achieved this prestigious status – you are doing something special.

Please sign the consent form and enclose it and the completed survey in the self-addressed, stamped envelope I have provided.

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact me at:
rcardarelli@email.wm.edu
or Dr. Megan Tschannen-Moran at The College of William and Mary at:
mxtsch@wm.edu.   I can also be reached by cell phone at (571) 332-2168.

Thank you for your time and support.

_____

Teacher's Signature and Date

Rosaline Cardarelli
Doctoral Student
The College of William and Mary

Appendix C

Principal Interview Questions

Thank you for taking the time to allow me to interview you for this study. I will ask you questions during this interview concerning your leadership behaviors as principal - I wish to emphasize there are no right or wrong answers to these questions. I truly want to learn about the root causes of the success of your award-winning school. I will follow up with a separate written survey of additional questions that will be compared with responses that I will obtain from a similar survey I will conduct with your teachers.

I am using Bolman and Deal's (2008) four-frame organizational theory format which focuses on the following four essential components of leadership orientation: structural, human resources, political and symbolic. My focus will be the symbolic component. The interview will assist me in comparing the results of responses with those of teachers for further analysis. The questions are as follows:

<center>LEADERSHIP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS</center>

Symbolic Frame

1. What is your role in fostering culture in the school?

_____

2. What are your core values and how do they align with those of the school?

_____

3. Did you join a high trust environment or did you have to work to increase trust as a part of your approach to school excellence?

_____

4. How do you build relationships within the school and how important are these relationships to your success?

_____

5. Are there any value-based processes that you convey to the teachers and if so, how?

_____

6. Besides you, who else influences the culture in your school?

_____

_____

7. What cultural factors distinguish your school from non-Catholic schools?

_____

_____

8. What are the key features of your school's climate?

_____

_____

9. What are the images or metaphors used to describe your school?

_____

_____

10. What physical impression does your school and its artifacts create?

_____

_____

11. What kind of beliefs and values dominate your school?

_____

_____

12. What are the main norms (i.e. do's and don'ts)?

_____

_____

13. Are there myths associated with the culture of your school?

_____

_____

14. What is the glue that brings cohesion to your school?

_____

_____

15. How do humor and play contribute to your school's culture?

_____

_____

16. How is conflict of cultural norms handled in your school?

_____

_____

17. What rewards systems are in place?

_____

_____

18. What are the dominant stories people tell?

_____

_____

19. What are the main ceremonies and rituals and what purpose do they serve?

_____

_____

20. What is the favorite topic of informal conversation?

_____

_____

Appendix D

Principal (Self) Leadership Orientation

and School Culture Survey

Thank you for taking the time to complete the following survey. When you have completed the survey, please return it to me by placing it in the provided self-addressed, stamped envelope and deposit it in any postal service mailbox. I hope you will answer all the questions, but you may skip any question you do not wish to respond to, or stop the survey at any time.

The Leadership Orientation survey is a self-assessment for principals and focuses on Bolman and Deal's (2008) four-frame organizational theory and four essential components: structural, human resources, political and symbolic, to determine the extent that leaders actually correspond to the respective frames. My focus will be the symbolic component and the results of this survey will be compared and contrasted with results from the teacher's version of the Leadership Orientation survey which will require teachers to assess the school principal's leadership and management style.

I am using the following definition to describe culture in schools: the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic 'taken for granted' fashion an organization's view of itself and its environment (Schein, 1985, p.6). The questions are as follows:

LEADERSHIP SURVEY (SELF)

This survey asks you as a principal to describe your leadership and management style.

I. Behaviors

Please indicate *how often* each of the items below is true of you and use the following scale in answering each item.

1	2	3	4	5
Never		Sometimes		Always
	Occasionally		Often	

You would answer "1" for an item that is never true of you, "2" for one that is occasionally true, "3" for one that is sometimes true of you, 4 is often true and 5 is always true.

Your results will be more helpful if you think about each item and distinguish the things that you really do all the time from the things that you do seldom or never.

1. _____ *Think very clearly and logically.*

2. _____ *Show high levels of support and concern for others.*
3. _____ *Have exceptional ability to mobilize people and resources to get things done.*

4. _____ *Inspire others to do their best.*

5. _____ *Strongly emphasize careful planning and clear time lines.*

6. _____ *Build trust through open and collaborative relationships.*

7. _____ *Am a very skillful and shrewd negotiator.*

8. _____ *Am highly charismatic.*

9. _____ *Approach problems through logical analysis and careful thinking.*

10. _____ *Show high sensitivity and concern for others' needs and feelings.*

11. _____ *Am unusually persuasive and influential.*

12. _____ *Am able to be an inspiration to others.*

13. _____ *Develop and implement clear, logical policies and procedures.*

14. _____ *Foster high levels of participation and involvement in decisions.*

15. _____ *Anticipate and deal adroitly with organizational conflict.*

16. _____ *Am highly imaginative and creative.*

17. _____ *Approach problems with facts and logic.*

18. _____ *Am consistently helpful and responsive to others.*

19. _____ *Am very effective in getting support from people with influence and power.*

20. _____ *Communicate a strong and challenging sense of vision and mission.*

21. _____ *Set specific, measurable goals and hold people accountable for results.*

22. _____ *Listen well and am unusually receptive to other people's ideas and input.*

23. _____ *Am politically very sensitive and skillful.*

24. _____ *See beyond current realities to generate exciting new opportunities.*

25. _____ *Have extraordinary attention to detail.*

26. _____ *Give personal recognition for work well done.*

27. _____ *Develop alliances to build a strong base of support.*

28. _____ *Generate loyalty and enthusiasm.*

29. _____ *Strongly believe in clear structure and a chain of command.*

30. _____ *Am a highly participative manager.*

31. _____ *Succeed in the face of conflict and opposition.*

32. _____ *Serve as an influential model of organizational aspirations and values.*

II. Leadership Style

This section of the survey asks you to describe your personal leadership style. For each item, give the number "4" to the phrase that best describes you, "3" to the item that is next best, and so on to "1" for the item that is least like you.

1. My strongest skills are:

_____ a. *Analytic skills*
_____ b. *Interpersonal skills*
_____ c. *Political skills*
_____ d. *Ability to excite and motivate*

2. The best way to describe me is:

_____ a. *Technical expert*
_____ b. *Good listener*
_____ c. *Skilled negotiator*
_____ d. *Inspirational leader*

3. What has helped me the most to be successful is my ability to:

_____ a. *Make good decisions*
_____ b. *Coach and develop people*
_____ c. *Build strong alliances and a power base*
_____ d. *Energize and inspire others*

4. What people are most likely to notice about me is my:

_____ a. *Attention to detail*
_____ b. *Concern for people*
_____ c. *Ability to succeed, in the face of conflict and opposition*
_____ d. *Charisma.*

5. My most important leadership trait is:
_____ a. *Clear, logical thinking*
_____ b. *Caring and support for others*
_____ c. *Toughness and aggressiveness*
_____ d. *Imagination and creativity*

6. I am best described as:

_____ a. *An analyst*

_____ b. *A humanist*

_____ c. *A politician*

_____ d. *A visionary*

III. Overall Rating

Compared to other individuals that you have known with comparable levels of experience and responsibility, how would you rate yourself on the following:

1. Overall effectiveness as a manager.

1	2	3	4	5
Bottom 20%		Middle 20%		Top 20%

2. Overall effectiveness as a leader.

1	2	3	4	5
Bottom 20%		Middle 20%		Top 20%

IV. Background Information

1. Are you: ____Male   ____Female   Race_____

2. How many years have you been the Principal at your current school? _____

3. How many total years of experience do you have as a Principal? _____

4. How many students are enrolled in your school? _____

5. How many teachers are employed in your school? _____

6. What is the number of Priests and Nuns assigned to the school? _____

7. Number of students who qualify for free and reduced priced meals? _____

Appendix E

Teacher Survey of Principal Leadership

Orientation and School Culture

Thank you for taking the time to complete the following survey. When you have completed the survey, please return it to me by placing it in the provided self-addressed, stamped envelope and deposit it in any postal service mailbox. I hope you will answer all the questions, but you may skip any question you do not wish to respond to, or stop the survey at any time.

The first portion of the survey uses Bolman and Deal's Leadership Orientation Survey which requires teachers to assess the school principal's leadership and management style. The results of this survey will be compared and contrasted with the principal's self-assessment.

The second part of the teacher survey focuses on questions designed with Bolman and Deal's (2008) four-frame organizational theory in mind which consists of the following components: structural, human resources, political and symbolic. My focus will be the symbolic component and the results will be compared and contrasted with results from principal interviews and surveys.

I am using the following definition to describe culture in schools: the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic 'taken for granted' fashion an organization's view of itself and its environment (Schein, 1985, p.6). The questions are as follows:

TEACHER SURVEY (Part I)

This questionnaire asks you to describe your principal in terms of leadership and management style.

I. Leader Behaviors

You are asked to indicate *how often* each item is true of the principal that you are rating.

Please use the following scale in answering each item.

1	2	3	4	5
Never		Sometimes		Always
	Occasionally		Often	

Please answer "1" for an item that is never true of the principal you are describing, "2" for one that is occasionally true, "3" for one that is sometimes true, 4 is often true and 5 always true.

The results will be more helpful if you think about each item and distinguish the things that the principal really does all the time from the things that s/he does seldom or never.

1. _____ *Thinks very clearly and logically.*

2. _____ *Shows high levels of support and concern for others.*

3. _____ *Shows exceptional ability to mobilize people and resources to get things done.*

4. _____ *Inspires others to do their best.*

5. _____ *Strongly emphasizes careful planning and clear time lines.*

6. _____ *Builds trust through open and collaborative relationships.*

7. _____ *Is a very skillful and shrewd negotiator.*

8. _____ *Is highly charismatic.*

9. _____ *Approaches problems through logical analysis and careful thinking.*

10. _____ *Shows high sensitivity and concern for others' needs and feelings.*

11. _____ *Is unusually persuasive and influential.*

12. _____ *Is an inspiration to others.*

13. _____ *Develops and implements clear, logical policies and procedures.*

14. _____ *Fosters high levels of participation and involvement in decisions.*

15. _____ *Anticipates and deals adroitly with organizational conflict.*

16. _____ *Is highly imaginative and creative.*

17. _____ *Approaches problems with facts and logic.*

18. _____ *Is consistently helpful and responsive to others.*

19. _____ *Is very effective in getting support from people with influence and power.*

20. _____ *Communicates a strong and challenging vision and sense of mission.*

21. _____ *Sets specific, measurable goals and holds people accountable for results.*

22. _____ *Listens well and is unusually receptive to other people's ideas and input.*

23. _____ *Is politically very sensitive and skillful.*

24. _____ *Sees beyond current realities to create exciting new opportunities.*

25. _____ *Has extraordinary attention to detail.*

26. _____ *Gives personal recognition for work well done.*

27. _____ *Develops alliances to build a strong base of support.*

28. _____ *Generates loyalty and enthusiasm.*

29. _____ *Strongly believes in clear structure and a chain of command.*

30. _____ *Is a highly participative manager.*

31. _____ *Succeeds in the face of conflict and opposition.*

32. _____ *Serves as an influential model of organizational aspirations and values.*

I. Leadership Style of the Principal

This section asks you to describe the leadership style of the principal that you are rating. For each item, give the number "4" to the phrase that best describes this person, "3" to the item that is next best, and on down to "1" for the item that is least like this person.

1. The individual's strongest skills are:

_____ a. *Analytic skills*
_____ b. *Interpersonal skills*
_____ c. *Political skills*
_____ d. *Ability to excite and motivate*

2. The best way to describe this person is:

_____ a. *Technical expert*
_____ b. *Good listener*
_____ c. *Skilled negotiator*
_____ d. *Inspirational leader*

3. What this individual does best is:

_____ a. *Make good decisions*
_____ b. *Coach and develop people*
_____ c. *Build strong alliances and a power base*
_____ d. *Energize and inspire others*

4. What people are most likely to notice about this person is:

_____ a. *Attention to detail*
_____ b. *Concern for people*
_____ c. *Ability to succeed, in the face of conflict and opposition*
_____ d. *Charisma.*

5. This individual's most important leadership trait is:

_____ a. *Clear, logical thinking*
_____ b. *Caring and support for others*
_____ c. *Toughness and aggressiveness*
_____ d. *Imagination and creativity*

6. This person is best described as:

_____ a. *An analyst*
_____ b. *A humanist*
_____ c. *A politician*
_____ d. *A visionary*

III. Overall Rating

Compared to other individuals that you have known with comparable levels of experience and responsibility, how would you rate this person on:

1. Overall effectiveness as a manager.

1	2	3	4	5
Bottom 20%		Middle 20%		Top 20%

2. Overall effectiveness as a leader.

1	2	3	4	5
Bottom 20%		Middle 20%		Top 20%

IV. Background Information

1. Are you: ____Male   ____Female   Race_____

2. How many years have you been a Teacher at your current school? _____

3. How many total years of experience do you have as a Teacher? _____

TEACHER SURVEY QUESTIONS (Part II)

1. Did you feel welcomed by the principal and other teachers when you joined the school? Please explain:

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. How important are sports events and student achievements (honor roll, etc.) to your school? How are they celebrated?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Are there special activities or events permitted (fund raisers, "Blue Jean Friday" etc.) and if so, how do you feel about them?

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Do you feel energized or energy-drained at the end of your work day, please describe?

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. What special events (birthdays, retirements, etc.) are valued and how are they celebrated?_____

_____

_____

6. What happens when a teacher or student crosses the line of acceptable behavior in your school?

_____

_____

_____

7. What is the glue that brings cohesion to your school?

_____

_____

_____

Appendix F

Letter of Instruction to School Secretary

Dear School Secretary,

Thank you for assisting me with my doctoral dissertation and this very important research topic concerning the relationship between principal leadership, teacher's perception of principal leadership and the influence of leadership on school culture.

All participation in this study is voluntary and the data will be collected in aggregate form without any personal identification; strict confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

If you agree, I will personally provide you with all the materials for distribution to include:

(1) Principal and Teacher Consent Form (to be individually signed and returned with surveys)

(2) Leadership Survey with Instructions for Principals (to be completed by the principal and returned to me through the postal service in the self-addressed stamped envelope I have provided)

(3) Leadership Survey with Instructions for Teachers (to be completed by teachers and returned to me through the postal service in the self-addressed stamped envelope I have provided)

I appreciate your support in this endeavor and I realize your time is extremely valuable. If you have any questions, I can be reached at: rcardarelli@email.wm.edu. I can also be reached by cell phone at (571) 332-2168.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rosaline Cardarelli

Appendix G

Permission to Use the
Leadership Orientations Survey Instrument

Dear Ms. Cardarelli,

Thanks for your interest in the Leadership Orientations Instrument.   We don't charge for research use of the instrument, but we do ask you to agree to conditions listed on my website at http://www.bolman.com/leadership_research.htm:

The instruments are copyrighted, and you must have explicit, written permission to use them. We routinely grant such permission at no charge for non-commercial, research use, subject to two conditions:

(1) The researcher agrees to provide us with a copy of any reports, publications, papers or theses resulting from the research.

(2) The researcher also promises to provide, if we request it, a copy of the data file from the research.

If those conditions are agreeable to you, I'll be glad to grant permission to use the instrument.

Best wishes in your program.

Lee G. Bolman, Ph.D.
Professor and Marion Bloch/Missouri Chair in Leadership
Bloch School of Management
University of Missouri-Kansas City
5100 Rockhill Road
Kansas City, MO 64113

Tel: (816) 235-5407
Web: www.leebolman.com

From: Rosaline Cardarelli [mailto:rosecardarelli@msn.com]
Sent: Sunday, September 08, 2013 12:03 PM
To: lee@leebolman.com
Subject: Request for Permission

Dear Mr. Bolman,

I am a retired Army Medical Service Corps officer that has returned to school to obtain a doctorate in education from The College of William and Mary. I am about to embark upon the dissertation phase of my program and I am researching the connection between principal leadership and culture within 6 Blue Ribbon Catholic Schools in the Arlington, VA school district.

May I have permission to use your Leadership Orientations Survey for my study and can I add some questions related to culture as it relates to principals, teachers and the school culture?

I am happy to pay for any fees you require. Thank you for your publications which we have referred to many times in my program.

Thank you for your consideration and I hope to hear from you soon.

With best regards,
Rosaline Cardarelli

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