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Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

BEST LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF TURNAROUND K-12 ADMINISTRATORS

A dissertation proposal submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Henri R. Same Etame

October, 2017

Farzin Madjidi, Ed.D.—Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

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under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation work to my family, friends, and all those individuals who, one way or the other have been part of my life in the face of joy and tribulations. To my big family: although it would be nearly impossible to list every one of you here due to our family's large size, I nevertheless dedicate this project to my immediate family members who have been along with me relentlessly throughout my entire academic journey.

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VITA

EDUCATION

2017	Doctor of Education (Ed. D.) Organizational Leadership	Pepperdine University Malibu, California
2009	Master of Science (M.S.) Education in Cross Cultural Teaching	National University Los Angeles, CA
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PROFESSIONAL HISTORY

2011–Present	AP Biology, Biology, AVID Teacher	Inglewood High School Inglewood, California
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Fall 2016	International Organization of Social Sciences and Behavioral Research (IOSSBR). “A well-educated and engaged youth: The future of our social and economic health and the stability of a democratic society.”
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Fall 2017	International Leadership Association (ILA) fellow. Participant; 19 th Annual Global Conference: “Leadership in Turbulent Times.” October 12-15, 2017 Brussels, Belgium.

ABSTRACT

Leadership as organizational practice and its study as a phenomenon have been traced to the beginning of civilization. In the landscape of the 21st century, executives who lead their companies to thrive in the global economy are challenged to have and effectively apply a broad range of leadership skills in their daily work in a constantly changing environment. They have to continuously adapt their behaviors and those of their organizations in order to develop a corporate culture and sustain their competitive edge. Change once was episodic; deliberate, planned, and executed. But in today's turbulent environment, change is constant and the role of senior executives in leading organizational change is to provide leadership that fosters a shared mindset, new behaviors, and culture. This phenomenological study will examine the best leadership practices of turnaround K–12 public school administrators in LA County who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations. The need for change usually induces a high degree of stress (Kets de Vries & Balazs, 1998; Lichtenstein, 2000), thus the best executives who lead positive change efforts embrace change as their real job and need more than one approach for leading it, ensuring its institutionalization in the organization's daily practices, hence transforming the organization through an innovation-driven culture. Data were collected from 15 turnaround public school administrators and superintendents in the form of a 12-question, semi-structured interview scheme, which focused on their past cognizance of leading such efforts in their organizations. The key findings of this study generated 94 themes among which 80 answered 4 research questions. Conspicuously, communication, collaboration, situational leadership, and transformational leadership emerged as the best leadership practices of these turnaround K–12 public school administrators. Similarly, participants indicated that having a clear understanding of the school improvement model, involving parents early, understanding the *why*, empowering others, being one's own brand, being proactive, improving teacher recruitment and selection, and changing the culture increase the chances of success of

a turnaround effort. As a result of the study findings, a framework of recommendations emerged for endeavoring and current turnaround administrators who embark onto similar efforts.

Chapter 1: Introduction

One of the most fascinating expressions of mankind is the leader-follower dynamics. Since the inception of human civilization, Philosophers and researchers have generated substantial literature on leaders and leadership; still to date, the consensus on the circumstances under which some lead and others follow are still eluding our apprehension. “Leadership as an organizational practice and its study as a phenomenon has been traced to the dawn of human civilization” (Stone & Patterson, 2005, p. 1). In the social, political, economic, legal, cultural, and technological landscape of the twenty first century, executives working to lead their respective companies to blossom in the today’s global economy face an increasingly growing number of challenges. For these executives, success is measured by how effectively they apply a wide variety of leadership skills, competencies and capacities in their daily work. While Plato perceived leadership as being the skill of a selected few with condescending wisdom, Aristotle believed that from birth, humans are predestined either to subjugation, or to command. Likewise, Machiavelli believed that individuals with organizational power and knowhow should lead in the best interest of the state and should be followed. In a constantly changing environment, these executives have to adapt their behavior and those of their organizations on a continuous basis in order to develop a corporate culture and sustain their competitive edge. A corporate culture develops as a natural result of people interacting together one way or another, and having some level of success (Kotter & Heskett, 1992).

There is a large consensus in education that agrees that the reasons for slow progress in kindergarten–twelfth grade (K–12) education nationwide and in Los Angeles County in this case are many and oftentimes complex. As research shows, there are several root causes of the failure of America’s public schools, all of which are both institutional and systemic, and frantically resistant to change. According to Walberg (1998), because America’s public schools have failed to innovate in order to strive, there is little or no competition among students and their administrators cling to the unsuccessful old fashion management principles with little or no

regard to failure or success to educate our children. Furthermore, the need for stronger leadership practices by K–12 school administrators for a better implementation of curriculum, instructional practices, and overall school organization is quintessential. While concerns about leadership practices at the K–12 levels are not new, effective school leadership has become one of the most pressing matters in America’s public education. As Alkin (1992) emphasized, there is a notable expanse of research that attempts to uncover the qualities of effective school leaders and to link certain key attributes and competencies to successful schools. Johnson (2006) described school administrators as “the brokers of school culture and climate” (p. 15) as their influence on the school extends beyond their leadership position. Similarly, adds Covey (1990), both the scholarly and popular presses are ponderous in publications aiming at describing and developing effective leaders. Knezevich (1969) viewed leadership in public education settings as a tri-fold: (a) symbolic as it underpins an attribute of personality; (b) formal as it represents status, title, or position in the school hierarchy; and (c) functional as the embodiment of the function or role performed within the organization. According to Harvey and Holland (2011), effective school administrators carry out five essential functions successfully: (a) they mold a vision of academic success for all learners by setting high standards of expectations; (b) they create and maintain an school climate and culture conducive to learning through safety, cooperation, and fruitful interactions; (c) empower others to embody and enact the school vision; (d) improve instructional practices thus allowing educators to educate at their best and learners to learn at their highest potential; and (e) manage human capital, manage data and tasks to promote school improvement. In other words, successful school leaders understand the concept of “first thing first” as they know how, when, and where to focus resources. Last but not least, as Mclver, Kearns, Lyons, & Sussman (2009) remarked, effective school administrators communicate the vision and the mission with the utmost clarity, hence allowing teachers, students and staff to understand their responsibilities.

In order for schools to thrive, they need at the top of their rankings, strong leaders who understand these three layers of leadership, and can give them new directions in times of crisis. These leaders are commonly known as turnaround leaders: they take daunting actions, thus setting high expectations for teachers' instructional delivery and students' achievement. There are no easy fixes when it comes to managing with talent and competencies. Zhu, Hitt, and Woodruff (2014) pointed out that vanguard research suggests that leader competencies are momentous in turning around low performing schools.

Decades of intensive research have recorded that the presence of an effective leader is an indispensable ingredient of successful turnaround efforts (Hassel & Hassel, 2009). Meanwhile, despite the overwhelming national interest on school turnarounds and the leaders who inspire them, significant hurdles hamper reformers from discovering and enabling leaders who have the propensity to succeed in a turnaround. As Hassel and Hassel (2009) posited, studies across industries indicate that barely 30% of turnaround effort are successful. In like manner, added Hassel & Hassel (2009), even leaders with a track record of success in other junctures may fail when confronted by the speedy and substantial change necessary during a turnaround effort. In the present K–12 educational principalship platform, there is a very limited number of competent candidates capable of effectively lead a substantial number of school improvement initiatives. As a result, school districts recruitment of turnaround administrators must focus on candidates with competencies and exceptional leadership skillsets, because not only are performance differences huge in difficult tasks, but most of all, leadership is difficult and good leadership is rare.

Background

From its inception in the 1840s, America's public education arose to the nexus of countless events in our nation. With the introduction of compulsory education laws and the advent of the Industrial Revolution, our nation's elementary and secondary schooling system was the envy of the planet. Despite the myriad of reforms that have been introduced in K–12

public schools across the nation during the past fifty years, the nation's public education system has experienced an unprecedented decline in student achievement; America's public education system is failing to educate our children. According to DiPerna (2014), while 87% of America's school children attend publicly funded K–12 educational institutions, 40% of America's parents would rather enroll their children in private schools, and only 37% of them prefer public schools.

Four decades of educational reforms. In today's global competitive and dynamic environment, an effective leadership style is necessary to reduce restraining forces acting against an organization's aptness to thrive and prosper. From an effective leadership approach, it is possible for K–12 administrators to productively achieve organizational goals. As Paun (1999) remarked, the teacher in the educational process, plans, organizes, and controls the students' activity and consequently appears in the position of leader. Thereupon, leadership styles and practices in the classroom affect not only teacher performance, more importantly a school administrator's ability to create and clearly communicate a vision, but most importantly, the overall student achievement and school performance as an organization. As many experts agree, the United States, as a realm, has scrambled for decades with finding ways to fruitfully improve its elementary and secondary schools. As research shows, between the late 1970s and the early 1980s, concerns about America's K–12 platform have soared, surge exacerbated mostly by threats to the nation's economic supremacy in the global market and prosperity at home.

As analysis shows, results on national achievement tests such as California Standards Tests (CST), American College Testing (ACT), and other standardized tests have been widely stagnant since they began in 1970. Similarly, achievement comparisons between American K–12 students and those of other countries suggest that American children, particularly in the upper secondary public education grades do not fare well, hence triggering the need for nationwide educational reforms initiated by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and voted into law in April 1965 as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on

Poverty.” The ESEA is a comprehensive piece of legislation enacted to provide funding for K–12 education. It requires state and federal authorities to provide education to all children, and institutes high code of honor with accountability for all. This legislation paved the way for a wave of major education reforms in the America in the twentieth century. Furthermore, the bill aimed at closing the achievement gaps between learners across grade levels by bestowing each student accessible, even-handed and equitable chance to achieve extraordinary education throughout their elementary and secondary education careers. As required in its provisions, the funds are allocated for teachers and other staff adequate training, instructional material for improved teaching, professional development, resources to assist academic programs, and the promotion of parent and teacher organizations (PTOs) and parent/teacher associations (PTAs).

The eighties and a new wave of reforms. Another prominent piece of legislation in public education commonly known as Special Education Law is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which grants households of special education children the right to have their child evaluated or tested to determine his or her special education eligibility and needs. Nevertheless, an increasing demand for “reform” reached its height with the advent of A Nation at Risk in 1983, followed by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) initiative of 2001. NCLB is a federal government educational mandate that holds schools accountable for students’ achievement. Since that time, and with the accountability movement, many kinds of reforms have been tried: student standardized testing and assessment; teacher training and selection; school reforms; school financing reforms; changes in curricula; school designs such as magnet schools, charter schools, and voucher schools; school safety, just to name a few. Equally important, was the development of policies such as peer-based accountability approach to expand the professional commitment and accountability of faculty members and other staff members in the nation’s elementary and secondary education system. Now more than ever, following the “Race to the Top” (RTTT) initiative of President Barack Obama, which recommends the implementation of similar indicators to assess, reward, and sanction individual

teachers as well, thus employing executive data-based and specific mechanisms designed to increase student achievement, public schools in America are expected to guarantee the prospect of quality education for all learners. Still, time and again, it has proven difficult to spark real and lasting change in our public school systems, translating into school districts' incapacity to bring about positive change in our classrooms.

Public education: A common good. Schooling is omnipresent in our contemporary world and the importance of education and its spillover effects are the biggest social, political, economic, cultural and technological endowments in human society. According to Baker and LeTendre (2005), state funded education is the biggest investment endeavored by any governments worldwide. As such, research shows that if public spending measures socioeconomic value, no alternative government initiative, including national armed forces in most instances is more precious in terms of return on investment (ROI) than providing a systematic education to our children at least at a minimal period (compulsory education). Education is a common good. The universal and national significance of education revolves around the noteworthy positive impact it bears on one's own life and on the well-being of the community at large. As Grossman (2006) remarked, education is primarily considered as to be a vehicle designed to prepare children to find good jobs by giving them the skills they need as adults and be valuable assets to society. Similarly, added Grossman (2006), education additionally has greater socioeconomic benefits for people, communities, and society as a whole; and the benefits of an educated youth expand beyond their sole lives, but even more so, to people whose connection to a public education system doesn't expand over and above the fact that they are taxpayers. Conversely, virtually five decades after "A Nation at Risk," a wide majority of American public schools are falling short of their mission to educate our children, failure due in part if not in all, to the lack of appropriate situational leadership at the top level of most public schools.

The noteworthy proceedings by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) (NCEE), cautioned about “a growing trend of amateurism in the education platform threatening our people and our future as a nation” (p. 5), while we have doubled our spending on K–12 public education, it is clear that our efforts to improve our schools have not yielded intended results. Research conducted by the NCEE on the latest national exams and standardized testing shows that not more than 30% or even fewer eighth-grade students’ scores showed proficiency in mathematics, science, or reading. Based on a recent review by the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center (EPERC), less than 70% of high school seniors nationwide graduate, and a vast majority of those who make it through graduation are not well-prepared for college, if at all. American College Test (ACT), organization conducting admission test for Universities and Colleges, not long ago ascertained 76% of America’s high school graduates as not being amply ready scholastically for their freshman annum university program. Consequently, as America’s high school students are stuck immovably in the predicament of failure and underachievement, the rest of the globe is moving forward. As an illustration, the World Economic Forum (WEF) positions the United States 48th in math and science, middle amid the 34 affiliates of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

A research conducted by the OECD (2001) indicates that “education has evolved within the government planner and is viewed as the key to unlatching both the socioeconomic issues” (p. 48). Concurrently, the essence of work in our global civilization is in constant flux, a flux which shapes the responsibility of leaders, including those in elementary and secondary education (K–12) known as school administrators, whose skillsets must today more than ever, become of corporate nature. According to Kotter and Heskett (1992), a corporate culture develops as a natural result of people interacting together and having some level of success. Public schools as organizations are no exception to this rule. As Robbins and Judge (2013) remarked, organizations are consciously coordinated social units, made up of a couple or more individuals functioning relentlessly to accomplish a routine objective or number of objectives

(para. 4). In social groups, communication between leaders and their followers shapes behavior; hence, communication influences the organization's culture and ultimately, its success.

From status quo to turnaround. Effective leadership is critical to successful school turnaround effort, whether planned or unplanned. America's public schools are in desperate need for leaders who can reverse the current state of dire straits that characterizes most of our public schools, depriving our children from one of the most fundamental human rights that is education. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2009), dramatically changing the course of low-performing schools is a national imperative. Hanushek and Woessmann (1991) emphasized that, whether considered on moral or economic terms, as a nation, we cannot afford to have students attend schools that do not prepare them to succeed and ready to face the challenges of our time (2007). According to Bridges (2009), each status quo is exactly a short-lived approach before a suitable course of action has been unearthed. Evidence gathered over the recent thirty years suggests that effective leaders considerably impact student achievement and various aspects of school performance (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom, 2004). Moreover, posited Kowal and Hassel (2005), "recorded experience equally indicates that leaders in frailty organizations in diverse sectors, including education, can affect rapid, substantial improvements." (para. 3). Having said so, turnaround can be considered as a strategy adopted by a firm or organization to stop a state of decline and revamp their growth. Meaningful and effective school turnaround processes requires quick, strategic alteration of school culture and systems, hence leading to a dramatic improvement in student achievement in chronically low-performing schools. These turnarounds are not easy to achieve and sustain for various reasons. Despite the fact that turnaround success is measured in terms of student academic outcomes, in the turnaround field, it remains difficult to assess just how good is good enough. Moreover, even though student academic achievement is the ultimate guidepost of an effective turnaround, it may take years to achieve this outcome. In virtually all instances, turnaround leaders pinpoint and emphasize on a number early triumph with considerable

payoffs, and employ that primeval success to embody change in their daily practices through critical consistent success actions, in order to gain momentum, hence relinquishing organizational norms and rules. According to Steiner, Hassel, Hassel, and Ellison (2016), in virtually all cases, successful turnaround initiatives encompass the following features: (a) establish and concentrate on a number of early wins with substantial payoffs, (b) obliterate organizational norms or rules to establish new strategies and fresh guidelines needed for early wins, and (c) act swiftly in a fast cycle of implementing new strategies, by measuring outcomes, disposing of inefficient tactics, and applying more of what works.

The vast majority of turnaround initiatives fail because they are initiated in extremely challenging situations and not well communicated. Therefore, school leaders who embark onto turnaround efforts must stay the course on achieving the most significant, consistent success actions. According to Denning (2011), turnaround leaders must emphasize conveying the right story by picking the right storyline for the leadership struggle at hand. In the vast majority of cases, leaders of successful turnaround organizations follow four courses of action: (a) communicate a shared vision, (b) pinpoint and focus on a number of early gains with substantial payoffs, (c) break organization norms and rules, and (d) act quickly in a fast cycle.

Statement of the Problem

Leadership as organizational practice and its study as a phenomenon has been traced to the beginning of civilization. According to Bass (1990a), prophets, clergymen, chiefs, and kings represented symbols for their people in the Holy Scriptures and were pivotal to the development of modern societies. These symbols were known as leaders, and because humans have practiced leadership since the beginning of time, leadership is considered the building block of humanity. For instance, Egyptian pharaohs, Ancient Greek heroes, and even biblical patriarch just to name a few, all share one common trait: leadership. Bass (1990a) noted that “leadership is one of mankind’s oldest fascinations” (p. 49). During the enlightenment era, leaders baldly merged the ideas of philosophy, science, politics, and art to overtake the

medieval ideas that had held back radical ways of thinking and doing things for thousands of years through leadership. Conversely, according to Paige (1977), all human social groups have mystified leadership in an attempt to provide reasonable explanations for the coercive power of their leaders over their followers. The importance of leaders and their guidance is paramount to the success of an organization. Because leadership is of the utmost importance for effective and meaningful organizational and societal functioning, the long hard look indulged to leadership is not fortuitous. Napoleon (as cited in Bass, 1990a) once noted, "I would rather have a lion lead an army of rabbits than a rabbit lead an army of lions" (p. 6). Leadership is a phenomenon found in primates and many other animal species, and is known to precede the emergence of humankind. During the past few years, the concept of leadership has evolved into a field of study of its own, thus changing the paradigm of its theory and practice. Furthermore, the importance of leadership in the contemporary society is a universal construct seen in all species with some level of complexity. In taxonomy, humans belong to the phylum of chordates or vertebrates, which includes all organisms with a backbone. According to Allee (1945), all vertebrates with some level of social behavior and hierarchy exhibit leadership. As an illustration, males of high social status tend to have easier access to food and mates than those with lower social ranking. As Bass (1990a) posited, "Leadership is a ubiquitous activity discernable in human civilization and in animal alike" (p. 4). However, despite being relatively easy to recognize, leadership still is very elusive to define. In today's "flat world," executives working to lead their respective organizations to successfully thrive in the global economy more than ever, face the daunting task of having and effectively applying a broad range of leadership skills, competencies, and capacities in their daily work and in a constantly changing environment. As Friedman (2005) recounted, "Entrepreneurs and creative minds from a wide variety of organizations, large and small, revealed that just in the last two years they had been doing things never imagined feasible before, or that they were being compelled to do things they had never conceived essential before" (p. 423). As Kotter and Heskett (1992) remarked, a

corporate culture develops as a natural result of people interacting together, having, and enjoying some level of success. Similarly, a school culture of success and achievement emerges as a natural result of school administrators, staff, teachers, and students working in unison towards achieving a common goal.

In many regards, the last twenty years have witnessed an unprecedented effort by K–12 school officials across the country to meaningfully change America’s schools, close the achievement gaps, and improve student achievement in the elementary and secondary grade levels. The most compelling evidence includes; newly designed curricula for English/ Arts and social studies, mathematics, sciences; expanded guidelines for high school graduation; decreased class sizes; particularly in lower grade levels; new course culmination exams and other state mandated testing and assessment; and performance-based accountability requirements for K–12 schools. These changes represent in many regards the most compelling state and federal initiatives in elementary and secondary reform during the last two decades or so, not to mention early start in pre-kindergarten–grade 3. Conversely, and despite all these initiatives and reforms, significant change in school administrators’ leadership practices, teaching practices, and student achievement have slowed at best, even non-existing in most cases. There certainly has been some improvement; but in many cases success has been meager and inconsistent.

According to Leithwood et al. (2004), well documented corroboration gathered over the last three decades suggests that powerful school administrator can have a significant impact on pupil’s learning, achievement, and other aspects of school performance. Additionally, added Kowal and Hassel (2005), “recorded episodes also demonstrate that effective leaders in declining organizations in different sectors, education included, can affect rapid, sizable improvement in such organizations” (p. 3). School turnaround is an achievable undertaking, but it takes a wider, joint and sustained endeavor with daring leadership at the rudder and; tenacious, achievement-oriented partnership among administrators, faculty, and staff. This

practice is the cornerstone of rapid, bad-to-great turnaround efforts across sectors through sustained actions and competencies. The concept of leadership is ambiguous both as organizational theory and organizational practice. As Bunmi (2007) remarked, “leadership is a socioemotional leverage undertaking whereby the leader solicits the discretionary involvement of non-leaders in an endeavor to attain organizational objectives” (p. 42).

Contingent on the above facts, leading turnarounds in educational institutions is both difficult and challenging, and often times, school turnaround efforts fail. During the past few decades in the United States, underperforming schools have increasingly become a centerpiece of public attention and concern. Legislature at local, state and federal strata have called for swift and dramatic efforts to revive America’s poorest performing schools, contending that the significance of their dysfunction demands a sturdy response. According to Stoll and Myers (1998), although there are no quick fixes, there could be quick wins; hence recognizing that K–12 public school turnaround is an achievable task. This study aims at examining the best leadership practices of turnaround administrators in elementary and secondary public schools in LA County who have led a major change effort in their respective schools.

Education Resource Strategies (ERS) has pinpointed five steps that school districts can take while designing and implementing their school improvement programs in favor of increasing the propensity that their efforts will yield lasting results: (a) understand the individual needs of each and every school, (b) itemize what individual schools get and how they use it, (c) invest in the most significant changes first, (d) customize and personalize strategies to each school, and (e) redesign the school district as a whole, not only the schools.

Purpose Statement

While implementing change and turning schools around have proven difficult, some leaders in the K–12 public school arena have successfully accomplished these effective leadership skillsets and competencies. As such, their approach to success can benefit other

K–12 leaders who follow their successful path. Accordingly, based upon the lived experiences of selected turnaround K–12 school administrators, the scope of this change oriented phenomenological investigation is as follows:

1. Examine the best leadership practices of turnaround K–12 administrators in LA County Public Schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations.
2. Explore the most common leadership challenges faced by turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County Public Schools who embarked on major change effort in these organizations.

Research Questions

The subsequent research questions (RQ) are tackled in this investigation:

1. What are the best leadership practices of turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County Public Schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations?
2. What are the most common leadership challenges faced by turnaround K–12 Administrators in LA County Public Schools who embarked onto major change effort in these organizations?
3. How do turnaround K–12 administrators in LA County Public Schools who have led major change effort in their respective organizations measure their success both as leaders, and as turnaround efforts?
4. What recommendations would turnaround K–12 administrators in LA County Public Schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations make for promoting innovative practices within public schools?

Significance of the Study

A well-educated and engaged youth are quintessential to the socioeconomic wellness, and the stability of a democratic nation. Notwithstanding, for countless Americans, the reality of

all-inclusive civic and economic involvement in social development falls far beneath the standard. The importance of this study is that K–12 schools, as all organizations, are open systems that operate within complex environments where change is the norm. Change once used to be episodic; it was deliberate, planned, and executed. But in today's unstable environment, change is constant and the role of school administrators in K–12 in leading major organizational change is to provide supportive leadership that fosters a common mindset, offbeat skillsets, new behaviors, and culture aligned with organizational vision and mission. In this global competitive environment, effective leadership practices of executives are necessary not only to mitigate the attrition of the restraining forces, but most importantly, move their organizations towards desired goals by increasing the driving forces. From the effective leadership practices of executives only is it possible to achieve organizational objectives, hence aligning vision and mission. As has been noted, the results of this study can benefit: current, endeavoring, and potential K–12 school administrators. Education is a fundamental right for mankind and a significant factor in the development of children, communities and countries. As Ravitch (2000) remarked, President George Washington declared in his farewell address, "Promote . . . as an object of paramount significance, institutions in change of the common dissemination of consciousness; in ratio as the makeup of an administration empowers common viewpoint, it is quintessential that popular viewpoint must be enlightened" (p. 9). According to Alexander (1997), public educational institutions have had an essential role in reducing the disparities between rich and poverty-stricken students on standards of intelligence. This qualitative change oriented phenomenological study will examine the best leadership practices of turnaround K–12 school administrators in Los Angeles County who have led major change effort in their respective schools. The quest for change usually generates a high degree of stress (Kets De Vries & Balazs, 2000). Because change is constant, the best K–12 school administrators who can lead positive change efforts embrace change as their real job. These administrators need more than one approach for leading change to ensure that change is

institutionalized in the school's daily practices, and transform schools through an innovation driven culture of actions and competencies; whether planned or unplanned. Findings from this study can benefit the following audiences: (a) current and endeavoring K–12 School administrators, (b) potential K–12 School administrators, (c) parents seeking to enroll their children in successful K–12 schools, and (d) as a reference landmark for superintendents of school districts in selecting, screening, recruiting and promoting K–12 school administrators.

Current and endeavoring K–12 school administrators. This study will benefit current and endeavoring K–12 school administrators because it showcases the best leadership practices of turnaround K–12 school administrators in Los Angeles County Public schools who have led major change effort in their respective organizations, thus providing underpinning principles and strategies of storytelling in re branding schools during times of crisis. In addition, this study will enlighten these hopeful administrators on the warning signs of schools in a state of entrenched failure. Furthermore, the results of this study can help practitioners gain valuable insight as to how to better lead turnaround initiatives in schools. Equally important, the outcomes of this study could also play a guiding role for the revision, drafting, and administration of new curricula and instructional materials in K–12 public schools.

Potential K–12 school administrators. This study will be instrumental to potential K–12 school administrators including Principals and Assistant Principals because not only will it expose them to the most common challenges faced by turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County Public schools, but most importantly, it will arm potential administrators with the best leadership practices employed by those who participated in this investigation, in furtherance of successfully leading change efforts of their own.

Parents seeking to enroll their children in successful K–12 schools. Finding the right school environment for your child oftentimes proves to be a daunting task. This study will be invaluable for parents seeking to enroll their children in successful elementary and secondary public schools in LA County because it will equip them with a clear snapshot of what

successful elementary and secondary schools look like in terms of: rigorous teaching and learning, straightforward emphasis on diversified curricula and global mindset, culture of top-level expectations for all students, well-designed and implemented system to enlighten students for smooth transition between high school and postsecondary (college/university) or career, multifaceted strategies to planning for career and postsecondary education, personalism, academic support, safe and orderly climate, and relevance.

Selecting, screening, recruiting and promoting K–12 public school administrators.

With the accountability movement, the process of evaluating performance based on student achievement measures became a centerpiece of our nation's educational policymakers across party lines. School districts and administrators are under tremendous pressure and increasingly attempt to ensure that the recruitment and selection process of prospective teachers meet certain requirements for quality. According to Burgess, Propper, Slater, and Wilson (2005), integrated disclosure of school-wide test scores has occurred for over twenty years in the U.K. Thus, this study will allow school districts in Los Angeles County and across the United States to understand the variations across programs, identify key factors influencing the effectiveness and possible unintended consequences of accountability policies, and familiarize these administrators with the effects of test-based accountability on students and teachers. According to Figlio and Loeb (2011), while a preponderance of evidence suggests positive effects of the accountability faction across the United States during the 1990s and early 2000s on student achievement, especially in math, it is however, important to mention that teachers and students' long-run outcomes are more difficult to judge.

Limitations and Assumptions

Conducting scholarly research entails being restricted in many ways. Some of these restrictions include the availability of resources, the access to resources, and the researcher's own shortcomings. Addressing these shortcomings and adjusting them accordingly ensures that the study is conducted the best way possible. At the core of any given research study, there are

fundamental assumptions and limitations that cannot be overlooked (Creswell, 2003). According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), assumptions and limitations are essential ingredients of a realistic research study without which the credibility of the researcher and the validity of the research may be disputed.

Limitations. Limitations can be defined as all potential weaknesses in the study that are out of the control of the researcher. Understanding limitations is paramount during the sampling process. For instance, a sample of convenience is used instead of random sampling, it is clear that while it could be suggested, the outcome of the research cannot be expanded to a larger population. This change oriented phenomenological study is geographically limited to K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County Public schools who have led major change efforts in their respective organizations. The results herein attained may not and cannot be generalized beyond the 15 elementary and secondary public schools in LA County Public schools. In like manner, because the study was conducted with 15 participants, any generalization should be done with cautious. The results do not include K–12 school administrators elsewhere in the State of California or those in the K–12 public schools across the nation. Furthermore, because we all have biases, and due to the potential failure of some or all 15 K–12 school administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who participated in this study to answer the interview questions (IQs) with candor, results might not accurately reflect the opinions of all K–12 turnaround school administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who have led major change effort in their respective organizations; therefore the lack of candor may influence the data analysis. Finally, owing to the lengthy span of the investigation, an important number of respondents accessible in the initial pool may become either inaccessible or simply not willing, or both unavailable and unwilling to participate in the final Semi-structured interview process.

Assumptions. As Leedeey and Ormrod (2010) posited, “Assumptions are so fundamental that without them, the research problem itself could not exist” (p. 62). But just stating one’s assumptions is not enough to guarantee an adjustment of one’s shortcomings;

instead, the researcher must justify that each assumption is true by taking them from uninformed assumptions to informed opinions; otherwise, the study cannot reflect the phenomenon being examined. For the accuracy of this study, it was assumed that all participants, K–12 school administrators in Los Angeles County Public Schools are highly qualified professionals in elementary and secondary education. It was also assumed that these turnaround administrators' genders will not significantly affect their perception of best leadership practices. A third assumption was that these administrators answered the interview questions (IQs) as truthfully and accurately as possible based on their personal experiences. The fourth assumption was that all participants in this study accurately represented administrators in K–12 public schools in Los Angeles County. The fifth assumption was that the K–12 school administrators participating in this study responded honestly and to the best of their individual abilities. According to Delpit (2006) and Nieto and Bode (2001), understanding hidden associations, assumptions, or biases allows a better understanding of ourselves so we can work with others toward a mediated identity where positive academic and social identities can be affirmed and nurtured through an asset model for identity construction.

Definition of Terms

According to Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman, the researcher should define terms that individuals extraneous to the field of study may not comprehend and that go beyond ordinary language (2013). For the objectives of this research, these words will ensure uniformity and understanding of how they are defined throughout the study:

- **Accountability:** the “quality or state of being accountable, especially, an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one’s actions” (accountability, n.d.).
- **A Nation at Risk:** the imperative for educational reform is the April 1983 report of the American President Ronald Reagan’s National Commission on Excellence in Education (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

- Charter school: publicly funded and independently ran school established by teachers, parents, and community groups and provided greater leverage in its running, in exchange for greater accountability in terms of performance under the terms of a charter with a local or national authority. As such the “charter” initiating each school is an achievement contract delineating the school’s mission, vision, program, location, students served, innovative ideas, performance goals, and assessment techniques (charter school, n.d.)
- Citizenry: all the citizens of a place; the group of individuals who live in a particular geographic location, city, town, area, or country (citizenry, n.d).
- Compulsory education: refers to a period of education that is required of persons, imposed by law, either in a registered school, or at home (compulsory education, n.d.)
- Magnet school: a public school offering special instruction and programs not available elsewhere, aimed at attracting a more diverse student body from throughout a school district (magnet school, n.d.).
- Return on investment (ROI): the amount, expressed as a percentage, that is earned on a company's total capital, calculated by dividing the total capital into earnings before interest, taxes, or dividends are paid. In education, ROI is associated with greater student learning, greater outcomes in student citizenship, higher graduation rates, or increased in lifetime earnings and career options (return on investment, n.d.).
- Turnaround: “a quick, substantial, sustained transformation within the output or accomplishment of a corporation; a complete shift from a negative situation to a positive situation, from one way of thinking to an opposite way of thinking” (turnaround, n.d.)

- Voucher: are scholarships, state allocated financial resources that provide funds for student to attend private schools (voucher, n.d.).

Chapter Summary

In today's competitive world economy, the success of an organization will be largely determined by the quality of leadership within that organization. Similarly, the success of a nation in the global economy is dependent upon the level of education of its youth. More than two hundred years ago, prior to retiring from the presidency, George Washington (1796) encouraged the young nation to have as a priority the advancement of public education as he wrote, "In ratio as the makeup of an administration empowers common viewpoint, it is quintessential that popular viewpoint must be enlightened" (p. 9). Today, the fact that America's public education network is free and accessible to all students is one of the greatest achievements of U.S. democracy. Over the past few decades, America's public education system has been profoundly transformed. This transformation came with many challenges and changes as time and again we have been urged to overhaul our public educational platform toward more integration, equality, and better access to equitable education for all children.

Nevertheless, in the past decades, and despite the implementation of several education reform laws in the nation's K–12 public education system, the United States continues to struggle with how to improve its public schools. We have failed as a society to properly educate our youth in a global competitive economy because, according to the Pew Center on the States (2009), public schools are not supporting the majority of children develop skills they need to be successful in today's global economy, hampering America's ability to be competitive and prosperous. The present K–12 shortcomings are numerous and clear; as several schools are classified as low performing. According to Seder (2000), states purposely designate schools as "under-performing" or "failing" based on persistently faulty scores on standardized tests, sometimes along with poor graduation and lofty dropout rates.

Despite this general trend of failure in public schools across the United States, some exceptional schools strive and successfully accomplish their mission of educating our youth. For those that do not meet these standards and are still struggling, corrective measures are needed now more than ever in order for us as a nation to keep our competitive edge. According to Baker and LeTendre (2006), public education is the most significant investment undertaken by public authorities all over the world. Organizations succeed when they have at the top of their ranking leaders who understand and employ leadership strategies appropriate to the situation at hand. Improving student achievement in our public schools is a daunting task that requires great leadership and major and sustained change strategies. Change, in whatever form it may come, is the only constant; it is inherent to the fabric of society. As Deming (2000) remarked, “Eight-five percent of problems in an organization are within the system, not the individual” (p. 266). In organizations, public schools included, a corporate culture emanates from a joined effort of all members working as a team and being successful (Kotter & Heskett, 1992). This entices the building of coalitions that can reframe and rebrand *at risk of failing* schools by turnaround administrators. Undoubtedly, school turnaround requires the combination of a certain number of skillset, sustained action and bold competencies. As Goleman (1995) posited, “A manager’s performance may be influenced by several factors: self-consciousness, character, self-directive, ethical values, commitment to motivation, honesty, compassion, and social skills” (p. 34). In organizations, leaders lead, and followers follow, managers get tasks accomplished through other people. Leaders are the decisions makers, resource providers, and supervise others employees to achieve goals. This change oriented phenomenological study will examine the best leadership practices of turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations; the common leadership challenges they faced; how they measure their success; and last but not least, the recommendations these successful K–12 administrators would make for promoting innovative practices within our elementary and secondary education public schools. In sum, “the

widespread overhaul of socio-economic conditions is directly dependent upon an educated citizenry that is well prepared to apply knowledge in making informed choices and, as a group, prepared for employment” (Grossman, 2006, p. 579).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Leadership as we know it today is the most examined subject in business and organizations. It is almost impossible to watch the news, read a newspaper, attend a seminar or a conference without hearing *leadership* uttered numerous times. Leadership as an organizational practice can be traced to the beginning of civilization (Stone & Patterson, 2005). From the medieval age, the age of enlightenment, and to the present, humans have always practiced some form of leadership in their daily social interactions. In the social, political, economic, legal, cultural, and technological landscape of the twenty-first century, executives working to lead their organizations to blossom in the global economy are challenged more than ever to incorporate in their practices a broad range of leadership skills, competencies, and capacities, and to effectively apply them daily in very volatile environments. Countless articles, advertisements, and books describe effective leadership as the avenue to organizational success. “Leadership involves the capacity to work together as a group to achieve common objectives” (Spinks & Wells, 1995, p. 14)

Overview

For the past few decades, the study of leadership as organizational practice has been an ongoing process broadly defined as an undertaking of social influence. Meanwhile, with the advent of globalization, organizations around the world—including big companies, academia, researchers, leadership scholars, and authors—have been focusing on not only trying to gain a thorough knowledge understanding of leadership but also deciphering the real differences and similarities between the concepts of leadership and management. Successful leadership is about finding the perfect balance between leadership and management. According to Drucker (as cited in Yukl, 1989) the sole description of any leader is an individual possessing followers. However, “while gaining followers entails influence; it does not exclude the absence of rectitude in achieving this” (Drucker, as cited in Yukl, 1989, pp. 466–467). Conversely, some researchers believe that management does not necessarily compel employees or subordinates to follow

managers; rather, management is regarded as a process used to achieve organizational goals. Based upon the lived experiences of turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County Public Schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations, the scope of this phenomenological investigation is dichotomous: (a) examining the best leadership practices of turnaround K–12 administrators in LA County Public Schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations, and (b) to explore the most common leadership challenges faced by turnaround K–12 Administrators in LA County Public Schools who embarked on major change effort in these organizations. The chapter showcases an overview of literature related to the phenomenon being explored—the notion that leadership, commensurate to power, is a fundamentally complex concept (Gallie, 1955; as cited in Grint, 2004).

This section includes a panorama concerning past events of leadership, various leadership postulates, leadership as opposed to management as different yet complementary practices, leadership and motivation, leadership branding in organizations, and the dynamic interdependence between leadership and followership. In this section, we will also overview the literature related to the history of early colonial schooling in America, education in the modern-era America, and the new waves of educational reforms between the 1950s and today. Furthermore, this chapter also discusses the relationship between leadership skills and elementary and secondary school administration, the cause(s) of school failure, the process of leadership, and change. Last but not least, this literature review examines the process of managing transitions during change efforts, turnaround as a process, and the competencies of effective school principals, how leaders implement change and reframe organizations through storytelling, as well as the importance and effects of innovative mindset during organizational turmoil and turnaround.

Defining Leadership

The term *leadership* has been an evolving one and continues to evolve today, which is why leadership theorists, practitioners, and scholars alike have very dynamic definitions and interpretations of who and what is a leader. As many sociologists and social scientists agree, leadership is one of social sciences, if not the social sciences' most investigated phenomenon. Stogdill (1974) asserted:

There certainly are as various delineations of the notion of leadership, nearly as there exist investigators who explore its conceptualization, attempting to narrow it down with regard to traits, behaviors, influence, conduct, interaction, beliefs, patterns, role relationships, principles, job description, or attributions. (p. 11)

Considering the intricate nature of leadership, a one-fits-all definition of the term does not exist. Similarly, Fiedler (1971) suggested: There probably are as numerous descriptors of leadership as there could be leadership postulates; besides there may be quite as innumerable leadership theories as there may be researchers in psychology exploring the sphere (p. 1). Leadership has many facets as a concept, both in theory and practice. Furthermore, Capowski (1994) concluded that "although it is flawless to admit; leadership is not effortless, good leaders must possess some underlying features such as inventiveness, righteousness, trust, altruism, faithfulness, creativity, endurance, interpersonal skills, bravado and apparentness" (p. 10).

"The term leadership originated from a common etymology and fused into the practical language of a scientific topic without being literally redefined" (Yukl, 2002, p. 20). According to Stogdill (1974), there are as multiple definitions of the term *leadership*, as it has been summarized into characteristic, for instance traits, behaviors, conduct, influence, beliefs, interaction patterns, role relationship, reverence, occupation of a position, attributes, or attributions. Yet, as Bennis (1959) noted:

Always seemingly, the construct of leadership dodges us or ends up in a different form to mock us again with its sliminess and intricacy. So we have created a boundless offspring of terms to get a handle on it . . . and still the notion is not adequately defined. (p. 159)

Bunmi (2007) depicted “leadership as a social reciprocity involving effective leaders and their subordinates whereby leaders solicit the voluntary involvement of followers in order to attain organizational objectives” (p. 57); but Mullins (2004) also added, “A leader can be defined as someone who empowers others to act in order to accomplish set goals” (p. 373).

In sum, no matter what the definition of leadership might be or whatever definition of the term one might be inclined to follow, clearly, the common denominator of leadership definitions is “a series of actions whereby purposeful leverage is put forth by an individual over several other people in order to direct, organize, promote organizational proceedings and relationships” (Yukl, 2002, p. 7). As a multifaceted concept, leadership is (as cited in Yukl, 2002, p. 3):

- “The strategies an individual uses to direct the actions of a team toward a common objective” (Hemphill & Coons, 1957, p. 7).
- “Influencing the achievement of organizational goals through compliance and routine” (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p. 528).
- “Displayed when individuals use social, political, economic, legal, intercultural, technological, psychological, and other resources in order to inspire subordinates” (Burns, 1978, p.18).
- “The process of directing what an organized group does toward the achievement of an objective” (Rauch & Behling, 1984, p. 46)
- “A process by which collective effort is purposeful, and willing effort is spared to achieve a goal” (Jacobs & Jacques, 1990, p. 281)

- “The ability to break cultural barriers, and initiate an adaptive change process” (Schein, 1992, p. 2)
- “The process of conveying meaning to a group of people in order to earn their commitment” (Drath & Palus, 1994, p. 204)
- About communicating visions, embodying beliefs, and creating and maintaining a setting conducive to accomplishment (Richards & Engle, 1986)
- The aptness of a person to empower followers to take part in the prosperity of a corporation” (House et al., 1999).

These varieties of definitions of leadership provide evidence that corporate leadership is a mutual initiative encompassing the capacity to impact followers toward reaching collective objectives.

Historical Perspectives of Leadership

One of the most sought-after expressions of human behavior is the phenomenon of leadership. Despite being considered a universal construct, no known universal theory of leadership exists, and humankind has always been intrigued to understand just who can become a leader. Historically, extensive research has been conducted and a large amount of literature has been produced by philosophers and scholars about leaders, the concept of leadership, and the power associated with it. According to Bass (1990a) and Zaccaro (2001), the study of leaders, their traits, and attributes is known to have emerged across antique civilizations long before the scientific study of leadership. While medieval mythology emphasized the qualities of heroes, biblical writings pointed out the wisdom and service to others as leadership attributes. As J. Heider (1985) remarked, the qualities of effective leaders were showcased in ancient Chinese literature dating back from the sixth century B.C. by Lao-Tzu as selflessness, honesty, hardworking, fair, and altruistic. Similarly, Plato (trans.1960) noted that effective leadership required reasoning and wisdom to inspire followers. He believed that

only the chosen few had the wisdom to be leaders. Aristotle (trans.1900) argued that before seeking virtue in others, leaders themselves should embody virtuous qualities. According to Aristotle, some people are predestined to lead at birth, while others are predestined to follow. Contrary to Aristotle, Machiavelli (trans. 1954) suggested cunning as attribute of leadership, recommending that leaders use less-than-virtuous means, even slyness to attain power and social status.

The emergence of the Industrial Revolution between the 1840s and the 1870s witnessed America's economy shift from agricultural base to industrial base, hence ushering in a shift in relationship between American leaders and their followers. This shift in leader-follower dynamics brought about new challenges and forever transformed the way leaders relate to their followers. According to Clawson (1999), the Technological Revolution introduced a new model change into a novel leadership theory whereby "ordinary" people assumed influence through the competencies they possess. Power became increasingly associated with status as different skills allowed different individuals to occupy different positions in society and within organizations. This era was characterized by new approaches of visualizing work and productivity known as the division of labor, an undeniably major turning point in human history, as almost every single aspect of our daily lives became influenced by it in some way. As new technologies were invented and introduced, they were accompanied by mechanization of human thinking and acting, which led to modern hierarchical bureaucracies (Morgan, 1997). As bureaucracy became prevalent, administrative practices become routine in many factories. Weber's (1946) rendition of bureaucracy suggested the establishment of hierarchy was a response to work in the post-industrial revolution era. For this reason, bureaucracies allocate tasks among subordinates (Stinchcombe, 1974), where every specialized position in the division of labor is interdependent via hierarchy. Those stratified positions specify conduct for managers and their workers (Biggart & Hamilton, 1984; Dornbusch & Scott, 1975), just as these

responsibilities eased harmonized labor. When positions and hierarchical relations fail, labor become baffling and cannot be performed (Greer & Caruso, 2007).

Accordingly, moving the workplace from homes to factories fragmented households as men worked while their wives stayed home; children had often joined the family workforce to supplement the father's income. "The factory system" was the beginning of a new era in leadership. Factories were regarded as job suppliers but in many instances created jobs of a very low skill level, and the employees at the lowest level of the hierarchy were often stuck there with no prospect of growth, let alone the possibilities of rising to skilled worker positions.

As the economy moved from labor to skilled workers, from manufacturing to services, the need to inspire employees became paramount. According to Weber (1961), the Industrial Revolution reinforced the physical separation between homes and factories, between those who consumed goods and those who produced them. As Weber (1961) remarked, before the eighteenth century, ownership of workplace, tools, power, influence, and raw materials were never concentrated in one and the same hand. In the factory system, the tools of production and necessary equipment moved out of the control of low-skilled workers. In the meantime, as factories rose, the machinery and tools of manufactures went under the exclusive control of factory owners, and workers had control over nothing but their labor. Factory owners also controlled the number of hours employees could work, their behavior, and personal code of conduct. Manufacturing, as Crouzet (1985) remarked, was like an industry with no industrialists prior to the Industrial Revolution (p. 4). Until the early 1900s, leader-follower relationships did not exist; instead, leader-subordinate relationships were essentially and primarily based on factory owner and factory worker dynamics. This attitude by factory owners reinforced both the notion of the role of the company and the division of labor. No one employee could or should know everything; instead, each worker only knows what he or she needs to perform his or her task. Subsequently, according to Becker & Murphy (1992), each employee only knows what he or she performs for the firm, and the action of all workers is coordinated by a manager. To put it

differently, Landes (1986) posited that hiring factory employees in the same families might have seemed like a brilliant idea but this involved also a minute number of workers. Others such as Smelser (1959) believed that this was actually common practice. Hierarchy became the norm as it introduced unity, control, and management. From now on, managers designed, defined organizational priorities, and coordinated how employees executed tasks. Their main organizational goal shifted from simple supervision to the achievement of excellence in a continually evolving environment. This new wave of thoughts paved the way to the four contemporary organizational management principles: (a) bureaucracy, (b) division of labor, (c) scientific management, and (d) behavioral management.

The ideas of bureaucracy, division of labor, scientific management, and behavioral management introduced the notion of specialization and skilled workers. On the positive side, specialization was not only paramount for the division of labor but was most important because workers had different skills; it would be wasteful for qualified workers to perform tasks requiring low skills. A flawless complement of task and skills was key to productivity and efficacy (Rosenberg, 1994). At this point, it had become clear that the factory system of production was being slowly but surely replaced by what would become division of labor, bureaucracy, and hierarchy. A pioneering explanation was provided by Holmström and Milgrom (1991) who recounted that in an aggregate system of production, it may be beneficial for a business owner to make his employees specialize in order to ensure that their time and effort are focused on individual efficiency.

Cornelius Vanderbilt, Andrew Carnegie, John Rockefeller, J.P. Morgan, and Henry Ford are a few recognizable names of factory owners or leaders who represent the underpinning of early organizational leadership in America. The views and practices of these pioneers regarding factory ownership and workers' productivity shifted America's economy from a strictly factory system to a bureaucracy and hierarchy system. As Cairncross (1997) remarked, with the rise of bureaucracy, the office became a networking club where leaders inspired employees and

enlisted their loyalty to the organization, and in return these leaders provided them benefits. Their names are metonymic with innovation, big business expansion, mass production, and the American dream. As pioneers of technological advances in various fields such as railroads, steel, oil, financial, and automobile industries, these leaders shaped the country and transformed the United States into a global superpower in the turn of the twentieth century in just fifty years by establishing a complementarity between organizational and technological change. According to Geraghty, leadership and organizational change improved technological advance and vice versa (2000). Indeed, Cowan and Foray (1997) insist that implicit intelligence was the precursor of abstract cognition, as the two are complementary, not substitutes for each other.

While Vanderbilt, Carnegie, Rockefeller, Morgan, and Ford's individual journeys were unique, the commonality bore no doubt; that is, certain key experiences were crucial in shaping and shifting their personal perspectives, whether the experiences were related to one's upbringing, schooling, or simple social interactions—they were inspired and in turn they have inspired many generations and will inspire many more to come. These pioneers of American modern industry understood that innovation is best cultivated and harvested in open competitive markets and stimulated by public policies. To illustrate this, in 1820 James Francis invented a water turbine to supply electricity in Massachusetts, thus improving the production of textile mills. His invention later became pivotal to the development of the modern turbojet. Lazonick (2004) later concluded that "homegrown innovation can profoundly impact a nation's innovative spirit" (p. 292).

Today, many leadership experts agree that one of the main challenges confronting leaders now and certainly in the future is their ability to innovate and inspire a shared vision in followers, in order to respond to radical social, political, economic, legal, intercultural, and technological changes. According to Reardon and Rowe (1998), "the pivotal component of effective leadership today and in centuries to come is bold and effectual responsiveness to

change” (p. 56). Similarly, as two studies demonstrated (Kotter, 1990; O’Toole, 1996), successful leaders have to be accommodating and predisposed to adapting to up to date state, receptive to novel choices, also ready to undertake daring chances. In the global economy, leaders lead and followers follow; managers get things done through others, thus reinforcing the notion of hierarchy in modern-day organizations. According to Morgan (1997), one great contributor to this age in managing and leading, Max Weber, a German social scientist, who identified the commonalities linking the automation of manufacturing and extension of bureaucratic structures of corporation as he highlighted the prime function of bureaucracy within the process of customizing the government in the same manner that the machinery standardized productivity. By feeling unease, Weber set the stage for the introduction of more effective techniques known as the classical management theory, which focuses on the blueprint of the company, and the scientific management, which emphasizes the methodical management of distinctive jobs. According to Bass (1990a), long-established theorists, exemplified by Henri Fayol and F. Mooney, advocated bureaucratization and pledged their buoyancies to identifying ways and means by which it could be achieved, thus setting the foundation for numerous contemporary management approaches for instance management with objectives.

Theories of Leadership

More recently, leadership as a phenomenon has been investigated within a myriad of settings, comprising political, economic, social, political, juridical, intercultural, as well as technological contexts. Occasionally, leadership has been identified as an undertaking, but the majority of theorists and researchers on the topic view an individual to decipher its underpinnings (L. Bernard, 1926; Blake, Shepard, & Mouton, 1964; Drath & Palus, 1994; Fiedler, 1967; House & Mitchell, 1974). In many regards, the phenomenon of leadership as a theory as much as a practice was a tricky process and its notion should be approached with serious forethought over the magnitude at which certain abilities can provide a clear illustration

on the depth of what makes some leaders and their corporations more successful and others less successful or even not successful at all.

Bernal (2009) posited “even though the research on leadership only began in the 1930s, humankind has been interested in this process since the dawn of time” (p. 2). Likewise, House and Aditya noted that “as a social science, the study of leader/follower dynamics only began in the 1930s” (1997, p. 409). Following the introduction of the trait theory of leadership in the 1930s, many other postulates of leadership have emerged over time. In the global economy, integration and technological breakthroughs have compelled many organizations around the world to consider intercultural competencies as a fundamental basis for their success. Indeed, House et al. (1999) explained that “with globalization, organizations face increased leadership challenges that can only be mitigated by effective organizational leadership” (p. 176). Despite changes that have occurred throughout the history of the study of leadership, certain trends have been identified. Gosling and Mintzberg (2009) advocated seven tenets as the foundation of managerial leadership, rooted in (a) performance, (b) integration, (c) experience, (d) reflection, (e) organizational development, (f) interaction, and (g) learning. Bryman categorized leadership research covering four decades: the trait strategy between the 1930s and 1940s, the style strategy between the 1940s and late 1960s, the contingency style between late 1960s and early 1980s, and the new leadership approach—including transformational, charismatic, and transactional—from the early 1980s to the present. Despite the changes that have been observed in how leadership is practiced along the way, the need for those who lead and leadership theory are still unchanged (Bass, 1990a; Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Across the board, the quintessential functions of leadership are the same: (a) providing directions, (b) decision making, (c) establishing goals, (d) communicating vision, and (e) resolving conflicts (Clark et al., 1990).

Leadership, at its core, has been delineated as the conduct, traits, qualities exhibited by those who lead. Leaders make decisions that have noteworthy impact on the lives of others.

Furthermore, leaders are individuals who have the power to shape events and affect the evolutionary path of society. In fact, the “Great Man” theory argued that these individuals inherently make history (Carlyle, 1888). Leadership has been studied for multiple decades through the examination of its cultural values and philosophical understanding. As House (2004) remarked, leadership is culturally contingent since perceptions of its importance vary across cultures. A synopsis of what we recognize and comprehend with respect to leadership is significant in coordinating further study on group leadership. The study of leadership has been examined from multiple different paradigms. Several divergent models of leadership were unearthed in the course of the last century: Great Man Approaches, Trait Postulates, Behavioral Postulates, Situational Postulates, Contingency Postulates, Transactional Postulates, and Transformational Postulates.

Traits theories. The first wave of leadership theories emphasized the features of influential leaders. Leadership practice was elucidated through the inner attributes a person possesses at birth (L. Bernard, 1926). Likewise, according to Northouse (2004), the trait theory emphasizes the determining specific traits that set leaders apart from followers. Similarly according to Kirkpatrick and Locke, there is a clear evidence that traits do matter and the six traits that differentiate those who lead from those who follow include: drive, the desire to lead, honesty, integrity, self-confidence, cognitive ability, and knowledge of business (1991). The rationale was contingent upon assuming the traits discerning those who lead from those who follow may be established, outstanding leaders could be swiftly evaluated established into functions of leadership. Yet through this day, this has not been proven to be true. Traits theories point out very specific characters and behavioral patterns in the likeness of charisma, inspiration, merit, and skillsets shared by leaders. Meanwhile, the main hurdle associated with applying trait theories to make sense of leadership and identify leaders is that while certain traits are common to all leaders, some people may possess those traits and not have what it takes to be a leader. For example, providing guidance through good leadership in organizations entails

managers having the knowledge of key legal and ethical responsibilities, supported by skills, behaviors, and values necessary to achieve the desired results.

In order to unlock the mystery surrounding the trait theory, certain core qualities were evaluated in certain individuals; and this stand was contingent upon the perception that leadership was innate, not learned, and the significant answer to unlocking this puzzle was in discerning, based on the examination of those traits, those human beings who inherited great leadership skills at birth. Historically, suggested Clark et al. (1990), the examination of leadership originated from Galton's Great Man Approach, embodied the view that those who lead are extraordinary individuals, with innate qualities naturally predisposing one to lead. The term *man* stood for a male figure, since not long before the end of the twentieth century; leaders were equated to males, service men, and Westerners. Throughout history, monarchs, war heroes, the affluent, and other effective people inherit genetic characteristics and competencies that distinguishing them from the rest of the population, predisposing them to be successful. The Great Man Approach of leadership engendered the Trait Approach between 1920 to 1930.

Though substantial research was done to identify certain traits as the cornerstone of effective leadership, no clear evidence has yet been produced as to which traits are consistently associated with great leadership. The trait approach presumes some individuals to be naturally equipped with a number of traits not endowed by others (Yukl, 2002). Conversely, if an underlying trait of leadership exists that can effectively respond to all situations, it does not play that big of a role in establishing a person's success in leading because any exhibition of leadership is contingent upon the situation at hand; according to Ghiselli and Brown (1955), when faced with certain circumstances, an individual will display good leadership, while under different situations, he will exercise very poor judgment. As an illustration, Zaccaro (2001) underlined a certain number of underpinning leader characteristics foretelling charismatic leverage: self-assurance, socialized inspiration, risk-taking propensity, sociability, nurturance, and cognitive abilities.

Since its inception, the trait theory has been unsuccessful, even more so failed, in its attempts to establish those traits that set leaders apart from other individuals. One deficiency with this perception was the total disregard for the circumstantial and environmental components exerting an overriding part in a leader's degree of efficacy. According to Bass (1990a), understanding the traits theories of leadership involves making two lines of arguments: (a) whichever traits separate those who lead from those who follow, and (b) what significance do these differences have? While leadership scholars commonly view leader characteristics as identifying with either demography such as sex, age group, and schooling; task competency such as intellect, self-awareness, and consciousness; or interpersonal attributes such as agreeableness and extroversion (Bass & Bass, 2008), only sparse research methodically examined Bass' subsequent ambiguity apropos any relative significance of these differences from one leader characteristics to another. In organizations for instance, deciphering the difference in productivity between male and female employees entails analyzing the relative soundness of the interdependence of characteristics and gender. According to Feingold (1994), biotic and sociocultural factors explaining the diverging scores between males and females on both personality and intelligence tests. While biotic gender differences are a result of inbred predispositions acquired through sexual differentiation, social and cultural factors related to the environment tend to directly impact people's predisposition to be leaders.

According to Avolio, Sosik, Jung, and Berson (2003), the majority of leader traits can be summarized in a trifold as follows:

- demography,
- characteristics associated with task competency, and
- extrinsic features.

In like manner, the behaviors of leaders are commonly examined with regard to the orientation of the conduct:

- task processes,
- interpersonal dynamics, and
- changeover.

Behavioral theories. Behavioral theories are a second major trend that examines leader conduct via ascertaining effective leaders' course of action, instead of how they appear to other people (Hemphill & Coons, 1957). Those investigations started viewing those who lead within the corporation, highlighting the patterns of conduct those who lead exhibit that increase the efficacy of an institution. The established Michigan State University leadership research, conducted in 1948, embraced this modus operandi, and according to Seyranian (2010), the behavioral theories were similar to the consideration and initiating structures behaviors uncovered in the Ohio State Studies, conducted in 1948. While the Ohio study emphasized on actual characteristics of the leader, the Michigan study sought to identify the relationships between leader conduct, team process, and assessments of group performance (Yukl, 2002). The Ohio State University carried out separate experiments in the Air Force and the Navy in 1946, known as the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ), developed to analyze the conduct of leaders as recognized by their work groups' members and by their immediate supervisors. The results of the research produced triadic model of leadership behavior, differentiating effectual from ineffectual managers (Yukl, 2002).

Two predominant, independent variables stood out in these investigations: consideration and initiation of structure. Studies were at the same time being carried in other academies and comparable results transpired. The behavioral approach identified three primary trends of behaviors in leaders: (a) task-oriented behavior, which focuses on the importance of getting the work done and considers followers as tools used to complete tasks and achieve goals; (b) relations-oriented behavior, which places the employee at center of the attention on the personal aspect of work as the leader considers employees individually and addresses each follower's personal needs; and (c) participative leadership, which embodies the belief that

leaders should make joint decisions or at least involve subordinates in the decision making process. These three features are, as Bowers & Seashore (1966) posited, relative to the four behaviors they suggested as the cornerstone for effective leadership:

- support—the leader enhances the follower’s feeling of self-esteem,
- interconnection enhancement—the leader engages in behavior that encourages followers to develop close and mutually benefic relationships,
- objective emphasis—the leader empowers followers to meet organizational goals, and
- work facilitation—the leader encourages goal attainment through equitable distribution of resources.

These four behaviors are not mutually exclusive, as leaders cannot exhibit both simultaneously. During these studies, the emphasis was placed on observed leader behavior only. As Johns and Moser (2001) pointed out, no assumptions were made that the behavior exhibited by a leader in one group situation was going to be observed in other group situations. The effect of this study embodied the perception that leadership wasn’t an inbred construct, rather successful leadership practices were learned by subordinates (Saal & Knight, 1988). Investigators intended to identify skillsets distinguishing those who lead from those who follow in order to be able to teach people how to lead. An additional outcome of this conceptual framework underlined the widening of management emphasis to incorporate people-oriented actions as much as task-oriented actions. Katz and Kahn (1978) described leadership as behaviors complementing organizations on a supervisory level for goal attainment.

Building upon the above research, Blake et al. (1964) equally established a dual-variable prototype of leadership conduct concurrent with the one unveiled in the Ohio State University and Michigan State University studies. These variables were called “concern for people” and “concern for output.” Later on, a third variable was introduced: flexibility. In the light of this research, supervisors externalize behaviors pertaining to the two prime categories (task or

people). Based on the category that appeared in higher frequency, the leader was positioned vis-à-vis either of the continua. The results of this study were predominantly qualitative and enlightened researchers to rank leaders on the basis of their conduct. Furthering the insight of the variables Blake and Mouton (1985) designed a leadership and managerial grid that “provides a blueprint for understanding leadership support in organization via two main factors (a) emphasis on performance; (b) emphasis on subordinates” (as cited in Northouse, 2004, p. 69).

Situational theories. A third method to uncovering best leadership practices emphasized the interdependence between the leader’s inbred characteristics and his or her conducts, and the situation in which the leader exists. Failure by the traits and behavioral theories to reach consensus led to the focus on situational leadership models. A comprehensive redefinition of the notion of leadership was proposed by Stogdill (1948; 1974) and Mann (1959) in the 1950s known as situational leadership; by synthesizing some 25 years of leadership research results. While their studies did not yield any specific traits that could conclusively be identified as incontrovertible indicators of leadership, they did unveil some specific personal characteristics associated with leadership: (a) extroversion, and (b) dominance. The situational approach perceives leadership as being specific to the situation at hand. The leader’s actions should be contingent upon the variables of the situation and his/her decisions should be based upon the situation at hand. Stogdill and Mann established that various situations could place clearly differing burdens on leaders. Hence, the characteristics of the leader are only relevant as long as they pertain to the task being carried out. As a result, Stogdill (1948; 1974) and Mann (1959) found no evidence of particular traits that could differentiate leaders from followers, let alone characters that could predispose leaders to succeed. Therefore, the ability for a leader to succeed was dependent upon his or her ability to relate to his followers, understand the surroundings, and respond to both appropriately by adapting circumstances. Those situational features that heighten the effectiveness of the leader (or negate them) are called “situational

moderator variables” (Yukl, 2002). In sum, situational leadership theories can be categorized either as trait or behavioral based on whether the leader’s actions are contingent on innate factors or simply a fact of the demand of a given situation.

Contingency theories. Known as the refinement of the situational model, contingency theories seek to identify the situational variables that best predict and suit the most appropriate or effective leadership style fitting specific circumstances at various hierarchical levels of organizations. According to Graeff (1997) and Grint (2011), effectual leadership entails clear apprehension of the environmental stimuli and responds accordingly. These contingency theories presume that stimuli of one factor on leading are subjected to others. The latter concept became a prime breakthrough then because it paved the way to the understanding that leadership could vary in each and every situation and adaptive as situations evolve (Saal & Knight, 1988). With this view, an even more pragmatic perception of what leadership is surfaced, leading to the intricacy and contingent specificity of all-inclusive efficacy. Over time, various other contingency postulates were unveiled, even investigated. Meanwhile, it would be impractical to infer that any single postulate is more or less meaningful than others. While scholars, practitioners, and researchers all agree that leadership is a universal construct, the contingency approach reckons that there is no universally fitting leadership style or “one best way.”

Fiedler’s contingency model. The prime wide-ranging contingency theory of leadership had been introduced by Fiedler (1967). Bolden, Gosling, Marturano, and Dennison (2003) contended that “Fiedler’s contingency postulate suggests the nonexistence of one best leadership practice or approach; instead situations will dictate different leadership approach for a leader and managers” (p. 8). The best approach to solving an executive problem is with proviso to the leading elements that influence the situation. Fiedler established the situation using three variables: (a) the leader-member relations, (b) task structure, and (c) the position of power. In fact, Abell (1987) suggested a summary the interrelations between strategic variables,

situation variables, company-specific variables, and performance variables quite concisely by pointing out that "strategies of Type A, in markets/situations of Type B, pursued by companies of Type C, will lead to performance of Type D" (p. 2).

These environmental variables are integrated in a weighted aggregate—"favorable" at one end and "unfavorable" at the other. Meanwhile, relationship orientations are optimal in the middle ground, and leaders are able to alter the environmental variables to match their style. This means the efficiency of the leadership style depends on the favorability of the situation. The situational favorability is the combination and appraisal of the three situational aspects mentioned earlier (leader-subordinate relation, task structure, and position of power). The mentioned three factors respectively involve how well leaders and followers get along, the structure of the task, and the amount of authority of the leader—his or her hierarchy. The rating of leaders measured how they related to followers (relationship oriented) or to the task (task oriented). Task-related leaders have the propensity to perform best in circumstances where leader-follower alliance is optimum, the task is well structured, and the leader's power is either influential or deficient. Task-oriented leaders are very productive in circumstances where the task happens to be unstructured while their position of power is influential. Relationship-oriented leaders do well in all situations. In Fiedler's theory, relationships, task, and hierarchy dictate leaders' situational control; they rely on loyalty, dependability, and support from followers. The position of power indicates the leverage leaders have in directing, rewarding, and punishing followers. Task-inspired leaders tend to be more effectual when their teams perform successfully, while alliance-oriented ones are more productive when their organizations establish a positive image. Leaders can perform better in certain jobs than others. As Galbraith (1977) remarked, each strategy does not yield the same results under various circumstances, as certain organizational responses or efforts are more suitable than the alternatives, contingent upon the setting. To put this in perspective, contingency theories represent an approach to behavioral theory that contends the nonexistence of a single best way of organizing or leading

others, and an organizational leadership approach that is efficient in certain situations may not be effectual in others (Fiedler, 1967).

Hersey-Blanchard life cycle theory. Hersey and Blanchard's life cycle theory suggested that leadership styles be used according to the situation at hand. Their model was later renamed situational leadership theory. Hersey and Blanchard introduced another contingency/situational theory recommending a leader's usage of different leadership conducts determined by two interdependent maturity variables: (a) job maturity-relevant task and technical knowledge and skills, and (b) psychological maturity—the follower's level of self-confidence and self-respect (as cited in Yukl, 1998). For instance, subordinate supervision is contingent to job and psychological maturity; the higher the job and psychological maturity of an employee, the less supervision the employee requires. In other words, as the employee's job and psychological maturity increase, the need for that employee being supervised decreases.

According to Hersey and Blanchard (as cited in Bolden, et al., 2003), the level of development of a leader's followers plays the most significant role in establishing which leadership approaches are most appropriate. The Hersey-Blanchard approach is hinged on the degree of direction (task behavior) and socio-emotional support (relationship behavior) a leader must expand in a particular set of circumstances, and the level of maturity of the subordinates. They believed that successful leaders should adjust their leadership approaches based on the maturity level of their followers and the details of the task, instead of using just one style. In other words, as the maturity of the followers increases, more emphasis should be placed on the details of the task and conversely, as the maturity of the followers decreases, less emphasis should be placed on the details of the task in order to get the task completed successfully.

Hersey and Blanchard (1996) proposed a leadership style with four situational variables based on the readiness of the followers:

- Telling/Directing (Situation1): Leaders instruct their followers what to do and how to do it.

- Selling/Coaching (Situation 2): Leaders provide guidelines, but there's more communication with followers. Leaders "sell" their message to get followers on board.
- Participating/Consulting (Situation 3): Leaders focus more on the relationship and less on direction. The leader collaborates with the group, and shares decision-making responsibilities.
- Delegating (Situation 4): The leader assigns the majority of the responsibility to the followers or teams. The leaders still track progress, but they're less involved in the decision-making process.

Tannenbaum and Schmidt's leadership continuum. Understanding the significance of leadership is paramount to leading and managing people. Tannenbaum and Schmidt (as cited in Ball, 2005) suggested that "leadership approach is a continuum, adding the appropriate approach is contingent on the subordinate and the situation" (p. 12). Ball (2005) indicated that "in order to be successful, all leaders must exercise power and control, but leadership approach will vary" (p. 1). According to Tannenbaum and Schmidt (as cited in Ball, 2005), the major leadership theories embody two underpinning approaches: task-centered and follower-centered. In a more modern approach known as the action-centered approach, Adair (as cited in Ball, 2005) suggested that "three basic needs . . . result in distinguishing between leadership styles: needs of the task, needs of the group, and needs of the individual" (para. 5). Tannenbaum (1971) proposed a leadership continuum that identifies several leadership styles.

Autocratic/telling. It describes the type of leader who gives orders and expects immediate obedience from the followers, without argument. It is an extreme form of transactional leadership in which the leader exercises high levels of power over his or her followers. Autocratic leaders make as many single-handed decisions as possible and maintain control over the decision-making process. While the main advantage of this style is that the leader generally gets things done, one of its disadvantages is that it is so highly organized that it has the propensity to depersonalize the organization.

Democratic/joining. Anderson (1959) defined a democratic leader as one who shares decision-making with his or her followers. Democratic leadership is associated with high morale. The leader presents a problem and seeks ideas and makes a decision or involves followers in the discussion and decision-making process. As Hackman and Johnson (1996) remarked, democratic leadership facilitates higher employee productivity, satisfaction, involvement, and commitment. In the end, democratic leaders overcome hurdles they face by enlisting the assistance of their subordinates.

Persuasive/ selling. The undeniably critical role of effective leaders is to be the skillful crafters of the organization's mission. Equally paramount for the organizational success is the capacity of those who lead to communicate their missions to subordinates in ways that engender buy-in and great intrinsic reward (Bass, 1985). A persuasive leadership style involves sharing some underpinning characteristics of an autocratic leader. Just like autocratic leaders, persuasive leaders maintain exclusive control over the entire decision-making process. The most important difference is *telling* for autocratic leadership versus *selling* for persuasive leadership, which entails spending more time working with subordinates in order to convince them of the benefits of the decision made. The downfall of persuasive style is that because subordinates have no say-so in the decision-making process, they may not trust the leader's decision.

Consultative/consulting. Consultative leaders focus on the task and employ subordinates' skills in formulating plans and making decisions. While the final decision-making power lies in the hands of the leader, the final decision is not made without looking for input from the followers who will be affected by the decision. The leader understands the importance of teams as he or she seeks to build them in every decision-making process.

Laissez-faire/delegative. French for "leave it be," the term *laissez-faire* describes a leader who leaves his or her subordinates to get on with their tasks. This approach can be effectual if the leader oversees what is being accomplished and provides feedback to his or her

team on a regular basis. Most often, laissez-faire leadership is effective for groups in which the members are highly experienced and skilled, thus requiring very minimum supervision.

Unfortunately, laissez-faire can also be observed in organizations where leaders are not exerting sufficient control.

Charismatic. Often considered the most effective leadership style, charismatic leaders achieve results by engaging and stimulating their followers through seduction. According to Dunphy and Stace (1990; 1994), charismatic transformations are dramatic changes made when organizations are off course and no longer in alignment with the environment. Charismatic leaders have a sense of personal image. Charismatic leaders are great environmental scanners and are very sensitive in understanding the moods of individuals and groups. They are usually better innovators than sustainers, and tend to leave organizations before the change effort is complete, which leaves a power vacuum (Dunphy & Stace, 1994). Charismatic leaders enjoy working with a significant number of devoted subordinates (Graeff, 1997; Grint, 2011).

Bureaucratic. When they embrace this style, leaders work “by the book,” ensuring that their subordinates observe routines as instructed. This is a very appropriate style for work involving serious safety risks (such as working at a construction site, working with machinery, toxic substances, or at heights) or where large sums of money are involved (such as cash-handling). Bureaucratic leadership is also advantageous in handling hazardous tasks where safety is a must, and certain standards are expected to be followed accurately. Because of the authority attached to this position, subordinates are expected to execute commands of the leader.

Path-goal theories. Another leadership approach to outdo the inconsistencies of the behavioral theory is the path-goal theory. Originally developed by Evans in 1970, the path-goal approach was modified by House in 1971 and emphasizes a leader’s most practiced style as a motivator to get followers to accomplish goals. The path-goal theory focuses on how the leader affects the motivation and abilities of immediate followers and the work unit performance

(House, 1996). A practical representation of Vroom's expectancy theory, the path-goal theory reinforces the idea that motivation is quintessential in leader/follower interactions, thus ensuring the overall success of the subordinate. The path-goal according to House (1971) presents two basic premises.

First, one of the strategic duties of the leader is to enhance the psychological contract or mindset of the follower in order to motivate performance and stimulate job satisfaction (House, 1971). That is, leaders need to clearly communicate the goals and path to subordinates, and boost employee satisfaction through extrinsic rewards in order to stimulate intrinsic motivation of employees. Second, House (1971) recognized that specific situational leader behavior will positively affect subordinate's motivational functions. The path-goal theory identified four leadership conducts that increase subordinates' motivations. The four path-goal styles that provide structure and reward to subordinates are (a) directive, (b) supportive, (c) participative, and (d) achievement-oriented (House & Mitchell, 1974; Indvik, 1987). House and Mitchell (1974) aligned the four leadership styles with three attributes exhibited by subordinates: (a) subordinates' satisfaction, (b) subordinates' expectations of their leader, and (c) subordinates' expectation of effective performance (Negron, 2008).

Transactional theories. Also identified as management theories, the transactional approach emphasizes the roles of supervision, organization, and group and team performance. Transactional leaders relate to their subordinates with an objective of exchanging one thing for another (Burns, 1978). It is said to be narrow because it does not look at the situation, subordinate, or what lays ahead for the organization when offering rewards (Crosby, 1996). These theories are based on two premises: reward and punishment, thus control, not adaptation (Tracey & Hinkin, 1994). The concept of leadership and followership is rooted in a sort of symbiotic type of relation: good performance yields reward, whereas poor performance entails punishment. For instance, many businesses have a system of reward and punishment where good performance can be rewarded by money or other items of symbolic value such as

employee of the month certificate; poor performance is reprimanded by employee write-up and verbal or written warnings, just to name a few. In the management theories, success brings rewards and failure brings punishment. Avolio and Bass (1990) viewed transactional leadership as a model that “emphasizes the exchange that takes place between the leader, colleagues, and subordinates” (p. 1), but Bass (1990a) posited that “transactional leadership as a process whereby a transaction with the subordinate during which a leader clarifies what is expected from the subordinate and the kind of compensation they will receive if they meet these expectations” (pp. 19–20). Transactional leadership is anchored on the premise that followers agree to obey the leader unconditionally upon accepting their jobs; the organization then pays the followers and in return, the followers exert their compliance and effort. Indeed, the leader has the authority and power to punish the subordinates if their effort does not satisfy a predetermined standard. As a result, employees can do very little or even nothing to improve their conditions. Furthermore, the leader could allow followers some limited control over their income and reward by adding an incentive that encourages even higher standards of productivity. Transactional leaders often times use “management by exception”—instead of rewarding better work, leaders may take corrective actions if the required standards were not met. Moreover, Northouse (2004) believed that transactional leaders are “influential because the follower understands that it is in their best interest to do what is expected of them” (p. 178). For this reason, transactional leadership can be considered a symbiotic relationship between the leader and the followers as they mutually benefit from each other. As an illustration, Avolio and Bass explained that “the exchange is based on the leader clarifying to the followers what is required and, specifying the conditions and rewards the followers will receive if the conditions are met” (2002, p. 1). Meanwhile, Yukl (2002) viewed “transactional leadership as a dynamic process involving an exchange between the leader and the follower where the follower is expected to comply with the leader’s command, even without enthusiasm and commitment to task objectives” (p. 253). Finally, it is important to indicate that prior to the accountability movement in education, the

school principal's main duty was to oversee day-to-day operations of the school, making the principal into a transactional leader whose priority was to ensure compliance to the school's pre-established set of rules, routines, standards, and procedural principles. Bass (1990a) noted, "Principals showed up in the classroom only when the teacher veered from the expected standards" (p. 44). The waves of educational reforms between the early second half of the twentieth century and today have outdated transactional leadership practices in public educational settings; hence, transformational leadership is suited for the reversal of chronic failure in America's public schools.

Transformational theories. Referred to as relationship theories, this approach focuses on building connections between managers and their subordinates; this theory evolved as a unique trend in the late 1970s and early 1980 (Bass, 1990a). Burns was instrumental in framing a transactional and transformational leadership paradigm. Burns (1978) noted the difference between the leaders who focused on transactions with followers and those who emphasized transforming followers. He observed transformational leadership as the more powerful of the two approaches since it is observable "when individuals connect with one another just as leaders and followers hold themselves and others to higher standards" (p. 4). Unlike transactional leaders, transformational leaders are very cognizant of what the followers want by appealing to their higher-level needs, as identified by Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs. Transformational leaders target self-fulfillment in the followers as the leaders motivate and inspire followers by ensuring each one sees the importance and higher good of the task. While they focus on the performance of the whole group, transformational leaders want each follower to fulfill his or her potential. They usually have high moral and ethical standards. "Leadership behaves as a spark in the absence of which other outstanding things in organizations would be unlikely to take place" (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008, p. 28), and leaders emerge in response to followers' needs (Burns, 1978). As Saban and Wolfe (2007) explained, "Leaders must be aware of what they believe and why they believe it" (p. 3). They must clearly express

their beliefs and inspire subordinates to embrace and accomplish their tasks toward a common goal and organizational mission (Bass, 1990a). Leithwood et al. (2008) found that all school administrators generally drew from the same set of basic leadership skills, but only the successful ones were able to effectively utilize these skills and had a strong influence on student learning through motivating teachers and providing a school climate that was conducive to learning. While transactional leadership revolves around the relationship between leader and follower, transformational leadership focuses on the organization. As research suggests, influential power inherent to the leader's position in a bureaucratic and hierarchically structured organization is growing to be inefficient, and successful leaders operate from within to transform their organizations (Burns, 1978).

“Transformational theory of leadership is known as one of the leadership theories that has been the center of significant study since the early 1980s” (Northouse, 2004, p. 169), and a transformational leader is not responsible for being at the center of every decision in the organization; rather, being the guarantor a synergic decision-molding process (Badaracco & Ellsworth, 1989; Book, 1998; Dixon, 1998; Wheatley, 1994). By not focusing on the current state of things and maintaining the status quo, transformational leaders create, communicate, and enact a vision in response to endogenous and exogenous environments, and empower followers to achieve that vision (Avolio, Waldman, & Yammarino, 1991).

In educational settings, transformational leaders, according to Bass (2006), emphasize intrinsic motivation and the success of followers. Transformational leadership is most effective in leading schools through the ever-changing federal legislations being placed on schools today. Public school administrators must be able to provide strong leadership while still maintaining high levels of teacher and student accountability (Bass, 2006; Leithwood et al., 2008; Saban & Wolfe, 2007). For this reason, Bass (1985) and Bass and Avolio (1994) proposed a four-component model that captures the essence of its core descriptions: (a) idealized influence, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individualized consideration.

Idealized influence. It entails building confidence in the leader and appreciation in the follower. This represents the attribution of power to the leader by his followers. According to Rowold and Heinitz (2007) and Yukl (2002), this component aims at transforming followers by altering their goals, values, needs, beliefs, and aspirations. Idealized influence demonstrates the ability of relationship building and trust making between the leader and his followers. In organizations, when those who lead and those who follow nurture each other through integrity, trust, honesty, righteousness, loyalty, motivation and inspiration, as they look at old problems with a new perspective, paving the way for innovative ideas and problem-solving initiatives. According to Cacioppe (1997), transformational leaders are armed with the ability to redirect organizations toward the ideal prospect in times of crisis by coordinating followers and integrating all system components. Especially in times of crisis, organizations need high-performing leaders who possess high moral and human behaviors, rather than those who use their positions of power to achieve personal goals; as Northouse (2001) elucidated, charisma identifies with those individuals who are exceptional and influences others to embrace their own frame of reference. Avolio & Bass (2002) recognized that transformational leaders are those whose behaviors are geared toward motivating and inspiring those around them by imparting significance and challenge to their follow.

Inspirational motivation. Transformational leadership involves motivation, as the leader uses inspiration to encourage followers to practice satisfactory behaviors. In times of crises, organizations need transformational changes in order to design, implement, and follow a new vision. Senge (1990) considered inspiration as the foundation of motivation. In organizations, inspirational motivation simply means making people want to do things, rather than making them do things. In good times and bad, but especially in times of crisis, organizations seeking to improve their performance should have at the top of their hierarchy leaders who inspire employees to buy into the new vision, stick with the new direction, and stay

the course. Inspirational motivation is the drive that stimulates employees' commitment to perform organizational aims. According to Senge (1990), inspiration is the foundation of motivation because it triggers the follower's dedication to perform organizational goals. When employees are inspired by the leader, they learn and align themselves with the leader's vision not because the leader tells them to, but because they are on board and want like to do it—not because of the leader's power; in whichever form it comes, neither expert, legitimate, referent, nor coercive, but because they want to act this way.

Intellectual stimulation. When confronted with adversity, transformational leaders listen to their followers, seeking differing perspectives. Transformational leaders understand their followers to be responsible people with good self-awareness and pride in their work. According to Morales, Matias-Reche, and Torres (2008), intellectual stimulation is the leader's behavior that fosters intelligence, stimulates cognition processes, knowledge, and learning of followers, allowing them to be more innovative in solving organization's problems and finding solutions. Intellectual stimulation facilitates competence in followers while stimulating creative and innovative thinking, which is paramount to problem solving. During a crisis, intellectually stimulating followers is crucial because it challenges them to find alternative solutions and improve their performance. Knowledge is power, in good times and bad. According to Connelly and Kelloway (2003), leadership support is one of the most important aspects of organizational knowledge. In good times and bad, the smooth running of an organization is contingent upon the distribution of resources that support task accomplishment. As Lin and Lee (2006) remarked, numerous studies have underlined the significance of leadership support for creating a climate that carries and provides sufficient resources.

Individualized consideration. In organizations, no two individuals are the same, and employees join organizations for various reasons, including higher wages, job security, career advancement, and love for the profession. Nevertheless, regardless of the reason for joining an organization, all employees join organizations to satisfy their needs. According to Bass and

Avolio (1985), a clear interconnectedness exists between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership. Similarly, Sarros, Gray, and Densten (2002) emphasized how important is individualized consideration of leadership behavior in the workplace. Good leadership is caring, as the leader addresses to the needs of each and every follower, providing mentorship or coaching. Listening to the followers' concerns and needs positively influences their performance. As it is, the individualized consideration of transformational leadership recognizes that each and every employee is motivated by specific needs and desires. While some employees are motivated by money, others might be motivated by change, excitement, long-term goals, short-term goals, and a myriad of other reasons. It is paramount to the success of an organization that the leader recognizes these sometimes conflicting needs and acts upon them to provide appropriate training for each follower, to empower them by allowing them to become fulfilled in their job position. According to Behling and McFillen (1996), at its best, transformational leadership in whatever form it may come, aims at empowering others to act, entails the leader giving a voice to his/her followers.

Leadership and Management

Leaders do not need to know all the answers; they do need to ask the right questions (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997). By the same token, according to Drucker (1999), management does things right, and leadership does the right thing. In their investigation of the theoretical background of leadership, Katz and Kahn (1966) suggested this view:

The perception of leadership as being ambiguous in both organizational practice and theory is a true and comparable to the complementarity between management and leadership. In practicality, management seems to contemplate a dual mindset in relation to exercising leadership. The specific nature of most employments makes differences between employees become irrelevant, while leader actions are considered both gratuitous and insubordinate. (p. 300)

Leadership, unlike management, is not contingent upon the position, title, or privilege. Instead, leadership encompasses observable, understandable, and learnable set of skills that can be mastered by anyone who is willing to devote the time and put forth the effort to learn them (Yukl, 1998). The complexity and versatility of the term *leadership* remain undeniable. Consequently, social scientists have suggested and unanimously agreed that few expressions inspire less agreement than the definition of leadership. Having said so, while many researchers perceive the notion of leadership as a dynamic undertaking of interchange among people; a clear definition of the term leadership may not be possible. As Bass advocated in 1990, there may be as many definitions as there are authors on the concept (as cited in Kreitner & Kinicki, 2001). Yukl also remarked on the numerous definitions, “The dissimilarities are not just a case of scholarly nitpicking; instead, they reflect huge discrepancies about recognition of leaders while understanding leadership process” (1998, p. 3).

While management is task oriented, leadership is process oriented. According to Kottermann (2006), a well-balanced organization should comprise a panacea of leaders and managers to be successful, and in fact what they really need is a few great leaders and many first-class managers. Managers include the people who accomplish management tasks; they plan, budget, organize work related activities, staff, solve problems, and control behavior, ensuring things are in alignment with the organizational mission in order to provide expected results consistently to the leadership and other stakeholders. Leaders, on the contrary, said Kotter, “guide, align people, motivate and inspire” (2001, p. 60). In other words, leaders develop and communicate a vision, create coalitions, motivate, inspire, innovate, empower employees to overcome resistance to change, and launch new products of the desired change, sometimes using persuasion through storytelling. However, in times of crisis, when organizations experience decline, when firms are not as good as they once were, when the situation at hand is perceived as failure, organizations need more than someone who can just achieve goals, but someone who can create and communicate a vision, and align that vision with a mission

carefully designed for the situation and environment in order to effectively turn things around. Messick and Kramer (2004) argued that the extent to which an individual showcases leadership traits is contingent upon not only his or her characteristics, drive, and personal competencies, but also those of the situation and surroundings in which he or she operates. Leaders with these unique traits and skillsets are called turnaround leaders.

Leadership and Motivation: Transitional Leadership

According to Melinda Oberleitner, “The hallmark of the transformational leader is vision and the ability to communicate that vision to others so that it becomes a shared vision” (as cited in McEwen & Wills, 2014, p. 363). Transitional leadership incorporates every known aspect of leadership style and theory, and a transitional leader is a board or executive level individual brought in to address a corporate challenge with a defined purpose and direction. Motivation, either intrinsic or extrinsic, is one of the most significant factors affecting human behavior, performance, and achievement. As a leader committed to giving a doomed organization a new direction in the context of uncertainty, transitional leaders must take into account multiple cultural perspectives within the organization.

In K–12 public schools, the turnaround leadership team must lead all employees and students alike in reflecting their strengths, values, personal characteristics, and sense of self, thereby allowing everyone to view their personal development in terms of one’s self identity, thus understanding the different and often conflicting ideas about who they are as they work and live in an increasingly multicultural world. Transitional leadership with this view encompasses multiple theoretical underpinnings from various leadership theories, and embodies the thought that a leader in general, and a crisis management leader in particular, can transition from one leadership style to another, as the situation dictates. As Kanungo and Mendoca (1996) wrote in their book *Ethical Dimensions of Leadership*:

Our thesis is that organizational leaders are truly effective only when they are motivated by altruistic principles, when their actions are invariably guided primarily by the standards of the benefit to others even if it results in some cost to oneself. (p. 35)

As a transitional leader during turnaround, school principals have to make business decisions based on social values such as altruism, self-interest, ethics, needs, morale, motivation, achievement, performance, rewards, outcomes, goals, productivity, inspiration, empathy, beliefs, harmony, responsibility, self-assurance, and discipline. Altruism is a significantly high personal benchmark for ethical behavior.

Motivation and inspiration, extrinsic or intrinsic, are the two driving forces of all human efforts and are essential to human achievements, as they respectively involve making people do things and making people want to do things. As two of the most significant aspects of leadership during periods of transition, motivation and inspiration should play a very important role in how administrators and their teams design and execute their change strategy. There are two broad groups of theories of motivation: (a) content theory, which focuses on individual needs such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs; and (b) process theory, which focuses on cognitive processes in the minds of employees. Process theory, such as Vroom's expectancy theory, looks at the cognitive processes that motivate people working in organizations, thus finding motivation through a certain type of calculation where behavior results from deliberate and intentional choices among alternatives or variables with the objective of maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain. As De Simone (2013) posited, "A healthcare organization can provide high quality service to patients only if employees feel they are considered valuable resources and as a result, they can provide their undivided attention to the patients" (p. 3). Similarly, in public schools seeking to successfully educate America's children, school administrators should give teachers and other staff members involved a sense that they are valuable resources so they can in turn be more attentive to the needs of all learners. The variables include individual effort, individual performance, organizational rewards/work outcomes, and personal goals. In the end,

the expectancy theory, explained Koontz and Weihrich (1988) recognizes the importance of various individual needs and motivations, seems more realistic, and helps to harmonize individual goals with organizational objectives. For the purpose of this phenomenological study, a wide range of theories of motivation are examined in order to evaluate the intricate underpinnings of what makes a transitional leader.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs. If the need for motivation is a result of unsatisfied needs, then it is worthwhile for a leader to understand which needs are the most important to individual employees. In support of this concept, Abraham Maslow developed a model to demonstrate how human needs have to be satisfied in a certain order, from the lowest to the highest, as follows: intrinsic needs (physiological, safety, and social) and extrinsic needs (esteem and self-actualization). In organizations, leaders and followers have different aspirations for success; even more so, employees, being unique, act in very different ways and are motivated by different things. Some are motivated by positions of influence, power, promotion, short-term goals, long-term goals, and career advancement. Others are motivated by money. Arguably, someone might think money is a manipulator; but according to Manion (2005), while manipulation implies negative implications, motivation encompasses positive results and benefits for both the employees and the employer. Maslow posited that "once an employee's intrinsic needs were satisfied; productivity would only be possible if the employee's extrinsic needs were met" (1959, p. 125). In other words, if such needs are not satisfied, then one's motivation will arise from the quest to satisfy them. As a result, higher needs, such as social needs and esteem needs, are not fulfilled until one has met the needs basic to bodily functions. If Maslow's theory holds, the implications in leadership and management can be equated to the propensity of leaders to motivate employees through their leadership style, job design, organizational events, and compensation packages. However, employees in organizations are not driven by the same purpose; at any given time, different people may be motivated by completely different factors. People work for different reasons, among which are money,

promotion, safety, short-term goals, and long-term goals. Vroom (1964) posited the idea that employees have the propensity to perform more efficiently if their wages are proportional to their performance, independent of any bias or prejudice, and on a fair assessment of their merit. Therefore, leaders must understand the importance of the needs pursued by each employee and the need level at which each member of the organization is operating in order to truly understand how to motivate each person. While Maslow's model epitomizes the intuitive aspect of motivation, little scientific evidence exists to support its hierarchical aspect, and some evidence even contradicts the order in which needs are expressed in the model. For instance, some cultures appear to place social needs before any other need. In sum, a dual assertion can be derived from Maslow's hierarchy of needs: (a) a satisfied need is not a behavior motivator; and (b) as lower hierarchy needs are fulfilled, the next higher-order need becomes the most prevalent determinant of behavior (Hamner & Organ, 1982).

Herzberg's two-factor theory (dual-factor theory). Herzberg (1966) designed his binary factor theory in 1959, also known as *motivation hygiene*, in order to further the work of Maslow by establishing the relationship between goals and incentives as motivators. Herzberg used the term *hygiene* in its medical etymology as a factor that removes hazards from the environment (Duttweiler, 1986). According to Herzberg, a subordinate's intrinsic and extrinsic needs should be satisfied simultaneously (1966). As Robbins and Judge noted, "Rooted on the experience of two hundred engineers and accountant feedback conducted in the USA regarding how they felt about their working environment, Herzberg (2009) identified two sets of factors that controlled employee's' attitude towards work and level of performance named motivation and hygiene factors. In this model, motivation factors are intrinsic factors that increase employees' job satisfaction, while hygiene factors are extrinsic factors that prevent any employee dissatisfaction. Herzberg elaborated that a full supply of hygiene factors will not necessarily lead to in employees' job contentment. Conversely, in order to expand employees' performance or productivity, motivation factors must be undertaken. Similar to Maslow's hierarchy of needs,

this model introduces more factors for measuring how individuals are motivated in the workplace. According to the two-factor theory satisfying the employees' lower-level needs (intrinsic or hygiene factors) would not motivate them to exert effort, but would only prevent them from being dissatisfied (Herzberg, 1966). The implication of Herzberg's two-factor theory for organizations is that meeting employees' extrinsic or hygiene factors will only prevent them from becoming actively dissatisfied but will not motivate them to contribute additional effort toward better performance. Similarly, in order to motivate employees, "organizations should focus on bestowing intrinsic or motivation factors" (Robbins & Judge, 2009, p. 19). In public schools, Herzberg's Theory can be applied to investigate motivation and job performance of teachers based on employment security as intrinsic factor, versus higher wages as extrinsic factor. For instance, teachers have higher propensity to seek employment and perform better in schools where long-term employment is guaranteed, and less likely to seek employment in the same institutions in the sole basis of better pay, with no employment security such as charter schools. However, most teachers would leave one school to another due to employment insecurity; if offered better wages elsewhere.

Hawthorne effect. Following the Great Depression of the 1930s, the Industrial Revolution triggered an unprecedented growth of manufacturers throughout the industrialized world. The world economy had boomed during the 1920s, and unemployment declined considerably. Although industries recorded high margins of profits, very little of this money actually filtered down to the factory workers. Workers were not able to live on their low wages, weekly working hours hit the 50-hour margin, and conditions were harsh. The "Hawthorne effect" has been in many regards the most enduring endowment of the well-known studies of employees' behavior in the workplace, carried out at the Hawthorne factory of the Western Electric company in the in the first half of the 20th century. Although just an incidental finding in its inception, the Hawthorne effect, also referred to as the "observer effect," is considered today to be one of the most prominent experimental tools in psychology and research. The basic

concept it examined was “What causes workers to be more productive?” At the core of this endeavor was Elton Mayo, a Harvard University researcher. Looking at the outcomes of early motivation studies, Mayo came to the conclusion that psycho- social factors influenced productivity far more than physical elements. This conclusion simply explained the psychological influence leaders can have on their followers.

In 1927, investigators were attempting to establish the optimal environmental factors—such as the amount of illumination, temperature, and humidity—for manufacturing electronic components in the Hawthorne factory. The results of the experiment demonstrated that the amount of light had no steady effect on the production of the components. They were frustrated when they discovered that in fact, as light increased, so did the output, just as decreasing light did. The common factor, apparently, was that something else in their work environment was altered, and that these positive effects then became observable.

After thorough examination of the results, Mayo and his researchers established that employees weren’t responding to the alteration in the amount of lighting, but instead to the perception of being observed by the researchers. This phenomenon was then called the Hawthorne effect. The workers' realization that the experimenters were assessing their productivity was enough to increase their performance, hence their productivity. This concept is comparable to the philosophical concept described as “Pygmalion effect,” according to which higher expectations lead to higher outcomes. The concept of Hawthorne effect led researchers to recognize the pivotal role psycho- social factors played performance at the workplace. Further experiments carried out over time revealed the significance of human factors in the motivation of employees at work, and by ricochet, their productivity. Researchers in subsequent experiments altered factors such as the length of break times, pay scale, and supervision strategies. Each time, the results revealed improved output. Maslow’s (1959) hierarchy of needs posited that “once an employee’s extrinsic needs are satisfied; productivity will only increase if his or her intrinsic needs are met” (p. 125).

In 1966, Roethlisberger and Dickson published *Counseling in an Organization*, which revisited lessons gained from the experiments. Roethlisberger (as cited in Gillespie, 1991; Sonnenfeld, 1985) described the Hawthorne effect as “the phenomenon in which subjects in behavioral studies change their performance in response to being observed” (cite the correct source and page number). For instance, turnaround school administrators should make themselves more visible and accessible in order to stimulate teachers’ and staff’s performance, and similarly encourage teachers to make their presence felt more by students during instruction by making it part of their best practices. Research has shown that when teachers walk around the classroom during instruction and guided practice, students tend to perform at a higher level; in a similar way, turnaround public school administrators should use classroom walkthrough to improve instruction. According to Cervone and Miller-Martinez (2007), classroom walkthrough is a tool school administrators use to drive a cycle of continuous improvement by focusing on the effects of instruction; this practice helps administrators to become more familiar with the school curriculum and teachers’ instructional practices, allowing the administrator to benchmark the overall climate of a school (Ginsberg & Murphy, 2002). Walkthroughs are a perfect showcase of the Hawthorne effect in school settings.

Many critics have reexamined the studies from methodological and ideological perspectives. Others find the overarching questions and theories to have new relevance in light of the current focus on collaborative management. The experiments remain a telling case study of researchers and subsequent scholars who interpret the data through the lens of their own times and particular biases. The Hawthorne experiment introduced a new concept in the field of leadership: ideas concerning motivational influences, job satisfaction, and resistance to change, group norms, worker participation, and effective leadership. From the leadership point of view today, organizations that do not pay sufficient attention to people and the deep sentiments and relationships connecting them are consistently less successful than those that do. According to

Mayo (1929), the change which you and your associates are working to affect will not be mechanical but humane.

Vroom's expectancy theory. Vroom's expectancy theory looks at the cognitive processes that affect the motivation of people working in organizations, thus finding motivation through a certain type of calculation where behavior results from conscious choices among alternatives or variables, the purpose of which is to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. These variables are individual effort, individual performance, organizational rewards/work outcomes, and personal goals. According to Koontz & Wehrich (1988), the expectancy theory recognizes the importance of various individual needs and motivations, seems more realistic, and helps to harmonize individual goals with organizational objectives. Satisfying and motivating employees is not an isolated, one-time event; rather, it requires continuous attention from the leadership to make sure it is achieved and sustained. As Jeston (2012) wrote:

In order to achieve this, management must ensure that the motivation and rewards systems are appropriately designed to support both the business process performance measurement system and the organizational structure. What drives employee motivation and performance within an organization is a complex set of circumstances with relevancy today. Vroom's theory assumes that behavior results from the conscious choices people make from various alternatives available to them. Together with Edward Lawler and Lyman Porter, Vroom suggested that the relationship between people's behavior at work and their objectives or goals is not as simple as was originally imagined. Vroom realized that an employee's performance is based on individual factors such as personality, skills, knowledge, abilities and significantly, their motivation for the task in hand. Expectancy Theory states that different individuals will have different sets of goals and that they can be motivated if they believe that:

- there is a positive correlation between effort and performance (expectancy),
- favorable performance will result in a reward (instrumentality),

- valence for reward is the degree to which the person wants to earn the reward on offer, [and]
- valence for performance is the degree to which the person wants to carry out the given task regardless of the reward offered. (p. 1)

In practical terms, Vroom's expectancy theory simply means that in order for leaders of organizations to expect management and staff to exert any effort, some kind of reward system must be attached to their effort. To expect the best out of followers, leaders should give their best because in all organizations, people live up the expectations they themselves and others have of them. Henry Ford said it best: "Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you are right!" (as cited in Manion, 2005, p. 292).

The three-dimensional theory of attribution. In order to understand the basic tenets and principles of the three-dimensional theory of attribution, defining the term *attribution* in its psychological context is important. Attribution is the process of attempting to explain what caused an event to occur. The three-dimensional theory of attribution is based on the assumption that employees in organizations understand the reasons for their failures and successes. It underlines all causal attributions around three psychosocial dimensions: internal or external, stable or unstable, and controllable or uncontrollable. According to F. Heider (1958), all humans are unconscious psychologists born with a deep desire to understand the core roots associated with behaviors and outcomes. In like manner, acknowledgment for these behaviors and outcomes ultimately help to mold emotional and behavioral responses (Weiner, 1985). With this in mind, understanding the various dimensions of attributions is paramount to deciphering the relationships between outcomes, emotional response, and behavioral motivation: (a) internal or external locus of causality, (b) stability/instability, and (c) controllability. The political arena during electoral campaigns offers a perfect platform where the three dimensions of attributions are expressed between electoral candidates who express their views on various policies, and their surrogates who vigorously defend these positions as behaviors for the purpose of earning

people's votes. These surrogates' positions often represent a dichotomy of emotional reactions to events and behaviors on the one hand, and the future expectations that underlie these behaviors on the other hand. Their emotional assumptions and expectations are based on the simple fact that support for their candidate will yield outcomes of some sort. Attributions entertain a mutualistic, sometimes unconscious relationship between the leader and the follower as the follower expresses unconditional support for the leader and expects some sort of reward as outcome.

Locus of causality. Locus of causality (LOC) is the extent to which people perceive their deeds as being caused by internal or external reactions. LOC is influenced by people's personality. People with internal LOC exhibit a higher propensity to engage in self-regulatory activities that predict performance and enjoyment. For example, during a yearly evaluation, if a school administrator misconstrues a teacher's performance as a failure by the teacher to have his lesson anticipatory set displayed while the teacher had it displayed and completed by the students prior to the administrator walking into the classroom, and attributes this error to his or her own carelessness (i.e., the administrator ignored the teacher's lesson plan that was handed to him or her prior to the beginning of the observation), the administrator is making an internal attribution. If the same outcome is attributed to poor lesson planning by the teacher, even though the lesson plan itself contradicts that assumption, the evaluating administrator is making an external attribution. The concept of the locus of causality dimension of attribution is significantly applicable to emotional reactions. While internal attributions are mainly associated with negative emotions such as shame and guilt, external attributions for similar behaviors and outcomes are inherent in internally focused negative emotions such as resentment and anger (Gundlach, Douglas, & Martinko, 2003; Weiner, 1985).

Stability. According to Kovenklioglu and Greenhaus (1978), the stability dimension of attribution affects individuals' future expectations. Stable causes are those that have the propensity to influence outcomes and behaviors consistently over time and in various situations.

While causes such as intelligence, natural laws of physics, and public policies are considered stable because they are difficult, even impossible to change, conversely, unstable causes, such as the amount of effort expended toward a task are relatively easy to alter. In organizations, employees can alter their stability dimension if they know that a certain level of performance will yield specific expected outcomes. Looking back at our teacher evaluation, if the poor performance by the teacher is attributed to a stable cause such as incompetence for instance, it is logical to expect that the teacher's performance is not going to change in the future. In like manner, if the same poor performance of the teacher is attributed to a less stable factor, such as inadequate or poor effort, we can expect the teacher to improve his or her performance by working harder in the future.

Controllability. According to Weiner (1995), attribution is also classified in terms of controllability and intentionality, in which the outcome is perceived as subjugated to internal control by the individual (Rotter, 1966). In organizational performance, causes such as laziness, intelligence, and tolerance—despite being internal—are uncontrollable. Similarly, the level of math aptitude in students is an internal yet uncontrollable trait of attribution.

McGregor Theories X and Y. Theory X (a democratic, employee-empowered environment) and theory Y (autocratic, control, and management centered power). In Theory X, leaders assume employees despise work, avoid responsibilities, and seek only job security from work; leaders also believe that employees will only respond to coercion, control, direction, punishment, and termination. As a result, the only motivator that encourages employees is money. In Theory Y, managers believe that employees regard work as a natural activity and will seek out opportunities to have increased responsibilities and understanding of their tasks; moreover, managers assume employees will respond best to favorable working conditions that do not pose threats or strong control. As a result, employee motivators are their quest to fulfill their social, esteem, self-actualization, and security needs.

William Ouchi Theory Z. Known as the “gung ho” or Samurai mode, Theory Z promotes a participative management style. Theory Z was developed by William Ouchi during the 1970s. Born and educated in America, Ouchi visited Japan and studied their success with teams. Theory Z is founded under the precepts that managers presume the average employee would like some degree of involvement in managing a corporation. Therefore, building trust within an organization and among its members is central to boosting productivity. In practice, employees who are involved in and committed to a company will be inspired to increase performance and productivity. Theory Z advocates a combination of all the best attributes of Theory Y, such as employee psychological contract, an implicit agreement between the employer and his employees where employees would provide higher productivity and lower grievances in return for acceptable pay and employment security (Argyris, 1960), and modern Japanese management principles, which at its best, places a large amount of freedom and trust with the employees and assumes that employees have strong loyalty and interest in team-working, their responsibilities, and the organization. According to Ouchi (1981), Theory Z leaders provide their followers rewards, such as long-term employment, internal promotion, participatory management, and other intrinsically motivating incentives.

Leadership Branding in Organizations: School Principalship

The moral triumphs and failures of leaders remarked Ciulla (2003), carry a greater weight and volume than those of non-leaders. According to Van Buren (n.d.), ethics are the principles, standards of behavior that distinguish right from wrong, besides leadership being the act of enticing others to pursue common goals; thus, ethical leadership can be regarded as the process whereby people are influenced through principles, values, and beliefs that embrace what we defined as right behavior. Ethical leadership principles underscore the four attributes that instill trust and compel people to follow a leader: honesty, forward-looking, inspiration, and competence. These attributes are the foundation of the leader’s character and the cornerstone of successful organization. In her memoir titled *Tough Choices*, former Hewlett-Packard CEO

Carly Fiorina wrote about success and the importance of character. Character according to Fiorina (2006) is all we have, our candor, the way we speak and what we say, how and when we speak, about being authentic, truthful; it is about integrity and what it entails, principles, beliefs at the core of our actions.

The power of personal branding and successful leadership. One of the terms most used in leadership today to define a leader's model is his or her *brand*. What does *personal brand* really mean? A brand is not a statement, but how we relate to ourselves and others, our image, the color of our packaging, snappy motto. It is not wearing a mask to disguise what lies beneath. In many regards, a branded relationship is special and requires mutual trust between two individuals who believe in the quintessential values that connect them (McNally & Speak, 2002). Branding is how organizations tell customers what they will deliver, a virtual bridge which connects corporations with their clientele in order to bond in a mutualistic relationship (McNally & Speak, 2002). It is the nature of how organizations are credited with the quality of the product they manufacture, represent and deliver. In public elementary and secondary school settings, the brand is synonymous with "school culture"—the school's unique selling proposition (USP). A school brand should represent "how we do things here." In like manner, every public school administrator should embody the school brand and enact it. None else, noted McNally and Speak (2002), can neither define nor deliver success for you, but only you can on the basis of personal values and dreams. In like manner, it is not something others can define for you, but what you define it to be, on the basis of your own values and aspirations. If values and aspirations make sense and are in perfect alignment with personal and organizational vision, an undeniably excellent chance exists that any effort to turn things around in times of crisis will dramatically transform organizations for a brighter future.

Personal brand and crisis management. Among several different kinds of branding, the personal and corporate ones stand out as the most important. Both at personal and corporate levels, creating a strong, clear, and unique brand is paramount to maintaining a

competitive edge in a constantly changing global economy. The brand outlines an organization's or an individual's core principles, the values and beliefs they offer to the people they serve. A brand, suggested McNally and Speak (2002), is "what you develop and what others see: character distinctiveness, relevance, and consistency" (p. 13). By the same token, Mitroff (2001) added that nothing better unveils the bravery and the ethos of an individual and a corporation than the approach they take to address a major crisis. Responding to a major crisis is the main duty of turnaround leaders. When facing a crisis, effective response is driven by leadership. As Robbins and Judge (2013) pundit, leadership is the capacity of influencing a team toward the attainment of a vision or objectives. Similarly, Northouse (2013) added that leadership is an undertaking whereby the leader influences others to achieve a shared goal. Regardless of the form by which it comes—continuous, punctuated, or incremental—change is a constant environmental factor in our global socio-economic world. Change, emphasized Burnes (2004) and Mitroff (2001), is inherent to the fabric of society, and the ability to lead change is a core competency of effective leaders. While several psychodynamic assessment tools validate the unique competencies of school principals to plan and carry out their missions, it remains clear that these leaders should be prolific and pragmatically adaptable practicing consultants. As a leader with a global mindset, K–12 public school principals should have broad experiences when it comes to rebranding schools, including exposure to a wide variety of situations, cultures, and organizational challenges. The survival of an organization in times of crisis is contingent upon how it responds to challenges within its environment. In the same way, leaders and their team(s) must respond and adapt when conditions change. Globalization has reconfigured social interactions on the international stage (Batstone, 2003, as cited in Dean, 2005). America's classroom of the twenty-first century is a global theater, a multicultural environment with students from different social, economic, linguistic, ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds. This diversity in America's public schools requires school administrators to develop a multicultural mindset. An undeniable implication of the global economy is that

leadership teams in various social arena are facing unexpected challenges in their functions (Dean, 2005). As a result, cultural competencies and cultural intelligences are prerequisites for effective leadership and prosperous functioning in today's increasingly unstable business scenery (Peterson, 2004; Thomas & Inkson, 2003; Walker, Walker, & Schmitz, 2003).

Personal brand dimensions during change effort. It takes people to make change happen; therefore, understanding the environment, the people, the cultures, and designing a suitable strategy to work with them or meeting them where they are is crucial for a flawless and complete recovery in times of crisis. Indeed, initiating positive change and making it stick is the primary mission of public school administrators in good times and bad. Successful change efforts require the change agent to connect with the stakeholders through his or her brand. K–12 turnaround administrators must have and enact a strong brand in alignment with the new change vision to which they expect the community, parents, teachers, staff, and students to adhere. People connect to a brand through three interrelated dimensions: competencies, standards, and style:

- Personal competencies—the underpinning nature or the leader's personal relationship with followers and the things the leader needs to accomplish capably just to meet the followers' expectations. In other words, personal competencies involve the role or a combination of roles one person plays for another person: friend or neighbor, parent or boss, mechanic, or physician (McNally & Speak, 2002).
- Brand standards—the dimension that enlightens a brand by focusing on the way the leader delivers competencies. According to McNally and Speak (2002), the leader's brand standards are the levels of performance that the leader is willing to achieve and adhere to constantly.
- Brand style—According to McNally and Speak (2002), this dimension represents the way the leader relates and socializes with subordinates, or simply the way we communicate and interact with others. Brand style is the emotional image we develop,

not just through first impressions, but from repeated contacts as we interact and socialize with others.

The courage to live your personal brand in good and bad times. Although the term *branding* did not exist in his time, Abraham Lincoln, United States President (1861–65) is remembered as one of the greatest leaders this nation has ever had. Today, he is perceived as the epitome of courage and conviction for the groundbreaking role he played in the drafting of the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which proclaimed the emancipation of slaves and the abolishment of slavery through his 1863 “Emancipation Proclamation.” Lincoln, who lived his personal brand, (as cited in Basler, 1953, p. 532) stated, “As I am not willing to be a slave, so I would not be a slave owner . . . This conveys my view of democracy, whatever contradicts this, to the scale of the divergence, isn’t democracy.” McNally and Speak (2002) posited that “while the personal brand you create will become a dynamic presence in your life; to remain strong, it must be renewed every day, it must become part of everything you do” (p. 117). In times of crisis, elementary and secondary public school administrators should align themselves with this kind of turnaround vision.

There are countless reasons why people are motivated to become leaders, whether one is committed to improve the organization, wants to help people reach their full potentials, or simply bring people together to achieve a common goal. Whatever the motivation might be, having a clear understanding of your purpose and motivation is the onset for your leadership brand. In K–12 public schools, administrators with a strong brand define the direction the school has to take and stay the course with courage and conviction. A strong leadership brand helps successful school administrators achieve three objectives: (a) authenticity, which earns the leader trust and respect from followers, making his or her brand an honest reflection of themselves; (b) inspiration, which leverages the leader’s strengths as it is evident that followers perform best when leaders operate at their best; and (c) deliverability—following through and delivering on promises.

According to McNally and Speak (2002), leaders prepare themselves for the important moments when their brands are put to the test. These leaders:

- expand and fine-tune their individual brand manifesto.
- are brand-content,
- scrutinize their brand pledge,
- are genuine,
- ensure the cues they send make sense to followers,
- practice consistency,
- make sure the package reflects their content,
- keep good company,
- synchronize their brand with their employer's brand, and
- count relationships as part of their asset base (synergize).

The global economy landscape embodies the idea that the twenty-first century as it appears is undoubtedly likely to undergo increasingly damaging, even costly aftermaths spilling over from the changes associated with our unstable environment. The tissue of society is undergoing not only undeniable complexity and connectedness but also increasing vulnerability as new, different, and more pressing challenges may arise and spread through spill-over and amplifier effects.

Leadership and Followership: A Dynamic Interdependence

Whether our professional affiliation is government, business, education, religion, sports, or any other activity that requires organizing humans in some way, we are endlessly in need of individuals who can lead organizations efficiently. Likewise, as institutions form, people are willing and able to follow. While the significance of a good leader cannot be denied, followers also incarnate a front row role in the triumph of many organizations. Within the current global economy, "trying to equate leadership and its practice to an exclusive role of leader

competencies still is a challenging notion today as it has ever been” (Kenny & Zaccaro, 1983, p. 678). The actions of leaders, either active or passive bear significant effects on other people. Similarly, non-leaders, known as followers, bear a considerable influence on both the prosperity of the corporation and the social well-being of the team, larger entities, and even an entire nation. The challenge is to understand which qualities predispose one person to be a leader. Maccoby (1989) noted, “The qualities that allows a leader to rise in a leadership position are not the same he or she will need in order to be effective” (p. 41).

Leadership and influence in organizations. The qualities and competencies of a leader bear a profound influence on all aspect of an organization especially in times of crisis. As an illustration, Rost (1991) suggested that leadership is an alliance of influence between those who lead and those who follow and envision authentic changes that demonstrate their reciprocal purpose. Whatever our interests may be—entrepreneurship, public service, healthcare management, entertainment, education, or any other field that organize humans in some way—humankind is always seeking qualified individuals who can influence others and lead organizations effectively. As composite whole of interconnected and interdependent parts, organizations, including public schools, should seek and embody characteristics and behaviors that enable leaders and their followers to move the organization’s agenda forward. Effective leaders are those individuals who influence followers no matter what the situational variables dictate.

Corporate culture. Motivation and inspiration are quintessential for leadership in moving people in the desired direction in order to achieve organizational vision (Kotter, 1990). According to Cairnes (1988), in order to connect with followers’ core desire, leaders first need to work on themselves. As leaders successfully connect within, they begin to unite the realm of body and soul. In organizations, subordinates are dependent upon the influential power of their leaders to produce change through creativity and innovation, whether planned or in times of

crisis. As Drucker and Maciariello (2004) posited, most innovations organizations create are imposed either by external or internal environmental factors.

The History of Education

Education at its core is the transmission and acquisition of know-how, skills, and values. This definition of education involves learning, and for as long as life has existed on earth, living things of a certain complexity engage in this behavior one way or another for several reasons, including: finding food and water, interacting in social groups, preserving civilizations, finding prey, avoiding predators, and reproducing. While all animal species engage in some level of learning, for centuries, many civilizations have attempted to untangle what constitutes the intellectual divide between humans and other species. French (1994), following the footsteps of Aristotle, suggested reason and symbolic thinking are the key differentials, while others believe that human intelligence resides in the ability to develop complex, abstract, internally coherent and cognitive systems that use symbols (Deacon, 1997). These symbols constitute the foundation of education as it has been known for centuries, as it is known today, and probably for centuries to come. In modern-day humans known as *Homo sapiens*, and for thousands of years, education has served and continues to serve two major purposes: interacting in social groups and preserving civilizations. Meanwhile, traced and rooted back to ancient Eastern Africans, Egyptians, Chinese, Hindu, Persians, American Indians, and Greeks, civilization as we know it today is a panacea of many different and complex things, involving many different combinations and contributions from our ancestors from many different places and many different ages. Speaking of the history of education, Cubberley (1971) noted:

While the Phoenicians passed down the alphabet, mathematical concepts, and scientific progress to our civilization through the Mohammedans, the fundamental genesis of human identity are rooted elsewhere: Greece, Rome, and Christianity epitomize the genesis of ancient history of the Western civilization as we know it today. Hence the Western civilization is a panacea of these three influences. The contemporary European

and American civilizations were born through the overlapping and superimposition of these three influential forces. (p. 68)

Following several centuries of Mohammedan barbarism on Europe, Christianity finally rose up as slowly but surely, churches and monasteries teamed together for the restoration of books and learning, the discovery of the period of awakening, the revival of ancient learning, the essence of scientific investigation, the discovery of new lands, the founding of new nations, the building of democratic mind, and finally, the expansion of what is known today as modern civilization.

According to Cubberly (1971), while the battle against obscurantism had been won by the eleventh century, the modern spirit only rose in the fourteenth century. By the 1500s, the critical spirit of Italian Revival was spreading to other civilizations, learning was being recovered, the printing press was multiplying books, Hebrew and Greek had spread in the west, cities and universities had become the new life, new routes had been unearthed, and Columbus had located a "new world." Religious radicalism gave rise to tolerance, thus allowing for the awakening and rapid advances, and progress in learning, education, government, and inventions. This was the beginning of a new era, which conversely brought nothing but centuries of religious hatred and social tensions. Yet, added Cubberly (1971), out of these conflicts and hatred, civilization witnessed the emergence of educational doctrines that promoted the authority of the Bible over that of the church, and later became the basis of elementary education for the masses, and education for all.

Modern education and scientific inquiry, as known today, are the products of religious appeasement, which allowed people to think more and express their thoughts without fear of being accused of blasphemy. Education and scientific inquiry gave rise to the Renaissance, which gave new motives for the education of children, and became the transition between the medieval and its obscurantism, the enlightenment, and the modern era. As an illustration, Cubberly (1971) maintained that:

The birth of the challenging and reasoning spirit in early Italian Renewal punctuated the genesis in the shift from mediaeval into contemporary perspectives, and more importantly, the dawn of scientific reasoning as one of the most significant outgrowths which later ensued. This symbolized great significance of our species' cognition to the study of natural events, with all the applications that come with it. This, slowly but surely, transformed and veered human energy elsewhere, leading to the induction of inquiry and tedious experimentation in the place of assumptions and skepticism, and overtime generated the scientific process, and finally the industrial revolution, which forever transformed the nature of phenomena. The inquiry based spirit and its underpinning of experimental inquiry has today, come to overlook all lines of human reasoning, and the implementation of scientific theories have, in the past hundred years or so, , completely transformed most aspects of humanity. Implemented in education, this avant-garde outlook on life had remodeled instructional practices and the process of schooling, ushered the introduction of novel generations of institutions of learning, and completely new ways of teaching and learning. (p. 74)

As scientific investigation dominated human thinking, there was a sort of renaissance of new spirit that paved the way simultaneously for the American and French Revolutions. Barbarism gave way to religious freedom and constitutional liberty, as the systems of privilege were abolished and democracies rose. Educational advantages increased, and the control of schools changed hands, moving from church to the State. In addition, schools and the education they provided had become not only a common good, but a fundamental right for all children.

Cubberley (1971) noted:

The significance of schools in public affairs became recognized; as it became common knowledge that schools served the purpose of promoting common welfare and advancing policymakers' agendas; control was now exercised by secretaries of education, the citizen superseded the religious authority as education organizers and

classroom supervisors, hence giving a new direction to the school instruction, as in time, education largely broadened in breadth, and common education now came to be perceived as a fundamental birthright of all.” (p. 82).

To sum up, in this educational debate, humankind has come a long way and now can achieve new goals through the full control of the education system in the hands of states and not religious entities. Looking back at the days iron fist signified right and children without fundamental rights, moving into the time when children are considered the scope of social investment with unlimited educational advantages, humankind has traveled a long and winding road. Tumultuous movements have punctuated this journey over time, even in part as necessary steps of the origins of modern civilization. Fauconnier and Turner (2002) suggested that the unprecedented abilities exhibited by Homo (humankind) such as the use of advanced tools, body decorations, beads and pendants in the Middle/Upper Paleolithic were due to the onset of cognitive fluidity. The civilization of humankind, from a strictly evolutionary standpoint, however, represents a relatively orderly quest for survival and adaptation, and over time, the education of Homo sapiens rises as the epitome of the expressions of humankind’s power.

Education in Early America

As English colonists settled on the east coast of North America about four hundred years ago, they brought with them values, traditions, cultures, religions, and beliefs about family values and children. Mintz and Kellog (1988) noted, “The family was the fundamental economic, political, and religious unit of society performing many functions which today would be expected to be handled by other institutions” (p. 10). Parents and society alike have always viewed the child’s schooling as the exclusive domain of the child’s household. Historically, parental education involved and still emphasized and still emphasizes activities such as good manners, like skills, ethics, trade skills, and inculcation of values, just to name a few. Patriarchal control was the norm, and family and community were interlaced. This was known as the Permissive Era. These fundamental, learning activities were performed exclusively and in private at home,

rather than in public schools (Berger, 1981). On the other hand, children's secondary education focused on teaching children job apprenticeship instead of K–12 public education.

While the settlers controlled schooling in early America (Pulliam, 1987), clergy leaders created the first schools and managed by community leaders. For many immigrants who fled Europe in pursuit of religious freedom in America, these ecclesiastical institutions offered them refuge where they could express their faith-based beliefs; and there were as many as many small schools as there were ecclesiastical sects representing parochial views of parents and where cultural beliefs were inculcated from generation to generation. According to Bailyn (1960), family, community, and church were the only vehicles available for the transfer of cultural values from generation to generation. While in many plantation states, Britain's social cast structures were replicated through and taught in these schools, they also catered to these parents' social needs. In sum, the America's platform in K–12 was dominated by parental support of children through ecclesiastical teachings.

As stated earlier, historically, publicly funded education in America began in the first colonies as community, informal networks that focused on teaching literacy, for the most part as ecclesiastical instruction and predominantly exclusive to the high ranking social elite. In order to guarantee the religious obedience of children, basic book learning slowly but surely began to be implemented in all age levels in the seventeenth century, and especially in North Eastern territories, where scriptural schooling was uppermost and most children were enrolled in Granddame schools, supported by factory-worker families who hired a female instructor to deliver education in her home. The duties of parents as the natural guardians of their children are to maintain and educate them during infancy and youth and prepare their future usefulness and happiness in life (Kent, 1826). Furthermore, according to The Legal Alert (2010), schools were initially instituted in ancient America to allow common citizens to read the Holy Scriptures for themselves in order to comprehend and enact the logical order of the cosmos created by the Almighty.

In 1642, the State of Massachusetts drafted a legislation compelling parents to ensure their offspring were able to read and comprehend the underpinnings of ecclesiastical teachings and the fundamental pieces of legislation of this nation (Snyder, 1993), and half a decade down the road in 1647, the Old Deluder Satan Act, one of America's first education acts, required all cities in the State of Massachusetts with at least 50 households to build K–5 schools, and all cities with at least 100 households to institute schoolhouses linguistic schools teaching Latin and Greek, as the Puritans deeply believed that the knowledge of Holy Scriptures would preclude their children from embracing the evil temptation, hence resisting sinners. According to The Legal Alert (2010), this Act was ratified to allow settlers' children master the reading of the Holy Scriptures for themselves, thus restraining them from being deluded through ignorance as the colonists had previously been in Europe.

The very first public 9–12 school teaching Latin linguistic was founded in Boston in 1635 and, around 1650, Massachusetts public schooling apparatus had become the envy of America. Following the growth of commerce and industry, interest in ecclesiastic teachings dimmed, and by the onset of the American Revolution, schooling had become a vehicle for the promotion of democratic ideas and freedom in the nation (Cohen & Gelbrich, 1999).

In 1751, Benjamin Franklin instituted the Philadelphia Academy, a 9–12 educational system specializing in the teaching of modern languages, agronomy, and other subjects of practical significance. At the same time, Noah Webster introduced the first classroom spelling publication to stimulate democratic standards in 1783. The vast majority of these kinds of schools were not free. In the late 1700s, Thomas Jefferson made an unsuccessful attempt to convince the Virginia Supreme Court that schools should be publicly funded (Cohen & Gelbrich, 1999). Women, for the most part, received no education outside the Granddames; even worse, both Native Americans and African Americans did not receive public schooling until almost early in the twentieth century due to laws excluding slaves from any education.

In 1787, the Northwest Ordinance profoundly transformed public education in the country, as this institution became of national importance. According to Snyder (1993), Act 3 of the Ordinance emphasized the value of religious practices, ethical and moral values, and awareness, as desiderata to good governance and the well-being of humanity, thus schools and transmission of knowledge must forever be promoted. These rulings granted land to public schools, which until then, despite being publicly funded, were not free. Publicly-funded schools did not become a reality in America until the 1800s. By 1850; most institutions of learning in America assumed a publicly funded, free, and compulsory education standard system. This was known as the Encouraging Era.

A new chapter was written in America's educational system with the establishment of the Department of Education in 1867. This was known as the Compulsory Era. With the advent of the Department of Education, data collection on educational systems and schools became a reality, and three years later in 1870, approximately 116,000 public schools were reported operating across the nation. Data recorded in 1870 showed that attendance-wise, 57% of children of 5 to 17 years of age attended public schools with an enrollment of 98% in grades one through five. Twenty years later, in 1900, this number was reported to have more than doubled, but most of these schools were a single teacher schools. In 1910, 80% of public schools in America were single-teacher operated, but that number steadily decreased in the early twentieth century, and by 1950, that number had been reduced to 44%. The majority of public schools in the early 1900s were elementary schools. Between the 1930s and the 1950s, the number of secondary schools in America jumped from 10% to 167%, representing a 6% increase. As the American population grew, so did the number of students attending public schools. In 1940, data showed that more than 84% of American children attended school and among those, over 25% were enrolled in grades 9–12.

According to Snyder (1993), the population of school-aged children declined with the great depression and through WWII; however, enrollment also decreased because students

dropped out of school. This symbolized the emergence of a pristine era in American education, as many older pupils quit school to serve in the armed forces or simply dropped out of school to join the workforce, filling the void left by those who joined the service. These events marked the transitional period between two eras in American public education: post WWII and Pre-Cold War.

In the late 1950s an unprecedented event unfolded that changed the course of history in America and the world, hence triggering a colossal wave of reforms in education. On October 4, 1957, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics successfully launched Sputnik, the mankind's first outer space satellite in orbit. According to Ravitch (2000), policymakers, public officials, and communication outlets in America considered this event to be a slap in the face for the United States, proclaiming it a national security challenge, giving rise to concerns that the United States had fallen behind the USSR in technology and innovation. To rectify the situation, the U.S. government demanded an immediate improvement of public education, thus initiating a wave of unprecedented school reforms initiatives in the history of the nation's education apparatus. By igniting the space race, the Sputnik event compelled the U.S. to improve its not only its educational system in, but particularly its science education (Zhao, 2009).

Education in the Modern Era America: An Era of Reforms

Education in America has come a long way, from the abyss of early colonial America to the era of accountability in education. Over the past 50 years, school policy makers and reformers have tried a vast spectrum of approaches designed to maximize American children's opportunities for favorable outcomes by improving our public school system through sustained and meaningful educational reform. However, educational reform is a complex journey on the one hand, and a difficult goal to attain on the other, in part because it is done in large scale and any large scale social transformation effort is challenging. According to Cuban (1988), the vision for educational reform vary in conformity with the extent to which reform initiatives aim at transforming the fundamental meaning of schooling (1988). Among the many reforms

implemented, three major movements emerged: equity-based reform, school choice reform, and standards-based reform.

Equity-based reforms. In the second stretch of the twentieth century, a broad policy program was introduced by the U.S. government to provide underrepresented children, poor children, English Language Learners, females, and those with disability an equal access to publicly funded education. Failure by states and local school districts to dispense equitable education for all children and the ripple effects of the civil rights movements of the 1960s which called out public school race-based segregation led the U.S. government to intervene. This wave of reforms was symbolized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. This reform introduced the provision of aids programs designed to provide additional educational services such as Title I to needy students, including those of low socioeconomic background.

School choice reforms. Sometimes described as the only remnant of the Civil Rights Movement, school choice reforms offer families alternatives to traditional form of schooling, which compel students to attend certain schools only because they are located within certain school districts geographical zones. School choice legislation opened the door to some form of integration by giving students enrolled in chronically failing schools the opportunity to attend better performing schools, hence the possibility to improve their achievement. This type of public schooling now exists in 46 states and D.C. The school choice platform includes:

- full choice programs or voucher schools,
- private scholarship programs,
- charter schools,
- public school choice,
- tuition tax credits and deductions, and
- education savings accounts.

Standards-based reforms (SBR). One of the most significant, recent changes in the education community for parents, students, and professionals has been the inclusion of standards as a central component of the schools' curricula. Standards are statements of the outcomes, detailing what each student is to learn. According to Wilson and Floden (2001), while the expression SBR became common two decades ago, its meaning, as we will discuss later, varied across contexts. Educators, policymakers, and other experts in the field have addressed this concept in various ways changes, accountability, and alignment of teaching curriculum to describe similar objectives. Nevertheless, when it comes to standards, all designs of reform are built around the following attributes: (a) academic prospects for students, (b) alignment between systemic elements to facilitate achievement of prospects, (c) use of assessments data to forecast performance outcomes, (d) encourage information sharing in designing and implementing curriculum and instructional design, (e) technical assistance provided by states and local districts to support school information technology and educational services, and (f) school and student reward system based on performance and achievement.

With the baby boom that started after World War II, America experienced a tremendous need for adults with high school diplomas. Data shows that 28% of America's public schools were secondary (9–12) and 72% were elementary (K–6). In 2011, the country had 13,809 school districts. Meanwhile, the 1950s marked a new era in American public education. In 1955, almost eight out of ten qualified students attended K–12 public institutions and the average education attainment by American children was graduation from high school (Fitzpatrick & Turner, 2006).

On May 17, 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on Brown vs. Board of Education case, declaring segregated schools unconstitutional, thus overturning its previous ruling in the 1896 case of Plessy vs. Ferguson. The ruling led to a substantial decrease in the number of elementary schools in the nation. Nevertheless, the bygone wounds between religious schooling and public institutions were still lingering people's minds. In 1962, a ruling by America's highest

Court proclaimed prayer sessions observed on publicly funded school premises to be religious events, therefore in violation of the First Amendment of the Constitution, hence prohibiting all school events with religious connotation and transforming publicly funded schools from a desegregated to a laic culture (Butts, 1978).

Educational reforms are fundamentally steered by the simple idea that education is inherent to the American experience—the idea that education is a common good as it has the potential to instill profound change both at the individual and social scales. Reforming America’s public school systems has interested great reformers for centuries. In addition to the contemporary such as Booker T. Washington, John Dewey, Thomas Jefferson, Horace Mann, and other founding fathers played a pivotal role in reforming public education in America.

A Nation at Risk and the Major Education Reforms: IDEA, ESEA, NCLB and RTTT

“A Nation at Risk,” the urgency for educational amendments, is the April 1983 report of the President Ronald Reagan’s National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE). In spite of the incitement for fairness, equity, and reforms in the K–12 school system, three decades later, compulsory education in America is still staggering. President Ronald Reagan established the NCEE to examine the public school landscape and initiate action. In 1983, the report was made public and revealed that elementary and secondary schools in the nation were inadequate. According to the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983), the educational underpinnings of America are currently being undermined by a growing trend of mediocrity which, added the commission, hampered our competitiveness in the global market as our children were not receiving adequate education in this information age. The report became a wakeup call to all the driving forces in the nation and generated huge attention from scholars, media, and policymakers across the U.S. As a result, state and federal authorities began to draft legislations requiring higher standards and expectations for both students and teachers. The first reforms increased high school graduation requirements for English language to four years and math, science, and social studies to three years, while reinforcing eligibility for teachers.

School ground improvement programs were expanded in all states and, Subsequent efforts emphasized certificated and classified staff advanced professional learning and fitter teaching practices (Clark & Plecki, 1997; Odden, 1986). In like manner, the “Nation at Risk” final report findings recommended the following:

- higher educational standards of aptitude and competence in subject matter for prospective teachers;
- higher graduation criteria and requirements for colleges and universities;
- higher salaries for teachers based on competence and competitiveness of the market-place;
- introduction of peer review in teacher evaluation system aiming at rewarding quality teaching and prevent mediocrity in the teaching profession;
- teachers should be contracted for 11 months and provided adequate professional development when needed;
- increased daily and yearly instructional time for students;
- teachers’ classification based on their tenure as beginners, experienced, and master teachers;
- introduction of student teaching and internship programs for new graduates;
- availability of grants and loans for prospective teachers;
- supervisory roles assigned to master teachers to supervise newly hired prior to their tenure ship;
- higher admission requirements teacher education programs in all four-year universities;
- introduction of alternative certification allowing bachelor degree holders to enter the teaching profession while earning their credentials;
- mandatory implementation of teacher assessment in most states; and

- textbooks and teaching programs designs reassigned to scholars, scientists, and other entities in collaboration with Master teachers.

Meanwhile, it is important to mention that quite a few recommendations made by the NCEE have not been unanimously implemented by school districts across the nation as of yet.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Serving more than 6.5 million students nationwide, the IDEA guarantees a free, suitable public schooling for children with some kind of disabilities, including communication disorders. Through its mandate, children between birth-age–2 years of age qualify for early intervention programs through IDEA Part C, while students between the ages of 3–21 qualify for special education and its underlying services through IDEA Part B.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). President Lyndon Johnson, a former teacher, believed that education was the answer for ignorance and poverty. Under his “Great Society” program, education was one of his priorities, especially for minorities. Despite public dismay for excessive federal oversight of the program, the ESEA of 1965 passed as a legislation because it was founded under the premise of helping socioeconomically disenfranchised students achieve by providing them support as follows:

- low socioeconomic families,
- equip school libraries,
- provide textbooks to each child,
- provide extra instructional materials,
- support educational research and teacher training programs,
- improve teacher education programs,
- provide extra funds to state departments of education,
- provide inclusion practices for students with disability,
- promote bilingual and equal access to education for all students,

- design and implement strategies to bridge the achievement gap,
- promote parental involvement through PTOs and PTAs,
- adjudication of federal funds for urban Catholic schools,
- no establishment of a nationwide curriculum,
- equal opportunity for school aged boys and girls in schools and universities for access in athletic programs, and
- institution of early education programs such as “Head Start” (Vinovskis, 2005).

It is important to mention that since its inception, Congress has reauthorized the ESEA for every five years. The most common of such ratification is the NCLB Act of 2001.

NCLB. Significant amendments of the ESEA introducing reforms within public education saw a bipartisan support in Congress and became a law of the land under President George Bush in 2002. With new funding provided, the Act compels States to administer basic skills assessments to grades 3–8 once a year, and once in grades 9–12 as a prerequisite to receiving federal funds. However, under the provisions of the NCLB, star testing will be under the control of each state, in which every school district is required to reach AYP and achieve a 100% success ratio within the school year 2013–2014, while imposing stringent intervention steps to schools that do not reach AYP. Schools deemed in violation of the AYP requirements for five consecutive years are ordered for restructuring which can range from reassigning, dismissing and rehiring all teachers and staff, even to school closure in worst cases. Under the NCLB, school standardized test results were to be made public every year. Teacher qualification became a prerequisite for selection and placement, and student achievement was improved through the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), and under the guidance of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), a subdivision of the Department of Education. By the 2002–2003 school years, the NAEP launched a mandatory biennial reading and mathematics assessment as a requirement to qualify for Title I funds from the U.S. government

(U.S. Department of Education, 2011). These scores represent an external audit for AYP and, according to Ravitch (2000), schools that do not meet AYP requirements have nothing to lose. Critics to NCLB are countless and include complaints about inadequate funding (Kohn, 1999), criticism about the excessive emphasis of instruction on math and reading, and the exclusion of subjects such as science. President Barack Obama proposed a new amendment of the ESEA aimed at mending the NCLB.

RTTT. The election of President Obama brought promises of more educational reform. Educators were hopeful that the NCLB Act of 2001 would be rescinded and the stringent accountability measures would be lifted but had to settle for an overhaul of the current system. Ladson-Billings (2009) captured the essence of the frustrations of educators with this decision:

This is not to suggest that teachers should not be accountable for ensuring that students learn. Rather, it emphasizes that teaching, learning, and assessments are iterative and interrelated processes. Professional teachers want to determine the effectiveness of their work. They want to use assessments to improve their teaching. They are less sanguine about using external standardized assessments that may or may not link to the curriculum because these tests provide limited useful information to improve their teaching. (p. 351)

RTTT initiative, rather than retracting the NCLB Act of 2001 mandates, actually included more accountability measures for teachers and more changes to the curriculum expectations. The RTTT initiative began as a competitive grant in 2009. In 2010, eleven states and D.C split four billion dollars for educational reforms. Requirements of RTTT included using statewide data systems to track students from early-childhood programs and beyond, developing college and career-readiness curricula, and an increased use of quality assessments to monitor student achievement (Calzini & Showalter, 2009; Kelleher, 2011). The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) initiative emerged from the implementation of RTTT in 2009. The mission of CCSS was

to issue a comprehensive, and clear understanding of both the students' learning objectives (SLOs) and parents' support (Common Core State Standards, 2012). The standards are

To date, forty-five states and D.C. have adopted and are implementing CCSS (Common Core State Standards, 2012). Many teachers feel that there is an underlying belief in the RTTT initiative of 2009 that teachers are to blame for the many problems facing public schools.

Teachers and unions are working together to shed light on other issues, such as class size and inequalities in school funding that adversely affect student achievement (Behrent, 2009).

Educational reforms over the century have focused on educating all children at high levels.

Unfortunately, these reforms have also increased the federal authorities' role in publicly funded education by interfering with states' rights to control educational decisions. States are struggling to adhere to the increasing federal educational mandates and expectations because the federal government is not providing any additional funding for the implementation of these mandates.

Accountability in Education: YPI and Achievement Gap

Following the enactment of the NCLB Act 2001, K–12 schools in America experienced the advent of a new era of accountability in education for both teachers and students. Under its provision, the NCLB Act's purpose was to guarantee a fair, equitable, and chance to access a high-quality learning and perform at a minimum level in the standardized tests (No Child Left Behind, 2002). Sadly, under such mandate, individual school's success is measured primarily by their yearly performance index (YPI), based solely on pass/fail state designed and administered assessment, a standard which awkwardly takes away all the need for inspiration and creativity from and by teachers. Consequently, the changes proposed by the NCLB Act of 2001 have created an environment that over-emphasizes test preparation at the expense of teacher excitement and creativity (Brown & Clift, 2010; Johnstone, Dikkers, & Luedeke, 2009; Lustick, 2011; No Child Left Behind, 2002).

Leadership and Administration

While it may seem obvious to many that in today's society, the leadership team in public schools should primarily focus on curriculum, instruction, student learning, assessment, student performance and, teacher and staff accountability, there is one factor that is just as important as all the ones previously mentioned: school culture. According to Peterson (2002):

School culture delineates set of rituals, beliefs, ceremonies, norms, stories, values, goals, principles, procedures, routines, and symbols that make up the "credo" of a school. These informal and formal expectations and procedures build up overtime as faculty members, school administrators, parents, students and other stakeholders work in unison to solve problems, overcome challenges, and occasionally tackle failures. (p. 10)

Why schools fail. For half a century, school reforms in America have been centered on three movements: equity based reforms, school choice reforms, and standards based reforms. While inarguably, all three reforms have profoundly transformed America's K–12 public education platform, none is yet to lead real intended results and produce durable changes because instead of improving things from within, these reforms sought to tackle school improvement from outside in. This is the underpinning reason for school failure; as long as school reforms perpetrate this practice, America's public school system will never compete with the most successful K–12 public school systems in the world such as those in the Scandinavian countries: Finland, Sweden, and Denmark, known for having the most successful elementary and secondary school systems in the world, yet spending much less than the United States. Among the many causes of school failure, the following play the most significant role in America's public school system demise: (a) lack of a culture of success among several schools and many school age students, (b) lack of a nationwide consensus of a solid curriculum, (c) failure by educational policymakers to understand the crucial role of individual decisions made

by parents, students, teachers, and business owners in determining educational outcomes, and (d) unfitness of some administrators and teachers.

In like manner, the NCLB identifies a series of benchmarks for school performance known as Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs). Following five consecutive years failing to make AYP, schools will be put down for restructuring as follows:

- conversion into a charter school,
- replacement of staff involved in failure,
- hire an outside contractor to manage the school, and
- attempt different reform to change the school.

All these reforms undertaken over the past few decades are yet to demonstrate real and durable progress. Making durable progress will involve bold action and concentrate on the internal essentials of teaching practices and student learning. To express one of the reasons for the dismal state of America's K–12 publicly funded education platform, Albert Shanker, President of the American Association of Teachers, wrote (as cited in Moo, 1999):

“It’s time to recognize that public schooling works like an organized economy, a policy making system in which everyone’s responsibility is defined in advance and few motivations for innovation and performance. Such an education system,” he concluded, “more parallels the socialism than capitalism.” And things will stay this course until authorities break the monopoly. (p. 222)

The question we should ask ourselves and attempt to answer is “Why have our efforts not yielded intended results. Standerfer (2006) best summarized the sentiments of “A Nation at Risk,” which portrayed U. S. schools as “falling short and that if necessary measures were not taken and implemented into the educational system, the nation would not stand the competition of the global market” (p. 27). With this in mind, turning around failing schools entails having a clear understanding of the underlying reasons why schools fail.

The reasons for school failure are almost the same across the board and are as complex as the reasons for our inability to turn around underperforming and chronically failing schools. No matter where you go in the Western Hemisphere, there are common reasons why public schools fail to carry out their mission, and common factors that make turnaround unattainable, rendering some schools inadequate to properly educate our children and increasing the probability that some schools will not close the achievement gaps of their students. While many reforms aimed at improving underperforming and chronically failing public schools have been attempted over the past few decades, they have not produced intended results; even worse, the reforms have contributed to further disadvantage these schools.

Leadership and Change Effort

In today's perpetually turbulent business environment, leading successful turnaround or change initiative requires significant managerial skills and competencies. Yet, research conducted between 1994 and 2010 shows that 50 to 75% of all change initiatives fall short. Behind these shortcomings often hides a missing ingredient or a panacea of ingredients. Nevertheless, while these missing links may seem obvious in retrospect, many change leaders may overlook or simply turn a blind eye on them, due to the lack of a clear vision of the desired outcome. Conversely, the literature shows neither an explicit unanimity within subjects regarding the meaning of organizational decline, how it materializes, and all its repercussions, nor an agreement between disciplines as to what organizational decline is (Cameron, Sutton, & Whetten, 1988; Weitzel & Jonsson, 1989).

Visionary leadership in failing organizations. Schein (1985) noted that insightful leaders in declining organizations are often times able to control or conquer their own biases and perceive components of the organization that are not consistent with the organizational culture and may be dysfunctional for its survival and growth in a changing environment. As a result, the culture in an organization will either spark or suppress competent performance since it is the credo that determines whether or not the organization will continuously operate in a satisfactory manner or

decline (Snyder, Anderson, & Johnson, 1992). Similarly, adds Barth (2002), school culture is more influential on student learning than are the country's president, the DOE, the superintendent of schools, the school board of director, the school administrators, the teachers, and the parents.

Leadership challenge and organizational failure: The five waves of exemplary leadership. According to Kouzes and Posner, while the context that underpins leadership has evolved dramatically over the years, its content has not; leaders stand up for what they believe, inspire other, practice what they preach, lead by example, and empower others to enact a shared vision (2007). Leadership entails credibility, trust, and authenticity in order to inspire followers to act.

Model the way. According to Kouzes and Posner (2007), promises of exemplary leadership include clarifying one's values and setting an example by aligning beliefs and actions. In order to infuse, sustain, and lead a smooth transition during school turnaround, school administrators should inspire and urge staff, teachers, and students to have the five waves of the trust model serve them and everyone involved in the change effort as a metaphor for how trust operates: (a) self-trust, (b) relationship trust, (c) organizational trust, (d) market trust, and (e) societal trust. A road map is also needed to understand the balance between leadership and management because although they do interact, the skills needed for each dimension are not the same. Turnaround principals should take action by examining their past experiences in the quest of figuring out the values they should apply in their decision-making process. If people believe the messenger, they will believe the message (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

Inspire a shared vision. According to Kouzes and Posner (2007), leaders should foresee a promising future through strengths and opportunities and get followers on board by appealing to common goals. As CEO of a public school during turnaround effort, managing the transition also requires school administrators to foresee the future and enlist all stakeholders

around a common vision through idea sharing; crisis management school principals should create an open line of communication with all stakeholders in order to listen to and understand people's dreams, hopes, aspirations, visions, and values. In order for a vision to pay dividends, it should be in alignment with the organizational mission. Leaders, commented Kouzes and Posner (2007), "should build credibility by delivering on promises; since if you don't believe the messenger, you won't believe the message" (p. 38).

Challenge the process. School turnaround efforts require improving enrollment, retention, school culture, and ultimately overall student achievement. To make this possible, school principals have to search for opportunities and take risk. Innovation entails a very creative mind and risk-taking. Kouzes and Posner (2007) noted, "When mistakes are made, leaders should simply try to learn from them" (p. 200). According to Kouzes and Posner (2007), failure is a significant building block of success, and those who lead have to learn not only from their followers' successes, but most of all their failures in order to make progress. Amid these times of uncertainty, school principals should take risky initiatives to validate the school's assumptions about its unique selling proposition (USP) and what incoming students will buy; iterate to discover what they will indeed buy. It is the time to experiment with new things and take risks just like Thomas Edison did when developing the light bulb. For instance, school principals could venture into improving parent involvement through parent-teacher organizations and parent-teacher associations (PTO/PTA), which, despite being small wins, can prove to be very useful in monitoring their children's homework and other curricular and extracurricular activities. Leaders learn by trial and error, and by confronting themselves about their worries (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

Empower others to act. Sisk (2003) described power sharing as a system of management in which every significant sector of society is entrusted with a permanent chunk of power. According to Kouzes and Posner (2007), to determine whether an individual is on the verge of assuming leadership, they simply count how many times that individual uses the word

“we.” Great leaders foster collaboration and generate a strong sense of shared creation and shared responsibility. In turnaround efforts, empowering others requires school administrators and their teams to build collaboration and trust among all stakeholders, including teachers, staff, counselors, students, and parents. High achieving public schools reinforce this notion through the implementation of intra- and interdepartmental collaboration as a platform for idea-sharing between teachers within departments or small learning communities and among teachers in different departments. The process of turnaround should be very structured in order to clarify common goals and seek collaboration. Leaders build collaboration by building trust, facilitating relationships, and strengthening others through self-determination and competence (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

Encourage the heart. Authentic acts of caring revive the spirit and propel people forward (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Public school turnaround administrators should request funds from the district human resources (HR) department to create and maintain permanent teachers, staff, and a student recognition program with weekly, monthly, and annual awards of excellence. School improvement principals can also introduce a program that recognizes students for their progress toward graduation and high achievement, such as honor rolls and a year-end recognition event for teachers and their families. Recognition is the quintessential currency of leadership and it is free—for leadership doesn’t dwell in the head, rather it inhabits the heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

Organizational behavior (OB): Culture and communication. Mintzberg (1973) identified “ten distinctive functions of the duties of managers where each function equates to an organized pattern of behaviors indicating a distinctive job or position compiled into three categories: interpersonal contact, information processing, and decision making” (p. 2). In order to increase organizational efficacy, employees must be knowledgeable of human behavior, and learn ways and means to improve their interpersonal skills. The knowledge of organizational behavior can make significant contributions to the culture within the confines of the organization,

the communication processes both within and outside the organization, and most importantly, how effective employees can be for the organization's success. Mintzberg (1973) noted:

Organizational behavior is a methodical in-depth study of employee attitudes and performance within a company that deals with individual employee perceptions, values, learning abilities, and actions as they work in groups; as well as how these actions impact the organization's ability to thrive both internally and externally, its mission, vision, and strategies for success. (p. 2)

Moreover, Robbins and Judge (2013) added:

Organizational behavior (OB) is a trifold examination of how people behave in organizations as individuals, groups, and structure as a means to gaining understanding of the interconnectedness of these three components and their impact on the effectiveness of the organization as a whole. (p. 6)

Organizational culture. Organizational culture (OC) as an abstract idea has a fairly recent origin. As Lewin, Lippit, and White (1939) remarked, "Although the notion of group norms and climate has been used by researchers for quite some time, the notion of culture has only been explicitly applied in organizational behavior spectrum in the past few decades" (p. 109). From a leadership perspective, the single most difficult thing to change in any organization, including schools, is the culture. OC is a system of shared values, presumptions, norms, beliefs, symbols, and artifacts that govern the way individuals behave in organizations. In like manner, the term *school culture* broadly invokes to the beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, and the written and unwritten rules that shape and influence every aspect of how a school functions. These commonly shared values have a profound influence on people in the organization and dictate how they dress, act, communicate, and perform their jobs; similarly, commonly shared values affect how public school administrators in K–12 tackle the challenges they encounter in their daily practices in order to ensure student achievement. Communication plays an undeniable role in designing, transmitting, and preserving organizational culture.

Communication is paramount to creating, spreading, reinforcing, and maintaining school culture, especially in times of crisis, when turnaround initiatives are being carried out. According to the Hidden Curriculum (2014), like the larger social culture, school culture results from both conscious and unconscious perspectives, values, interactions, and practices; and it is heavily shaped by a school's particular institutional history (p. 18). The Hidden Curriculum (2014) added:

Students, parents, teachers, administrators, and other staff members, all contribute to their school culture, as do other influences such as the community in which the school is located, the policies that govern how it operates, or the principles upon which the school was founded. (p. 16)

Schein (2004) posited, "Culture is to organizations what character is to individual; culture represents all the hidden phenomena that direct human behavior" (p. 1). In organizations, culture is the underpinning of human behavior, the panacea of hidden phenomena that guide employees' behaviors. In reciprocal dynamics, leadership directs and redirects culture, but culture also influences and even defines leadership in organizations. Hence, Schein (2004) defines culture as "a system of shared values and beliefs learned by a group and integrated in their way of life in order to solve problems both internally and externally" (p. 17). A corporate culture is a recipe of three basic ingredients: organizational artifacts, beliefs and values, and assumptions. These basic levels of corporate culture respectively represent the physical infrastructure, policies, rituals, and climate; beliefs and values; and perceptions and thoughts. In successful organizations, charismatic leaders create and maintain a cultural climate that increases the driving forces that ultimately control and manage external and internal challenges. This concretizes the mission and vision into specific goals and strategies that drive cultural development as it reinforces certain behaviors and beliefs. In a sense, corporate culture simply means "this is how we do things here." Leaders embed and transmit corporate culture within organizations. In school settings, the common cultural denominator should be student

achievement. In high performing schools, administrators work tirelessly with teachers and staff to create and maintain a vision built around innovation and best practices that promote a culture of high achievement in students. Becoming a high-performing school is not an easy endeavor and takes many years of hard work and dedication to achieve. As research shows, nine basic cultural characteristics are common to all high performing schools. The same cultural model should be implemented in times of crisis, during turnaround efforts. These cultural characteristics are:

- a clear and shared focus,
- high standards and expectations for all students,
- effective school leadership,
- high levels of collaboration and communication,
- curriculum instruction and assessments aligned with state standards,
- frequent monitoring of learning and teaching,
- focused professional development,
- supportive learning environment, and
- high levels of family and community involvement.

The administrator's role in successful schools is to create, reinforce, and maintain a productive school culture, cornerstone of refinement and progress in any organization. Many researchers and scholars in K–12 agree, no administrator's role and responsibility is less important; but a productive school culture is imperative in infusing the notion of community, a sense of belonging, and high achievement. A meaningful school culture, noted Habegger (2008), is the main reason why the other influential aspects of successful schools were able to blossom. As the nine characteristics of successful schools can testify, culture is learned; hence, these characteristics themselves can help us understand how schools become successful and how successful schools maintain that culture of high achievement. Likewise, culture is perpetuated and carried over, and reproduces itself in groups such as schools through the

socialization of new members entering the group and new students enrolling in schools. Unlike other organizations, public school enrollment does not look for students who have the right set of cultural assumptions, beliefs, and values; instead these beliefs and values should be embedded within the school culture. New members of organizations do not know the ropes well enough to be able to enact their organizational culture, and hence they should be trained and acculturated (Feldman, 1988; Ritti & Funkhouser, 1987; Van Maanen, 1976, 1977). To summarize, in schools as in all organizations, culture is shaped by seven characteristics: innovation, attention to details, emphasis on outcomes, emphasis on people needs, teamwork, aggressiveness, and stability. When one of these links is missing in the chain, schools as organizations fail to fulfill their mission of educating our children. Schools that thrive are the ones that have top visionary administrators who employ effective leadership either to help these schools maintain their competitive edge or turn things around in times of crisis.

Organizational Communication

In organizations large or small, members need to communicate effectively with each other to achieve positive results. Effective communication in organizations requires first the recognition by leaders and their followers that communication is critical, and second, a commitment by all to ensure that everybody in the organization from the top down and the bottom up has the skills, tools, and resources to communicate effectively. However, talking continuously and constantly isn't necessarily communicating; communication is the transfer and understanding of meaning (Robbins & Judge, 2013). The unmitigated phenomenon of organizational communication is, undoubtedly, innate and universal because all living organisms of a certain level of complexity perform it in some way, and each human culture has means of performing it. However, the notion that communication is paramount, the idea that human problems are caused by bad communication and can be solved by better communication, the notion that communication is a technical skillset that can be enhanced by incorporating principles and techniques spread by experts in the field, the notion, in sum, that it is imperative

to talk and share meaning—these notions are ingredients of a cultural blueprint that has changed in particular historical circumstances in close association with specific social practices and related cultural themes in human progress, modernization, and globalization. As a result, organizations are built as open systems, as their various components constantly interact with one another and with the environment, exchange and process feedbacks, sharing inputs and outputs in order to survive and prosper. When these relationships are not built, or are built but not properly maintained, systems become faulty. This lack of relationship can have very negative repercussions in the overall efficiency and even the functioning of the organization. In both striving and failing organizations, most problems are system-related, not people-related. According to Deming (2000), 85% of problems in an organization are within the system, not the individual. For any organizational change to be effective and enduring, leadership teams must infuse much needed change within the system; when system change is successful, people will follow and align themselves with the new direction.

Kreps (1986) noted, “Organizational communication is a social collective in which people develop ritualized patterns of interaction through meaning, values, symbols, and artifacts in an attempt to coordinate their activities and efforts in the ongoing accomplishment of personal and group goals” (p. 5). Communication is an essential activity in every human endeavor in general. However, in times of crisis, communication could lead to either positive or negative outcomes depending on the course of action taken in response to the situation at hand. Peterson (1962) remarks that communication could and actually affects organizational efficiency resentfully if not appropriately addressed. Some examples that validate Deming’s and Peterson’s reasoning are cases such as the Challenger space shuttle disaster on January 25, 1986; the space shuttle Columbia explosion during reentry on February 1, 2003; and more recently, on the crash in the French Alps of Germanwings passenger jet, flight 4U9525 on Tuesday, March 24, 2015, in which the copilot deliberately locked the captain out of the cockpit and prematurely activated the aircraft descent procedures in order to crash the plane, killing all 150 on board. The truth of the

matter is that all these catastrophes could have been prevented had there been better communication procedures within systems that could see wholes instead of parts that could see interrelationships rather than things, and use myriad of lenses to analyze the same data.

In all organizations including schools, communication is the control center for rules, regulations, and responsibilities; thus, communication is very important in good times and bad. Communication should be consistent and aligned with organizational goals and follow the proper channels:

Effective, meaningful, and carefully planned communications take into consideration both the order and timing of communication to guarantee that the message gets to the right person in the right order, and consistent, message flows effectively from the top to the bottom of the organization. (Richards, n.d., p. 30)

During school turnaround efforts, communication should not be overlooked when principals or district superintendents are designing and implementing strategies to bring about positive change. Kreps (1990) stated that “the function of communication in an organization is to establish and reinforce leaders’ control, and provide followers with valuable information” (p. 12). This information eventually includes the new vision and mission. Champoux (1996) noted that the overriding functions of communication in organizations include information sharing, providing feedback, integration to coordinate diverse functions, exercise persuasion, and express emotions.

Whenever carried out, communication serves four main purposes in organizations: control, motivation, emotional expression, and information. Information dissemination requires a purpose, a message to be conveyed between a sender and a receiver, as the sender encodes the message (symbolic form) and passes it through a medium (channel) to the receiver who decodes it (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Wrench, McCroskey, and Richmond (2008) posited that “communication is a process in which one person or a group of people intentionally tries to

stimulate meaning in the mind of another person or group of people by means of verbal, nonverbal cues” (p. 27).

Koontz (2001) summarized the hurdles against communication, noting that “communication problems are often symptoms of more deep-rooted problems, as poor planning may be the cause of an uncertain future for the organization” (p. 6). The manner in which leaders in organizations handle a crisis determines the socioeconomic implications that may ensue, public perception and reputation of the organization, as well as the overall success or failure of the organization in the future. Consequently, Coombs and Holladay (2010) noted that “the best way leaders can communicate a shared vision during crisis is to respond quickly, accurately, and consistently (p. 28). In schools, communication is the backbone of education, the bridge between teaching and learning. Either lateral or vertical, from the top down or from the bottom up, communication disseminates meaning. Administrators communicate with teachers and staff, teachers communicate with other teachers and students, and students communicate with one another. Wentz (1998) noted, “Meaningful communication require more than just speaking” (p. 112) Keeping the lines of communication open, especially in times of crisis determines how leaders can take appropriate course of actions, successfully implement change strategies and achieve intended goals. The most important turnaround actions include identifying and focusing on a minute number early wins with big payoffs, breaking corporate norms and rules, and acting quickly in a fast cycle.

Communication during school turnaround. Like all organizations, schools heavily rely on effective communication during good times and bad, both when they are striving and when they are recovering from crisis. In public schools, turnaround communication should prioritize challenging the issues of teachers, students, and staff members while providing a humane touch for problem-solving. Communication, as mentioned earlier, is crucial and has proven to boost stakeholders’ confidence about the future in times of crisis. First, school administrators should prepare teachers, students, and staff for the need for change in order to get them ready

to transition through the ending, the transition, and toward the new beginning. However, despite the proven efficacy of written communication, Klein (1996) noted that “verbal or face-to-face communication is crucial in this stage” (p. 2).

Second, in order to prevent rumors, school districts and school site administrators should provide those not directly involved in the turnaround implementation with detailed and accurate information as to why the change effort is imperative, how it will be done, what is being done, and will continue to be done. As the change effort begins to have more visible and palpable effects and some influence on the school improvement process, the information provided should be more specific in nature (Klein, 1996). Third, communication should make meaning by building structure and process. Turnaround agents answer questions and lift the fog of ambiguity from teachers, students, and staff. Often times during change efforts, as emotions get high due to uncertainty, stakeholders tend to ask themselves if part or all the effort is worthwhile. District and school administrators should be prepared to defend their efforts against uncertainty while adopting and implementing the inevitable path to change. Smith (1937) once said: “On the road from the City of Skepticism, I had to travel through the Valley of Ambiguity.” Reschedule your trip! With conspicuous purpose, school turnaround agents create responsibilities and routines that keep incremental actions moving forward with holistic approach and accountability, hence preventing skepticism and doubt when assigning strategic duties and transition toward a future filled with promises.

Clear communication offers district officials and school administrators a unique opportunity to confront issues such as efficiency of the intervention, potential rewards for effort, role play in control and relationship to their assistants; and in turn to various department chairs. According to Klein (1996), “In order to alleviate potential misunderstandings, communication should primarily focus on spreading and disseminating success and small wins” (p. 12). Furthermore, many researchers agree that meaningful dissemination of information is a vital ingredient in the success of any change initiative (Kotter, 1995; Lewin, 1951).

Research in the field of organizational behavior has described the purpose of communication strategies in turnaround process as disseminating a vision and minimizing skepticism (Klein, 1996), gaining employee commitment (Kotter, 1995), empowering employees by seeking their input into the intervention effort (Kitchen & Daly, 2002), mitigating resistance to change (Carnall, 1997), and challenging the status quo (Balogun & Hope, 2003). The purpose of change communication during turnaround has been identified by researchers as playing several underpinning roles: (a) tackle queries of employees, (b) generate communication spirit, (c) build trust, (d) motivate employees, (e) reinforce employee commitment, (f) encourage employee participation, (g) reduce uncertainty, (h) ensure job security, and (i) add feedback.

Managing Transitions During Change Efforts: Breaking the Status Quo

Organizational change efforts, whether in the form of simple intervention or as important as turnaround, such as a simple office or headquarters relocation, are inherently challenging. As research shows, organizational change initiatives are so difficult that an astounding 70% of all change initiatives fail. We all may be surprised to learn that in fact, when organizations fail to deliver on their promises, when organizations fall short, it is generally not because of flaws in the design, deployment, and implementation of the intervention itself; rather in most cases, about 70% as mentioned earlier, the intended change takes place but the stakeholders affected by the change are left behind due to poor communication or even no communication at all from the leadership, thus hampering innovation, motivation, knowledge, and support by followers to perform in the post-change environment. Meanwhile, there is something exclusive to every organization that sparks innovation. Conversely, organizations going through change, either planned or unplanned tend to focus too much energy on the external events, downplaying how to lead staff and teams through the transition.

Turnaround: From Turmoil to Great Again

Over the past few years, elementary and secondary school scholars have focused a lot of attention and resources on the school turnaround process. However, despite this level of

activity, school turnaround is still a relatively new field, and despite its rapid growth, the field is still fragmented. Education reformers have very limited knowledge and understanding of what works and to what extent. Notwithstanding the myriad of educational reforms introduced in America's K–12 system during the past few decades, our children are failing and America's schools are failing to educate our children to be competitive in the global economy. In order for school districts in the nation to transform the thousands of chronically underperforming schools, it is paramount that action be taken, and that by doing so, multiple actors work in unison to conduct needs assessment, identify, and implement effective practices and create policies that can create success, and guarantee the sustainability of the turnaround effort. Turnaround, a vigorous and far-reaching intervention in a chronically failing school that (a) yields significant improvements in achievement in a matter of two years, and (b) prepares the institution for a lengthy undertaking of transformation toward a high-achieving organization.

Leadership and Organizational Change

In our global economy, organizational change has become more than common, but a norm. Because change is the only constant, it occupies a strategic position in organizational life cycle, and organizations need to respond to the stimuli from both within and without in order to survive and thrive. According to Nadler and Tushman (1990), organizations are constantly undergoing change. In like manner, Kotter and Rathgeber (2006) posited that “our Iceberg is melting” (p. 1). Research shows that 70% of organizational change initiatives fall short. According to Bolman and Deal (2005), the reason why organizations fall short during change efforts is because often times, change leaders focus too much energy on changing the structure; ignoring the human capital aspect which controls people's feelings, trust, motivation, loyalty, and commitment, cornerstones of all successful human enterprise. However, with the notion that change is the only constant, if an organization is to survive the strain of a constantly changing environment, it needs at the top of its hierarchy, a leader who has a clear

understanding of (a) how change process operates, (b) his or her role as a leader during the organizational change process, and (c) how he or she can manage organizational change.

Lewin Three-Step and Kotter Eight-Step Change Models

Lewin's three-step change model helps crisis management leaders shift the balance in the direction of the planned change. Imagine having a cubical block of ice when a conic block of ice is required. This analogy best describes chronically underachieving schools. The best way to change the cube into a cone is to unfreeze the cube, obtain the water, and then refreeze water into a cone. Turnaround principals in chronically underachieving schools can implement this simple strategy during change efforts.

Unfreeze (set the scene). This step usually means reducing the forces acting to keep the organization in the current condition. This step incorporates Kotter's first four steps: (a) establishing a sense of urgency, (b) creating a guiding coalition, (c) developing a vision and a strategy, and (d) communicating the change vision. Any positive change in organization can only occur if the change agents establish a sense of urgency by creating dissatisfaction with the status quo. In failing schools, the status quo is the chronic underachievement of students. Establishing the sense of urgency is crucial to gaining needed cooperation (Kotter, 2001).

First, the school administration should seek to secure all teachers, counselors, students, and staff' cooperation through behavior shift. According to Lewin (1951), unfreezing is the process of changing behavior, the status quo, and the state of equilibrium. The turnaround principal sets the scene by applying Lewin's Field Force Analysis by increasing the driving forces and decreasing the restraining forces. The HR department selects and recruits a team of administrators who are capable of viewing the new vision as desirable (can we do it?) and communicable (yes, there is a need for change in this school). For turnaround principals and their teams, this is the time to build trust by creating a vision statement to provide all stakeholders with a clear direction and give teachers and students a new mission to accomplish—dramatically improved student achievement within a defined period of time, usually

about two years. The principal should encourage idea sharing; therefore, the vision he or she creates will be a shared vision (Senge, 1990). The final driving force principals should use is inviting stakeholders to buy into the vision by communicating the vision in order to remove barriers that could hinder the change.

Change/move (implementation). Also known as the transition stage, this step usually involves the development of new attitudes and behaviors, through internalization, identification, or changes in structure. This stage can prove to be very difficult as it does not last long. Implementation is a panacea of Kotter's steps five, six and seven: empower a broad-based action, generate short-term wins, and consolidate gains and produce more wins. According to Lewin (1951), moving the target system to a new level of equilibrium is necessary. During a turnaround effort, the school administration team should take time to educate all teachers, students, parents, and community leaders about the road ahead in order to eliminate barriers such as fear and uncertainty and use target elements of change to transform the school by encouraging risk-taking and problem-solving. By enabling action and removing barriers such as inefficient processes or hierarchies, leaders provide the freedom necessary for teachers, staff, and students to work across boundaries and create change (Kotter, 2012). In school turnaround efforts, it is time to undertake the removal of obstacles still lingering around the school aura, such as low morale and lack of discipline. Teachers should be encouraged to adopt an open-door policy to facilitate collaboration among teachers and across departments, the flow of information and resources, and to encourage innovation. As Kotter (2012) remarked, innovation is less about generating new ideas and more about knocking down barriers to making those ideas a reality. Principals need to focus on the tangibles. Lewin's second step is about taking action and involving people. For those teachers and students who were not on board, at least not yet, the administration should provide more training as a source of power to improve performance, celebrate short-term wins, and consolidate gains. The leadership team should meet in a weekly basis to update and clarify the school objectives, define and engineer visible

performance achievements, and design a reward system for these achievements. It is the time to say “thank you.” Wins are the molecules of results—they must be collected, categorized, and communicated early and often to track progress and energize volunteers to drive change (Kotter, 2012). With tangible growth on the horizon, each department should receive a written recognition from the school district and the administration. Moving forward, the district should consolidate gains by hiring, promoting, and developing teachers who can implement the vision and move into a new beginning.

Refreezing: Anchor the new approach in the culture (make it stick). As Lewin (1951) remarked, refreezing is the time to make change permanent, establish new way of things, and reward desired outcomes. It is the time to integrate new values into the community—beliefs and tradition. Changes in organizational culture, in staff norms, in organizational policy or organizational structure often accomplish this goal. This is Kotter’s eighth step. In turnaround efforts, the leadership team’s main duty is to reassure all stakeholders as to why the effort is worthwhile. All highly successful transformation efforts combine good leadership with good management. The purpose of refreezing is to stabilize the new equilibrium resulting from the change by balancing both the driving and restraining forces. Principals should equate the driving forces to what Simon Sinek (2013) called the golden circle: why, how, and what. For turnaround principles, stakeholders need to know why we are here, how we do things, what things we do; it is the time to say, “This is how we do things here, this is our school culture.” As Schein (2004) remarked, organizational culture is all the beliefs, philosophies, ideologies, feelings, assumptions, expectations, attitudes, norms, and values of the organization. School administrators should create leadership development, a succession plan, and policy guidelines consistent with the new school vision; administrators and their assistants are coaches who support and facilitate. The change effort only shows dividends when the coordination of daily operations becomes more tangible because there is a clear evidence of authority, communication, and student learning and achievement.

Leading Change Through Storytelling

Everyone has probably been called upon to give an elevator speech. An elevator speech is a 30-second, clear, and concise message or advertisement about oneself. It summarizes the story of who you are, what you are seeking, and what your contribution to an organization can be. Its purpose is to tell the story in order to spark or jump start interest in a project, an idea, a product, even yourself and what your organization does. Stevenson (2001) advocated for storytelling as an effective leadership strategy. When told well by politicians and other public speakers, a story connects the leader with his/her audience for motivation and inspiration, hence becoming a mirror reflecting the follower's own view of the reality. But most stories are neither meaningful nor useful for leaders who tell them as they do not spark that needed transformation in people's thinking, the way they perceive certain things, or lead to a different course of actions. Westen (2007) noted that people assume incorrectly that stories are as effective as they are elaborate. But in order for storytelling to be effective, practical, and meaningful in leadership, the storyteller must understand and master the patterns of the stories that matter the most for the audience, such as springboard stories, which narrate the past, spark emotions, and inspire actions in the future. Storytelling in leadership can be used to spark change, communicate who you are, communicate the organization's brand, share knowledge, or lead into the future.

For the 2008 presidential election, wrote Halperin and Harris (2006), then Senator Barack Obama used stories that sparked change to win voters' hearts in order to advance his change agenda:

As Washington is engulfed in the status quo, with disagreements, and diversion, more Americans lose their homes, more factories file for bankruptcy . . . And the story goes on. In all cynicism, we conclude this is as good as it can get. We turn our backs to our responsibilities, adopt low standards. Today Americans are rising across the nation, standing for what is right, against the Washington old game and its players, arguably to

change the players in order to change the results, change the course of American history. (p. 6)

Obama (2008) used storytelling to emphasize how he dealt with adversity in his life to communicate who he is:

Raised by his single mom and his grandparents, his mother was a teen ager when she had him and his father left when he was two. However, with little money and no status, his mom and grandparents loved him and educated him, hence putting hope in his signs. He raised the concept of hope at the Demographic convention, wrote a book about hope, but at the same time, he knows how hard it will be to overcome the challenges that lie ahead. . . . He had organized people in communities before, represented clients in court as a civil rights lawyer, as a policymaker, where he won some fights and lost others Regardless of how hard change is, nothing has changed in this country without hope. (p. 8)

Moving forward, Obama used storytelling to communicate his organization, the Democratic Party's brand by outlining the past achievements of the party, hence reinforcing the notion of trust in the party:

So Democrats, our time for change has come, our party has always excelled when it is inspired by principles, not by polls, convictions instead of calculations toward a lofty purpose, the pursuit of happiness the party where we challenge ourselves to do more for our country not the opposite. That is exactly who we really are (Obama, 2008, p. 12).

Turnaround leaders can use storytelling to enhance their ability to change the status quo by communicating who they are, transmitting values, branding their organizations, fostering collaboration, sharing knowledge, sparking action, inspiring innovation, and leading people into the future in order to successfully achieve their goals. Callahan (2009) noted that "successful leaders change the game; change people's perception, their feelings, and their actions in order

to direct undertaking toward a shared vision” (p. 1). During the Republican Party and the Democratic Party conventions, a myriad of leaders and ordinary citizens from all walks of life tell stories in order to change the feelings, redirect the actions, and win the minds of potential voters. Storytelling has a persuasive power. But as Callahan (2009) remarked, transforming people’s thinking and undertakings requires not just persuasive argument because argument alone cannot move people; reshaping judgements, remodeling assumptions, and redirecting actions also requires one’s compassion, attention, ability to ask questions, and most importantly the ability to tell stories rich in substance. Likewise, as Howard Gardner, author of *Changing Minds*, (as cited in Callahan, 2009) noted, the principle conveyance of leadership is the narrative, the storyline: leaders influence people’s behavior, choices, feelings, and thinking through the storyline they narrate. This constitutes the underpinning importance and effectiveness of storytelling as a meaningful tool of leadership, why the story is told, how it is told, and the story behind the person who tells it.

Turnaround in Non-Educational Organizations

Research on non-educational organizations found five interrelated core approaches to successful organizational turnarounds: (a) capturing and telling the stories of the recovery process, (b) extracting and properly managing key elements and characteristics of the intervention process, (c) discussing actions and approaches/strategies of the process, (d) outlining phases or stages of the turnaround, and (e) developing themes and models to describe the process from beginning to end (Murphy, 2010).

Hambrick and Mason (1984) argued that an organization is a reflection of its strategic leaders because they are the actors who make and implement strategic decisions. CEOs, as the apex within organizations, are the leaders of the restoration process who authorize the initiation of particular stages and approaches of the turnaround effort. Successful and sustainable organizational turnarounds efforts almost always entail replacing the leadership team of the organization, especially if they have been with the organization for more than two

years. Top ranking leaders often think they can freeze the process and start over, when in fact reform requires organizational turnaround. A strong correlation exists between replacing high ranking leadership and successful turnarounds. Eventually, the rescue and recovery plan must be initiated with the assumption of a change in leadership (Gadiesh, Pace, & Rogers, 2003; Murphy, 2010).

Before understanding how failing corporations are able to effectively elicit a turnaround, understanding how they became a failing corporation in the first place is important. Collins (2009) identified and described five stages of decline that lead to failing corporations, and according to Weitzel and Jonsson (1989), corporate decline materializes when corporation's leadership fails to foresee, identify, avoid, neutralize, or adapt to environmental threats and their effects on the long-term survival of the organization. Without proper or adequate evasive or remedial measures, corporations in downturn proceed through the following challenges: (a) carelessness, (b) nonintervention, (c) negligence, (d) disaster or trouble, and (e) disintegration.

Stage one—blinded/carelessness. Stage one in the decline of a corporation occurs when company leaders adopt an attitude of arrogance; henceforth, they become unable to recognize and act upon adverse changes in the environment. They feel a sense of entitlement and lose sight of how the company became successful in the first place. "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18, New International Version). In the first stage, corporations are incapable of pinpointing environmental variables that may potentially hamper its survival on the long-run" (Weitzel & Jonsson, 1989, p. 97). Furthermore, Weitzel and Jonsson (1989) added that various administrative problems "such as overstaffing, complacency to incompetence, awkward and unmanageable bureaucracy, faulty hierarchy, replacement of significance with appearance, lack of meaningful objectives and decision-making guidelines, fear of the unknown and disagreements, communication deficiency, and obsolete

organizational structure” (p. 97) may not be noticed if methods of internal surveillance and communication are inadequate. Decline begins.

Stage two—inaction/ nonintervention. Prideful attitudes lead to the second stage of corporate decline. In this stage, corporate leaders lead the company into areas where they cannot possibly be successful. As a matter of fact, the inaction stage is characterized by an abundance of warning signs of declining performance, but the leadership team fails to take corrective action. Organization leaders recognize signs of trouble still, fail to take necessary remedial action, citing cost or uncertainty about proper course of action, demise becomes obvious and almost irreversible. According to Weitzel and Jonsson (1989), as decline intensifies, leaders manifest signs of denial, avoidance, resistance, or procrastination and are tempted to cover-up or distort negative information. Undisciplined decisions in stage two lead to an inability of the corporation to maintain levels of quality, excellence, and high ethical considerations. The corporation starts to grow faster than can be possibly supported. One such example is the bankruptcy demise of Enron in 2001, which marked the emergence of an unprecedented wave of corporate scandals with the same common denominator: ethical misconduct through abuse of power, excess privilege, deceit, inconsistent treatment of internal and external constituencies, misplaced and broken loyalties, and irresponsible behavior. Enron faced felony charges that led to the indictment of its leadership and its fall into stage three of its collapse.

Stage three—faulty action/negligence. Corporate leaders moving into stage three of decline tend to ignore the early warning symptoms of problems. The organization takes some form of action to reverse the course, but response is ineffective and comes a little too late. The immediate success diminishes the underlying data indicating foundational problems within the corporation. They ignore negative data and continue to make risky corporate decisions. As a result of poor corporate decision, Enron’s demise was inevitable as its leadership flunked to meet critical ethical tests and leadership struggle (Johnson, 2001).

Enron faced these charges, among others: (a) borrowing with intent to deceive subordinate (Wilke, 2002), (b) federal tax evasion (Manning & Hill, 2002), (c) contribution to energy crisis by forging California power prices (Fusaro & Miller, 2002; Manning & Hill, 2002), (d) bribery (Wilke, 2002), (e) accounting fraud (Hill, Chaffin, & Fidler, 2002), (f) cooking the books (Cruver, 2002), (g) energy policy bluff (Duffy, 2002; Duffy, Dickerson, Thomas, Tumulty, & Weisskopf, 2002), and (h) collusion for financial gain (Fox, 2003).

Stage four—crisis/ disaster or trouble. Stage four of corporate decline is a critical determinant of whether the corporation will recover or capitulate into decline. In this stage of decline, the leader is faced with the impending peril of the corporation. Internal disagreements grow as organization leadership acknowledges that an impact is necessary to steer things toward the desirable direction but unfortunately nothing is being done. Massive resignations or terminations of top ranking officials ensue, and revolutionary changes set forth as the last chance for reorganization and reversal for recovery. Ghemawat and Nalebuff (1985, 1990) suggested that the decline stage can also be equated to a waiting game until the organization collapses; just a few survive. The leader's response can either be to revert back to what made the corporation great in the beginning, or to look for external help to save the corporation. Barker, Mone, Mueller, and Freeman (1998) and Castrogiovanni and Burton (2000), through the review of factors favorable to turnaround, emphasized that retrenchment and other leading factors associated with turnaround are still part of an open debate in need of additional research. Furthermore, Arogyaswamy, Barker, and Yasai-Ardekani added that decline and turnaround are closely related because successful turnarounds not only manage the decline, but they also change the company's strategy and internal environment to guarantee new resources that deal with the cause of failure (1995).

Stage five—dissolution/ disintegration. In the fifth stage, evasive measures and reforms efforts have all failed, triggering demise. Regardless of effort level, improvement measures, and change strategies, the collapse of the organization can no longer be avoided.

Intense internal conflicts within the hierarchy and external conflicts between the leadership and stakeholders exacerbate the situation. At this juncture, while the failure is inevitable and irreversible, the only hope is to oversee the dissolution process with fairness and efficacy. In some cases, however, the deterioration process can prove to be very chaotic. The only strategy left is to close down the company in an orderly fashion and organize the smooth dispensation of the company's remaining assets in order to reduce the stressful emotions that come with job or even career loss for some stakeholders. Most of the myriad of interconnected common factors behind corporate failure bear a human origin. Based on their research on organizational failures, Weitzel and Jonsson (1989) proposed a prototype that underlines organizational decline in five phases: "(1) corporate leadership is sightless to the genesis of decline; (2) the leadership acknowledge the urgency of the situation but fail to apply corrective measures; (3) the leadership takes remedial action, unfortunately the intervention is unsuited; (4) the organization enters a state of predicament, no turning back; and (5) dissolution ensues" (p. 91).

Returning to the foundational beliefs on which the corporation was originally built may be enough to stop the decline. However, looking for an external quick fix will most certainly result in a continued downward spiral. The final stage of corporate decline is the realization that the company cannot be turned around. The corporation becomes insignificant and either sells out or dies out completely. According to Collins (2009), while it is possible to skip a stage of decline, research has suggested that companies generally move through all five stages sequentially. Some companies move through the stages quickly while others spend many years progressing through them. It is possible for corporations to recover during the decline, but not very likely. "The vast majority of corporations undeniably collapse. Nevertheless, our investigation reveals that corporate decline is to a great extent, a self-inflicted demise, and the recovery process primarily within organizational control (Collins, 2009, p. 26).

Effective School Administrators: What They Do

A decade ago, school leadership was unheard of in most school reforms and improvement agendas. Today, school leadership is known to be a significant factor and top ranking in the list of priorities for school turnaround. As leaders, school principals play a significant role in developing a community of teachers who inspire one another in improving instructional practices, hence guaranteeing student learning and achievement. The cornerstone of being a good leader is cultivating leadership in others. According to Kouzes and Posner (2007), leaders in all sectors must depend on followers to accomplish organizational purpose, as well as facilitate the development of leadership across the organization.

Promoting global competencies for students. The primary responsibility of a public school administrator as a leader is to facilitate effective teaching and learning with the overall mission of enhancing student achievement and competitiveness in the global economy. “Instructional leadership provided by the principal and his entourage has been identified as the main contributing factor to higher student achievement” (Lezotte, 1994, p. 4). The success of an organization such as a school depends on the functionality of its staff, various departments, and teams and groups powered by strong leadership. Furthermore, key characteristics of effective groups include strong leadership, shared power, meaningful politics, and effective communications. The same principle applies as much to urban high schools as it does to any other type of organization. Education is a global must, a veritable human right, yet education, especially secondary education, in the land of the free and the home of the brave is still very elusive. As a high school teacher in a low-performing, economically depressed urban school, I have witnessed first-hand the many obstacles associated with poorly preparing students for college. According to Card and Krueger (1992), graduating from high school has also become paramount for college readiness and college education has proven to be essential as higher competencies are more and more in demand in the global economy. Goldin and Katz (2001) also noted the parallel ROI of a high school diploma without a college education has

substantially decreased in recent years while the number of college attendees and graduates has increased. Moreover, as a global must and a common good, education also provides citizens with access to health and other social benefits because the more educated people are, the higher their propensity is to have stable jobs, and they are less likely to be exposed to certain life stressors and risk factors that adversely impact health, less likely to commit crimes, and above all, less likely to need government-sponsored assistance programs (Bernanke, 2007; Muennig, 2005). In addition, research has shown that high school dropouts are a potential menace to public safety. As Oreopoulos (2003) explained, with so few job opportunities available for high school dropouts, the ripple effect of these young people's demise costs the United States billions of dollars in fiscal revenue and other government assistantships.

The academic performance index (API) of troubled schools is low, the adequate yearly progress (AYP) does not meet state standards, and scores on standardized tests such as California Standard Test (CST) do not meet the proficiency required by the California Department of Education (CDE). Most of all, many students fail to meet the graduation requirements during their senior year. If they do graduate, they do not attend or stay in college. Educational achievement has dramatic economic benefits for individuals and society at large, and completing high school has always been a very important indicator for potential employers that an individual is prepared to join the workforce as a global citizen.

Nurturing great communication skills. If a student has held a part-time job during the school year, held a full-time job during the summer, volunteered for a nonprofit or belonged to a social organization, this person has experienced organizational communication, participated in its culture, and been part of its learning, power, and politics. A job seeker, an interviewee, a new employee, a manager, or even a leader in an organization makes various decisions regarding how to communicate with others, whether it is downward, upward, or laterally. We participate in organizations in almost every single aspect of our lives. In fact, we will spend the bulk of our waking lives in the context of organization (March & Simon, 1958). "An organization is a system

of interrelated social behaviors of a number of participants” (March & Simon, 1958, p. 24). Furthermore, “we are born in organizations, educated by organizations, and most of us spend much of our lives working for organizations” (Etzioni, 1964, p. 8). At the center of every organization is leadership, structure, role, decision science, learning, communication, power, politics, culture, and last but not least, motivation. All these characteristics are implemented within groups and teams. As Deetz (1994) pundited, “Simply put, from the time we are born to the time we die; moreover, organizations impact every aspect of our lives” (p. 6), hence, the importance of developing highly skilled K–12 school leaders.

According to Cotton (1995) and Lezotte (1992), studies in the United States from the last four decades unanimously support the belief that when K–12 schools have effective school administrators in their highest hierarchical rank, pupils are proven more likely to perform academically. A definitive review of 30 years of research by Marzano, Waters, and McNully (2005) established both a practical and statistical significance in the relationship between student achievement and the quality of school leadership. Moreover, a review of worldwide studies found similar results (Heck, 1996). One of the core competencies of successful school administrators is their ability to communicate very effectively. Communication is essential in building trust within organizations. Effective school administrators make good communication a priority in their schools. Communication is the sharing and transmission of insights and thoughts from one individual to another. The process encompasses a sender transferring the thought, information, or emotion to the recipient. Effectual communication takes place when the intended recipient comprehends this thought, insight, or emotion in the manner compatible with the sender’s intent. Poor communications, in the course of which the recipient fails to decipher the thought, insight, or emotion in the manner the sender intended or when the sender rather fails to convey the meaning, insight, or emotion, results in a multitude of problems, engenders confusion, and potentially causes good intentions to fail. Four decades ago, James Granger (1970) “described a number of obstacles that companies faced when communication is not

effective between leaders and employees on the one hand, and among employees on the other hand” (p. 12). Granger identified:

the lack of trust, the existence of fear among employees; the inertia due to a non-rewarding system; the sense that management did not care about their problems; the fear that disagreement will block their promotions; and the lack of supervisory accessibility and responsiveness. (p. 12)

How does leadership style affect group communication? In secondary education, just like in any other organization, leadership style impacts the structure and efficacy of group communication.

To deal with these flows, Granger (1970) asserted that:

companies should take three courses of action, in order to radically change the environment: (a) the management should start building trust between them and employees; (b) the management should put a premium on integrity; and (c) leaders should get out of their offices and find out what is going on, in their organizations.

(p. 14)

As a result, organizations are built as open systems, as their various components constantly interact with one another and with the environment, exchange and process feedbacks, and share inputs and outputs in order to survive and prosper.

Educational organizations are not an exception to this rule. Just like organisms interact with one another and with their environment in an ecosystem, organizations do not live in isolation. Instead, as Scott and Davis remarked, “They operate as systems characterized by an assemblage or combination of subsystems whose relations make them interdependent” (2007, p. 24). Hence, organizations have to adapt to their changing environment. Schools, just like other organizations as systems, are made of communities of people interacting with one another and with their environment to build relationships and help each other. When these relationships are not built, or are built but not properly maintained, systems become faulty. This lack of interdependence can have very negative repercussions in the overall efficiency of the

organization. Hence successful K–12 public school administrators encourage team members, teachers, counselors, and all school staff to collaborate together and draw from their talents and experiences to achieve goals, using their innovative skills and knowledge to contribute to team success through a shared vision.

Meanwhile, as good and effective as this initiative may sound, it is not possible without a real understanding of the need for change, a real strategic plan, and comprehensive strategic thinking that aims to steer the direction of the overall school, a strategy that has long-range, attainable horizon, measured in years rather than months and weeks. The strategy that will have a positive effect will likely to be felt throughout the entire school and the entire district. Change is the only constant, and change is part of the fabric of society. Successful elementary and secondary public school administrators create a school culture of achievement and success. According to Coulter (2005), organizations bear a brand or culture developed from a myriad of factors that become familiar over time. Employees seek this culture instinctively, reverting to what they know best, when threatened by the systemic change being introduced. Strong leaders know how to break that pull back to the corporate comfort zone and increase the drive for change. Moreover, as Drucker (1999) remarked, actions that facilitate systemic transformation in organizations are directly influenced by leadership.

Empower a shared vision. Kanter, Stein, and Jick (1992) understood effective principals as change makers, rooted in the principals' commitments to plan and lead the effort. These principals create and communicate a vision, pinpoint the need and desire for change, and make change happen. Because the same causes produce the same effects, our schools cannot afford to engage in the same instructional practices where there is no baseline for teaching, reinforcing, and assessing students' Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) across departments, and expect to be competitive, and see improvements in students' achievement. As Cohen (1999) remarked, organizations strive and keep their competitive edge when they continuously implement transformational change. Nonetheless, academics and

managers alike have usually assumed that organizations have, or ought to have, clear and consistent goals set at the top of their ranking (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Indeed, organizational culture is one of the hardest things to change in an organization but by reframing the organization in all its forms—structural, human resources, political, and symbolic—the school leadership can begin to innovate and infuse small doses of change. Changing the rules, roles, policies, the environment, needs, skills, relationships, power, conflicts, culture, meaning, and heroes involves changing the school's social architecture, empowering teams and students, encouraging advocacy, and inspiring others to embrace the change. Above all, emphasized Papa, Daniels, and Spiker (2008), the wide variety of individuals and groups that make up contemporary organizations worldwide create a pluralistic environment in which interests both dovetail and collide. Effective school leaders do not have to be in agreement with all members of the organization. Instead they have to stick to the organizational vision by empowering others through sustained action. School administrators are, according to Denning (2011), accountable for conveying to the institution the perils in embracing the status in quo and the prospects of championing a drastically different future as they:

- Instill a culture of success. Reaching one's highest potential entails the basic understanding that success is not a goal, but a journey.
- Sustain instructional designs and practice likely to promote student achievement and staff satisfaction.
- Promote ethical values, integrity, and fairness.
- Shape a safe, efficient, teaching and learning environment.
- Build collaboration and partnership with families and community. Students whose parents are involved in their education have a higher propensity to succeed.
- Set boundaries as all stakeholders must have a clear understanding of the do's and don'ts foundations of ethical principles in every society.
- Facilitate the dissemination of a culture of learning.

- Understand, even influence a larger political and cultural context.

The Influence of Effective Leadership on Teaching and Learning

Despite being fairly new in school turnaround initiatives, the effective leadership concept is not new in organizational practice. According to research conducted by Harvey and Holland (2011), five primary practices were identified in effective school administrators, each of which points to the standards successful school administrator are expected to embody, paramount to developing and inspiring committed and purpose driven teachers, hence increasing student achievement. These qualities include:

- shaping a culture of high academic achievement and success for each and every student,
- creating and maintaining a climate accommodating to education,
- nurturing leadership in others,
- enhancing instructional practice, and
- managing human capital, data, and process to promote improvement.

The effect of principals interacting with the teaching staff to foster idea sharing and internal growth by providing timely feedback, giving authentic praises, and modeling effective instructional strategies significantly influences teacher performance and consequently student achievement. According to Blase and Blase (2001), effective school principals not only exemplified teaching techniques during instructional delivery and during tête-à-tête, while at the same time, modeling meaningful between faculty and learners. By doing so, school administrators demonstrated impactful examples of best practices of educational leadership at their core and yielded positive effects on faculty enthusiasm, self-esteem, efficiency, self-reflection, impressive teaching techniques, daring teaching, innovation, and imagination (Blase & Blase, 2001). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2009), K–12 school leadership needs to be strengthened by finding more innovative ways of training school administrators. As

the U.S. Department of Education (2009) noted, “Seventy percent of school principals mentioned that conventional training programs for school administrators were obsolete and no longer addresses the realities of the twenty first century classroom” (p. 1). Principal ineffectiveness in failing schools is a direct result of the latter. In today’s public schools, principalship is a sink-or-swim experience. School leaders must be instructional leaders who shape the culture of the school. Great school administrators care for, retain, and enable outstanding teachers; faulty administrators chase them away (U.S. Department of Education, 2009).

Turnaround in Educational Organizations

While many scholars on the subject agree that the process of turning around chronically underperforming K–12 public schools is one of the underlying principles of the NCLB Act, very limited research documents successful and sustained turnaround efforts in the education field. Furthermore, given the relative young age of educational turnaround efforts, very limited literature is available on successful turnaround K–12 public school administrators and what they do. In any case, a systematic environmental scan assessing the unique needs of every failing school district and every school is paramount for designing, developing, and implementing a sustainable school “from bad to good again” program, commonly known as a turnaround effort. Experience has shown that successful turnaround administrators take five basic steps in designing, developing, and implementing their school improvement programs, with a high propensity to increase the chances that their efforts will yield lasting effects.

Understanding what each school needs. School turnaround initiatives have recently inspired numerous players in the school improvement platform literature. In spite of its astronomical significance and recent research on turnaround, the vast majority of ventures to induce school improvement results in a dismal fate. DiFonzo, Bordia, and Rosnow (1994) noted that “poorly communicated change effort during turnaround spreads rumors, generates fear of the unknown, and amplifies the dismissive effects of change” (p. 448). “Dissemination of

valuable information is undoubtedly paramount to successful implementation of corporate turnaround” (DiFonzo & Bordia, 1998, p. 297). Effective communication is quintessential for needs assessment. This responsibility falls within the scope of school districts that embody the new vision. They must put in place a comprehensive program aimed at identifying and communicating the needs of individual schools, students, and teachers. “Organizational turnaround and organizational communication are two concomitantly related phenomena” (Lewis, 1999, p. 49). During school turnaround initiatives, students, teachers, staff, and administrators must be attuned to the new vision and embark in the new direction for the change effort to yield intended results. Furthermore, research has shown that effective communication has a very positive connection with school outputs such as teacher, student and staff commitment, performance, behavior, and overall satisfaction. Conversely, “poor communication in public schools may yield functionless results such as teachers and students stress, staff job dissatisfaction, mistrust, low commitment, and absenteeism” (Malmelin, 2007, p. 298) thus negatively affecting school efficiency (Zhang & Agrawal, 2009). During turnaround, proper communication between turnaround agents and school site administrators clarifies the individual needs of each and every school involved in the process, thus ensuring the proper distribution of human capital and other resources. This reduces potential resistance to change and as a result, makes the change effort more productive and enduring.

Needs of current and incoming students should be acknowledged and addressed. In addition, districts must ensure that administrators and teachers have the skills and qualifications required to carry out their duties and fulfill their responsibilities with efficacy. The federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) program provides endowment for school turnaround interventions, primarily targeting only 5,000 low performing schools nationwide. Since public school turnaround efforts introduce funds from the state and federal governments, and a variety of tasks spread down the school hierarchy from administrators to students, transmission of

information to these stakeholders on the urgency of change and the intended results is an imperative and centripetal element of turnaround strategies.

Quantify what each school needs and how it is used. The best school instructional practices require not only skilled teachers, but also up-to-date resources. In order to turn failing schools into high achieving ones, districts must guarantee the quality of instructional resources available to teachers for the improvement of instructional practices and confront the needs of all intelligences and learning models. In this age of the Internet, districts must guarantee schools a minimum access to technology as a means to cater to the needs of all intelligences and learning styles. Because turnaround by definition should be a temporary state, struggling schools receive additional support and resources to break the cycle of failure. The SIG and other state and district level turnaround funds are designed to provide a smooth transition to get schools back on their feet, while they build systems, processes, and infrastructure they need during this journey. These funds are usually needed to satisfy student needs, staffing for adequate student-teacher ratio, class size reduction, and other internal priorities.

Invest in the most important changes first. According to Covey (1990), this strategy is known as “first things first.” During turnaround efforts, school districts should first address those things that cause schools to fail at the first place. To be successful, a turnaround plan must help everyone—staff and students—to achieve individual changes in behavior (Goodman & Dean, 1982). By aggressively targeting the challenges that make chronically low-performing schools fail, districts can provide the needed or additional resources and support each school needs to mitigate these challenges. The key priority during the change process is to appoint strong leaders (administrators) at the top of such schools and hire competent teachers who as a team, have the skillsets to meet student needs and sure that at-risk students receive basic social and emotional support. Furthermore, priority must be given to the implementation of school designs that promote and organize excellence in teaching practices and instructional time. Special attention must be given to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Finally, school

districts should ensure that the institution receiving intervention possesses adequate access to support from the state and district office.

Customize the strategy to the school. Intervention has no one-fits-all solution. Every school is a unique system, and it faces unique internal and external environments. Different schools have different student populations of different social and economic backgrounds, geographic locations, levels of parental involvement, levels of parents' education attainment, and views about the short-range and long-range role of education in their lives, just to name a few. In addition, the quality of leadership and teaching staff is very unique to every school. Hence, the district should be thoughtful in designing and implementing personalized intervention strategies for each school's unique, most pressing, and critical needs.

Change the district, not just the schools. Most problems in society are system related, not people related; quality is a systematic process, first establish the aim, vision, mission, goals or constancy of purpose of the system" (Deming, 2000). According to Deming (2000), without the aim, there is no system, no identity; then identify the components and the process that coordinate the actions of the components, and processes and the interrelationships between the components within the system. Similarly, Aristotle (1991) noted that "the aggregate is better than the tally of its chunks." Intervention strategies that only address the needs of individual schools without looking at the school district as a system and confronting the core system-wide structural issues that caused these educational institutions to collapse in the first place do not, and will not, generate enduring improvements. During turnaround, the intervention strategies should ensure schools have the resources to succeed during the intervention effort and continue to succeed when the intervention is over. Successful intervention should be sustainable and leverage lessons learned to provide recommendations for potential broader reforms that support ongoing improvements in other districts and schools that embark onto such efforts.

In conclusion, no magic carpet, silver bullet, or single one solution can bring positive change and turn around chronically underperforming schools. However, by following these five simple remedial steps, turnaround leaders can substantially improve their ability for scalable, quantifiable, and sustainable success.

Reframing Organizations

Organizations are intricate entities sometimes difficult to comprehend. Several aspects of organizational life make it unpredictable, complicated, and often times ambiguous and the most substantial challenge for leaders and managers in organizations is to uncover the right way to frame and reframe their organizations when necessary in an economy that has become more global, competitive, and unstable. It is imperative for school turnaround principals to possess a detail mastery of the challenges of the school improvement undertaking in order to build a team of competent professionals who can support their decisions and act in unison in order to attain satisfactory results within a reasonable time frame. According to Bolman and Deal (2013), reframing entails viewing events both inside and outside the organization with multiple lenses, from different viewpoints in order to avoid misperceptions and psychic blindness. Reframing organizations in times of decline requires patience, clarity, and flexibility while redefining and reviewing organizational events through structural, human capital, political, and symbolic lenses in order to avoid oversimplifying problems. These events include:

1. Structural leadership: allows those in position of power to make decisive decisions that shape the organization by developing new models of the interconnectedness between structure, function, strategy, and environment.
2. Human resources (human capital) leadership: an effective human capital leaders focus on facilitating, motivating, and empowering employees as their efficacy is contingent upon talent, sensitivity, and service to the organization, not position of power. They help subordinates accomplish extraordinary results. According to Bolman and Deal (2013), effective human resources leaders trust employees, are

available and accessible, build team by empowering others and getting them involved in the decision-making process and information flow.

3. Political and cultural leadership: power, politics, and culture define how things are done in organizations, hence its failure and success. Effective political leaders are altruistic, they have a clear understanding of their followers' concerns and interests (Bolman & Deal, 2013). In like manner, good successful political leaders embody the following four principles: (a) clarify what they want and what they can get, (b) empower others to act, (c) build relationships with all stakeholders, and (d) use persuasion and negotiation instead of coercion to accomplish their objectives (Bolman & Deal, 2013).
4. Symbolic leadership: every organization is defined by its culture and successful symbolic leaders are transformational leaders whose vision for the future brings out the best in followers and move them toward a higher purpose. Culture and communication defines how things are done in organizations, and according to Bolman and Deal (2013), successful symbolic leaders consistently apply the following set of rules: (a) leading by example, (b) use symbols as attention grabbers, (c) frame experience, (d) communicate a shared vision, (e) use storytelling to inspire followers, and (f) have great respect for history.

Turnaround in educational organizations. America as a nation is at a crossroads in a groundbreaking effort to turn around chronically failing public schools. For the past few years, school districts across the nation have focused unprecedented intellectual efforts and financial resources on turning around America's lowest-performing institutions. Following the wave of educational reforms initiated in the 1950s in the K–12 landscape, elementary and secondary school students across the country were expected to achieve at their highest potential. Unfortunately, the results on national achievement tests and other standardized tests such as CST, ACT, and SAT show stagnation since they began in 1970. Moreover, performance

comparisons between American K–12 students and those of other countries suggest that American K–12 students, especially those in upper secondary public education grades, do not blossom. This consistent low performance of America’s public elementary and secondary schools triggered the need for major nationwide educational reforms, which in many regards, did not prove efficient in bringing about meaningful change within failing schools. Turning around persistently low-performing schools requires more than just a piece of legislation; a more prescriptive leadership approach capable of addressing the problem from its core is needed, while designing and implementing corrective measures appropriate to the problem at hand. However, while statistics from the Education Research Strategies (ERS) show that while most of America’s public K–12 schools are failing to properly educate our children, some schools have made significant improvements in student achievement.

Mass Insight Education (2009) noted that turnaround is a drastic and systematic overhaul of a low-achieving school designed to yield noticeable short-term results two years following its initiation, and steer the school through the process that refines it into high-performing organization in long-term.” Kutash, Nico, Gorin, Rahmatullah, and Tallant (2010) noted that “to promote the sense of urgency, the U.S. government has made significant amounts of funds available and offered directions for reforms that support school turnaround initiatives” (p. 4). The K–12 turnaround phenomenon is a relatively recent phenomenon initiated with the inception of President Barack Obama’s administration’s RTTT initiative of 2009.

Measuring success during turnaround. Successful school turnarounds are swift and hasty strategic changes in school culture and systems that aim at dramatically improve students’ achievement in chronically low-performing schools (Lutterloh, Cornier, & Hassel, 2016). In January 2009, as part of the RTTT initiative, the Obama administration revealed its plan to impart five billion dollars to improve America’s 5,000 chronically low performing K–12 public schools between 2009 and 2014. According to Kutash et al. (2010), President Barack Obama declared in his inception address:

Instead of providing funds to chronically failing schools and promoting the status quo, we will support school reforms designed to improve student achievement and school performance, hence improving chronically failing schools that stand between many American children and their future, in both urban and suburban schools. (p. 9)

This was considered a very bold move by the administration primarily because to date, even though some individual school turnaround initiatives had proven successful, the movement had not produced known dramatic, successful improvement efforts nationwide. Eighteen months after the movement was launched and federal funds had been distributed, to states and school districts that had drafted comprehensive turnaround strategies, it was time to take action. There are two common benchmarks used to measure success during turnaround efforts: (a) school site environment, and (b) student overall performance.

Understanding success in turnarounds. As experience shows, turnaround efforts are very difficult to achieve, let alone sustain; and they fail in about 70% of the time. Lutterloh et al. (2016) emphasized that very few states and school districts have a clear and sturdy understanding of turnaround success. According to Lutterloh et al. (2016), understanding turnaround success embodies two criteria:

- Identifying successful turnarounds through success-contributing factors, thus creating lessons useful for other schools.
- Identifying early signs of off-track or astray early symptoms of potentially failing turnaround efforts in order to respond more quickly and efficiently.

In general, while approaches to public school turnaround vary from one state to another, one district to another, one school to another, most school improvement plans adopt what is known as “theory of action,” a Quadra fold that promotes input, school based practices, leading indicators, and outcomes. Lutterloh et al. (2016) suggested that to measure and actually understand success not only through students’ academic success but also the path and steps toward the attainment of such outcomes, state administrators, district superintendents, and

school principals need a “theory of action” bridging the gap between those steps and the desired outcomes.

Inputs. Inputs lay the foundation for success as they allow states and school districts to create and maintain both internal and external conditions pivotal for schools to achieve rapid, dramatic increase in the students’ achievements. The most important stage of the input is the selection and recruitment process of a turnaround principal with outstanding leadership skills and competencies (Steiner et al., 2016). The second stage of the input process is to provide the new school principal leverage and financial, human, technological, legal, and political resources necessary to jump start the turnaround process. From this point on, tough decisions must be made and enacted upon. As an illustration, Lutterloh et al. (2016) recommended that the turnaround school principal must put together a team of successful teachers with known competencies paramount to turnaround and meaningfully allocate time, money, and other resources, and must also promote programs that support teaching and learning. These programs should be both internal, such as school extra-curricular activities, and external, such as parent and community involvement. During turnaround efforts, school principals should not shy away from community leaders. Instead, principals should embrace community leaders and invite them to be a part of the solution. School improvement leaders should enlist support from state leaders, district leaders, and external providers to guarantee the success of turnaround efforts (Lutterloh et al., 2016).

School-based practices. The first step toward leading a successful organization is to create and communicate a clear vision. Most public school districts in the United States were built over 40 years ago on average, which means that their visions and mission statements may not have been revisited or reviewed, do not reflect the reality and needs of the current student body, and certainly do not represent the values and contributions of teachers and staff. Major decisions should be aligned with the school’s mission statement. Students, teachers, and parents should be able to discuss inconsistencies in the implementation of these strategies. The

school's improvement plan should represent a vision shared by the entire school body in order to yield collective devotion. In addition to conditions for success set forth during the input stage, school-based practices provide benchmarks for turnaround agents to measure success and understand whether or not the schools involved in change efforts have taken necessary steps toward dramatically improving student achievement (Lutterloh et al., 2016). School-based practices are organized into five main categories:

- turnaround planning;
- leader actions;
- instructional practices;
- school culture and climate; and
- performance management routines.

To summarize, working in conjunction with teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders, the school turnaround leadership team should design an inclusive vision for current school improvement and long-term growth. The mission statement and vision must showcase a common value system based on high student expectations, holistic nurturing, and well-being (Lutterloh et al., 2016). Within the scope of the school-based practices, the vision and mission should be first endorsed by the school board, clearly communicated by the leadership team, and used to budget for staff recruitment and selection and instructional practices improvements—posted on school district's website (Lutterloh et al., 2016).

Leading indicators. In addition to improved student performance and achievement on state standardized tests, measuring successful turnaround efforts includes other leading indicators such as student engagement, parent involvement, and teacher and administrator engagement (Kowal & Ableidinger, 2011). In addition, Kowal and Ableidinger (2011) contented that these leading indicators provide palpable and measurable corroboration that the turnaround efforts are producing intended results. Nevertheless, developing a more comprehensive public school turnaround success description entices further research and analysis. More in-depth and

empirical analysis of the turnaround process must be conducted in order to understand the most significant and measurable success indicators and the desirable trajectory to achieving these milestones. For instance, Lutterloh et al. (2016) proposed a success measurement module built around three main strands:

- teaching and learning,
- organizational design, and
- school leadership.

Outcomes. The final step toward measuring and understanding success in turnaround initiatives is having a clear picture of dramatic gains in academic achievement or return on investment (ROI). Lutterloh et al. (2016) built the conceptual framework of dramatic improvement in student academic achievement around three standards observable four years down the road: (a) reading proficiently and math scores on STAR test, (b) progress in reading and math scores on STAR tests, and (c) rates of graduation for seniors in high schools.

Proficiency. Proficiency is defined as the advancement in knowledge or skill, the quality or state of being proficient (Proficiency, n.d.). The purpose of a school turnaround initiative is to dramatically enhance student performance in chronically low-achieving schools (Lutterloh et al., 2016). Being cognizant of this, a successfully turned-around school provides evidence of significant betterment in student achievement as evaluated by an important increase of the institution statewide percentage bracket for proficiency as required by state assessment (AYP). As required by the core principles of the accountability movement in education, school turnaround leaders must employ multiple sources and types of evidence because even though the standardized test scores in reading and math provide some measurable evidence of achievement improvement, they are not sufficient indicators for assessing sustained school quality. According to “Core Principles” (2009), a public school involved in turnaround initiatives should use inspections or other analysis of school content and practice to provide insights that guide improvement efforts. These schools should validate performance measures with external

outcomes other than those used in an accountability system and aim at pointing out all types of frauds.

Growth. Substantial and sustained student growth is another landmark achievement of successful school turnaround as it puts all students on a path to closing the achievement gap and provides evidence of reaching rigorous academic standards. Upon attaining successful turnaround, public schools show a clear rise in standardized tests results in terms of AYP and API. These results translate into a high statewide percentile ranking on state growth measure. These results often show a pattern of instability, and according to Lash, Peterson, Vineyard, Barrat, and Tran (2013), current research has attributed the instability in school-level growth scores to a commonly used method of measurement of student growth known as the student growth percentile model. Nevertheless, researchers on school turnaround success concluded that student growth is paramount and an undeniable indicator of success and must be included in the definition despite being only one of multiple indicators.

Graduation rates for high schools. One of the main indicators of success in high school turnaround, in addition to increased proficiency and high student growth rate, is the graduation rate. In successful turnaround high schools, the percentage of students graduating on time is significant. Similarly, in these schools, the number of students exiting and college and career ready indicate a net performance improvement across the board. According to Lutterloh et al. (2016), the high school graduation rate is not an inflexible measure of success and does not equate college and career readiness for these students. Graduation rates measure the percentage of students who successfully complete the state-determined course of study for high school culmination. Nevertheless, because schools are not required to report on how students performed academically, it does not set a high standard for student academic performance, thus making the graduation rate a lagging measure. Similarly, because the graduation rate is measured at the end of a student's K–12 academic career, it does not consistently monitor students' potential to graduate during their elementary and middle school careers. In order to

accurately measure progress, it may be useful to connect the graduation rate with a “freshman on-track” measure, which focuses on the credits a student needs to qualify for graduation, as well as his or her progress toward those benchmarks.

Limits of success measurements. While many states and school districts easily established criteria and landmarks for identifying K–12 schools in need of attention, federal standards for tracking progress and measuring success during turnaround efforts are not established. Consequently, assessment of the extent to which turnaround efforts were successful has proven very difficult, as well as understanding whether or not any positive change occurred in the context of system improvement all together. Nevertheless, two major themes surrounding measures of success during turnaround receive broad agreement: school level and system level.

At the school level. Turnaround efforts evaluate student achievement results, school culture overhaul, and a comprehensive makeup of the learning environment. The bar is set high as meaningful improvements are expected within two to three years. This requires a complete make-up of the school culture through the creation of clear communication of a new vision. Effective school turnaround initiatives require the collaborative effort and commitment of school districts, administrators, teachers, and non-teaching staff (Herman et al., 2008). Meanwhile, added Lambert et al. (2002), expecting magical “hero principals” to do the job without all stakeholders’ collaboration is unrealistic. Thus, turnaround efforts require a systematic approach and a full-time commitment of districts in order to yield effective and sustainable results. The following steps, outlined by Rhim (2012), serve as guidelines for effective turnaround effort measurement at the school level:

- Assess whether the current principal has the required situational leadership skills to initiate the change effort, based on his or her track record of past achievements.

- The best indicator of a principal's ability to take these bold actions is the level at which he or she took similar actions in the past, based on leadership skills and performance.
- In the event the current principal has lead the institution for almost a decade and the academic achievement has been stagnating or dropping, the teaching staff has not been inspired, and enrollment has dropped, it is time to let him or her go.
- In the event the principal has led the institution for three years, demonstrated some gains, set high expectations for all students, gotten rid of unproductive routines, released ineffective personnel, limited staff turnover, then the principal can lead a successful turnaround initiative with support from the district.
- Having carefully and intentionally selected the turnaround principal—whether it is the existing or a new principal—to work in partnership with the district, schools should demonstrate tangible signs of progress, such as progress on standardized test results within 18 to 24 months.
- Key priorities need to be identified and defined and specific performance expectations need to be outlined.
- Consistent collaboration with turnaround principals must be established with the capability to hold them accountable for meeting performance expectations as well as providing support necessary for school administrators to initiate and implement successful turnaround.
- Data related to leading turnaround indicators, including key turnaround leader actions and leadership practices, must be collected.
- The principal's performance should be assessed according to defined expectations at 18 months and 24 months into the effort.
- The decision to retain school principal should be based on tangible evidence of performance.

- Successful principals should be rewarded and supported to build momentum and sustain turnaround.

Within the system. Turnaround effort address specific goals for students' achievement, school site learning environment, and the school district as a system that is required to track performance of all schools, evaluate state and district self-performance guidelines, and share best practices with other districts and schools. According to the USDOE (1998), the following suggestions for state and local school district leaders are useful in ensuring that all students enroll in and attend high-performing schools:

- Give school administrators enough leverage to act swiftly, while holding them liable for success.
- Help schools that are striving to succeed.
- Endeavor to hire competent administrators and faculty to lead and teach in declining schools.
- Take meaningful actions against chronically failing schools.
- Create data collection network at the state or district level to track student performance.
- Assess student achievement to ensure success for all students and avoid instant gratification by allowing sometime for the turnaround effort to pay dividends.
- Allow parents to send their children to schools of their choosing and give them the opportunity to be the architect of their children's college and career path.
- Invest in small learning communities such as career academies within schools.
- Make sure no students are disenfranchised and provide extra support to low socioeconomic students and students with disabilities for equity purposes by focusing on high quality education.
- Encourage broad family and community involvement.

- In case an acting administrator is incompetent, get him/her replaced by a new one who is knowledgeable of similar schools.
- Offer counseling to burned-out teachers; if that does not work, advise them to leave the profession.
- Allow staff members in perpetual denial the option to resign.

Federal funding in turnaround efforts. The USDOE rewards school districts for designing and implementing policy change and turnaround efforts that set expectations compatible with local education affiliates (LEAs). Under the patronage of the USDOE, school districts receive significant amounts of short-term funds, which has led states and school districts to express concerns about the sustainability of their turnaround efforts in long-term. Such funds include RTTT funds, SIG, and IIF.

RTTT Funds. This funding allocates \$4.35 billion to states committed to school improvement efforts. RTTT has had early measurable successes in promoting valuable innovative K–12 school policies nationwide. According to Manna (2010), while this approach has both pros and cons, it has yet to show evidence of its effectiveness on school turnaround. The program reinforces the following reforms:

- Implementation of quality student evaluation and student assessment standard through common core aiming getting students college and career ready. Furthermore, under its mandate, states and school districts must design assignments geared toward promoting critical thinking.
- Attracting and keeping competent teachers and principals in our nation's schools. great teachers and leaders in America's classrooms— RTTT subsidizes teachers and school administrators through better teacher training, evaluation, compensation, and retention policies by encouraging and rewarding competent teachers, while working to guarantee their proper and adequate placement.

- Support data systems that inform decision and improve instruction—RTTT requires states to develop common record keeping systems that will promote assessing and using data to drive instruction.
- Applying innovation and effectiveness, funds should be allocated to improve chronically underperforming schools.
- Demonstrating and sustaining educational reforms—RTTT promotes partnerships between schools and local businesses, raise students' achievement by closing the achievement gaps, increasing support for local charter schools, reinvigorating STEM curricula, and reinforcing the spirit of innovation and reform.

School improvement grants. Title I eligibility funding needs have allocated \$3.55 billion to states. SIG guidelines are compatible with those of RTTT, and require states and school districts to use the four turnaround models for improvement. According studies by Shea and Liu (2010), some states have not found the SIG to be entirely effective due to the lack of qualified lead partners. The study recommended more oversight by the SEA in future rounds of competition for SIG funds for informing LEAs of the role of the lead partners.

Investing in innovation funds. The DOE has allocated \$650,000 million in competitive grants awarded to nonprofits and school districts to expand innovative and evidence-based approaches designed to improve student achievement and school turnaround efforts. As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the Department of Education received unprecedented funding to improve K–12 education. Just like the RTTT and School Improvement Grant (SIG), the Investment in Innovation Fund (IIF) aimed at closing the achievement gap by addressing the following needs:

- college and career ready standards for all K–12 public schools,
- improve teacher effectiveness,
- enhance data system, and
- improve low-performing schools.

The allocation of these funds aims at “restoring American leadership in fundamental research, educate the next generation with 21st century knowledge and skills while creating a global workforce, build a state of the art school science infrastructure, develop a world class information technology system” (Obama, 2010, p. 3). As President Barack Obama emphasized:

It is imperative that we patronage American innovation. Last year, we engage in the most significant investment in fundamental research funding in our history; a pioneering investment that could introduce the world’s most cost effective solar cells or therapy that destroys cancer cells without harming healthy ones, and we can provide Americans employment today as we begin to build infrastructures for the next generation. From the first railroads to the interstate highway system, our nation has always been built to compete. There’s no reason Europe or China should have the fastest trains, or the new factories that manufacture clean energy products. (State of the Union Address, 2010, n.p.)

The four-school turnaround model. Promoting dramatic rather than incremental turnaround reforms, the U.S. Department of Education requires states and school districts to use the following four approaches:

- Turnarounds. Replace the principal, rehire no more than 50% of the staff, and allow the new principal enough flexibility to re-staff, design calendars and schedules, and draft budgets in order to facilitate a full implementation of a comprehensive approach geared toward improving student performance and achievement.
- Restarts. Transfer control of or close and reopen a school under a newly selected school operator selected through a rigorous selection process.
- School closures. Close the school and enroll students in a higher-achieving school within the LEA.

- **Transformations.** Replace the principal and take steps toward increasing teachers' and school administrators' effectiveness, institute comprehensive instructional reforms, increase learning time, create community-oriented schools by increasing parent and community involvement, and last but not least, provide operational flexibility and sustained support.

The K–12 school turnaround platform. Turnaround efforts have been the subject of various studies over the past few years and a few organizations have been known to either provide turnaround services or emerge with programs and services designed for the implementation of turnaround efforts. However, the number of knowledgeable operators and practitioners serving this lucrative field is still insufficient to meet the high demand of failing schools in need of attention. Moreover, it has been reported that several new companies serving this sector lack the adequate expertise to successfully accomplish this delicate mission, thus rendering states and local school districts' assessment of and access to such providers a daunting task. Consequently, states and local school districts are compelled to select a minute number of schools needy of turnaround efforts for active intervention.

The K–12 school turnaround actors. Besides the U.S. Department of Education, whose role is limited to funding and policy catalyst, key players involved in the turnaround efforts include the following: states and local school districts, unions, school operators, and various supporting partners. Above and beyond providing funds and being the catalyst for policy change and implementation, the U.S. government has in recent years reiterated its role in vetting many of the newcomers to the school turnaround platform. In the meantime, the pledge by the federal government to provide funds to school turnaround initiatives has encouraged many states to draft new laws that create more favorable conditions for such efforts.

States and districts. Nationwide, each state carries the responsibility to develop turnaround strategies and create reforms, turnaround policies, and partnerships with local districts. In turn, local school districts are in charge of executing school improvement initiatives,

working with school contractors and school support partners, while at the same time addressing human capital issues. States and school districts are in charge of implementing the turnaround plan. States and school districts play a supervisory role during these initiatives.

Unions. Teacher unions are a significant entity in the K–12 public education sector in the United States. According to Henderson (2004), within the first 10 years of the twenty-first century, the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Teacher Federation (ATF) accounted for about 75% of the 5.5 million certificated staff employed in the nation’s K–12 education system. While teacher unions have been around for over a century, both the NEA and the AFT emerged as a result of the exponential growth of the nation’s public education system as we know it today, and school administrators’ authoritarian power over teachers. Therefore, bargaining rights for teachers emerged from the demands for their protection from arbitrary or sexist treatments by administrators (Strunk & Grissom, 2010). In many states, the union’s role is critical in ensuring good working environment for teachers. While unions have been against initiatives such as dismissing “underperforming” faculty members, expanding the working day for teachers, correlating teacher wages to pupils’ achievement, and designing and implementing new faculty evaluation guidelines, it has been proven that unions are increasingly beginning to work in partnership with all stakeholders to tackle the issues related to school improvement.

School operators. In many cases, school operators are working in partnership with both charter and private schools in order to adapt their models to failing public schools. More and more school operators oversee networks of schools thus working at both school and systemic levels, because while these specialists provided with a great amount of leverage when it comes to their actions, their accountability is very minimal as contractors. According to Sawchuk (2009), school operators provide schools freedom from contract provisions during turnaround effort as they are operated by a third-party management organization. Besides the conventional district-ran public schools, school improvement initiatives could also be led by school contractors such as school management organizations (SMOs) and others which provide

services such as curriculum development, assessment design, professional development, teacher recruitment and selection.

Supporting partners. Beside traditional school operators, a wide variety of volunteering organizations are now evolving and teaming up with traditional school operators to support school turnaround efforts. These include:

- comprehensive school redesign specialists,
- human capital and professional development providers,
- district and school resource management,
- integrated services providing prevention of violence and other mental health issues,
- community based organizations,
- research and field-building organizations, and
- philanthropic funders.

Managing Transitions During Turnaround

While changing an organization entails shifting its external orientation toward a new vision and can happen fast, transition is the reorientation stakeholders need to make in response to the change—and transition can take time. Whether planned or unplanned, change is the only constant and it does happen to people and organizations. Regardless of the scenario by which it came, people will always go through a transitional period before proceeding into either the expected improvement or new situation.

Turnaround and innovation. The ability to innovate and bring innovative ideas successfully to practice will undoubtedly be a crucial determinant of the success, sustainability, and competitiveness of twenty-first century organizations in the global economy. There is a growing awareness among policymakers that innovative activity is the main driver of economic progress and well-being as well as a potential factor in meeting global challenges in domains such as environment and health” (OECD, 2013). Knowledge in the fields of environment and

health is within the scope of education. These innovative activities can be expanded in the field of education, the cornerstone of the transmission of knowledge.

With globalization, leaders in established organizations around the world have spent several decades attempting to build companies that could thrive by executing effective leadership strategies with the utmost discipline, while at the same time, responding to very dynamic, even unstable environments filled with opportunities and threats. According to Welch, at the dawn of the decade we witnessed two threats ahead of us, one externally and the other internally (as cited in Applegate & Harreld, 2009). As an illustration, on the outside, we faced a global economy that would be typified by meager growth, with potent global competitors contending for a smaller portion of the pie; on the inside, our contest was even greater as we had to uncover a way to amalgamate the power resources, and range of a large organization with the needs, potentials, spirit, and drive of a minuscule one (Welch, as cited in Applegate & Harreld, 2009). With this approach, Welch regarded the change process as an opportunity for growth—a perfect time to synergize— not a threat.

Organizational decline: A stimulus for innovation. In today's turbulent social, political, economic, legal, cultural, and technological environment, leaders seeking to promote innovation as a response to their organizations' decline are often faced with the dilemma to embrace nontraditional approaches. These leaders must be creative about ways to adjust and redirect their organization's mission, while maintaining the known vision. When facing a crisis, doing something is always better than doing nothing. According to Mueller, McKinley, Mone, and Barker (2001), "although innovation bears risks and is not a guaranteed path to success, it is better than inertia when an organization is confronted with decline" (p. 25). When the Italian cruise ship Costa Concordia capsized after striking an underwater boulder off the coast of Isola del Giglio, in Tuscany, Italy, on January 13, 2012, killing 32 passengers with many more missing and others left trapped inside the sunken vessel, its captain, Francesco Schettino, nicknamed "Captain Coward" for this sad occasion, fled the ship before the 4,200 passengers on board

were safely ashore. The verdict was 16 years in prison for manslaughter. In like manner, as a passenger airline entered turbulent clouds as it climbed to cruising altitude and the pilot attempted an evasive maneuver to avoid the turbulence, pitching the nose too steep and causing the aircraft to lose lift and ultimately stall and crash, killing all on board, poor decisions made by both the captain of the Costa Concordia and the pilot of the jetliner were simply due not to a lack of appropriate training, but poor situational leadership, to the lack creativity and innovation in situation of crisis. They both failed to introduce new ideas, new methods into what was supposed to be routine practice and translate them into action. When organizations face crises and their leadership initiates change efforts to turn things around, the leaders have to be knowledgeable of the change process, how change is initiated, implemented, and ultimately how the transition should be managed for sustainability. Change is not synonymous to transition. Change is situational and involves organizational systems, whereas transition, according to Bridges (2009), is a three-phase psychological reorientation process that affects stakeholders. In other words, change means taking a new direction, embarking into a new vision, while transition involves ending something and beginning something new; and is done in three stages: the ending, the neutral zone, and the new beginning. Change is the only constant; change happens in organizations, either planned or unplanned. Managing transitions during turnaround efforts requires identifying and understanding the three stages of the path to the future: the status quo also filled with certainty; the neutral zone, also filled with ambiguity; and the future, also known as the new beginning, filled with hope.

Chapter Summary

Inspirational leadership is about empowering followers; it is not about making people do things but it is about making people want to do things. As Simon Sinek (2013) remarked:

Great leaders are able to bring the best out of people. Those who are capable of inspiring give followers a sense of commitment or belonging that does not equate external incentive or other benefits to be gained. Those who sincerely lead are capable

of creating a circle of followers who act not because they were slayed but because they were inspired, the motivation to act is deeply personal; those who inspire will create a following of people, supporters, voters, customers; workers who act for the good of the whole not because they have to, but because they want to. (p. 19)

Connecting individuals to what is significant is the label of the game; because creativity and beliefs emerge when people interact. When individuals relate in some respect, things shape up, leaders lead, and followers follow. Teams commit and pristine products are set in motion, and on schedule, the enthusiasm is unmistakable as thoughts emerge and materialize, struggling organizations see brighter days, once chronically low performing K–12 public schools see a new day, and fulfill their golden mission—the mission of educating our children, hence guaranteeing them a brighter future. Organizations are systems and systems do not function in isolation but as organized collections of subsystems that are integrated to accomplish an overall goal. An organization of even modest size is composed of many units or departments, such as personnel and payroll, customer service, or billing and shipping, and each of these units is a system. If one part of the system is changed, the overall system is likely to be influenced through the network of relationships between parts.

Bringing about positive change to chronically failing public schools, turning them around, requires a thoughtful level of personal leadership; the leadership of oneself, the ability to give one's life a direction and follow that direction with resolve (transitional and transformational), ethical considerations, strategic thinking, vision, planning, implementing, community buy-in, and last but not least, teambuilding, which comes down to having a clear understanding of the “art of the start.” While turning around failing schools is not an easy task, by integrating transitional and transformational leadership practice turnaround administrators can attain desirable goals. Meanwhile, by surrounding oneself with a team of knowledgeable professionals who understand and align themselves with the new direction envisioned and implemented for this endeavor, turnaround public school administrators working with their teams, diligently with passion, mutual

trust, and integrity toward the completion of this task, can lead their organizations to new horizons: improving enrollment, retention, increasing graduation rates, and maximizing return on investment, can be an achievable task.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

Research design and methodology provide a road map for the design and implementation for a study most tangibly inclined to yield the intended outcomes (Burns, Grove, & Stuppy, 1998). Examining the best leadership practices of K–12 public school administrators in Los Angeles County who have led a major change effort in their respective schools was best achieved through a qualitative phenomenological research design (Creswell, 2003). The study population and the sampling is elaborated, besides the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process for human subject considerations. Furthermore, validity and reliability of the study is addressed, and finally, a thorough examination of the collection of data and its analysis method is presented through a formulation from the research findings. This chapter outlines the investigation design and its methodology, including data gathering, interview protocol and analysis of the data, statement of limitations and personal biases of this study.

Re-Statement of Research Questions

For the prospect of this investigation, the subsequent research questions were developed and addressed:

1. What are the best leadership practices of turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organization?
2. What are the most common leadership challenges faced by turnaround K–12 administrators in LA County Public Schools who embarked onto major change effort in these organizations?
3. How do turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who have led major change effort in their respective organizations measure their success both as leaders and as turnaround efforts?

4. What recommendations would turnaround K–12 administrators in LA County Public Schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations make for promoting innovative practices within public schools?

Nature of the Study

This descriptive qualitative study addresses the research questions generated for the purpose of this undertaking. It adopts a respondent-centered holistic approach by developing a clear understanding of their opinions about their lived experiences, and in many regards, allows the researcher, according to Holloway and Wheeler (1996), to generate a comprehensive description that will present a dynamic description of the participants' realities. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010), assumptions are so basic that without them, the research problem itself could not exist. It is important to mention that just stating his or her assumptions is not enough for the researcher to guarantee adjusting their shortcomings; instead, the researcher must justify that each assumption is true by taking them from uninformed assumptions to informed opinions; otherwise the study cannot reflect the phenomenon being examined. In the interest of the accuracy of this study, all subjects, K–12 school administrators in Los Angeles County Public Schools were assumed to be highly qualified professionals in elementary and secondary education. It was also assumed that the genders of these turnaround administrators did not significantly affect their perception of best leadership practices. Another assumption was that these administrators answered the interview questions (IQs) truthfully and as accurately as possible in the light of their unique experiences. Moreover, it was assumed that all participants in this study accurately represented administrators in K–12 public schools in Los Angeles County. Finally, the K–12 school administrators participating in this study were assumed to respond honestly and to the best of their individual abilities.

The researcher, according to Mouton and Marais (1992), works from the point of grasping the perceptions of the participants without imposing preexisting expectations. The research questions paved the way for open-ended, semi-structured interview questions asked of

15 selected participants, which were compatible with what Patton (2002) offered as suggestions for open-ended interviews, purposefully designed to engender “in-depth feedbacks about respondents’ lived experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings, and knowledge” (p. 23). Moreover, this study assessed the research blueprint against the stipulations set forth for thorough qualitative study (Creswell, 2003). Neophyte investigators are oftentimes submerged by the superfluity of study designs and approaches that are available to them, thus making the choice for an appropriate design for a given study complex. Mouton (1996) described methodology as the technique or process by which something is done, whereas Polit and Hungler (1999) inferred that it is a method of data collection and analysis in the course of an inquiry by following a predesigned protocol, recounting how the study will be conducted. In other words, the research blueprint and methodology encompass the “know how” of the scientific method and techniques applied to obtain valid understanding. As Burns et al. (1997) posited, “Research design and methodology include design, setting, sample, limitations, data collection, and other useful elements of the study” (p. 581). The basis for this qualitative, change-oriented phenomenological investigation is to: (a) evaluate the best leadership practices of turnaround K-12 administrators in LA County Public Schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations, and (b) explore the most common leadership challenges faced by turnaround K-12 Administrators in LA County Public Schools who embarked on major change effort in these organizations.

According to De Vos (1998), qualitative research design is dialectic and interpretive because the researcher’s role throughout his or her interaction with each participant is to discover the subject’s lived experiences and translate them into themes. In this study, a phenomenological methodology was utilized. Spiegelberg (as cited in Streubert & Carpenter, 1999), further identified descriptive phenomenology as:

a process of straight exploration, examination, and rendition of a given phenomenon as freely as it could be from unexplored assumptions inclined to maximize instinctive

recount, it enhances people's perception of participants' lived experiences while at the same time, delineating the depth, breadth. (p. 49)

The basic assumption of qualitative research about the world is that unlike quantitative research, which examines a single reality and can be measured by an instrument, qualitative research examines multiple realities as described by individuals who lived them. According to Myers (2009), the qualitative research method moves from the hidden presumptions to research blueprint. The research purpose of qualitative study is geared toward understanding a social situation from participants' perspectives. It is flexible, needless of hypothesis, and its design is contingent upon data collection.

The basic strengths of qualitative research include (a) a view of homogeneous exploration of lived experiences of participants, (b) use of open-ended questions to raise more issues, and (c) understand behaviors of values, beliefs, and assumptions. Conversely, qualitative research also shows some major weaknesses: (a) the results are not objectively verifiable, (b) interviewers must be skillful throughout the interviewing process, (c) time consuming interviewing process, and (d) generates intensive number of themes. According to Myers (2009), qualitative investigation is schemed to help investigators comprehend people, besides their environmental sociocultural contexts. Data is originated from the straight observation of conducts, interviews, written perspectives, or public archives (Sprinthall, Schmutte, & Sirois, 1991). Moreover, while both qualitative and quantitative methods are based on the essence of knowledge and how participants perceive the world around them, qualitative research was designed for social studies to allow investigators examine sociocultural phenomena. According to Domegan and Fleming (2007), qualitative research aims at discovering and exploring the unknowns of a problem. Descriptive phenomenology is a four-step process that involves (a) intuiting, (b) bracketing, (c) analyzing, and (d) describing (Brink & Wood, 1998).

Intuiting. Streubert and Carpenter (1999) noted that “intuition is a technique by which the investigator scrutinizes the data in order for a comprehensive and accurate elucidation of the meaning of a given description to be achieved” (p. 331). Intuiting enables the researcher to be soaked up in the phenomenon from a fresh perspective without stratifying it with what he or she left out. Here, the researcher’s concentration and involvement are at the highest (Brink & Wood, 1998), thus resulting in a clear apprehension of the event being investigated (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). Intuition allowed the acquisition of a clear picture of the phenomenon of best leadership practices of turnaround administrators Los Angeles County K–12 public schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations. As the interview process unfolded, the participants’ knowledge generation was tapped by using simple, yet facilitating techniques such as elucidating open-ended questions, while avoiding prompting ones (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999).

Analyzing. In phenomenology, analyzing entails the identification of the roots of the event being investigated based on the accuracy of the data. This step requires careful listening as it is important to compare and contrast various events involved in the phenomenon being studied, thus allowing recurring themes and relationships to stand out (Brink & Wood, 1998). Listening to the elaboration of the lived turnaround experience of the administrators and embodied the scheme allows underlying common themes to emerge.

Describing. In the final step of describing the research, oral and verbal communications are key underpinning principles; the findings are unveiled to the general public (Brink & Wood, 1998). A rush to conclusions or premature description of the phenomenon is not helpful; instead, one thing should be remembered: “Premature description is the common methodological denominator for error in the phenomenological research design” (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999, p. 52). In this investigation, the analysis of the events involved delineating all aspects of the lived experiences of turnaround K–12 public school administrators and describing these experiences in details.

Methodology: Phenomenological Approach

This phenomenological study is in quest of examining the in-depth quintessence of lived experiences that cannot be revealed through conventional observations (Creswell, 2003; Sanders, 1982) such as those obtained through “normative paradigms” (Sanders, 1982, p. 358). The term *phenomenology* is rooted in Latin from the Greek meaning “phenomenon,” originating from *phainesthai* or “appear,” *phainein*, “to show,” and stands for “philosophy.” Phenomenology was founded by Edmund Gustav Albrecht Husserl and focuses on the “thorough description of a lived experience of an individual free from explanations, assumptions, and philosophical questions, a phenomenon, not a state of being” (phenomenology, 1991, p. 1168). While as a research design phenomenology can be retraced to Hegel and Kant, Vandenberg (1997) recognized Husserl as being the father of phenomenological research in our times, and according to whom facts are treated as “authentic phenomena”; the sole information with which an investigator starts. Phenomenology describes a particular phenomenon or the appearance of things as lived by others (Carpenter, 2007). Issues central to persons’ lived experiences are best suited for this research methodology.

Phenomenology as a philosophy evolved in Western culture as a rationale to the idea that human behavior can be controlled by scientific process on the one hand, and a way to decipher human behavior on the other hand. Based on Husserl’s assessment, and according to Holloway and Wheeler (1996), phenomenology attempts to describe lived experiences of participants without making any previous assumptions about the truthfulness of these experiences and takes into account the “exploration of the true meaning of the phenomenon as lived and described by the individual” (Jasper, 1994, p. 309). Creswell (2003) defined phenomenology as a design of inquiry in which the investigator examines the lived experiences of the participants regarding a phenomenon as they lived it through interviews (Giorgi, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenology represents an inductive, descriptive research method aiming at investigating and describing all phenomena, including human lived experiences as

they appear (Omery, 1983). Similarly, “phenomenological research examines not what is, but what it is perceived to be by particular individuals in a given situation” (Burns et al., 1997, p. 81). Riemen (1986) further added that a phenomenological research seeks to untangle the essence of a phenomenon as experienced by the participants. Phenomenology returns the research to the concrete, which Moustakas (1994) referred to as “back to the things themselves” (p. 26).

The underpinning questions are:

- What is the phenomenon experienced and lived by the respondents?
- How does it manifest itself?

As Van der Wal (1999) posited, phenomenology aims at foraging through the strata of interpretation to unveil experiences as they unfold somehow blatantly in people’s initial contact and involvement in a situation. In this study, these people were turnaround K–12 public school administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations. Moustakas (1994) analyzed the underpinning tenets and the process involved in the phenomenological method. This phenomenological study is in quest of examining in-depth quintessence of lived experiences which cannot be revealed through conventional observations (Creswell, 2003; Sanders, 1982), such as those obtained through “normative paradigms” (Sanders, 1982, p. 358). The phenomenological viewpoint is comprised of the belief “that reality exists only in the eyes and minds of beholders” (Locke, Silverman, & Spirduso, 2004, p. 154).

Phenomenology is a qualitative research methodology inspired by the subdivision of philosophy that examines the phenomena of human awareness. Phenomenology is the cognitive examination of meaning-making experiences (von Eckartsberg, 1986; Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenology is the method of choice whenever the research objectives anticipate unravelling the *essence* of humankind lived experiences (Creswell, 1998) or to examine concepts from different perspectives (Cohen, Kahn, & Steeves, 2000).

Structured process of phenomenology. As Apelgren (2005) suggested, the various schools of phenomenology we know today evolved from two major trends: the classical phenomenology of Hegel and empirical phenomenology of Husserl. Laitinen and Sandis (2010) viewed Hegel's classical phenomenology as traveling in time from natural awareness to philosophical sagacity or ultimate intelligence. Husserl's underpinning identity had been on the quiddity (*whatness*) of things, which is more concerned with intuition and logical thinking as a fundamental means for understanding phenomena. Hermeneutic phenomenological process is aligned with this line; and as outlined by van Manen (1990), it is a panacea between hermeneutical processes (the branch of knowledge that deals with interpretations) and phenomenological analysis (the science of phenomena that focuses on studying consciousness of direct experience). The latter evidenced the structured process of phenomenology as rooted on the scientific method, in which rationale is both interpretive and descriptive.

Conversely, Husserl (1931) perceived phenomenology as a description of the inside world from an outsider perspective. Meanwhile, existential phenomenologists emphasize interdependence and connectedness of the inside and the outside, confirming the notion that "organisms do not live in isolation, paralleled to the fact that phenomena can only be well understood from within. Consequently, existential phenomenology is rooted in the fact that consciously lived experiences are paramount to understanding the ways one is *in* the world.

Weaknesses of phenomenology. While phenomenology is described by Streubert and Carpenter (1999) as "a method that describes a given phenomenon or occurrence of things as lived experiences" (p. 43), it remains evident that this methodology presents certain weaknesses. One of the main weaknesses of this research approach is that it does not have clearly defined steps. The lack of defined steps is because researchers utilizing this design do not emphasize the timing or sequence of events, and even more so, phenomenological design hampers creativity (Burns et al., 1997). Other weaknesses of phenomenology include:

- non-generalizability to other subjects or other situations (i.e., findings might be sole and limited to the somewhat few people),
- quantitative predictions are difficult to make,
- hypotheses and theories are more difficult to test with large participant pools,
- lengthy data collection,
- data analysis is time consuming, and
- easy infringement of investigator's biases and assumptions on the results.

Strengths of phenomenology. Despite the weaknesses mentioned earlier, phenomenology presents the following strengths:

- It represents the best approach when it comes to researching lived experiences in humans (Wimpenny & Gass, 2000).
- It attempts to reveal what is hidden of the phenomenon via a description (Sorrell & Redmond, 1995, as cited in Maggs-Rapport, 2000).
- It involves critical, rigorous, and very systematic inquiry of a phenomenon (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999).
- Data collection is based on the participants' own recount.
- It is useful for describing complex phenomena.
- It is significant for the in-depth examination of a small number of case, and data are usually collected in naturalistic settings.
- It provides understandings and descriptions of people's personal experiences of phenomena.
- It determines idiographic influence (causes of certain events).

At the core of phenomenological study is the attempt to unearth the anatomy and nature of the life-world experiences of respondents by searching for meaning that identifies the quintessence of the phenomena and their accurate account through the daily lived experience (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). According to Streubert and Carpenter (1999), the purpose of

qualitative phenomenology is to: (a) clarify the nature of being human, (b) expand consciousness about a certain phenomenon, (c) foster humankind responsibility in the construction of concreteness, and (d) tighten the bond between experiences, concepts, and theories used to explain those experiences.

Appropriateness of phenomenology methodology. This study sought to uncover best leadership practices of turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations. The term *appropriateness* means the quality or state of being especially suitable or fitting, the properness, and the rightness. Thus, the appropriateness of the phenomenological methodology involves understanding why phenomenology is the better fit for this study. The goal was to examine the best practices of turnaround public school administrators as they led major change efforts in their respective organizations. In other words, these leaders shared their lived experiences.

According to Christensen, Johnson, and Turner (2010), the main goal of phenomenology is to decipher the depth of life-world events of an individual, or a set of individuals, as they dealt with a particular phenomenon. The phenomenologist endeavors to unravel human conduct through the view of participants in the research. In this research, the phenomenologist endeavored to grasp the behavior of turnaround administrators through the lived experiences of public school administrators. This is known as *verstehen*, German for the illustrative understanding of human behavior. In research, phenomenology does not begin with a theory; rather, it is rooted on the phenomenon under investigation. Moustakas, the father of phenomenology, conceptualized experience and behavior as an interrelated and interdependent association of the event and the individual experiencing it. As an illustration, Moustakas (1994) explicated that researchers should emphasize the aggregate of facts and search for the essence of the experiences. Similarly, Chiari and Nuzzo (1996) explained that there are strong connections between phenomenology and constructivism, as the latter examines how a

particular person views the world through personal experiences. As Moustakas (1994) posited, constructivism is a heuristic method in phenomenological analysis involving:

- immersing—the investigator is part of the environment of the event;
- incubating—a space for consciousness, discernment, comprehension;
- illuminating—the process of expanding the perception of the experience;
- explicating—actions of reflection; and
- innovative synthesis— putting all in one to show relatedness.

As the heuristic process of phenomenology shows, this design is the most appropriate for examining meaning through lived experiences, as it provided insights about the best leadership practices of turnaround K–12 public school administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations. Pereira (2012) confirmed this as he investigated the depth of phenomenological research, and posited that a phenomenological study must apply rigor and appropriate procedures in order to shed light about a specific phenomenon. Consequently, the central research question in a phenomenological study is often approached as follows:

- What are the lived experiences of turnaround administrators (a group) around best leadership practices during major change effort (a specific phenomenon)?
- What are the meanings, structures, and essence of lived experiences of best leadership practices (a specific phenomenon) by turnaround K–12 public school administrators (individuals experiencing the phenomenon)?

The data mining technique focused on deciphering the significance of the phenomena. To make sense of the quintessential meaning of each participant's experience, the methodology of induction was used and specific statements were analyzed to isolate overarching themes. Following the interview process with participants, were provided copies of transcripts or interview summaries in order to allow their corrections of any inaccuracies. Finally, to guarantee

anonymity of the participants, pseudonyms were assigned to enable them to respond in their own words without being identified.

Research Design

The analysis unit is the unit being analyzed in the study and could be any of the following: individuals, groups, artifacts, geographical units, or social interactions. In this study, the analysis unit was chosen for its relevance to the phenomenon being studied and its conceptual questions rather than its representativeness. According to Burns et al.(1997), the blueprint of the research provides the ultimate outcome of a number of decisions made by the investigator in regard to the manner in which he or she will conduct the research. In this study, data were collected from the population herein illustrated. Subjects were chosen through purposive sampling, and careful ethical considerations were taken into account for the protection of participants' rights and privacy within the standards of Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Analysis unit. The analysis unit is the major entity that is being analyzed in the study. It represents the "*what* or *who*" being studied. To conduct this research accurately, the list of ideal participants was narrowed to include K–12 turnaround principals in Los Angeles public schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations. To reach this goal, the analysis unit for this study used the following fundamental common characteristics:

- be a K–12 public school administrator,
- hold a valid California or New York State administrative credential,
- hold an administrative position within Los Angeles County geographic limits,
- have at least 5 years of combined teaching and administrative experience, and
- be a turnaround administrator who has actually led a major change effort within an organization.

Population. In research, the population is defined as the whole group of people sharing some recurrent features as identified by the sampling specifications generated by the research design (Burns et al., 1997; Polit & Hungler, 1999). It is a well-defined collection of individuals or objects known to have similar characteristics. As an illustration, Patton (2002) emphasized the need for researchers to draw their sample from the population, also known as “the group in which the researcher is most interested” (p. 45). The population selected to participate in this study consisted of turnaround administrators in Los Angeles County K–12 public schools who have led major change effort in their respective schools.

Sample. In qualitative research, Strauss and Corbin defined a sample as a sub-group within a population selected by either a probability or nonprobability sampling method (1990). The deliberate selection of interviewees delineates a significant decision stage in phenomenology (Creswell, 2003; Patton, 2002). The sample is a unit of subjects selected from a population with intent to generalize results back to the population from which they were chosen. The sample is a subcategory of the population selected to be part of the research study. To be more specific, the sample delineates the selected batch or batches of elements, and could be individuals, groups, and/or organisms. In research, the sample is derived from the research community and is commonly known as the “target population or attainable population” (Burns et al., 1997, p. 206).

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006) qualitative investigators perceive sampling procedures as dynamic, ad hoc, and phasic rather than static or a priori parameters of populations. However, according to Patton (2002), sample size is contingent upon what the researcher wants to uncover, the purpose of the inquiry, the stakes, the trustworthiness, and what needs to be achieved with the time and means at the investigator’s disposal. For phenomenological studies, Creswell (1998) recommended five to twenty-five participants, while Morse (1994) suggested at least six. In this investigation, the sample consisted of 15 K–12 public school administrators. Nonprobability sampling techniques were applied in this study

(Henry, 1990); in other words, the researcher's subjective judgment was paramount to choosing the sample. As such, sampling was done hypothetically and not statistically, despite the versatility of subjects that were employed to draw empirical data (Colaizzi, 1973). The relatively small sample (15 participants) was ideal because of the large quantity of data that was derived and analyzed (Mouton & Marais, 1992). Consequently, the following criteria were required to be met by participants in order for them to be considered as appropriate to the sample (Creswell, 1998; Stones, 1986):

- thorough knowledge and experience of the phenomenon being studied;
- verbal fluency in order to articulate their feelings, thoughts, experience, and perception of the phenomenon being investigated;
- the same first language or verbally fluent in the first language of the researcher in order to prevent loss of valuable information;
- naivety with respect to psychological theory;
- expressing the willingness to be transparent during research; and
- relationship being developed between the participant and the researcher to build trust.

Snowballing sampling was applied in this study to allow respondents to recommend other potential subjects having relevant information to the research, thus substantially increasing the participant pool (Creswell, 1998; Huysamen, 1997; Patton, 1990). Fifteen public school administrators were selected as the sample. According to Patton (1990), the sample population is identified by informational principles, is complete when no subsequent information is flowing, and redundancy is the main criterion. After administering six interviews, adequacy of the sample was determined.

Purposive sampling. For the scope of this investigation, purposive sampling was used with a maximum variation of K–12 public school turnaround administrators in Los Angeles

County who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations. In purposive sampling, according to Gay and Airasian (2000), the sample selection is contingent upon the researcher's understanding of the population being sampled. The main advantage of this kind of sampling is the depth of information gathered regarding the central issues essential to the scheme of the research. For this study, a purposive sample of fifteen participants with maximum variation was obtained—K–12 public school turnaround administrators in Los Angeles County who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations.

Participant selection. According to Hycner (1999), the phenomenon imparts the methodology, not the opposite, including the type of informants. The deliberate choice of participants constitutes a significant decision point in a phenomenology (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 1990). Therefore, in this research, non-probability sampling techniques were chosen (Henry, 1990), as the process of selection of participants was strictly subjective. Purposive sampling was used, which determines the point at which new data collected from participants no longer yield additional insights to the research questions. This technique was used in order to reach saturation. According to H. Bernard (2002), by using purposive sampling, the researcher decides the phenomenon to investigate and sets out to identify, find, and interview people who are willing to provide information about the phenomenon through knowledge and lived experiences. Moreover, purposive sampling was used to identify and select the primary participants because this technique, according to Welman and Kruger (1999), represents the most significant type of non-probability sampling. The samples for this study were chosen through sound judgment and the scope of the investigation (Babbie, 1995; Greig & Taylor, 1999; Schwandt, 1997) with intent to locate participants who have had prior experience regarding the phenomenon being studied (Kruger, 1998). For this study, 15 participants were selected in order to reach data saturation. According to Bowen (2008) and Kerr (2010), non-fulfillment to attain data saturation can profoundly affect the quality of the investigation and hamper content integrity. In phenomenological studies, using probing questions and creating an epoche assists

with reaching data saturation. No one-size-fits-all as no one style or procedure would fit in all related applications when it comes to data saturation, and according to Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006), underpinning principles and concepts control data saturation in research: (a) no additional data, (b) no novel themes, (c) no additional coding, or (d) the possibility that the researcher might recreate or duplicate the study. To attain the maximum saturation, Dibley (2011, as cited in Flusch & Ness, 2015) suggested that data saturation be perceived in terms of rich or a lot of data (quantity) and thick or multilayered, intricate, detailed and diversified (quality), as according to Burmeister and Aitken (2012), data saturation is not about the quantity: rather, it is about the depth because neither a large sample size nor a small one guarantees data saturation. Instead, data saturation is what makes up a sample size. For this phenomenological study, 15 participants constituted perfect data saturation.

Securing the master list. To identify 15 participants, Internet searches and telephonic inquiries to the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) such as were used. In addition, phone calls were made to the California Department of Education (CDE), and the Elementary and Secondary Instructional Directors of Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Superintendent office, Culver City Unified School District, Santa Monica and Malibu Unified School District, and several other school districts in Los Angeles County. Through these phone calls, it was learned that searching the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) website was the best way to gaining access to potential subjects. Therefore, participant identification and selection was obtained through the following process:

- Step 1. The Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) website provided the Los Angeles County public school directory with contact information for all sixty school districts found in Los Angeles County, with the district names, addresses, telephone numbers, and governance represented by superintendents of the schools.
- Step 2. The LACOE school directory web site was filtered to include only school districts where successful turnaround efforts have actually taken place. A list

incorporating such schools and their websites was clearly posted online, and schools were picked based on the type of improvement programs they implemented, and their location and accessibility.

- Step 3. The LACOE database was filtered to include only elementary and secondary schools within the County for administrators who met the criteria for inclusion.
- Step 4. Purposive sampling was applied for the study through the use of criteria for inclusion, criteria for exclusion, and criteria for maximum variation to create a list of 25 potential participants, as indicated in the criteria for selection.

This became the sampling frame, which in this case was also a public domain as it required no authorization and no site permission for access. During the phone conversations, the researcher was instructed to contact the elementary and secondary instructional directors of each school district for the purpose of gaining access to the schools' improvement database, which required authorization from superintendents of schools, hence site permission. These individuals were contacted by telephone and via e-mail in order to secure interviews with them. Once these individuals agreed to take part in the study, official letters were sent to the superintendents of schools in order to officially be granted access to their master lists. These interviewees were the core the analysis unit (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000), along with their informed consents (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Bailey, 1996; Street, 1998). In order to identify and locate additional participants and informants, the snowballing strategy was employed to expand the sample by asking informants and participants to recommend others as potential interviews (Babbie, 1995; Crabtree & Miller, 1992). Purposive sampling was used because it is considered the most significant kind of non-probability sampling technique used to locate the primary participants, through judgment and the purpose of the research (Babbie, 1995; Greig & Taylor, 1999; Schwandt, 1997), thus identifying those individuals who had experienced the phenomenon being studied (Kruger, 1998). Interviews were secured with elementary, middle, and high school principals in various districts who were the primary unit of analysis (Bless &

Higson-Smith, 2000); they were provided informed consent forms (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Bailey, 1996; Street, 1998).

Criteria for selection. In this phenomenological study, sampling criteria were built around the research problem, purpose, design, and their practical implications. Additional aspects such as events, incidents, and experience were also taken into account as significant factor in the sampling benchmarks of the study (Burns et al., 1997; Polit & Hungler, 1999). Full access to his participants was gained by being granted full authorization to enter school premises at any time. While access to classrooms was not necessary, permission was received to visit classrooms in order to witness first-hand best teaching practices throughout these schools as evidence of successful turnaround efforts. Most of the interviews were conducted in these schools. To the extent of capturing a clear picture of the job and leadership approach of these school administrators in various times throughout the day, interviews were conducted at the inception of the school day, during lunch, and at the end of the school day according to the guidelines set forth by the school district. A promise of confidentiality and anonymity was secured with participants in order to maintain privacy while visiting classrooms.

Inclusion criteria. Elementary and secondary (K–12) school administrators who had actually led a major change effort in their respective organizations were selected and vetted to participate in this study. While the inclusion criteria did not discriminate because of gender, religion, ethnicity, age, or sexual orientation, all participants were employed in K–12 public schools within the confines of the County of Los Angeles. The number of years a particular principal had been the leading administrator in that school site was also taken into account. As such, participating administrators were required to have at least 5 years of combined teaching and administrative experience. All acting principals in institutions where the study was conducted had been on the site for a minimum of three years, which is in accordance with the minimum of two years necessary to measure success after intervention effort.

Exclusion criteria. In order to guarantee accuracy of the sample population, a considerable number of school administrators were excluded from participating in this study, including:

- private school principals;
- principals outside the confines of Los Angeles County;
- principals of public schools in a current turnaround process; and
- principals of public schools where turnaround efforts have been completed, but not over the two-year limit for success measurement.

Criteria for maximum variation. In order to maintain maximum variation in the study, the criteria for inclusion was ensured to exhibit maximum variability. For the purpose of this study, this included position, geographic location, age, ethnicity, gender, race, and sexual orientation in order to uncover central themes, core elements, and shared dimensions that underpin a diverse sample, while documenting unique or diverse variations. Including members of all ethnic groups, races, religions, genders (males and females), and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community in the study as much as possible was a priority. Maximum variability was also guaranteed through the inclusion based on marital status and socioeconomic background. A master list of 25 of these individuals was compiled and secured for confidentiality purposes. This sampling technique yields “(1) high-quality, descriptions of each case, which are useful for recording uniqueness, and (2) shared patterns that cut across cases and derive their significance from having emerged out of heterogeneity” (Patton, 2002, p. 235).

Human subject consideration. Human subjects are paramount to conducting phenomenological research study. As such, the relationship between the investigator and human subjects is important and should be based on honesty, trust, and respect. In order to guarantee ethical investigation, informed consent was used (Holloway, 1997; Kvale, 1996) in

order to inform potential participants about the research purpose, objectives, and significance. As such, Bailey (1996) warned that deceptions may be counterproductive (p. 11). However, according to Kvale (1996), failure to ask the leading central question is not considered deception. As Bailey (1996) recommended, a specific consent agreement was designed as precondition for gaining informed consent from the participants by acknowledging the following: (a) they are participating in research, (b) the purpose of the research, (c) the procedure of the research, (d) the risks and benefits of the research, (e) the voluntary nature of their participation, (f) the participant's right to withdraw from the study at their convenience, and (g) the procedure employed to guarantee their confidentiality (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000; Kvale, 1996; Street, 1998). In a different light, Bailey (1996) further elaborated that deceptive behaviors potentially hamper much needed insights, whereas honesty, privacy, and confidentiality mitigate suspicions while promoting sincere responses from the subjects. The informed consent was elucidated to the participants in detail prior to the beginning of each interview confirming that their participation to the study was done under free will. The most probable participants signed the informed consent, and those who declined to do so were not pressured at all, but simply replaced by those on the waiting list because, as mentioned in the informed consent form, participants' involvement in the study was strictly discretionary. Accounting for the rights of the informants, who are expected to provide the needed information on potential participants, is a moral obligation (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999) builds trust with the informants, and encourages their responses as autonomous individuals, hence allowing them to generate flawless decisions (Burns et al., 1997; Polit & Hungler 1999; Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). The researcher was authorized to conduct the study from relevant authorities and kept in mind the informants' rights to privacy and confidentiality, and likewise, their prerogative to retreat from the investigation at any moment. The desire for permission to carry out the investigation was sent to various school districts' instructional directors of K-5 schools, 6-8 schools, 9-12 schools, and charter schools.

The Pepperdine Graduate and Professional School (GSEP) Institutional Review Board (IRB) model. Approval from Pepperdine Graduate School of Education and Psychology's IRB was secured (see Appendix A). Following the Pepperdine GSEP IRB guidelines, the selected participants who consented to take an active part in the study received a detailed informed consent form that identified the nature of the study via electronic mail; they were asked to fill it out, sign it, and return it via electronic mail. The participants were then solicited for the study interviews through a recruitment letter (see Appendix C). The recruitment letter was sent to participants at an appropriate time. The recruitment letter and informed consent form included the following elements:

- an overview of the nature of the study,
- the purpose of the study,
- the potential risks and discomforts to participant,
- a detailed description of the expectations of the participant,
- a statement of voluntary participation and right of the participant to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative repercussions,
- a symbolic offer to participant for his or her kind involvement in the study,
- a guarantee for no conflicts of interest,
- a guarantee for confidentiality and privacy,
- the researcher's name and other relevant contact information,
- an offer to receive detailed information on the study upon its completion, and
- appropriate spaces for signing and dating the letter by participant (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, p. 102).

Confidentiality. The purpose of confidentiality is to provide protection to participants in a research study as a way to prevent their individual identities from being linked directly or indirectly to the information that they provide and from publicly being revealed (Polit & Hungler,

1999). Confidentiality implies that the totality of the information revealed by the informants will be kept away from the public or will be unavailable to others. Confidentiality entails the understanding that when a subject gives private information to a researcher, the information will not be disclosed or will be disclosed to the extent that the subject directs.

Anonymity. Anonymity is the protection provided to the participant to prevent even the investigator from being able to link the participant to the data provided (Polit & Hungler, 1999). Both personal and institutional anonymities are guaranteed by preventing the linking of details of data to a certain individual or institution. In this study, confidentiality and anonymity were secured by making sure that the data acquired could only be accessed by the researcher (Behi & Nolan, 1995). Informants' names should not be used, under any circumstances, to identify the data, and the information they provide will only be accessed by those involved in the study and those who read the dissertation. To achieve this goal, participants in this study will only be identified by numbers.

Privacy. According to Polit and Hungler (1999), privacy entails the necessity for all data collected throughout the research to be kept in the highest confidence. For privacy purposes, individuals involved in this study can behave or think free of any interference; in addition, no private behavior should be used with the intent to humiliate participants in the future. In this study, participants expressed their opinions about best leadership practices of turnaround elementary and secondary public school administrators without any interference. While remaining very involved in this activity, the researcher only observed these behaviors while collecting data.

Data collection. According to Burns et al. (1997), data gathering is the thorough, methodical aggregation of insights applicable to the investigation sub-problems, using procedures such as interviews, subject observation, representative focus group discussions, and case histories. The contact information obtained was used to contact participants in the final selection list via telephone calls and e-mails using a standardized IRB recruitment script (see

Appendix B). Once they agree to participate in the research, the participants were sent each a duplicate of the Informed Consent form besides the interview questions in advance in order to allow them to familiarize themselves with the content. Based on the objectives of this study, qualitative data collection methods, namely conducting interviews, were selected to lead this study in exploring, describing, and understanding the phenomenon. Data were obtained from elementary and secondary turnaround school administrators in Los Angeles County.

Participants were vetted in several school districts across the county.

The recruitment script was closely followed during the invitation, and the participants were sent the interview questions and informed consent forms ahead of time. During the original phone call, e-mail or the letter sent to the participant a face-to-face appointment with the participant was requested, mentioning the approximate stretch of the interview process as 45 to 60 minutes long, and informed the subjects of his plan to audio-record the interview session in order to guarantee authenticity and accuracy of the data collected. A list of the interview questions (IQs) and the informed consent forms were also provided to the participant. This was also an opportunity to clarify with the participant the scope of the project, its nature and importance, and most importantly, the reason why that particular individual was chosen to participate in the study.

If a participant could not be contacted in person, a voicemail message was left for the participant and a follow-up e-mail sent, specifying the missed call and subsequent e-mail, the reason for the call, and thanking the prospective participant for his or her time in advance. After connecting with a prospective participant, a follow-up email was sent to recognize his or her time and give detailed information on the next steps of the endeavor. The participant was given the option to choose the site and time convenient and comfortable for the subject of the interview session. The interview date, place, and time were then arranged. The signed consent form was collected from the participant just before the beginning the interview session. The interview was anticipated to last about 45 to 60 minutes and was transcribed via written notes

and participants were reminded that interviews will be recorded by a voice recorder under the permission of the participant, for coding accuracy purposes. If the participant declined a recorded interview, the significance of the voice recorder in avoiding and preventing misinterpretations of the participants' statements was shared again, thus guaranteeing optimum accuracy. Meanwhile, if the interviewee totally declined being voice-recorded, the person was politely excused and removed from the participant list.

Interview techniques. This process will use a semi-structured interview. The descriptor Interviewing could refer to: structured, semi-structured, or unstructured oral communication during which insights are shared as part of the research (Burns et al., 1997). The research participants were granted permission and understood the prerogative to retreat from this investigation at any moment at their discretion, and that without any repercussions. Informing the participants all through the investigation about the discretionary essence of their involvement in the study besides their rights to withdraw at any time is paramount (Holloway 1997). Participants were informed of their rights (see Appendix E) prior to them committing to participate, and prior to interview sessions (Morse & Field, 1996). Data collection was conducted via semi-structured interviews. A certain number of interview questions (IQs) were predesigned, each matching one of the four research questions (RQs) of this investigation. In order to enrich the study, the predesigned IQs were posed to the participants, and were followed by closely related follow-up questions.

One of the most useful strategies in securing an interview with a subject is to give the participant a choice of site while making the appointment. Once the appointment was secured, the researcher arrived at the interview site at least 15 minutes before the scheduled time in order to get familiar with the venue. The necessary equipment and supplies for the interview was assembled, including two audio recorders, power supplier, a writing pad, and pens. At the beginning of the interview, an ice breaker question was used in the form of an open-ended question, inviting a measure of relationship building with the participant. The question was as

simple as inquiring how the interviewee's day had gone so far. The first formal question asked of the participant was whether he or she had read, understood, and approved to the guidelines of the informed consent form received by electronic mail. Prior to begin the interview, if the participant indicated that he or she did not read the informed consent form, he or she was verbally reminded of his or her right to withdraw from the study at any time, the risks and/or benefits associated with participating in the investigation were reviewed orally and the IRB consent form was signed and later secured for safe keeping in a lock vault that is not accessible to others, in order to guarantee and maximize confidentiality. Participants were advised of the essence of semi-structured interviews, furthermore that questions could be accompanied with follow-up questions. Participants were also informed that they were participating in a qualitative phenomenological study and their responses would be used as supportive data for a doctoral dissertation in leadership with an emphasis on best leadership practices of turnaround administrators in K–12 public school in Los Angeles County who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations. In addition, participants were notified that the findings gathered upon completion of this study will enlighten future administrators on school turnaround strategies.

Interviews are usually initiated with general open-ended types of questions. After the interview session begins, tactics such as nodding, acknowledging, vocalizing interest are used to engage with participants and encourage the forthcoming of their answers. Sometimes, the interviewees were further stimulated to flesh out on particular topics by the use of probes (Burns et al., 1997), and gave cues for follow-up questions that helped participants to dive into the true meaning of the phenomenon (Cormack, 1997).

Strengths of semi-structured interviews. The essential benefit of semi-structured interviews is the fact that interview questions are formulated in advance, thus allowing the investigator to be prepared and exhibit competency during the interview. Other strengths of semi-structured interviews include (a) creating a positive relationship between investigator and

participant that develops connection, (b) demonstrating high validity, (c) complex questions and issues can be discussed and clarified, (d) topics are predetermined, (e) the research is easy to record, and (f) flexible/ adaptable as they are well-suited for exploring attitudes, beliefs, values, and motives.

Weaknesses of semi-structured interviews. Despite being very advantageous in phenomenological research, semi-structured interviews present a certain number of weaknesses: they are time consuming, only good for small scale studies, never 100% anonymous, and present a great potential for subconscious biases as the interviewer can give unconscious signals that potentially lead the interviewee to give answers expected by the interviewer. Semi-structured interviews carry a stigma of major inconsistencies. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews depend greatly on the skills of the interviewer. They are non-standardized and difficult to replicate; the depth may prove to be difficult to analyze as it is very difficult to discern what is versus what is not. There is no way to decipher what is true versus false statements from the participants.

During the interview session, the interviewee's comments should be acknowledged by nodding and making eye contact, without sharing personal experiences about the matter or expressing opinion. As Morse (as cited in Schurink, 1998) posited, the realm of the research (exploratory-descriptive), the essence of the inquiry, and the data sources available dictate to some extent the data-collection method that best fits the study. Sellitz (as cited in Mouton & Marais, 1992) proposed three methods of data collection adapted to exploratory research studies such as (a) an overview of existing literature, (b) the interview process of individuals with inside practical knowledge and experience of the phenomenon being investigated (the interviewing of turnaround K–12 public school administrators), and (c) the analysis of internally stimulating examples. According to H. Bernard (1988), semi-structured interviews are best used in circumstances there is only one opportunity to interview a participant and when several interviews can be conducted on the same topic. In semi-structured interviews, the researcher:

- engage the participants in a formal interview model;
- develops and relies on an interview guide, elucidating the questions and topics that need to be addressed during the session, usually in a prearranged order; and
- follows the guide, but is able to veer out of the trajectory in the conversation.

Interview protocol. In research, interview questions (IQs) are leading questions derived from the research questions (RQs) asked of the participant during the interview session. For the purpose of this study, 12 IQs were generated contingent upon the review of the literature and personal knowledge, and became the scope of his conversation with the participants. Following a three-step process (*prima facie*, peer review, and expert review) in order to establish validity and pilot and pilot interviews to establish reliability. McNamara (2009) offered outstanding recommendations for designing meaningful research questions for semi-structured interviews, as follows: (a) use open-ended wording that offers respondents the flexibility to answer in their own terms; (b) questions should be neutral in meaning to avoid influencing the respondent's judgment; (c) interview questions must be posed one at a time; (d) use clear wording, which requires a good understanding of the culture of the respondent; and (e) avoid asking *why* questions. McNamara (2009) suggested asking open-ended questions that can lead to a follow-up question.

Constructing effective and meaningful interview questions to use during the interview sessions is one of the most difficult and critical components in uncovering various aspects of the phenomenon being investigated. The interview questions must be aligned with the phenomenon being researched in order to create connectedness between the IQs and the participant. As Mellon (1998) remarked, because all human beings have an innate ability to storytelling, all it takes is a little spark to trigger that urge in people and produce great outcomes. Qualitative researchers, whose goal is to study phenomena and oral traditions in the field, collect people's life stories in order to make meaning of underpinning aspects of human experiences. The primary way to gather those stories is to interview people. Throughout the interview process,

respondents are invited to share their stories. High quality IQs are designed to gain insights into the phenomenon and the lived experiences of participants, decipher perspectives of subjects participating in the study, and compare and contrast individual stories in order to capture nuances and build themes. Leaning toward descriptive qualitative phenomenological research requires an unconditional interest in listening to stories within the researcher's conceptual framework, but creating and asking the right questions to elucidate these stories to collect rich and relevant data through interviews can prove a daunting task. Asking the right questions and getting the right answers is not as simple as it may seem at first (Fontana & Frey, 2000).

The following pre-designed interview questions (IQs) were employed for the purpose of collecting data in this research:

1. What leadership practices did you engage in the planning and implementation phases while dealing with human elements (faculty, staff, students, and parents), unexpected challenges, and resistance to change?
2. What major or unexpected challenges did you face during this intervention?
3. What other strategies, including leadership strategies, did you use in the planning and implementing processes of your new vision?
4. How did you overcome resistance to your new planned direction for the organization?
5. What challenges did you face in the planning phase of the implementation of your intervention mission?
6. Did anything unexpected occur during the planning and implementation of your intervention?
7. If so, what corrective (evasive) measures did you envision to mitigate these surprising events?
8. What role did innovation and creativity play in overcoming these unplanned hurdles?
9. How did you define success during this endeavor?

10. How did you measure or track your success throughout the implementation of this school improvement effort?
11. Knowing what you know now, what would you have done differently?
12. What recommendations would you make for other public school administrators who embark on a similar journey?

Relatedness between research and interview questions. This process bears a significant weight in establishing Prima Facie validity. In order to challenge any assumptions and ask difficult questions regarding the methods and interpretations, a peer review process was employed to further establish validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Each research question is related to corresponding interview questions (see Table 1).

Table 1

Research Questions and Corresponding Interview Questions

Research Questions	Corresponding Interview Questions
<p>RQ 1: What are the best leadership practices of turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County Public Schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations?</p>	<p>IQ 1: What leadership practices did you engage in the planning and implementation phases while dealing with human elements (faculty, staff, and students), unexpected challenges and resistance to change?</p> <p>IQ 2: What major or unexpected challenges did you face during this intervention?</p> <p>IQ 3: What other strategies, including leadership strategies, did you use in the planning and the implementing processes of your new vision?</p> <p>IQ 4: How did you overcome resistance to your new planned direction for the organization?</p>

(continued)

Research Questions	Corresponding Interview Questions
<p>RQ 2: What are the most common leadership challenges faced by turnaround K–12 Administrators in LA County Public Schools who embarked onto major change effort in these organization?</p>	<p>IQ 5: What challenges did you face in the planning phase of the implementation of your intervention mission?</p> <p>IQ 6: Did anything unexpected occur during the planning and implementation of your intervention?</p> <p>IQ 7: If so, what corrective (evasive) measures did you envision to mitigate these surprising events?</p> <p>IQ 8: What role did innovation and creativity play in overcoming these unplanned hurdles?</p>
<p>RQ 3: How do turnarounds K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who have led major change effort in their respective organizations measure their success both as leaders, and as turnaround efforts?</p>	<p>IQ 9: How did you define success during this endeavor?</p> <p>IQ 10: How did you measure or track your success throughout the implementation of this school improvement effort?</p>
<p>RQ 4: What recommendations would turnaround K-12 Administrators in LA County Public Schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations make for promoting innovative practices within public schools?</p>	<p>IQ 11: Knowing what you know now, what would you have done differently?</p> <p>IQ 12: What recommendations would you make for other public school administrators who embark onto similar journey?</p>

Note. The table above was designed to show the IQs proposed in addressing the study’s research questions. These questions were presented to two panels of reviewers namely peer reviewers and dissertation committee to evaluate and provide feedback on the usefulness of each interview question (IQ) in regards to being aligned with the research questions (RQs). The results as seen on the table were then to content validity through a peer review and expert review process.

The peer review panel was made of four classmates from Pepperdine University GSEP who are also currently in the process of writing their dissertations, who examined each research question (RQ) and its corresponding interview questions (IQs). After careful and meticulous examination of these questions, the panel concluded that all 13 interview questions (IQs) perfectly matched the research questions (RQs) from which they were generated.

Reliability and validity of the study. According to Morse, Barrett, Olson, and Spiers (2002), verifying data involves checking, re-checking, checking, and checking once more. In qualitative research, verification enhances the procedures adopted during the process, thus contributing to confirm reliability, validity, and the rigor of the study. Patton (2002) portrayed validity and reliability as being two determining variables of which all qualitative researchers must be cognizant as they outline their research, evaluate outcomes, and judge the value of the investigation. Any research without rigor is worthless, fictitious, and useless, which is why validity and reliability are given particular attention in research methods (Morse et al., 2002). Lincoln and Guba (1985) further equated validity and reliability to trustworthiness with its four underpinning concepts: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Reliability. Despite being used as a means of assessing or appraising qualitative study, the term reliability is generally employed in a wide variety of studies. Reliability is used to evaluate quality and generate understanding in qualitative research (Stenbacka, 2001). According to Patton (2002), validity and reliability are the dual underpinning components qualitative researchers should keep in mind while scheming an investigation, evaluating the results, and dissecting the quality of the research. Reliability is the cornerstone of quality control in qualitative research; it guarantees trustworthiness in the research. Reliability describes the magnitude at which the research study can be replicated by other researchers using the same method and yielding the same results. Seale (1999) stated that the “trustworthiness of an investigation outlines inconsistencies at the center of hurdles conventionally examined as validity and reliability” (p. 266).

Validity. Within positivist terminology, it represents the pinnacle of other evidence-based concepts such as cosmic laws, truthfulness, reality, deductions, rationale, facts, and numerical data among others (Winter, 2000). The notion of validity is outlined by a significant array of locutions in descriptive investigation. As an illustration, Creswell and Miller (2000) suggested that the validity as it stands is influenced by how the investigator perceives it throughout the

research and his or her choosing of standard presumption. Consequently, other investigators have designed their own constructs of validity, often embracing what they perceive as being the most accurate terminologies, such as good quality, exactness and even trustworthiness (Davies & Dodd, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Seale, 1999; Stenbacka, 2001). Creswell (2003) asserted that “regardless of the designation used to express the concept of validity, whether it is trustworthiness, authenticity, or credibility; it represents the cornerstone of qualitative research” (p. 195).

Prima facie validity. To enhance the validity of this study, the interview questions had to match corresponding research questions. Ten appropriate interview questions informed by the review of the literature were designed. The interview questions were believed to generate adaptable and vivid responses to address their respective research questions (Shulman, Shedletsky, & Silver, 1986).

Peer review validity. Also known as peer debriefing, this process exposes the research to unrelated and unbiased peers in order to parallel an analytical session. Peer viewing validity is also used for the scope of elucidating facets of the investigation that might alternatively remain merely wholehearted inside a researcher’s memory. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), peer debriefing allows the researcher to be cognizant of other researchers who are knowledgeable in the methods of investigation, the phenomenon, or both. For this study, the research work was exposed to a classmate for constructive criticism and suggestions. A list was developed to demonstrate the relationship between the research questions and the interview questions. Each peer reviewer was given a transcript of the research questions (RQs) and the corresponding interview questions (IQs) (see Table 1), and was assigned the following tasks:

1. Review each original IQ to determine how accurately it addresses the corresponding RQ.
2. Ensure relevance between each research question and its corresponding interview questions.

3. Provide guidance and suggestions to researcher on drafting a modified version of interview question(s) whenever deemed necessary.
4. Recommend additional interview question(s) as deemed necessary to researcher.

Upon completion of the peer review, the interview questions were maintained, but peer reviewers suggested that the number of interview questions be reduced from 13 to 10 in order to mitigate the length of the coding exercise.

Expert review validity. Expert review validity was provided by the dissertation committee members. They served as the final reviewers of the validity of the research instrument. Expert review validity offers the dissertation committee an opportunity to review the interview questions (IQs) and make sure they are in alignment with the research questions (RQs) in the event consensus was not reached between the investigator and his/her peer reviewers. In consultation with the committee, interview questions (IQs) were modified into their final forms.

Statement of Personal Bias

Public education all over the world is the worthiest investment that any government can undertake for the future of its youth and the society as a whole for the undeniable immense social, political, medical and economic benefits. As an educator teaching in an inner-city high school characterized by chronic low performance of students in all grade levels, I have always regarded leadership as being the leading cause of these schools falling short and failing their mission of educating children. I consider this to be one of my biases and did not allow it to interfere with the outcomes of this study. For example, the increasingly high rates of high school dropouts in our society dramatically increases the number of unemployed citizens, while exponentially increasing the likelihood of these children to end up in a vicious cycle of social assistance programs.

This study was pursued on the basis of personal experience of witnessing our society's failing of our own children. Creswell and Miller (2000) noted that any personal biases should always be underlined in a research project. This raises attention to the need to "bracket or

exclude those researcher biases as the study proceeds” (p. 127). As a result, biases are identified that might relate to some of the answers the participants might give regarding the underpinning causes of chronic failure in our schools. The problem of lack of proper preparation of some of our administrators in creating and implementing programs that help students transition through grade levels in K–12 on the one hand, and from high school to colleges and universities on the other hand is one of the leading causes of failure in America’s public school system. Therefore, the researcher’s personal experience in education has shaped his perspective and exposed his personal biases with regard to:

- the type of instructional support system that can be established in America’s public schools to better serve the needs of those students;
- the leadership style appropriate to uplift the spirit and creative minds of inner-city public school students; and
- the sense of urgency, the vision, and the mission of how to successfully turn chronically underachieving public schools into learning environment that prepare and equip students to face the challenges of the global economy.

Bracketing. In phenomenology, and as Holloway and Wheeler (1996) explained, bracketing refers the process by which the researcher restrains his or her assumptions and preconceptions to enhance the accuracy of the study. In other words, emphasized Holloway and Wheeler (1996), one examines his or her assumptions in order to expose them rather than conceal them for the purpose of preventing any interference with the information provided by the participant(s) regarding the phenomenon. The goal is to read between the lines to understand and analyze phenomena as they are rather than as one assumes they are or should be. The bracketing process is essential throughout the study, especially for the purpose of analyzing data. Remaining neutral and emotionless regarding the truthfulness of the phenomenon is important (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). As an educator, the researcher for this study might be inclined to assume what best teaching practices are in opposition to what the participating

administrator would believe. When it comes to school turnaround, any preconceived ideas about best leadership practices of turnaround school administrators had to be identified and set aside (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). Furthermore, any prior knowledge about best teaching practices implemented in high achieving schools had to be excluded to prevent this knowledge from having any interfering impact with the retrieval of an authentic description of the phenomenon being studied. This will lead to the truth and only the truth being exposed— hence the trustworthiness of the results.

Epoche. In research methodology, according to Chamberlain (1974, as cited in Sanders, 1982), this term identifies the process of at least temporarily excluding the researcher's underlying biases, values, presumptions, and assumptions regarding the phenomenon in the interest of having a clear picture of what it actually means, while similarly, Crotty (1998) viewed the term as a look back at things the way they are. Also known as “bracketing,” epoche allows researchers to see what should be seen in the whole without altering other parts (Sanders, 1982). In research, epoche represents phenomenological reduction or imaginative variation and synthesis from which the researcher can derive structural themes. Moustakas (1994) suggested that “no position is taken, nothing is determined in advance; the researcher is always present and focuses on one's own consciousness, by returning to whatever is there in memory, perception, judgment, feeling, whatever is actually there” (p. 84).

Data analysis. Data analysis materializes a mechanism allowing the investigator to minimize and organize the evidence gathered in order to produce findings to be interpreted (Burns et al., 1997). Once the interviewing process is complete, a thorough data analysis is conducted, based on the results of coding. According to Coffey and Atkinson (1996), analyzing data requires extreme care, patience, and rigor.

Reading, memoing. After months of writing, carrying out field research, conducting countless searches on the Internet, the task of analyzing the information begins. The multi-

faceted task of analysis of data calls for making sense of the evidence collected, breaking it down, analyzing its components, investigating its significance, interpreting its meaning, and providing recommendations. While data analysis is inherently paramount to field research, very few meaningful instructions are given as to how to access analytical insights from the collected data. Although researchers are inclined to believe that data analysis only starts when all data has been collected on the field through interviews, surveys, or other means applicable in research, in reality, data analysis starts the day researchers start thinking about the rationale of conducting a study. Therefore, more time is spent analyzing data than collecting it. According to Lofland and Lofland (1995), researchers consume two to five times as much time analyzing data than they spent collecting data on the field. While quantitative data analysis relies on operating systems such as Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) operating system and statistical tests, and procedures such as Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA), and t-tests, qualitative data analysis involves reading several pages of transcripts multiple times, and grouping and organizing the data during concurrent reading sessions. In the end, the analyzed data is interpreted into results based on the research questions (RQs) and interview questions (IQs).

Collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data requires countless hours of reading and writing. Memoing is a process of keeping record of all the reading done. This process involves the following strategies: (a) note taking about the coding; (b) documentation of definitions, questions, hypothesis, and answers from data; (c) coding at a higher level; (d) triangulation data; and (e) iteration.

Describing, classifying, and interpreting (coding). An inductive coding procedure is employed through interim analysis, coding, categorizing, and interpreting data to elucidate the significance of the results. Coding is the process of organizing a substantial amount of data into smaller chunks that can easily be retrieved and used when needed (Bailey, 2006). As mentioned earlier, quantitative data analysis relies on software such as SPSS and statistical

tests and procedures such as ANOVA and ANCOVA, and t-tests, whereas qualitative data analysis relies on reading countless pages of transcripts. Bailey (2006) emphasized the need to use software in qualitative research and explained the reasons for his recommendations as follows: (a) taking field notes, (b) transcribing field notes, (c) editing, (d) coding, (e) storage, (f) search and retrieval; (g) linking data, (h) memoing, (i) content analysis, (j) data visualization (drawing conclusions), (k) building themes and theories, (l) creating diagrams, and (m) preparing interim and final reports. Bailey (2006) recommended “the following software for qualitative research analysis: Atkas.ti, Hyper RESEARCH, MAXqda2, NVivo, N6, CDC EZ-text, Qualrux, QDA miner, and Ethno graph” (p. 134).

The inductive coding approach is very common in qualitative data analyses, particularly grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), for the following reasons: (a) to summarize extensive raw data, (b) to create an explicit connection between the study objectives and the investigation summary findings; and to ensure these links are both transparent and defensible, and (c) to develop a model about the structure of processes found in the raw data.

Interrater validity and reliability. External validity expresses the magnitude to which the results of the investigation can be generalized to other settings or contexts. To improve external validity, inter-rater reliability is established. A four-step process was applied in order to establish inter-rater reliability and increase the external validity. This allowed for more agreement about the semi structured coding process. To establish inter-rater reliability and increase the external validity of the results of the coding process, the data from the first three interviews were coded first, and then a three-step coding technique was used to code the remaining twelve interviews as follows:

- Phase 1—The interview data from the first three participants was coded using Hyper Research’s manual coding software. This process identified common themes or categories through reading and memoing, as broad units of information that consist of several codes aggregated to constitute a common idea (Creswell, 2013).

- Phase 2—The results of the first three interviews were discussed with two peer reviewers in order to reach a consensus regarding the coding results; and the committee conducted an expert review of the results. The peer review committee was formed of two classmates from the Pepperdine University Graduate School of Education and Psychology EIP 2017 who, through their professional background as educators are armed with the necessary knowledge to make sound decisions in matching each one of the four research questions (RQs) with its corresponding interview questions (IQs). Each peer reviewer was provided a copy of the chart outlining the four research questions (RQs) and their corresponding interview questions (RQs) in order to analyze the results of the coding with intent of reaching a consensus with the investigator on the validity of these results. If a consensus could not be reached, the dissertation committee was available to resolve the differences.
- Phase 3—Using the agreed-upon coding scheme, the remaining 12 interview transcripts were coded. Once the coding completed, the co-raters were asked to review the coding protocol and underline various leadership themes that emerged from the semi structured coding process.
- Phase 4—The peer review panel reviewed the coding results of the last 12 interviews and offered changes as deemed appropriate, working with the researcher to reach consensus. Upon completion of data gathering and attainment of unanimity on coding by the peer-reviewers or (and) the dissertation committee, co-raters were asked to delete all information pertaining to this study from their computers.

Representing, visualizing. In research, a picture is worth more than words, especially when understanding or insights are derived from the data. Moreover, finding relationships between a myriad of variables obtained from data collection to determine their relative significance involves representations and visualizations. The data collected in this study is presented in chapter 4, using appropriate graphics such as bar graphs, scatter plots, pie charts,

box plots, correlation matrices, line graphs to tabulate and report on the interviews and the themes they generated.

Summary

This chapter highlighted, discussed, and summarized how this study was conducted. A wide variety of perspectives regarding the research methodology utilized were shared. The chapter also outlined the design of the research, collection of data and its analysis, the study trustworthiness, and important ethical considerations of this study. The true findings will be inferred through actual data collection, analysis, and interpretation, for which this chapter set the stage. Chapter 4 will discuss the research findings with reference to the literature review.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

Leadership is undoubtedly second only to classroom management school-related factors conducive to student learning, performance, and achievement (Leithwood et al., 2004). Until very recently, debates about best practices in our public education system focused almost exclusively on classroom teachers and their ability to plan and deliver meaningful instruction to students while creating and maintaining a classroom environment conducive to learning— instructional practice and classroom management. With the advent of the Race to the Top (RTTT) funding for innovative state education plans and school improvement grants (SIG) to turn around America’s chronically low-performing schools, the narrative has shifted considerably and the topic of effective school leadership has been given more attention by both federal and state policy makers across the country. The primary tasks of K–12 public school administrators in successful schools include being directive and setting a vision, aligning time and allocating resources to foster effective teaching, and establishing high standards for student achievement. In contrast, turnaround administrators must work closely with district leaders to affect positive change through superior and quality instructional leadership, give much attention to the system, and master the ability to identify and leverage key points within the system to advocate for and deliver a well-designed, well-aligned, and well-articulated transformational plan. As Herman et al. (2008) suggested, a turnaround school administrator will need a series of “early wins” to demonstrate and reassure all stakeholders that the school is on track to improvement and establish momentum for change. As Leithwood, et al. (2004) described:

Neither superintendents nor principals can do the whole leadership task by themselves. Successful leaders develop and count on contributions from many others in their organizations. Principals typically count on key teachers for such leadership, along with their local administrative colleagues. In site-based management contexts, parent leaders are often crucial to the school’s success. Superintendents rely for leadership on many

central-office and school-based people, along with elected board members. Effective school and district leaders make savvy use of external assistance to enhance their influence (p. 7).

As such, in order to foster best leadership practices in K–12 schools, alignment among individual schools, districts, state, and federal authorities is a pressing need. This includes high standards for public school administrators' preparation programs for endeavoring school administrators and their continuity with workshops, seminars, and professional development for current administrators. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the best leadership practices of turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations. For this investigation, four research questions were developed:

1. What are the best leadership practices of turnaround K–12 public school administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations?
2. What are the most common leadership challenges faced by turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who embarked onto major change effort in these organizations?
3. How do turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations measure their success both as leaders, and as turnaround efforts??
4. What recommendations would turnaround K–12 Administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations make for promoting innovative practices within public schools?

In order to address these four research questions, 12 interview questions were developed and then presented to two inter-raters and three experts for validation. Upon approval, these interview questions were then used to interview the participants of the study:

1. What leadership practices did you engage in the planning and implementation phases while dealing with human elements (faculty, staff, students, and parents) unexpected challenges and resistance to change?
2. What major or unexpected challenges did you face during this intervention?
3. What other strategies including leadership strategies did you use in the planning and implementing phases of your new vision?
4. How did you overcome resistance to your new planned direction for the organization?
5. What challenges did you face in the planning phase of phase of the implementation of your intervention mission?
6. Did anything unexpected occur during the planning and implementation of your endeavor?
7. If so, what corrective (evasive) measures did you envision to mitigate these surprising events?
8. What role did innovation and creativity play in overcoming these unplanned hurdles?
9. How did you define success during this endeavor?
10. How did you measure or track your success throughout the implementation of this school improvement effort?
11. Knowing what you know now, what would you have done differently?
12. What recommendations would you make for other public school administrators who embark onto similar journey?

The school administrators interviewed for this study gave open, detailed, and personal accounts of their lived experiences as they embarked onto turning around chronically low-performing K–12 public schools. Information that emerged from these conversations will serve as helpful

clues, landmarks, and guidelines to consider when planning and implementing a turnaround initiative. This chapter outlines the results of the study, a participant profile, and a detailed discussion of the data collection process. In addition, data collected from the 12 semi-structured interview questions have been analyzed and will be presented thereafter.

Participant Selection

After a vetting based on the inclusion criteria, 15 participants were selected and interviewed for this study. Among these 15 participants selected, three identified as females (20%) and twelve identified as males (80%). The study participants were all K–12 public school administrators who have actually led a turnaround effort in their organizations through the federal School Improvement Grant (SIG). Confidentiality was promised to all participants through the informed consent and reiterated prior to begin the interview.

Participants' demographics by hierarchy. For this study, one superintendent of schools and 14 school principals were secured according to the following demographics (see Figure 1).

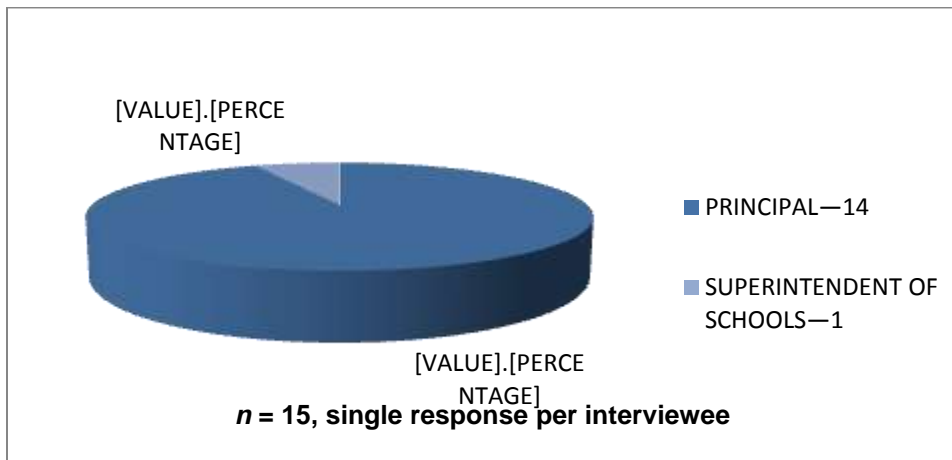


Figure 1. Participants' demographics by hierarchy

Participants' demographics by gender. Participants' demographics by gender were two females and 13 males (see Figure 2).

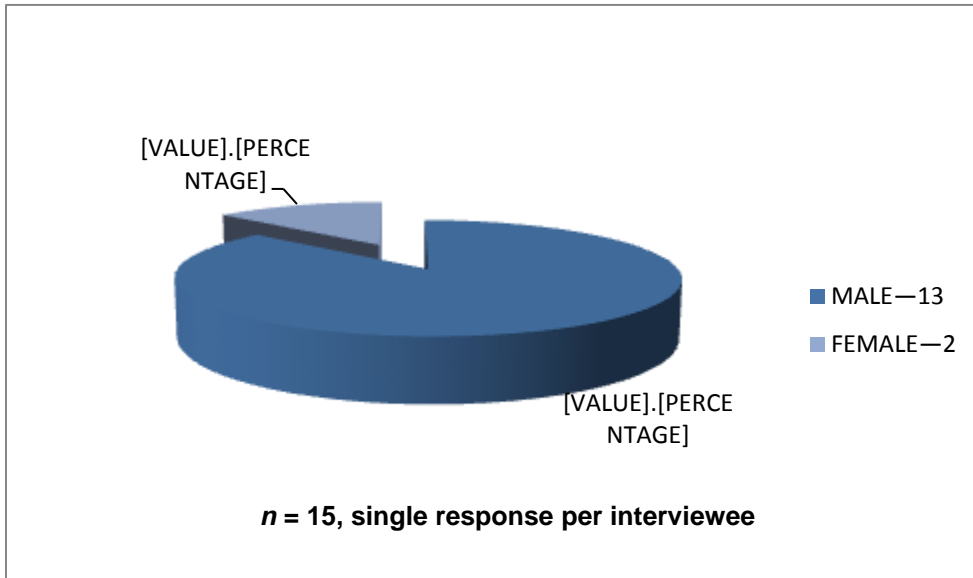


Figure 2. Participants' demographics by gender

Participants' demographics by ethnicity. Participants' demographics by ethnicity were 10 Caucasians, two African Americans, two Latinos, and one African (see Figure 3).

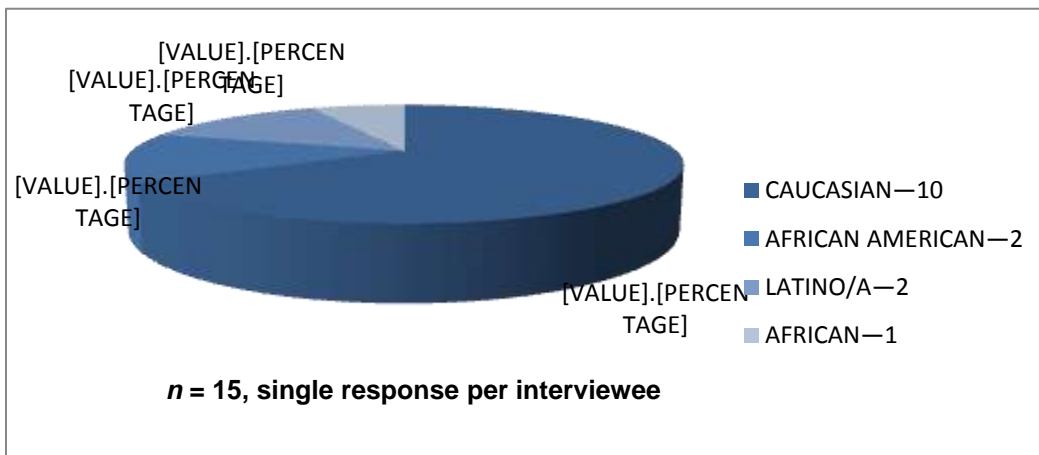


Figure 3. Participants' demographics by ethnicity

Participants' demographics by school designation. Participants' demographics by school designation were one charter school and 14 traditional schools (see Figure 4).

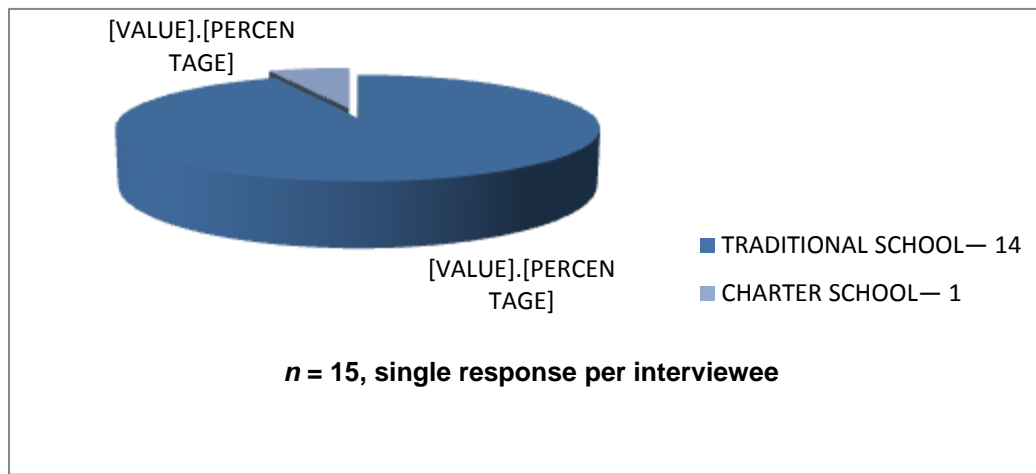


Figure 4. Participants' demographics by school designation

Data Collection

Data used for this study were collected from 15 turnaround K–12 public school administrators in Los Angeles County who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations. Names of turnaround schools, also known as SIG schools, were researched by first identifying eligible schools through the California Department of Education website. This site provides detailed information for all cohorts under Cohort Funding Results (XLS), which provides details of all cohorts funded and unfunded applications. Searching the XLS yielded a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet with all school districts and individual schools that received and used the SIG funds between 2010 and 2015, included the following information:

- county district school code (CDS),
- county name,
- district name,
- school site,
- National Center for Education statistics (NCES),
- school designation (charter or traditional), and

- participation status in previous cohort.

Cohort 1 and cohort 2 schools were chosen because they matched important inclusion criteria for participant selection—all acting principals in institutions where the study was conducted had been at the site for a minimum of three years, which is in accordance with the minimum of two years necessary to measure success after an intervention effort. The selected schools were K–12 public schools in Los Angeles County. Upon identification of the 15 schools, their physical addresses, telephone numbers, and e-mail addresses were obtained from their publicly accessible school websites. Upon receiving IRB approval from Pepperdine University on January 19, 2017, the process of contacting the 15 potential participants via e-mail began, utilizing the Pepperdine University approved IRB e-mail recruitment script (see Appendix C). Based on the information obtained via the California Department of Education (CDE) School Improvement Grant website, more than 40 schools were identified that matched the study criteria for inclusion. At this point, relevant information regarding principals of these schools was collected and contacts were made using the IRB-approved recruitment phone script. Upon the participants' initial agreement to participate, formal e-mails were sent to the potential participants through their professional e-mail accounts, including all relevant documents connected to the study: (a) an e-mail recruitment script detailing the purpose of the study, (b) a list of the 12 interview questions, (c) a copy of the Pepperdine IRB informed consent form, and (d) a copy of the IRB approval protocol ID # 16 09 394.

Thirty school administrators and superintendents were initially invited to take part in this endeavor. Among these vetted candidates, two women responded positively within less than four hours and provided a positive response as per their willingness to participate in the study. They provided their office telephone numbers via e-mail, seeking a return call to make arrangements regarding the date, time, and place of the interviews. Upon reception of these e-mails, both participants were called and confirmed as the first two interviews to be conducted. The participant search continued and a third interview was granted by a former superintendent

of schools; this interview was conducted just a few days after the first two. Five other school principals who were willing to be interviewed for the purpose of the study also replied. However, one potential participant asked the researcher to confirm his participation with his school district's chair of the Committee for External Research Review at the Office of Data Accountability. The coordinator was contacted on February 2, 2017, who forwarded a link and invited the researcher to upload and submit a research proposal to the school district. On February 16, 2017, an email from the chair of the Committee for External Research Review was received, confirming that the research proposal had been approved, pending the specification that "district staff can only be interviewed outside of working hours and the informed consent form must state that fact." The researcher contacted his dissertation committee chairperson who gave authorization to submit the modification as requested. On February 21, 2017, the final approval to start contacting school administrators to request their participation was granted. Previously, another school district asked for a submission of the research proposal on January 2, 2017. On February 14, 2017, the research coordinator at that school district declined authorizing the participation of the district's administrators at this time. Follow-up e-mails continued to be sent to other potential candidates on the master list, and the final seven participants agreed to take part in the study during the last week of February.

Data collection with each participant, utilizing the 12 interview questions, was conducted between mid-January to early March 2017. Other potential participants sought to schedule interviews in mid-March but due to the timeline for project completion and maximum number of participants limited to 15, their requests were not accommodated. Throughout the interview process, in addition to audio recording the conversation, notes were taken in order to guarantee relevance and accuracy of follow-up questions.

Most interviews in semi-structured form were conducted in the participants' offices after school. One participant selected a restaurant for the interview, which was conducted in the facility's conference room. Another interview was conducted on two different days. During the

first appointment, the participant had to postpone the interview after answering seven interview questions due to continuous interruptions by school staff and other school obligations he had to fulfill. The interview resumed two days later at the same site to complete the process with interview questions 8 through 12. Although the interviews were scheduled last between 45 and 60 minutes, the two longest interviews lasted 90 and 105 minutes each, and the shortest one lasted 48 minutes. Table 2 illustrates the dates interviews were conducted.

Table 2

Dates of Interview Sessions

Administrators	Date of Interview
A1	January 24, 2017
A2	January 26, 2017
A3	January 27, 2017
A4	February 8, 2017
A5	February 9, 2017
A6	February 10, 2017
A7	February 12, 2017
A8	February 14, 2017
A9	February 20, 2017
A10	February 22, 2017
A11	March 3, 2017
A12	March 4, 2017
A13	March 5, 2017
A14	March 6, 2017
A15	March 6, 2017

The semi-structured interviews were transcribed soon after they were conducted; transcripts were reviewed against the audio recording for accuracy and sent to participants for confirmation. All transcripts were confirmed by participants for quality and accuracy. Some participants declined to review the transcripts; rather, they reiterated their gratitude for having the opportunity to participate in the study, and look forward to reading the dissertation upon completion and publication. The other participants confirmed authenticity within two days.

Data Analysis

According to Trochim and Donnelly (2001), qualitative data analysis involves interim analysis, memoing, data entry, data storage, and coding. For the purpose of this descriptive qualitative phenomenological study, data entry, data storage, semi-structured data coding, and category development were conducted in order to accurately interpret the data. The data analysis process facilitated the emergence of themes to answer the four research questions. The themes allowed for the reduction of the data and the creation of visual displays in the form of bar charts that could lead to drawing and verifying conclusions.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), data reduction is a form of analysis that sharpens, focuses, discards, and organizes data in such a way that conclusions can be drawn and verified. The first step in analyzing the data involved becoming familiar with the information shared by all 15 interview participants and displaying the data. To accomplish this, each audio recorded interview was manually transcribed into a written format in a Microsoft Word document. Each audio-recorded interview was listened to as many times as necessary to preserve the authenticity of the conversation. A feature in the computer's media display was used to reduce the speed of the playback so the transcripts could be handwritten. Still, bits of recordings were not accurately transcribed. Once an interview had been fully transcribed, it was read along with the audio recording playing in order to ensure authenticity of the transcripts. The coding process was then started to establish themes as they emerged from the data.

The semi-structured coding process involved reading each transcript thoroughly. Certain technical terms or statements were used by all or a large majority of participants for each interview question. The data was edited, segmented, and summarized. Once all the transcripts were read, a Microsoft Word document was created with 15 sections along the top (each section represented one participant), and 12 sections along the side, each section representing a particular interview question. In each section, data were inscribed as codes and memos by finding themes, clusters, and patterns. A color was assigned to each cluster with key words in

order to conceptualize the various themes that emerged. Each theme was then color-coded and given a name. As Creswell (1998) remarked, if a participant made a statement that didn't yield direct key words, its meaning can be inferred by a key word or phrase that represents the statement. This process was done for the first three transcripts; the semi-structured coding results were presented to the three inter-raters and one expert, and repeated for 12 remaining transcribed documents.

At the conclusion of the transcription process, data analysis occurred as follows:

- Every transcript was read at least twice in order to get familiar with the content of the interview.
- Data was coded, reduced, and displayed in order to determine common clusters and patterns.
- Common issues, categories, and concepts emerged and were tied to the literature review to formulate thematic frames of reference.
- Common themes emerged alongside the creation of codes and clusters.
- Meaningful statements highlighted as color codes were extracted from the transcripts during the reading process.
- A table was set up via Microsoft Excel in order to group common themes as they emerged.
- The data were sorted and regrouped by frequency, and any insignificant data was discarded.
- All emerging and homologous themes were regrouped.
- Once the data were assessed, each outstanding occurring statement was listed and recorded.
- Emerging themes were combined into a descriptive narrative of what was expressed using the literatim transcripts as quotes for reference and support.

- The coding table was submitted to two inter-raters, as elucidated in Chapter 3, for review.
- The three inter-raters provided feedback on the accuracy of the categories as they were presented on the table and provided suggestions for additional categories and or other changes to the original coding. This process will be subjected to further examination in the subsequent section.
- Leading characteristics were generated from the data to unscramble it as a whole.
- The data were visualized for presentation by combining narrative with bar charts to present a visual layout of the study findings.

Inter-rater review process. The semi-structured coding table was submitted to two current Pepperdine University Organizational Leadership doctoral candidates who served as inter-raters for this study. The selection of these inter-raters was based on their experience, as they were conducting similar research studies for their dissertations and had previously been enrolled in a series of doctoral courses in both quantitative and qualitative research methods and data analysis. The inter-raters did not have access to any identifiable piece of information linking the data to the participants as shown in the semi-structured coding table. The inter-raters reviewed the semi-structured coding table individually and independently by evaluating the initial categories, and providing additional suggestions for categories to be added as they deemed necessary. Very few to no changes were added to the semi-structured coding table based on the reviewers' feedback. All differences, such as swapping some semi-structured coding data or statements between categories to better reflect the message that was conveyed by a participant, were handled through consensus. When consensus was not reached, the expert was called in to settle coders' differences. As an illustration, for interview question 1 (IQ 1), a slight disagreement between inter-raters was identified between the themes regarding buy-ins and collaboration.

The original semi-structured coding table listed “building relationships” and “creating leadership teams” under buy-ins. The two coders identified that building relationships and creating leadership teams are practices that fall into collaboration (see Table 3).

Table 3

Inter-rater Coding Suggestions

Interview Question(s)	Item(s)	Move From	Move To
IQ 1	Creating relationships Building relationships	Buy-ins	Collaboration

Note: The above table illustrates the suggestion provided by the inter-rater reviewers regarding the initial semi-structured coding table.

The 15 interviews were conducted and recorded over 20 hours and generated 120 pages of transcripts, which in turn produced 360 pages of semi-structured coding excerpts. Using the semi-structured coding excerpts, underpinning themes for each research question and a matrix were developed; the number of interview participants who cited them was compiled. Themes were annotated as substantial if two or more participants used them during the conversation. This process yielded 94 underpinning themes, where 59 were annotated as substantial.

Data presentation. Data collected from interview sessions were organized by research question. Using an Excel spread sheet, frequency charts and interview transcript excerpts were created and utilized to highlight and color code the underlying assorted themes and categories that emerged from the interviews. In order to guarantee confidentiality of the collected data as promised to participants, the participants were referred to as school administrators and assigned the acronym A for administrator, and label coded the interview transcripts in chronological order as follows: Administrator 1 (A1), Administrator 2 (A2), and Administrator 3 (A3) . . . Administrator 15 (A15). Themes were developed according to the jargon used by interviewees in response to each interview question. Whenever the administrators’ responses to

a given interview question did not yield a key thematic word but rather a meaningful group of words or phrases, discretion was used to summarize these phrases into key words. Using a predesigned frequency chart, each of the research questions was authenticated through participant quotes found in the transcribed data. It is of paramount significance that throughout the following pages, participants' statement excerpts are reproduced verbatim in order to preserve and guarantee forthrightness of responses provided by interview participants of this investigation. While these quotes may or may not contain incomplete sentences or idioms, in the context of semi-structured interviews as conducted in this study they unambiguously communicate the participants' intent.

Research Question 1

RQ 1 was stated as: What are the best leadership practices of turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County Public Schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations? In order to answer this question, four interview questions (IQs) were generated and posed to the participants:

1. What leadership practices did you engage in the planning and implementation phases while dealing with human elements (faculty, staff, students, and parents), unexpected challenges, and resistance to change?
2. What major or unexpected challenges did you face during this intervention?
3. What other strategies, including leadership strategies, did you use in the planning and the implementing processes of your new vision?
4. How did you overcome resistance to your new planned direction for the organization?

From each of the above interview questions (IQs), unequivocal threads emerged that would then form and inform the main themes elucidated to answer research question 1.

Interview question 1. What leadership practices did you engage in the planning and implementation phases while dealing with human elements (faculty, staff, students, and parents), unexpected challenges, and resistance to change?

The analysis of data recorded in response to this interview question (IQ) developed 76 characteristics. These 68 characteristics in turn produced eight underlying themes, presented in alphabetical order: (a) charismatic, (b) collaboration, (c) communication, (d) democratic, (e) situational leadership, (f) transformational leader (see Figure 5).

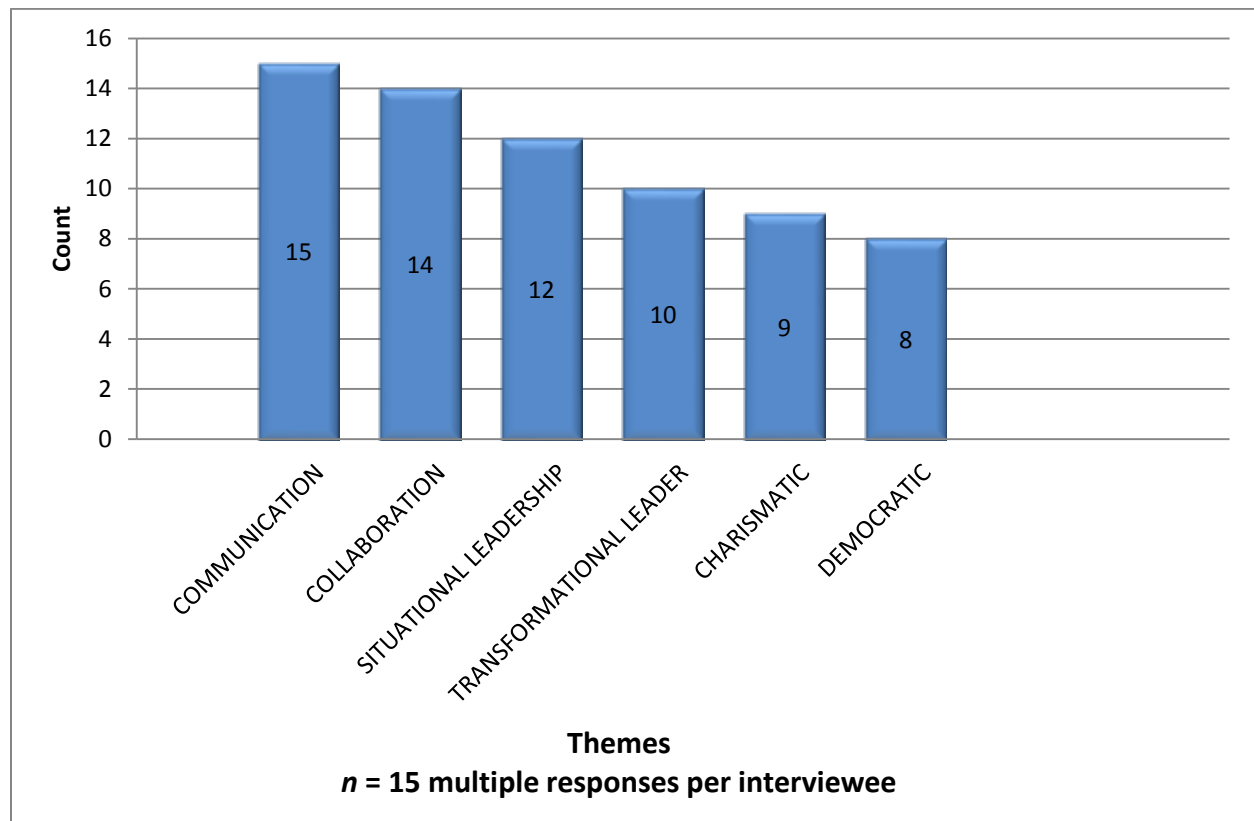


Figure 5. Interview question 1 coding results: Leadership practices. Six themes emerged from responses given by all 15 participants. Sixty-eight categories were revealed. These responses are presented in decreasing order of frequency (from 15 to 8). The number within each theme represents the number of times a direct or indirect statement was made by a given participant using a word or phrase that merged into the respective category.

Communication. Communication, the process of transmitting a message from a sender to a recipient plays a pivotal role in all organizations. This category emerged as the top theme related to this interview question, as all 15 public school administrators believed in the significant role that communication played in the success of their change effort in these organizations and said it either directly or indirectly (22% frequency). In regard to research question 1, turnaround K–12 public school administrators who embark onto a change initiative

have to communicate effectively with all stakeholders, including teachers, staff, students, parents, and even with community leaders in order to enlist buy-ins of the new vision for the school. For instance, A2 expressed the need for clear communication at the beginning of such an important mission in order to create and maintain collaborative teams and groups throughout the duration of the intervention and beyond:

We had to have a clear focus and agree upon goals and collective commitments . . . with regard to what we wanted all students to know and do. . . . to learn at every grade level, and hold not only the students but one another accountable for the task ahead.

Similarly, A1 mentioned organizing various teams and meeting with each of them in the early stages of her endeavor:

I held initial meetings before the school started with my leadership team, my PTA leadership, PTA board and got information; and I did activities with them where I could find out information . . . which focused primarily on what was good about the school and what needed to be changed . . . I do a weekly school newsletter, a weekly e-mail, a weekly phone call to parents, and a weekly staff-at-a-glance; so, communication is key.

Furthermore, A3, A4, A5, A6, and A7 all referred to communication as leadership's most important strategy in enlisting buy-ins. In the same manner A8, A9, A10, A11, and A12 emphasized the need for excellent communication skills in creating and maintaining a collaborative environment at the workplace, especially in times of crisis. Finally, A13, A14, and A15 insisted on how important it is for turnaround administrators to reinforce daily public announcements in schools.

Collaboration. Second to communication, turnaround school administrators regarded collaboration as one of the biggest players in getting people on board. Collaboration is the process of working with other people in order to attain a common goal. Fourteen instances (20.6%) of this theme were mentioned by turnaround administrators either directly or indirectly. For example, A1 emphasized the need for collaboration when trying to get buy-ins:

One of the first things I did was to get huge buy-ins. First of all, collaboration entails being available I still have an open-door policy, and they weren't used to the principal being active and participating. I had meetings with my leadership team maybe twice a month. I met with my staff three times a month . . . I meet with every teacher and staff member as needed.

In addition, A2, A7, A9, A12, A13, A14, and A15 all mentioned collaboration at least once. A13 even went further to explain the benefits of collaboration at the workplace in general, and during crisis in particular:

Collaboration in the workplace . . . is the key to success in the 21st-century business world for three simple reasons: it allows for thinking and brainstorming ideas for problem-solving, it increases the sense of purpose and team work in employees, and [it] facilitates equal participation by encouraging ideas from all levels of the hierarchy at the workplace, not just from those in position of power.

By the same token, A15 delineated other benefits of collaboration especially in times of crisis when different skills play different roles. He made reference to promoting both intradepartmental and interdepartmental collaboration as being the precursors of the strengths and skills of all stakeholders through knowledge sharing. By sharing ideas with one another, they see first-hand how others think, operate, and build relationships.

Situational leadership. When it comes to leading, no “one size fits all” approach to leadership exists. Leadership is successful when leaders understand that there are varying levels of leadership styles depending on the situation at hand. During crisis, leaders cannot utilize the same strategies as during prosperity and expect to turn things around. In 12 instances (17.6%), turnaround administrators directly or indirectly mentioned the theme of situational leadership through directing, coaching, supporting, or delegating as being one of the foundations of their success during their intervention mission. In addition to understanding the situation at hand, successful turnaround administrators should evaluate and understand how

willing and able stakeholders are to get on board and apply the most appropriate style to fit the situation in three simple steps: (a) identify and prioritize the most important tasks, (b) decipher the readiness level of stakeholders, and (c) decide the appropriate leadership style.

With regard to coaching, this leadership approach is most appropriate when followers have high willingness but low ability for the task at hand. For instance, A2 stated:

The unexpected challenges were the parent body. Although most parents were glad to see . . . some changes [were] happening, . . . a small fraction of parents didn't understand what rigor really looked like with the kids; so, we had some pushback and we had to start educating parents of the road ahead because kids were going home exhausted [and] upset because they had never been held accountable [to do] their work.

In terms of delegating, A2 pointed out the fact that per her turnaround model, she was required to ensure that newly-hired teachers and staff were highly qualified, and that they were up to the challenges of the task, in order to allow her to provide minimum support. She stated:

I was in a unique situation. Everyone I hired was hired within a turnaround model, so it wasn't as if I was going there . . . to change an established staff. Some candidates were not selected, not because they weren't excellent teachers, but because they did not show the ability [to be] good team players. . . . I can teach a teacher how to teach, but I can't teach them how to have a better personality.

When it comes to support, A4 talked about holding emergency staff meetings in order to identify the reason why some teachers and staff were holding back, in order to ask for their cooperation. Similarly, A2 mentioned seeking a better approach for managing that transition. She stated:

We had to leave our egos at the door and really agree in our team meetings that we weren't always going to agree, but we [would find] a consensus. That took some struggle because everybody thought their way was the right way because they had the reputation

of having good results and [being] great teachers. So, we had to agree that it was okay to build consensus in order to collaborate.

Transformational leader. The underpinning assumption of this leadership style is that people will follow leaders who inspire them, and they will align themselves with a vision and with those who make them do things because they want to, not because they have to.

Transformational leadership emerged as one of the best practices utilized by these turnaround public school administrators in the planning and implementation phases while dealing with human elements such as faculty, staff, students, and parents' unexpected challenges and resistance to change. As in 10 (14.7%) instances, the school administrators directly or indirectly identified this as a strength that was vital to their success. A3, A4, A7, A8, and A10 believed that their primary duty in overcoming unexpected challenges and resistance was to inspire all stakeholders by ensuring each one sees the significance and the higher good of the task at hand. A4 posited that:

The proposal to increase student enrollment and achievement in the district generally was embraced by everyone because they wanted to get back to the time and space where the district would be thriving, like back in the 1950s. It wasn't real difficult to get buy-ins, although the majority of stakeholders did not understand how we were going to reverse the course. . . . They were really hungry [for a] spark that was going to make good things happen again in the district.

In a similar line of thinking, A7 expressed:

The need [is] for K–12 public school principals to inspire teachers, staff, and students to embrace and fulfill their duties toward a common goal, especially in time of crisis, to be cognizant of what they believe and why they believe it, and clearly express their beliefs in order to spark that needed change. . . . At the beginning of the school year, I told all stakeholders that my primary mission here as a change agent was to create and maintain a school climate conducive to success.

Charismatic. Creating followers requires leaders to tap onto their ability to charm and be graceful to followers. The administrators referred to charisma as playing an important role in the success of their mission nine times (13.2%), either directly or indirectly. As indicated by A6, a great school administrator connects firmly with the identity of his or her stakeholders in order to create an unalterable position for his or her vision.

I had a unique opportunity to create a platform to deliver on teachers', staffs', students', parents', and the whole community's expectations and I was poised to meet their expectations. . . . The challenges were enormous, but I had faith on my side and I was not going to let them down.

A6, A7, and A8 talked about inspiring teachers, staff, and students by making them feel like they are the most important people in the world. A4 revealed that he pulled all the strings by using a wide range of methods including business practices to manage his image and engender trust.

This administrator highlighted the following:

I don't think people were fighting this change or resisting it; rather, they were curious as to how it was possible. They hadn't seen the time when the district was way up. All they knew was a steady decline. They were motivated to support the program. They were happy to know that things were going to get better, but just did not know how. How can this [downward] trend be reversed after so long? . . . I used the principles of marketing and business that I learned at the USC School of Business and applied them to the public sector.

Democratic. Following being charismatic as a leader, a democratic leadership style emerged as one of the best leadership practices employed by turnaround school administrators in the planning and implementation phases while dealing with human elements. This requires a lot of group participation, discussion, and group decision-making encouraged by the leader. Eight instances (11.8%) of this theme were mentioned by these school administrators either directly or indirectly. For example, A1 emphasized facilitating buy-ins by encouraging team work

and idea sharing regarding decisions that affected the school as a whole and as an organization. According to A1, the toughest hurdle was setting up a system of organization because there have been lots of changes at the school site, a lot of administrators in a short span of time; so, establishing a protocol, a system, meeting with those teams proved the toughest hurdle.

Interview question 2. What major or unexpected challenges did you face during this intervention? Based on the data analysis of responses of administrators to this interview question, 46 characteristics emerged. From those 46 characteristics, the following six themes were developed: (a) organizational issues, (b) parent involvement, (c) school safety, (d) stakeholder buy-ins, (e) student achievement, and (f) student behavior (see Figure 6).

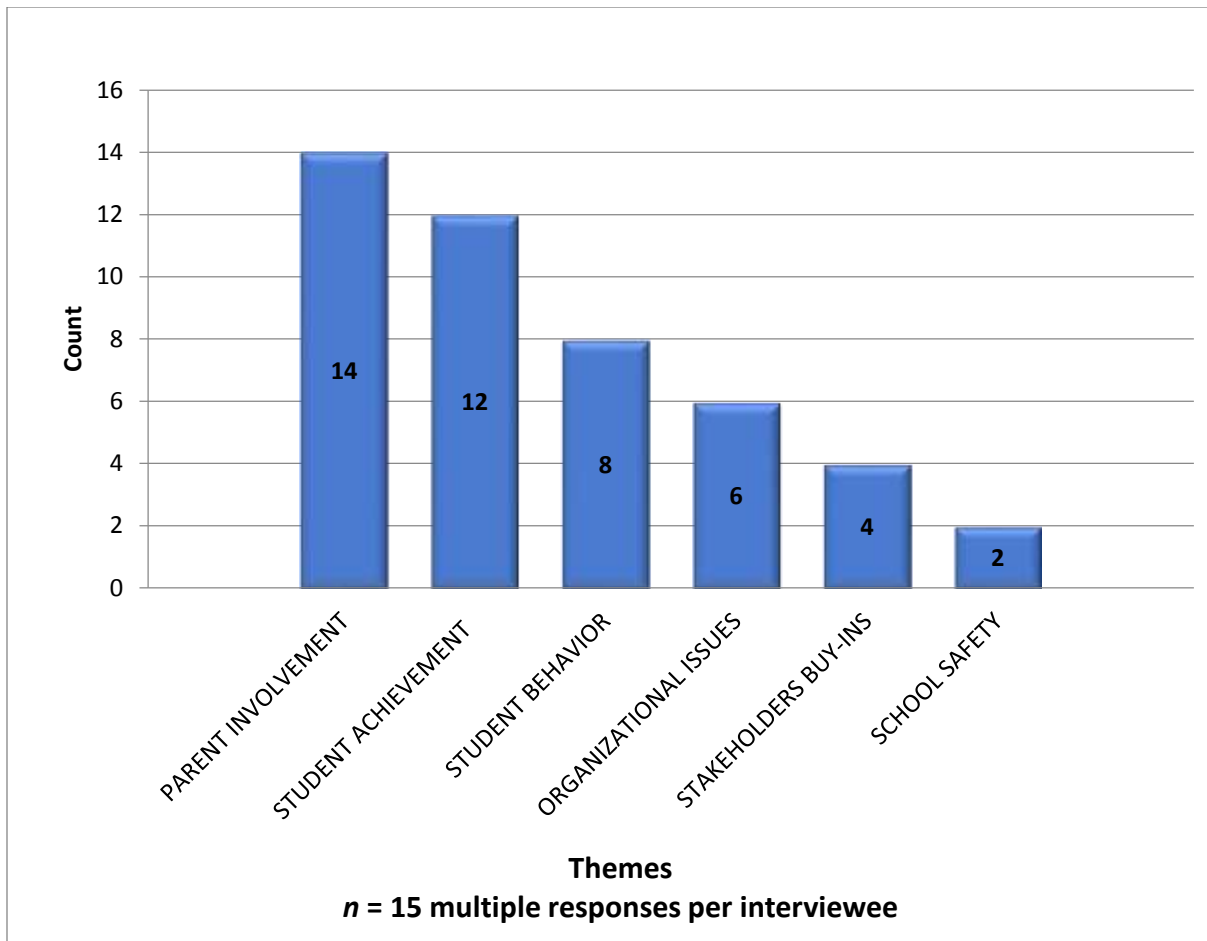


Figure 6. Interview question 2 coding results: Major or unexpected challenges. Six themes emerged and 46 categories evolved from these themes, presented in decreasing order of frequency (14 to 2). The number within each theme represents the number of times a direct or indirect statement was made by a given participant using a word or phrase that merged into the respective category.

Parent involvement. This category emerged as the pinnacle of challenges faced by turnaround public school administrators as 14 out of 46 instances (30.4%) were mentioned by school administrators either directly or indirectly. For example, A1, A2, and A7 talked about parents' lack of involvement with their predecessors and much unstructured PTAs and PTOs.

When asked about major or unexpected challenges, A11 stated:

While parents were entrenched in the belief that parent involvement in schools is limited to PTOs, PTAs, and teacher-parent conferences, my biggest challenge was to change that perception and make them understand that there were things they could do with and for their children to support their education from the comfort of their homes, such as homework assignments and communication with the school.

According to A13, involving parents through PTAs and PTOs was key, as they are the two traditional vehicles through which parents participate in their children's education since the early years of public education. "The results were astonishing because this strategy created accountability for all parties: teachers, students, and parents, because it provided a platform for open communication and collaboration between teachers and parents, and we all loved it"

Student achievement. Student achievement is the measurement of the level of academic content a student masters in an established amount of time. In education, student achievement is second to none when it comes to establishing what makes a school successful. This category emerged as the second challenge most frequently faced by participants in this interview question, as 12 out of 46 instances (26%) were mentioned by school administrators either directly or indirectly. A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, and A10 all made references to chronically persistent low scores prevailing in their schools for several years prior to their intervention. A11 revealed the declining state of the school upon his rise to the principalship. He asserted:

Teachers were entrenched in a laissez-faire type of environment, same as students. I had to build up some intervention strategies to address the academic needs of the students while establishing myself and bringing leadership to the school. Because teachers were not performing, students' achievement plummeted dramatically and this trend had lasted for years before I took over.

In addressing the issues of student achievement in high school and beyond, A12 stated:

The most common barometer for measuring achievement is set in reference to their performance in subjects such as English language, math, science, and history in state-wide tests such as ACT, SAT scores, but also API scores. When I took over, those tests scores were disastrously low and there was an urgent need to address them. . . . We also noticed that a significant number of students dropped out of high school or did not succeed at the college level.

Student behavior. The notion of student behavior encompasses all observable actions a student undertakes in the classroom. The issue of student behavior, whether positive or negative, is one that should be addressed by the teacher in the classroom because in many regards, behavior is directly connected to achievement. Poor student behavior often leads to poor performance. This theme emerged as third challenge most frequently faced by participants in this interview question, as eight out of 46 instances (17.3%) were mentioned by school administrators either directly or indirectly. A2, A4, A7, and A10 mentioned some issues of student behavior that were addressed very quickly and swiftly, leading to remediation of the problem at its early stages. A2 spoke of “students having some behavior issues related to the implementation of rigor in the classroom. Because they were not used to doing work, it became clear that they were going to resist our new direction until we reinforced it.” A1 stated:

As a team [we established] what . . . appropriate behavior should look and feel like. We also implemented . . . positive reinforcement programs [such as] the medal ceremony. We called the medal recipients “scholars” and we talked about what scholars do and

how scholars behave. I told them that scholars use their words not their fists, and I had them repeat it to each other.

Organizational issues. Logistical issues are those issues related to planning, administration, and execution, handling and running of an organization's day-to-day activities. This theme emerged as fourth challenge most frequently faced by turnaround public school administrators in this interview question, as 6 out of 46 instances (13%) were mentioned by school administrators either directly or indirectly. A1, A2, A10, and A12 talked about putting in place a leadership team at the early stages of their intervention with a mission to focus on all logistical issues. A13 said, "I put in place a team of expert volunteer teachers whose mission was to coordinate all school activities including back-to-school night, various assemblies, parent/teacher conferences, and other special events." A4 stated:

The most effective strategy for this task [wasn't immediately apparent]. I needed to do an environmental scan. . . . It took some time to craft a solution that would motivate families to bring their children to school. I matched people to work on those areas with logistical needs while I focused on crafting a strategy that would bring new families to embrace our vision.

Stakeholder buy-ins. Buy-in is the process by which a leader involves stakeholders in the organizational decision-making process, hoping to reach a broader consensus for the future of the vision. This theme emerged as the fifth challenge most frequently faced by these administrators related to this interview question, with four out of 46 instances (8.6%) mentioned by school administrators either directly or indirectly. A1, A4, A7, A11, and A12 mentioned that their vision looked so unrealistic that it took audacity and much explanation to get certain stakeholders, especially parents and the community, on board. A4 stated:

The question was to know why these parents would like to bring their children to the district. Trying to find what motivated parents, what they were looking for was the part I worked on for a long time. Once I identified those highlights, I started to market . . . with

companies south of LAX and their human resources departments to include a little word in their payroll envelopes regarding the concept that you could live in one place and send your child to school in another place, and that it was legal in the state of California. We sized up the situation by looking where the opportunity might be.

School safety. All activities carried out on school grounds must guarantee that students are safe from violence, harassment, and substance abuse. This theme emerged as the sixth challenge most often faced by turnaround public school administrators, as two out of 46 instances (4.3%) were mentioned by school administrators either directly or indirectly. While the vast majority of participants mentioned safety as not being a major concern on their campuses when they took on this challenging endeavor, at least two instances of the expression *school safety* was referred to by participants. A1 stated:

The school was very dirty. . . . [It] bordered a public park and we shared that area. So, meeting with the city, school personnel, [and] my own team, coming up with a plan so that the school could visually look better—that helped with our vision too . . . It improved our buy-ins. It is about kids being on safe school grounds; I call it “low-hanging fruit,” something tangible that people can see right away. I made it very clear . . . that this is a priority for me, so I got it done because I feel that kids deserve a clean school.

A11 noted:

I reminded my teachers and staff that school safety is an ongoing process . . . all students should feel safe. It is of optimal significance to create and maintain a school environment and school climate conducive to learning as they incorporate these principles into their daily routines.

A15 stated:

The one thing I was concerned . . . was to ensure that the school was in good standing with the federal, state, and city School Safety Plan Evaluation Tool for K–12 in terms of prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery. We needed to guarantee an efficient

evacuation and testing of the plan . . . as appropriate to local hazards for lockdown, earthquake, shelter in place, severe weather, reverse evacuation—just to name a few. As far as the other measures such as school police, school security, and overall school ground safety, we did not have any problems.

Interview question 3. What other strategies including leadership strategies did you use in the planning and implementation processes of your new vision? Through data analysis of respondents, 52 characteristics developed and led to the emergence of seven underpinning themes: (a) buy-ins, (b) cultural shift, (c) expectancy theory, (d) path-goal, and (e) theory of attribution, (f) theory X and Y (see figure 7).

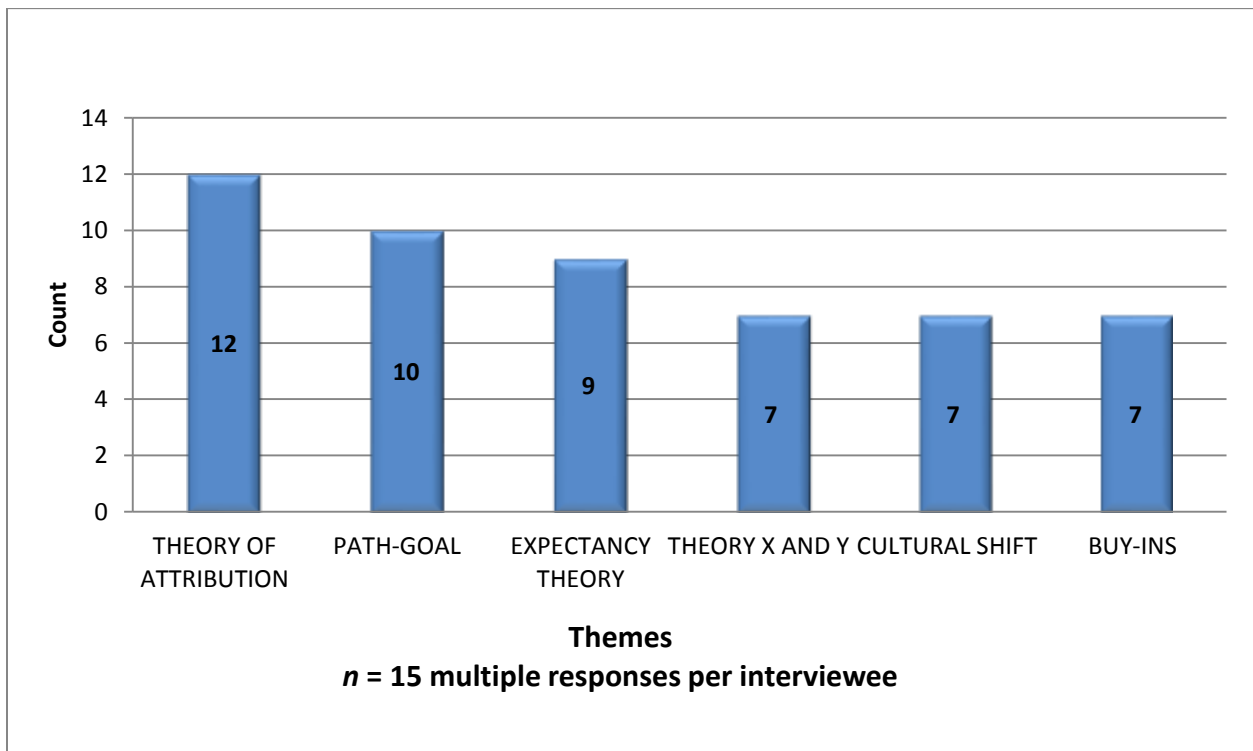


Figure 7. Interview question 3 coding results: Other strategies including leadership strategies. Six themes emerged, yielding 52 categories, presented in decreasing order of frequency (from 12 to 7). The number embedded within each theme bar indicates the number of time or frequency at which a direct or indirect statement was made by an interviewee and associated with a respective theme category.

Theory of attribution. This theory embodies the assumption that employees in organizations understand the reasons for their failures and successes. As motivational theory,

attribution attempts to decipher what leads to the occurrence or non-occurrence of an event.

This theme emerged at the top of other strategies (motivational), including leadership strategies used by turnaround K–12 public school administrators in the planning and implementation processes of their vision, as 12 instances (23%) were mentioned by these administrators either directly or indirectly. A1, A2, A3, A4, A6, A9, A10, and A11 all mentioned introducing some kind of recognition for teachers and staff, and an achievement celebration event to recognize student achievement one way or another, while at the same time entertaining an unconscious mutualistic relationship between them and their teachers and students. This was their way of saying “thank you” by reinforcing the link between outcomes, emotional response, and behavioral motivation. A1 said, “The medal ceremony was a very important vehicle of behavioral shift, especially when we started referring to the recipients as scholars; they understood that their efforts were worthwhile.” A2 conveyed:

We had a \$6,000,000 grant under SIG. So, I would not say it was a reward system but [teachers] were compensated for their work. So, we added an extra hour to the school day and we also had mandatory professional development (PD) time and mandatory professional learning community (PLC) time, and teachers were paid for that . . . My teachers met expectations and performed far beyond what I would pay them for.

Path-goal theory. A dyadic theory of supervision, path-goal theory involves the rapport between formerly appointed leaders and their followers in the daily accomplishments of their duties. This theme emerged as the second most frequently employed of other strategies (motivational), including leadership strategies, used by turnaround K–12 public school administrators in the planning and implementation processes of their vision as 12 instances (19.2%) were mentioned by the administrators either directly or indirectly. Nearly all participants mentioned something related to psychological contract, as the school administrator is the mirror or the reflection of how teachers and students perform by displaying and enacting acceptable

behavior, which in turn motivates teachers and students to increase effort and yield effective performance. A1 posited:

You have to walk the walk . . . My teachers told me that they appreciate that I am present . . . I don't call in, I don't miss a day, I stay late, I do what I am supposed to do, just implementing systems to make that culture stick. When you do that, they know what you expect of them.

A11 stated:

[I] walk the walk, modeling whatever practice I expected my teachers to implement. If I expected my teachers to have students work in small, heterogeneous, cooperative groups, the best practice was for them to walk around the classroom, facilitating instruction. . . . Throughout the day, I went around and visited every teacher's classroom. . . . I observed and gave feedback. You have to take your vision down to something they can see, hear, and feel.

Vroom's expectancy. Behaviors result from deliberate choices among alternatives whose goal is to optimize gain and minimize pain. This theme emerged third as one of other strategies (motivational), including leadership strategies used by turnaround K–12 public school administrators in the planning and implementation processes of their vision as nine instances of it (17.3%) were mentioned by these administrators either directly or indirectly. A1, A2, A7, A8, A9, A10, A11, and A12 all mentioned instituting some kind of compensation system where effort was celebrated for teachers and students. A11 stated:

There was a compensation system where we celebrated performance based on the value of the effort. We believed that teachers, staff, and students deserved to be compensated on the merit of the amount of effort they exerted. The recipient was awarded a \$500 gift certificate.

A12 stated, "Students were recognized for highest achievement during the principal's honors roll ceremony that took place once a year."

Theory X and Y. While Theory X denotes a management-centered working environment, Theory Y illustrates an employee-empowered workplace. This theme emerged fourth as one of the other strategies (motivational), including leadership strategies used by turnaround K–12 public school administrators in the planning and implementation processes of their vision, as seven instances (13.4%) were mentioned by these administrators either directly or indirectly. Throughout the completion of their school improvement tasks, the majority of these turnaround public school administrators expressed mixed feelings about some of their teachers and staff, as they felt that some demonstrated a level of detachment from the change process and needed more supervision (Theory X). Others enjoyed their jobs and were easily bought into the new direction with little or no supervision (Theory Y). But for the most part, these turnaround school administrators felt the need to empower teachers in order to increase the teachers' participation in the process. As an illustration of Theory X, A9 said, "We had to apply rigor not only on students, but also on teachers. . . . we had to micromanage, making sure everyone plays their part . . . if we were to optimize our chances of success." Conversely, A11 exemplified the typical Theory Y type of leadership, stating:

I believe in participative and democratic leadership; I believe my staff deserves to have a say-so in our daily operations. I don't believe in . . . being the only one who knows something or everything. I believe in everybody being given leverage and being involved. When everybody wins, the leader has won.

Cultural shift. Culture defines how things are done in organizations. School culture encompasses a set of assumptions, values, and beliefs shared by administrators, teachers, staff, students, parents, and the community. This theme emerged fifth as one of the other strategies (motivational), including leadership strategies used by turnaround K–12 public school administrators in the planning and implementation processes of their vision, as five instances (13.4%) were mentioned by these administrators either directly or indirectly. At least one third of the participants mentioned cultural shift as a complementary leadership practice that drove the

planning and implementation processes of their new direction for their schools. A1 talked about “establishing a culture of communication and collaboration between all stakeholders.” A7 said, “We needed to establish and communicate our vision, then make it stick, so that everyone understands the way things are done here now.” A8 recalled “packaging the advantages, the beliefs, the values, and selling them to the public, creating the *why*, the purpose, the culture.” By the same token, A2 posited:

It was time to change the culture. Once the school year started, I invited the whole staff at my home for a barbecue, just for them to get to know one another—no expectations, no evaluation, just come to my home, let us sit around, talk, get to know who you are going to be working with. Beyond that, I consider myself part of the PLC.

Buy-ins. Staff buy-in is the process of getting stakeholders involved in the decision-making process, hoping to attain broader participation on consensus for future wins of the organization. This theme emerged sixth as one of the other strategies (motivational), including leadership strategies used by turnaround K–12 public school administrators in the planning and implementation processes of their vision, as five instances (13.4%) were mentioned by these administrators either directly or indirectly. A11 mentioned setting the tone, being fair, being transparent, and showing empathy by displaying both his human side and his managerial side. He stated:

When you interact with the staff, you set a tone that will determine the way the staff is going to respond and behave toward you. If the tone is one of complacency, low standards, not setting high achievable standards, then the staff is going to behave that way. Second . . . I was very fair. No secret agenda, no vindictiveness—I put myself in a position of dealing with all them as a supervisor [and] of empathizing with them. The staff was able to embrace me, because they knew that I had a human side as well as an official side.

Interview question 4. How did you overcome resistance to your new planned direction for the organization? Through analysis of the data generated from the administrators' responses to this interview question, 70 characteristics emerged and led to the development of six themes: (a) eight-step change, (b) empower others, (c) feedback, (d) field force analysis, (e) *the why*, and (f) vision and mission (see figure 8).

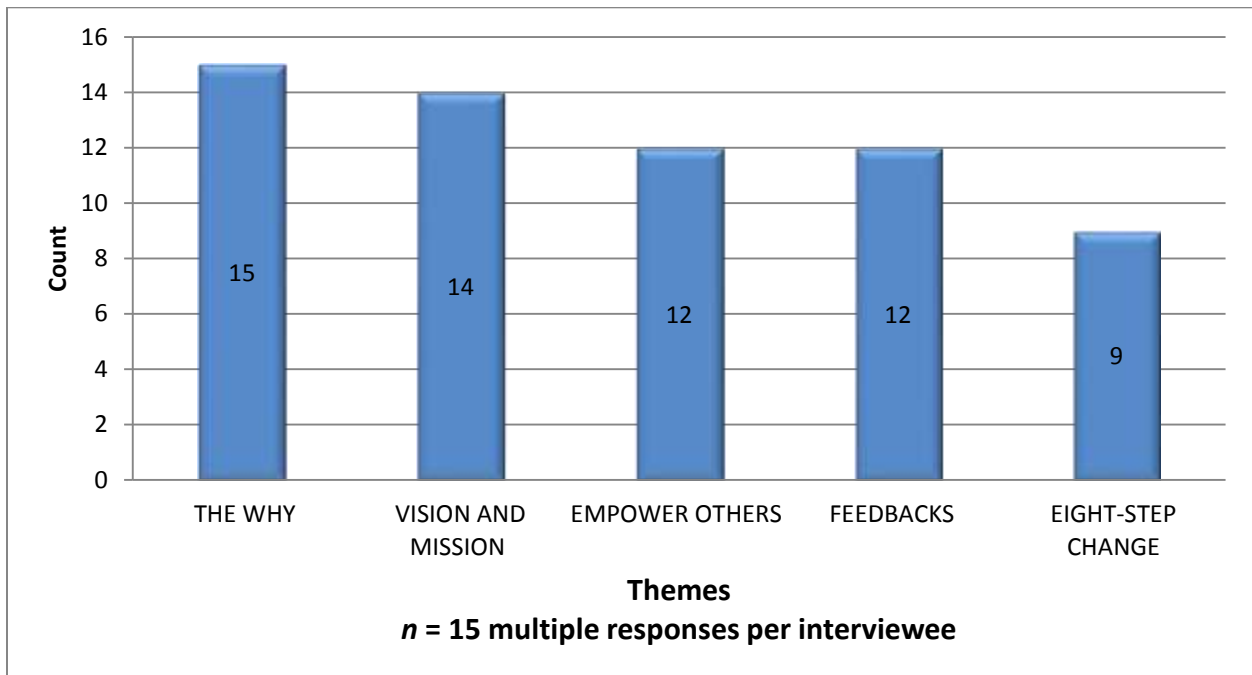


Figure 8. Interview question 4 coding results: Overcoming resistance to the new planned direction. Six themes emerged with 70 categories. The inputs are presented in decreasing order of frequency (15 to 8). The number embedded within each theme bar indicates the number of time or frequency at which a direct or indirect statement was made by an interviewee and associated with a respective theme category.

The why. This theme is concerned with understanding the purpose of the mission ahead, having the core belief in education, and the underpinning reasons for the turnaround endeavor. This theme emerged as the most significant step taken by turnaround K–12 public school administrators in overcoming resistance to their new planned direction for their organizations, as 15 instances (21.4%) were mentioned by these administrators either directly or indirectly. Stakeholders don't buy what you do as a leader, they buy why you do it; they buy the value. In times of crisis, overcoming resistance to the new vision entails selling the vision

and making it stick. A9 indicated that “success in any mission both in good times and bad times entails a clear understanding of the purpose of the mission.” A2 stated:

The *why* was all about data—the core reason for this change effort— and where we expected our students to be. The *how* was about ways and means we could implement to get this done, because *what* we were going to do was on the teachers. I focused on the *why* and let the teachers take care of the *how* and *what*. I focused on the management piece, the vision, and let the teachers do the mission.

Vision and mission. As a leader, or a turnaround leader for that matter, your vision delineates a direction, where you are going, and your mission specifies how you will get there. This theme emerged as the second most significant step taken by turnaround K–12 public school administrators in overcoming resistance to their new planned direction for their organizations, as 14 instances (20%) were mentioned by these administrators either directly or indirectly. A8 stated:

Keeping our vision and mission aligned required keeping that passion and dedication to our personal brand. Once I identified the ideas that would motivate parents to enroll their children in our schools, I needed to communicate what our district was all about by creating brochures, and getting media attention on the district to highlight its bright side and try to prevent anything negative in the environment that could destroy anything good. . . .Keep the focus on those things that would make them want to come to our schools—whether it was test scores, small class size, the mission ahead, selling our vision to the public—trying to figure out those levers that motivated parents, packaging the advantages and selling them to the public; creating the *why*, the purpose.

A11 stated:

Holding individuals accountable for the mission that was assigned to them was quintessential. . . . if you want to be successful, you have to follow the policies and rules that are in place. . . . If you dare using some other paradigms or other methods that are

not the written policies, it's easier for you to be compromised, and you cannot carry out your vision.

Empower others. A true leader is one who changes other people's lives by helping them reach their full potentials, being appreciative of them, sharing information with them, and providing resources, cognizant of the fact that others are looking to them to find answers, just to list a few characteristics. This theme emerged as the third most significant step taken by turnaround K–12 public school administrators in overcoming resistance to their new planned direction for their organizations, as 12 instances (17.1%) were mentioned by these administrators either directly or indirectly. A1 mentioned modeling by focusing on communication. She stated, "Communication was key to changing people's perception and empowering them by letting them hear, see, and experience authority, while allowing them to share the load." A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, and A7 talked about leading from within. On overcoming resistance, A2 stated:

I empowered teachers and staff to do it so I wouldn't have to do it. It got to the point where a couple of teachers who were having trouble getting on board left, not because I asked them to but because their colleagues asked them to leave as this wasn't the right fit for them. . . . I didn't really have to do much; I let the teachers take care of it. People who are on a steady stream of continuous success will stand up, and they did.

Feedback. Giving feedback involves providing the recipient with the observer's meaningful insights regarding their current performance and advice to remedy potential shortcomings. This theme also emerged as the fourth most significant step taken by turnaround K–12 public school administrators in overcoming resistance to their new planned direction for their organizations, as 12 instances (17.1%) were mentioned by these administrators either directly or indirectly. For many of these turnaround administrators, giving feedback was significant in mitigating stakeholders' resistance to change. A5 stated, "It was important for

stakeholders, especially teachers, staff, and students, to know where they were in order to design a plan that fits their needs moving forward.”

A6 contended:

Data was at the core of our mission. We used data to drive instruction . . . design our professional development sessions . . . conduct supervision . . . plan and conduct evaluation, and . . . as a blueprint for planning and implementing instructional improvement. This was our opportunity to tell everyone what was as opposed to what was supposed to be.

Eight-step change. Most change efforts are implemented through the execution of this eight-step model in one way or the other. This theme emerged as the fifth most significant step taken by turnaround K–12 public school administrators in overcoming resistance to their new planned direction for their organizations, as nine instances of it (12%) were mentioned by these administrators either directly or indirectly. Interestingly, A1 stated:

I didn't really have any resistance. The urgency was there; we were operating under SIG. Everybody was ready for improvement and change. This school wasn't [well thought of] for whatever reason because I had the best teachers. . . . If I had any resistance, communication squashed that. Communication was key. If you communicate and center all your decisions on the children and improving the school, you will create that coalition, and people will buy into your vision. Remember that grandmother who wrote me a letter following the medal ceremony? That was a great sign of connection, a win-win situation. You can have your unreasonable people, but I didn't consider them real barriers because what we brought to the table, including the student Medal of Honor ceremony . . . was enough to make it stick by reinforcing a culture of success throughout our school.

Field force analysis. In order for a change agent to fully understand and address resistance to his or her effort, uncovering both the restraining and driving forces acting on the

environment is important. This theme emerged as the sixth most significant step taken by turnaround K–12 public school administrators in overcoming resistance to their new planned direction for their organizations, as eight instances (11.4%) were mentioned by these administrators either directly or indirectly. A4 stated:

There was some resistance from the classroom teachers . . . because they weren't sure whether these students who came under permit could stay. We needed the money, so we needed the students to get the money. It took a few years to set up a process where teachers could make a report on a student—put the student on probation—with the threat that they may lose their permit . . . and the student wouldn't come back. A driving force was that people who received those permits viewed them as privilege, that they were better off in our schools than where they [had been], and they wanted to hold on to their permits. So now, you have the parents on the kid saying, "Don't screw up because if you do, you are going back to wherever." . . . We designed a document that had [the teachers'] part on it and gave them real power in deciding who would come back the next year. That resistance lessened and went away. They saw they really were in charge.

A11 contended:

We had to make tough decisions in order to confront people [in] their comfort zones and reverse that equilibrium; parents were used to calling their children on their cell phones and pulling them out of the classroom, disrupting the learning process; teachers were calling in on a short notice without giving the school ample time to call a substitute—maintaining a certain status quo. We had to address parent behavior on school campus and define a clear policy for teachers calling off.

Summary of Research Question 1

Research question 1 asked: What are the best leadership practices of turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who have led a major change effort in their

respective organizations? In order to answer this question, four interview questions were developed:

1. What leadership practices did you engage in the planning and implementation phases while dealing with human elements (faculty, staff, students, and parents), unexpected challenges and resistance to change?
2. What major or unexpected challenges did you face during this intervention?
3. What other strategies, including leadership strategies did you use in the planning and implementation processes of your new vision?
4. How did you overcome resistance to your new planned direction for the organization?

A total of 24 themes emerged in response to the four interview questions associated with this research question. The most significant examples of the 24 themes included: communication, collaboration, situational leadership, transformational leadership, parent involvement, student achievement, three-dimensional theory of attribution, path-goal theory, Vroom's expectancy theory, Simon Sinek's "it starts with a why," and empowering others.

Research Question 2

RQ 2 was stated as follows: What are the most common leadership challenges faced by turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who embarked onto major change effort in these organizations? Answering this question entailed the development of four corresponding interview questions (IQs) that were posed to the participants:

- IQ 5. What challenges did you face in the planning phase of the implementation of your intervention mission?
- IQ 6. Did anything unexpected occur during the planning and implementation of your intervention?

- IQ 7. If so, what corrective (evasive) measures did you envision to mitigate these surprising events?
- IQ 8. What role did innovation and creativity play in overcoming these unplanned hurdles?

Specific themes emerged from each of the interview questions that would then form the major themes to answer research question 2.

Interview question 5. What challenges did you face in the planning phase of the implementation of your intervention mission? Through analysis of the data generated from the administrators' responses to this interview question, 64 characteristics emerged and led to the development of six themes: (a) boundaries, (b) conflict resolution, (c) consensus, (d) status quo, (e) race, and (f) timeline (see Figure 9).

Timeline. You cannot make more, but you can only make the best out of what is allocated to you. This theme emerged as the most significant challenge faced by turnaround K–12 in the planning phase of the implementation of their intervention, as 15 instances (23.4%) were mentioned by these administrators either directly or indirectly. All participants recognized their timeline as having been a challenge as they planned the implementation of their interventions. A4, A5, and A7 referred to the benchmark requirements that the turnaround models imposed. Performance evaluations for turnaround administrators are based on the fact that according to research, rapid and dramatic school improvement is possible within two years.

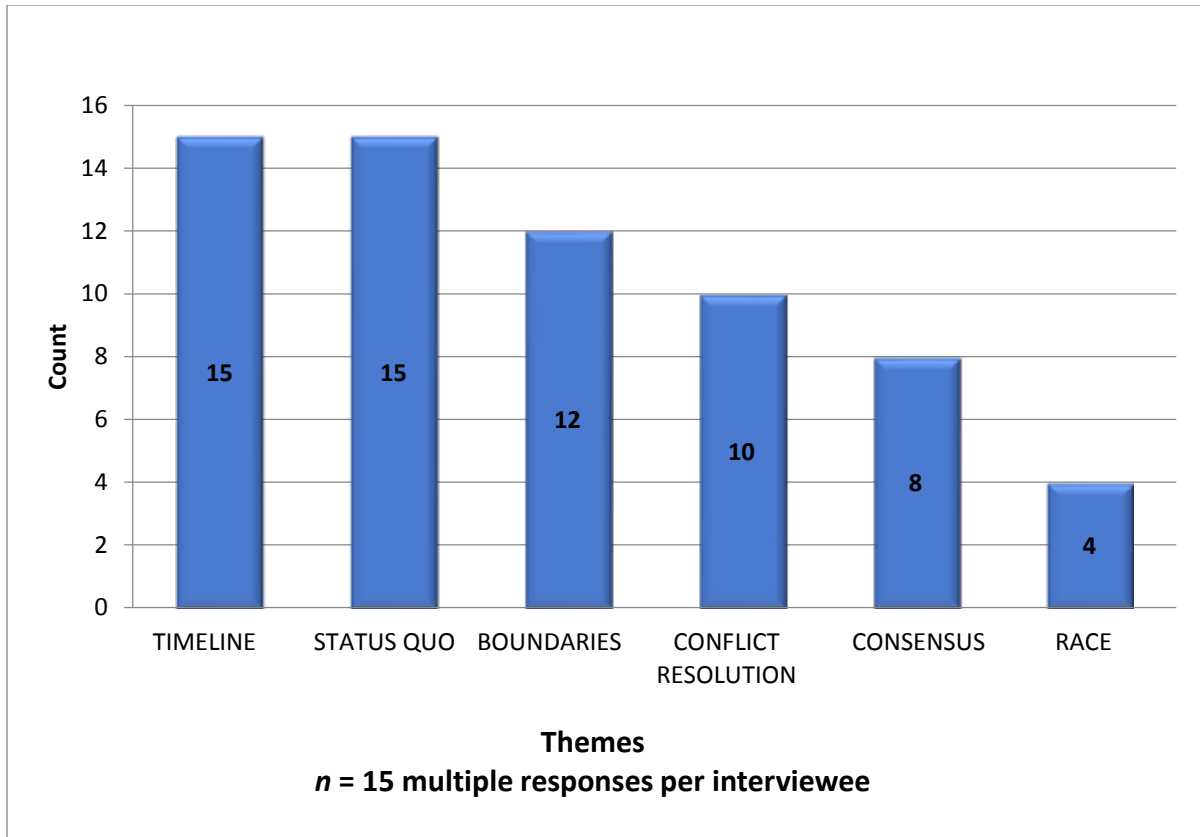


Figure 9. Interview question 5 coding results: Challenges. Six themes emerged with 64 categories. These responses are presented in decreasing order of frequency (from 15 to 4). The number within each theme represents the number of times a direct or indirect statement was made by a given participant using a word or phrase that merged into the respective category.

A1 stated:

The timeline for deliverables puts tremendous pressure on you to show results within 18 to 24 months, but I was fortunate that my superintendent knew and understood my vision . . . Everybody knew the mission I was on, and he was out there communicating it to them. The other great thing was that all my staff . . . was on board with the mission, and when we succeeded, we all celebrated.

A12 remarked:

Current turnaround guidelines operate on a very aggressive timeline and require a throughout overhaul, not a tinkering. This puts a lot of pressure on us as turnaround

principals. But with a clear vision and a good team of professionals . . . things usually work out.

Status quo. In order to foresee success in turnaround, the leader should design and implement an action plan that addresses and aligns inputs (leadership, staff, and resources), school-based practices (actions, practices, school climate, and parent/community), leading indicators (adult and student behaviors), and desired outcomes (discipline, academic success, and college attainment/graduation). This theme emerged as the most significant challenge faced by turnaround K–12 in the planning phase of the implementation of their intervention, as 15 instances (23.4%) were mentioned by these administrators either directly or indirectly. A1, A2, A3, A4, and A6 spoke of the uncertainty of walking onto a new campus knowing you are there to make something extraordinary happen. A6 remarked:

Breaking the status quo required me and my team to first of all show a sense of urgency. The school was in a downward spiral, teacher and student absenteeism was at its highest, discipline was nonexistent, and student learning and achievement were long gone; the desperation caused by the current situation was palpable, people were retracted in their comfort zones. The next step we took was to design and adopt a plan of action that [would] alter behaviors by building a coalition [to] work toward delivering desired outcomes. . . . The rest of the journey was not as steep. We were able to get other stakeholders on board and secure buy-ins in a fair amount of time.

A11 told an interesting story of action leadership, behavior, and desired outcomes. He stated:

In the planning phase of my intervention, I noticed a total lack of leadership in the school. I had to craft a leadership style that was going to fill the vacuum. . . . Most of the teachers did not have any respect for . . . the principal before me. They ran the school the way they thought fit their desires and most of the students. . . . I had to create a leadership style that did not get me in a position where I had to bargain my authority,

[but] where equity was my guiding principle. That is how you mitigate those things; you have to be neutral, firm, [and] fair but not hard.

Boundaries. How to say yes, and when to say no; boundaries are that invisible line that separates us from others, that segregates our emotions from other people's emotions. This theme also emerged as the third most significant challenge faced by turnaround K–12 in the planning phase of the implementation of their intervention, as 12 instances (18.7%) were mentioned by these administrators either directly or indirectly. A4, A6, A9, A10, and A11 all mentioned the importance of making students understand where they can begin and where they can end. A11 told a fascinating story that embodies the notion of boundaries. He stated:

You have to have a mastery of how power and politics play out. . . . We do not allow students to use their cell phones in school. One student was playing around with her cell phone and the dean . . . confiscated it. The student . . . said she needed her cell phone and the dean said, "No, you can't have it." The student took out a second cell phone and called her father [who came] to the school to retrieve the phone. The dean told him he could not have the phone back before two weeks. The father said, "No way, that is my phone, I pay the bills, it is my property, and you can't hold my property." . . . The father called the sheriff, who came in faster than when I called him for some other incident. . . . Power and politics are interwoven, and you can successfully use them as leverage for the reinforcement of boundaries.

Conflict resolution. Conflict resolution is the process by which two or more parties find a peaceful resolution to a disagreement that arose among them. Conflict is inherent to the fabric of society. When conflict is well managed, it can become an opportunity for growth out of our comfort zones. In order for our schools to promote and maintain high standards of learning for our children, it is important to guarantee a minimum of a safe, conflict-free environment on school grounds. Nevertheless, when conflicts do arise, it is important for the school leadership to intervene with equity, dignity, and respect for all parties. This theme emerged as the fourth

most significant challenge faced by turnaround K–12 in the planning phase of the implementation of their intervention, as 10 instances (15.6%) were mentioned by these administrators either directly or indirectly. Continuing with the story on boundaries, A11 elaborated on how he resolved conflicts when they arose. He recounted:

The sheriff came in, the parent told his side of the story, and the sheriff asked us: “Do you have a policy for cell phone use on your campus?” We said, “Yes, we do, and parents sign the policy before their child is admitted to the school.” The parent said he had signed the policy. The sheriff told the parent . . . “Then there is nothing I can do. You have to follow what the school policy is.” The sheriff left. As a way to resolve this conflict without further concerns, I pulled the parent to the side and told him that I was going to give him that phone back the next day. Then I called the dean to the corner and said: “If this parent goes to the district and tells them any cooked-up story, they are going to give us about a week or a month to deal with this story. Is it worth it? I am going to give him the phone tomorrow. I am going to ask him to come to my office tomorrow and retrieve the phone.” The dean was okay with that. . . . I could have kept the phone for two weeks . . . but I used my discretionary power to get the best alternative in negotiating this issue to an agreement. Everyone got something out of it; even better, we all learned from it.

Consensus. Consensus is the cornerstone of collaboration and growth in every organization. In order to for collaboration to exist and serve its purpose during turnaround, turnaround administrators and their stakeholders should find common ground in order to leverage their efforts toward the desired direction. This theme emerged as the fifth most significant challenge faced by turnaround K–12 in the planning phase of the implementation of their intervention, as eight instances (12.5%) were mentioned by these administrators either directly or indirectly.

Still in reference to the cell phone incident between the student, the dean, and the parent, A11 added:

I used my discretionary power to give the phone to the parent the day after the incident as a leverage to get him on our team once and for all. The parent feels that this is a principal who is understanding . . . so if I have something I would like to get out of him as a parent, he will quickly do that for me because I am a nice man to him. At the same time, the dean did not lose face in front of the parent and the student because I did not grab the phone from him at that time and give it to the parent; had I done that, the dean would have felt like he had no power and [would have become a disgruntled member of the team.

To be a successful leader, you should put yourself in a position where you [affect] people's lives. You have to build the type of relationship that promotes consensus; you have to do things for people that will require them to either be appreciative of what you have done or be supportive of the program you are leading. If you are leading people without them following what you are doing, you are not leading them right. Building consensus . . . is a two-way street. If I have a vision for the school as a leader—I want all the students to go to college, I want them to participate in the spelling bee—if the parents don't provide that support and bring the kids here to participate, then I can't have them participate.

Race. Sometimes, people can express very different views about other people's demographic background. Whether it is race, gender, age, or sexual orientation, people do not have the same perceptions, especially when it comes to leadership. Some even assume that being an effective leader is contingent upon belonging to a certain ethnic group. This theme emerged as the least significant challenge faced by turnaround K–12 in the planning phase of the implementation of their intervention, as four instances (6.2%) were mentioned by these administrators either directly or indirectly. In only four occasions did participants mention this category but it was fascinating and two of the stories are shared here. A1, A4, and A11

mentioned their ethnic background as being a limiting factor, at least for some time in the planning phase of the implementation of their intervention. A1 stated:

Everybody was not ready for an African American female leader in this school . . . people have their own stereotypes, their own personal challenges they need to overcome. Despite these pushbacks at the early stages of my intervention, when they saw human action, they kind of got over it. . . . [One person] had real issues with my race. My school is the most diverse school in Culver City and a lot of students enroll on permit. . . . Some of the neighborhood fellows did not like the fact that other minority kids came here from [other] neighborhoods, and I was seen negatively as a leader who they believed allowed that to happen.

Similarly, A11 confessed:

The whole idea of change was difficult. Many people don't receive change as positively as you may think or expect. . . . Second, my predecessor was female. Now, I am a male and on top of that, I am not African American but I am from Africa, which is a little bit difficult to swallow as a change pill. . . . I have Americans on my staff that I supervise, so I had to strengthen my position by having my certificates and diplomas displayed on the wall in my office. . . . When people, parents, teachers, and others come in my office and see them, they can actually see firsthand that this is an authentic person. This is not because he knows Mr. A or Mr. B; no, this is a solid person [who] is deserving of this position.

Interview question 6. Did anything unexpected occur during the planning and implementation of your intervention? Based on the analysis of the data generated from the administrators' responses to this interview question, 47 characteristics emerged and led to the development of four themes: (a) change, (b) district restrictions, (c) parent pushbacks, and (d) student behavior (see Figure 10).

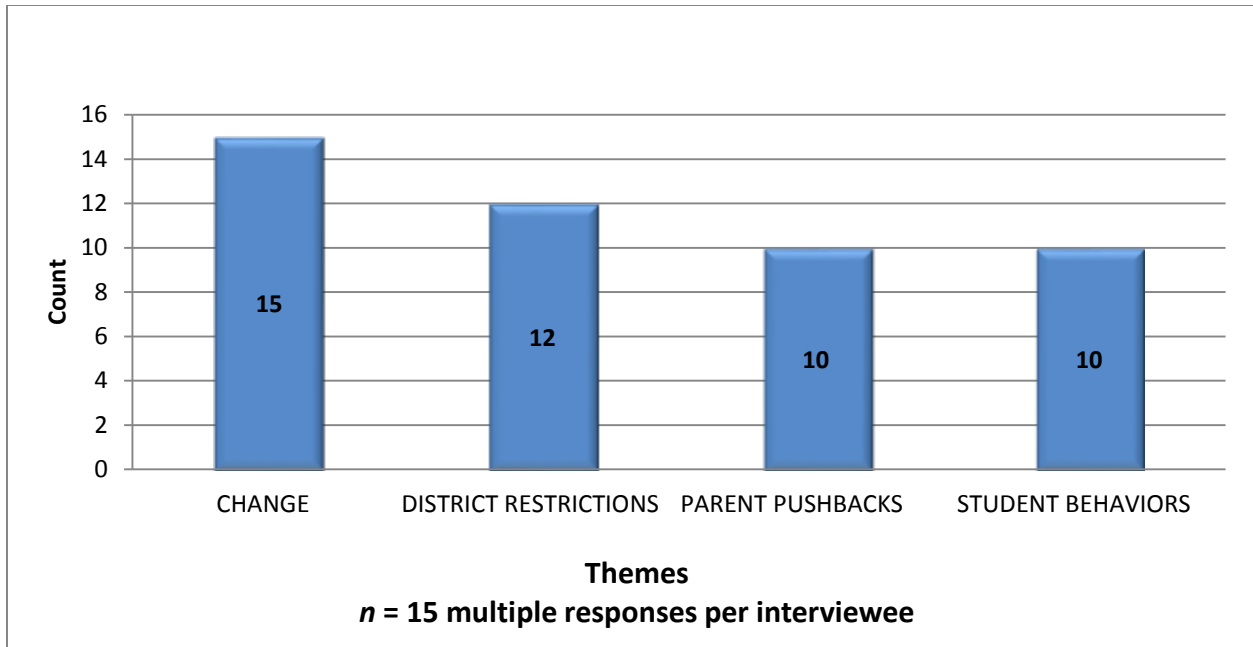


Figure 10. Interview question 6 coding results: Unexpected events. Four themes emerged with 47 categories. The inputs are presented in decreasing order of frequency (from 15 to 10). The number embedded within each theme bar indicates the number of time or frequency at which a direct or indirect statement was made by an interviewee and associated with a respective theme category.

Change. Change is the only constant and change is fast. As many leaders would agree, change as it is known today is a constant process—not simply an event. This theme emerged as the most significant unexpected event faced by turnaround K–12 public school administrators during the planning and implementation of their intervention, as 15 instances (31.9%) were mentioned by these administrators either directly or indirectly. All turnaround public school administrators who participated in this study unequivocally agreed that change happened so fast during their intervention that it felt like they were working hard without building the thrust they needed to create those small wins. A1 stated:

The unexpected occurrence was change; it happened so quickly. I don't know if it was because I had been through this before, making change in my previous school; so, I put the system in place sooner. Usually change takes a couple of years, but this was done in five months and it was incredible. The president of the community association approached me and said new families were moving into the area and wanted to come to

the school; they would like to know how they could support and fund us. So, the change has been pretty immediate with positive feedback.

A6 conveyed: “Things happened so fast that before we knew, we were immersed into our next planned course of action. We had very little or no time to connect the dots and brace ourselves between past undertakings and current initiatives.”

District restrictions. Schools in turnaround have to operate within the constraints delineated by one of the following models: turnaround, restart, transformation, and school closure. This theme emerged as the second most significant unexpected event faced by turnaround K–12 public school administrators during the planning and implementation of their intervention, as 12 instances (25.5%) were mentioned by these administrators either directly or indirectly. The majority of turnaround administrators interviewed cited resistance due to rigid guidelines of the model, namely staff replacement. A5 stated:

Many teachers expressed some resentment toward the new turnaround leadership team and this translated into some level of resistance to our effort in its early stages. As a result, building our team took a little longer than it should have but with good communication, we were able to get all the teachers who showed signs of early buy-in on board.

A6, A7, A9, and A15 alluded to the costs associated with the release of at least 50% of current teachers, especially those with tenure. A15 stated: “Severing ties with tenured teachers was just as challenging as hiring new ones. Creating the human and political capital needed to leverage our actions and build our latitude to carry out turnaround work [was also challenging].”

Parent pushbacks. For various reasons, some parents created restraining forces acting against the change effort. This theme emerged as the third most significant unexpected events faced by turnaround K–12 public school administrators during the planning and implementation of their intervention, as 10 instances (21.2%) were mentioned by these administrators either directly or indirectly. Most turnaround administrators admitted having to face, sometimes to face

off some parents who did not understand the scope of the mission, especially at its inception.

A2 stated:

We expected the students to present some challenges with regard to their behavior and academic results, but we did not expect challenges from parents. Some parents checked their children out of our school; a few opted to home school [their children]. They were used to coddling their children; not that we were torturing them, but there was rigor, the children were not used to being held accountable for learning and behavior. They complained to their parents, who reacted by pulling them out. Parents pushed back by saying, "I do not want my child to work this hard."

A11 posited:

Parents were set on old ways of doing business and could not take to new ways. Parents who had personal contacts with those with authority within the organization were used to going over the principal to get things done. So, in many instances, I did have pushback from those parents because they were used to and satisfied with the status quo; they were used to having things done their way on our campus by disrupting the instructional process at will for one reason or another.

Student behavior. In most cases, challenging behavior is defined as a combination of actions undertaken by students in the classroom or on school grounds, susceptible to cause harm to the student himself or herself, other students, teachers, staff, or to interfere with school property or the learning process. Challenging behaviors can take various forms: withdrawn, disruptive, violent, or inappropriate. This theme emerged as the fourth most significant unexpected event faced by turnaround K–12 public school administrators during the planning and implementation of their intervention, as 10 instances (21.2%) were mentioned by these administrators either directly or indirectly. Regardless of what the cause of challenging behavior might be, A8, A9, A10, and A14 recognized student unruliness as being one of the underlying, if not the biggest underlying cause of low student performance and achievement. A14 said:

Effective classroom discipline is the responsibility of the teacher; not the student. Teachers should be able to clearly communicate to all students what appropriate behavior should be through their classroom rules, procedures, and routines, and we provided enough professional development opportunities for teachers to perfect their craft in that domain. Our goal . . . was to create and maintain a school culture that held everyone accountable for their actions. When I was in the classroom, I always told my students that “between teaching and learning there is silence.”

A1 asserted:

We had a lot of behavior assemblies, a lot of staff meetings because behavior was not acceptable. We established what behavior looked like, what appropriate behavior looked like so that we were all on the same page. We met with parents as needed, counseled with students as needed, and instituted a lot of positive reinforcement programs such as the medal ceremony.

Interview question 7. If so, what corrective (evasive) measures did you envision to mitigate these surprising events? Based on the analysis of the data generated from the administrators’ responses to this interview question, 50 characteristics emerged and led to the development of seven themes: (a) communication, (b) idealized influence, (c) individualized consideration, (d) intellectual stimulation, and (e) stakeholder involvement (see Figure 11).

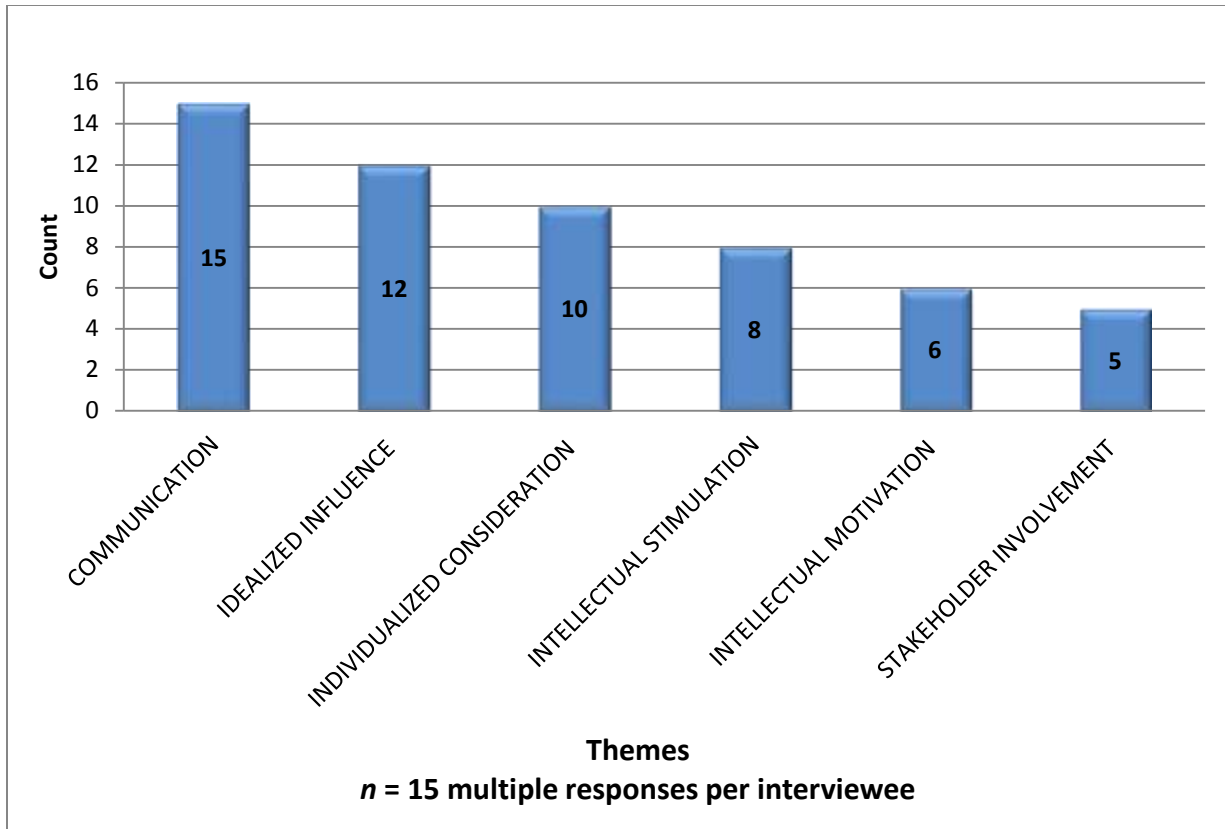


Figure 11. Interview question 7 coding results: Corrective (evasive) measures. Fifty categories and five themes were represented. The inputs are presented here in decreasing order of frequency (from 15 to 5). The number embedded within each theme bar indicates the number of time or frequency at which a direct or indirect statement was made by an interviewee and associated with a respective theme category.

Communication. Constantly talking is not communicating; rather, communication is the process of exchanging or sharing information between a sender and a recipient. This theme was referred to by participants in 15 instances (30%) either directly or indirectly and emerged as the most commonly used evasive measure employed by these school administrators to mitigate surprising events during the planning and implementation of their intervention. All school administrators asserted using communication as a major evasive measure, if not the major evasive measure to mitigate surprising events. A1 posited:

Innovation and creativity are everything for a clear communication of your vision and in overcoming hurdles. You have got to monitor progress, keep your ear on the ground, know when to make changes, implement changes, strategies, who to talk to, how to talk

to them, implement a new plan. Innovation and creativity are everything especially when you are trying to get buy-ins to your new vision or change to overcome hurdles.

A8 recalled his attempt to enlist new families in the community into his new vision:

Recognizing the new field of play, the new opportunities, and clearly communicating our vision was key to our success. Our goal was to open the school for children coming from other districts through school permits and we did address the benefits of doing that to these communities. We just retooled to meet the new audience expectations. . . . All of those strategies were really innovative and creative because I had no book as reference or nobody advising me, yet I was able to present and sell something people were craving for.

Idealized influence. Reversing a situation in dire straits requires a leader to build confidence in themselves and appreciation for the followers by building relationships and instilling trust. This theme was referred to by participants either directly or indirectly 12 times (24%) and emerged as the second most significant theme in this interview question after communication. All school principals who mentioned this theme made reference to changing stakeholders' perception, values, aspirations, even views, while at the same time, building relationships and instilling trust. A1 stated:

Because change was happening so quickly, I had to implement more opportunities for the community to hear about it. I introduced events such as "coffee with the principal" once a month. We were doing actual school tours, going on the school grounds and into the classrooms twice a month, and I scheduled alternative tours for parents who could not make those time slots. We had multiple points, about six days per month, where we got information out to the community regarding great things that were happening at our school. Parents of prospective students [started asking for tours]. . . . They could get firsthand the sense of what we had been doing to get things on a successful course.

Similarly, A2 stated:

I started having parent meetings, introduced “coffee with the principal”, and initiated student home visits. We reached out to parents, inviting them for coffee, barbecue. We painted the school, cleaned up with parents, just to get them involved. Making them feel at home was part of our planning.

Individualized consideration. Understanding who your stakeholders are and unravelling what their individual needs are is a quintessential characteristic of successful leaders, especially in times of decline. Teachers and staff seek employment in different schools for various reasons, and similarly, parents enroll their children in schools for reasons that are sometimes very personal. This theme was mentioned in 10 instances (20%) by interviewed administrators. The following are two excerpts to illustrate this theme. A4 asserted, “I initiated quality, not quantity in order to address individual needs of stakeholders. For these things to work, you’ve got to customize them to the individual needs of parents and their children.” A13 also shared this line of thinking:

Parents enroll their children in schools that have a culture of success. No matter what other reasons may be, all parents want their children to succeed; and if a school does not guarantee a learning environment conducive to these fundamental needs or desires, parents will seek permits and enroll their children elsewhere. Whether it is academics, sports, arts, or other tangible and recognizable programs offered by the school, as a school administrator, especially a turnaround school administrator, you should bear this in mind when planning and implementing your school improvement plan and pioneer programs that meet these needs and desires.

Intellectual stimulation. Successful leaders pay close attention to what their followers have to say, in good times and bad. Followers are more likely to bring innovative ideas when they know that these ideas will be given the attention they deserve by the leader. This theme was revealed by turnaround school administrators in eight instances (16%), directly or indirectly.

Notably, A1 mentioned reaching out to parents for inputs. A10 emphasized the importance of listening to stakeholders. He declared:

Coffee sessions with the principal were unique opportunities to listen to school department chairs, parents, and community leaders in order to invite them to be part of the solution not the problem, challenge them to uncover alternative solutions, and improve their performance and participation with the school vision.

Stakeholder involvement. Getting everyone involved and embracing the new direction is crucial in helping a change agent reverse the trend that led to failure. Five instances (10%) of this category were raised by turnaround public school administrators, either directly or indirectly. A6, A7, and A10 talked about opening a fluid line of collaboration within the school, among teachers and staff, as well as between the school and the community. As a perfect illustration, A11 indicated that “opening the school to visitors paved the way for increased involvement of all members of the community in the school daily operations” and A12 spoke of “an open alliance between teachers and parents.”

Interview question 8. What role did innovation and creativity play in overcoming these unplanned hurdles? Based on the analysis of the data generated from the administrators’ responses to this interview question, 77 characteristics emerged and led to the development of six themes: (a) branding, (b) communication skills, (c) expectations and achievement (d) Hawthorne effect, (e) intercultural competence and achievement, and (f) storytelling (see Figure 12).

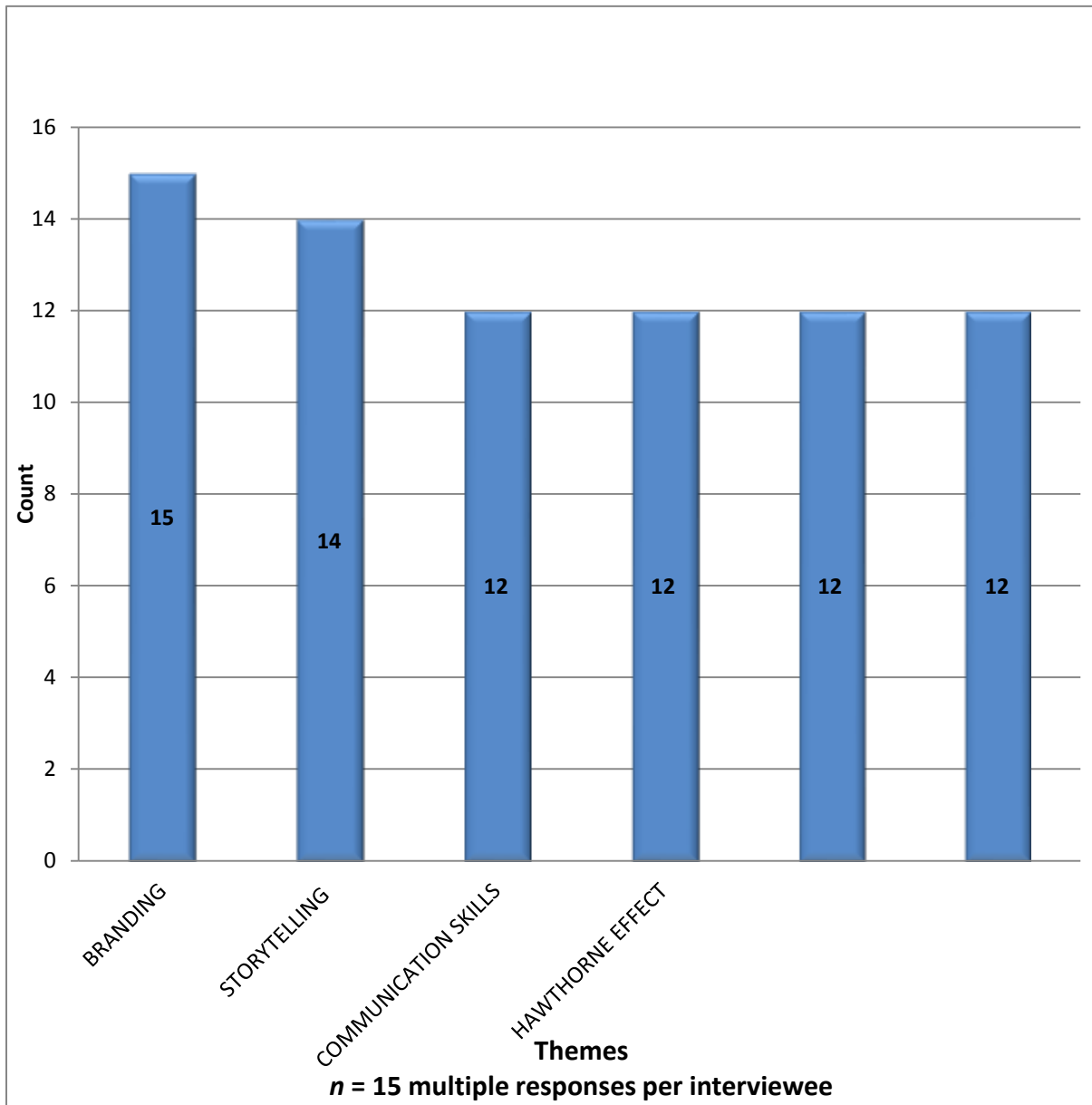


Figure 12. Interview question 8 coding results: Role played by innovation and creativity in overcoming unplanned hurdles. Six themes emerged with 77 categories. Responses presented in decreasing order of frequency (from 15 to 12). The number within each theme represents the number of times a direct or indirect statement was made by a given participant using a word or phrase that merged into the respective category.

Branding. Just like Boeing manufactures and sells airplanes and Rolex makes and sells watches, each one of us makes and sells something that is unique: ourselves. The determining hallmark, the ascertaining attribute, the distinguishing trait of you is what makes you your own brand. This theme rose as the most frequently mentioned (19.4%), either directly or indirectly, by interviewed turnaround public school administrators as one of the innovative and creative

practices they employed in overcoming unplanned hurdles. All 15 administrators acknowledged either directly or indirectly the significance of “being your own brand” and creating a branded relationship with teachers, staff, students, parents, and the whole community in order to instill trust create that connection between one another’s values and belief system. A2 talked about “being authentic, in order to earn trust, inspiring teachers, students, and staff to be their best, following through and delivering on promises” (personal communication, January 26, 2017). A11 indicated the importance of “initiating a meet and greet system to show caring and build connections with all stakeholders including teachers, staff, students, and parents.” Similarly, A1 contended:

I created that presence and instilled recognition as that of a school principal who is accessible and makes teachers, staff, students, parents, and other community members want to talk to me, believe what I was saying, understand where I was going, and be ready to get there with me.

Storytelling. Storytelling summarizes the story of who you are. Turnaround public school administrators used storytelling in several instances as an innovative and creative tool to overcome unplanned hurdles by sparking or jumpstarting interest in some given strategies and leading into the future. This theme emerged 14 times (18.1%), either directly or indirectly.

Speaking to an audience of teachers, A2 elucidated that:

in order to learn a new language, you need to use the language . . . academic language, sentence frames, and all other strategies. When I went to Germany, the best way to learn the language was to use it.

A8 also used storytelling to engage teachers and staff in buying into his vision during an assembly in which an audience of parents and community leaders were also present. In that setting, he stated:

As I stand in front of you today, I would like to first and foremost thank you all for attending this event. Dear colleagues, teachers, staff, students, parents, and community

leaders, there is no secret behind the reason why we are here today. One thing and one thing only matters as we gather in this hall, on this day: it is about getting to know one another better and embracing our cultural differences in order to better serve our children. When I took on the challenge of turning things around in this school, I knew . . . this would not be an easy task, but I also knew that by surrounding myself with capable educators and competent staff that you are, we will stay the course and fulfill our mission. . . . This mission is about creating the future for our youth; this mission is about providing an opportunity for each one of them to see a brighter future ahead. Dear teachers, staff, and parents, we cannot reach our goals without the commitment of each and every one of us being part of the solution. We will share our stories of success and the challenges we faced along the way in order to inspire our common purpose. . . . I call on you to embrace the vision we set forth so that together, we can provide the quality instruction and support that will open the next chapter for this institution and the children it serves. Thank you for coming and enjoy your time with us.

Communication skills. Communication is the process of transmitting, conveying, disclosing, disseminating, or exchanging information. One of the fundamental competencies of successful public school administrators is their ability to communicate very efficiently. This theme was mentioned either directly or indirectly in 12 instances (15.5%) by participants as a significant innovative and creative means they employed to overcome unplanned hurdles during their intervention. A1, A2, A3, A4, and A5 made references to using communication to show their support to the staff and involve everyone. A1 mentioned “regularly sending letters to parents to encourage them to play a more prominent role in the education of their children.” A9 recalled “organizing and patronizing weekly school-wide assemblies where students and teachers interacted in plays; where students were allowed to speak publicly in order to share insights about themselves, the school, and their vision for the future.” In addition, A12 stated:

Great communication skills are the cornerstone of success in the global economy. . . .

We made it a requirement for all teachers, especially English teachers and foreign language teachers to increase the practice of oral communications and presentations of all sorts within the classroom. [For] English language learners (ELLs), we recommended that teachers use a variety of strategies . . . including specially designed academic instruction in English (SDAIE) and sheltered instruction observation protocol (SIOP) to address the needs of that special population of students. Finally, we facilitated the distribution of resources to our AVID [Advancement via Individualized Determination] teachers in order to engage students in various communication stimulating activities, including movie report outs and many other types of oral and written activities.

Hawthorne effect. This theory demonstrates the psychological influence leaders can have on the motivation of their followers. What psycho-social factors cause teachers to be more effective and students to perform better? This category emerged as the third theme, in 12 instances, (15.5%) as it was mentioned either directly or indirectly by public school administrators as part of their innovative and creative ideas to overcome unplanned hurdles by being present, visible, and accessible in order to stimulate teachers, staff, and students. A15 stated:

When I was in the classroom prior to becoming an administrator, I always walked around when students were doing independent work; creating and maintaining that proximity prevented them from lagging and increased their focus on the task, thus their readiness to learn. As administrators, I believe in walk through, not as a tool to spy on teachers, but as a means to reiterate my support to their efforts and to have a clear idea on the overall atmosphere of the school. Continuously assessing teachers' instructional practices and student engagement can only make them better at what they do.

A7 confirmed this by asserting:

During a staff meeting designed to improve teacher effectiveness and student engagement, one teacher simply told me that when students realize that the teacher is assessing their engagement by either keeping an eye on them or simply walking around the classroom without saying anything during guided practice or independent work, or even during group work, their ability to achieve at a higher level increases exponentially. I agree with the positive psychological effect this simple practice can have on students' sense of ownership of their own learning.

Intercultural competence. Cultural competence is a set of perceptions, behaviors, attitudes, and values that allow an individual to function properly in a diverse setting without prejudice. This theme was mentioned directly or indirectly in 12 instances (15.5%) by participants as a significant, innovative, and creative means they employed to overcome unplanned hurdles during their intervention. All 15 schools that participated in this study were characterized by very diverse student demographics. A1 stated that “the great thing about the school is that it is very diverse. We have approximately 33% Hispanics, 27% African Americans, 25% Whites, 15% Asians, and others.” A11 explained that “it is necessary to educate our students about intercultural competence at this early age because in this global economy, our values should be built on a minimal level of acceptance, if not adaptation, toward other cultures.” A12 contended:

Intercultural competence plays a significant role in educating our students on the strategies to avoid conflicts and misunderstandings, diffusing tensions, providing them [with a] better awareness of their own cultures, boosting their curiosity about other cultures, stimulating their sensitivity about cultural differences, avoiding unintentional offenses on other cultural groups, increasing their cultural aptitudes to diffuse insults, and helping in conflict management.

In a similar note, A15 stated, “Our cultural diversity is one of our greatest assets, which is why we celebrate it.”

Expectations and achievement. This theme was mentioned directly or indirectly in 12 instances (15.5%) by participants as a significant innovative and creative means they employed to overcome unplanned hurdles during their intervention. Almost all participating public school administrators unanimously agreed that changing culture is the single most difficult challenge to overcome in any organization. Successful K–12 public schools are successful because they embody a culture of high standards of academic expectations and achievement for all students. A1, A2, A4, A5, and A6 view cultural shift as leverage for heightened accountability, high academic expectations, and achievement. A1 noted:

I think the medal ceremony as a way to celebrate academic excellence was very significant for students, parents, and the school. The parents are here, we are playing [the students’] selected songs. It is a big production, easy but moving, and very empowering. We played the song “I Rise Up” by Rihanna. When they hear that song once a month, they feel empowered. It seems small and these medals only cost \$1.95 each, but it’s very meaningful. This ceremony is everything because they began to see themselves as scholars. The teachers bought in right away and started calling them scholars—this is what scholars do, this is how scholars behave—and they began to see results that way.

A9 described cultural shift as “a win-win situation for the student, the school, and the community.”

Summary of Research Question 2

Research question 2 asked: What are the most common leadership challenges faced by turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who embark onto major

change effort in these organizations? In order to answer this question, four interview questions were posed:

- IQ 5. What challenges did you face in the planning phase of the implementation of your intervention mission?
- IQ 6. Did anything unexpected occur during the planning and implementation of your intervention?
- IQ 7. If so, what corrective (evasive) measures did you envision to mitigate these surprising events?
- IQ 8. What role did innovation and creativity play in overcoming these unplanned hurdles?

A total of 22 themes surfaced in response to four interview questions associated with this research question. Some examples of the most significant of the 22 themes included: timeline, breaking the status quo, boundaries, speed of change, district restrictions, communication, idealized influence, be your own brand, the Hawthorne effect, and promoting a culture of high academic expectations and achievement.

Research Question 3

RQ 3 was stated as follows: How do turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who have led major change effort in their respective organizations measure their success bot as leaders and as turnaround efforts? In order to answer this question, two interview questions (IQs) were generated and posed to the participants:

- IQ 9. How did you define success during this endeavor?
- IQ 10. How did you measure or track your success throughout the implementation of this school improvement effort?

Specific themes emerged from these two interview questions that informed the overall key themes to answer research question 3.

Interview question 9. How did you define success during this endeavor? Based on the analysis of the data generated from the administrators' responses to this interview question, 62 characteristics emerged and led to the development of five themes: (a) absenteeism, (b) school connectivity, (c) school environment, (d) student performance, and (e) teacher and staff engagement (see Figure 13).

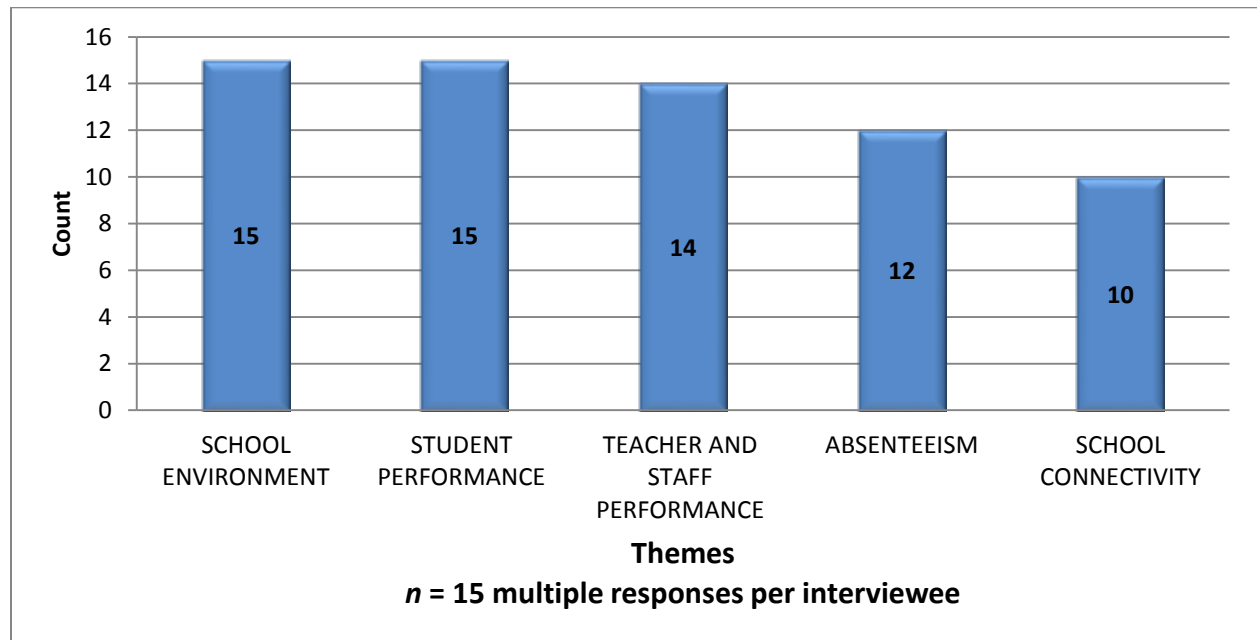


Figure 13. Interview question 9 coding results: Defining success during turnaround effort. Five themes emerged with 62 categories. Responses presented in decreasing order of frequency (from 15 to 10). The number within each theme represents the number of times a direct or indirect statement was made by a given participant using a word or phrase that merged into the respective category.

School environment. Schools are safe havens for most inner-city students. The school environment theme was mentioned directly or indirectly in 15 instances (28.8%) by participants as the most significant factor in defining success during turnaround effort. All turnaround public school administrators who participated in this study undisputedly pointed to school environment as the most influential factor affecting teacher engagement, student learning, achievement, and performance. A1, A2, A3, A4, A8, and A15 cited school environment as the main driving force in

determining whether or not teaching and learning occur within any given school campus. A11 stated:

We created a campus-wide high morale. We defined success by outcomes and results. In terms of school environment, School culture and climate are the precursors of teacher efficacy and student engagement and performance. We ensured the campus was clean, safe, and secure. We guaranteed the “safe havens” motto of schools. We increased our security staff in number and quality in order to guarantee long-term solutions to behavior deviance and as prevention measures to deter poor behavior from occurring.

A15 noted:

We defined success at various levels. When it comes to school environment, we set our priority on school culture and school morale; maintaining the “safe havens” concept on our campus. We created and maintained a welcoming, nurturing, and caring environment for all students across our campus regardless of their ethnic, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds and legal status. We addressed issues related with bullying, harassment, and intimidation. All students on our campus are given a voice based on the content of their character, not gender, sexual orientation, or race, let alone ethnicity. When you secure this kind of environment on school grounds, I believe teachers will teach and students will learn.

Student performance. While student achievement measures the amount of academic content and knowledge a student acquired and accumulated in a determined amount of time, performance measures the outcome of education—the extent to which a school, a teacher, or a student has attained their educational goal. This theme was mentioned directly or indirectly in 15 instances (28.8%) by participants as the second most significant factor in defining success during turnaround effort, but as bearing the same level of importance as school environment. All 15 turnaround public school administrators unanimously agreed that improved student performance is the second most significant indicator of a successful school improvement effort.

A1, A2, A3, A4, and A5 mentioned that while they were able to notice significant improvement in the school culture and morale within the first two years of their change effort, improvement in student performance took a little longer to define with accuracy. While A2 emphasized improved academic performance index (API) and adequate yearly progress (AYP) as major definitions of success, A11 cited student outcomes and results as success indicators. A1 stated:

Student data: We measured success by recording the number of students who are exceeding grade level expectations. I had data at every grade level showing that students are outperforming their past benchmarks. Students are making excellent gains and most of them have graduated from the in-school intervention program. We increased the rate of students performing and advancing from one grade level to the next; we also saw an increase in rates of earned credits. . . . Student achievement data showed that they were succeeding. The medal ceremony is part of that.

A2 posited:

It was pretty easy to define success; we had academic success. In terms of scores, we made 120 points in three years, our API and AYP went up, we made all our benchmarks, all our targets were attained both state and federal, and we made all of them every single year. All our benchmarks were defined and recorded against past performance and expected performance.

Teacher and staff engagement. Teacher and staff engagement is measured by the level of commitment these two key school entities show toward aligning their practices to the vision and mission of the school. This theme was mentioned directly or indirectly in 14 instances (26.9%) by participants as the third most significant factor in defining success during turnaround effort. A2 attributed high teacher and staff engagement on her campus to team work, A4 and A11 credited high morale, trust, and relationship building. A2 stated:

We really worked as a team and we could see that in every decision we made. . . . A fifth-grade teaching team decides to hold all their conferences in one room because the

kids see all of us in one day—that is success because they were so used to working in isolation. To see us work as a team in something as simple as parent-teacher conferences or having them teach AVID lessons in the same room with one teacher delivering instruction while others walk around the room in the auditorium making sure that all students are on task—that is success.

A11 added:

When you create a culture of accountability, engagement, and achievement, performance is the result. Teachers and staff have shown a positive pattern in terms of attendance. With more than 90% daily teacher attendance, we believe this is a positive definition of success. The record speaks for itself; our teachers and staff are doing everything possible to serve the students. Teacher devotion and commitment has been very high and this has been witnessed by student testimonials. The outcomes of this heightened teacher and staff engagement has had positive ramifications on student attendance, student behavior, and overall student performance.

Absenteeism. In order to succeed in school, students must attend school and stay in class. Student attendance is the most important thing a student must commit to in order to be successful. A student is considered chronically absent when he or she misses 10% or more of the total number of school days required to attend each school year. This theme was mentioned in 12 instances directly or indirectly (23%) by participants as the fourth most significant factor in defining success during turnaround effort. The vast majority of participants recognized student absenteeism as being the most common cause of poor achievement and drop out. A2 believed that if teachers start the instructional day with an interesting activity, students will be poised to attend their classes. A2 remarked:

Internally, we were able to say our behavioral referrals and detentions for tardiness went down. Our absenteeism went down because kids wanted to be at school. Every morning we had school-wide assemblies where we talked about the importance of being at

school on time and every day. The teachers were telling students, “I need you here.” We did perfect attendance awards to mitigate absenteeism and celebrate presence. It got to a point where students were afraid to miss a day because we were moving in a fast pace and they needed to be here the next day.

A11 stated, “I defined success by the outcomes. . . Our daily attendance goal was 96–97%. If my student attendance . . . was rising as opposed to declining, then I [knew that I was] doing the right thing.”

School connectivity. Building relationships with colleges, universities, and local businesses offers students the opportunity to make career choices that fit their needs, abilities, and interests. This theme was mentioned directly or indirectly in 10 instances (19.2%) by participants as the fifth most significant factor in defining success during turnaround effort. Most participants recognized the significance of connecting their schools with the outside world and the positive effects this can have in motivating students to prepare themselves for college and future careers. A1, A2, A4, A5, A7, A11, A12, and A13 mentioned creating partnerships with colleges, universities, and local businesses in order to provide students with early exposures to the realities of higher education and professional world.

A1 stated:

We had engineers from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) come and speak to the students about various scientific phenomena. . . . We are one of the schools in the United States that is partnering with the United States Air Force (USAF); they are going to provide STEM activities, including a science fair, field trips, activity development for students, and other engineering related learning modules. We are very proud of what we have achieved so far because only one other school . . . has this opportunity. When it comes to connectivity, I am most proud of changing the culture, how students see themselves, how parents see the school, and most of all, how the community sees the school.

A7 recounted:

We partnered with many businesses, colleges, and universities in Los Angeles, in California, and outside of the state. We used these connections to organize informative and fun field trips for students to colleges, universities, and museums such as the Los Angeles County Museum of Arts (LACMA). Students were able to visit the San Diego Sea World and the Los Angeles zoo. We have admission specialists from various colleges and universities come speak to our sophomores, juniors, and seniors about the admission process and advantages of enrolling in their schools. We also leveraged our connections to invite several professionals and experts to our campus during our career day events to speak to our students about potential future careers. Field trips . . . inspire them in making their choices when they apply for college and also for their future carriers.

Interview question 10. How did you measure or track success throughout the implementation of this school improvement effort? Based on the analysis of the data generated, from the administrators' responses to this interview question, 80 characteristics emerged and led to the development of six themes: (a) data keeping, (b) data use (c) growth, (d) instructional measures, (e) school culture, and (f) teacher attendance (see Figure 14).

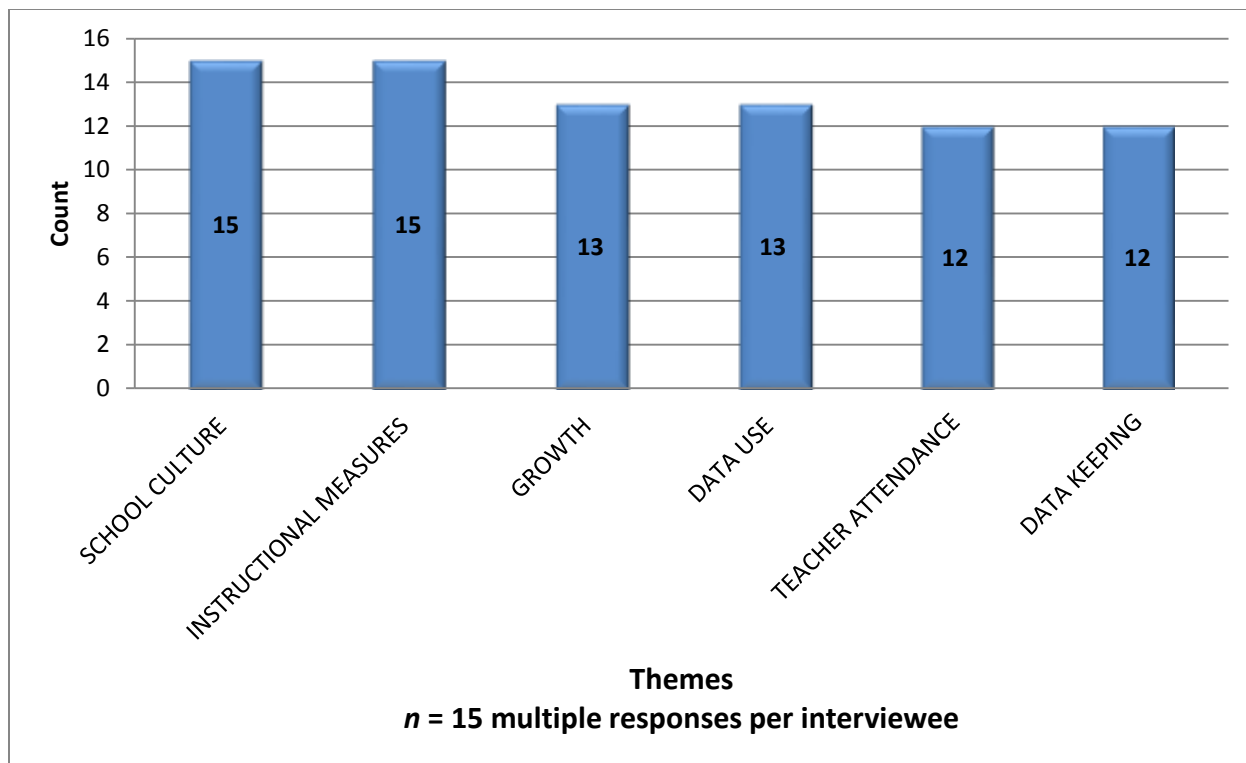


Figure 14. Interview question 10 coding results: Measuring or tracking success throughout improvement effort. Six themes emerged, generating 80 categories. Responses presented in decreasing order of frequency (15 to 12). The number within each theme represents the number of times a direct or indirect statement was made by a given participant using a word or phrase that merged into the respective category.

School culture. According to Fullan, school culture delineates the guiding beliefs and values evident in the way a school operates (2007). This theme was mentioned directly or indirectly in 15 instances (18.7%) by participants as the most significant factor in defining success during turnaround effort. All 15 participants admitted that reinvigorating and restoring a culture of success and high morale in their schools was a key factor in success measurement and tracking. A1, A2, A3, A8, A10, A11, A12, and A15 said to have worked hard toward establishing a positive culture, the concepts of values and beliefs that are part of the schools.

A6 stated:

We needed to have something we could be identified by—something intangible but something that can be felt across our campus, something that represented the school personality. We aimed at restoring high standards of accountability, effective teaching for

our teaching staff, and commitment to success for our students as the way we do things. As student attendance and benchmark results show, we were able to attain that. This renewed school culture also laid the foundation for higher student performance, higher proficiency in state assessments, and ultimately, higher graduation and college enrollment and attendance rates.

A11 stated:

In order to renew the school culture, we had to be very innovative and creative. We started what I call “meet and greet” every morning. When students arrive at school, we meet them at the gate, greet them, and check on how they are dressed. As a result, they come to school feeling empowered, feeling welcomed, they feel like someone actually cares. We were able to create and instill a culture of a welcoming school. We also implemented tardy sweeps between class periods and required that teachers meet and greet their students at the door at the beginning of each period. This helped motivate students to be in class on time, persuaded parents to keep their children in our school, and inspired others to want to enroll their children in our school. The school became a place where they felt comfortable and safe. We demonstrated a sense of safety, a sense of caring, and helping to bring people together. . . . It renewed our culture.

Instructional measures. Instructional time is the amount of time allocated for teachers to deliver instruction and students to be engaged. You cannot make more time for a given class period; therefore, instructional time should be used wisely from bell to bell. This theme was mentioned directly or indirectly in 15 instances (18.7%) by participants as the second most significant factor in defining success during turnaround effort. Most participants believed that the use of instructional affects not only student learning, but also student behavior. A10 stated:

I like walk-through’s, not as a way of spying on teachers, but as a way of supporting them. When you walk into a classroom and students are engaged in some kind of activity, it tells you that instructional time is being used properly. When students are not

talking uncontrollably or hanging in the hallways during instruction, it tells you teachers are doing something right. . . . We made it a requirement for teachers to use their allocated time from bell to bell in order to properly increase the amount of time that students are actually engaged in learning.

A15 stated:

When teachers teach, students learn. . . . When a teacher has clear classroom routines, students know what to do and when to do it. When a teacher has good classroom management practices, instructional time is used properly; instruction gets delivered and learning takes place; and when learning takes place, students perform at higher levels.

Growth. In education, growth is measured through student achievement and graduation rates. This theme was mentioned directly or indirectly in 13 instances (16.2%) by participants as the third most significant factor in defining success during turnaround effort. A1 and A2

mentioned academic success as a measure of growth. A2 stated:

If a turnaround model is done well, it is a great opportunity for a school to restart and grow. . . . We measure success by ensuring those best practices are part of our school culture. We also used common assessments and other built-in measures to track attendance, behavior, and parent participation. People reported to us about learning in our school, we had a lot of outside accolades about what we were doing on our campus.

Data use. Student data are a clear reflection of teacher effectiveness and student learning in the classroom. This theme was mentioned directly or indirectly in 13 instances (16.2%) by participants as the third most significant factor in defining success during turnaround effort. A11 believed:

If students fail, it simply means the teacher is not doing something right. It could be classroom management, student behavior, poor instructional practices, or a combination of all these factors. We track success by ensuring that when teachers collect data at the end of a common assessment, they analyze the data in order to inform instructional

strategies, measure growth over time, identify and address misunderstandings or points of confusion, and measure mastery. We used data to drive instruction. Teachers are required to reteach any concept that students did not master as informed by the data analysis.

A1 noted:

We tracked success by doing pretests, posttests, and strategic use of data. . . . We implemented plans based on data. . . . Even [our intervention students] are making progress. Students are making excellent gains and most of them have graduated from that in-school intervention program. . . . Student achievement data showed that they were succeeding.

Teacher attendance. In order for instruction to be delivered and students to learn, teachers have to show up in school. A teacher should have fewer than four days of absence within a ten-calendar month school year to qualify for good attendance. This theme was mentioned directly or indirectly in 12 instances (15%) by participants as the fourth most significant factor in defining success during turnaround effort. A11 stated:

When I came to this school there was a laissez-faire type of school culture. Teacher attendance was so low that it created a kind of daily climate that [could not] sustain learning. We had to invite teachers for a series of talks in order to come up with an effective solution. Today, our teacher attendance has shown a significantly positive pattern. We are recording an average of more than 90% daily attendance. We also recorded a great improvement in our teacher retention rate. Effective principals hire good teachers and keep them; that is what we did. We added a considerable amount of time to improving teaching and learning through professional development.

A12 stated:

Teacher chronic absenteeism was a big problem when we started our intervention. Our goal was to reduce it to acceptable levels. We aimed at creating and maintaining a

school climate where perfect or at least good teacher attendance is the norm. We are well aware of the stressful and demanding nature of teaching. Our first step was to provide instructional resources that allowed teachers to deliver instruction using a wide variety of instructional strategies.

Data keeping. Student data including attendance, behavior, and grades should be recorded and securely stored. Student attendance is a legal document that must always be accurate. This theme was mentioned directly or indirectly in 12 instances (15%) by participants as the fourth most significant factor in defining success during turnaround effort. The majority of participants mentioned improved data collection and keeping as a measure of their success. A5 stated:

Renewing our school was not only about teachers, students, and staff; it was also a matter of finding better ways to record and keep data in order to better inform parents, school administrators including myself and my two assistants, and track student progress. We standardized our data categorization in such a way that all teachers were required to have at least the following categories: grades, attendance records/tardy records, office discipline referrals, class/school suspensions, and homework completion. We brought in new electronic data collection software.

A7 recounted:

Data collection and keeping was significant in changing how things were done in our school, especially for students in response to intervention (RTI). Teachers could set a baseline for grade average and use that to follow and reach the student intervention goals.

Summary of Research Question 3

Research question 3 stated: How do turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who have led major change effort in their respective organizations

measure their success both as leaders and as turnaround effort? In order to answer this question, two interview questions were posed:

- IQ 9. How did you define success during this endeavor?
- IQ 10. How did you measure or track your success throughout the implementation of this school improvement effort?

A total of 11 themes emerged in response to the two interview questions associated with this research question. The most significant of these themes included: student performance, teacher and staff engagement, decreased absenteeism, renewed school culture, improved instructional measures, and using data to drive instruction.

Research Question 4

RQ 4 was stated as follows: What recommendations would turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations make for promoting innovative practices within public schools? In order to answer this question, two interview questions (IQs) were generated and posed to the participants:

- IQ 11. Knowing what you know now, what would you have done differently?
- IQ 12. What recommendations would you make for other public school administrators who embark onto similar journey?

Specific themes emerged from these two interview questions that would then inform the overall key themes to answer research question 4.

Interview question 11. Knowing what you know now, what would you have done differently? Based on the analysis of the data generated from the administrators' responses to this interview question, 65 characteristics emerged and led to the development of six themes: (a) ask questions, (b) improve cultural value, (c) parents' involvement, (d) selection and recruitment, and (e) student-teacher relationships (see Figure 15).

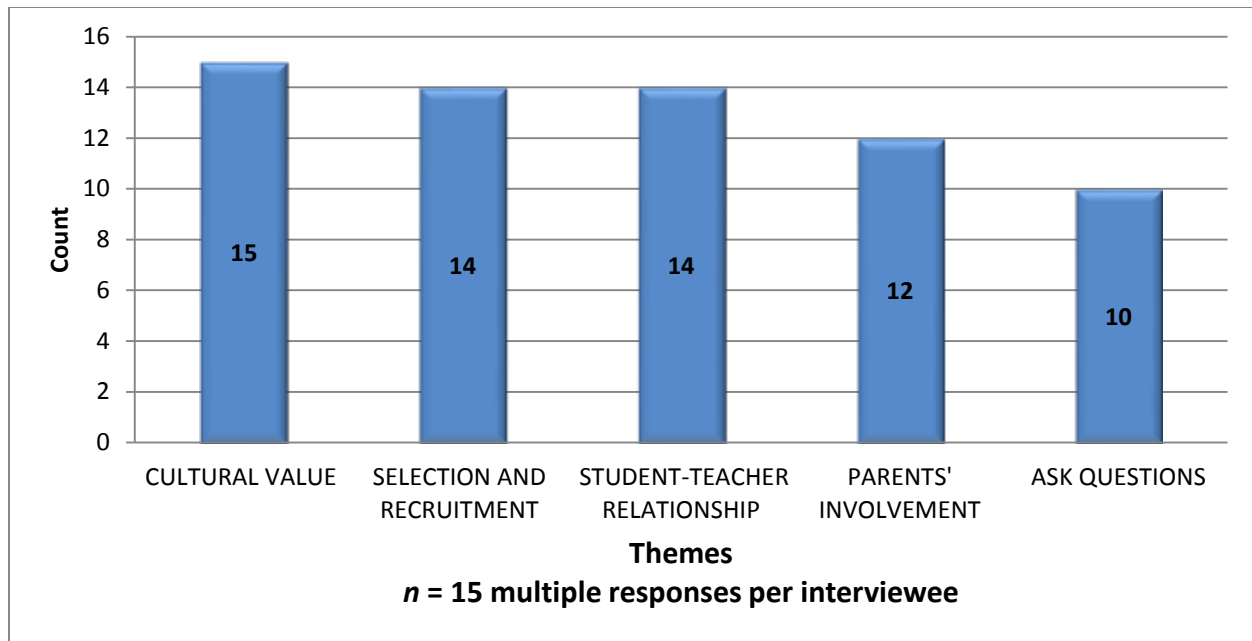


Figure 15. Interview question 11 coding results: Second-guessing oneself. Five themes revealed 65 categories. Responses presented in decreasing order of frequency (from 15 to 10). The number within each theme represents the number of times a direct or indirect statement was made by a given participant using a word or phrase that merged into the respective category.

Cultural value. School culture encompasses the beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, and written and unwritten rules that shape and influence every aspect of how a school functions. In other words, school culture delineates how things are done in a particular school. Cultural capital, on the other hand, is the acquisition and accumulation of knowledge and competence, and the ability to use them as socioeconomic leverage. This theme was referred to by participants in 15 instances (23%) either directly or indirectly and emerged as the most prevalent thing turnaround public school administrators would have done differently knowing what they know now. All participants unanimously recognized cultural capital as a very important vehicle for the promotion and reinforcement of educational success through academic brilliance. A4, A5, A8, and A11 articulated the need for public schools to facilitate access to Advancement Via Individualized Determination courses (AVID) to underrepresented students. A5 stated, “In order to increase the cultural capital throughout our campus and give more

opportunities to low-income and underrepresented students, we plan to increase access to AVID courses to our lower grade students.” A8 stated:

In order to reinforce the cultural capital of our students, we plan to introduce a comprehensive AVID program in our school to help bridge the achievement gap between low socioeconomic students and rich students. We will be able to enforce simple cultural competences such as dress for success, Socratic seminars, tutorials, writing an effective resume, writing a cover letter, preparing for a job interview, applying for financial aid, preparing for a college application, and many others. Above all, the AVID program will pave the way for our students to become more involved in the community and help increase the number of college-bound students who enroll and graduate from a four-year university.

Selection and recruitment. Selection is the final choice of teachers to whom a school or a school district offers a teaching position. Hiring teachers is one of the most important aspects of a turnaround initiative. Based on its model, turnaround requires replacing the school principal and up to 50% of the instructional personnel. This theme was referred to by participants in 14 instances (21.5%) either directly or indirectly and emerged as the second most prevalent thing turnaround public school administrators would have done differently knowing what they know now. A5 suggested that “successful schools hire good teachers and keep them.” A11 stated:

During my first year in this intervention initiative, I hired teachers solely on the basis that they held a credential, but knowing what I know now, you just don’t hire teachers because they have credentials. If someone . . . with a credential doesn’t have a job in the middle of November, it should raise a flag as per their qualifications as a good teacher. There were potentially good teachers who came to me and did not have a credential; I turned them down over those with credentials who unfortunately ended up

being unqualified. I need to reevaluate my hiring process not to be influenced principally by having a credential.

In a related observation, A15 stated:

One thing I would do differently would be to focus a little more on newly hired teachers' abilities to meet students' behavioral and academic needs—teachers with a solid classroom management style in order to help instill the new school culture in students during the very early stages of the intervention.

Student-teacher relationship. A positive climate in the classroom is paramount to the teacher's ability to deliver effective instruction and the students' ability to learn. This theme was referred to by participants in 14 instances (21.5%) either directly or indirectly and emerged as the third most prevalent thing turnaround public school administrators would have done differently knowing what they know now. Across the board, the vast majority of participants believed that when teachers entertain good relationships with their students, this creates a more learning-friendly classroom environment, and thus dramatically increases not only their ability to deliver meaningful instruction, but also the ability of all students to learn and achieve at a higher level regardless of their readiness. A1 stated:

Just by calling students who received medals during the Medal Ceremony "scholars," they felt empowered and . . . just revolutionized the way these children perceived themselves, . . . and related to each other and to the teachers across campus. The positive response was just incredible and that tremendously lessened behavioral issues as even those who did not receive medals became determined to earn them. The inspirational aspect of it and the impact on teacher-student relatedness was just unheard of.

A12 asserted:

A successful turnaround effort is also contingent . . . upon the quality of relationships teachers entertain with their students in the classroom and on school grounds. The one

thing I would improve on is ensuring that teachers create, maintain, and nurture a culture of constructive relationship with all students . . . on campus through accountability, fairness, care, equity, and positive reinforcement of classroom rules and school guidelines.

Parents' involvement. The degree to which parents and the community are involved in their children's education influences the children's ability to perform in school. This theme was referred to by participants in 12 instances (18.4%) either directly or indirectly and emerged as the fourth most prevalent thing turnaround public school administrators wished they had done differently knowing what they know now. Despite advocating for and perceiving parent involvement as a major catalyst in students' schooling, most turnaround public school administrators believed that they could have done better by involving parents sooner than later.

A1 suggested "creating summer immersion programs to help such initiatives." A4 also identified the usefulness of summer immersion programs. A6 noted:

My plan to target early parental involvement in our school is to request funds in order to launch training and orientation programs for parents who desire to play a more active part in their children's education. Within this program, we will encourage and support less educated parents' participation by having at their disposal talented translators in order to break the language barriers that may exist between their will to participate and their effective participation in such programs.

A1 posited: "I would have had more parent meetings prior to the beginning of the school year to get to know one another and get familiar with what we were about to embark on."

Ask questions. To conduct data collection for this study, semi-structured interviews were used, which gave clear insights regarding the power of questions. Listening does matter. Asking questions serves several purposes, including: information acquisition, control, facilitating mental turnaround, problem solving, connecting with others, and persuasion. This theme was referred to by participants in 10 instances (15.3%) either directly or indirectly and emerged as

the fifth most prevalent thing turnaround public school administrators wished they had done differently knowing what they know now. According to A5, “Asking more questions more often to students would have put me in a unique position to get insights faster and use them to leverage my change effort.” While referring to trying to get buy-in, A7 described the need for asking questions as “a way to persuade teachers, staff, parents and students to agree on the necessity of teaming up together in order to find common solutions to common problems.”

Interview question 12. What recommendations would you make for other public school administrators who embark onto similar journey? Based on the analysis of the data generated from the administrators’ responses to this interview question, 127 characteristics emerged and led to the development of 10 themes: (a) be proactive, (b) benchmarks, (c) build trust, (d) challenge the process, (e) culture change, (f) empower others, (g) encourage the heart, (h) model the way, (i) shared vision, and (j) open mind (see Figure 16).

Be proactive. Successful people are proactive, not reactive. In very simple terms, being proactive entails the ability to make things happen, instead of reacting to them when they happen. Proactive leaders set priorities and do first things first. This theme was referred to by participants in 15 instances (11.8%) either directly or indirectly and emerged as the most commonly used evasive measure employed by these school administrators to mitigate surprising events during the planning and implementation of their intervention. A1, A2, A3, A4, and A8 all spoke of being proactive at the beginning. A1 stated:

It can’t be all talk, you have to have buy-ins, you have to be active, you have to be proactive—a proactive administrator. You can’t just sit back and watch things happen, you have got to be there. You set your priorities when you set your vision. First, you have got to identify what the needs are in the school; . . . you do that by meeting with teams. I met with the district to get a vision of where the school [was].

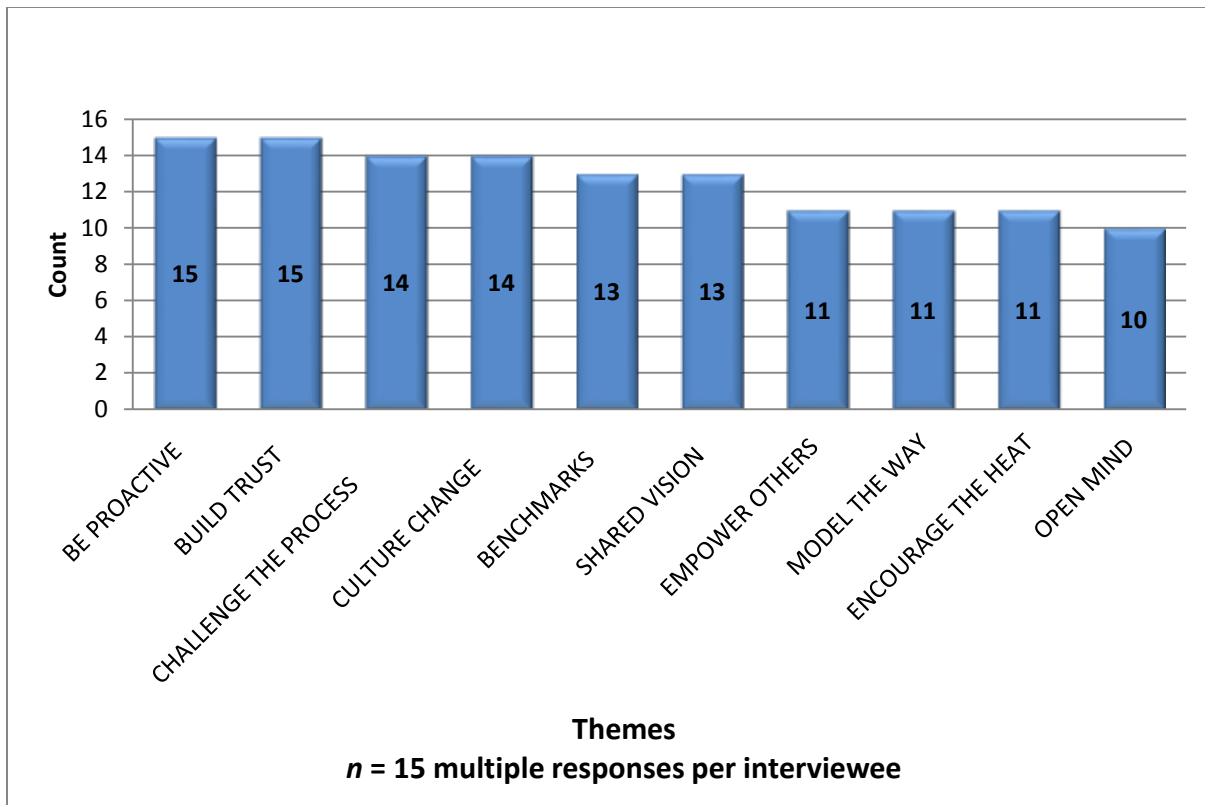


Figure 16. Interview question 12 coding results: Recommendations. Ten themes with 127 categories were identified. Responses presented in decreasing order of frequency (from 15 to 10). The number within each theme represents the number of times a direct or indirect statement was made by a given participant using a word or phrase that merged into the respective category.

A8 said, “Be proactive, stay on the front line, avoid distractions, and stay focused on academic success.”

Build trust. Communication is the transfer and dissemination of information between a sender and a recipient. One of the main functions of communication in organizations is to build trust; not only between the leadership and its followers, but also among followers themselves. This theme was referred to by participants in 15 instances (11.8%) either directly or indirectly and emerged as the most commonly used evasive measure employed by these school administrators to mitigate surprising events during the planning and implementation of their intervention. The importance of communication during crisis is an undeniable fact, especially in building trust. All turnaround school administrators were unanimous on the fundamental role played by communication in their efforts. A1 stated:

It was fundamental to communicate and identify who we are because people may have different perspectives as to who we are. We define who we are and I always tell my staff that we write our own story. . . . I am always here late, doing those monthly communication sessions—that is me getting my story out, getting my story through.

A4 stated, “Communicate to collaborate, to build trust, to share solutions; be patient, don’t act too soon, fine tune as needed, be flexible.”

Challenge the process. As one of the five practices of exemplary leadership, challenging the process plays a very significant role in creating ways for others to embrace change and participate in the growth process. This theme was referred to by participants in 14 instances (11.2%) either directly or indirectly and emerged as the third most commonly used evasive measure employed by these school administrators to mitigate surprising events during the planning and implementation of their intervention. A5 stated: “After conducting my environmental scan, I looked at shortcomings of the past administration as great opportunities that could lead to growth in this school rather than as setbacks. We define our own successes and failures.” A11 contended:

Regardless of the difficulties, we had to brace ourselves, learn the existing school culture in order to decipher the process we knew very little or if not nothing about, choose our battles, and build a compelling case through our vision in order to get buy-ins. In the end, we were all winners. If the students win, if the parents win, I win; we all win.

Culture change. Culture shift is the process of moving stakeholders’ values, beliefs, thoughts, and behaviors to a desirable new state. Changing culture in schools involves creating and modeling a school environment in which all stakeholders are held accountable: (a) teachers and staff for accountability toward the school, and (b) student accountability toward their learning and behavior. This theme was referred to by participants in 14 instances (11.2%) either directly or indirectly and emerged as the fourth most commonly used evasive measure

employed by these school administrators to mitigate surprising events during the planning and implementation of their intervention. Almost all of these turnaround public school administrators conveyed the significance of culture change in turning around underperforming schools. A2 stated:

Start small and identify a clear focus as a team and align all your resources with the strategy that addresses that focus. Keep an open mind, and conduct a needs assessment to understand the current culture. Go on a listening tour. Design an intervention program suitable for the situation at hand. One size does not fit all.

A7 said, “Our focus was on creating something great and make it stick, creating a way we do things around the campus, instilling a culture of accountability and academic achievement in all our students.”

Benchmarks. Benchmarks constitute specific indicators that set goals have been met. This theme was referred to by participants in 13 instances (10.2%) either directly or indirectly and emerged as the fifth most commonly used evasive measure employed by these school administrators to mitigate surprising events during the planning and implementation of their intervention. A1, A2, A3, A4, A9, and A12 talked about creating benchmarks to know where you are coming from and where you are going. A2 articulated:

You need to start small and have clear benchmarks along the way [for measuring] success in that area. Once that focus is identified, whether it is behavioral, instructional, or both, . . . management wise, start small, don't try to take on too much, and let the teachers buy into it.

A10 said, “If you want to accurately know where you are going, you need to know where you were and find out where you are. Benchmarks are barometers of our intervention.”

Shared vision. In order to develop a forward-looking capacity, a leader has to enlist stakeholders into sharing his or her view of the future. This theme was referred to by participants in 13 instances (10.2%) either directly or indirectly and emerged as the sixth most

commonly used evasive measure employed by these school administrators to mitigate surprising events during the planning and implementation of their intervention. A2 said:

A leader does make a difference in inspiring others in maintaining best practices.

Although you have great teachers and staff who are ready to put up the work and the dedication, if you don't have a good leader, a turnaround effort or model cannot sustain itself.

A15 said, "Success in this field is not about you, it is all about getting everybody on board, it is about ensuring a brighter future for our children, making them lifelong learners and global citizens."

Empower others. Empowering others to act is a combination of the commitment to foster collaboration and the drive to strengthen others by creating a climate of trust. This theme was referred to by participants in 11 instances (8.6%) either directly or indirectly and emerged as the seventh most commonly used evasive measure employed by these school administrators to mitigate surprising events during the planning and implementation of their intervention. Before all else, A1, A2, A4, A5, A8, and A11 touched on recognizing others' good skills and supporting them in order to get their support and build trust. Participants acknowledged that empowering others to act was fundamental, creating that collaborative spirit needed move the change effort forward. A1 stated:

You have got to be there, people have to be able to trust you and you have got to be consistent. You have got to be supportive of your staff and promote team building. You can't do it alone; you have got to have a team.

Similarly, A11 added:

As a leader, you should not carry yourself like a "all-knowing prophet," because you may be good at something and other people may be just as good as you or even better than you. If I have a classroom management seminar or professional development, I will highlight these teachers who are good at it to help me. I will ask them to facilitate the

session so their fellow teachers can learn from some of the best practices they implement. . . . That empowers them; they feel proud of themselves while it reinforces the notion of trust; it makes other teachers look up to them; and you are fostering team building.

Model the way. Modeling involves what is known in leadership jargon as “doing what you say you will do” (DWYSYWD). In other words, the leader should embody and model what he or she would like to see in others. This theme was referred to by participants in 11 instances (8.6%) either directly or indirectly and emerged as the eighth most commonly used evasive measure employed by these school administrators to mitigate surprising events during the planning and implementation of their intervention. The preponderance of turnaround public school administrators avowed the importance of loyalty as a centerpiece of a successful intervention. A1 asserted:

I am present, I am here. So, by first modeling what good attendance looks like, or my expectation in terms of attendance, teachers and staff showed up, and student attendance and behavior improved because they all felt supported. . . . My office staff is probably never absent, ever, and my teachers are only absent when there is an important issue.

A6 stated: “If you present yourself as a model, if you reinforce the behavior you want to see in others, people who are on a steady stream of success . . . will stand up and enact on your vision.”

Encourage the heart. Recognizing individual and group contributions is a clear demonstration that the leader appreciates the effort and good work. This theme was referred to by participants in 11 instances (8.6%) either directly or indirectly and emerged as the ninth most commonly used evasive measure employed by these school administrators to mitigate surprising events during the planning and implementation of their intervention. A1, A2, A3, A4, A10, and A11 emphasized showcasing teachers’ performances and students’ achievements in a

public setting as a vehicle to carry the flag of success and saying “thank you” for your dedication and good work. A1 stated:

When I think about the medal of honor ceremony, it is just something higher than I had imagined would come out of this. They can have pizza every time, they can have an ice cream every day, but getting this medal is an everlasting moment; and when they graduate at the end of the school year, they will have all their medals they won. That is something tangible—“You told me that I am a scholar and I have a medal to prove it.” So, it was just more motivating than anything else and it transcended over onto behaviors and everything else.

On a parallel note, A11 stated:

The teacher of the month award, the staff of the month award, and the student academic achievement weekly and monthly honor roll ceremonies were a way for us to showcase high performance and congratulate the recipients for a job well done.

Open mind. In organizations, keeping an open mind involves working collaboratively with others regardless of their ranking on the hierarchical order. Team work is the process by which people in organizations collaborate, putting their individual skillsets together and providing meaningful feedback. This theme was referred to by participants in 10 instances (7.8%) either directly or indirectly and emerged as the tenth most commonly used evasive measure employed by these school administrators to mitigate surprising events during the planning and implementation of their intervention. A1 stated:

Communication skills are key. You have got to know how to get along with people, how to deal with different personalities, and be organized because you are dealing with several groups, and you’ve got to have that vision to be able to bring everybody to the table—all my classified staff (counselors and others) and all my certificated staff (teachers). You’ve got to be able to work with the district, communicating your vision so

they are on the same page with you. Communication and collaboration are key ingredients of success in this field.

Summary of Research Question 4

Research question 4 asked: What recommendations would turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations make for promoting innovative practices within public schools? In order to answer this question, two interview questions were posed:

- IQ 11. Knowing what you know now, what would you have done differently?
- IQ 12. What recommendations would you make for other public school administrators who embark onto similar journey?

A total of 15 themes surfaced in response to these two interview questions associated with this research question. Some of the most significant of these themes included improved cultural value, improved teacher selection and recruitment process, improved teacher/student relationships, be proactive, build trust, challenge the process, change the culture, stay the course, and inspire a shared vision.

Chapter 4 Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the best leadership practices of turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations. Fifteen public school administrators from various public schools within the County of Los Angeles were vetted and recruited as interviewees in the study. Participants were asked 12 semi-structured interview questions built around the following four research questions:

1. What are the best leadership practices of turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organization?

2. What are the most common leadership challenges faced by turnaround K–12 administrators in LA County public schools who embarked onto major change effort in these organizations?
3. How do turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who have led major change effort in their respective organizations measure their success both as leaders and as turnaround efforts?
4. What recommendations would turnaround K–12 administrators in LA County public schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations make for promoting innovative practices within public schools?

The data collected for the scope of this study was done through semi-structured interviews. The investigator and two inter-raters who are current EIP doctoral candidates at Pepperdine University Graduate School of Education and Psychology coded the data via intense content analysis. As examined in details in Chapter 3, this analysis was accomplished through a descriptive phenomenological approach. In Chapter 4, the findings were delineated as they related to four research questions, which in turn generated a total of 72 themes. These themes are assembled and presented for review in Table 4.

Table 4

Summary of Themes Addressing the Four Research Questions

RQ 1. Best Leadership Practices		RQ 2. Leadership Challenges		RQ 3. Measuring Success		RQ 4. Recommendations	
IQ 1	-Communication -Collaboration -Situational leadership (by-Ins) -Transformational leader -Charismatic -Democratic	IQ 5	-Timeline - Status Quo -Boundaries - Conflict resolution - Consensus - Race	IQ 9	- School Environment - Student performance - Teacher/Staff Performance -Absenteeism - School Connectivity	IQ 11	- Cultural Value - Selection and Recruitment - Student-Teacher Relationship - Parent Involvement - Ask Questions

(continued)

RQ 1. Best Leadership Practices		RQ 2. Leadership Challenges		RQ 3. Measuring Success		RQ 4. Recommendations	
IQ 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Parent Involvement -Student behavior - Student Achievement -Organizational Issues -Stakeholders Buy-ins - School Safety 	IQ 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Change - District restrictions - Parent pushbacks - Student behaviors 	IQ 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School Culture - Instructional Measures - Growth - Data Use - Teachers attendance - Data Keeping 	IQ 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be proactive - Build trust - Challenge the process - Culture Change - Benchmarks - Shared Vision - Empower Others - Model the Way - Encourage the Heart - Open mind
IQ 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Theory of attribution - Path-goal - Expectancy theory - Theories X and Y - Cultural shift - Buy-ins 	IQ 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication - Idealized influence - Individualized Consideration - Intellectual Stimulation - Stakeholders involvement 				
IQ 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The Why</i> - Vision and Mission - Empower Others - Feedbacks - Eight-step Change - Field Force Analysis 	IQ 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Branding -Storytelling - Communication skills - Hawthorne Effect - Intercultural Competence - Expectations and Achievement 				

Finally, results and discussions of the key findings, the implications of the study, and recommendations for future research, final thoughts, and conclusion of the study are presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

None can doubt the noteworthy importance of public education on our individual lives, the significance of its return on investment (ROI), and its socioeconomic benefits to society as a whole. John Adams wrote:

The whole people must take upon themselves the education of the whole people and be willing to bear the expenses of it. There should not be a district of one mile square, without a school in it, not founded by a charitable individual, but maintained at the public expense of the people themselves. (as cited in Bos, 2013)

From the inception of our nation, public education has played a fundamental role in building and maintaining American democracy, yet despite a myriad of school reforms that have been enacted in our public education system from the 1600s to today, America's public schools have failed to provide an equitable education to all children. Benjamin Franklin (1749) wrote:

The good education of youth has been estimated by wise men in all ages, as the surest foundation of the happiness of both private families and of commonwealths. Almost all governments have therefore made it a principal object of their attention, to establish and endow with proper revenues, such seminaries of learning, as might supply the succeeding age with men qualified to serve the public with honor to themselves, and their country. (p. 1)

Education is a common good and a universal right for mankind, yet our nation has failed to provide equitable and quality education to all its children. W. E. B. Dubois (1970) declared:

Of all the civil rights for which the world has struggled and fought for 5,000 years, the right to learn is undoubtedly the most fundamental . . . The freedom to learn . . . has been bought by bitter sacrifice. And whatever we may think of the curtailment of other civil rights, we should fight to the last ditch to keep open the right to learn. (p. 230)

Furthermore, providing a universal access to free education in order to guarantee equal opportunity to all children was the promise of our founding fathers. Frederick Douglass (1883) declared:

The fact remains that the whole country is directly interested in the education of every child that lives within its border. The ignorance of any part of the American people so deeply concerns all the rest that there can be no doubt of the right to pass laws compelling the attendance of every child at school. (p. 8)

Yet again, publicly funded schools have failed time and time again to fulfill that mission. As an illustration, Susan B. Anthony (n.d.) stated that “a republican government should be based on free and equal education among the people.” In order to add to the literature in the field, findings from this study can benefit the following audiences: (a) current and endeavoring K–12 school administrators, (b) potential K–12 school administrators, (c) parents seeking to enroll their children in successful K–12 schools, and (d) as a reference landmark for superintendents of school districts in selecting, screening, and promoting K–12 school administrators.

This chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations of the study. A summary of the research is presented along with the results and discussion of the key findings, the implications of the study, recommendations for future research, and final thoughts about the insights gained throughout this journey.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the best leadership practices of turnaround K–12 public school administrators in Los Angeles County who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations. The review of the literature paved the way for the emergence of the contextual background needed to craft the four underpinning research questions (RQs) and the 12 corresponding open-ended interview questions (IQs). At its core, this study employed a

qualitative descriptive phenomenological approach which, according to Christensen et al. (2010), aims at deciphering the depth of life-world events of an individual or a set of individuals as they dealt with a particular phenomenon.

For the purpose of this study, turnarounds K–12 public school administrators were defined as individuals who (a) actually were or still are K–12 public school administrators in Los Angeles County, (b) hold a valid California or New York teaching credential, (c) hold or have held an administrative position within Los Angeles County geographic limits, (d) have at least five years of combined teaching and administrative experience, and (e) are turnaround administrators who have actually led a major change effort within an organization. Fifteen interview participants were selected by purposive sampling with maximum variation in order to find common patterns spread throughout individual experiences. This practice was deemed valuable as it allows themes to emerge from heterogeneity (Isaac & Michael, 1995; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Furthermore, the criteria for maximum variation included position, geographic location, age, ethnicity, gender, race, and sexual orientation in order to uncover central themes, core elements, and shared dimensions that underpin a diverse sample, while documenting unique or diverse variations. The inclusion of members of all ethnic groups, races, religions, genders (males and females), and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community in this study was a priority as much as possible. Maximum variability was also guaranteed through inclusion factors based on marital status and socioeconomic background.

In order to address the four research questions, an interview protocol was developed and later validated by two Pepperdine University doctoral candidates who were selected to serve as inter-raters, in addition to a panel of experts comprised of members of the doctoral committee. Following the completion of 15 semi-structure interviews, the raw data were compiled in the form of written transcripts taken from the audio-recorded participant answers during the interviews. Determining coding entailed the use of inductive content analysis.

Themes began to emerge and consensus was reached by the investigator and two inter-rater reviewers. A comparison between the results of the analysis and the proposed themes was conducted, thus consolidating and reinforcing the validity of the proposed themes. Finally, the findings are presented in Chapter 5.

Results and Discussion of Key Findings

The findings of this investigation were geared toward uncovering the best leadership practices of K–12 public school administrators in Los Angeles County who have experience with turning around failing and declining schools. In this section, results of the investigation will be reviewed. Furthermore, the discussion of the findings emphasized specific themes that emerged from each research question and how these findings may be universally compatible with the characteristics of organizational change agents in general and K–12 turnaround public school administrators in particular.

Results for Research Question 1

RQ 1 asked: What are the best leadership practices of turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who have led a major change in their respective organizations? To answer this question, the following emphases were examined:

- turnaround K–12 public school administrators' best leadership practices;
- the major or unexpected challenges they faced;
- the leadership strategies they used to overcome resistance to change in the planning and implementation phases; and
- how they overcame resistance to their new plan of direction for their organizations.

For instance, A2 expressed:

the need for clear communication at the beginning . . . in order to create and maintain collaborative teams and groups throughout the duration of the intervention and beyond in order to agree as a team of professionals, both certificated and classified, on what our

goals were . . . we wanted students to learn at every grade level, and hold not only the students but one another accountable.

Pauley (2010) stated that “a school administrator has no greater responsibility than to develop effective communication” in good times and bad (p. 19). Whether planning, leading, or monitoring, school administrators communicate with and through other people. This emphasis on communication, according to Brun (2010) and Summers (2010), implies that every person’s communication skills affect both personal and organizational effectiveness. As a result, communicating their visions with clarity, purpose, and resolve is of paramount significance for turnaround public school administrators.

Analysis of Research Question 1

Based on the themes that emerged from this research question, communication was the unmistakable best leadership practice of turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations. The top seven best leadership practices were communication (15 instances or 19.7%), collaboration (14 instances or 18.4%), parent involvement (14 instances or 30.4%), theory of attribution (12 instances or 23%), *the why* (15 instances or 21.4%), vision and mission (14 instances or 20%), and empowering others (12 instances or 17.1%). These school administrators became aware of these best practices through daily implementation as they were committed to turning around chronically underperforming K–12 public schools. Presumably, their effective communication of the vision stimulated all stakeholders to stay engaged and to perform their duties efficiently (Clement, 2008).

The findings from the four interview questions unequivocally addressed research question 1. Throughout their collective statements, the seven best practices of communication, collaboration, parent involvement, theory of attribution, understanding *the why*, aligning mission and vision, and empowering others stood out from the participants’ responses:

- Clear communication was paramount at the beginning of such an important mission in order to create and maintain collaborative teams and groups throughout the duration of the intervention and beyond.
- Collaborating and being available helped in getting huge buy-ins, including an open-door policy, meeting with leadership team twice a month, and meeting with every teacher and staff member as needed. Furthermore, collaboration allows for thinking and brainstorming ideas for problem-solving, increases the sense of purpose and team work, and encourages idea sharing at all levels of the hierarchy.
- Parent involvement was viewed as bearing a very strategic significance and a great predictor of student performance and success.
- The three-dimensional theory of attribution was highlighted by the Medal Ceremony as a very important vehicle of behavioral shift, especially when student recipients were referred to as scholars, thus viewing themselves as precursors of their own success.
- Succeeding in any mission both in good and bad times entails an explicit cognizance of the purpose of the endeavor, the *why*, understanding of the undertaking. One administrator recalled focusing on the data—the *why*— and letting teachers take care of the *how* and *what*.
- Keeping the vision and the mission aligned required keeping the passion and dedication to one's personal brand. Similarly, holding people accountable for the mission that was assigned to them was quintessential for defining and measuring success.
- Communicating with stakeholders was key to changing their perception and empowering them by letting them hear, see, and experience authority, while allowing them to share the load.

Across the board, communication was essential to leading the turnaround effort because in order to earn people's trust and enlist their buy-in, a leader must clearly communicate the vision. According to Kouzes and Posner (1995), trust is a factor that any individual wants to have before following anyone enthusiastically in a situation, whether it may be a battleground or meeting room; people want to be assured that the leader they are going to follow is truthful and ethical.

Results for Research Question 2

RQ 2 asked: What are the most common leadership challenges faced by turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who have embarked onto major change effort in these organizations? To answer this question, the research focused on:

- the challenges they faced in the planning phase of the implementation of their intervention mission;
- the unexpected events that occurred during the planning and implementation of their intervention;
- the corrective (evasive) measures they envisioned to mitigate those surprising events; and
- the role innovation and creativity played in overcoming these unplanned hurdles.

For example, in expressing some of the challenges faced during the planning phase of the implementation of her intervention mission, A1 pointed out the tremendous pressure district deadlines put on the turnaround team to show results within 18 to 24 months. Nevertheless, she felt fortunate that her superintendent knew and understood her vision and was supportive, so she got results thanks to the superintendent's desire to see implemented results. Everybody knew the mission she was on and the superintendent was communicating it to others. Similarly, A2 mentioned the fact that current turnaround guidelines operate on a very aggressive timeline and require a throughout overhaul, not a tinkering. This demand puts a lot of pressure

turnaround principals but with a clear vision, things usually work out. Doing extraordinary things is the responsibility of a leader. Meanwhile, prior studies on efficiency effects have shown that time constraints either as perceptions or deadlines positively affect individual and team performance (Kelly & Karau, 1993, 1999).

Another major challenge these leaders faced in the planning phase of the implementation of their intervention was breaking the status quo. A6 revealed that breaking the status quo required him and his team to first of all show a sense of urgency: the school was in downward spiral, teachers and student absenteeism was at its highest, discipline was nonexistent, and student learning and achievement were long gone. The desperation caused by the current situation was palpable, and people were retracted in their comfort zones. According to Rosenthal, Boin, and Comfort (2001), crisis and leadership are closely intertwined phenomena; people experience crisis as episodes of threat and uncertainty, a grave predicament requiring urgent action. As a result, the next step A6 took was to design and adopt a plan of action to alter behaviors by building a coalition that worked toward delivering desired outcomes. To build a coalition of teachers, staff, and students, A6 had to communicate his vision for the future of the school well, which took a considerable amount of time.

The last two major challenges turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who embarked onto a major change effort in their respective organizations finally had to confront were challenges related to the reinforcement of boundaries and resolving conflicts. A11 spoke of the necessity of having a mastery of how power and politics play out as a way of reinforcing boundaries in order to be a successful leader. When it came to conflict resolution, A11 talked about always finding the middle ground in order to leave feuding parties' personal egos unbruised because success in this field is also contingent upon building relationships and instilling trust. According to Sebring and Bryk (2000), trusted and respected school administrators take a personal concern in the welfare of stakeholders: teachers, students, their families, and other members of the extended school community. A11 recounted a

conflict between the dean in charge of discipline and a parent who wanted to retrieve his daughter's cell phone in violation with a school policy. The school administrator placed the story within the scope of how power and politics are interwoven in society and how one can successfully use power and politics as leverage for the reinforcement of boundaries while paying attention to others' needs as well. A11 recalled this way of resolving the conflict without further concerns. A11 had to be not only innovative but also creative by working with the parent and the dean to achieve the best alternative to a negotiated agreement (BATNA) of the school policy. This simply shows that principals can be trusted by stakeholders through open communication and presence (Black, 1997; Blase & Blase, 2001; Sebring & Byrk, 2000). Barlow (2001) argued, "Once the leader takes the risk of being open, others are more likely to take similar risk and thereby take the first steps necessary to building a culture of trust" (p. 26).

Analysis of Research Question 2

Based on the themes that emerged from RQ 2, deadlines for deliverables and breaking the status quo were the most common leadership challenge faced by turnaround K–12 administrators in the Los Angeles County public schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations. The biggest leadership challenges these principals faced in the planning phase of the implementation of their intervention missions were timeline (15 instances or 23.4%), status quo (also 15 instances or 23.4%), and boundaries (12 instances or 18.7%). Furthermore, change (15 instances or 31.9%) and district restrictions (12 instances or 25.5%) were among the main unexpected events that occur during the planning and implementation of their interventions. In addition, communication (15 instances or 30%) and idealized influence (14 instances or 24%) were the best corrective measures they envisioned to mitigate these surprising events. Finally, being their own brand and using storytelling were part of their creative and innovative strategies for overcoming unforeseen hurdles.

The findings from the four interview questions addressed RQ 2. Six aspects of being a turnaround K–12 public school administrator stood out from participants' responses:

- Requirements of the turnaround model put tremendous pressure on a turnaround administrator because performance evaluation for dramatic school improvement is possible within two years.
- Breaking the status quo requires the leader to design and implement an action plan that addresses and aligns the following:
 - inputs such as (a) actions, (b) practices, (c) school climate, and (d) parent and community;
 - leading indicators (adult and student behaviors); and
 - desired outcomes: (a) discipline, (b) academic success, and (c) college attainment and graduation.
- The importance of reinforcing boundaries and resolving conflicts by defining roles and making stakeholders understand where they can begin and where they can end, the concept that conflict is inherent to the fabric of society, and well-managed conflicts can become an opportunity for growth.
- Understanding that change is the only constant and knowing how to manage its speed is fundamental to success in the planning and implementation of an intervention.
- Expressing the fundamental role of communication when facing unexpected events.
- Being your own brand plays a significant role in innovation and creativity—being who you are, showing your determining hallmark, and the ascertaining attribute of yourself as an important aspect of creating that presence and building those needed connections.

In emphasizing the most common leadership challenges they faced during their change effort, one public school administrator spoke to the idea of change being difficult as many people don't receive change as positively as one may think or expect. He pointed to the present

political situation in the United States, referring to how people are reacting to the turmoil that characterizes the current administration. He spoke of feelings of resistance and rejection for being African to the point where he was compelled to display his diplomas and certificates on the wall of his office in order for teachers, students, staff, parents and other stakeholders to see his credentials and understand that he is an authentic person—capable, trained, accessible, and trustworthy. A11 stated: “It was about building that trust not only between myself and others, but also among teachers, students, and so forth, in order to mitigate some of the challenges emanating from stakeholders’ lack of trust within the school.” According to Sergiovanni (1992), the duty of building trust among teachers falls on the shoulders of school administrators and teachers equally; administrators can and should embody the role of shaping the necessary setting for teacher relationships that are as congenial as collegial. Furthermore, as Lien, Johnson, and Ragland (1997) remarked, being able to express concerns and disagreements without fear of reprisal is essential to building trusting relationships.

When a conflict arose between a parent, his daughter, and the dean, the principal had to step in as a leader and express concern while keeping his foot down, because as Blasé and Blasé advised, school administrators need to acknowledge and address conflict as a way to engender tangible, positive outcomes in long term, and approaching conflict as potentially worthwhile helps build supportive human interactions because it leads to dealing with our differences in win-win ways, it also allows staff and teachers to feel more secure in providing forthright input and participating usefully in school decision-making (2001).

Finally, as the literature review substantiates and as one principal conveyed, understanding and knowing how to manage change through communication and personal branding is essential and appears to be among the most effective strategies these leaders employed to overcome the most common leadership challenges during their interventions. As one turnaround public school administrator confessed, communication and personal branding were quintessential in creating that presence and instilling that recognition. A principal who is

accessible helps teachers, staff, students, parents, and other community members (a) want to talk to him or her, (b) believe what he or she is saying, (c) understand where he or she is going, and (d) get ready to go there with him or her. As Blasé and Blasé (2001) remarked: “Ineffective communication, including individuals’ inability or unwillingness to listen to what others have to say, is a sure way to confound problem solving, reduce trust, and magnify feelings of isolation among school administrators, teachers, and support personnel” (p. 25). According to Lambert (1998), while trust is built and experienced within the context of a multifaceted communication system, a communication system needs to be open and fluid, include feedback loops, and be practiced by everyone in the school.

Results for Research Question 3

RQ 3 asked: How do turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations measure their success both as leaders and as turnaround effort? To answer this question, the research focused on how participants defined success during their endeavor, and how participants measure or track success throughout the implementation of their school improvement effort.

For instance, in conveying how he defined success during his intervention, one interviewee recalled focusing first on creating a campus-wide high morale, which was a way to quantify outcomes and results. In terms of school environment, the participant spoke about school culture and climate as precursors of teacher efficacy, student engagement, and ultimately, performance. As the literature review substantiates, turnaround efforts evaluate student achievement results, school culture overhaul, and a comprehensive makeup of the learning environment, and according to Byoung-suk (2012), children need safe, healthy, and stimulating environment in which they can grow and learn. For example, A11 stated that keeping the school campus safe and secure guaranteed the “safe haven” motto of schools, and by the same token, increasing the number and quality of the security staff ensured long-term solutions to behavior deviance, as prevention measures to deter poor behavior from occurring.

This is in perfect alignment, according to Sunday (2012), with what is a significant parallel between physical school environment and students' scholastic performance.

Another participant talked about setting priorities on (a) creating and maintaining a school culture and campus morale that embodied a welcoming, nurturing, and caring environment for all students regardless of their socioeconomic, ethnic, linguistic, and legal status; and (b) insisting on efforts to address issues of bullying, harassment, and intimidation with clarity and resolve. Also, paramount to teacher performance and student achievement is the need to secure the kind of environment where all students are treated equal and given the fundamental right to access a decent education.

Defining success during turnaround was also a matter of student performance. These findings extended previous research with student performance at its core. All participants agreed that improved student performance is the second most significant indicator of a successful school improvement effort. While one participant emphasized improved adequate yearly progress (AYP) and academic performance index (API) as major definition of success, another mentioned student progress and outcomes in terms of tangibles and intangibles. A1 stated that when students are making excellent gains both academically and emotionally, student achievement data shows that they are succeeding. The medal ceremony is a part of marking and celebrating student progress. This holistic aspect of success is consistent not only with concepts such as multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1999), emotional intelligence or EQ (Goleman, 1995), and spiritual intelligence (Zohar & Marshall, 2000), but also with the vast majority of college mission statements and institutional goals, which include many outcomes that are not strictly academic or cognitive (Astin, 1991; Kuh, Shedd, & Whitt, 1987).

Success in the light of these turnaround public school administrators' change efforts was also defined with regard to teacher and staff engagement, renewed school culture, improved instructional measures, organizational growth, and how data was used to drive instruction. One participant talked about great tangible gains made in relation to student achievement, team

work, parent involvement, and teacher collaboration, especially in the AVID program. Likewise, A11 spoke of the creation of a culture of accountability, engagement, and achievement as being the precursor of high performance and results. Having something the school could be identified by constitutes a sign of success. With reference to organizational growth, A2 touched on using built-in measures to track student attendance, behavior, and parental involvement, while making sure that those best practices are part of the school culture. In the meantime, reports were pouring in to the school's leadership about learning in the school, increased outside accolades about what was being done on school campus, and most importantly, enjoying the patronage of the National Center for Teaching and Learning, as well as the Center on Time and Learning.

The use of data to drive instruction represented another significant indicator of success, as according to one participant, data was now being not only well recorded and kept, but also better analyzed to inform instructional strategies, measure growth as time went by, and identify and reteach misunderstood concepts. For decades, organizational theorists have recommended being cognizant of culture as the most important action a leader can perform. In order to renew the school culture, one participant made reference to having to be very creative and innovative, and actually instituted what was known at that school as "meet and greet." This principal recalled that every morning when students arrived at school, they were met at the gate and greeted individually, hence feeling empowered and welcomed. Educational theorists have reported that a principal's influence on learning is mediated through the climate and culture of the school and is not a direct affect, but culture is (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). As an illustration, principals exercise a measurable effect on school effectiveness and student achievement; the leadership provided by the school's principal exerts indirect influence on students' achievement through the school climate (Hallinger & Heck, 1998). A11 added: "The meet and greet helped motivate students to be in class on time" (A11, personal communication, March 3, 2017). According to Resnick, school principals are responsible for establishing a pervasive culture of

teaching and learning in each school because, if the culture is not hospitable to learning, students can suffer (cited in Watson, 2001).

Analysis of Research Question 3

The findings from the two interview questions addressed RQ 3. Throughout their remarks regarding how they measure success as leaders of turnaround efforts, seven aspects of being a turnaround K–12 public school administrator stood out from participants' responses:

- Creating and maintaining a safe haven—a welcoming, caring, and nurturing school environment with positive school climate, high morale, and increased palpable security for all teachers, staff, and students.
- Creating and maintaining a culture of high academic achievement and performance while guaranteeing high rates of graduation and college attainment.
- Ensuring teachers and staff are highly engaged in fulfilling their missions as educators with passion, resolve, care, and team work.
- Guaranteeing the prospect of a school where the guiding beliefs and values that delineate “how we do things here” are renewed through a culture of high standards of commitment and accountability for all.
- Using instructional time and engaging students from bell to bell as a strategy to increase student engagement and learning while preventing disruptive behavior from occurring.
- Maintaining best practices and in order to stimulate teacher, staff, and student growth, and an overall outstanding reputation through effective leadership.
- Using data as a clear reflection of our practices and a platform to drive intervention.

Results for Research Question 4

RQ 4 asked: What recommendations would turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who have had a major change effort in their respective

organizations make for promoting innovative practices within public schools? To answer this question, the research focused on how these administrators would have done certain things differently knowing what they know now, and the recommendations participants would make for other K–12 public school administrators who embark into similar journeys.

As an example, to impart what they would have done differently knowing what they know now, all interviewees recognized cultural capital as a very important vehicle for the promotion and reinforcement of educational success through educational brilliance. Many turnaround administrators voiced the need for public schools to promote on their campuses and integrate in their curriculum a larger number of advancement via individualized determination (AVID) courses. A5 spoke to the importance of AVID courses in bridging the achievement gap between rich and poor students. Cultural capital in many ways has been proven to guarantee educational brilliance to students who accumulate it overtime and can use it as socioeconomic leverage; therefore, cultural capital transferred over generations and possessed by families and individuals is an important resource that contributes to individuals' educational success and equips them with knowledge, practical skills, and a sense of “the rule of the game” in the educational system, which is recognized and rewarded by educational gatekeepers and peers (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, 1990).

With regard to second guessing themselves, turnaround public school administrators also regarded teacher recruitment and selection process as a major key player in a successful turnaround effort. A11 talked about his decision at the beginning of his journey to hire teachers merely based on the fact that they held credentials in their subject matter as one that could have been considered differently. He added that had he known, he should have questioned the fact that some of the teachers he added to his teaching staff were not employed in the middle of the first semester or at least be a little skeptical because while qualifications count, they should not supersede one's judgment. A15 brought up issues related to classroom management as being fundamental to a teacher's ability to plan and deliver effective and meaningful instruction while

guaranteeing student learning and achievement. While one of the interviewees viewed good lesson delivery as a precursor of good classroom control, he also recognized that effective instruction lessens but doesn't eradicate classroom behavior issues (Emmer & Stough, 2001). Nevertheless, as substantiated by the literature review, classroom planning and behavior management prowess significantly impact the steadfastness of new teachers in teaching professions (Ingersoll & Smith, 2001).

Additionally, participants second guessed themselves in reference to student-teacher relations. As the vast majority of turnaround public school administrators expressed, creating and maintaining positive relationships with students could guarantee a more learning-friendly classroom environment, a precursor of not only the ability of the teacher to deliver effective instruction but also that of all students to learn and achieve at a higher level regardless of their readiness and personal abilities. This notion is confirmed by the belief that although at-risk students enter the classroom with lower academic skills and need more sustained instruction in order to accelerate learning (Donovan & Cross, 2002), they tend to receive less instruction and praise than their peers who are not at risk (Wehby, Symons, Canale, & Go, 1998).

Participants were invited to make recommendations for other public school administrators who embark on similar journeys. A1 suggested that "talk is cheap;" success cannot come with all talk; one has to be proactive, set priorities when creating vision, and do first thing first. A1 spoke to identifying the needs and setting up and meeting with teams. Another participant suggested staying on the front line in order to avoid distractions and focus on academic success. Leadership is hard, and good leadership is rare. According to New Leaders (2001), proactive and accessible school leadership has been recognized as a critical engagement driver for teachers; this being said, effective school leaders contribute to learning indirectly, but in a magnificent way, by creating a school environment where students and teachers can flourish, and by influencing the many stakeholders who are part of it (RAND

Corporation, 2012). Conversely, according to Leithwood et al. (2004), all things considered, the quality of any organization's performance cannot exceed the quality of its leadership.

Turnaround principals also cited communication as being a key trust promoter for public school administrators who embark on a similar journey. Without trust, there are no followers; and without followers, there is no leader. One interviewee mentioned the significance of communication in helping stakeholders identify "who we are; it helps define who we are by writing our own story." The theoretical model of communication suggests that quality and quantity of communication builds trust while facilitating organizational openness and boosting employee involvement. A4 referred to communication as the vehicle to collaboration, trust building, and solution sharing, and recommended fine tuning and being flexible as needed while communicating. Similarly, as the literature review suggested, a leader's purposeful word or act builds trust, while a careless expression or deed can crush trust; fully responsible leaders define, describe, and exemplify trust (Dallas, 2012).

Another major recommendation made by turnaround school principals was using the five waves of exemplary leadership. Challenging the process plays a very significant role in creating ways to enlist others to embrace the new direction and be part of the growth process. After conducting an environmental scan, A5 recalled facing the shortcomings of the past administration as great opportunities for growth rather than setbacks. A5 stated: "We define our own successes and failures." A11, on the other hand, viewed challenging the process as an opportunity to learn the existing school culture in order to build a compelling case for his new vision for the school. Also, paramount to their successful interventions, these turnaround school administrators engaged in changing the culture, as they viewed cultural shift as setting the path and modeling a new school environment branded on accountability, high standards of achievement, and exemplary behavior. A7 noted the importance of "creating something great and make it stick, while at the same time creating benchmarks because as a turnaround agent, one needs to start small and have clear success indicators along the way." Finally, turnaround

K–12 public school administrators regarded the process of inspiring a shared vision as a way to tell stakeholders that they were all in this together. In order for stakeholders to go along with the leader’s vision or direction for the future, it is quintessential that the leader shows them that direction. As one participant stated, “Success in this field is not about you; it is all about getting everybody on board, it is about ensuring a brighter future for our children, making them lifelong learners and global citizens.”

Analysis of Research Question 4

Based on themes that emerged from RQ 4, it was determined that findings from the two interview questions used did address research question 4. Improving cultural value, being proactive, and communicating to build trust were these turnaround administrators’ top recommendations for other school administrators who embark on similar endeavors. In summary, the recommendations these turnaround K–12 public school administrators made for other administrators who embark on similar mission of promoting innovative practices in public schools were cultural value (15 instances or 23%), be proactive (15 instances or 11.8%), build trust (15 instances or 11.8%), selection and recruitment (14 instances or 21.5%), challenge the process (14 instances or 11.2%), culture change (14 instances or 11.2%), benchmarks (13 instances or 10.2%), and shared vision (13 instances or 10.2%). Improving cultural value and being proactive were the top recommendations made for promoting innovative practices within public schools. As the literature review substantiated, cultural value (which delineates the way things are done) and communication are the two biggest power players in molding organizational behavior. It remains true that culture is to organizations what character is to individuals. Culture represents all the hidden phenomena that direct human behavior.

The findings from the two interview questions addressed research question 4. Throughout their remarks regarding the recommendations they would make for promoting innovative practices within public schools, eight aspects of being a turnaround K–12 public school administrator stood out from participants’ responses:

- By being proactive and doing first thing first, priorities are set and we make things happen instead of reacting to them.
- Improving cultural value as a means of transforming the beliefs, values, perceptions of all stakeholders is important, while at the same time modeling students' cultural capital.
- Communicating to build trust facilitates collaboration, clarifies the vision, and accomplishes the mission.
- Improving the teacher recruitment and selection process provides the opportunity for students to be led by a team of educators who understand the importance of planning and delivering meaningful lessons while maintaining a classroom environment conducive to learning through excellent classroom management practices.
- Challenging the process creates ways for stakeholders to embrace the vision and inspires them to want to participate in the growth process.
- Changing the culture sets the tone for new ways of doing things.
- Creating benchmarks is a way to understand the path to success, where we were, where we are, and where we are going.
- Inspiring a shared vision, stakeholders embrace the vision for the future.

Implications of the Study

The findings from the analysis responded to the study's four research questions and helped achieve its purpose which was to examine the best leadership practices of turnaround administrators in K–12 public schools in Los Angeles County who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations. These findings yielded several significant implications for (a) examining the best leadership practices of turnaround K–12 administrators in LA County Public Schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations,

(b) exploring the most common leadership challenges faced by turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County Public Schools who embarked on major change effort in these organizations, (c) understanding how turnaround K–12 administrators in LA County Public Schools who have led major change effort in their respective organizations measure their success both as leaders and as turnaround efforts, and (d) delineating the recommendations turnaround K–12 administrators in LA County Public Schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations would make for promoting innovative practices within public schools.

In many regards, K–12 public education has always been viewed as an equalizer and a path to opportunity regardless of one’s racial, ethnic, social, and economic background. With accrued focus on the cognitive realities in the advancement of humankind, the ever-present argument of a quality education for all echoes ceaselessly in our society. From its inception in colonial America, our public education has had as its credos the notion of being that panacea by which social inequalities can be lessened, there by emerging as the great equalizer. As an illustration, of the many causes dear to Horace Mann’s heart, “none was closer than the education of the people” (Cremin, 1957, p. 6). Furthermore, Mann articulated that the “civil rights question of our nation today is that of access to a quality education” (as cited in Gonzalez, 2001, p. 2).

While our founding fathers had a clear vision of education being not only the main Satan deluder in children, they also and most importantly believed in the significant role it bore in the survival of the new republic they had just founded. Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, among others, advocated for the creation of publicly-funded education system in 1779. Similarly, rooted on the premise on social harmony, our founding fathers envisioned a public school system that would be available and equal for all as part of the fundamental birthright of every American child, rich and poor alike. According to Selznick and Steinberg (1969), schools are often regarded as the main social institutions where tolerant and liberal values are transmitted. As

Hello, Scheepers, Vermulst, and Gerris (2004) posited, this educational effect has been interpreted as a universal liberalizing effect of education since it has showed up in different countries time and again. As an illustration, educated individuals are better prepared to make sound political decisions and choices than uneducated ones, and according to the socialization theory, the longer an individual is part of the educational system, the more he/she is exposed to liberal democratic values and principles of tolerance.

Similarly, other advocates of public education suggested that public funding would give schools the adequate human and financial capital needed to educate children from poor families and facilitate the implementation of a more common approach to curriculum, duration of the school year, teacher training, qualifications, selection, as well as other necessities such as overcrowding and school physical condition. Yet, the vast majority of America's children attending the nation's K–12 public schools are unruly and failing. Following the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* case that ruled against the federal government allowing states and municipalities to deny equal access to educational opportunities to African Americans and other minority groups in the United States, the Supreme Court ruled that public education is “a right which must be made available to all in equal terms. “Despite being called the passport to the future for all, disparities in public school spending between urban and suburban schools remain enormous to this date” (U.S. Department of Education/NCES, 1995). Short of adequate funding, many public schools in America, especially those in urban areas known as “inner city schools” are overwhelmed and show signs of physical distress with serious consequences on student learning and achievement. According to the U.S. Department of Education/ National Center for Education Statistics, a number of differences emerged between schools based on their geographic locations (1995). For instance, schools with high concentrations of minority students are typically depicted as being in worse condition than schools with lower proportions of minority students (Lowe, 1996), which as past experiences suggest, will be costly to correct.

Additionally, there is no doubt that well-educated and engaged youth are not only the future of our social and economic health, but most importantly, the stability of a democratic society. Educating America's youth is a worthy public investment with huge social and economic benefits, as according to research, individuals who have access to a good education throughout their K–12 careers and graduate from high school will attend college and will most likely graduate from college and have gainful careers, stable families, and be active and productive citizens. Every school is a place where children learn what adults in the community already know, a place for the transmission of knowledge (Hu, 2010); additionally, public schools according to Alexander, have played an important part in closing the gap between wealthy and poor students on measures of intelligence (1997). These beneficial results, added Means and Voss, occur because education has several cognitive benefits such as increasing the facts known and understood by students in various academic subjects, decision-making ability and reasoning skills (1990). According to Wolfe and Haveman (2002), a better educated work force not only leads to more research and innovation, but the benefits of this economic innovation are then spread more widely and powerful throughout a better educated public. Finally, according to Kingston, Hubbard, Lapp, Schroeder, and Wilson (2003), improved educational opportunity and attainment have been found to strengthen social engagement in many ways, while education increases voter participation (Bernanke, 2007) and participation in volunteer organizations, and personal tolerance of different viewpoints (Campbell, 2006).

By the same token, the prospect of equal opportunity, most especially in public education is at the core of the American dream, and it has been said that if you study hard and work hard, you can achieve your goals and fulfill your aspirations. Conversely, while the idea of an American Dream which was first instilled upon the citizens of the new nation at the close of the 18th century was the balance of "our credal values to create and preserve an open, competitive, entrepreneurial society in which the opportunity to succeed is widely available" (Jillson, 2004, p. 5), many urban schools in America fall short of delivering this dream to the

large majority of America's children despite the fact that since its inception, the prospect of public schooling has been to provide positive cumulative effects on the life opportunities of the nation's youth and their capacity to fully partake in social order.

Likewise, as this study drew to its conclusion, it became more and more evident that its implications will benefit public school policy makers at local, state, and federal levels, as well as public and private school administrators in the designing and implementation of best leadership practices. While there is no doubt about the significance of effective leadership in improving school outcomes by inspiring teachers, students, and staff, as well as school climate and environment, the prospect of effective leadership still evades several K–12 public schools in America. As Yukl (2002) remarked, “Most definitions of leadership reflect the assumption that it involves a social influence process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person or group over other[s] . . . to structure the activities and relationships in a group or organization” (p. 4). Effective school leadership is paramount to improving the efficiency and equity of schooling.

Finally, this study can inform parents on the indicators of a successful school. No single thing successful schools do guarantees high student achievement; instead, all successful schools have a number of interwoven characteristics that constitute their culture. As Deal and Petersen (1999) observed, “Parents, teachers, principals, and students have always sensed something special, yet undefined, about their schools—something extremely powerful but difficult to describe” (p. 2). As Oakes (1985) stated, “Many school practices seem to be the natural way to conduct schooling . . . These beliefs are so ingrained in our thinking and behavior . . . that we rarely submit them to careful scrutiny” (p. 5). Indicators of successful schools constitute both the tangible and intangible.

Recommendations for Future Research

Having covered a wide range of concepts such as the historical background of education and leadership, leadership theories, leadership styles, motivational theories, change models,

turnaround in both educational and non-educational organizations, the dynamics of decline and failure in organizations and the branding process, and most importantly, having unveiled and contributed significant, beneficial insights and knowledge to the fields of K–12 public schools, a myriad of untapped opportunities for future investigations of this topic still exist. Rooted in the research findings, the following recommendations for future research regarding turnaround K–12 public school administrators are offered:

- Conduct a similar study by including administrators in other counties within California, other states, other countries in the Americas, and around the world. Regardless of the denomination it takes, the construct of a school principal, school administrator, school manager, and the concept of public school leadership is universal. The idea that well-managed schools can significantly affect student learning and achievement is a pivotal driver in the rise of interest in school turnaround research and practice. Unequivocally, leadership and management entail a unique set of activities or functions, and while leaders and managers share some similarities because they both influence others by using specific powers to achieve predetermined goals, some underpinning differences exist between the two (Northouse, 2007). With the advent of globalization, the concepts of leadership, management, and administration are interwoven and have been accorded varying and sometime conflicting emphases over time and in various contexts. As a result of this overlapping, their usage fluctuates across countries and professional practices, and highlights best practices implemented around the world in order to affect positive change and identify signs by which effective and sustainable school turnaround is measured. In today's vigorous workplace, organizations need both effective management and effective leadership to optimize success (Kotterman, 2006).
- Expand the population to include K–12 administrators in private schools and conduct a comparative study of themes that emerge from both groups. Since its inception

nearly 400 years ago, America's K–12 education system as gone through four main eras of reform: the permissive era (1642–1821), the encouraging era (1826–1851), the compulsory era (1855–1980), and the freedom of school choice era (1980–present). While America's public schools did not meet national and public expectations for student academic achievement, private schools were perceived to maintain a positive standing (Benveniste, Carnoy, & Rothstein, 2003; Tyack & Cuban, 1995; "What Do People Think of Independent Schools Anyway?" 1999). Meanwhile, gaining a clear understanding of what has been happening in America's K–12 schools, both private and public, entails looking back at the onset of the freedom of school choice era because it represents the epitome of educational reforms in America, which culminated in the advent of the accountability movement in education. According to Portin, Schneider, DeArmond, and Gundlach (2003), while private schools have a clear and uncomplicated mission and are more likely to share leadership functions, public schools have a diffuse mission that is largely defined by external pressure and demands such as union contracts, constraints on resources, and a historically fixed bureaucratic organization with legislative policy placing responsibility in the principalship. The external pressure and demands limit the latitude of public school principals and hamper their ability for free governance while private school principals have more freedom when it comes to allocating resources, hiring teachers, and planning and organizing staffing needs for teaching and learning.

- Conduct a similar study through a mixed method approach by using semi-structured interviews to examine the best leadership practices of turnaround K–12 public school administrators in Los Angeles County through a qualitative approach and use the themes that emerge from the findings to develop a quantitative data collection instruments such as surveys, questionnaires, and focus groups, by employing multiple independent variables in elaborate models of causation (Blalock, 1969,

1985). According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003), mixed method research refers to all procedures collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data in the context of a single study. Mixed method approach data analysis entails analyzing qualitative data to develop codes or themes, which in turn, are merged into qualitative response categories that are entered into a quantitative instrument or database such as Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) or Statistical Application Systems (SAS) to analyze data. The basis for employing these designs are likewise varied but they can be generally described as methods to expand the scope or breadth of research to offset the weakness of either approach alone (Blake 1989; Greene, Caracelli, & Graham 1989; Rossman & Wilson, 1991). For example, an investigator could gather qualitative data to assess the personal experiences of turnaround school administrators while also gathering data from survey instruments measuring the quality of their leadership. The two types of data can provide validation for each other and also create a solid foundation for drawing conclusions about the intervention. An example of research question utilizing a mixed method approach to show causal relationship between variables for this kind of study would be: How does the success of turnaround K–12 public school administrators in LA County public schools who have led a major change initiative in their respective organizations further explain best leadership practices as measured quantitatively to promote innovation and creativity during such efforts as measured on a leadership scale?

- Apply minimum variation sampling also known as criterion sampling to focus on criteria such as gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, or age group to examine the best leadership practices of turnaround K–12 public school administrators in Los Angeles County who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations. These criteria would facilitate a study of the best leadership practices of turnaround K–12 public school administrators in Los Angeles County who have led a major

change effort in their respective organizations by providing detailed and rich data pertaining to the criterion selected for the study. This sampling technique involves “selecting cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance” (Patton, 2002, p. 238). Because phenomenological approaches’ semi-structured interviews yield lots of transcript data, the point of criterion sampling is to be sure to understand cases that are likely to be information-rich as they may reveal major system weaknesses that become targets of opportunity for program or system improvement (Patton, 1990).

- Explore the transferability of the findings and results of this study to design a training program (software) or a recruitment and selection learning module for senior officials in leadership positions in California, in the United States, and around the world. In this case, both the maximum variation and criterion variation sampling techniques can be applied to transfer the findings and results. In transferring the findings and results of an existing study, a researcher verifies and confirms validity of his/her study and invites readers to make connections between aspects of another study and his or her experience of the phenomenon. The validity of the results and findings guarantees their transferability. According to Merriam (1998), external validity confirms the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations. For example, in this study and among other examples, Educational Leadership Administration and Policy (ELAP) schools in universities in Los Angeles and other counties in California, across the United States, and around the world can use the findings and results of this study to improve their programs of study in order to reflect the realities encountered in the field by turnaround school administrators. Similarly, district superintendents of schools and Departments of Education in other counties in California, other states, and other countries around the world might selectively apply their own turnaround experience findings and results to design a learning module for

senior officials aimed at improving the selection and recruitment of turnaround school administrators that can guarantee short-term and long-term sustainability of the effort beyond the 18–24 month time frame set forth by the School Improvement Grant initiative.

Final Thoughts

A quality education is a basic human right, not a privilege, for every child. An education is a pivotal factor in the development of children, families, communities, countries, and humankind as a whole. Sen (1992) claimed that “a right gives a person a certain opportunity” (p. 141). Importantly, he added to this a caution that we also need to understand what capabilities are necessary to convert these rights into something meaningful and enabling. From a socioeconomic standpoint, the benefits of providing a solid education to our youth are undeniable and numerous. Education is a major crime deterrent, crime itself being a negative externality for the burden it bares on the fabric of society. According to Chiras and Crea (2004), the same factors that affect decisions to commit crime also affect schooling decisions, thus suggesting that education and crime have a negative correlation impact on each other even if schooling has no direct causal effect on crime. Educated people do not constitute a burden to taxpayers. According to Oreopoulos (2003), dropouts have fewer employment opportunities, and the ripple effect of their disadvantage costs the nation billions of dollars in lost tax revenue and in welfare, unemployment, and crime prevention programs. Educated people have a higher proclivity to participate in the democratic process and make sound political decisions. People with a college education participated in the 2004 presidential election at three times the rate of high school dropouts (Junn, 2005), with similar results in the 2008 election (Nover, Godsay, Kirby, & Kawashima-Ginsberg, 2010). Furthermore, adults who dropped out of high school are more likely than graduates to die prematurely from cardiovascular disease, cancer, infection, injury, lung disease, and diabetes (Wong, Shapiro, Boscardin, & Ettner, 2002), and people with less education are more likely to enroll in public health assistance programs like Medicaid (17%

versus 7% of college graduates) (Husen & Tuijnman, 1991); educated people are more likely to make healthier nutrition choices. Educated people are more likely to live longer and more productive lives.

Education is a socioeconomic equalizer, and being an educator requires more than just the wish to fulfill the need for a steady employment. Educators must hold a strong belief that all children can learn and that education is a fundamental human right that cannot be alienated from any child. Gonzalez (2001) echoed the same sentiment: “Education is the great equalizer in a democratic society, and if people are not given access to a quality education, then what we are doing is creating an underclass of people who will challenge our very way of life” (p. 2). Gonzalez (2001) further declared that the “civil rights question of our nation today is that of access to a quality education” (p. 2). Yet in our nation, that prospect is still evading the vast majority of children who are forcefully entrenched in chronically low-performing schools. “While it is correct to have concern for how certain institutional structures can deprive individuals of their basic rights, it is equally important to look to achieving certain levels of basic capabilities, below which people count as scandalously deprived” (Sen, 1993, p. 41). The myriad of school reforms has yet to provide any substantial improvement in our K–12 educational system. Ravitch (2013) referred to educational reforms in America as “corporate reform because reformers want to use crude metrics to judge teachers and schools” (p. 11). Since 2009, an estimated \$8.5 billion dollars in federal funds have been allotted for initiatives to address school improvements, representing a significant investment by the federal government to entice school districts to embark on creative and innovative models to turnaround failing schools. Yet only a small portion of these initiatives have yielded positive outcomes.

As an educator, this study bears a particular interest to the researcher because he has seen firsthand what education in low-performing schools looks like, and thus recognizes the devastating spillover and ripple effects K–12 low-performing schools can have on the well-being of our society. All this can be reversed if, as a people, we look beyond our personal interests or

beliefs and focus on doing the right thing—because according to Sen (1993), having a right is only significant if that right enables you to do something which you value. The American ideal is for students of all socio-economic and racial/ethnic backgrounds to have access to a free, quality public education (Cremin, 1957), and we must fulfill the promises our founding fathers made to all America’s children more than two centuries ago through the “Deluder Satan Act.” As the findings of this study show, leading success in the K–12 platform, whether in good times or times of crisis, requires those entrusted with that mission to possess a clear understanding of the underpinning factors that create and sustain the path to success, the best leadership practices one needs to employ in order to build solid teams of followers, and the underlying measures of success in such initiatives.

Finally, I would like to commend the participants who gave their time and energy to be part of this study and make it a success. Their priceless and honest insights are now engraved forever in libretto and will bestow knowledge to the literature of leadership in K–12 education and beyond for decades to come.

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APPENDIX A

IRB Approval Notice



Pepperdine University
24255 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263
TEL: 310-506-4000

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: January 06, 2017

Protocol Investigator Name: Henri Same Etame

Protocol #: 16-09-394

Project Title: BEST LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF TURNAROUND K-12 ADMINISTRATORS IN LA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS WHO HAVE LED A MAJOR CHANGE EFFORT IN THEIR RESPECTIVE ORGANIZATIONS.

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Henri Same Etame:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chair

cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Vic Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives

Mr. Brett Leach, Regulatory Affairs Specialist

APPENDIX B

Interview Recruitment Phone Script

Good morning/afternoon <potential participant's name>,

My name is Henri R. Same Etame and I am a doctoral candidate at the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University. I am currently working on my dissertation entitled "Best Leadership Practices of Turnaround K–12 Administrators." I am calling to request your participation in my study. The purpose of this study is to examine the best leadership practices of turnaround K–12 administrators in Los Angeles County public schools who have led a major change effort in their respective organizations. This study consists of 12 semi-structured/open-ended interview questions that will emphasize on identifying the best leadership practices and challenges that turnaround elementary and secondary public school administrators in LA County have experienced in their leadership roles as they embarked onto major change efforts in their respective schools. I am in the quest for voluntary participants willing to provide me data for this qualitative phenomenological research study. Entrenched in specific qualifying criteria, I have determined that you would be an excellent participant for this study. The interview process will last approximately 45-60 minutes and will be conducted in a face-to-face format at a location of your convenience.

Would you be interested in participating in this study? If yes, thank you for your interest; what will follow next is setting an interview date, time, and location. Approximately one week before the interview, I will provide you a copy of the interview questions for review. If no, thank you for your time and your consideration. Have a great day.

APPENDIX C

Interview Recruitment E-Mail Script

Good morning/ afternoon,

Dear [potential participant],

My name is Henri R. Same Etame, and I am a doctoral candidate at the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University. I am conducting a research study examining the “Best Leadership Practices of Turnaround K–12 Administrators” and you are invited to participate in the study. If you agree, you are invited to participate in the data collection and analysis process via 12 semi-structured interview questions.

The interview session is anticipated to take no more than 45 to 60 minutes to complete and will be conducted face-to-face at a location of your convenience. Moreover, I am also seeking your permission to audiotape the interview in order to guarantee maximum authenticity and accuracy of my questions and your answers.

Participation in this study is voluntary, and you reserve the right to withdraw from this process at any time. Your identity as a participant will remain anonymous as even the researcher (interviewer) cannot link you to the information you will provide; therefore, the researcher will prevent the linking of any aspect of the data to you or to the institution you represent. Furthermore, the information you will provide the researcher during this study will remain confidential, and under no circumstances will it, neither be public nor available to others. Your identity will not be linked neither directly nor indirectly to the information herein provided during and after the study. To guarantee further confidentiality, your name will not be used to identify the data, and the information you will provide will only be accessed by the researcher and those involved in this study. To achieve this goal, you as a participant in this study will only be identified by a number or any other pseudonym we will agree on, and you will not be mentioned by name at the site where the interview will be conducted.

If you have any questions or would like to participate in this study, please contact me at [provide your contact information].

Thank you for your participation. I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Henri R. Same Etame
Doctoral Candidate
Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions

Interview Question 1: What leadership practices did you engage in the planning and implementation phases while dealing with human elements (faculty, staff, students, and parents), unexpected challenges, and resistance to change?

Interview Question 2: What major or unexpected challenges did you face during this intervention?

Interview Question 3: What other strategies, including leadership strategies, did you use in the planning and implementing processes of your new vision?

Interview Question 4: How did you overcome resistance to your new planned direction for the organization?

Interview Question 5: What challenges did you face in in the planning phase of the implementation of your intervention mission?

Interview Question 6: Did anything unexpected occur during the planning and implementation of your intervention?

Interview Question 7: If so, what corrective (evasive) measures did you envision to mitigate these surprising events?

Interview Question 8: What role did innovation and creativity play in overcoming these unplanned hurdles?

Interview Question 9: How did you define success during this endeavor?

Interview Question 10: How did you measure or track your success throughout the implementation of this school improvement effort?

Interview Question 11: Knowing what you know now; is there anything you would have done differently?

Interview Question 12: What recommendations would you make for other public school administrators who embark onto similar journey?

APPENDIX E

Informed Consent Form

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

BEST LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF TURNAROUND K–12 ADMINISTRATORS

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Henri R. Same Etame, Doctoral candidate of Education in Organizational Leadership with Dr. Farzin Madjidi, Committee Chair, at Pepperdine University, Graduate School of Education and Psychology (GSEP) because you are an elementary and secondary (K–12) public school turnaround administrator who has led a major change effort in your organization. Your participation is voluntary. You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything that you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate. Please take as much time as you need to read the consent form. You may also decide to discuss participation with your family or friends. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form. You will also be given a copy of this form for your records.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to examine the “BEST LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF TURNAROUND K–12 ADMINISTRATORS.”

STUDY PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to elaborate on the best leadership practices you employed as a turnaround administrator, the common challenges you faced during this endeavor, how you measured success both as a leader and as a crisis management leader, and the recommendations you as a successful school improvement principal would make to promote creative and innovative practices within public schools. During your participation in this study, you will be asked to answer 12 tape-recorded interview questions (IQs). The interview process is a one-time commitment and will last between 45 and 60 minutes. For the accuracy of data collection, your participation to this study is contingent upon the session being audio recorded.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The potential and foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study include taking a few minutes (45-60) away from your normal workday, at a location of your choosing. Furthermore, there is a potential for breach of confidentiality, risk to your reputation, fatigue and boredom during the interview session. Other than that, there are no foreseeable physical, emotional, or professional risks to your participation in this study.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

While there are no direct benefits to the study participants, there are several anticipated benefits to society which include: addition to the existing literature on the subject of public school improvement, the understanding of what school turnaround entails, contribution to school safety, and the simple fact that as an educator, you took part in changing a child's life.

PAYMENT/COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

While no monetary compensation will be enough for your participation in this study, the researcher would like to kindly and symbolically offer you as a participant, a \$20 Amazon book gift certificate for your personal use and as an appreciation for the time you devoted to this endeavor.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST OF THE INVESTIGATOR

As a researcher committed to best ethical and moral practices of scholarly research, I guarantee that there will be no conflicts of interests associated with conducting this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The records collected for this study by the researcher will be confidential as far as permitted by law. However, if required to do so by law, it may be necessary to disclose information collected about you. Examples of the types of issues that would require me to break confidentiality are if disclosed any instances of child abuse and elder abuse. Pepperdine's University's Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) may also access the data collected. The HSPP occasionally reviews and monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects.

The data will be stored on a password protected computer in the principal investigator's place of residence, transcribed by a third party, stored for three years after the study has been completed and then destroyed. The data collected will be coded with a pseudonym (number), de-identified, identifiable, and transcribed and maintained separately for validity and reliability purposes. The audio-tapes will be destroyed once the process of transcription is complete.

SUSPECTED NEGLECT OR ABUSE OF CHILDREN

Under California law, the researcher(s) who may also be a mandated reporter will not maintain as confidential, information about known or reasonably suspected incidents of abuse or neglect of a child, dependent adult or elder, including, but not limited to, physical, sexual, emotional, and financial abuse or neglect. If any researcher has or is given such information, he or she is required to report this abuse to the proper authorities.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

Meanwhile, the researcher reserves the right to terminate the participation of the interviewee if the participation of the interviewee is deemed not fully cooperative.

ALTERNATIVES TO FULL PARTICIPATION

The alternative to participation in the study is not participating or only completing the items for which you feel comfortable. Participating in this study will not in any way, shape or form infringe upon the relationship between you and your employer.

EMERGENCY CARE AND COMPENSATION FOR INJURY

If you are injured as a direct result of research procedures you will receive medical treatment; however, you or your insurance will be responsible for the cost. Pepperdine University does not provide any monetary compensation for injury.

INVESTIGATOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION

You understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries you may have concerning the research herein described. You understand that you may contact:

- ❖ Henri R. Same Etame (researcher)
- ❖ Dr. Farzin Madjidi (committee chairperson), (310) 568-5726 or farzin.madjidi@pepperdine.edu

If you have any other questions or concerns about this research.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT—IRB CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about your rights as a research participant or research in general please contact Dr. Judy Ho, Chairperson of the Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board at Pepperdine University, 6100 Center Drive, Suite 500, Los Angeles, CA 90045, 310-568-5753 or gpsirb@pepperdine.edu

APPENDIX F

Los Angeles Unified School District Research Approval

Los Angeles Unified School District
Office of the Data and Accountability
333 South Beaudry Avenue, 16th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017-1466
Telephone: (213) 241-2460 ♦ Fax: (213) 241-8462

February 21, 2017

Mr. Henri Romain Same Etame

Dear Researcher:

The LAUSD Committee for External Research Review has given approval for you to initiate the research study entitled “Best leadership practices of turnaround k–12 administrators.” This action by the committee is an approval to conduct your study in LAUSD schools according to the terms presented in the Statement of Agreement for External Researchers and signed on February 3, 2017.

- Create any obligation for district personnel, students, or parents to participate. All participation must be completely voluntary and the confidentiality of all sources must be maintained.
- Permit the principal or staff to engage in research activities (other than observations) that occur during instructional or work time.

The approval is valid for one year from the date of this letter. At the conclusion of your study or within a year of the date of this letter, whichever comes first, please send an executive summary of your findings and copies of any reports to my attention. I wish you the best of luck in your research endeavors.

Sincerely,

Katherine Hayes, Ph.D.
Coordinator
Chair, Committee for External Research Review