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Selected Practices and Characteristics of Highly Effective Elementary Schools

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Effective Elementary Schools

by

George Allen Lauritson

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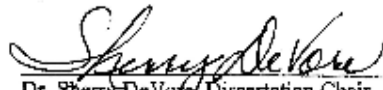
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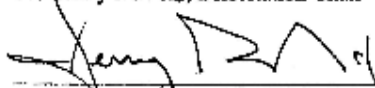
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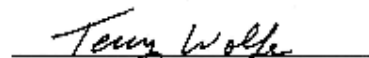
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Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon

my own scholarly work at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for

any other college or university course or degree.

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Abstract

The federal government, through NCLB legislation, has provided target proficiency goals schools will be accountable to meet. Missouri public elementary schools use these target goals to determine their success. The focus of this study was to examine the highly effective public elementary schools in Missouri that met or exceeded the 2011 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) targets and determine the practices that contributed to their success. The overarching questions were: Can the actions, performance, and knowledge of schools achieving AYP assist other schools to improve their performance on AYP targets? Do Lezotte's correlates of effective schools provide a framework to view successful school performance? With these questions in mind, the purpose of the study was to explore the researched-based programs, characteristics, or reforms used by highly effective elementary schools in Missouri that mirror Lezotte's (2011) correlates of effective schools and comply with NCLB. It was determined that the principals' and teachers' high expectations for themselves and their students were a significant contributor to effective school results. The areas of school focus outlined in the correlates closely matches the goals and procedures effective schools are meeting to be successful. Principals and teachers reported communication arts programs were based on textbooks, with guided reading used to support reading instruction. The math program most used was also the adopted textbook series.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Background

From the early to middle years of the twentieth century, education requirements and policies were determined by the local school boards (Louis, 1998). In the late 1950s, the Soviet government's launch of Sputnik, the first space satellite, caused significant concern and "sparked a much needed revolution in scientific education in the U.S." (Abramson, 2007, p. 1). The 1960s civil rights movement brought federal education funds to schools with large populations of poor children (Louis, 1998).

Educational reform has been a controversial topic for decades (Toppo, 2008). In the early 1980s, the National Commission on Excellence in Education issued *A Nation at Risk*, which is often cited as the beginning of present educational reform efforts (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, n.d.). The report attacked the nation's education system and called for sweeping reform to create effective education for all. The controversial report spurred discussions on school reform and led to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (Toppo, 2008).

Currently, controversy exists on how schools should be reformed, although the desire to improve the quality of education is universal (Schmoker, 2004). Districts, states, and the federal government continue to address why schools need reform to reach accountability standards (National Governors' Association [NGA], 2008). Political groups and leaders at the state and federal levels have pushed school reform to the forefront of national attention (U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2009).

The Hunt Institute's *Blueprint for Education Leadership* (2009) asserted that a bold reform in education is needed, not a continuing of the standards-based approach that has not achieved expectations. The Hunt Institute (2009) favored a comprehensive system

of integrated programs focused on administrator, teacher, and student development; assessments; curriculum; textbooks; and data analysis. States must work together to reach common agreement on the issues confronting them.

Federal Level

President Obama sought a new goal for education with the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Act and changes to NCLB (USDOE, 2010). Obama's vision was to ensure that by 2020 the United States would lead the world in the number of students completing college (USDOE, 2010). In the report published by the USDOE (2010), Obama re-emphasized the key goals of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009:

- Improving teacher and principal effectiveness to ensure that every classroom has a great teacher and every school a great leader;

- Providing information to families to help evaluate and improve their children's schools, and to educators to help them improve their students' learning;

- Implementing college and career-ready standards and developing improved assessments aligned with those standards; and

- Improving student learning and achievement in America's lowest-performing schools by providing intensive and effective interventions. (p. 3)

The USDOE has instituted competitive grants under the *Race to the Top Fund* (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [MODESE], 2010) to ensure states reform their education systems and utilize federal funds effectively. The purpose of the grant is to allocate funds to states that develop implementation plans to

initiate innovative educational reforms (The White House, 2009). The first round of funding was awarded to only two states, Tennessee and Delaware, with Missouri in "33rd place among the 41 jurisdictions that applied for first-round funds" (Singer, 2010, p. 2).

The National Governors' Association (2008) found state leaders heavily engaged in working toward achieving higher standards for students, raising instructional standards, and turning around low-performing schools. In 1995, the U.S. was tied for first place in the number of students graduating from college; however, by 2006 the U.S. had dropped to 14th place (National Governors' Association [NGA], 2008). To address the falling graduation rates, the National Governors' Association (2008) proposed five actions to reform state education:

Action 1:

Upgrade state standards by adopting a common core of internationally benchmarked standards in math and language arts for grades K-12 to ensure that students are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to be globally competitive.

Action 2:

Leverage states' collective influence to ensure that textbooks, digital media, curricula, and assessments are aligned to internationally benchmarked standards and draw on lessons from high-performing nations and states.

Action 3:

Revise state policies for recruiting, preparing, developing, and supporting teachers and school leaders to reflect the human capital

practices of top-performing nations and states around the world.

Action 4:

Hold schools and systems accountable through monitoring,

interventions, and support to ensure consistently high performance,

drawing upon international best practices.

Action 5:

Measure state-level education performance globally by examining

student achievement and attainment in an international context to ensure

that, over time, students are receiving the education they need to

compete in the 21st century economy. (p. 6)

State Level

With increased national focus on student achievement and schools failing to meet

the targets established by NCLB (2001), the USDOE estimated up to 82% of schools

could fail to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in 2011 (USDOE, 2011). With

Missouri educational results comparable to other states MODESE, submitted the

Missouri Race to the Top application with the intent "to propel Missouri's public

education system into the top 10, nationally and internationally" (MODESE, 2010, p. 1).

Missouri's Race to the Top school improvement plan focused primarily on curriculum

and assessment, data systems, teachers and leaders, turnaround schools, and charter

schools (MODESE, 2010). The MODESE (2010) will continue to use the Missouri

School Improvement Program (MSIP) "to diagnose problems and to recognize and

disseminate effective practices in all schools and districts through monitoring and

review" (p. 4). The MSIP standards define the measurements schools should achieve to be effective (MODESE, 2006).

The NCLB (2001) legislation established accountability requirements so that all students are proficient in mathematics and communication arts by 2014. Students in Missouri are assessed annually, according to (MODESE, 2011), in the areas of mathematics and communications arts using the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP). Student scores are disaggregated into four levels: below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced (MODESE, 2011).

Due to NCLB legislation, all students are expected to meet yearly academic benchmarks, or AYP, by scoring in the proficient or advanced level. Missouri schools seek to meet and improve their AYP scores by integrating programs and implementing school improvement strategies (Prep-KC, 2010). In 2011, 424 out of 523 school districts in rural and urban areas of the state failed to achieve AYP (MODESE, 2011a). What are the reasons for failure to achieve benchmark goals required by NCLB?

In Missouri, the status of student achievement and school district performance are determined by the standards that accompany the Annual Performance Report (APR) (MODESE, 2010a). The APR standards are comprised of 14 areas schools must strive to meet: academic, attendance, graduation, and college preparatory goals (MODESE, 2010a). School personnel evaluate their current academic status and develop a comprehensive school improvement plan, which should focus on positive educational characteristics and researched-based programs to meet proficiency targets and raise student achievement (MODESE, 2002).

Conceptual Framework

Meeting assessment proficiency targets each year requires a focused effort on good instruction, a viable curriculum, and effective teachers and leaders (USDOE, 2011a). While state education officials decide where their emphasis on school reform should be placed, the goal-setting process may become clearer when examined through the effective schools framework (Lezotte, 2011). When viewing the current educational reality and focusing on school reform for the future, Lezotte's (1991) correlates of effective schools are important to create, build, and sustain an overall learning environment.

In Missouri, over 81% of school districts failed to meet AYP in academic areas, attendance rates, and graduation rates for 2011 (MODESE, 2011a). Why are other school districts successful? With the lofty goals established by NCLB in mind, educators are valiantly attempting to achieve accountability measures while they operate within different social, economic, and geographical contexts. Chenoweth (2007) stated:

There is never one single factor that is at the core of a successful school: no one structure, or one curriculum, or one set of policies and procedures that, if every school in the country were to adopt it, would transform them into high-achieving schools. (p. 1)

The success of a school relies on variables and characteristics that become a part of the school culture (Wilson, 2007). In the early 1980s, Lezotte (2011) developed the effective schools framework which quantified certain characteristics schools must possess in order to become successful educational institutions. Lezotte termed these characteristics *correlates,* which when used together create achievement for

all students regardless of location or social class (Association for Effective Schools,

1996). Lezotte (2011) proposed a path to success for schools by providing a framework

for school change efforts framed from seven characteristics:

1. High expectations for success

2. Strong instructional leadership

3. Clear and focused mission

4. Opportunity to learn/ student time on task

5. Frequent monitoring of student progress

6. Safe and orderly environment

7. Positive home-school relations. (pp. 1-2)

Researching the effectiveness of school improvement through Lezotte's (2011)

framework organizes a very complex topic with multiple variables into a clearer

systematic approach for understanding the key components impacting effective schools.

Statement of the Problem

Schools are required to achieve Missouri proficiency targets each year, yet

numerous Missouri schools and districts are experiencing difficulty in meeting these

current targets (MODESE, 2011a). Each successive year, proficiency target scores

increase and schools are failing to meet proficiency targets or sub-group categories of the

targets (MODESE, 2011b). Missouri's AYP score results have been essentially equal to

the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) score averages (The National

Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 2011).

The NAEP results for 2011 showed Missouri math average score of 240,

essentially equal to the national average score of 240 in 4th grade, and in 8th grade scoring

282 compared to 283 nationally (NCES, 2011). In reading, the NAEP results for 2011 showed Missouri 4th graders at 220, essentially equal to the nation at 220, and 8th grade scoring 267 compared to 264 nationally. Missouri scores are equal to or slightly above the national averages on the NAEP in reading and math in 4th and 8th grade (NCES, 2011).

Lezotte's (2011) correlates of effective schools, NCLB, and the Race to the Top program are focused on making schools proficient in student achievement. Can the actions, performance, and knowledge of schools achieving AYP assist other schools to improve their performance on AYP targets?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the researched-based programs, characteristics, or reforms used by highly effective public elementary schools in Missouri that mirror Lezotte's (2011) correlates of effective schools and comply with NCLB. Highly effective schools are meeting or exceeding AYP goals under NCLB.

Research questions. In this study, questions to be answered included:

1. What are the selected practices of highly effective Missouri public elementary schools?

2. In what ways are highly effective Missouri public elementary schools meeting the correlates of effective schools?

3. What communication arts and mathematic programs are used by highly effective Missouri public elementary schools?

Significance of the Study

Achieving AYP is more difficult each year because the proficiency targets increase annually (NCLB, 2001). Identifying the research-based programs, school characteristics, and reforms schools utilize to meet or exceed AYP is extremely important for ensuring what schools must do to be successful in the future. The alternative to success is being designated *In School Improvement* and complying with the sanctions imposed on Title I schools should they fail to meet AYP (MODESE, 2011a).

Title I schools failing to make AYP in reading/language arts or math for two years in a row must begin taking escalating steps for school improvement (MODESE, 2011b). The consequences of NCLB sanctions over a six-year period include: write and implement a school improvement plan, notify parents in writing, provide technical assistance, offer school choice, provide Supplemental Education Services (SES), spend more than 10% of Title I funds for professional development, replacement of school personnel, and school restructuring (MODESE, 2011b). The study findings may assist school boards, administrators, and teachers in developing proactive school improvement plans, thereby leading to increased student achievement and avoiding AYP failure and the NCLB sanctions.

Limitations

This study was limited to public elementary schools in one Midwest state. Only building principals and lead teachers completed the survey. Missouri schools may lack the resources or staff to adopt programs or reforms that have been successful in other schools. Also, one must understand that financial resources will vary from district to

district in Missouri (MODESE, 2010b). Common characteristics or the use of a particular research-based program may not be necessary to meet or exceed AYP in any particular elementary school.

Summary

In 2011, 424 out of 523 school districts in rural and urban areas of Missouri failed to achieve AYP (MODESE, 2011a). The NAEP assessment places Missouri essentially average with other public education students in the nation in mathematics and reading at the 4th and 8th grades (NCES, 2011). The improvement of AYP and raising scores for elementary schools should be possible when viewed against effective schools.

 Lezotte (1991) developed the correlates of effective schools consisting of seven areas schools should develop to have increased student achievement. Viewing the performance of schools through Lezotte 's (2011) framework offers a systematic approach to evaluating school environments for success. Then schools can improve the their performance on AYP targets.

Elementary schools are required to meet accountability standards defined in NCLB (2001), and how schools achieve this goal should be shared with other elementary school personnel. The purpose of the study was to determine the researched-based programs, characteristics, or reforms used by highly effective public elementary schools in Missouri that mirror Lezotte's (2011) correlates of effective schools, and comply with NCLB.

In Chapter Two, a review of relevant literature was conducted. The relevant literature covers in detail background to education reform, Lezotte's (2011) correlates of effective schools, and professional learning communities. The methodology for the study

is described in Chapter Three. An analysis of the data was presented in Chapter Four. In

Chapter Five, the findings and recommendations were revealed.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Education Reform

President Obama's plan to dramatically reform the education processes "from the cradle up through a career" (p. 1) calls on states to develop standards to meet 21st century skills (CNN Politics, 2009). Obama stated:

> We have let our grades slip, our schools crumble, our teacher quality fall short and other nations outpace us. The time for finger pointing is over. The time for holding ourselves accountable is here. (CNN Politics, 2009, p. 1)

The Race to the Top program (RTTT), the U.S. Government's response to improve education, according to Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education, is structured around four areas of reform:

1. Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy;

2. Building data systems that measure student growth and success, and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction;

3. Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most; and

4. Turning around our lowest-achieving schools (USDOE, 2009a, p.1)

The RTTT provides a historic opportunity for states to raise education standards and student achievement on a nationwide scale (Achieve, 2010). The USDOE, since its inception in 1980, had a sole focus on ensuring compliance to federal education law (USDOE, 2009b). The 4.35 billion dollar RTTT is USDOE (2009b) discretionary

money for education reform, more money for school improvement than the total of funds for reform since the inception of the USDOE. Many states in competition for RTTT school improvement funds have planned reforms that were unthinkable just a year ago, improvements that will take years to complete, but the RTTT has begun (USDOE, 2009b).

The Common Core Standards effort, a part of the RTTT program, stresses raising academic standards in all states so students can achieve robust rigorous standards, ensuring they can successfully compete globally (Postal, 2010). The Common Core State Standards Initiative has been adopted by 48 states. These states are "participating in the landmark Common Core State Standards Initiative led by the National Governors' Association and the Council of Chief State School officers, in partnership with Achieve, ACT and the College Board" (Achieve, 2009, p. 1).

There have currently been three rounds of competition for RTTT school improvement funds. The second round of RTTT selected nine states and Washington, D.C., in addition to Maryland and Tennessee already chosen previously in round one (Turner, 2010). The second round winners applications focused on adopting rigorous common curriculum in reading and math, placing effective teachers in low achieving schools, and developing programs and evaluations for teachers and principals (USDOE, 2010a). In the third round of competition, seven states were selected to share $200 million, designated from the Early Learning Challenge Fund, for specific reforms to improve student achievement (USDOE, 2011b).

The state of Missouri, according to MODESE (2010c), was not selected in the first or second round of RTTT. Missouri's second round application for RTTT was more

specific than the first round application, focusing on four areas; developing a model curriculum, educator evaluations which include student performance, assistance to low-performing districts, and developing student data tracking systems (MODESE, 2010c). Missouri's second round application disqualified the state from competing for round three RTTT funds (USDOE, 2011b).

Missouri Commissioner of Education, Nicastro, stated, "While we are disappointed, we are not surprised" (MODESE, 2010c, p. 1). According to Nicastro (MODESE, 2010c), "The benefit of the Race to the Top competition for Missouri has been the opportunity for all stakeholders to come together to discuss some important areas of reform" (p. 1). Secretary of Education, Duncan, agreed, "Every state that applied will benefit from the process of collaboratively creating a comprehensive education reform agenda" (as cited in Baumer, 2010, p. 1).

The NCLB law passed in 2001 is still impacting education goals set on student testing and accountability, while the RTTT focuses on teachers ensuring their students are achieving a robust education (Koltnow, 2010). The NCLB created sanctions on schools not achieving AYP and focused educators on raising student test scores to achieve annual accountability targets (Crouch, 2010). The RTTT focuses on students being college ready, by creating school reform that is more systematic, effective, and efficient (Achieve, 2010).

Both the RTTT and NCLB are about raising school standards. These latest attempts in school reform efforts started decades ago to focus on school results (McKenzie, 2010). The RTTT and NCLB provide a clear path for schools in need of

reform (Perez, 2010). The path of school reform has been paved over many years by dedicated school researchers (DuFour & Eaker, 1998).

One of the early school researchers, Lezotte (1991), expanded on a framework of seven criteria that effective schools could use to guide school improvement efforts. This literature review utilized Lezotte's (2011) latest version of the effective schools framework, or the *Correlates of Effective Schools*, researched and updated from the early 1980s to current use.

Background to Effective Schools Research

Edmonds (1982) was the first school educational researcher to identify common interactive characteristics effective schools maintain to be successful. Edmonds (1982) coined the term, *Effective Schools Model,* based on characteristics all effective schools displayed:

- the leadership of the principal notable for substantial attention to the quality of instruction
- a pervasive and broadly understood instructional focus
- an orderly, safe climate conductive to teaching and learning
- teacher behaviors that convey the expectation that all students are expected to obtain at least minimum mastery
- the use of measures of pupil achievement as the basis for program evaluation. (p. 1)

Edmonds, Brookover, and Lezotte were some of the original researchers on effective schools (Lezotte, 1991). Lezotte (1991) continued the development of the correlates of effective schools through two generations; the first generation was the

minimum necessary for a school to be effective. The second generation expands the correlates to encompass the learning-for-all mission (Lezotte, 2011).

The effective schools movement qualified certain characteristics schools possessed, in order to become successful educational institutions (Kirk & Jones, 2004). Lezotte (2011) determined the correlates create a pathway for schools desiring school improvement by providing a framework for school change efforts framed from seven characteristics:

1. High expectations for success

2. Strong instructional leadership

3. Clear and focused mission

4. Opportunity to learn/time on task

5. Frequent monitoring of student progress

6. Safe and orderly environment

7. Positive home-school relations. (pp. 1-2)

The seven characteristics that effective schools' proponents have been developing since the beginning of the effective schools movement were incorporated as key parts of the 2001 NCLB legislation (Lezotte, 2011). The government's NCLB and RTTT programs of school reform coincide with the effective schools movement and provide a framework to study these characteristics across current programs and research (Lezotte, 2011). Lezotte's (2011) seven characteristics are dynamic in capturing reform categories, which over the last few decades have become common effective school elements.

High Expectations for Success

In the early 1990s, high expectations for student success became the educator focus, according to DuFour and Eaker, developers of the Professional Learning Community (PLC) model (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Karhanek, 2004). The PLC model by DuFour and Eaker (1998) goes beyond a focus on instruction to a focus on student achievement and learning.

Lezotte's (2011) study of effective schools also focused on the achievement of the student. Lezotte (2011) determined to attain high expectations for school success, two critical changes must be embraced:

The first element focuses on the staff's beliefs about the students'
ability to succeed: the staff believes that all students can and will obtain
mastery of the intended curriculum. The second element addresses the
staff's sense of efficacy. Sense of efficacy is the belief that one can
successfully achieve what one is being asked to do. (p. 40)

The shift from a focus on teacher instruction although still important occurred when teachers, teaching to high standards, found some students still were not achieving to standard (DuFour et al., 2004). This shift to the student learning point of view allows the teacher to prepare for additional instructional strategies to ensure all students learn (DuFour et al., 2004). School improvement programs have shifted away from a reliance on only an instructional focus to a student centered approach (Lezotte, 2011).

The shift to a student-centered education was included in NCLB (2001) when accountability for every child's education was written into law. Under NCLB significant improvement of student academic standards have occurred, yet compared to other

countries American student achievement has fallen further behind in math and science (Pastorek, Smith, Bennett, Gist, & Robinson, 2011). Raising students' achievement and high expectations goes hand in hand with providing a rigorous, challenging, and specific curriculum (Zavadsky, 2010). High expectations for students, includes that teachers and schools, must be clear in defining what skills they will teach at any given grade (Zavadsky, 2010).

The DuFour and Eaker (1998) PLC approach changed the way schools look at achieving these high expectations by reviewing the results of academic programs on student learning results. The DuFour and Eaker (1998) PLC model includes four guiding achievement questions for focusing on student outcomes:

1. What is it we expect them to learn?

2. How will we know when they have learned it?

3. How will we respond when they do not learn?

4. How will we respond when they already know it? (p. 8)

Question one, of guiding student achievement with the PLC model (what is it we expect them to learn?), creates the foundational thinking for teachers and schools. Student learning must be aligned with high standards for college and career-readiness, similar to those put forth in RTTT (Achieve, 2009).

States, in the past, according to Achieve (2009), had found their expectations lacking. Students meeting their state standards went to college and were placed in remedial programs or entered the work force only to find they did not possess skills necessary to succeed in their jobs (Achieve, 2009). Common core state standards addressed the rigorous curriculum needed for 21st century learning (NGA, 2008).

High expectations for students include ensuring specific content standards are defined and become the learning targets (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008). Establishing the learning standards clarifies the academic purpose for schools, according to Ainsworth (2003), and once the specific standard or power standards are established, the student achievement level, or goal to be attained, is determined. Establishing power standards sets the goals for teachers to specifically address student learning (Ainsworth, 2003).

The second question guiding high expectations for student achievement in the PLC model, (how will we know when they have learned it?), evaluates the student's success in learning the specific or power standards. Common formative assessments should be developed by subject area to the specific or power standards, administered, and scored by teams of teachers as the preferred method of assessing students (Ainsworth, Alemida, Davies, DuFour, Gregg, Guskey et al., 2007). Formative assessments are developed for the purpose of determining where the student's gaps are and informing the teacher on future instruction (Chappuis, Stiggins, Arter, & Chappuis, 2005).

The third question in guiding student achievement in the PLC model is: how will we respond when they do not learn? Responding to students who do not learn in a traditional school does not happen systematically (Buffum, Mattos, & Weber, 2009). The Response to intervention (RTI) and Pyramid of interventions, a part of RTI, according to Buffum, et al. (2009), is a systematic tiered approach to providing assistance to struggling students. The RTI goal of helping all students become successful is a regular education initiative providing three levels of increasing support for student learning (Buffum et al., 2009). Each school develops, based on its needs, its RTI as a systematic program to address school and student learning needs (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Karhanek, 2010).

The fourth question in guiding high expectations for student achievement in the PLC model is: how will we respond when they already know it? When building intervention systems for struggling students, the teachers and school leaders must also create a system of enrichment to extend the learning of students who are already proficient (DuFour et al., 2008). A complaint often heard from proficient students is, when looking back at their schooling experience, that they needed to be challenged more (DuFour et al., 2008). Having high expectations and a challenging school environment includes ensuring that all students reach their individual level of success (Lezotte, 2011). Establishing a high level of expectations as part of a school culture is very challenging, and beneficial to all students (Lezotte, 2011).

The DuFour and Eaker's (2008) PLC process is based on the focus of student learning as the bottom line of a school's success. The PLC process changes the instructional model to how well the students learn the material (DuFour & Eaker, 2008). The focus of student success requires teachers to be consistently learning better instructional strategies and striving for higher levels of professional learning to ensure student achievement (DuFour et al., 2004).

Schools must become learning organizations for teachers and students (DuFour et al., 2004). The school structure, according to Chenoweth (2007), must also focus on teacher learning so no child is placed with an ineffective teacher. All teachers should study test data and change instructional strategies so students can learn (Chenoweth, 2007a).

The continuous training of teachers is always important in achieving higher levels of performance for students (Jones, 2008). The professional development program

for teachers at the district and building level serves to strengthen student expectations (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). Raising teacher instructional knowledge is just as important for a school as the achievement of their students (DuFour et al., 2004).

Strong Instructional Leadership

The principal, in the effective school, is viewed as the primary instructional leader responsible for focusing teachers, students, and parents, on the school's mission of student learning and achievement (Lezotte, 2011). The National Association of Elementary Principals defined an effective school principal as one who leads schools by providing resources, visibility, and constant emphasis on performance improvement of teachers and students (Connelly, 2008). The role of instructional leader, according to Smith and Williams (as cited in DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2005), has four components: resource provider, instructional resource, communicator, and visible presence. Each of these components contributes to the teaching and learning process (Schmoker, 2005).

The principal's role as resource provider ensures materials, facilities, and funding for teaching are readily available (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker,, 2005). Successful schools need sufficient resources to allow for school improvement goals to be achieved (Dunsworth & Billings, 2009). Research on school improvement, along with research on successful instructional leadership, shows leaders in effective schools are more proficient in locating and obtaining resources for their school than their peers, according to Murphy et al. (as cited in Dunsworth & Billings, 2009).

As the instructional resource leader, the principal creates and maintains the focus on teaching and learning in the school (Lezotte, 2011). When principals serve as instructional leaders of their schools, higher student achievement usually occurs,

compared to principals who are not involved in instruction leadership (Dunsworth & Billings, 2009). The important role of the principal in instructional leadership is being a leader among leaders by developing the leadership skills of teachers to sustain school improvement over time and leadership changes (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008).

The principal is the main communicator to staff, students, and parents, and articulates the mission and goals of the school (Connelly, 2008). Principals should define themselves by communicating the culture of the school. That culture should be to build the collective capacity of the school to develop the skills and knowledge for student success (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008). The capacity building of the school includes the principal creating an environment of staff and parent relationships and outreach to the community (Lezotte, 2011).

The visibility of the principal in schools keeps the focus on teaching and learning (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2005). Effective principals also know school success sometimes requires many external tasks, such as marketing and public relations and working with community organizations (Connelly, 2008). The principal must be visible and approachable to staff, parents, students, and the community at large (Connelly, 2008).

When a school is operated effectively, by a principal, a student's chance to achieve academic success is increased (Marzano, McNulty, & Waters, 2005). Principals and teachers under NCLB have the duty to educate all students, something they have never before been required to do (DuFour et al., 2004). Fink and Resnick (n.d.) determined it is clear when one examines the position of the principal; one quickly realizes the limited amount of time principals have to spend on instruction. At present,

school principals look for a balance in their role as manager and instructional leader (Jenkins, 2009).

According to Daggett (2005), the school leader's primary change objective is to seek higher rigor and relevance when evaluating or observing teacher instruction. Research cited by Marzano (2010) supports this instructional focus, which determined effective teachers have the greatest impact on student learning and student success. The building leadership is then challenged to determine and institute the instructional changes, promoting high achievement for all students (Center for Comprehensive School Reform, [CCSR], 2009).

Identifying instructional improvements is accomplished when principals are conducting classroom visits or walkthroughs while questioning students and viewing learning (Marzano et al., 2005). This visibility by the principal supports and reinforces the purpose of the school to teachers and students (Marzano et al., 2005). Classroom visits are important, although Rossi (2007) found that visibility alone is not sufficient to change instruction, but what the principal does with the information gathered will make the difference.

Clear and Focused Mission

Every school must know why it exists! The school's staff must be collectively responsible to the school mission and vision, and follow through to achieve its goals (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). Similarly, Lezotte (2011) believed discussion and understanding by all teachers and staff of a clear and focused mission should permeate the very core of the school's existence. Everything the school does should flow smoothly from the mission of the school (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008).

The mission statement of a school should define its very purpose for its existence (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008). The PLC model by DuFour and Eaker (1998) begins with establishing the mission of the school as the first collaborative effort by the school staff. The schools' staff through collaboration must take great care to develop a clear mission statement that will establish a strong personal commitment (Lezotte, 2011).

A school's mission statement, according to DuFour and Eaker (1998), must adhere to placing student achievement first. The clear and focused school mission statement should establish school goals, beliefs, and values, thereby, defining the school culture (Lezotte 2011). A school mission advocating all students will learn creates a new level of focus for schools to obtain achievement for all students (DuFour et al., 2004).

The challenge faced by the school leader is to keep the mission always as the main driving force of the school (Lezotte, 2011). The success of the school improvement effort by the principal is to maintain the staffs' focus on the mission and goals (Lezotte, 2011). Kanold (2011) offered:

 ...the definition of the discipline of vision and values: The leadership

work of developing and delivering a compelling picture of the school's

future that produces energy, passion, and action in yourself and others. (p. 12)

The school's vision should provide a clear direction for staff and students of where they need to go (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008). The goal of a vision statement is to provide understanding, focus on the main idea, and determine the right things to do and be about (Kanold, 2011). A collaboratively established vision can be the most

powerful agent for change, when led properly (Kanold, 2011). Once the vision is established, it should pervade every action by the staff and students (Connelly, 2008).

The creation of a shared vision cannot rely on one person's view, because the stakeholders will never totally adopt it; trust and ownership by all are needed to support the vision over the long term (Kanold, 2011). Clarifying beliefs and staff values by allowing teachers to freely discuss them will establish the shared values they hold (Lezotte, 2011). According to Clinton, schools, when they allow staff to share openly, establish collective commitments, and provide opportunities to share, foster a sense of belonging that contributes to school success (as cited in DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008).

The effective schools research by Lezotte (2004) changed the earlier educator beliefs of only some students can learn. Lezotte (as cited in DuFour et al., 2004) concluded, "all students can learn.... [and] schools control the factors necessary to assure student mastery of the core curriculum" (p. 20). Schools that develop the culture of *all students can learn*, also create strong mission statements proposing high levels of student achievement (DuFour et al., 2004). An effective school culture focused on a school mission of learning for all should drive school improvement efforts (Lezotte, 2011).

The clear and focused mission for effective schools is a strong statement of what the school's purpose entails; it is not just a statement on the wall (Lezotte, 2011). A clear mission statement creates a constraint on actions by staff actions, which could be inconsistent with the school purpose (Kanold, 2011). Developing a collaborative culture, focused on the school's mission, allows staff to be responsible for the *learning for all* mission (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008).

Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task

Teachers have to determine, in the time available, what is the most important material to cover while also ensuring each student's active engagement for understanding and mastery (Lezotte, 2011). The Alabama Federation Council for Exceptional Children Tip Sheet (2010) for teachers stated:

Research consistently shows that the more time students spend involved in learning activities, the more they learn. That is, there is a strong positive relationship between the amount of time students are actively engaged in learning activities and their achievement. Further, increased time spent in academic learning does not result in negative attitudes toward school or learning. (p. 1)

According to Lezotte (2011), the correlate of Opportunity to Learn and Time on Task is the most difficult correlate for teachers to support. Supporting the correlate, according to Lezotte (2011), requires teachers to go against two traditional school cultures: first, grouping students by age instead of by academic need and second, the factory model of schooling where students are given the same opportunity to learn the knowledge and skills for their age group or grade level (Lezotte, 2011).

Children starting Kindergarten, especially from impoverished families or families who fail to provide important skills to their children, may enter with learning gaps and be unable to meet the objectives at the same pace of their peers (Economic Policy Institute, 2002). Teachers must address this learning gap by changing their traditional teaching approach and provide learning opportunities and additional instruction time through high quality interventions (Klein & Knitzer, 2007).

Effective schools are overcoming old traditions by finding newly emerging strategies to guide the support for students with learning gaps (Virginia Education Association, 2006). There is about a 65% gap in student achievement, according to Alexander, Enthwisle, and Olson, between advantaged students and students from low income families, due to disparities in an opportunity to learn (as cited in Lezotte, 2011). Educators often fail to provide the resources and commitment to close the gap, and instead, provide a slower modified program in hopes students will catch up (Lezotte, 2011).

Response to Intervention (RTI) is one of the new strategies to support students with learning gaps (Buffum, Mattos, & Weber, 2009). According to Buffum et al. (2009), under RTI, a student will not be referred to special education services until the student has failed to respond to timely, systematic, focused, and researched-based interventions taught by regular education teachers. Teachers and schools must create a systematic and manageable curriculum that provides opportunities to provide quality classroom instruction and individual student support in a timely manner (Lezotte, 2011).

Teachers must have a well-developed awareness of each student's needs and a focus on each student's achievement to drive their instruction for all students to learn (Voltz, Sims, & Nelson, 2010). RTI uses a three-tier pyramid to provide a visual representation of the intervention process (Bender, 2009). Tier 1 is the instruction that all general education students receive in the classroom. The regular classroom teacher is expected to deliver whole class instruction to the students, along with some small group instruction and differentiated instruction for students who may need additional support (Bender, 2009).

Tier 2, according to Buffum et al. (2009), is specific interventions for students who are struggling with learning. A student in Tier 1 can continue to struggle and not keep pace with their classroom peers. The classroom teacher will then increase the amount and time of interventions, to Tier 2, providing more individualized instruction to the student or send the student to other teachers providing teaching in the needed specific skills (Howell, Patton, & Deiotte, 2008).

The last tier of the pyramid, Tier 3, is very intensive support by teachers before a referral to special education (Bender, 2009). At Tier 3, instruction is highly specific; focusing on exactly the skills a student needs, in a high intensity, longer duration, mostly one-on-one session (Howell et al., 2008). The goal of the three tiers is that no child will be denied the support he or she needs to learn (Howell et al., 2008).

The correlate, opportunity to learn (Lezotte, 2011), recognizes that students are unique and come from different backgrounds that impact their individual educational readiness. Providing for these differences acknowledges all students can learn. The time on task requirement causes educators to plan for instruction in organized specific ways on a daily basis. Leaders in effective schools realize no time can be lost and all students must learn (Lezotte, 2011).

Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress

All students should be allowed to perform to their best ability. The effective schools correlate to ensure students are learning is to frequently monitor how each student is progressing and how the class, as a whole, is learning (Lezotte, 2011). The assessment process should be used to determine where students are in the learning process, before, during, and after the instruction (Voltz et al., 2010). Teachers wanting

their students to succeed seek all assessment data to fine tune instruction and meet each

student's needs (Chenoweth, 2007).

Over the last several decades, summative assessments have been used for student

grades and accountability of learning at the local, state, and national level (Stiggins,

2005). Formative assessments, according to Stiggins (2005), in the last decade have

provided teachers more frequent monitoring of student learning and helped to guide

instructional decisions. Used correctly, according to Lezotte (2011), classroom formative

assessments for learning focus instruction and monitor student learning by providing

feedback on how the learning is progressing.

Common formative assessments establish goals for learning that are measureable

and provide a timeline for the student and teachers of where they are in the learning

process (DuFour et al., 2010). Quality common formative assessments, according to

Chappuis, Stiggins, Arter, & Chappius, (2005), have five key standards:

- Arise from and be designed to serve the *specific information needs of intended users*

- Arise from clearly articulated and appropriate *achievement targets*

- *Accurately reflect* student achievement

- Yield results that are *effectively communicated* to their intended users

- *Involve students* in classroom assessment, record keeping, and communication. (p. 64)

Common formative assessments should provide meaningful and consistent

feedback to students and teachers and be designed for the purpose of improving student

performance and skill, according to Ainsworth and Viegut (as cited in Reeves, 2010).

Feedback from these formative classroom assessments also informs students of their individual progress toward learning goals and should motivate them to higher learning (Ainsworth et al., 2007). When a student is engaged with an adult to discuss and reflect on his/her performance, that student's performance is increased and higher levels of learning result (Daggett, 2005).

Immediate descriptive feedback for a student can make a significant difference in his/her learning (Lezotte, 2009). Regular monitoring of students' progress is important for two reasons; ensuring students continue to grow and what comes next in their learning, and also to discover what to do when students are not learning (Chappuis et al., 2005). Discovering what comes next in a child's education and finding what is hindering student learning are teacher instructional decision that happen daily in the classroom (Chappuis et al., 2005).

Classroom assessments have evolved into common formative assessments for learning, developed by teams of teachers, to achieve the goals of determining the levels of student learning and to provide accurate assessment data to inform instruction (Ainsworth et al., 2007). By reviewing assessment data immediately after a common assessment, teachers can analyze individual student results, and when the results indicate a difficult concept, teachers can collaborate to expand and diagnose instructional strategies to improve the next time (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008).

The problem with data becomes, too much data. Most teachers have more data to make decisions from than they need, and data by itself does not improve instruction or student performance (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008). The collection of data takes time and resources, so the selection of which data to collect is an important one (White, 2005).

Data collected from student assessments should be the most useful because they can

determine instructional changes needed to be made (Allison, Besser, Campsen, Cordova,

Doubek, et al., 2010). So, if one expects teachers to develop better decision-making, one

must decide what data to collect and how to collect it (Reeves, 2010).

Teams of teachers must discuss what achievement areas they are wanting and how

the accountability of the data will be accomplished (Kanold, 2011). The team must also

establish the constant monitoring cycle of at least monthly to determine improvement

(Kanold, 2011). The right data, according to Kanold (2011) are the data needed to

measure improvement results. Teachers also keep track of accountability to performance

targets of the class to ensure meeting the school goals (Allison et al., 2010).

Elementary school teachers wanting a simple way to keep track of student,

classroom, and school data are developing student-tracking worksheets using Excel

computer worksheets (Teachnology, 2012). These Excel worksheets allow the teacher to

visually lay out student and whole classroom scores covering multiple assessments and

analyze their students' progress (Sample, n.d.). The increased use of Excel applications

by teachers, to organize student data, for easier analysis has become a professional

development need for teachers (Teachnology, 2012).

Safe and Orderly Environment

The school environment, since the April 1999 Columbine massacre, has changed

the school environment significantly (Sutter, 2009). Many schools, especially at the high

school level, have metal detectors, security cameras, security protection devices, and

school resource officers on staff (Sutter, 2009). This new level of security has become the

norm for schools reacting to the tragic events of public school shootings and other extreme behavior problems (Toppo, 2006).

Schools regularly practice intruder lock-down drills, tornado and earthquake drills, along with fire drills (Dorn, n.d.). Schools limit parent access to and visitation of classrooms and require scheduled preplanned visits to provide safety of students and ensure no interruptions of instruction (Academic Classroom Visits, n.d.). All school building exterior doors are kept locked, except for main entrance doors observed by school personnel (Coonrod, 2010). The need for a safe schools environment has been established by past events and the needs of society today (Sutter, 2009).

Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory supports the importance of a safe and orderly school environment. School safety is a basic human need, and students and staff must feel intuitively that their physical need for safety is met. Applying Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory, students could not perform to high standards if their need for safety was not met. Staff and administrators must ensure safety of all students through an orderly environment, where the needs of students' satisfaction are met, to create an environment where learning can thrive (National Association of School Psychologists [NASP], 2006).

Lezotte (1991) initially believed a safe and orderly school environment only meant to be free from the threat of physical harm. This basic level of safety is required to ensure schools are able to conduct their purpose as a learning institution (USDOE, 2007). Over time, greater safety measures have evolved to provide an even safer environment, contributing to increased higher school improvement goals (ConnectEd, 2011).

More recently, Lezotte (2011) concluded schools must meet a higher standard of orderly environments conducive to possessing levels of certain acceptable behaviors. Schools, according to Lezotte (2011), must achieve a level where respect for human diversity and appreciation for the American values and the allowance for an environment of acceptance of all cultures. Significant student learning to achieve this level of commitment by schools establishes high standards of understanding and interaction by students, allowing a total learning environment without the distractions due to an uncomfortable environment (Lezotte, 2011).

Maintaining a safe learning environment requires strong instructional goals, high expectations for student behavior, protecting instructional time, and a well-established discipline system (Dunsworth & Billings, 2009). The discipline system should have two components: create and maintain an environment that learning can flourish, and ensure the physical safety of staff and students (Dunsworth & Billings, 2009).

Effective schools emphasize learning, safety, and teaching socially appropriate behaviors (Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice [CECP], 2012). According to the CECP (2012), schools that are safe and responsive to children address multiple factors and focus their efforts on the child. The emphasis on children's social, emotion, and behavior development work best in schools with character programs.

To achieve this higher level of student satisfaction for a safe and orderly environment, programs, such as Fight-Free Schools (Dolan, 2007), Positive Behavior System (Missouri Schoolwide-PBS, 2011), and Character Plus (2011) have been developed. The Fight-Free Schools program was developed by Dolan (2007) while

serving as a elementary principal and seeking a way to change the school-wide behavior standards of her students.

The Positive Behavior System (PBS) has wide support with schools in Missouri. The PBS program creates behavior matrixes schools develop to cover areas of the school where common procedures of acceptable actions are followed school-wide (University of Missouri-Columbia, College of Education, 2011). Character Plus is a program to develop the social and emotional aspects of students (Character Plus, 2011).

These programs seek to achieve a positive school experience where student enthusiasm, motivation, and the feeling of safety contribute to higher levels of student achievement (USDOE, 2007). The higher order of organization and planning translates to a focus on academics and student achievement (USDOE, 2011c). Teacher support of these behavior programs serves to build a culture of expectations and norms that students quickly accept as routine (Dunsworth & Billings, 2009). The effort to raise student achievement cannot overlook the impact of a positive and safe environment on a student's motivation (Price, 2008). When a child lacks self-esteem, they can blame the school and not do well in school (Price, 2008).

Positive Home-School Relations

According to Lezotte (2011), decades of research have proven that positive parental involvement with their child's school raises student outcomes. Students also have more developed social skills, better behavior, and higher attendance rates when their parents are involved in their school (Lezotte, 2011). When President George H. W. Bush spoke to the nation's governors on national goals for American schools, he stated, "every school will promote partnerships that will increase parent involvement and participation

in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children" (as cited in DuFour et al., 2008, p. 377).

Parents and the community make important contributions to student achievement (Dunsworth & Billings, 2009). Children learn from the positive and respectful relationship between school staff and parents and learn that school matters (Dunsworth & Billings, 2009). Teachers must understand that every parent is unique and reach out to build a relationship for the good of the child (Voltz, Sims, & Nelson, 2010).

Noted researcher, Epstein (as cited in Lezotte, 2011), identified six types of parent involvement:

1. Parenting (providing such basics as food and shelter)

2. Communicating (primarily school-initiated)

3. Volunteering

4. Learning at home (for example, help with homework or exposure to such outside learning as museums)

5. Decision making (family participation in school governance and advocacy)

6. Collaborating with the community (p. 117).

The findings by Epstein were that learning at home had the most impact on student achievement (Lezotte, 2011). The value parents place on their children, knowingly or unknowingly, can be communicated just by interaction and communicating with them (Price, 2008).

It is discouraging that parental involvement decreases as children get older. Just when they are needing guidance, many parents recede and allow peers and group social structures to influence their children (Price, 2008). Generally, elementary schools receive

the most parental support, according to Sheldon and Van Voorhi (as cited in Lezotte, 2011). Engaging parents in support of school is important, especially knowing that the result is higher student achievement (The Center for Public Education, 2012).

The school's successful engagement of parents starts with the belief that it takes both the school and the family to work together for the success of the students (CCSR, 2005). Building parental trust is the central theme to build the relationship between home and school (Lezotte, 2011). The success of building trust is difficult to do when the tendency of educators is to believe their job is to make the important educational decisions, and the parents should support them (DuFour et al., 2008). Educational researcher, Marzano (2003), found three elements of home-school partnerships which are important components of a positive relationship: effective two-way communication between parents and teachers, parents should monitor and control student behavior, and parent's expectations are communicated to the child.

The school leader should take the lead in ensuring the teachers and parents find common ground for parent participation in their child's education (Lezotte, 2011). The school leader, according to Lezotte (2011), must establish trust between the parents and teachers, realizing that both have the same goal: a successful education and a bright future for every student. Schools leaders must train teachers and staff members to understand they are a part of a service industry, and they create an atmosphere of reaching out to their customers, their parents, and students (DuFour et al., 2008).

Summary

President Obama has been committed to education reform so that every child will receive a high-quality education (The White House, 2011). The USDOE developed

the RTTT program to challenge states to propose significant education reforms and compete for federal grants to finance the reforms (USDOE, 2009a). Currently, according to the USDOE, (2011b) 21 states have received grants under RTTT.

The NCLB law passed in 2002 is still impacting education outcomes with its focus on testing and accountability (Koltnow, 2010). The NCLB sets academic goals along with sanctions for schools that fail to achieve annual accountability targets (Crouch, 2010). Both RTTT and NCLB school reform efforts continue a decades long focus on improvement of school results (McKenzie, 2010).

Three researchers of school reform, in the early 1980s, were Edmonds, Bookover, and Lezotte, who identified common characteristics of effective schools (Lezotte, 1991). Research on effective schools by Lezotte (2011) continued with his correlates of effective schools, now updated to the second generation. The effective schools research maintained that successful schools possessed certain characteristics, which accounted for their high achievement (Kirk & Jones, 2004).

The seven correlates of effective schools create a pathway for schools desiring to improve (Lezotte, 2011). The correlate, *high expectations for success*, changes the mindset of teachers from a focus on instruction to a focus on student achievement (Lezotte, 2011). *Strong instructional leadership*, places the responsibility on the principal to bring together the school's mission, teachers, parents, and students for the purpose of student learning and achievement (Lezotte, 2011).

A *clear and focused mission* establishes a collective responsibility of the school's staff to follow through and achieve its goals (Lezotte, 2011). Teachers have to determine the *opportunity to learn and time-on-task* by ensuring the most important material is

covered and students achieve mastery (Lezotte, 2011). Teachers are also ensuring

frequent monitoring of student progress to determine where students are in the learning

process (Voltz et al., 2010).

Students' need for a *safe school environment* has been demonstrated by past

school experiences and present day concerns (Sutter, 2009). The safer a school

environment becomes the greater the contribution to school improvement (ConnectEd,

2011). The correlate of *positive home-school relations* has firm research that positive

parental support promotes increased student achievement (Lezotte, 2011). School leaders

must train teachers to create an atmosphere of trust between the staff and parents to

achieve success for every student (Lezotte, 2011). This literature review utilized

Lezotte's (2011) latest version of the effective schools framework, the correlates of

effective schools, researched and updated from the early 1980s to current use.

In the following chapter, the methodology of the study was presented. Discussion

of the problem and purpose of the study, as well as the instrumentation and description of

the design were examined. In Chapter Four, the results of the principal and teachers

surveys were described and graphed. A summary of findings, conclusions, and

recommendations were discussed in Chapter Five.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Research Design

This study was conducted to determine the academic programs, characteristics, or reforms used by highly effective elementary schools in Missouri that mirror Lezotte's (2011) correlates of effective schools. The term, highly effective, refers to schools that are meeting or exceeding Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals under NCLB. Once the research project was approved by the Lindenwood IRB (see Appendix A), a letter of introduction (see Appendix B) and letter of informed consent (see Appendix C) were sent via electronic communication to principals of schools meeting or exceeding AYP for the 2011 academic year.

The surveys (one survey for the principal [see Appendix D] and one survey for a lead teacher [see Appendix E] selected by the principal) were sent through electronic communication. Quantitative data were collected from schools to determine the programs and characteristics that may account for their high achievement. The data were organized by survey items and descriptive statistics were applied. Quantitative research counts and classifies research features to construct a statistical model to explain what was found (Neill, 2007).

Research Questions

In this study, questions to be answered included:

1. What are the selected practices of highly effective Missouri public elementary schools?

2. In what ways are highly effective Missouri public elementary schools meeting the correlates of effective schools?

3. What communication arts and mathematic programs are used by highly effective Missouri public elementary schools?

Population and Sample

This study involved public elementary schools in Missouri with math and communication arts scores meeting or exceeding the AYP targets for 2011 (communication arts, 75.5%; mathematics, 72.5%). The MODESE (2011b) established proficiency targets were used to select schools to participate in this study. Individual school quantitative data were obtained by surveying two school personnel from the various schools meeting the MODESE criterion.

Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun (2012) determined a purposive sampling allows researchers "to select a sample …[that] will provide the data they need" (p. 100). This study utilized a purposive sample of public elementary schools in Missouri. The sample consisted of all public elementary schools in Missouri meeting or exceeding AYP targets, for the 2011 testing period.

The schools meeting or achieving AYP were sent surveys electronically. The response rate of surveys totaled 33% percent of the schools selected. Demographics were not used because the elementary schools existed across all variables of outside influences. Outside influences could be the areas of school size, poverty, rural, and urban.

The AYP 2011 data results from MODESE, School Data, and Statistics were used to select the elementary schools meeting or exceeding scores in communications arts and math, free and reduced priced meals, attendance, special education students, limited English proficiency, and ethnicity subgroups (MODESE, 2011b).

Instrumentation

Schools surveyed were sent electronic consent forms to establish participants prior to the collection of data. The IRB Committee of Lindenwood University approved the consent form and surveys. The surveys, one for the elementary principals and one for lead teachers, were used to gather the data from effective elementary schools in Missouri.

The surveys covered Lezotte's (2011) correlates of effective schools and the type of math and communication arts programs used by the schools. The surveys were developed to ascertain what elementary school principals and lead teachers identified as the selected practices, how they are meeting the correlates of effective schools, and what math and communications arts programs are used by their school to be successful. Principals and lead teachers of five elementary schools provided feedback on a field-test of the surveys to ensure the questions were posed clearly and for the designated purpose.

During the study, principals and lead teachers were asked a series of 19 questions, with the questions formatted as multiple-choice and open-ended to provide the best possible data collection. The principal and lead teacher survey questions varied very little in content, with the survey variation only to focus on their individual perspectives. A multiple-choice format within a survey is used as the primary method for asking people about their opinions (Albrecht, n.d.). The multiple-choice format is commonly used because choices are presented; thereby, narrowing the responses for more precise analysis (Albrecht, n.d.).

Using the correlates of effective schools framework assured the survey questions covered the following: High Expectations for Success, Instructional Leadership, Clear and Focused Mission, Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task, Frequent

Monitoring of Student Progress, Safe and Orderly School Environment, and Home-School Relations. The survey questions served to determine what each school embraces that contributes to the school's effectiveness and high achievement. Additionally, survey questions were posed to determine other school characteristics contributing to high academic performance. The data collected from the survey instruments were used for the statistical description of responses in Chapter Four.

Data Collection

For the purpose of the study, the MODESE AYP summary and 2011 improvement status of all districts, with level of sanctions, were used to determine the elementary schools achieving AYP that were selected to be surveyed. Schools selected were then located in the MODESE School Directory (2011) to determine the principals' names and electronic mail addresses. An online survey instrument developed through SurveyMonkey was sent to the principals using electronic mail to gather survey responses from elementary principals and lead teachers.

Frequency distribution charts from Excel were developed for both the principal and lead teacher responses collected from the online surveys. Survey questions that were given to both principals and lead teachers were displayed together for a comparison of responses. Questions that were unique to a principal or a lead teacher were graphed and displayed as a separate chart.

The charts combined the most frequent responses from the survey participants. Open-ended question responses for both the principals and lead teachers were reviewed using text analysis to group common responses. The multiple-choice questions were graphed in the same manner as the open-ended questions.

Principals were asked to answer the survey questions and select a lead teacher to answer the teacher survey. A second electronic mail to all principals was sent after one week to solicit additional responses. A third electronic mail was also sent due to less than 50% return of surveys. Finally, a fourth electronic mail was sent to increase the returned surveys to approximately ninety returns. Electronic survey response data received were saved to a password protected electronic folder.

Subjects had no risks associated with participation in this study. No personal identifiable information will be used, published, or retained. Findings from the study will only be available by accessing the full dissertation on the Lindenwood University Library website.

Data Analysis

The data were collected and analyzed by demographics of the personnel and the survey question results. The surveys gave specific school data to determine the similarities between the characteristics of effective Missouri public elementary schools and the correlates of effective schools, along with the math and communication arts programs used. Electronic surveys were used so individual schools or personnel were not identifiable. The data were analyzed using standard methods for quantitative studies.

Descriptive Statistics

According to Bluman (2008), the use of descriptive statistics consists "of the collection, organization, summarization, and presentation of data" (p. 4). The data obtained from the multiple-choice questions and open-ended questions were described using descriptive statistics.

Ethical Considerations

According to Wilder Research (2009), researchers should give subjects certain rights when asked to be surveyed, these include:

- Choose whether or not they want to participate without penalties (e.g., participation in the evaluation should not be a mandatory requirement for receiving services).

- Withdraw from the project at any time, even if they previously agreed to participate.

- Refuse to complete any part of the project, including refusing to answer any questions. (p. 1)

The subjects in this study were adult school leaders or lead teachers; both groups were experienced professional educators. They were sent surveys by electronic mail or were forwarded the survey by their building principal. Both were asked for their permission to participate in the survey before they were linked to the survey instrument.

This study was conducted using quantitative data to determine what research-based programs, characteristics, and reforms, are found in high performing Missouri public elementary schools. There were no data collected that were of a sensitive nature where harm could come to any of the schools or participants. Confidentially and the withholding of participant identification were respected by utilizing electronic surveys.

The surveys returned from school personnel are private, used for data collection only, and not released individually. Participants in the survey can access the results from the survey through the Lindenwood University Library. The purpose of this study was to assist schools in determining how to improve school performance.

Summary

   This study was conducted from February to August 2012. Identification of the

selected schools took place using the MODESE (2011b) website, School Data and

Statistics. Once selected, an elementary school principal was electronically notified to

participate in the survey, consent to the survey, and identify a lead teacher to receive the

survey. The survey was sent electronically to the identified school principal and

forwarded by the principal to a lead teacher. Returned electronic surveys did not identify

which school or specific principal or teacher took the survey.

   The surveys were evaluated for results and summarized to establish common

programs and characteristics found in high-performing public elementary schools in

Missouri. Additionally, the results determined if the programs mirrored the correlates of

effective schools framework. The data from this study may contribute to raising low-

performing schools performance by identifying research-based programs, characteristics,

and reforms that Missouri schools could adopt to assist with school improvement efforts.

    The methodology of the study was detailed in Chapter Three. Specifically, the

research questions, description of the sampling method, data collection, and data analysis

procedures were described. In Chapter Four, the description and results of the data were

described. The findings, conclusions, and recommendations were offered in Chapter Five.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

The purpose of this study was to determine the researched-based programs, characteristics, or reforms used by highly effective public elementary schools in Missouri that mirror Lezotte's (1991) correlates of effective schools and meet the academic goals of NCLB. According to Daly (2005), "the nation needs more rigorous research on what works in schools, especially given the large number of children that remain at great risk of failing" (p. 28). The continued effective schools research of Lezotte (2011) through two generations of development has determined the correlates of effective schools create a pathway for successful school improvement.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed for this study.

1. What are the selected practices of highly effective Missouri public elementary schools?

2. In what ways are highly effective Missouri public elementary schools meeting the correlates of effective schools?

3. What communication arts and mathematic programs are used by highly effective Missouri public elementary schools?

Analysis of the Quantitative Data

This chapter was designed to present the data collected regarding the benefits of programs and characteristics of effective elementary schools. The results presented were for 92 elementary schools meeting or exceeding AYP for 2011 across the state of Missouri. Surveys were conducted with elementary principals and lead teachers to determine what programs and characteristics their schools possessed.

Then, the results were analyzed to determine the specific programs, characteristics, and trends found in effective schools. The data were explained in detail or converted to figures for ease of understanding. The correlates of effective schools by Lezotte (2011) proposed a path to success for schools by providing a framework for school change efforts framed from seven characteristics.

Lezotte's Correlate #1 Climate of High Expectations for Success

Principal/Teacher survey question 5/5. Overall, teachers in your building as a whole would be described as excellent, above average, average, below average, or uninvolved. The first critical element of a climate of high expectations, according to Lezotte (2011), is the belief by the staff that all students have the ability to succeed. This belief translates to all students can learn and master the curriculum presented. In this study, principals (31.5%) responded they felt their teachers were excellent (see Figure 1).

The majority of principals (59.8%) thought their teachers were above average. The remaining 8.7% principals felt their teachers were average. Teachers described 37.5% of their fellow teachers as excellent, 47.9% as above average, and 14.6% of teachers were considered average.
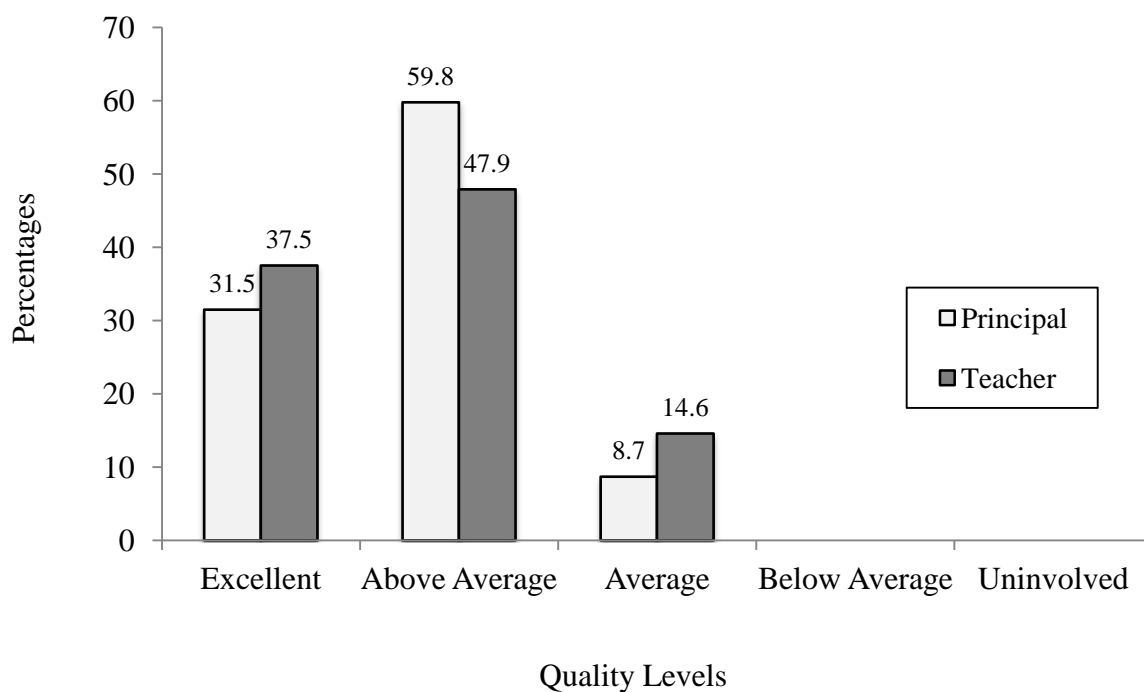
Figure 1. Quality levels of teachers based on responses from principals and teachers.

Principal/Teacher survey question 10/11. Comparing your building to other buildings, how would you rate your teacher expectations? The professional development of teachers is paramount to ensuring students will perform at high levels of achievement (Jones, 2008). Principals, when comparing their building's teacher expectations to other building teachers, responded with a wide range of opinions (see Figure 2). The majority of principals (53.8%) believed that their staff had higher expectations than other schools' teachers. Other principals (31.9%) responded that their teachers were competitive with other buildings. Of the remaining 14.3% of principals, 6.6% responded that their teachers met state standards, and 7.7% considered their teachers comparable to other buildings.

The teachers shared a different view than the principals when comparing their expectations with the expectations of teachers in other buildings. Of those responding, 41.7% felt their expectations were higher. The majority of teachers (47.8%) felt that their colleagues' expectations were competitive with teachers in other buildings. The remaining teachers (4.2%) responded that their coworkers met state teaching standards, and 6.3% believed that they were comparable to teachers in other buildings.
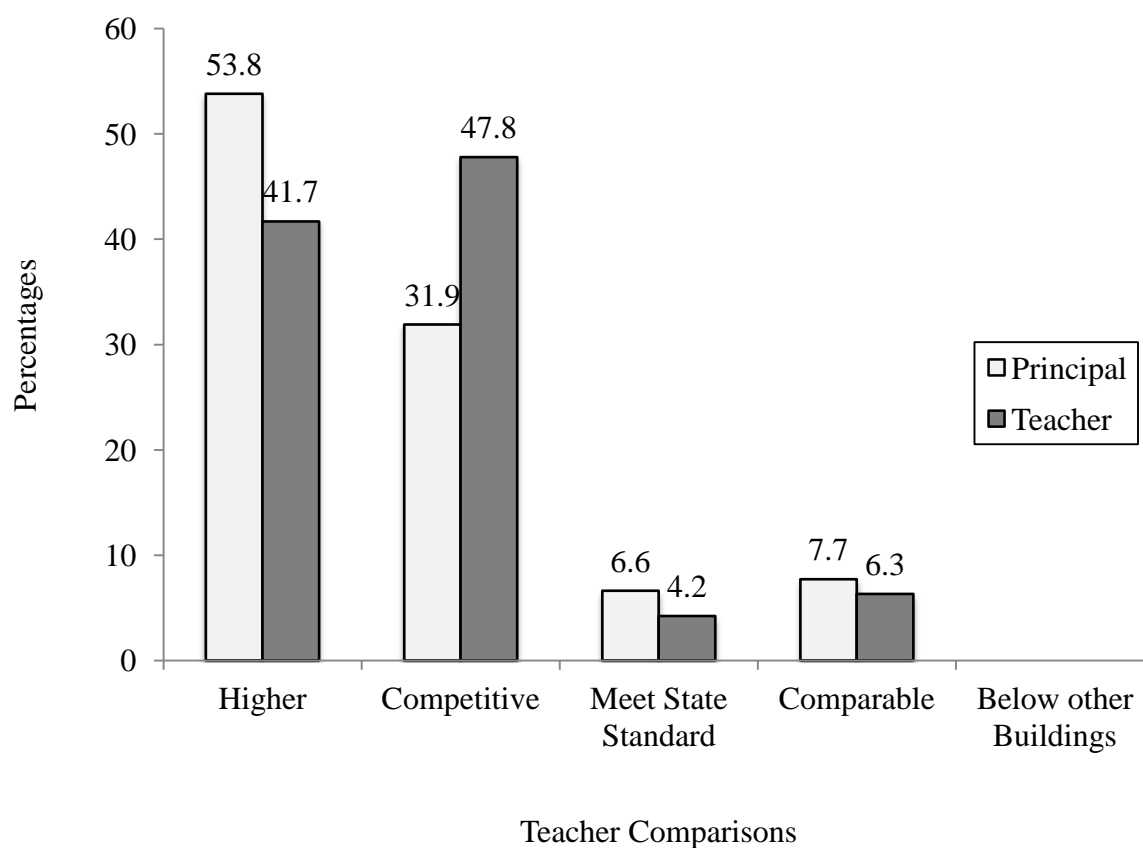

Figure 2. Principal/Teacher ratings of fellow teacher expectations compared to teachers in other buildings.

Teacher survey question 19. Please provide the number one reason why you feel your building is effective. The DuFour and Eaker (1998) PLC approach has promoted a new way of viewing the achievement of high expectations by focusing on the results of schools' programs and their impact on student learning. The majority of teachers surveyed mainly responded with one of two answers for why their building was effective (see Figure 3). The remaining teachers listed 10 other reasons why their building was effective, although none of the 10 responses had more than five teachers list that reason.

The largest group of teachers, with 21 responses, believed that they held *common goals/ students come first* as the main reason their building was effective. The next highest response, from 12 teachers, was *work collaboratively* as the reason their building achieved building effectiveness. The remaining 10 responses listed included the following: *leadership* and *high expectations* (5); *teaching staff dedication* and *small class size* (4 each); *communication within the school* (3); followed by a *safe environment, parental involvement*, and *collecting and using data* (2 each). The use of *resource teachers* and using *instructional differentiation* had one response each.
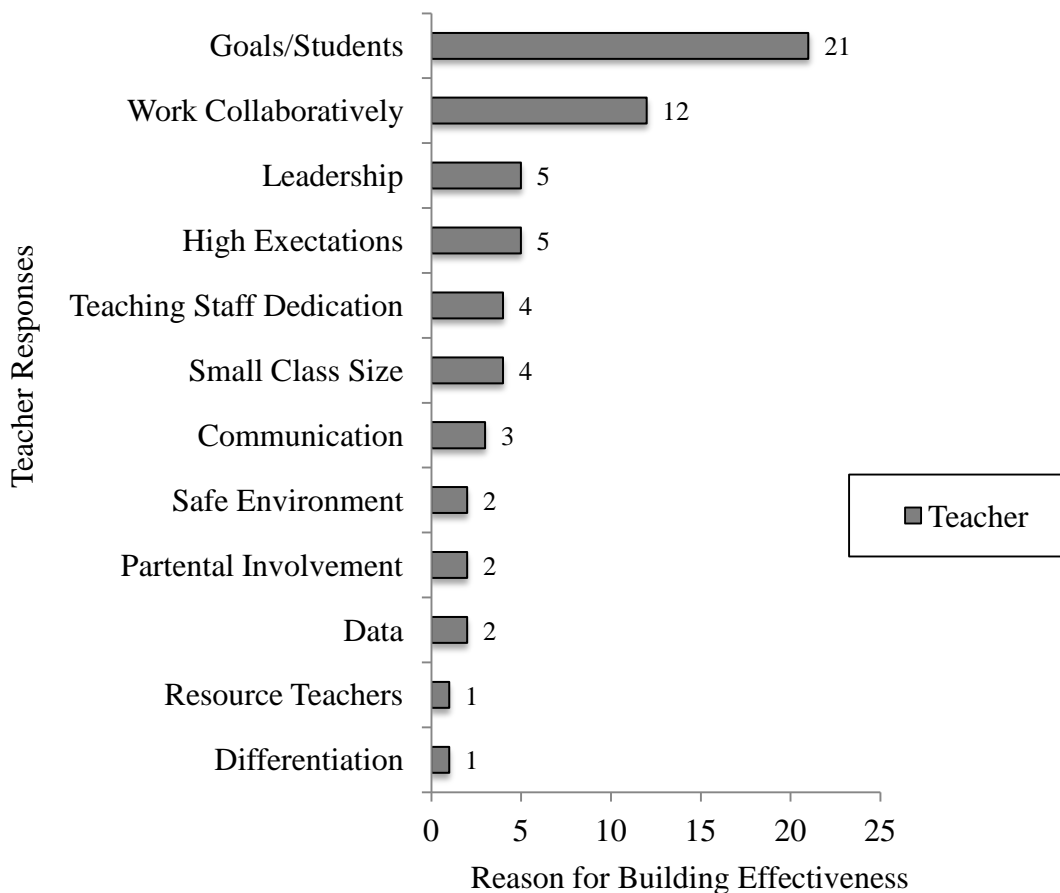
Figure 3. Teachers' perceptions of the primary reason why their building is effective.

Teacher survey question 20. Please provide the number one reason why you are an effective teacher. The number one reason that teachers provided, by open-response, for being an effective teacher was truly enlightening. One of the teachers surveyed answered, "I am dedicated to the philosophy of 'Whatever it takes.' All students can learn. I spend my time, energy, and money making sure my students have the most of me and the resources that are available to me."

All open-response answers made up eight general groups (see Figure 4). Five groups received over six or more responses, and three groups had four or less responses. Eleven teachers listed *teacher dedication* and *professionalism* as the number one reason they were effective teachers. Dedication and professionalism are tied closely to efficacy, the belief that one can be successful and achieve what one is attempting to do (Lezotte, 2011).

The next two highest responses from teachers were that *differentiated instruction* and *student/parent relationships* were the reasons for their effectiveness as teachers, with each group reporting 10 responses each. Seven teachers indicated that they were effective because they improved effectiveness by *professional learning* and *reflecting on their instruction*. Six teachers each believed that *building leadership* and the *assistance of their peers* made them effective teachers. The three remaining areas, with four or less responses, were *positive environment* (4), *setting high expectations* (2), and a *special education teacher* who doubted his effectiveness and felt frustrated (1).
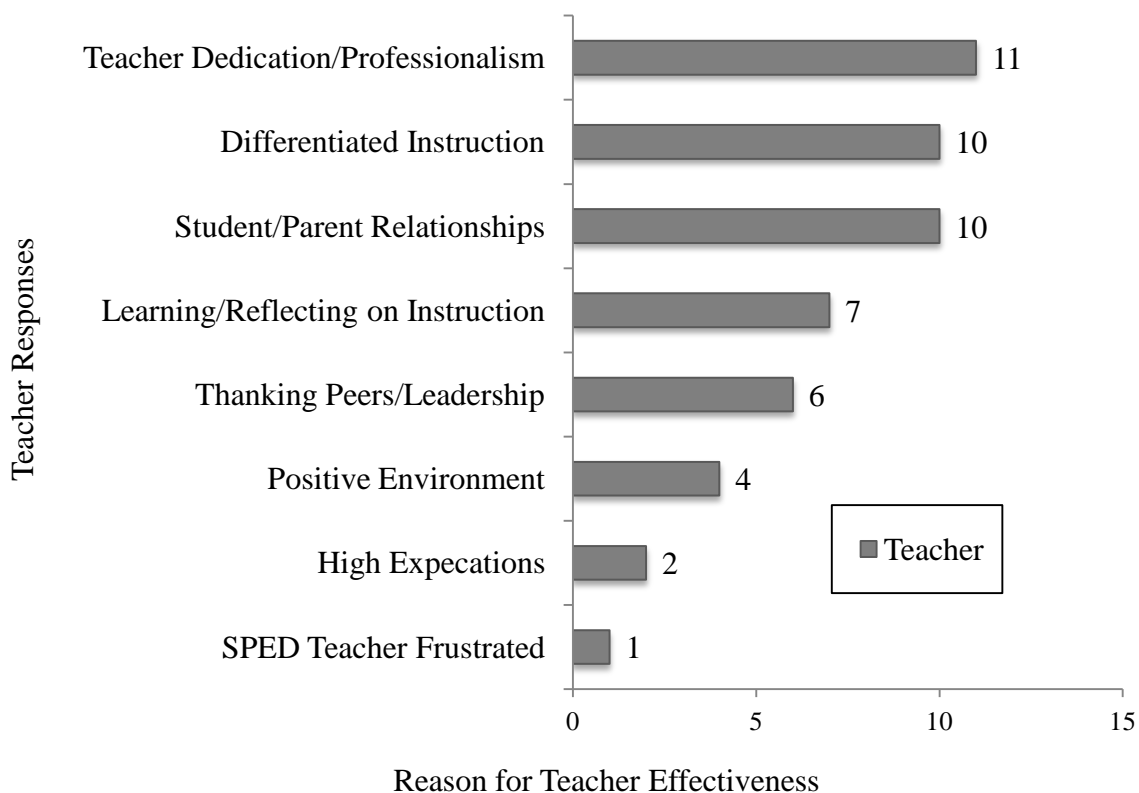
Figure 4. Teachers' self-perceptions of why they are effective teachers.

Lezotte's Correlate #2 Strong Instructional Leadership

Principal survey question 1. How long have you been a principal? The

principal, in the effective school, is the experienced leader responsible for the

performance of teachers, students, and parents, in relation to the school's mission of

student learning and achievement (Lezotte, 2011). As shown in Figure 5, principals fell

into five almost equal numerical bands of years they had served as educational leaders.

New principals serving 0-3 years (19.6%) and principals serving with 4-6 years

experience (19.6%) were equal. The next two groups were slightly higher with 20.7% of

the principals who had served either 7-10 years or 11-15 years as educational leaders.

The last numerical grouping was comprised of 19.4% of principals who had 15 years or more experience.
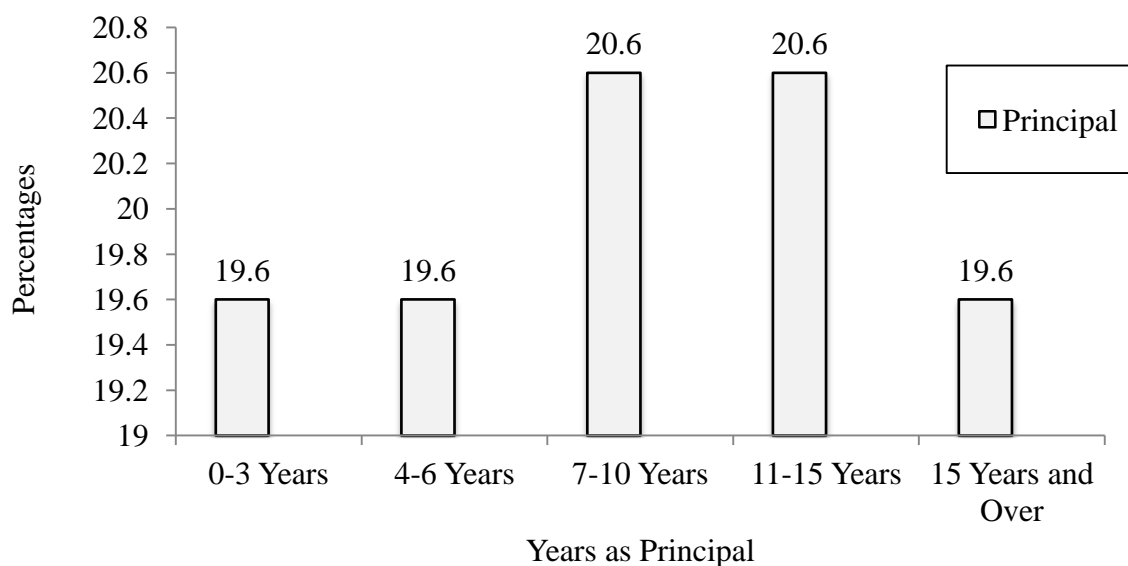
Figure 5. Total years serving as school principal.

Principal survey question 2. In how many buildings have you been a principal? The National Association of Elementary Principals determined an effective school principal as one who is a manager of resources, visible, and focused on improvement of teachers and students (Connelly, 2008). The majority of principals (39.1%) responded that they had served in only one building (see Figure 6). The next highest percentage was 35.9% of principals serving in their second building as a principal.

Principals who had served in three buildings as educational leaders totaled 17.4%, and those who served in four buildings totaled 3.3%. The last group (4.3%) consisted of principals who had served in five or more buildings as principal.
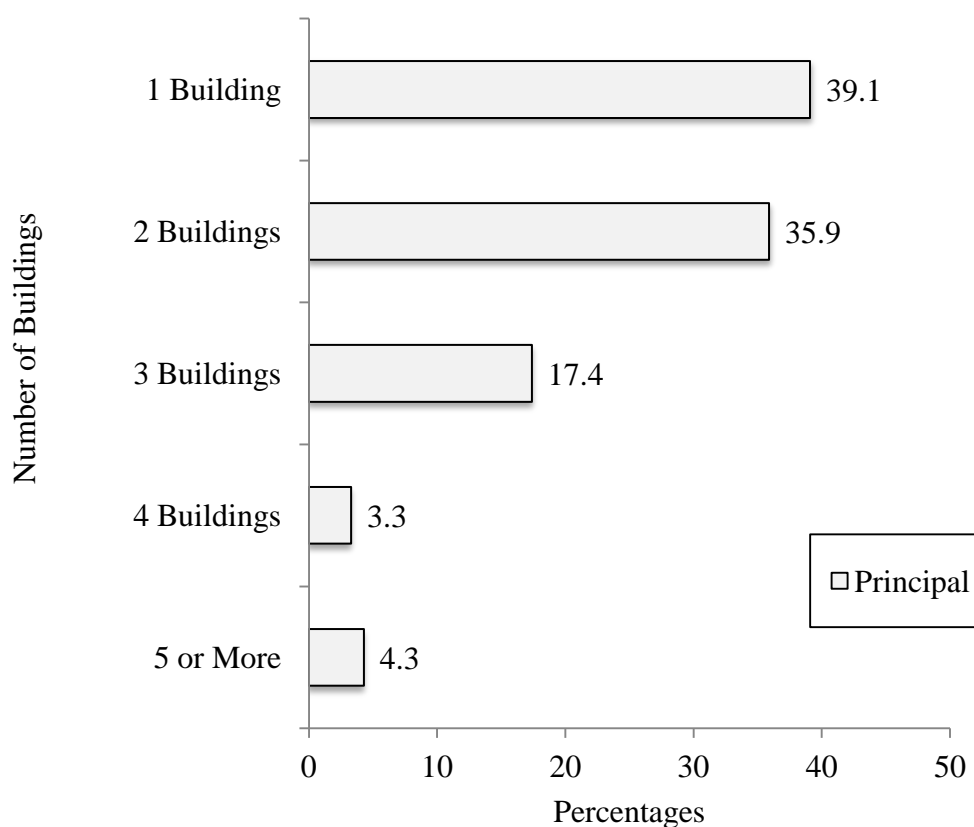
Figure 6. The number of buildings served as principal.

Teacher survey question 1. How long have you been a teacher? Principals were asked to choose one lead teacher to answer the teacher survey. Research cited by Marzano (2010) has supported a focus on teacher instruction, finding that experienced effective teachers are the key component on student learning and successful learning of the curriculum.

Teachers selected their years of experience from numerical bands provided on the survey. The majority of teachers (37.5%) had been in education more than 15 years (see Figure 7). The second highest group, 27.1%, were teachers with 11-15 years in education. The third group (20.8%) was made up of teachers who had been teaching for 7-10 years. The least experienced teachers in the survey had been in education 4-6 years (8.3%) and 0-3 years (6.3%).
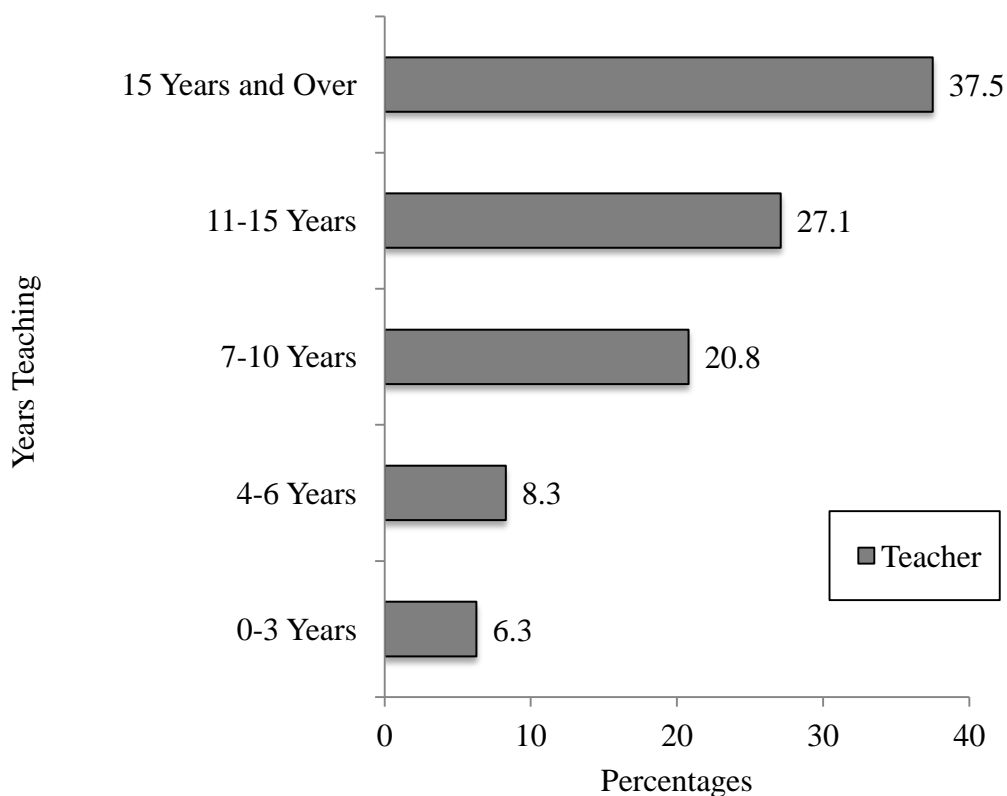
Figure 7. Total years served as a teacher.

Teacher survey question 2. How many buildings have you taught in? The professional development program teachers receive at the district and building level directly relates to how they approach instruction and impact student expectations (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). Teachers who taught in only one building totaled 41.7% (see

Figure 8). Those teachers responding they taught in two buildings made up 25% of the responses. The remainder of teachers had taught in multiple buildings: three buildings with 18.8%, those in four buildings 2.1%, and teachers who taught in more than five buildings totaled 12.4%.
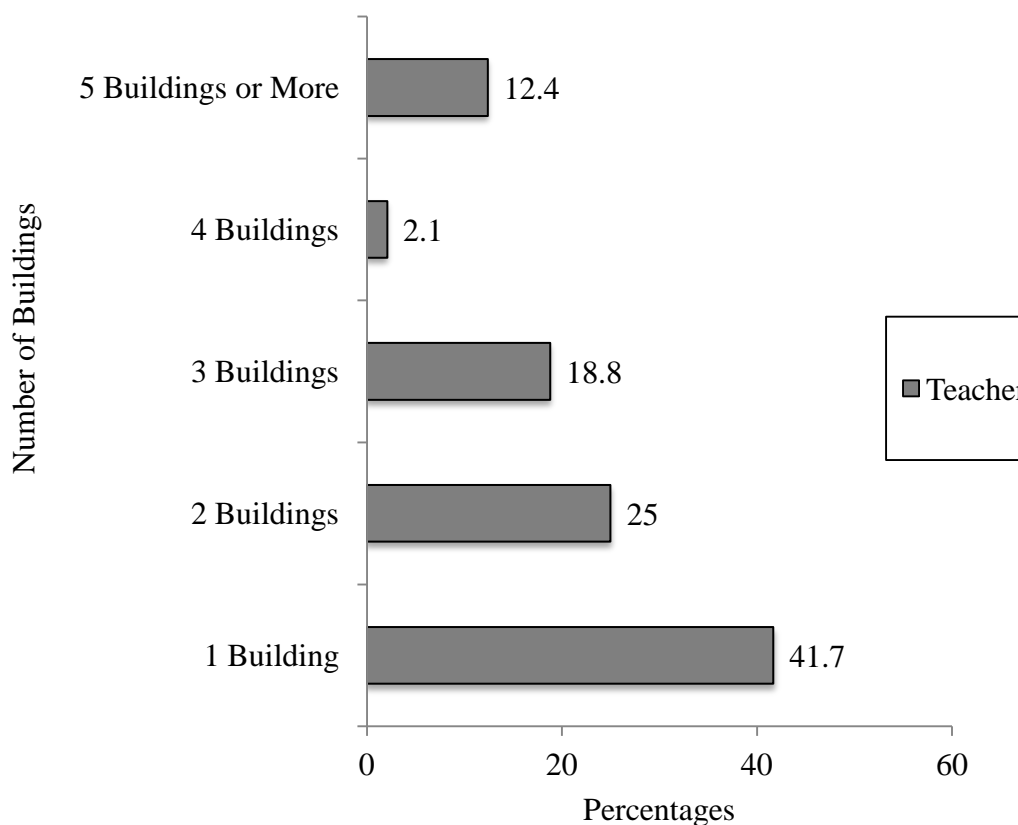
Figure 8. Total number of school buildings that they had served in as a teacher.

Principal/Teacher survey question 3/3. What is your highest completed education degree? The No Child Left Behind Act (2001) clearly stated, "every child in America deserves a high-quality teacher" and "States will be accountable for ensuring that all children are taught by effective teachers." The majority of principals reported that they continued their education studies beyond the basic administrative requirements. As

shown in Figure 9, principals with the basic requirement, a master's degree, totaled 21.7%, and principals with two or more master's degrees totaled 7.6%. The largest category, with 39.2%, consisted of principals who had earned a specialist degree in education. The most advanced degree, doctorate, had been completed by 31.5% of those who responded.

Teachers also continued their education degrees while teaching. The largest group of teachers who continued their education had earned a master's degree (60.3%). Twenty-five percent of teachers held only their initial bachelor's degree. Teachers with two or more master's degrees, or having a specialist degree, were tied with 6.3%, and only 2.1% of teachers had completed a doctorate degree.
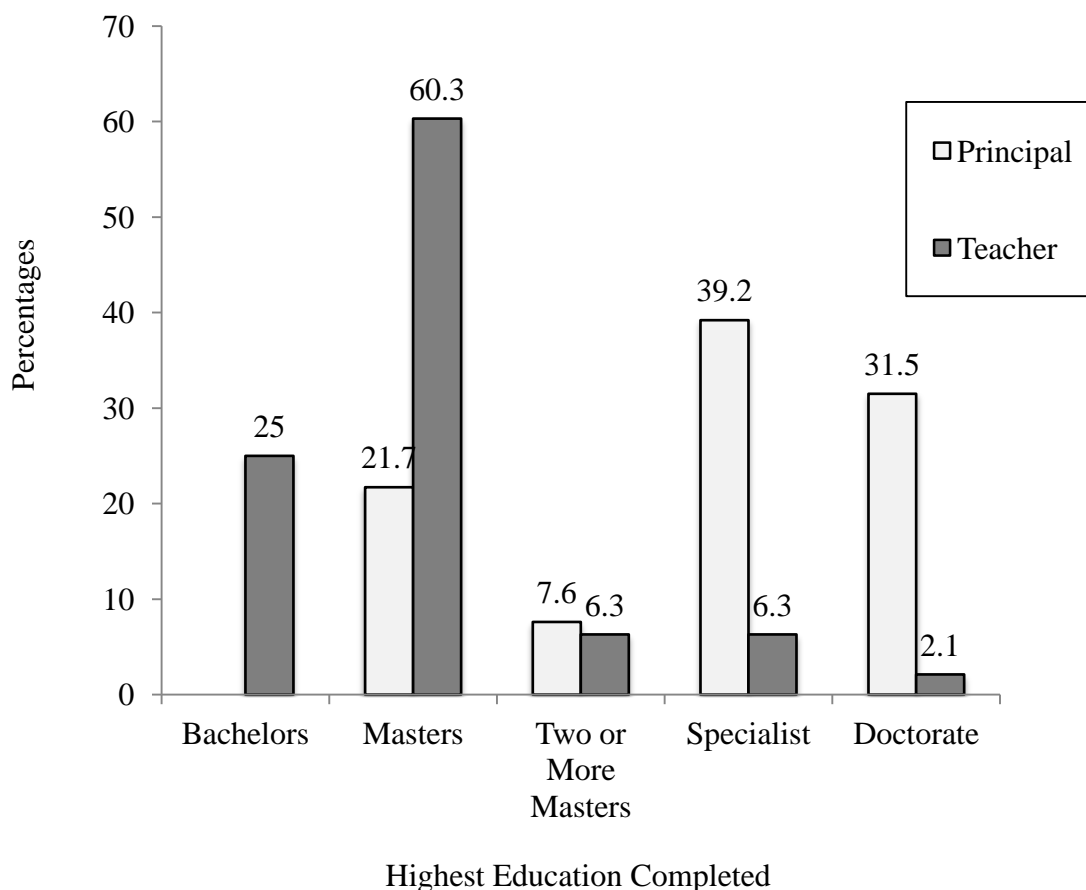
Figure 9. Principal and teacher highest educational degree completed.

Principal/ Teacher survey question 4/4. As an educational leader/teacher your involvement in curriculum and instruction can be described as? School leadership must be involved to determine the instructional changes necessary to improve student learning and student success (CCSR, 2009). Principals (9.8%) responded that their total focus was on curriculum and instruction (see Figure 10). Almost two-thirds (64.1%) of principals responded that they had major involvement in curriculum and instruction. When combined, a total focus and major involvement (73.9%) in curriculum and instruction show that effective schools have high interest in curriculum and

instruction. The next group of principals (19.6%) felt they had only a monitoring role. Minor involvement in curriculum and instruction was reported from a very small group of principal respondents, with 2.2% and 4.3% noting that curriculum and instruction were district directed with little involvement.

The results for teachers showed similar outcomes to the principals. Teachers (16.7%) reported that curriculum and instruction were the total focus. The teachers (62.5%) also responded that they had major involvement in curriculum and instruction, which was only marginally statistically lower than the principals reported. A small percentage of teachers (12.5%) reported only a monitoring role of curriculum and instruction. A few teachers (2.1%) reported they had minor involvement, and teachers (6.3%) felt it was district directed with little involvement.
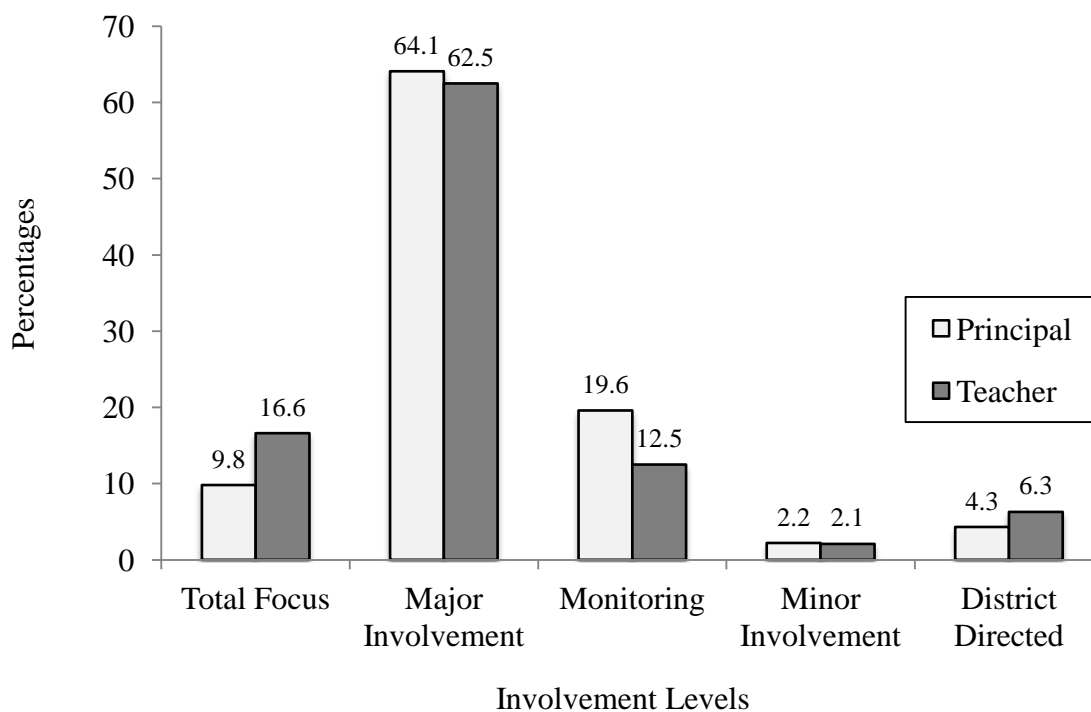
Figure 10. Principal and teacher reported involvement in curriculum and instruction.

Lezotte's Correlate #3 Clear and Focused Mission

   Principal/Teacher survey question 7/8. The goals of your building are focused on which of the following: Focus on the school mission and goals should be at the core of the school's existence, where every action underlines the school's mission and goals (Lezotte, 2011). A school's mission statement, according to DuFour and Eaker (1998), must adhere to placing student achievement first. Principals (77.1%) responded that the goals of their building were overwhelmingly based on students (see Figure 11). Goals that were building directed (18.5%) determined the actions of staff.

   Principals also reported that teachers' goals (2.2%) and district directed goals (2.2%) were equal in the setting of school goals. Teacher respondents (83.3%) chose students as the focus of their building, followed by building directed goals (14.6%) and district directed goals (2.1%). Surprisingly, teachers did not believe teacher set goals were the focus of any of the buildings.
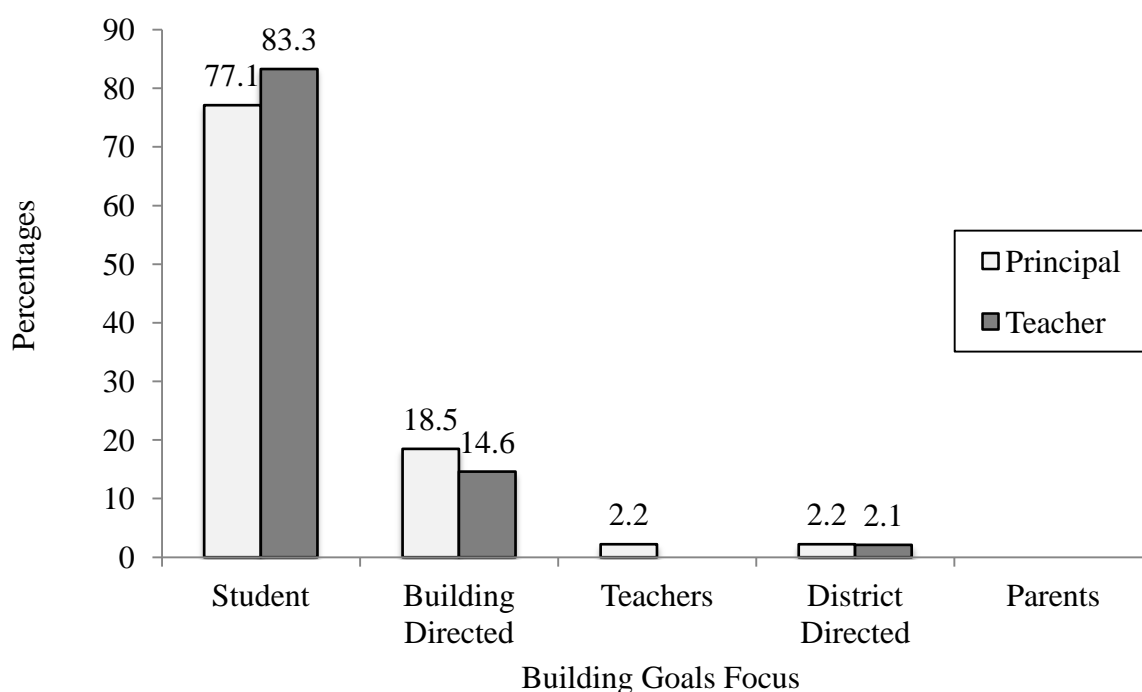
Figure 11. The perception of principals and teachers focus of their school's goals.

Principal/Teachers survey question 11/12. How would you describe the teachers' support of goals and procedures in your building? The school's staff must be collectively responsible to the school's mission and vision, and follow through to achieve its goals (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). Principals reported that their teachers, by a large majority, were highly supportive (42.4%) of building goals and procedures (see Figure 12). Other principals reported that teachers were goal focused (42.4%) and in support of building goals and procedures. A smaller percentage (14.1%) of principal respondents believed teachers adequately supported goals and procedures, while only 1.1% of principals reported their teachers were below standard in supporting goals and procedures in their respective schools.

Teachers felt that their fellow teachers, by a large majority, were highly

supportive (35.4%) and goal focused (52.1%) in support of their building goals and

procedures. Only 12.5% of respondents believed that teachers gave adequate support of

their building goals.
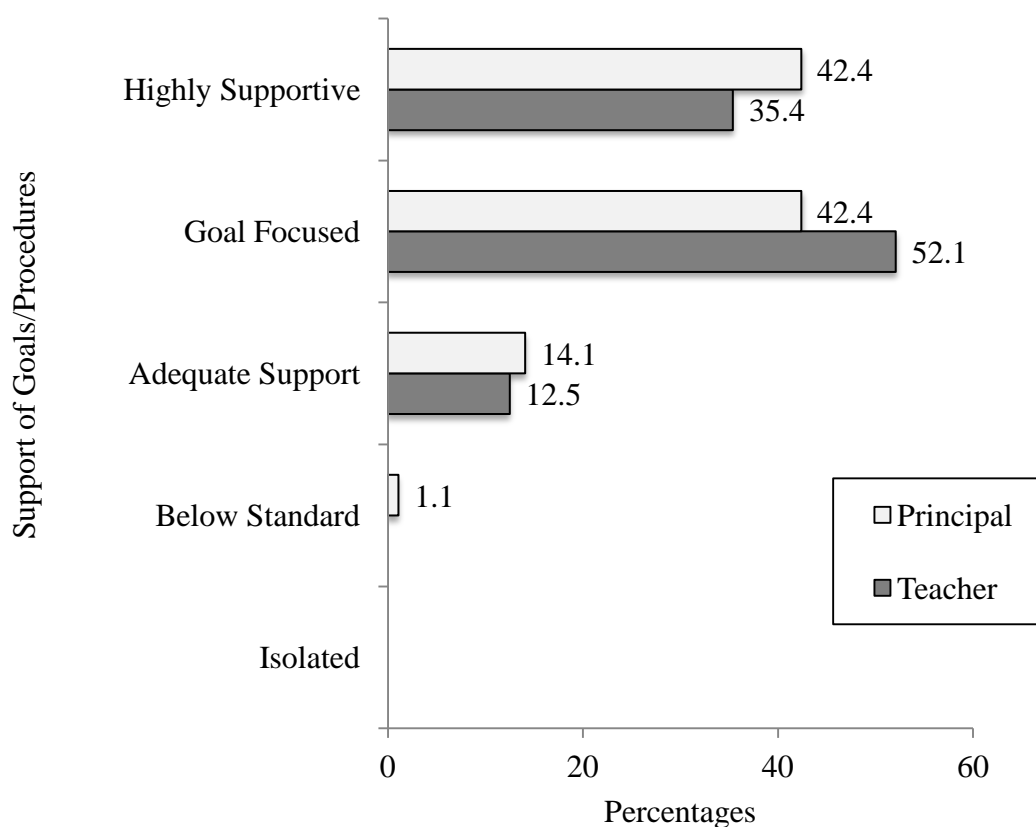
Figure 12. Principal and teacher description of their fellow teachers' support for school

goals and procedures.

Lezotte's Correlate #4 Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task

Principal/Teacher survey question 13/14. Which statement reflects your

building curriculum priority? Teachers must have an acute knowledge of each

student's achievement gaps and how student achievement will best be delivered for all

students to learn (Voltz, Sims, & Nelson, 2010). Reading was clearly the major priority of successful buildings for both principals and teachers (see Figure 13). In order of priority, reading, math, then writing were chosen by 68.1% of principals and 70.7% of teachers.

Reading, writing, and math, respectively, were the second priority by 25.3% of principals and 16.7% of teachers. This shows that 93.4% of principals and 87.5% of teachers ranked reading as the most important subject and of the highest priority. The responses regarding the remaining curriculum categories on the survey list included 4.4% of principals and 6.3% of teachers chose math, reading, and writing. Math, writing, and reading were chosen by 1.1% of principals and 2.1% of teachers, while writing, reading, and math were selected by 4.4% of principals and 6.3% of teachers.
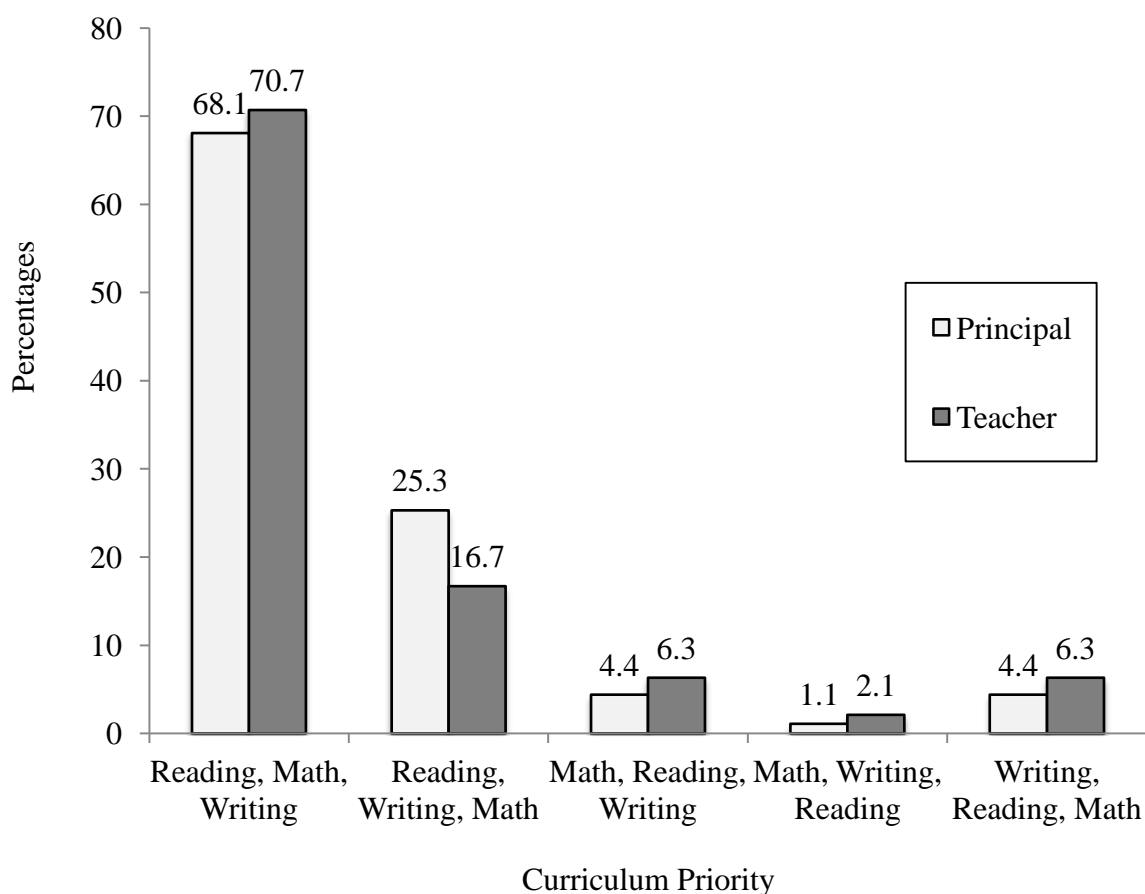
Figure 13. Priority listing of building curriculum subjects.

Principal/Teacher survey question 14/15. Which of the following programs are used at your building? (Check all that apply). Principals and teachers were able to select all behavior programs used in their buildings. The survey question allowed principals and teachers to select from a listing of behavior programs and then further comment to explain or add what specific behavior programs effective schools use. Effective schools are changing their instructional traditions by researching new programs and strategies to assist students to overcome their learning gaps (Virginia Education Association, 2006).

Topping the list of the most used programs, by highly effective schools for improving discipline and behavior, was the Missouri Positive Behavior Intervention Program with 43.4% (see Figure 14). The next most used program was Character Plus with 23.7%. Some building principals (27.6%) reported that they used no behavior program at all. The Fight-free School Program was used in only 1.3% of schools. The Behavior Intervention Support Team (BIST) was used in 22.4% of schools. Comments on the survey, by principals, included using parts of several programs to fit their individual school needs.

Teacher respondents reported that they used Missouri Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (59.6%), Character Plus (19.1%), Fight-free Schools (10.6%), and BIST (27.7%). No behavior program was used in 14.9% of buildings, according to teacher responses. Teachers also commented that they utilized teacher support teams, Junior Student to Student, Character Education, Boys Town Discipline, and Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.
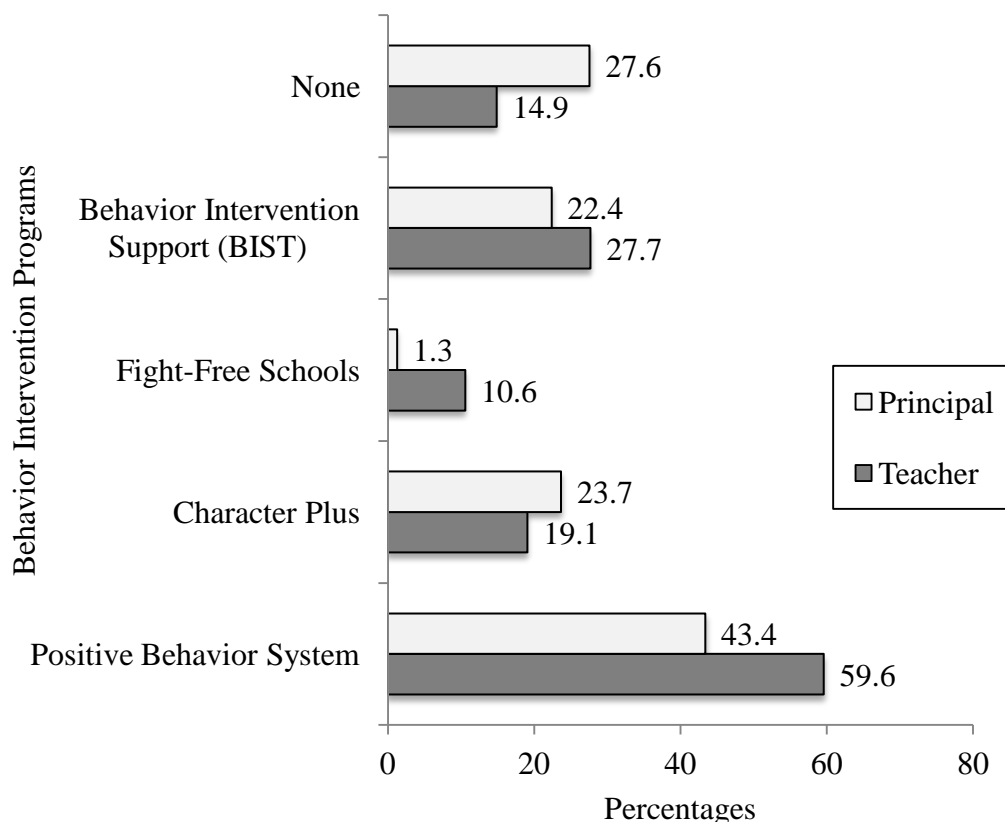
Figure 14. Principal and teacher responses with multiple selections of school behavior programs.

Principal/Teacher survey questions 15/16. What Reading programs do you use? (Check all that apply). While most children have no difficulty learning to read, other students do not respond to traditional reading approaches. These struggling students require effective instruction and reading programs to succeed (Allington & Gabriel, 2012). Principals responded with several different choices as their successful reading programs. The two highest choices of reading programs were textbook series (59.6%) and guided reading (57.3%) (see Figure 15) .

Other programs used included: Starfall (21.3%) for Kindergarten, SRA (13.5%),

Ed Mark (5.6%), LIPS (3.4%), Lexile Reading (23.6%), Accelerated Reading (38.2%),

Reading Counts (16.9%), Read 180 (10.1%), and Reading Recovery (16.9%). Principals

listed other reading programs: Study Island, SRI, Pathways to Reading, Good Habits

Great Readers, and First Principles, followed by Missouri Reading Initiative (MRI),

DIBELS-2, DRA, and Wilson Reading.

The teachers responded with similar data. Guided Reading had the highest

number of respondents with 66%. Teachers responded they used the reading textbook

series (53.2%), 34% used Accelerated Reading, and 25.5% used Reading Counts. STAR

reading was used by 34% of respondents, Read 180 was used by 12.8% for upper

elementary grades, and Starfall was used by 19.6% for Kindergarten.

Other reading programs teachers included were Reading Recovery (14.9%),

Lexile Reading (91.7%), LIPS (2.1%), Ed Mark (5.6%), and SRA (19.1%). Teachers also

listed additional reading programs: Pathways to Reading, DRA, Reading Eggs, Buckle

Down, and Reading Workshop, followed by SRI, Study Island, Good Habits Great

Readers, and teacher-made materials.
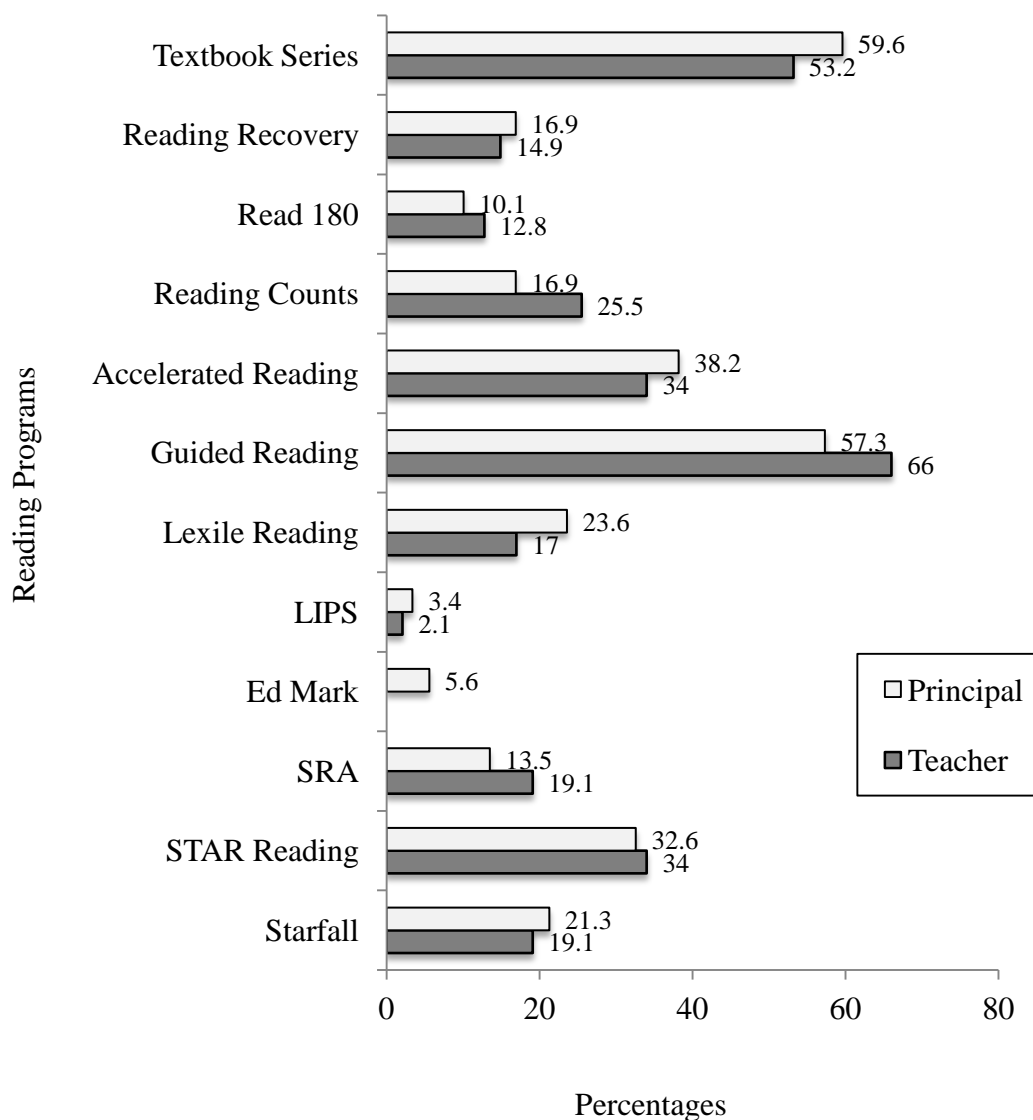
Figure 15. Principal and teacher listed reading programs used by elementary schools.

Teacher survey question 6. Teachers allocate what amount of time per day for Communication Arts? Teachers must prepare the learning environment so students perform successfully (Kentucky Department of Education, 2012). Teachers estimated the percent of time they spend on communication arts instruction each day (see Figure 16). Nearly half (46.8%) of the teachers surveyed spent 11%-30% of their time each day on

communication arts. A slightly smaller amount of teachers (40.4%) spent 31%-40% of

their time on communication arts, and 12.8% of teachers spent 41%-55% of their daily

time on communication arts instruction.
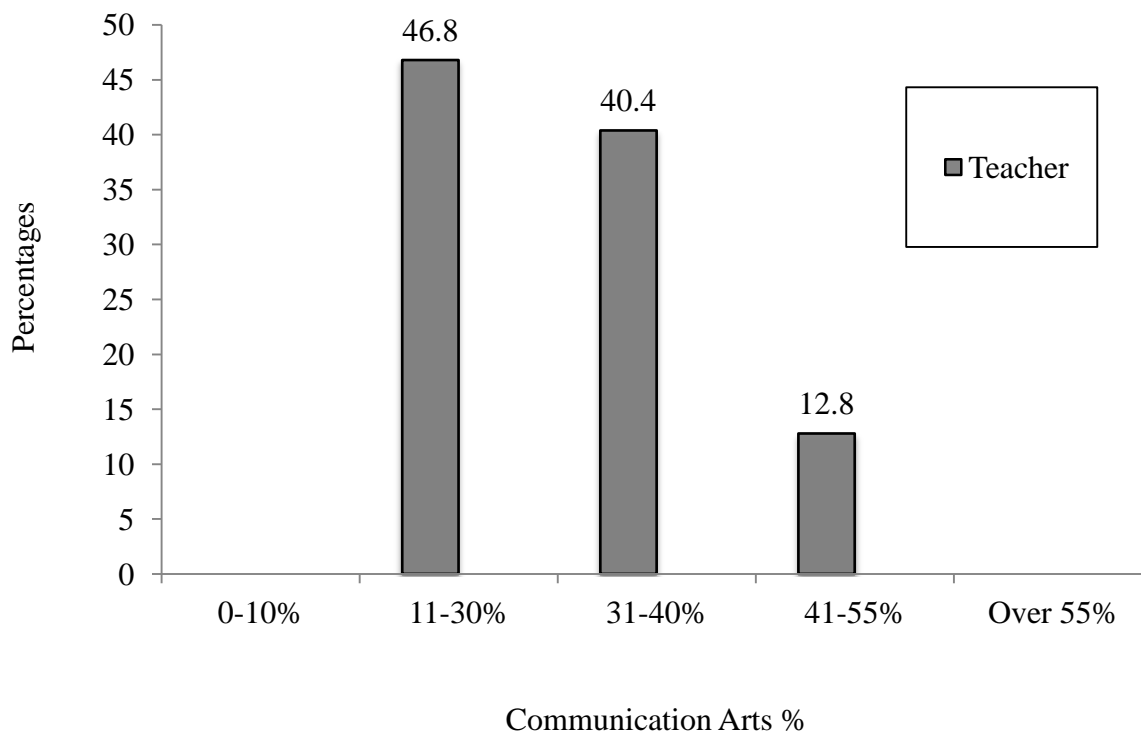
Figure 16. Amount of time teachers spend on Communication Arts.

Principal/Teacher survey question 16/17. Which math programs do you use?
(Check all that apply). Principals and teachers are particularly interested in finding and

using math programs that improve the math success of all children (Slavin & Lake,

2008). Principal responses (40.2%) showed that effective schools mainly used an adopted

textbook series (see Figure 17). Everyday Math was next (29.9%) followed by

Investigations Math (21.8%). Saxon Math was used in 20.7% of schools surveyed, and

Star Math was used by 6.9% of schools, followed by Study Island Math and Rocket

Math.

Teachers reported that the textbook series (36.6%) was the main math program.

Investigations Math was the second highest math program, according to 31.7% of

respondents. Everyday Math was used by 24.4% of teachers, and Saxon Math was used

by 7.1% of respondents. According to teachers, STAR Math (4.9%) was used only in a

few schools. Teacher open-ended comments on additional math programs used included

Singapore Math, teacher created materials, and Envisions Math. The teachers also

reported using Study Island, IXL Math, Math Connects, and Accelerated Math.
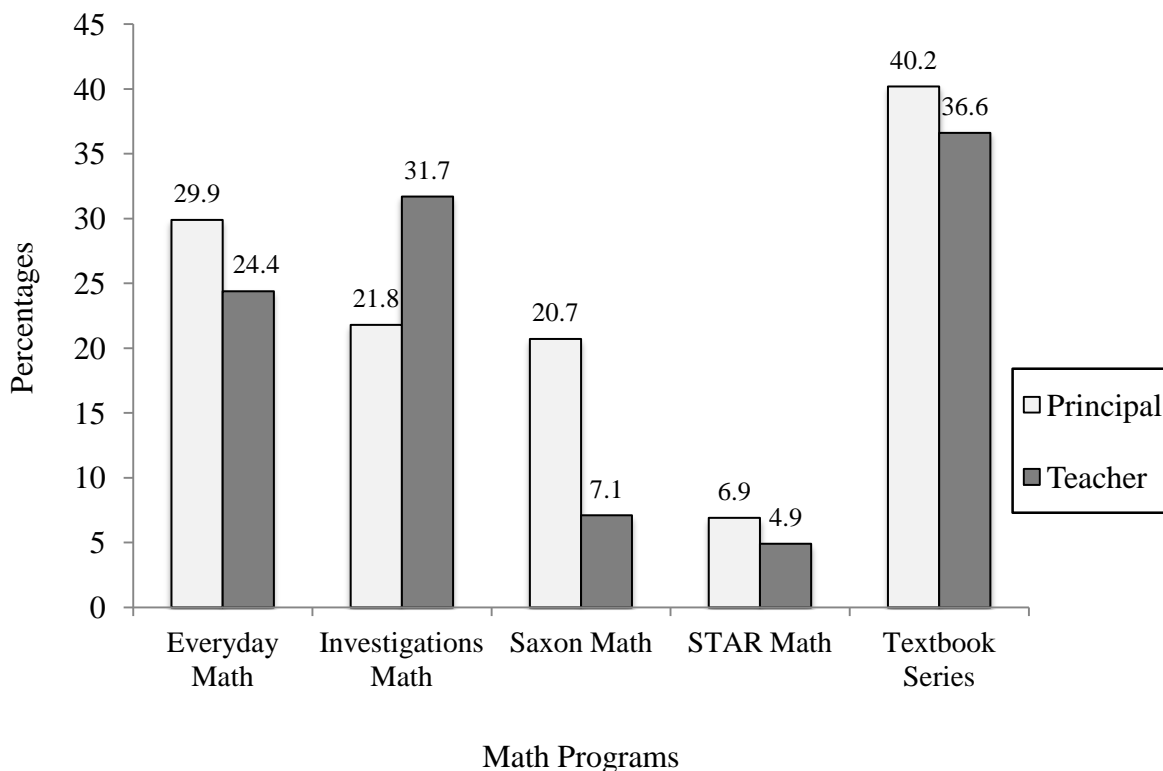
Figure 17. Principals' and teachers' responses of the math programs used in elementary schools.

Principal survey question 17. How many resource personnel does your building have in addition to classroom teachers? School resource teachers can certainly help student learning. When teachers work together to focus on student learning, student achievement is enhanced (Michigan Education Association, 2009). In this study, resource personnel varied in number from building to building (see Figure 18). Zero to two resource personnel were in 37% of buildings, and 3-5 resource personnel were in 43.5% of buildings. Some principals (9.8%) reported having 6-8 resource personnel in their building. The least reported was 9-11 resource personnel (4.3%). School buildings with 12 resource personnel (5.4%) were also reported.
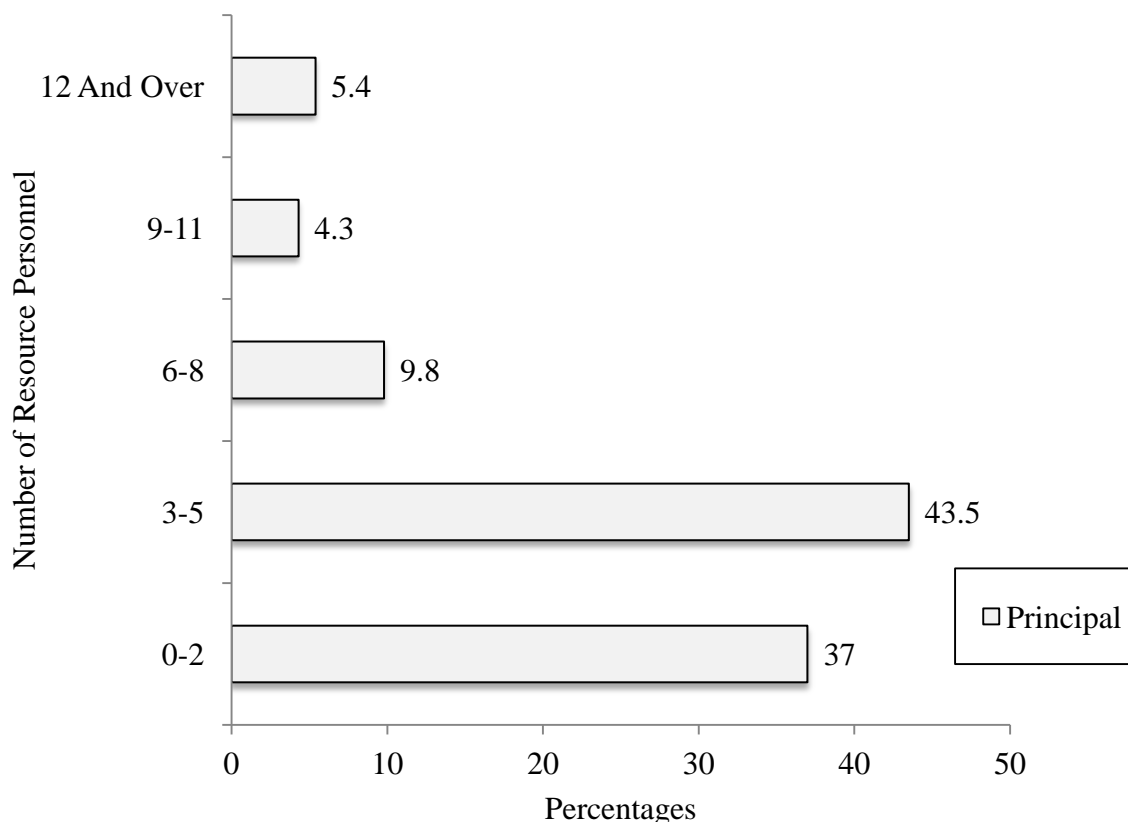
Figure 18. Number of resource teachers per building to support students.

Principal survey question 18. Please list programs used for special needs students, either commercial or teacher developed programs. Principals were given the opportunity to list any and all programs they used to meet the needs of their special education students. Many of the elementary buildings in Missouri failed to meet AYP because the targeted proficiency scores for the special education subgroup were not achieved. It is important to find what successful elementary schools used to teach special education students and achieve AYP for this subgroup.

School leaders and teachers must focus on the learning gap by changing their instructional approach, by providing research-based learning, and developing high quality

instruction along with time for interventions (Klein & Knitzer, 2007). The principals

reported the programs used with special education students. The programs (see Figure

19) used most often were Wilson Reading, Modified District Curriculum, READ 180,

Pathways to Reading, and SRA Reading Mastery Plus, followed by Systems-44, Pearson

My Sidewalks, and Fundations Reading.
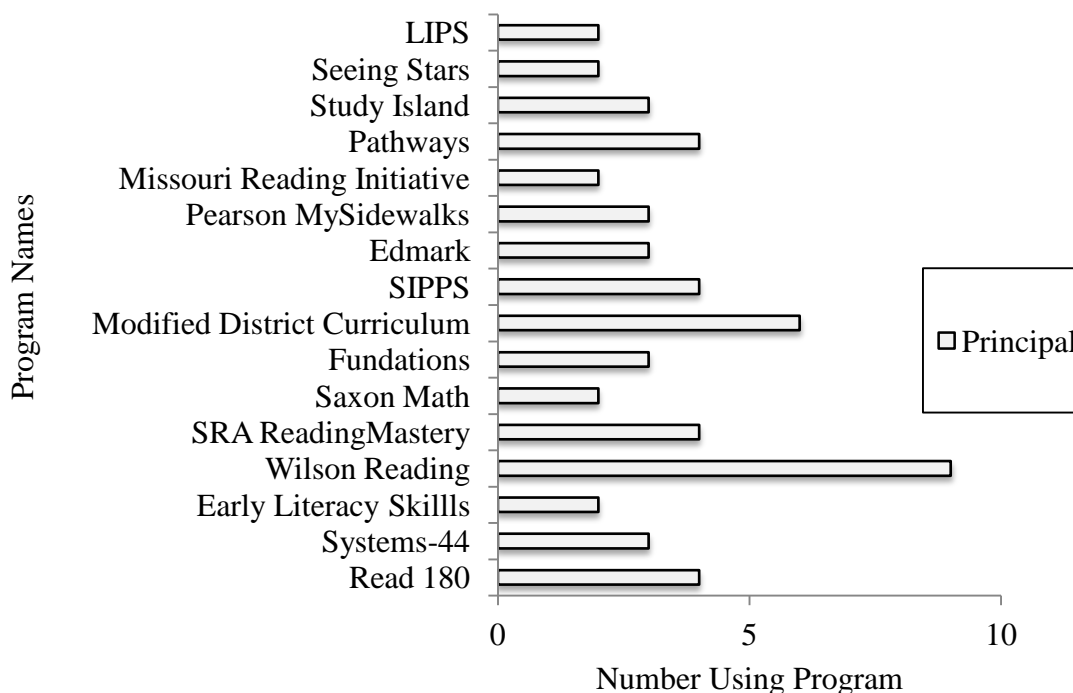
Figure 19. Principal reported programs used for special education students.

Principal survey question 19. Please list programs you use with any other

subgroups of students to improve student achievement. This survey question was

posed as an open-ended response. Principals are using a wide variety of programs to

address subgroup needs. These program decisions are challenging, yet are necessary to

meet the requirement of NCLB. Educators must ensure success for all students, which

they were not required to do in the past (DuFour et al., 2004). Principals (13) reported the

most used program as Response to Intervention (RTI) to address the students' needs.

As shown in Figure 20, principals also listed Study Island (6) and Leveled

Literacy Interventions (LLI) (6) for improving achievement of students in subgroups. The

practice book, Buckle Down (5), and Fundations reading interventions (5) were reported

as used in assisting skill and content development. The DIBELS (4) and Aims Web (2)

were used as universal screening tools. Sidewalks on Reading (4), followed by Reading

Eggs (3) and Road to Code (3) were used by a few schools for direct reading

interventions. Data Teams (2) and Acuity (2) were used to track students' progress.
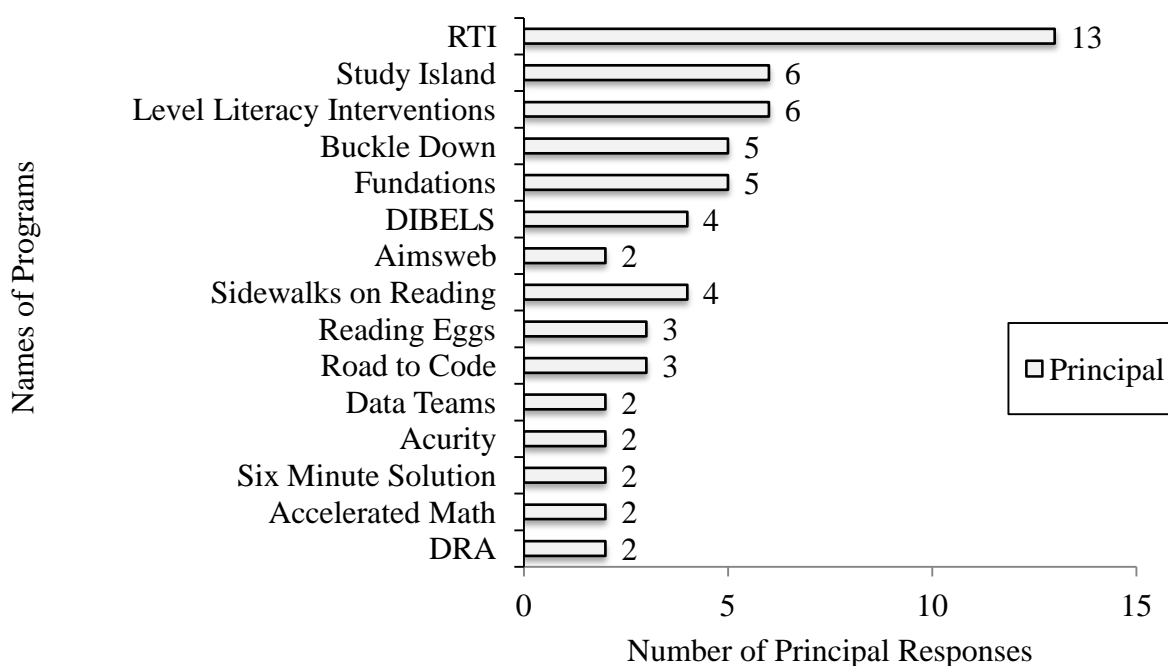
Figure 20. Principal reported programs used for AYP subgroup students.

Lezotte's Correlate #5 Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress

Principal/Teacher survey question 8/9. How often are all students universally screened or assessed for grade level proficiency? The effective schools correlate to ensure students are learning is to frequently monitor how each student is progressing and how the class, as a whole, is learning (Lezotte, 2011). Principals reported universal screening of their students, to guide instruction, were conducted at all buildings. The respondents did report a varied number of times students were screened in the different schools.

The principals who reported screening only 1-2 times (10.8%) per year would acquire baseline data (see Figure 21). The majority of principals (59.8%) reported universal screening of students 3-4 times per year, which would serve as progress checks. Other principals responded they conducted universal screening 5-6 times (12%) per year, 7-8 times (10.9%), and 9 times or more (6.5%).

The majority of teachers (50%) responded they universally screened all their students 3-4 times per year. Universal screenings of 1-2 times (8.3%) per year were given by teachers to establish baseline data. Of the teachers responding, 22.9% reported universal screening of students 5-6 times per year. Evaluating students' progress closely by screening 7-8 times (6.3%) occurred in a few schools. Universal screening students 9 or more times a year (12.5%) took place by some teachers who tracked student progress. The important result from the information was that universal screening took place three or more times (91.7%), as reported by principals and teachers.
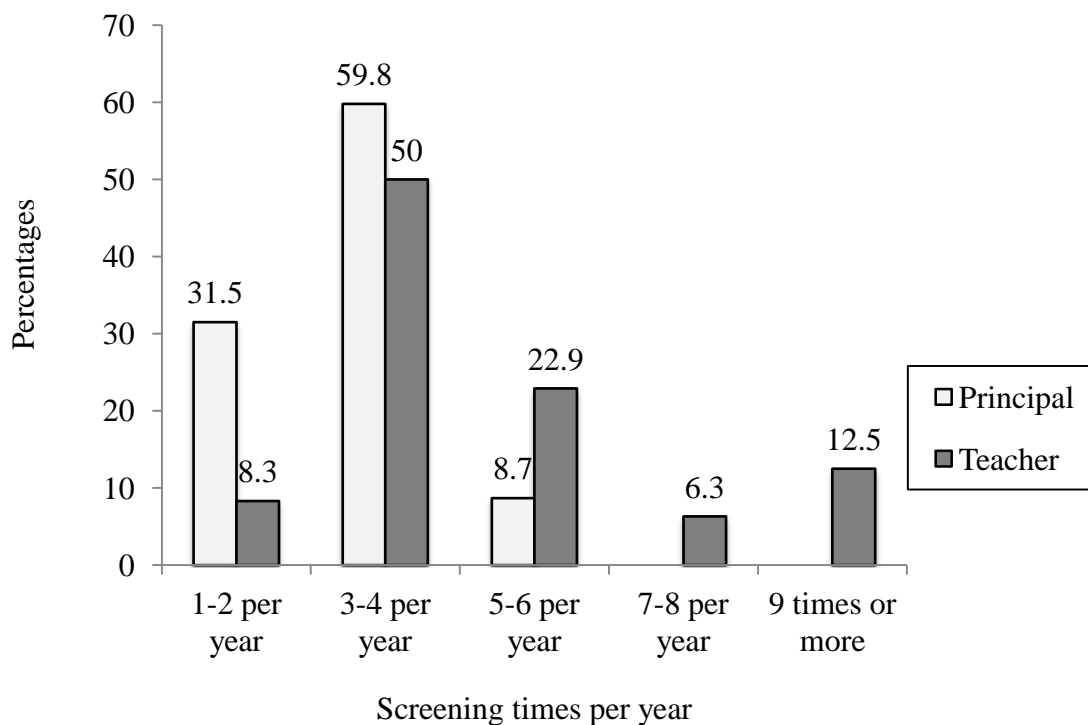
Figure 21. Principals and teachers report the number of times per year students universally screened.

Teacher survey question 18. How often do teachers collaborate with their grade level per week? Reviewing assessment results shortly after a common assessment helps teachers analyze individual student and class results. When learning gaps are evident, teachers can collaborate and determine what instructional changes need to be made so students can be successful the next time (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008). In this study, teachers (89.6%) reported collaborating at least one hour or more per week (see Figure 22).

Those teachers not collaborating (10.4%) were in the minority. Most teachers (42.7%) collaborated one hour each week, and 27.1% of teachers spent approximately two hours of collaboration per week. Some teachers (8.3%) collaborated with their team three hours each week, while other teachers (4.2%) spent four hours collaborating with their coworkers. Also, 8.3% of teachers discussed students' needs with their team as much as five hours or more each week.
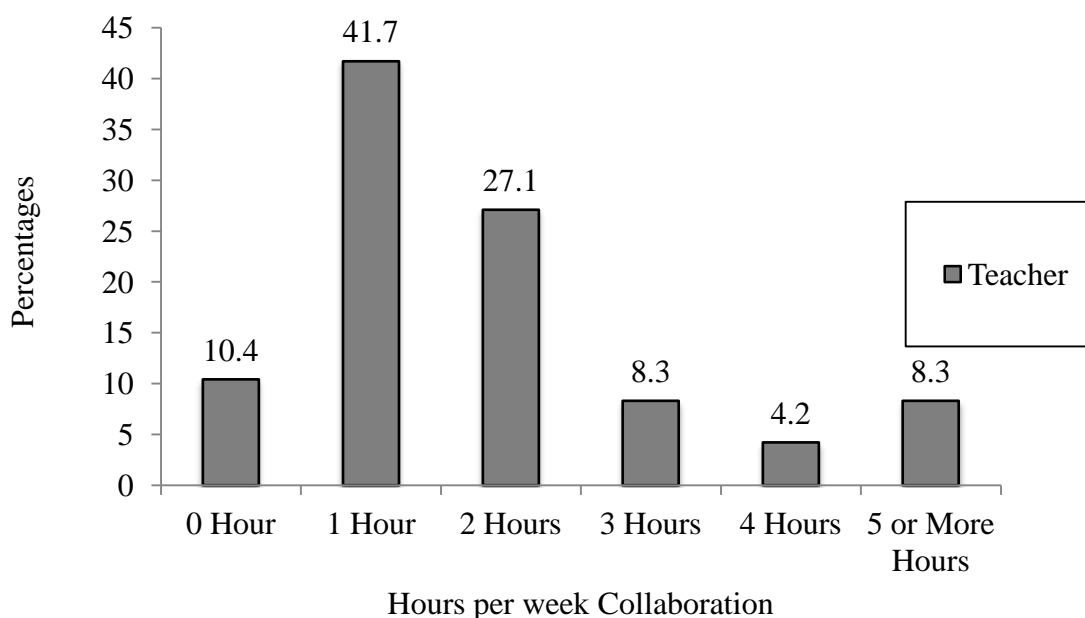
Figure 22. Amount of teacher reported grade level collaboration per week.

Lezotte's Correlate #6 Safe and Orderly Environment

Principal/Teacher survey questions 12/13. Our building operates safe and efficiently. The importance of a safe environment has been clearly shown by previous schools' experiences and society's expectations for schools to be safe places (Sutter, 2009). Principals responded that their buildings operated safely and efficiently with 74% in strong agreement and the remaining principals (26%) in agreement (see Figure 23).

Teachers responded their buildings operated safely and efficiently with 60.4% strongly

agreeing, 33.3% agreeing, 4.2% neutral, and 2.1% disagreeing.
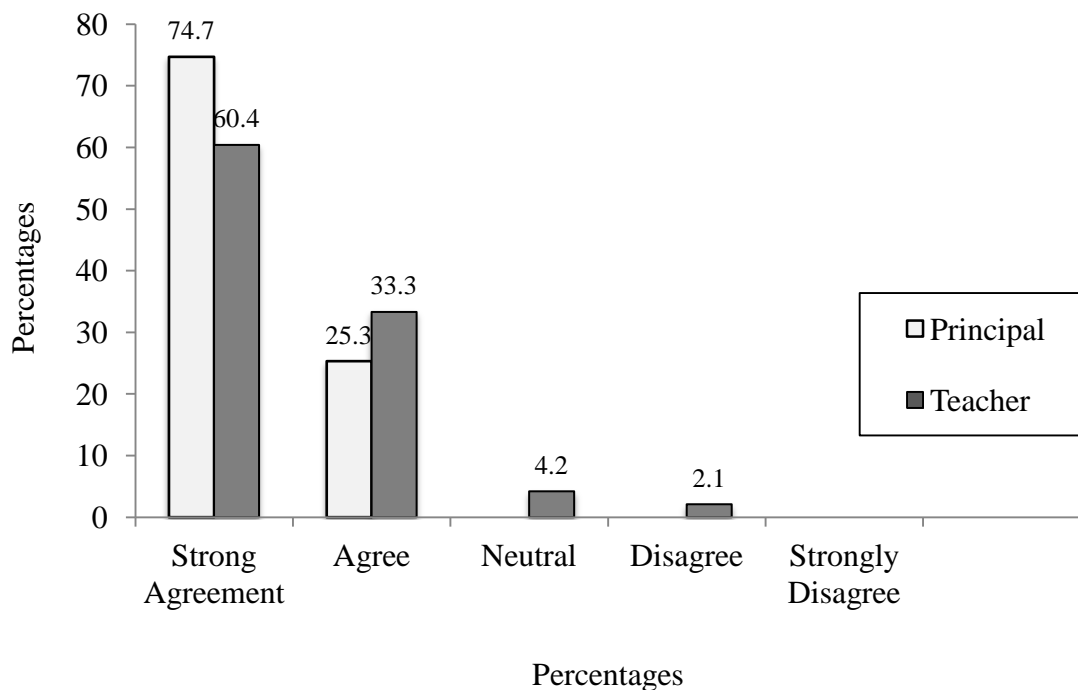
Figure 23. Principal and teacher responses of their school having a safe and orderly

school environment.

Lezotte's Correlate #7 Positive Home-School Relations

   Principal survey question 6. Free and reduced rates for your building are?

Schools must create an orderly environment, where students' needs are met, to allow

learning to thrive (NASP, 2010). Principals of effective schools surveyed reported a wide

range in their school's free and reduced priced meals (see Figure 24). The lowest rate of

free and reduced priced meals (0-10%) was reported in 5.5% of schools. Principals

reported rates of 11-30% in 22.8% of schools, rates of 31-40% in 13% of schools, rates of

41-55% in 23.9% of schools, and rates over 55% in 34.8% of schools. Combining

schools, a rate of over 41% free and reduced priced meals was evident in 58.7% of

schools that met the effective school criterion.
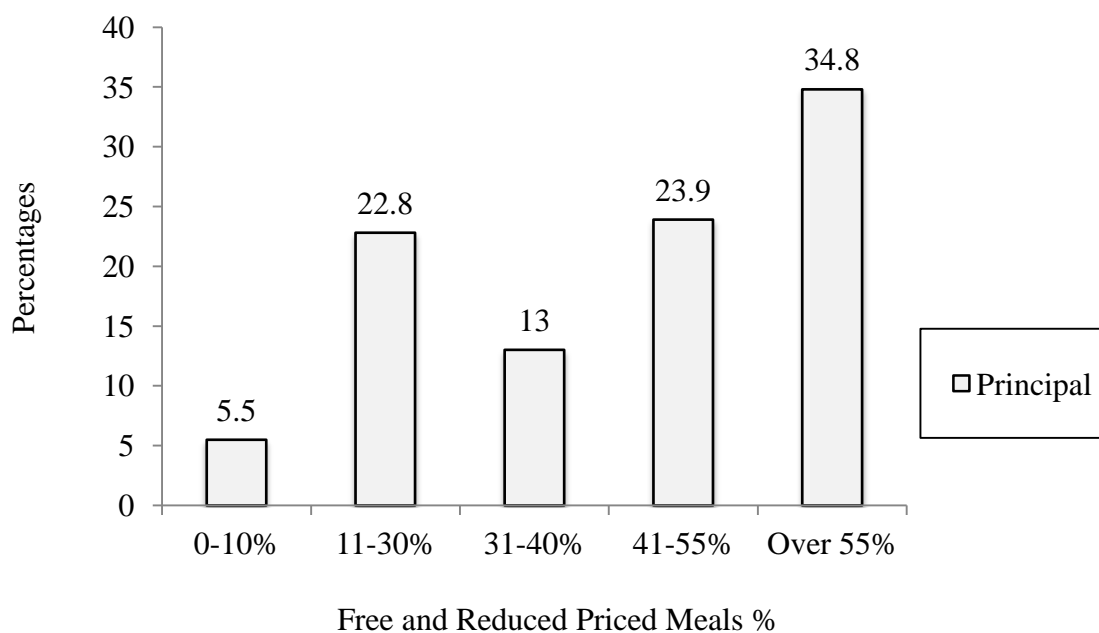
Figure 24. Percentage of reported free and reduced priced meals.

Principal/Teacher survey question 9/10. How would you describe parent

relations? Schools must believe that parents are important to the school's success and

when working with parents as partners, students will be successful (CCSR, 2005).

According to principals, parental support is seen in all buildings but ranges from some

support to essential support (see Figure 25). No building principals reported not having

parental support.

Highly involved parents were found in 39.1% of schools, which makes it the highest category. Functional parent support was reported in 31.5% of buildings, and some support from parents was found in 14.1% of buildings, according to the principal survey. Essential support was reported in 15.3% of buildings.

The teachers surveyed also reported some level of parental support in their schools: highly involved (12.4%); functional support (43.8%), in which parents are regularly participating in schools; and some support (43.8%). Teachers differed from principals on the top level of parent support, essential support (0%), which teachers did not select.
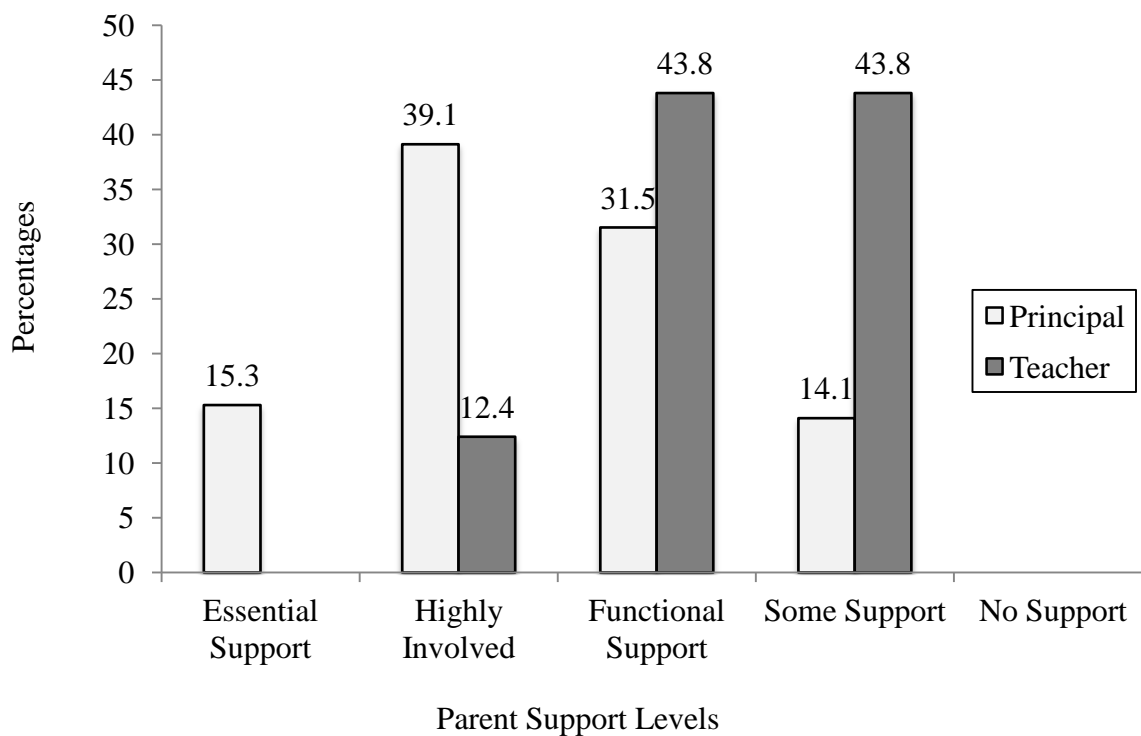
Figure 25. Principal and teacher description of parent relationships.

Summary

A total of 92 principals and 48 lead teachers from highly effective Missouri public elementary schools were surveyed for the purpose of collecting and analyzing data to determine the programs and characteristics that may account for their high achievement. The survey questions were framed within the correlates of effective schools research: High Expectations for Success, Instructional Leadership, Clear and Focused Mission, Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task, Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress, Safe and Orderly School Environment, and Home-School Relations. Using the framework, each survey question was presented, and principal and teacher responses were described. The data were visually displayed in bar graphs.

Overall, the principals and teachers in the high achieving schools reported high expectations for student success, which was substantiated in setting student goals and working collaboratively. Teachers viewed themselves as dedicated, involved with curriculum and instruction, and using instructional strategies to meet each student's needs. Most of the teachers focused on reading, math, and writing, respectively. Behavior systems were in place, and the schools were perceived as safe environments. Parent support was present, although varying from some support to highly involved.

In Chapter Five, a review of the study was presented. The findings of the study, framed from Lezotte's (2011) effective schools correlates, were described. The conclusions were revealed, and recommendations for further research were discussed.

Chapter Five: Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

A continued controversy exists on how to repair the education system, especially when everyone agrees that improvement in the quality of education is needed (Schmoker, 2004). Funding support by the USDOE Race to the Top Fund is assisting to reform states' education systems (USDOE, 2010a). Although, the USDOE funds must be used by states to implement plans to initiate innovative educational reform (The White House, 2009).

The question then becomes, what are the academic programs and characteristics that schools must demonstrate or reforms schools must make to become an effective school that has high student achievement? To respond to this question, the following research questions were posed:

1. What are the selected practices of highly effective Missouri public elementary schools?

2. In what ways are highly effective Missouri public elementary schools meeting the correlates of effective schools?

3. What communication arts and mathematic programs are used by highly effective Missouri public elementary schools?

Review of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the academic programs, characteristics, or reforms used by highly effective public elementary schools in Missouri that mirror Lezotte's (2011) correlates of effective schools, and meet NCLB. In Missouri, meeting assessment proficiency targets each year requires a focused effort on good instruction, a viable curriculum, and effective teachers and leaders (MODESE, 2011b).

The literature related to this study included historical information about school reform, federal laws and programs guiding educational reform, education reform movements including correlates of effective schools and professional learning communities, and other education programs.

The population for this study included elementary schools that achieved AYP goals for the 2011 assessment period. The sampling number was determined by the total number of public elementary schools in Missouri meeting AYP as listed by MODESE for 2011. For the purpose of this study, data collected included, (a) demographic information on survey respondents, (b) types of academic programs used for general education students and subgroup populations, (c) actions by staff that create characteristics of the school environment, (d) mission and goals of the staff, and (e) parental support. The response rate from the survey sent to all 278 elementary school principals was 38% and 28% from the lead teachers.

Findings

Research question 1. What are the selected practices of highly effective Missouri public elementary schools?

The principals and teachers reported that having high expectations for themselves and their students contributed significantly to effective school results. Achieving high expectations, the principal and teachers undertook several selected practices, including a focus on goals and students, working collaboratively, and supporting the school's leadership. Teachers described themselves as dedicated professionals who differentiated instruction and supported student and parent relationships.

High involvement in curriculum with a major instructional focus on reading, followed by math, and then writing, were evident. Time for instructional programs were based on universal screening and students' levels of achievement. The variety of selected instructional programs for special education and subgroup students shows the desire to meet individual student needs. Behavior systems were utilized in the majority of effective schools to address student needs for a safe and orderly environment contributing to higher achievement.

Research question 2. In what ways are highly effective Missouri public elementary schools meeting the correlates of effective schools?

Principals and teachers clearly reported the focus of their work supports the correlates of effective schools. The areas of school focus outlined in the correlates closely matches the goals and procedures effective schools are meeting to be successful. High expectations of principals (91.3%) and teachers (85.4%) and the belief in their fellow teachers being excellent or above average created positive school environments for effective schools.

Strong instructional leadership was found in the high levels of experience and education levels of principals and teachers. Principals and teachers were highly dedicated to improvement of student achievement and their own continued professional development. Both principals' and teachers' high levels of involvement in school curriculum demonstrated concerns of leadership for ensuring student needs are met.

A clear and focused mission showed the support of the school's mission of meeting all student needs and success for all students. Teachers (84.4%) were in support of goals and student achievement. Opportunity to learn and time on task showed a

priority to reading, then math, and writing. Utilization by principals and teachers of a behavior program that created a positive environment so students feel safe and learn in an orderly environment. Frequent monitoring of student progress was found in all schools.

A safe and orderly environment was reported by principals (100%) and teachers (93.7%) who strongly agreed or agree their schools are safe and orderly environments. Positive home-school relations also were shown in effective schools. Principals (85.9%) and teachers (56.2%) reported very high levels of parental support relationships.

Lezotte's correlate #1 Climate of high expectation: Survey results showed that effective elementary school principals (85.7%) and teachers (89.5%) have high expectations for student success, and that the principals (91.3%) and teachers (85.4%) rated their school's teachers as above average or excellent. Teachers believed their three highest reasons for building effectiveness were a focus on goals and students, they worked collaboratively, and had good leadership. Teachers reflected their individual effectiveness came from three key reasons; teacher dedication/professionalism, differentiated instruction, and student/parent relationships.

Lezotte's correlate #2 Strong instructional leadership: Principals in highly effective public elementary schools are experienced leaders, with over 60% completing seven or more years of leadership experience, and 58.3% having been a principal in more than one school. Principals also are highly educated, with 77% having educational degrees above initial certification requirements, and 31.5% having completed a doctoral degree. Building principals (73.9%) reported they have total focus or major involvement

in curriculum and instruction. Principals and teachers both reported they are goal-oriented and strongly believe all students can learn.

Teacher respondents to the survey were an experienced group, with 85% completing over seven years as teachers and 58.3% having taught in more than one building. Multiple building experiences gave teachers an opportunity to view different approaches to instruction and school systems. Teachers (64.6%) had over 11 years of experience, which demonstrates principals selected teachers to take the survey who most likely would provide accurate data. Teachers completed advanced education degrees, with 60.3% completing a master degree and 14.7% completing two or more masters, specialist, or a doctorate degree. Teachers (79.1%) reported total focus or major involvement in curriculum and instruction.

Lezotte's correlate #3 Clear and focused mission: The survey results clearly showed principals (77.1%) and teachers (83.3%) focus on goals that are overwhelmingly based on students. Principals (84.8%) and teachers (87.5%) reported that teachers are highly supportive and goal focused in support of building goals and procedures. The schools' teachers were described as highly dedicated, professional, and supportive of the goals of their principal. They also believed their fellow teachers in their building are more capable and competitive than teachers in other schools.

Lezotte's correlate #4 Opportunity to learn and time on task: The priority curriculum focus of the majority of highly effective schools is on reading, then math, and writing. Principals (59.5%) and teachers (53.2%) reported the reading programs of their schools were based on the adopted textbook series. Although, principals (57.3%) and teachers (66%) also reported the use of guided reading strategies to teach reading.

Teachers (87.2%) estimated that 11-40% of the instructional time per day is devoted to communication arts.

The majority of principals (40.2%) and teachers (36.6%) reported that the adopted math textbook was their primary source for teaching math. Although, principals (29.9%) and teachers (24.4%) responded Everyday Math was used, while other principals (21.8%) and teachers (31.7%) reported using the Investigations Math program. The textbook series, Everyday Math, and Investigation Math were used in the majority of schools.

The principals (82.4%) reported the majority of schools use a behavior support program of some type. The main behavior program cited was the Missouri Positive Behavior System with 43.4% of principals reporting its use in their schools. Teachers (59.6%) also reported the use of the Missouri Positive Behavior System in their schools.

Special education and instructional programs used numerous different programs to meet the needs of at-risk students. A variety of different programs was used for subgroup students. The two main programs for special education were Wilson Reading (9) and modified district curriculum (6), which showed the different approaches to meeting those individual student needs. The use of the Response to Intervention system was reported in 13 schools to meet the needs of at-risk students. Five or less additional resource teachers are available in effective schools to support classroom teachers.

Lezotte's correlate #5 Frequent monitoring of student progress: All schools reported the use of some level of universal screening to determine where students are in the learning process. Principals (70.6%) responded that universal screening was done at least one to four times per year, with the remaining principals (29.4%) reporting

screening five or more times per year. Teachers (58.3%) reported screening students one to four times, with remaining teachers (31.7%) conducting universal screenings five or more times per year for student achievement levels.

Nearly 90% of the teachers reported collaboration at least one hour per week, with 47.9% collaborating more than two hours or more. Teacher collaboration is important for allowing time for teachers to discuss student needs, assessment results, and instructional changes. Collaboration at these levels by teachers creates a culture in which all students can learn.

Lezotte's correlate #6 Safe and orderly environment: Safety is a main requirement, and principals reported agreement or strong agreement (100%) that their schools were safe. Teachers (93.7%) also reported agreement or strong agreement that a safe and orderly school environment exists. The higher the level of safety in the school the higher the level of student achievement.

Lezotte's correlate #7 Positive home-school relations: Parental support was reported in all schools surveyed with the principals reporting essential support, highly involved, and functional support by parents in 85.9% of schools. Teachers also reported high levels of parental support in highly effective schools, with 56.2% reporting highly involved or functional support by parents. Some parental support was reported by 43.8% of teachers. The principals reported 58.7% of their students had free and reduced priced meal rates of 40% or higher. Free and reduced priced meal rates shows the challenges principals and teachers additionally must address for their students' success.

Research questions 3. What communication arts and mathematic programs are used by highly effective Missouri public elementary schools?

Principals reported communication arts programs were based on textbooks (59.2%), with guided reading (57.3%) used to support reading instruction. Teachers also reported textbook (53.2%) use, along with guided reading (66%) as an instructional approach. Other communications arts programs used, as reported by principals, were Accelerated Reading (38.2%), Reading Counts (16.9%), Lexile Reading (23.6%), and Starfall for Kindergarten (21.3%). For reading intervention and tracking progress, programs included Reading Recovery, Read 180, SRA, and Star Reading Assessments.

Principals reported the most used math program was also the adopted textbook series (40.2%). Although, new program approaches to learning math included Everyday Math (29.9%) and Investigations Math (21.8%). Saxon Math, a series also used for home schooling, was used, according to 20.7% of the principals.

Conclusions

The characteristics that schools must demonstrate, or reforms schools must make to become an effective school, include: Principals and teachers of highly effective Missouri public elementary schools were focused on three main selected practices to be an effective school. First, they had a focus on the goals they needed to accomplish, and all those goals were focused on student results.

Second, the staff worked collaboratively to establish the goals, practices, procedures, programs, assessments, and outcomes they desired. Lastly, they gave support to each other, the students, and support for the school's leadership. School leaders should share the results of this study to improve schools in Missouri. Collaboration between

schools and districts is an opportunity to increase student achievement for schools seeking improvement.

Highly effective Missouri public elementary schools do mirror the correlates of the effective schools framework. The seven areas of the correlates closely matched the reported goals and practices of the highly effective Missouri public schools that participated in this study. The high expectations principals and teachers held for themselves and their teachers and students created a positive atmosphere that contributed to their success. Strong instructional leadership was found in the high levels of experience and education levels of principals and teachers.

Principals and teachers reported clear and focused goals that are overwhelmingly based on students. The priority curriculum focus of effective schools is on reading, then math, and writing. Teachers provided quality classroom instruction and individual student support to close achievement gaps.

Many schools use systematic universal screening to determine where students are in the learning process. The principals and teachers also track student progress systematically. A high priority of principals was the safety of students and staff, while maintaining an orderly environment for learning. In this study, Missouri highly effective schools understood the value of parental support and had strong parental support in their schools.

The academic programs effective schools use were communication arts programs based primarily on textbooks, with guided reading used as an instructional approach. Principals responded their highest used math program was also the adopted textbook

series. New exploratory math programs of Everyday Math and Investigations Math were also found to be used in many of the schools.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. The study should be furthered to determine how rural and urban schools differ in programs, practices, and trends.

2. In an effort to increase the validity of the results, a comparison of school responses over time could enhance the results by viewing what programs continue to be used and which programs are dropped in response to lower achievement results.

3. In obtaining more accurate data on effective schools, the study may be expanded to include surrounding states or larger portions of the population. This may be possible with the adoption of the common core curriculum, by having a common yearly assessment by which all schools would be measured.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the academic programs, characteristics, or reforms used by highly effective elementary schools in Missouri that mirror Lezotte's (2011) correlates of effective schools, and meet NCLB. The principals' and teachers' high expectations for themselves and their students were a significant contributor to effective school results. Achieving high expectations, the principal and teachers undertook several selected practices, a focus on goals and students, working collaboratively, and supporting the school's leadership.

The programs, characteristics, and reforms of highly effective Missouri public elementary schools matched the correlates of effective schools framework. A discussion

regarding the findings of the study and the correlates was provided. Conclusions derived from the study included the most notable findings.

Elementary principals and lead teachers from effective schools were focused on goals to accomplish to assure student results. Instructional practices, assessments, and outcomes were established for student success. High expectations, collaboration, and support for the leadership were cited by the principals and teachers as reasons why their schools were effective. To increase individual student support, screening and frequent monitoring of progress were utilized. Students and staff were provided with a safe learning environment and the support of parents.

Appendix A

LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY
Institutional Review Board Disposition Report

To: George Lauritson
CC: Dr. Sherry DeVore
IRB Project Number 12-64
Title: *Selected Practices and Characteristics of Highly Effective Elementary Schools*

The IRB has reviewed your application for research, and it has been approved.

Thank you.

Dana Klar

Dana Klar   Institutional Review Board Chair   Date 3/09/12

Appendix B

E-mail Recruitment Letter
<survey>

Dear <Title> <First Name> <Last Name>,

This is an invitation for you to participate in a survey for a research study entitled,

Selected Practices and Programs of Highly Effective Elementary Schools. I am

completing this study in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a doctorate in

Educational Administration through Lindenwood University. If you would like to

participate in this study, please click here: <link> to access the letter of informed consent.

Yours truly,

George A. Lauritson
Doctoral Candidate
Lindenwood University

Appendix C

Lindenwood University
School of Education
209 S. Kingshighway
St. Charles, Missouri 63301

Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities

Effective Schools Research

Principal Investigator ___George A. Lauritson_____
Telephone: 573-▮▮▮▮▮▮▮   E-mail: glauritson@waynesville.k12.mo.us

Participant_____ Contact info_____

1. Congratulations! You are receiving this email survey because your school achieved AYP in all categories for 2011! You are invited to participate in this research study along with a lead teacher from your building, you select who is knowledgeable about your building practices. This research study is conducted by George A. Lauritson under the guidance of Dr. Sherry DeVore. The purpose of this research is to determine the selected practices and programs of highly effective elementary schools in Missouri.

2. a) Your participation will involve answering the questions in "Effective Schools Survey" either the principal or teacher versions. The survey will take about 10-15 minutes to complete. Approximately, two hundred elementary schools will be involved in this research.

3. There are no anticipated risks associated with this research.

4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about selected practices of effective elementary schools in Missouri.

5. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.

6. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a safe location.

7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, would like a copy of the research results, or if any problems arise, you may call the investigator, George A. Lauritson at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮, or the Supervising Faculty, Dr. Sherry DeVore at 417-

881-0009. You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting <u>Dr. Jann Weitzel.</u> Vice President for Academic Affairs at 636-949-4846.

By completing this survey, you consent to participate in this study

Please click this link for Principal Survey
Please click this link for Teacher Survey

Appendix D

Effective School- Principal

Please complete the following survey:

1. How long have you been a principal?

   A) 0-3 years
   B) 4-6 years
   C) 7-10 years
   D) 11-15 years
   E) 15 years or over

2. How many buildings have you been a principal in?

   A) 1
   B) 2
   C) 3
   D) 4
   E) 5 or more

3. What is your highest completed education degree?

   A) Masters
   B) 2 or more Masters
   C) Specialist Degree
   D) Doctorate

4. As an educational leader your involvement in curriculum and instruction can be defined as?

   A) District directed
   B) Minor involvement
   C) Monitoring
   D) Major Involvement
   E) Total focus

5. Teachers in your building as a whole would be described as?

   A) Uninvolved
   B) Below average
   C) Average
   D) Above average
   E) Excellent

6. Free and reduced rates for your building are?

   A) 0-10%
   B) 11-30%
   C) 31-40%
   D) 41-55%
   E) Over 55%

7. The goals of your building are focused on?

   A) District directed
   B) Teachers
   C) Students
   D) Parents
   E) Building directed

8. How often are all students universal screened or assessed for grade level
  proficiency?

   A) 1-2 times per year
   B) 3-4 times per year
   C) 5-6 times per year
   D) 7-8 times per year
   E) 9 times or more per year

9. How would you describe parent relations?

   A) No support
   B) Some support
   C) Functional support
   D) Highly involved
   E) Essential support

10. Comparing your building to other buildings your staff expectations are?

   A) Below other buildings
   B) Comparable to other buildings
   C) Meet state standards
   D) Competitive with other buildings
   E) Higher than other buildings

11. Teacher support of goals and procedures in your building is?

   A) Isolationalist
   B) Below standard
   C) Adequate
   D) Goal focused
   E) Highly supportive

12. Your building operates safe and efficiently?

   A) Strongly disagree
   B) Disagree
   C) Neutral
   D) Agree
   E) Strongly agree

13. Which statement reflects your building curriculum priority?

   A) Math, Reading and Writing
   B) Writing, Reading and Math
   C) Reading, Writing and Math
   D) Reading, Math and Writing
   E) Math, Writing and Reading

14. Which of the following programs are used at your building?

   A) Positive Behavior System
   B) Character Plus
   C) Fight-Free Schools
   D) BIST
   E) None

 F) Others (Please list)_____

_____

15. What Reading programs do you use?

   A) Starfall
   B) Star Reading
   C) SRA
   D) Ed Mark
   E) LIPS
   F) Lexile Reading
   G) Guided Reading

H) Accelerated Reading
I) Reading Counts
J) Read 180
K) Reading Recovery
L) Textbook Series
M) Other (Please list) _____

_____

16. Which Math programs do you use?

A) Everyday Math
B) Investigations Math
C) Saxon Math
D) Star Math
E) Textbook series
F) Other (Please list) _____

_____

17. How many resource personnel does your building have in addition to classroom teachers?

A) 0-2
B) 3-5
C) 6-8
D) 9-11
E) Over 12

18. Please list programs used for special needs students, either commercial or teacher developed programs.

19. Please list programs you use with any other subgroups of students to improve student achievement.

Appendix E

Effective School- Teacher Leader

Please complete the following survey:

1. How long have you been a teacher?

   A) 0-3 years
   B) 4-6 years
   C) 7-10 years
   D) 11-15 years
   E) 15 years or over

2. How many buildings have you taught in?

   A) 1
   B) 2
   C) 3
   D) 4
   E) 5 or more

3. What is your highest completed education degree?

   A) Bachelors
   B) Masters
   C) 2 or more Masters
   D) Specialist Degree or above

4. As a teacher your involvement in curriculum and instruction can be defined as?

   A) District directed
   B) Minor involvement
   C) Monitoring
   D) Major Involvement
   E) Total focus

5. Teachers in your building as a whole would be described as?

   A) Uninvolved
   B) Below average
   C) Average
   D) Above average
   E) Excellent

6. Teachers allocate what amount of time per day for Communication Arts and
   Math?

   A) 0-10%
   B) 11-30%
   C) 31-40%
   D) 41-55%
   E) Over 55%

7. The goals of your building are focused on?

   A) District directed
   B) Teachers
   C) Students
   D) Parents
   E) Building directed

8. How often are all students universal screened or assessed for grade level

   proficiency?

   A) 1-2 times per year
   B) 3-4 times per year
   C) 5-6 times per year
   D) 7-8 times per year
   E) 9 times or more per year

9. How would you describe parent relations?

   A) No support
   B) Some support
   C) Functional support
   D) Highly involved
   E) Essential support

10. Comparing your building to other buildings teacher expectations are?

   A) Below other buildings
   B) Comparable to other buildings
   C) Meet state standards
   D) Competitive with other buildings
   E) Higher than other buildings

11. Teacher support of goals and procedures in your building are?

   A) Isolationalist
   B) Below standard
   C) Adequate
   D) Goal focused
   E) Highly supportive

12. Your building operates safe and efficiently?

   A) Strongly disagree
   B) disagree
   C) Neutral
   D) Agree
   E) Strongly agree

13. Which statement reflects your building curriculum priority?

   A) Math, Reading and Writing
   B) Writing, Reading and Math
   C) Reading, Writing and Math
   D) Reading, Math and Writing
   E) Math, Writing and Reading

14. Which of the following programs are used at your building?

   A) Positive Behavior System
   B) Character Plus
   C) Fight-Free Schools
   D) BIST
   E) None
   F) Others (Please list)_____

   _____

15. What Reading programs do you use?

   A) Starfall
   B) Star Reading
   C) SRA
   D) Ed Mark
   E) LIPS
   F) Lexile Reading
   G) Guided Reading
   H) Accelerated Reading
   I) Reading Counts

J) Read 180
K) Reading Recovery
L) Textbook Series
M) Other (Please list) _____

_____

16. Which Math programs do you use?

A) Everyday Math
B) Investigations Math
C) Saxon Math
D) Star Math
E) Textbook series
F) Other (Please list)

_____

_____

17. How often do teachers collaborate with their grade level per week?

A) 0-2
B) 3-5
C) 6-8
D) 9-11
E) Over 12

*18. Please write the number one reason why you feel your building is effective.

*19. Please write the number one reason why you are an effective teacher.

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Vita

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