

## ABSTRACT

Title of Document: THE HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S  
PERCEPTIONS OF THE DEMANDS,  
CONSTRAINTS, AND CHOICES IN THEIR  
WORK AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS

Darryl L. Williams, Doctor of Education, 2011

Directed By: Associate Professor Hanne Mawhinney  
Department of Education Leadership, Higher  
Education and International Education

A principal's major role is that of an instructional leader, which, according to research, if done in isolation inhibits his or her effectiveness. Current literature reveals a paucity of research that examines how high school principals balance the demands and constraints of their jobs, while cultivating instructional leadership among their staff. This study described the choices that four high school principals made to focus on instructional leadership, in spite of dealing with the demands and constraints of their jobs. The participating principals have varying years of experience and work in a diverse suburban school district in Maryland. A short survey captured the principals' backgrounds, and face-to-face interviews answered research questions about the demands and constraints of their jobs. The survey used was based on the research work of Rosemary Stewart (1982). The study revealed the principals' perceptions of the instructional and non-instructional demands of their jobs. The researcher used the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework to categorize the principals' responses as instructional leaders and employed Bolman and Deal's (2006) theoretical paradigm to determine whether the principals used

a symbolic, structural, human resources, or political frame to conceptualize their roles and responsibilities. The findings indicate that these four high school principals each took on a distributed leadership approach to instruction. The principals worked closely with assistant principals, department chairpersons, staff development teachers, and other key leaders in their focus on instruction. The principals described the importance of having clear roles and responsibilities for staff and of providing opportunities for staff to develop their abilities through leadership experiences and professional development opportunities. The findings support existing research regarding distributed leadership and the myriad responsibilities of school principals. The findings further support the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), which state that the primary role of the school principal is instructional leadership and asserts that all other non-instructional responsibilities are secondary. This study informs research on the choices that high school principals make to focus on instructional leadership.

THE HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S PERCEPTIONS  
OF THE DEMANDS, CONSTRAINTS, AND CHOICES  
IN THEIR WORK AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS

By

Darryl L. Williams

Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of the University of Maryland, College Park,  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education  
2011

Advisory Committee:

Professor Hanne Mawhinney, Chair  
Associate Professor Robert Croninger  
Professor of Practice Carol Parham  
Professor of Practice Patricia Richardson  
Professor Thomas Weible

© Copyright 2011 by Darryl L. Williams

All Rights Reserved

## Dedication

I extend my thanks, love, appreciation, and sincere regards to my best friend, my wife, Shellie Bronson Williams, who supported me throughout this entire process. I sincerely appreciate your patience, support, and encouragement as I pursued my goal. Without your flexibility, love, and encouraging phrases, I would not have completed this project. I am forever grateful and blessed to have you and our children in my life.

## Acknowledgements

I first would like to acknowledge and thank the administration of my school system and school building for supporting me as I completed my doctoral research study, while working full-time in a very demanding leadership position. I greatly appreciated their support and words of encouragement during this journey.

Also, I want to thank my advisor and committee chairperson, Dr. Hanne Mawhinney, and my other committee members: Dr. Robert Croninger, Dr. Carol Parham, Dr. Patricia Richardson, and Dr. Thomas Weible. I appreciate your expertise, scholarship, and years of service in the field of education. Dr. Mawhinney has been my source of inspiration and provided thoughtful and insightful feedback since the very beginning of my journey. I am eternally grateful to you.

I want to acknowledge my critical friends; who reviewed passages, provided feedback, or asked for frequent updates. I thank Mrs. Myriam A. Rogers, Dr. Nelson McLeod, Dr. Robert Johnson, Dr. Tamitha Campbell, Mrs. Cynthia Eldrige, Dr. Darlene Simmons, Mrs. Brenda Wilks, and the Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) staff.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge Mrs. Lynda Harman, my critical friend and editor. You pushed me to meet some challenging deadlines and provided helpful feedback. I appreciate your professionalism, work ethic, and skills. You are unbelievably talented.

## Table of Contents

Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
List of Tables.....	vi
List of Figures.....	vii
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Research Problem.....	4
The Purpose of the Study.....	5
Research Questions.....	5
Conceptual Framework.....	5
Methods.....	9
Study Sites.....	10
Potential Significance.....	19
Limitations.....	21
Researcher Identity.....	22
Definition of Terms.....	22
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	27
Policy Responses to the Changing Role of the Principal.....	27
Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework.....	30
Principals' Demands, Constraints, and Choices.....	42
Reframing Leadership.....	48
The Development of the Conceptual Framework.....	50
Summary.....	53
Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology.....	55
Rationale for Case Study and Qualitative Research Methods.....	55
<i>Site and Sample Selection</i> .....	56
<i>Data Collection</i> .....	59
Data Analysis.....	61
<i>Within-Case Analysis</i> .....	61
<i>Cross-Case Analysis</i> .....	62
Standards of Quality and Ethical Issues.....	63
Summary.....	64
Chapter 4: Findings.....	65
The Cases.....	65
Case One: Eastern High School and Its Principal.....	66
Case Two: Lexington High School and Its Principal.....	74
Case Three: Reading High School and Its Principal.....	82
Case Four: Ackerman High School and Its Principal.....	91
Summary.....	98
Chapter 5: Cross-Case Analysis of High School Principals' Perceptions.....	105
A Four-Frame Model of Leadership.....	106
<i>Structural Leadership</i> .....	106
<i>Human Resources Leadership</i> .....	134

<i>Political Leadership</i> .....	145
<i>Symbolic Leadership</i> .....	152
Summary of Choices.....	153
Chapter 6: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations.....	157
Research Summary.....	157
Findings.....	159
Conclusions.....	165
Recommendations for Practice.....	167
Suggestions for Further Research.....	168
Final Thoughts.....	169
Appendices.....	172
Glossary.....	187
References.....	191



## List of Tables

Table 1	HS Student Enrollment in Eastland School District	58
Table 2	Within Case Coding of Demands, Constraints, and Choices	62
Table 3	Coding for Principals' Perceptions	62
Table 4	Schools and Principals In Case Study	66
Table 5	Summary of Principals' Perceptions of Constraints	101
Table 6	Summary of Principals' Perceptions of Non- Instructional Demands	102
Table 7	Summary of Principals' Perceptions of Instructional Demands	103

## List of Figures

Figure 2.1	Rosemary Stewart's Framework of Demands, Choices And Constraints	45
Figure 2.2	Analytical Framework of This Case Study taken from Rosemary Stewart	51
Figure 2.3	Conceptual Framework	53

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

As a high school principal, I am frequently questioned by teachers, parents, and community members about my role as a school-based leader and the challenges that I face on a daily basis. Members of my staff frequently mention that my job is very demanding, because they see me at many school activities and meetings where I often must deal with a variety of students, staff, parents, and community partners.

At times, the varying expectations of diverse stakeholder groups can have a significant impact on the role of the high school principal. State boards of education expect schools to prepare students for successful completion of the state assessments called High School Assessments and preparation for post secondary education or the workforce. The school community wants a safe and secured school building and a school facility that is free from drugs, gangs, crime, bullying, and other peer pressures. The staff want the resources necessary to teach the curriculum and students who come to their classrooms with the prerequisites skills to achieve in advanced level courses. Staff members also want an environment conducive to learning--one that includes a clean and working facility, an orderly classroom, and equal representation in the decision-making process. Students want an excellent education with the latest use of technology, a strong extracurricular program, and a variety of advanced-level and college courses, work programs, and internships. Parents want the best instructional programs and the most knowledgeable teachers for their students. Parents also want to be involved with school activities, yet their involvement may vary because of work schedules and the demands of their jobs.

The role of a high school principal is demanding because of these and other expectations from stakeholder groups. Moreover, because of the nature of many demands, high school principals are challenged in maintaining the requisite focus on instructional leadership. Despite these challenges, a number of high school principals have successfully balanced the myriad demands of their position, while providing effective leadership that promotes student achievement.

A number of studies have identified the changing role of the school principal. Research indicates that high school principals must now extend their role beyond school management and classroom instruction. Grubb and Flessa (2006) concluded that the “job of the school principal has become increasingly complex” (p. 519). Grubb and Flessa further stated that principals must serve as instructional leaders, in addition to other responsibilities that traditionally have been required of principals, such as “managerial and political tasks” (p.519). Principals are to manage the school wide instructional program by monitoring the teaching and learning in the classrooms (Hallinger, 2011) and producing great results in student achievement.

Not only does the role of the school principal include aspects of management, instructional leadership, and the involvement of various stakeholders; but today’s principals must deal with all of these components while also responding to the pressures of high stakes accountability. Even with the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act expected in 2012, it is likely that principals will have to address requirements specified in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. NCLB (2001) required that every classroom have an effective teacher, and that every school have an effective principal. This requirement was, of course, well-supported by researchers like Leithwood,

et. al (2004) who long argued that “effective principals are key to improving teaching and school” (p. 7).

Policy makers have also recognized that principals are more than managers; they are instructional leaders. The dual responsibilities of managing the staff and students while monitoring the instructional program is evident in the certification process for administrators and the accountability measures outlined by federal and state governments. For example, administrative certification in Maryland requires future principals and assistant principals to demonstrate leadership competencies and have at least three years of classroom experience. These competencies follow the state’s regulations, as specified in the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework (MILF). Future administrators must pass an examination for administrative certification based on competencies or standards for school leaders developed by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC).

The ISLLC standards specify that: (a) “a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and support by the school community; (b) a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth; (c) a school administrator is an educational leadership who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment; (d) a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with

families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources; (e) a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner; and (f) a school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008). These national standards list the competencies of the principal and identify the job expectations of all school administrators including principals.

Principals are now faced with adhering to national standards (ISLLC), federal law (NCLB), state regulations (MILF), while managing the day-to-day operations of a school building. The tensions between the multiple political and managerial demands facing high school principals, and the expectation that they prioritize instructional leadership, provide the context for the study reported in this dissertation.

### **Statement of the Research Problem**

High school principals have myriad responsibilities within the school building, largely because of the demands of today’s high school, including its size and composition, as well as recent reform initiatives. Research confirms that effective schools have principals who are instructional leaders, but these principals do not work in isolation (Portin, 2004; Grubb & Flessa, 2006, Spillane, 2006). At present, a paucity of research exists that examines how high school principals balance the demands and constraints of their jobs, while cultivating instructional leadership among their staff.

## **The Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study first was to identify strategies that principals use to lessen some of the duties and demands of their daily operations and to collaborate more effectively with key staff members; such as assistant principals, department chairperson, and other staff members with supervisory responsibilities. Secondly, the researcher sought to identify the demands and constraints that principals encounter as a result of the choices they make to focus on instructional leadership.

## **Research Questions**

To this end, this study proposed to answer the following research questions:

1. What do high school principals describe as the instructional and non-instructional demands of their jobs?
2. What do high school principals describe as job constraints that have an impact on instruction?
3. In light of the demands and constraints of their positions, what do high school principals choose to do in order to focus on instructional leadership?

## **Conceptual Framework**

These research questions, which will be discussed further in Chapter 2, were developed to respond to the need for further inquiry into the demands and constraints that high school principals face and the impact of these demands on individual perceptions of the desirability of the job, particularly among those who aspire to practice instructional leadership. For example, Walker and Kwan (2009) identified a number of “motivational factors” for becoming principals. Their research analyzed the work of Pounder and Merrill’s (2001) *Job Desirability of the High School Principalship: A Job Choice Theory*

*Perspective.* Pounder and Merrill found that participants in their study were interested in a high school principalship because of the ability to improve education for students and the income and benefits associated with the job. Their study revealed that significant time demands involved with the high school principalship, such as attendance at athletic events, evening programs, and weekend activities, significantly impacted the selection pool of future principals.

According to Browne-Ferrigno (2003) (citing Educational Research Service, 1998; McAdams, 1998; Young, Peterson, & Short, 2002), “recent reports suggest that filling vacant principalship is becoming problematic because the pool of qualified candidates willing to assume positions as school leaders is growing smaller” (p.469). Walker and Kwan (2009) concurred, and stated that a shortage of principal applicants exists not only across the United States, but throughout the world. Schools are in great need of skilled principals, but perceptions of the principal's job responsibilities and demands seem to have caused a reduction of interest, which has led to a very small pool of qualified candidates.

This dearth of interest in the principalship is highly problematic; as evidenced by a growing body of research confirming that every great school has an effective principal--one who recognizes that the principal position represents only one component of the school's leadership. School leadership extends beyond the principal to include key staff members and other stakeholders in the building. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (as cited in Chrispeels, Burke, Johnson, and Daly, 2008) described a leadership team as a team that works collaboratively to successfully fulfill the complex leadership roles essential to the development of effective schools. (p. 731). Chrispeels and Martin (2002)



stated that school leadership teams need to have a “heterarchical form in which power and authority are more disperse and fluid” (p. 359). Recognizing this context, researchers now call for studies exploring how high school principals manage the demands and constraints of their work in ways that create conditions for school-based instructional leadership to flourish.

As discussed in greater depth in Chapter 2, this study drew on conceptual guidance from two bodies of research: Stewart’s (1982) conceptualization of the demands, constraints and choices in managerial work, and Bolman and Deal’s (2008) explication of frames of leadership. These bodies of research were chosen because they facilitated an analysis of the working conditions of high school principals that clearly demonstrate the need for the multifaceted skill set that researchers have long associated with leadership. Danielson (2007) explained that the leadership role is multifaceted for a school principal, who must take on the responsibilities of the "visionary leader, manager, [and] instructional leader," all while striving to meet testing/accountability standards and address the needs and expectations of multiple stakeholders (pp. 15-16). This conclusion underscores the need for analysis of this issue using both Stewart’s (1982) framework and Bolman and Deal's (2002) depiction of the many frames of school leadership: human resource, symbolic, managerial, political, instructional, and institutional (see Appendix E).

The conceptual framework guiding this study was largely based upon the research of Rosemary Stewart (1982), whose observations and interviews of managers and leaders in the public sector included examinations of industries, commerce, and public services. Researcher and professor, Lowe (2003), described Stewart’s work:

Her work, spanning five decades, stands as a testimony to the benefits of a truly cumulative and programmatic research program focused on systematically exploring a phenomenon layer-by-layer, nuance-by-nuance. Her research methods were (and remain) innovative, exhaustive, and cutting edge. Using a battery of techniques such as structured interviews, diaries, structured observations, group discussions, case analyses, and critical incidents, Stewart was developing grounded theory work and implementing method triangulation before those approaches had fashionable labels. Among the many important contributions emerging from this work are the demands-constraints-choices framework and the notion of managerial exposure, useful models for defining differences in managerial work and discretion across jobs. (p.193)

According to Lowe (2003), “Human resource scholars interested in more effective utilization of the performance appraisal process, improving managerial development processes, and for an alternative perspective on person-job-organization fit will be informed by [Stewart’s] body of work” (p. 194). The researcher Sergiovanni (2009) described Stewart’s work in his work regarding the principalship. Sergiovanni stated that “one hallmark of a successful principal is her or his ability to expand the area of choices and thus reduce demands and constraints” (p.46). He further stated that “this extra margin of latitude makes an important difference in enhancing the overall effectiveness of the school” (p.46). Stewart’s (1982) framework of demands, constraints, and choices was the entry point of the development of the conceptual framework for this study.

This study also drew conceptual guidance from the work of theorists and authors Bolman and Deal (2008), who developed four models for understanding organizations and leadership, which include structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames. These frames describe the need for managers in private and public organizations “to understand similarities and differences among all types of organizations” (p. ix) and further stated that their “work with a variety of organizations around the world has

continually reinforced [their] confidence that the frames are relevant everywhere” (p. ix).

Specifically, Bolman and Deal found:

[Leaders] need multiple frames to survive. They need to understand that any event or process can serve several purposes and that participants are often operating from different views of reality. Managers need a diagnostic map that helps them assess which lenses are likely to be salient and helpful in a given situation. Among the key variables are motivation, technical constraints, uncertainty, scarcity, conflict, and whether an individual is operating from the top down or from the bottom up. (p. 326)

Chapter 2 provides a full description of the development of the conceptual framework that guides this study and expounds upon Bolman and Deal’s (2008) delineation of multiple frames and Stewart’s (1982) conception of the work of the manager.

## **Methods**

This dissertation reports on a qualitative study of four high schools in a suburban school district. The study explored the experiences of each high school's principal; and the demands, constraints, and choices they face as instructional leaders. Chapter 3 explains the research design and methodology, and Chapter 4 provides a description of the schools and background information for the principals.

The high schools were selected based on location, student enrollment, staff size, academic performance, and the availability of special programs at the school. The principals of these four high schools agreed to participate in this study and then completed a survey that explored the principals' backgrounds, along with the potential demands and constraints of their jobs. The principals also participated in interviews, where they answered a number of questions about the demands and constraints that they frequently faced in their roles as instructional leaders. The interview questions were based on the work of Rosemary Stewart (1982) and Bolman and Deal (2008). Chapter 5

provides an analysis of the findings of the study, and details both the similarities and differences in leadership styles and choices among the four participants.

### **Study Sites**

The study examined specific examples of the challenges of principalship and the ways in which four high school principals in a suburban Maryland school district chose to work with other leaders in their school building. The study was conducted in Eastland School District, a large public school district in a suburban county with 26 comprehensive high schools. Eastland School District and all names of schools and individuals used in the district are pseudonyms. The average high school student enrollment in this school district was 1740, and the average middle school student enrollment was 800. To become a high school principal in Eastland School District, a candidate must have experience as a teacher and assistant principal at the high school level. Many novice high school principals began as middle school principals and then moved to the high school level.

In July 2000, the new superintendent of Eastland School District developed a strategic plan that focused on mandated system targets for every level, including elementary, middle and high schools. In response to this plan, high school principals, along with their school-based leadership teams, analyzed various data sources on student achievement and developed school-wide improvement plans to address the following targets for all student groups and subgroups: the increased completion of Algebra II at the 11<sup>th</sup> grade level; improved participation and performance in honors and AP courses; reduction of suspension rates; increased graduation rate; increased participation in and

improved performance on the PSAT, SAT and ACT; and a decrease in the ineligibility rate for extracurricular activities.

The superintendent's implementation of the new strategic plan began with a presentation to all central office and school-based administrators, which focused on student achievement in all ethnic groups. Following the presentation, the principal supervisors explained to their principal teams that the expected vision for all school-based administrators was to analyze root causes of low student performance on standardized tests and to develop action steps to increase participation and performance in Algebra, and on SAT/ACT and Advanced Placement (AP) examinations.

The district superintendent, along with the principals' union, developed a professional growth system for all administrators. This professional growth system included a comprehensive evaluation system that listed criteria to meet the seven standards: (a) "vision of teaching and learning; (b) high expectations; (c) instructional program and staff professional growth; (d) management of the organization; (e) collaboration with stakeholders; (f) professionalism and professional growth; and (g) political, social, socio-economic, legal, and cultural context" (Eastland School District, 2009, pp 15–28). During the time of this study, between December 2009 and May 2010, principal supervisors conducted evaluations based on evidence of competency in each of these seven standards. The individual school data results, based on the targets, were used as part of the collection of evidence to substantiate each standard in the principals' evaluations. Principals understood the expectations of meeting the system targets and how these data points were used in the evaluation system.

While this study was underway, NCLB established certain requirements, including that state testing in mathematics, English, and reading, and high schools had to meet each state's testing standards. In response to these requirements, principals had to create supportive programs for students, so that they could pass these state assessments and earn a high school diploma. Principals and teachers also focused more heavily on supporting at-risk student groups; such as African-American and Hispanic populations, students receiving special education services, students identified as English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and Free and Reduced Meals Students (FARMS). In addition, principals had to monitor the implementation of curriculum and ensure that highly-qualified teachers were teaching the core content areas of English, mathematics, social studies, foreign language, and science. These state testing requirements, along with the new system targets, became additional demands on the high school principals in Eastland School District; but these testing requirements, and the student performance on these tests, determined a school's ability to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). To the parent community, not meeting the state's target was interpreted as a possible failing school.

Because of NCLB requirements, the Eastland Central Office staff placed expectations on administrators and teachers to prepare students for successful completion of the four state assessments in English; biology; national, state and, local government; and algebra/data analysis. The high school principals were expected to address the NCLB and state requirements, as well as the system targets defined by the superintendent. Essentially, these principals had to deal with multiple assessment mandates regarding student performance. Furthermore, high school principals were responsible for hiring

highly-qualified staff; reducing teacher turnover, designing staff development and school improvement plans to achieve reputable results in student and teacher performances, maintaining a clean, safe, and secure environment for students, staff and parents; and establishing relationships with businesses and community groups to promote collaboration and financial partnerships.

In 2004, a high school reform movement began to permeate throughout the schools nationally for the preparation of students for post-secondary education and the workforce. To meet the needs of high school students through school reform models, national organizations and task force of researchers, practitioners from school districts, organizations and higher education provided recommendations and strategies to improve high schools based on research and practices among successful administrators and school districts. High school principals in Eastland School District began to create unique programs for their students after studying research in the National Association of Secondary School Principals' (2004) report, *Breaking ranks II: Strategies for leading high school reform* and reading recommendations from the Eastland School District's (2004) *Report of the high school task force*. In *Breaking ranks II*, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) identified three major strategies for improving student performance: "Sowing the seeds for change: collaborative leadership, professional learning communities, and the strategic use of data; Personalizing the school environment; and Making learning personal: curriculum, instruction, and assessment" (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2004). In Eastland School District's (2004) report, authors identified four major components of success for the high

achieving high school: “ leadership; instruction, assessment, and accountability; structure and organization; and climate and support” (p.5).

In response to these reports, high school principals created programs and activities to meet the needs of their students and provide a sense of uniqueness among their schools. These reports provided key strategies to aid the principals in their efforts to redesign their high schools and successfully prepare their students for college and careers.

The 26 high schools in Eastland School District became unique because of special programs, student demographics, and track records of success. The four high schools selected for this study differed from each other in student demographics, special programs, and staff enrollment, as well as in assistant principal and department chairperson allocations. Although the schools differed, the school leadership team was common at every high school. In Eastland School District, school leadership at the secondary school level included the principal, assistant principals, department chairpersons, and other key staff persons with supervisory and managerial responsibilities. Selected parent and student leaders were included as participants of the school leadership team. In Eastland School District’s (2004) report, the findings listed several Standards for Success. Standard for Success #3 states the following:

The high-achieving high school has a principal who effectively guides and supports the mission of student success. A strong principal and leadership team lead the high-achieving high school. The principal leads by example and encourages collaboration, professional growth, community participation, and continuous improvement. (p. 9)

Community participation and stakeholder involvement provided opportunities for principals and leaderships teams to get regular feedback and to hear about successes and



challenges within the school building. Stakeholders were involved in the decision making process, and the conversations that led to action steps designed to meet the system and state's targets.

Despite the necessity for collaboration, and the many other responsibilities of their position, the principal has a key role to play when it comes to instructional leadership. In 2005, the Maryland State Departments of Education (MSDE) developed the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework (MILF) to provide school leaders with a set of regulations that defined instructional leadership and provided evidence of practice that is expected of all administrators. To develop the MILF guidelines, a workgroup of administrators from Maryland school districts, higher education faculty in Maryland, and members of MSDE researched the different definitions and practices of instructional leadership. They worked together to compile feedback and reports from the Division for Leadership Development (DLD) of the Maryland Instructional Leadership Development Program, Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), National Staff Development Council (NSDC), National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), Breaking Ranks II (BR II), National Middle School Association (NMSA), National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), and National Policy Board for Educational Administration, Education Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) (Maryland State Department of Education, 2005, p. 8). Workgroup members designed the MILF as a means to address the concerns from many constituents that all administrators, including principals, needed to place more focus on

instruction and lessen those activities that did not reinforce instructional leadership (Maryland State Department of Education, 2005).

The MILF details a number of “outcomes expected of Maryland principals as they provide instructional leadership for their schools” (Maryland State Department of Education, 2005, p.1). These outcomes consist of the following: "(1) “facilitate the development of a school vision; (2) align all aspects of a school culture to student and adult learning; (3) monitor the alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment; (4) improve instructional practices through the purposeful observation and evaluation of teachers; (5) ensure the regular integration of appropriate assessments into daily classroom instruction; (6) use technology and multiple sources of data to improve classroom instruction; (7) provide staff with focused, sustained, research-based professional development; and (8) engage all community stakeholders in a shared responsibility for student and school success” (Maryland State Department of Education, 2005, pp. 9-12).

For each of these outcomes, the MILF provides “evidences in practice that delineate the minimum of what [MSDE] expect[s] principals to know and be able to do if the respective leadership outcome is to be realized” (Maryland State Department of Education, 2005, p.1). The framework is not inclusive of all of the responsibilities of a principal, but it “focuses, instead, on the content-knowledge needed for school principals to be the leader of teaching-learning in the school” (p.2). As the MILF itself states, “It represents the most commonly accepted instructional leadership responsibilities according to respected practitioners, researchers, and theorists in the field of instructional leadership and continuous improvement” (p.2). MILF is a resource for all administrators

to use to identify those practices that support instructional leadership, as defined by the MSDE.

According to the Maryland Task Force, the purpose of the MILF was “to clear the plate” of principals, so they can focus on instructional leadership (Maryland State Department of Education, 2005). The MILF defines its primary goals as the following:

- “Drive the instructional leadership curriculum of the Division for Leadership Development, MSDE;
- Guide instructional leadership professional development for veteran, new, and potential school leaders
- Serve as a catalyst for the alignment of professional development for Executive Officers (those who supervise and evaluate principals as defined in Code of Maryland Regulations [COMAR] 13A.01.04.02B);
- Provide a self-assessment/reflective practice tool for principals and potential school leaders;
- Promote dialogue in districts around matters of instructional leadership;
- Be referenced in policy through the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR);
- Influence future policy decisions about the principalship; Be incorporated into a part of the program approval process used by institutions of higher education to guide their principal preparation programs; and
- Serve as the Maryland-specific evidence in practice for the instructional leadership component of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards” (Maryland State Department of Education, pp. 3-4).

Maryland state regulations in COMAR required that school administrators in Eastland and other local school districts meet all MSDE expectations; including those mandating that school principals prioritize their role as instructional leaders.

With these mandates, *instructional leadership* became a familiar term in the Maryland school districts. May and Supovitz (2011) stated that “through the lineage of studies, a conventional wisdom has emerged that instructional leadership [is] an essential factor in school improvement” (p.333). Consistent with these ideas, the MILF serves as a valuable blueprint for school district administrators, principals, and other administrators in their work as instructional leaders (Maryland State Department of Education, 2005). In Maryland, MILF is referenced in state and school district policy, and systems like Eastland have incorporated MILF outcomes into their evaluation of school administrators. By doing such, the goals of MILF become consistent practices among all principals and administrators and align with their evaluation tools.

Each school district has its own process for evaluating principals. In Eastland School District, principals are evaluated based on the following leadership standards, which are closely related to MILF: (a) “Facilitates the development, articulation, implementation and stewardship of a vision of teaching and learning shared and supported by the school community; (b) nurtures and sustains a school culture of professional growth, high expectations and an instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth; (c) ensures the management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment; (d) collaborates with the school staff and other stakeholder groups including students, families, and community members; (e) models professionalism and professional growth

in a culture of continuous improvement; and (f) understands, responds to, and influences the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context” (Eastland School District, n.d.). The evaluation process occurs during the first two years for beginning principals, and then once every three years for veteran administrators. MSDE’s MILF and Eastland School District’s evaluative standards are written differently, but maintain some similarities regarding the role of principals. However, unlike MILF, the school district’s evaluative tool addresses the management and operations of the school building in addition to instructional leadership.

At the time of this study, Eastland School District had instituted many expectations and targets that impacted the high school principals; including ISLLC, NCLB, the strategic plan for Eastland School District, and MILF, which was unique to all school districts in Maryland. Since Eastland School District is located in Maryland, this study employed the MILF to illustrate the instructional leadership styles of the four high school principals who were the focus of inquiry.

### **Potential Significance**

This study makes a significant contribution to practice by outlining actions that high school principals take to develop instructional leaders within the school building and by suggesting effective practices for aspiring principals in large school districts. In *Choice of Managers*, Rosemary Stewart (1982) describes the demands, constraints, and choices of managers in the public sector. This study focused on the demands, constraints and choices of principals in high school settings. Taking Stewart’s model and applying it to an educational setting helped to identify certain demands faced by high school principals. Many demands may be associated with the impact of NCLB, while others may

arise from the pressures to meet the school system's targets, adhere to the state's definition of instructional leadership, align with the school system's evaluation system, and field a number of other external pressures.

High school principals may face constraints involving school composition, student and staff demographics, or their experiences as principals. Pounder and Merrill (2001) discovered that a “desire to achieve and influence or improve education” and “salary and benefits” were the most attractive reasons for seeking a high school principalship (p. 46). However, the data revealed that a number of factors, such as “time demands of the position (e.g., evening and weekend work, balancing work and family demands)” and “the kinds of problems and dilemmas that often accompany the position (e.g., ethical dilemmas, student behavior problems, termination of unfit employees, union grievances)” also can make the role seem less appealing to potential school leaders (p. 46).

This study makes a contribution to practice by identifying strategies that principals can employ to be successful in their buildings. The study identified ways to present the principal's position in a more attractive light than usually described by the media, which may change perceptions of the role for potential administrators. The principalship can be a rewarding opportunity to positively affect the lives of students and teachers, while advancing one's own career.

Grubb and Flessa (2006) examined schools that have alternative structures of leadership, which included the employment of a principal, co-principals, and rotating principals or teachers that assumed the responsibilities of principals. Findings of the current study offered insights into the viability of such alternative structures. This inquiry

also contributed to the emerging body of research on the ways that principals delegate their responsibilities and their reasoning for employing a distributed leadership style. In addition, the study identified strategies to help newly-appointed high school principals balance the pressure of the job and increase the retention rate of new school leaders.

As mentioned above, Stewart (1982) originally developed her framework for managers in the public sector, not for instructional leaders in a school building. High school principals play a role as managers, but management is not the sole responsibility and purpose of a high school principal. Stewart's (1982) framework addresses the working conditions of a manager and the working relationships between “subordinates,” or staff, and the “supervisor,” or principal. This study revealed that the efforts of high school principals to promote instructional leadership in their buildings are significant and have a direct impact upon the roles and responsibilities of assistant principals and individuals in other key positions.

### **Limitations**

This case study has several limitations. First, the study is limited to the sample size, consisting of four high school principals, which is too small to make generalizations about the effects of instructional leadership. Additionally, the selection of Eastland School District may not be representative of school districts around the country, because of the socio-economic variables of both the district and cities within the school district. Also, the school district has an “aspiring principal” program and an assistant principal development program, both unique to the district, which have been in place for over 20 years.

This study does not seek to explain fully all of the actions of a high school principal; but instead, specifically reviewed the choices of the high principals and their decisions to focus on instructional leadership. Although the respondents were all high school principals, this study is expected to contribute to instructional leadership at the middle school level as well, because of both the accountability measures of NCLB and the existence of similar staffing positions; including team leaders, assistant principals, and department chairpersons; at the middle school level.

### **Researcher Identity**

During the period in which this study was completed, I was a high school principal in the Eastland School District. I had three years of experience as a principal at my school, and an additional two years of experience as principal at another high school. Prior to my initial appointment as a high school principal, I spent three years as a middle school principal. My interest in studying the demands and constraints that high school principals face when choosing to practice instructional leadership grew out of these experiences. I had come to realize that I faced many demands; the most obvious was the need to demonstrate continuous improvement in student achievement in all target areas. As I entered each new assignment as a principal, I realized that I needed to rely on key personnel in the building and develop their skills to maintain a high level of accountability and better staff performance, both of which would lead to higher student achievement. I made strategic choices designed to improve student achievement and demonstrated instructional leadership in my work with staff. My interest in exploring how other principals went about making such choices led to this study.



## **Definitions of Terms**

*Administrative Team:* A group, typically consisting of the principal and assistant principals, that is responsible for the leadership and oversight of the school.

*Assistant Principal:* Eastland School District (n.d.) describes the assistant principal as an administrator that assists with managing and supervising the total school program and providing educational leadership for the students and staff members that is consistent with the educational goals of the community. Functions include establishing a climate conducive to learning; planning and coordinating programs; effecting change; and making key decisions (Eastland School District, n.d.).

*Business Manager (School-based):* Eastland School District (n.d.) describes the business manager as the individual who provides overall leadership related to the financial management of the school, facility management, and management of other aspects of the school not directly related to the instructional program. The business manager oversees the school's budget and financial functions, in accordance with Board policy and regulations; directs the use of the school facility; provides guidance to food service school personnel, transportation, purchasing and procurement programs; collaborates with the school leadership team to effectively manage human resources; and ensures the school derives maximum benefit from its budget (Eastland School District, n.d.). The business manager contributes to the school's overall development as an active member of the school leadership team. He or she is responsible for providing comprehensive and accurate financial information to school leadership and the School Board in a timely manner, to enable the school to plan and take appropriate management action (Eastland School District, n.d.).

*Department Chairperson (resource teacher):* Eastland School District (n.d.) describes the department chairperson (or high school resource teacher) as a teacher who supervises a department of teachers. The department chairperson (resource teacher) provides leadership to a department or subject field(s) within a high school, under the supervision of school administration. A department chairperson (resource teacher) supports classroom teachers in the instructional program, serves as an instructional role model, supports the development of a professional learning community within the department and school, observes and analyzes instructional practices related to teachers' professional growth and evaluation, collaborates with supervisors and colleagues on instructional issues, takes a leadership role in the handling of instructional resources, supports the development of the master schedule, keeps current on content and best practices in the specified subject field, and serves as a liaison to the central office on subject matter and instructional issues (Eastland School District, n.d.).

*Distributed Leadership:* Spillane (2006) stated that distributed leadership means more than shared leadership. The three elements of practice, interactions, and situation are essential to distributed leadership. First, "leadership practice must be the central and anchoring concern. Second, leadership practice must be generated through the interactions of leaders, followers, and their environment. Each of these elements is essential for leadership practice. Third, the situation both defines leadership practice and is defined through leadership practice" (p.4).

*Instructional Leadership:* Hallinger's (2000) instructional leadership model has three dimensions: defining the school's mission; managing the instructional program (focusing on supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum, and

monitoring student progress); and promoting a positive school-learning climate (protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, and providing incentives for learning).

*Instructional Leadership Team:* The instructional leadership team consists of a principal, assistant principal(s), department chairpersons, and other key staff, students, and parents.

*Instructional Technology Specialist:* – Eastland School District (n.d.) describes the instructional technology specialist as someone who provides all levels of user support and technology administration. Based on the assigned level, this work may include analyzing and resolving problems related to workstations, networks, servers, and printers; performing systems analysis; designing and implementing configuration changes; and performing related duties as required or assigned (Eastland School District, n.d.).

*Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework (MILF):* The Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework (2005) consists of eight outcomes: facilitate the development of a school vision; align all aspects of a school culture to student and adult learning; monitor the alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment; improve instructional practices through the purposeful observation and evaluation of teachers; ensure the regular integration of appropriate assessments into daily classroom instruction; use technology and multiple sources of data to improve classroom instruction; provide staff with focused, sustained, research-based professional development; and engage all community stakeholders in a shared responsibility for student and school success.

*Media Specialist* – Eastland School District (n.d.) describes the media specialist as the individual who plans and administers the school's library media program. The media

specialist provides direct instruction to students and training to staff; manages library media center material, facilities, and equipment; and communicates the school library media program to administrators, staff, students, parents and the broader community (Eastland School District, n.d.).

*Paraeducator* – Eastland School District (n.d.) describes the paraeducator as the person who assists teachers by performing a variety of tasks that promote student learning and well being. Duties involve working with students individually and in small groups to assess performance; reinforce instruction; motivate learning; and assist with classroom management, clerical, and other non-instructional work (Eastland School District, n.d.).

*Staff Development Teacher* – Eastland School District (n.d.) describes the staff development teacher (SDT) as the individual who fosters development and growth of professional learning communities and facilitates job-embedded staff development. In collaboration with administrators, teachers, and other stakeholders; the SDT supports the goal of building staff capacity to meet system-wide and local school initiatives to increase student learning (Eastland School District, n.d.).

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This chapter begins with an examination of policy response to the changing role of the principal, including NCLB and the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework (MILF). The purpose of the study was to identify strategies that principals use to lessen some of the duties and demands from their daily operations and to collaborate more effectively with key staff members. This review of research was designed to highlight the literature on the changing role of the school principal. The chapter examines these changes through the lenses of policies such as NCLB and the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework; research on instructional and distributed leadership, including the role of school leadership teams; the demands, constraints, and choices of principals, based on Stewart's (1982) work; and the four-framed leadership model developed by Bolman and Deal (2008). The conceptual framework of this study was designed based on a combination of Stewart's (1982) framework on choices of managers; MILF (2005); and Bolman and Deal's (2008) work on a four-framed leadership model of human resources, structural, symbolic, and political frames. The final section of this chapter discusses the relationship of the literature on the demands of the principal as an instructional leader to this study.

### **Policy Responses to the Changing Role of the Principal**

According to Portin (2004), leading schools is complex work. Researchers have defined the complexity of this work in many ways (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Grubb and Flessa (2006) stated that the principal "is responsible for hiring and perhaps firing teachers, coordinating bus schedules, mollifying

angry parents, disciplining children, overseeing the cafeteria, supervising special education and other categorical programs, and responding to all the stuff that walks in the door” (p.519). Pounder and Merrill (2001) agreed and stated that “time demands of the position (e.g. evening and weekend extracurricular supervision responsibilities, balancing the demands of job and family)” make the job challenging (p.48). These factors represent just a few examples of the complexities of the high school principal's position. The principals in this study described the demands and challenges that they faced, and the strategies they adopted to lessen the demands of their job, while serving as an instructional leader. The principals' responses concurred with existing research that described the role of the principal as multifaceted and complex.

According to Horng, Klasik, and Loeb (2009), principals play a major role in school operations “through motivating teacher and students, identifying and articulating vision and goals, developing high performance expectations, fostering communication, allocating resources, and developing organizational structures to support instruction and learning” (p. 1). Eastland School District demonstrated a similar notion of the role of the principal and noted that high school principals are “responsible for administering and supervising the total school program and providing educational leadership for the students and staff members consistent with the educational goals of the community” (Eastland School District website, n.d.). These expectations require principals to serve as instructional leaders by working with staff to create a strong instructional program that fosters effective teaching and learning.

One active and major role of principals in the instructional program is hiring, developing, and maintaining teachers and staff (Harris, Rutledge, Ingle, & Thompson, 2006). Horng, Klasik, and Loeb (2010) reported that principals can “affect the instructional quality of schools through the recruitment, development, and retention of teachers” (p.491). The composition of teachers and staff greatly impacts the instructional program of any school, and NCLB requires that schools have highly qualified and effective teachers in every classroom.

In *Breaking Ranks II*, one of the recommendations for high school reform speaks to the quality of teachers and their ability to “design high-quality work and teach in ways that engage students, encourage them to persist, and, when the work is successfully completed, result in student satisfaction and their acquisition of knowledge, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and other abilities valued by society” (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2004, p. 126). High quality schools have effective teachers who impact student achievement (Hanushek, 2011) and student achievement is based on a myriad of indicators, such as the targets indicated in the strategic plan of Eastland School District. As the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) (2004) states; effective teachers know their subject, are well-versed in strategies for teaching their subject, and effectively meet the needs of their students. Because principals are involved in the instructional program through the hiring of effective teachers, everyone from the parents and school staff to the federal government hold both principals and teachers accountable for meeting benchmarks on high stakes tests.

No Child Left Behind (2001) created accountability measures that include state assessment benchmarks, and principals and teachers are feeling the pressures to prepare students for successful completion of these assessments. Cushing, Kerrins and Johnstone (2003) state that “principals are responsible for implementing curriculum mandates that include getting all students – including English language learners and students with identified learning handicaps – to achieve high standards, and for student performance on high-stakes assessments that could result in the eventual closing of the school” (p. 28). Local school systems have developed “district-guided curriculum and aligned assessments, coherent professional development, frequent monitoring, and use of data for decision making as well as the development of a shared vision” (Chrispeels, Burke, Johnson & Daly 2008, p. 739) in response to these mandates. Such demands have resulted in key changes to the role of the principal, because of the politics of state and federal testing and accountability measures. Failure to meet the accountability measures over a period of time can result in the replacement of all or most of a school's staff, the conversion of a traditional public school to a charter school, or permanent closure of a school (Maryland State Department of Education, n.d.). Principals are experiencing the pressure to serve in a different role because of the political demands to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as outlined in NCLB.

**The Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework.** In response to heightened expectations to address accountability requirements set out in the NCLB Act, states like Maryland recognized the importance of prioritizing the instructional leadership role of principals. The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) took a proactive approach and sought to explore research regarding instructional leadership, the



principalship, and strategies for reducing the non-instructional responsibilities of local principals (Maryland State Department of Education, 2000). MSDE convened a group of local educators and administrators in public education and higher education to define the role of principals. This taskforce concluded that the principalship is the most demanding position in the school building (MSDE, 2000).

According to two separate reports from MSDE, the *Maryland task force on the principalship* and *Achievement matters most: The final report of the visionary panel for better schools* the role of the principal is that of an instructional leader (Maryland State Department of Education, 2000; 2002). In *Achievement matters most*, a task force of educators and administrators recommended that “the principal’s primary role must be that of instructional leader, and that role must take priority over all other roles and responsibilities” (Maryland State Department of Education, 2002, p. 56). NCLB mandates that every school has an effective principal, and according to MSDE, an effective principal is one who prioritizes instructional leadership.

The members of the Maryland Task Force on the Principalship summarized the “role of the principal” as follows:

Noting that extraneous responsibilities impede principals’ ability to fulfill their primary role as instructional leader/facilitator, the task force recommends that the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and all 24 local school systems ‘clear the plate’ of those functions that do not contribute in a substantive way to this role. The task force further recommends that this be accomplished by giving principals sufficient staff and support and the power to use staffing creatively to build an effective leadership team; recommending triennially to state and local officials which tasks, responsibilities, duties, and regulations can be removed from the principalship; and awarding grants for current and proposed efforts focused on redefining the principalship. (p. iv, MSDE, 2000)

Researchers have described the importance of the principal in the role of instructional leadership. May and Supovitz (2010) state that “research identifying

the essential role that school principals play in encouraging instructional improvement has been a central tenet of school improvement research at least since analyses of the effective schools movement of the 1970s” (p.333). Coldren and Spillane (2007) argue that these improvements happen by “establishing connections that bridge the gap between leadership practice and teaching practice, thereby initiating instructional leadership” (pp.369-370). To help principals fulfill their role as instructional leaders, MSDE made recommendations to Maryland school districts to revise the responsibilities of principals. MSDE’s (2002) report *Achievement matters most* recommended a number of strategies that further support principals in their primary role as instructional leaders. These include the following strategies: “eliminate current responsibilities that are non-instructional in nature from the job requirements of principals” and create a position of “Building Manager [whose] responsibilities are non-instructional in nature as determined by the local school system, so that the principal can concentrate on improving the instructional program” (pp. 57-58). These recommendations indicated that principals needed to refocus their time and attention on the instructional program, and this newly designed position allowed principals to serve in the role of instructional leaders.

Taking into account these recommendations, the MSDE Division of Leadership corroborated these research findings of and made recommendations to the Maryland State Board of Education regarding changes to state regulations defining the role of the principal. The state board subsequently approved the inclusion of regulations in the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) that

delineated the role of the principal by identifying expected outcomes for instructional leadership. These outcomes eventually became the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework (MILF) (Maryland State Department of Education, 2005).

The MILF was created based on feedback and reports from the Maryland Instructional Leadership Development Program, Division for Leadership Development (DLD), Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), National Staff Development Council (NSDC), National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), Breaking Ranks II (BR II), National Middle School Association (NMSA), National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), the National Policy Board for Educational Administration, and the Education Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) (pp. 4-7).

MILF has eight instructional leadership outcomes, each having specific expectations or “evidence in practice.” (Maryland State Department of Education, 2005, p.1) The outcomes are not a checklist, nor are they an exhaustive list of expectations. These expected results were designed to help principals provide quality instructional leadership for their schools. The framework does not include all of the responsibilities of a principal, such as financial management, but MILF “focuses on the content knowledge needed for school principals to be the leader of teaching-learning in the school” (p.2).

The eight outcomes of MILF include, "(1) facilitate the development of a school vision; (2) align all aspects of a school culture to student and adult learning; (3) monitor the alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; (4) improve instructional

practices through purposeful observation and evaluation of teachers; (5) ensure the regular integration of appropriate assessments into daily classroom instruction; (6) use technology and multiple sources of data to improve classroom instruction; (7) provide staff with focused, sustained, research-based professional development; and (8) engage all community stakeholders in a shared responsibility for student and school success" (p.8). Each of the eight outcomes includes examples or "evidences in practice that delineate the minimum of what [MSDE] expect[s] principals to know and be able to do if the respective leadership outcome is to be realized" (p.1). See Appendix D for the eight outcomes and specific evidences in practices.

MILF was implemented in the accreditation process and administrative preparation programs in higher education. Maryland school districts incorporated MILF to design their administrator's evaluation system and MSDE used the framework for the training plan for the Maryland Principals' Academy for new and aspiring principals.

**Research on Instructional Leadership.** The outcomes in MILF are based on research and reports from a variety of stakeholders and organizations and appear in a number of studies regarding instructional leadership. Hallinger (2010) states that "instructional leadership became the preferred term [in the field of education] because of the recognition that principals who operate from this frame of reference rely more on expertise and influence than on formal authority and power to achieve a positive and lasting impact on staff motivation and behavior and student learning" (pp.275-276). Supovitz, Sirinides, and May (2010) describe three key factors in instructional leadership: "the role principals play in focusing the mission and goals of the organization, how principals encourage and environment of collaboration and trust in the building, and the

extent to which principals actively support instructional improvement [related to teaching and learning]" (p.34). Horng, Klasik, and Loeb (2010) state that "school leaders can have a tremendous effect on student learning through the teachers they hire, how they assign those teachers to classroom, how they retrain teachers, and how they create opportunities for teachers to improve" (pp. 66-67). Hallinger (2010) describes instructional leadership as components within the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) framework which includes "defining the school mission: frames the school's goals and communicates the school's goals; managing the instructional program: coordinates the curriculum, supervises and evaluates instruction, and monitors student progress; and developing the school learning climate program: protects instructional time, provides incentives for teachers, provides incentives for learning, promotes professional development, and maintains high visibility" (p. 276).

Coldren and Spillane (2007) citing Cuban (1988), Hallinger and Murphy (1987), Krug, (1992), described instructional leadership as a "practice [that] can involve a variety of activities such as defining an instructional vision or mission; managing the instructional program through teacher supervision, curriculum planning, program coordination, and monitoring student learning; and promoting of professional learning among staff and the enforcement of academic standards..." (p.371). Components of MILF continue to appear in research studies and articles regarding instructional leadership because of the pressures and expectations that principals serve as instructional leaders as their primary function; however, principals and school officials are facing demands to focus on assessments and AYP. .

Because the NCLB Act placed emphasis on students taking and passing high stakes assessments, school leaders have faced growing pressures to ensure that the teaching and learning that occurs in the classroom is results in high scores on state assessments. According to Reitzug, West, and Angel (2008) , “the pervasive influence of NCLB may be reasserting the traditional instructional leadership role of principals, as principals sacrifice the long-term gains resulting from teacher professional growth, for the short-term goals of an ‘inspect and direct’ instructional leadership role” (p.695). The pressures to make AYP every year may be changing the principal’s role to testing coordinator, one who monitors tests results, instead of instructional leader. With the high stakes accountability, the essential role of principals is the improvement of the instructional programs of a school (May & Supovitz, 2010). Instructional leadership, as indicated in MILF, involves the development of a school vision and an effective school leadership (Maryland State Department of Education, 2005).

Instructional leadership involves the collaboration between the principal and other administrators, staff in positions of authority, and other stakeholders (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). Principals are no longer considered the only instructional leaders in schools; therefore, shared leadership or work that has been distributed among stakeholders is common in schools. In the annual report from the National College of School Leadership (NCSL) (2004), researcher Geoff Southworth observes:

School leadership is often taken to mean headship. Such an outlook limits leadership to one person and implies lone leadership. The long standing belief in the power of one is being challenged. Today there is much more talk about shared leadership, leadership teams and distributed leadership than even before. (p.8)

MILF employs a similar philosophy and includes an outcome which stresses the importance of creating effective leadership teams that collaboratively work to improve the teaching and learning in schools (Maryland State Department of Education, 2005). This collaborative, team-based approach leads to a distributive leadership role for the principal.

***Distributed Leadership.*** Eastland School District's leaders, like those in other school districts, expect principals to serve as instructional leaders. High school principals cannot work alone, because of the extensive operational and instructional demands that exist in today's schools. Hallinger and Murphy (1985) state that, in larger schools, the principal cannot be the only person involved in leading the school's instructional program. Supovitz, Sirinides, and May (2009) posit that principals have to look "toward[s] an array of other actors who either consistently, or situationally, take on a leadership role in schools" (p.36). According to the MILF, distributed leadership builds a school culture focused on both student and adult learning and involving many stakeholders (Maryland State Department of Education, 2005). Research revealed that schools must practice distributed leadership in order to monitor effectively instruction and student progress (Spillane 2006; Spillane, Halverson and Diamond 2001, & Maryland State Department of Education, 2005).

Researchers define distributed leadership by the level of involvement and leadership of each staff member in a school building. Hulpia, Devos, and Van Keer (2010) describe distributed leadership "as the degree to which leadership functions are distributed among formal leadership positions on the leadership team (i.e., the principal, assistant principals, and teacher leaders)" (p.40). They further described the leadership

team “as the group of people with a formal leadership role in the school as a whole” (p.40). “Leadership is no longer seen as a one-person business; rather a business that requires social interaction and cooperation of a whole group” (p.41). Spillane and Healey (2010) concur, and state that “leading and managing schools can involve multiple individuals in addition to the school principal, including others in formally designated leadership or management positions, such as assistant principals, mentor teachers, and curriculum specialists” (p.256).

Spillane (2006) provides a similar view, and describes distributed leadership as collective interactions between leaders, followers, and their situations. Hulpia, Devos, and Rosseel (2009) define distributed leadership as “the formal distribution of the supportive and supervisory leadership functions; the cohesive leadership team, which refers to the interaction that takes place among the leadership team members; and participative decision-making of the whole school team, which refers to the informal contribution of all school employees in the decision-making process of the school” (p.310). Citing Rayner and Gunter (2005) and Gronn (2002), Hulpia, Devos, and Rosseel (2009) further explained the differences between distributed leadership and delegation:

The formal distribution of the supportive and supervisory leadership functions is broader than a delegation of tasks. Delegation of tasks refers to the reallocation of work from one person to another, and the person who is delegated a certain task is authorized to carry it out independently... In distributed leadership, however, various functions are stretched over the leadership team; all members pool their expertise and work collaboratively in an interactive way, so that the leadership functions become an emergent property of a group... (p.293).

Distributed leadership involves a working relationship with staff members and stakeholders and the collection of knowledge, skills and experiences of group members.



In distributed leadership, numerous leaders in the school work towards a set of goals delineated in the school improvement plan. Rhodes and Brundrett (2009) state that principals “who distribute leadership responsibilities amongst their staff are more likely to build capacity for change and realize school improvement” (p. 362). Distributed leadership has “been the source of investigations of leadership approaches that might more effectively facilitate instructional improvement in schools” (May & Supovitz, 2010, p. 335). Mayrowetz (2008) writes that distributed leadership “should facilitate the widening of the target of leadership development from administrators to a school-wide approach and make leaders more conscious of the tools they use and design in the practice of leadership” (p. 428). Mayrowetz further states that “distributed leadership promotes the notion that by having multiple people engaged in leadership; these individuals will all learn more about themselves and the issues facing the school” (p.431).

Spillane (2006) explains that “a distributed leadership perspective attempts to acknowledge and incorporate the work of all the individuals who have a hand in leadership practice” (p.13). Examination of the different roles of leadership in the school building can help to clarify further the concept of distributed leadership, and the role that principals, assistant principals, teachers, and support staff may play in school administration.

**Members of school leadership teams.** Staff leaders, charged by the principals to work collaboratively, can play a significant role in the school improvement process. The school leadership team; comprised of the principal, teacher leaders, and other school staff; present an example of shared leadership. The Maryland Task Force on the Principalship provides key recommendations about the leadership team (Maryland State

Department of Education, 2000). “If the principal is to devote the necessary time and thoughtful energy to the critical tasks outlined in [his/her] vision, he/she must have a leadership team able to share in the many instructional and managerial functions involved in running a school” (p.10). It further stated that “the effective 21<sup>st</sup> century school team will function in a leadership capacity for daily and long-term planning” (p.10). The school leadership team serves as a critical means to help the leaders in the building share a focus on school improvement.

Membership of the leadership team may vary from school to school. At the high school level, principals may have a leadership team of teachers, administrators, parents, business managers, and when possible, students. Cameron’s (2010) work defined the membership of the school leadership as “senior leaders and heads of departments” (p.38). These team members must know their role as members of the leadership team.

The role of the assistant principal is to assist and support the principal by assuming a number of leadership, disciplinary, instructional, and managerial responsibilities. Rintoul and Goulais (2010) find that “the position of second in command (called the vice principal in Canada, the assistant principal in the USA, the deputy head in the UK and the deputy principal in Australia) receives scant attention in scholarly writing” (pp.745-746). Rintoul and Goulais further describe the assistant principal position as “a job of high stress varying dramatically depending on the school and leadership style of the principal” (p.746). Marshall and Hooley (2006) note that the position of assistant principal as “both a leader and a follower, driven by a juggling act of creative, practical and political demands” (p.746). Researchers consistently express that,

although stressful and demanding, the role of an assistant principal is a vital position in the school building and on the leadership team.

Department chairpersons are teacher leaders of their subject matter and, like the assistant principal, comprise another important component of the leadership team. In Ghamrawi's (2010) work on subject leadership, she describes the department chairperson, or subject leader, as a "pedagogical expert, staff developer, action researcher, change agent, proficient raconteur, managed leader, policymaker, cultural developer, resource manager, curriculum developer, strategic planner, quality controller, liaison, problem solver and data manager" (p. 307). Brown, Rutherford, and Boyle (2000) argue that the department head is "the key to developing successful schools" (p.239). They further conclude that "if heads of department are to share in any meaningful way in the leadership and management of schools, there is a growing need for current management development and training provision to change radically, if they are to be supported in improving their practice as curriculum leaders and managers" (p. 255). Little research currently exists on the role of the department chairpersons; however, they play a critical role in school leadership (Brown, Rutherford, & Boyle, 2000; Printy, 2008) and their inclusion in the distributed leadership process can help to facilitate school improvement as teacher leaders.

The school leadership team provides an opportunity for various stakeholders to work together towards school improvement. Chrispeels, Burke, Johnson, and Daly (2008) assert that a leadership team involves many school leaders who work together to improve classroom teaching and student learning. Chrispeels and Martin (2002) conclude that the team plays a key role in the shift to distributed leadership "by

presenting the opportunity to move from a hierarchical structure, typically described as administrative where relations among people are designated, to a hierarchical form in which power and authority are more disperse and fluid” (p. 359). This shift of leadership encourages an ownership of the work necessary to improve student achievement and strengthens teamwork.

The school leadership team is charged with increasing student achievement and providing leadership that will increase school improvement. Printy and Marks (2006) state that “principals alone cannot provide sufficient leadership influence to systematically improve the quality of instruction or the level of student achievement” (p.130). They further declared that “the best results [in student achievement] occur in schools where principals are strong leaders who also facilitate leadership by teachers; that is, principals are active in instructional matters in concert with teachers whom they regard as professionals and full partners” (p. 130). The MILF supports such conclusions by including an outcome which stresses the importance of the alignment of all aspects of a school culture to student and adult learning, and an evidence of practice is an effective school leadership team (Maryland State Department of Education, 2005). School district leaders expect principals to address the needs of the school, students, staff and community. As such, collaboration among school and community staff is essential to manage the many demands and constraints present in today’s schools.

### **Principals’ Demands, Constraints, and Choices**

The demands and expectations of principals come from many stakeholders, as well as from school district policies and procedures. Murphy (1994) found that principals often must take on numerous new responsibilities without letting go of any of their old

duties. As a result, they easily become overwhelmed by the tremendous demands of their position. Principals face additional demands that involve state assessments and the accountability measures that identified schools as successful or failing schools based on their “Adequate Yearly Progress” in mathematics and reading.

At the time of this study, NCLB had published accountability requirements for public schools. Failure to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for at least four years required local school districts to prepare for a “restructuring plan to either: (1) re-open as charter schools; (2) replace principal and staff; (3) contract for private management; or (4) other major restructuring of school governance” (No Child Left Behind, 2001.). These accountability measures impact school staff and principals.

Coldren and Spillane (2007) state that the myriad demands of their position, which can include “moral, interpersonal, managerial, and political” (p. 371) pressures, often leave school administrators feeling beleaguered by their copious responsibilities. The assessment accountability of NCLB adds to other demands and constraints that principals must face in a school building.

In addition to the stringent mandates of NCLB, principals must face a number of other demands of their administrative role. Pounder and Merrill (2001) identify these responsibilities as “time demands of the position (e.g., evening and weekend extracurricular supervision responsibilities, balancing the demands of job and family) and to a lesser degree, the kinds of problems and dilemmas that often accompany the position (e.g., ethical dilemmas, student behavior problems, termination of unfit employees, union grievance)” (p. 46).

Researcher and author Rosemary Stewart is known for her research on the work of managers in the public sector; which, she states, provides “greater insight in the nature of the demands, constraints, and choices in the job” (Stewart, 1982, p.128). According to Kevin Lowe (2003), [Stewart’s] “research methods were (and remain) innovative, exhaustive, and cutting edge” (p. 193). Lowe further states that “among the many important contributions emerging from this work are the demands-constraints-choices framework” (p. 193). The purpose of Stewart’s work was to observed managers in positions that “cover[ed] a variety of different kinds of middle management jobs: production, sales, personnel, and service jobs in industry and maintenance, and planning in local government” (p.126) including a “cross-section of marketing and finance” (p. 129-130) and “district administrators in hospitals” (p. 131). This framework was designed to guide the managers’ thinking about the nature of a job and to recognize that they are in a position to make choices (Stewart, 1982).

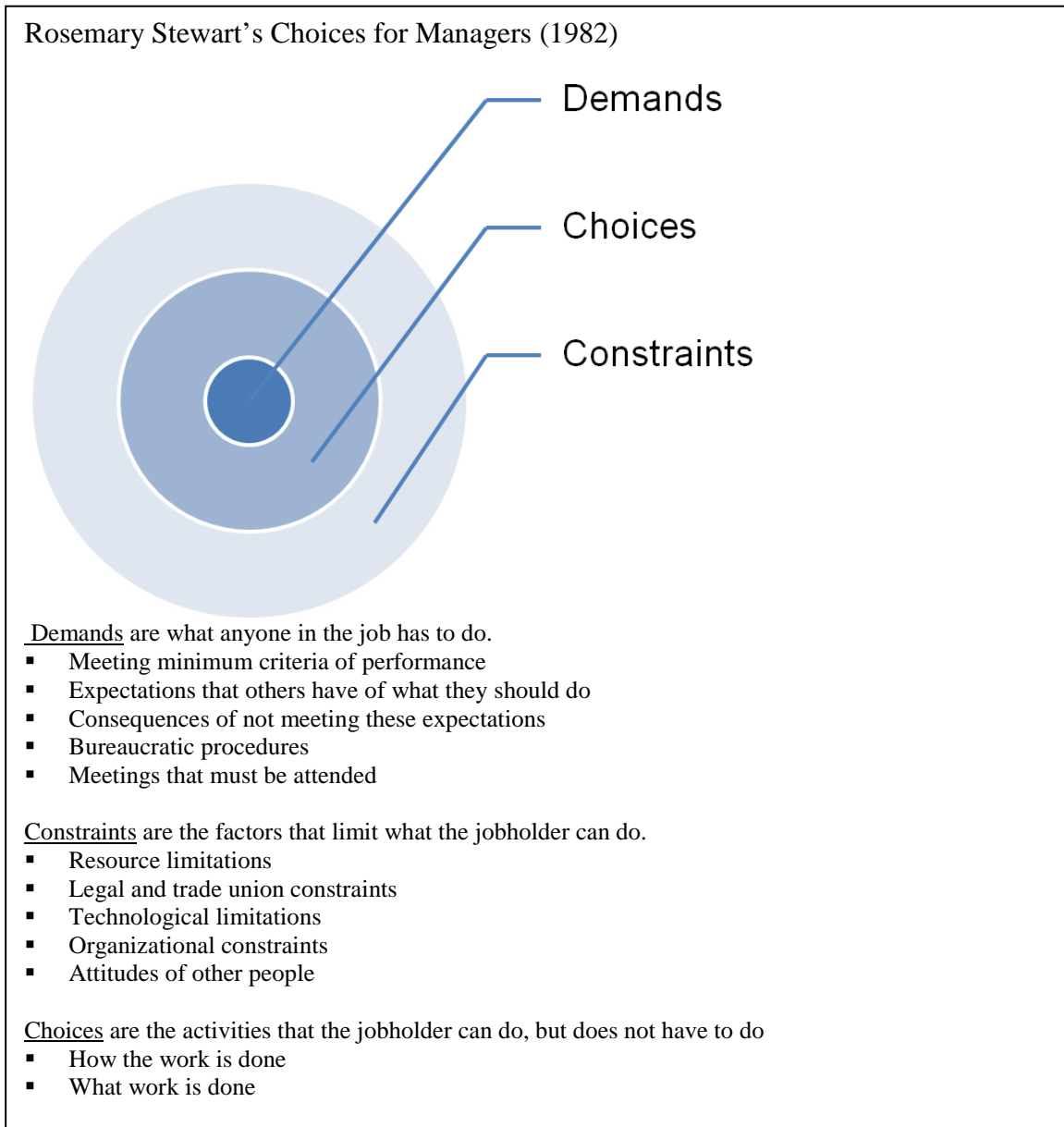
Stewart’s (1982) framework has three components (see Figure 2.1):

1. Demands: What anyone in the job has to do; demands are only what must be done;
2. Constraints: The factors, internal or external to the organization, that limit what the jobholder can do; and
3. Choices: The activities that the jobholder can do, but does not have to do.

Stewart (1982) states that “demands, constraints, and choices can be used to understand any kind of managerial job, and other jobs as well” (p.9). She further notes that her “framework is useful because it provides a different way of thinking about jobs and about how individuals do them” (p.9).

This study focused on the ways high schools principals perform their jobs as instructional leaders, in spite of certain demands and constraints. Stewart's (1982) framework was used to develop the conceptual framework for this study. Hallinger

**Figure 2.1. Rosemary Stewart's (1982) Framework of Demands, Choices, and**



(2011) explains that a principal's role often includes both managerial functions and the coordination of a school's curriculum and instruction components. Hallinger describes one aspect of instructional leadership as “managing the instructional program” (p. 276). Stewart's (1982) framework of demands, constraints and choices framework allows for individual choices about what work is completed and how the work is undertaken. The managing of the instruction includes the demands and constraints of teaching and learning which provides choices for the school principals. Furthermore, the manager's choices in delegation will be limited by the work they are required to do themselves, either because they are not permitted to delegate it, or because the expectations that they will do the work are too strong to make delegation politically feasible (Stewart, 1982).

Stewart (1982) stated that “the work that managers must complete themselves is determined by the following factors:

1. The extent to which they must be personally involved in the work of the unit for which they are responsible.
2. Whom they must work with and the difficulty of these work relationships
3. The expectations that others have of what they should do, and the consequences of not meeting these expectations.
4. Bureaucratic procedures that cannot be ignored or delegated.
5. Meetings that must be attended” (p. 4)

Stewart described constraints as “the extent to which the work to be done by the manager's unit is defined or the factors that limit what the jobholder can do.” She specifically provided a summary of the common constraints (p. 5):

- Resource constraints, including buildings,



- Legal and trade union constraints,
- Technological limitations of equipment and process,
- Physical location,
- Organizational policies and procedures, and
- Attitudes that influence what actions other people will accept or tolerate.

Stewart's findings indicate that managers have limitations in their choices to delegate work. However, Stewart stressed that "the organization can seek to encourage managers to take a wide view of the possibilities in their jobs; to recognize choices and to think strategically about them" (p.38). Stewart details the choices of "sharing of work," "becoming an expert," and "taking part in activities outside the organization" as options available to organizational leaders (p.42). She described these choices as ways to "invite work or to substitute one kind of work for another" (p.48). Choices allow opportunities for team work and collaboration, distributed leadership and accountability a clear division of work and of responsibility, "work sharing," and professional development (p.50). Researcher Sergiovanni (2009) referenced Stewart's demands-constraints-choices model by stating that "within any demand-and-constraint set, there are always choices in the form of opportunities to do the same things differently and to do other things that are not required or prohibited" (p.46). According to this perspective, principals can be most effective in their roles as instructional leaders if they lessen the demands and constraints of their jobs by "expand[ing] the area of choices" (p. 46).

Stewart's (1982) research provides a framework that identifies choices that managers have in their positions and defines the work that must be completed because of the demands and constraints of their jobs. She also provided suggestions on how the

work can be done, which relates to one of the research questions in this study: In light of the demands and constraints of their positions, what strategies do high school principals adopt to aid them in their focus on instructional leadership? As the principals in the current study chose to focus on instruction, they described how they did the work by using a particular leadership style or “frame” that aligned with the work of Bolman and Deal (2008).

### **Reframing Leadership**

Leadership requires the ability to make decisions that meet the needs of the school, teachers, students, and parents; and good leadership ultimately translates into school improvement. Bolman and Deal (2008) argue that the most effective leaders use multiple frames when making decisions. To illustrate this phenomenon, they developed four frames that can be used to analyze a situation from different perspectives and to make decisions about the best way to handle the state of affairs (Bolman & Deal, 2002; see Appendix E). The four frames are as follows:

- *Political Frame* – Bolman and Deal (2002) explain that schools are political entities because of two essential features: "There are individuals and groups with different backgrounds, beliefs, and agendas and of different positions, race, ethnicity, social class and ideology. There are scarce resources – never enough money, time, or human energy to do everything or to give everyone all they want. Choices have to be made. The interplay of different interests and scarce resources inevitably leads to conflict between individuals and groups" (p.51).

- *Human Resource Frame* – Bolman and Deal posit that the school staff has a need to "feel safe, to belong, to feel appreciated, and to feel that [educators] make a difference" (p. 66). They suggest that within this framework, educators can respond to this need by empowering others to take on leadership roles, building on staff ideas and suggestions, establishing relationships, and acknowledging individuals for their successes and feedback.
- *Structural Frame* - To operate effectively, school staff must have structure and clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Bolman and Deal suggest the following structural arrangements: "Clarify roles: Anyone who needs to be consulted, who has approval rights, who needs to be kept informed, and who is responsible; design groups for success rather than failure with four keys to success: What are we supposed to do? What authority and resources do we have? To whom are we accountable? What are we accountable for?" and "shape a structure that fits – a workable structure has to fit the task and the people who will do it" (p. 84-86).
- *Symbolic Frame* – Successful school leaders recognize the need for celebrations and ceremonies within a school building. Bolman and Deal suggest that principals, "Learn and celebrate the history, diagnose the strength of the existing culture, reinforce and celebrate the culture's strengths, and make transitions with ceremony" (p. 104-105).

Bolman and Deal's premise is that leaders must look "at the same things from multiple lenses or points of view," which is a "powerful tool for gaining clarity, regaining balance, generating new options, and finding strategies that make a difference" (p.22).

Using this four-frame model helped to identify how the four principals in the current study focused on instructional leadership. The schools' demographics and principals' leadership styles differed, but using Bolman and Deal's four-frame model provided clarity about how these four school administrators chose to focus on instructional leadership.

### **The Development of the Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework guiding this study was developed from the conceptual framing of demands, constraints and choices by Stewart (1982) and Bolman and Deal's (2008, 2002) four-frame model for reframing leadership. In order to draw specific attention to instructional leadership the MSDE's (2005) Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework was linked to these two conceptualizations

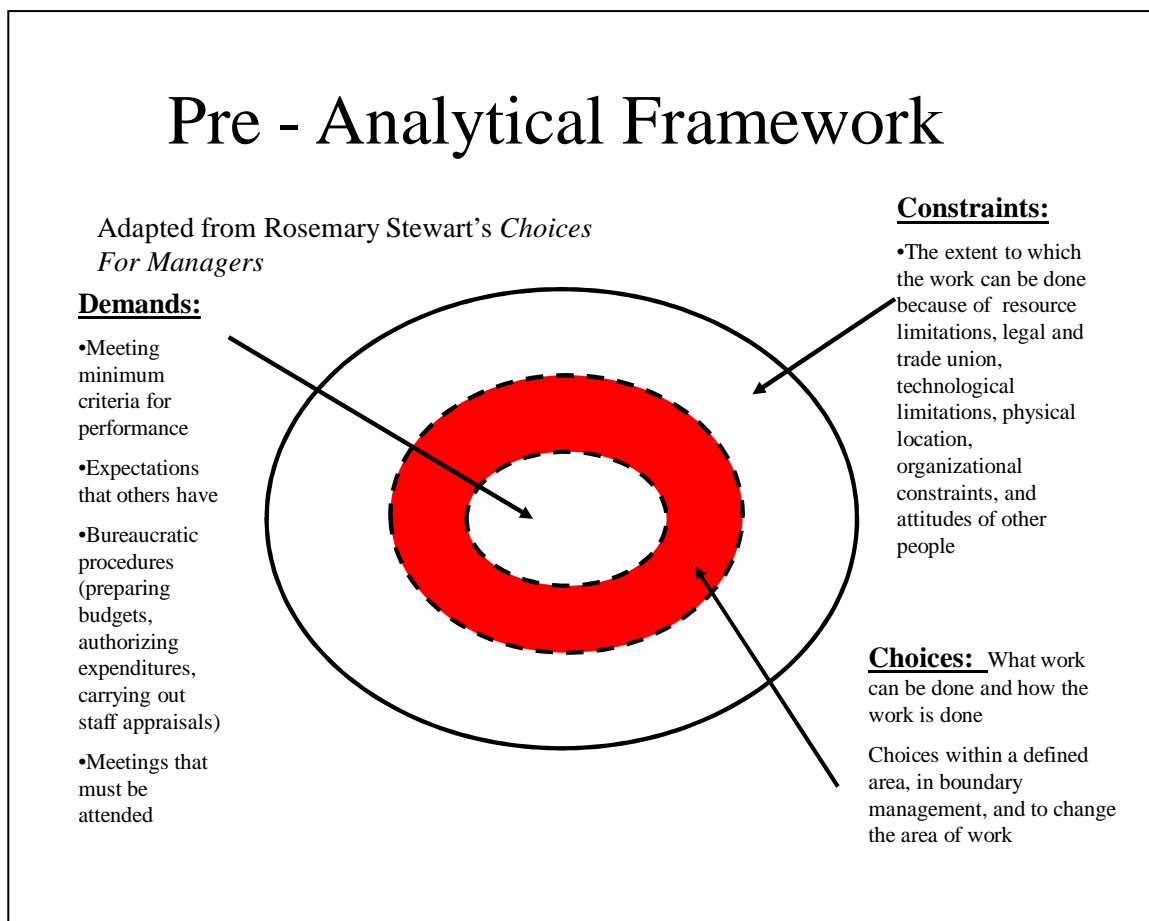
**Demands, constraints and choices.** Rosemary Stewart's (1982) work shows that administrators within the public sector have "choices [that] will be limited both by the extent of the demands and by the nature of the constraints" (p.6) (see Figure 2.2.). She further describes the purposes of her framework:

Demands, constraints, and choices can be used to understand any kind of managerial job, and other jobs as well. The framework is useful because it provide a different way of thinking about jobs and about how individuals do time. In selection it can help in analyzing what a job is really like. The framework can help in appraising how an individual does a job by enabling the appraiser to consider what is distinctive about the subordinates' approach and to review how well this is matched to the needs of the job at that time. Individual managers can use demands, constraints, and choices as a way of thinking about their job and of examining their approach to it. (p.9)

Stewart also explains that "there are choices that are found in all or most managerial jobs, such as emphasizing one aspect of the job more than another and taking actions to protect the unit for which one is responsible from disturbance" (p.9). Applying this framework to the study of four high school principals' experiences helped to identify the demands

and constraints they encountered, as well as their choices to focus on instructional leadership. The framework includes questions that helped to distinguish between the principals' instructional and non-instructional demands.

**Figure 2.2. Analytical Framework Taken from Rosemary Stewart (1982)**



**The Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework (MILF).** The MILF served as a lens for better understanding the four principals' perspectives on instructional demands and choices. MILF enabled the categorization of principals' instructional demands and choices using eight leadership components:

- 1) facilitate the development of a school vision;
- 2) align all aspects of a school culture to student and adult learning;

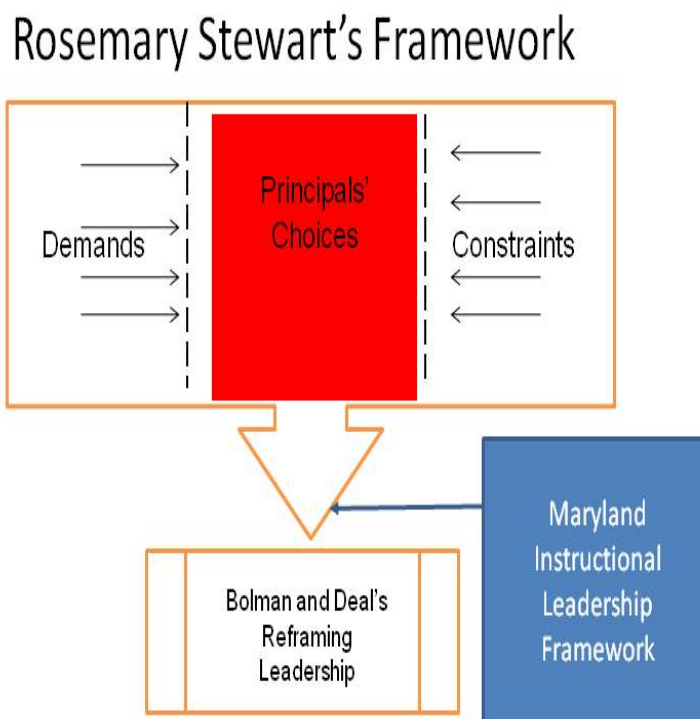
- 3) monitor the alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment;
- 4) improve instructional practices through the purposeful observation and evaluation of teachers;
- 5) ensure the regular integration of appropriate assessments into daily classroom instruction;
- 6) use technology and multiple sources of data to improve classroom instruction;
- 7) provide staff with focused, sustained, research-based professional development; and
- 8) engage all community stakeholders in a shared responsibility for student and school success (Maryland State Department of Education, 2005).

**Bolman and Deal's four-frame model.** Stewart (1982) described choices as “what work was to be done and how the work was done” (p.5). Using Bolman and Deal's (2008) work on the four-frame leadership model, common behaviors of the principals and differences in making their choices were identified that focused on instructional leadership. The four frames include a Political Frame, Structural Frame, Human Resources Frame, and a Symbolic Frame.

**A combined conceptual framework.** The choices of the four principals' in the current study were analyzed, using both Stewart's (1982) and Bolman and Deal's (2002, 2008) conceptual frameworks, to determine if the principals used a particular approach to focus on instructional leadership. Stewart's model (see Figures 2.2 and 2.3) was modified to address purpose of the study and to answer the research questions. This revised framework shows the infusion of three major bodies of work: Rosemary Stewart's (1982) Demands-Constraints-Choices framework from *Choices for the Manager*; the

MILF, developed by the Maryland State Department of Education in 2005 and currently included in the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR); and Bolman and Deal's (2002, 2008) Four-Frame Model for Reframing Leadership.

**Figure 2.3. Conceptual Framework**



### **Summary**

The literature shows that the role of the principal has many dimensions. One of the key functions of the high school principal is to serve as an instructional leader. As the instructional leader of a school, the principal must first know the components of effective instruction and be skilled in improving student achievement. In addition, the literature presented evidence that instructional leadership required the cooperation with and delegation of tasks to key staff, including teachers and administrators or assistant principals. The work of instructional leadership requires a team effort, and the delegation

of responsibilities must be common practice for high school principals because of the size of the student enrollment.

The problem with accomplishing the requisite level of cooperation is that high school principals have to juggle such diverse roles and responsibilities, many of which they must undertake themselves. They also are challenged by the demands of today's high school and its size, composition, and recent reform initiatives. The research question this study seeks to explore is, "In light of the demands and constraints of their positions, what do high school principals choose to do in order to focus on instructional leadership?" This study was limited by the scope of the guiding conceptual framework based on Rosemary Stewart's (1982) work, the definition of instructional leadership as described in the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework, and leadership styles of Bolman and Deal's (2002, 2008) four-frame model. This study described the participating principals' perceptions of the instructional and non-instructional demands and constraints of their positions, and explored their individual choices to focus on the work related to instructional leadership.



## **Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology**

This chapter presents the design and methodology of this study, beginning with an explanation of the purpose and the rationale for selecting inquiry qualitative case study approach. The following section on data gathering methods and data collection tools provides an explanation of how the parameters of the study were established, how the schools and principal participants were selected, and how the conceptual framework was operationalized, how the sample was selected, and how the four high schools and principals were selected based on the school's demographics, programs, and student achievement. The section concludes with a discussion of the data collection methods utilized in the study. The chapter presents the researcher's approach to analyzing the data collected over the course of the study.

### **Rationale for Case Study and Qualitative Research Methods**

A qualitative case study design was selected for this inquiry because it provided a unique mechanism for studying how high school principals focus on instructional leadership, in spite of the demands and constraints of their jobs. As Creswell (1998) explains, a quantitative approach—

is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, and analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. (p.15)

According to Gall, Borg, and Gall (2003), qualitative research traditions can be used to investigate the themes, patterns, and relationships in sample populations.

This study employed a case study approach to qualitative inquiry. Creswell (1998) defines a case study as "an exploration of a bounded system or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context" (p. 61). The use of case study methods facilitated the development of an in-depth picture of the context which influenced each principal's perceptions of demands, constraints, and choices of instructional leadership.

**Site and sample selection.** Eastland School District, a suburban school system in Maryland was selected as the site for the study of a sample of high school principals. At the time of the study, Eastland School District governed 26 high schools; the smallest high school served a student population of 584 with 70 staff members, and the largest high school enrolled over 2600 students served by over 200 staff members. I selected my sample of four high school principals from these 26 high schools using three selection criteria.

First, I categorized the high schools based on their student enrollment. As previously noted, at the time of the study Eastland School District was responsible for 26 high schools with an average student enrollment of approximately 1720 students. In order to capture this context, I first listed schools by enrollment from highest to the lowest, I then removed from the sampling pool those high schools the school with the lowest enrollment (less than 585) and the high school with the highest enrollment (over 2680). The school with the lowest enrollment was a specialty high school concentrating in vocational education and students take only the vocational courses. The high school with the highest enrollment was removed from the sampling because of its student

enrollment was so much larger than the other schools and the number of staff members and programs were different from the other schools.

Second, I categorized the remaining schools by their locations within one of the four geographic areas that Eastland District uses to organize their schools; southeast, northeast, northwest, and central. I then identified four target high schools that maximized the student demographics and the program diversity of my sample. I wanted high schools whose -American and Hispanic demographics were near or above 25% of the total population.

Third, because my interest was in understanding instructional leadership practices by high school principals not under direct pressure to address the constraints imposed when the schools they led failed to meet requirements for demonstrating Adequate Yearly Progress (under the regulations of NCLB at the time of the study), I removed from consideration those schools in the district that had not met AYP targets. Thus, only schools whose student achievement had met benchmarks on state assessments, and that met my criteria of maximum diversity (outlined above), formed the final pool.

***Principal selection.*** Once I selected the sites I would examine, I identified the principals from each of these high schools and sent them an email inviting them to participate in the study. Once I obtained written consent (see Appendix B), each principal was scheduled, by email, for a long interview at an agreed-upon location.

Table 1, below, provides a demographic profile of the 26 high schools from which the sample schools were selected. Schools with an asterisk (\*) were chosen for the case study.

Table 1

*High School Student Enrollment in Eastland School District*

<b>HS</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>FARMS</b>	<b>ESOL</b>	<b>Sp Ed</b>	<b>AA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>W</b>
School A	SE	2681	30.6	9.3	6.1	29	18.6	26.4	25.8
School B	W	2459	4.2	2	8.9	5.8	34.6	4.8	54.6
School C	W	2110	2.4	0.3	11.6	6.6	24.3	5.4	63.6
School D	NE	2098	12.9	8.2	8.2	17	11.3	10.9	60.4
School E	NW	2025	16.2	0.1	13.4	31	16.6	16.8	35.7
School F	W	2003	5.8	5.8	14.5	9.5	14.5	13.3	62.3
School G*	C	2000	30.3	12.2	15.4	28	11	34.8	26.2
School H	C	1971	23.7	5	11.5	19	14	23	43.4
School I	C	1953	15.6	7.1	8	17	24.5	15.9	42.4
School J	NE	1887	35.4	6.4	9.9	48	15.7	23.5	13.1
School K	W	1884	2.1	5.6	10.7	4.4	13.1	6.8	75.6
School L	NE	1805	22.3	0.8	7.7	47	20.3	12	20.4
School M*	NE	1800	20.4	1.4	8.8	41	10	14	35.1
School N	W	1777	8.6	4.1	7.7	16	7.5	13.7	61.8
School O*	NW	1700	17.1	6.9	12.8	18	14.2	18.2	49.6
School P	N	1653	23.5	6.3	11.3	32	16	20	31.7
School Q	C	1593	35.9	7.9	16.9	37	11.2	31.9	19.9
School R	SE	1570	37.3	10.6	13.9	23	10.8	43.9	22.2
School S*	SE	1502	41.5	9.2	12.4	42	10.9	35.8	11.3
School T	N	1420	10.4	0.1	12.4	8.3	5.1	11.9	74.3
School U	NW	1344	24.3	9	12.9	34	10.8	22.5	32.4
School V	SE	1323	31.4	8	14.4	35	6.3	34.3	24.5
School W	SE	1320	53.3	15.8	10.2	22	11.1	56.6	10.3
School X	C	1243	20.5	6.7	13.4	18	13.1	26.6	42.2
School Y	N	1049	3.8	0	5.3	5.7	17.7	4.3	71.5
School Z	SE	584	40.4	12.8	28.1	28	11.6	41.3	19.3

**Key:** FARMS – Students on Free and Reduced Meals program, ESOL – Students who are English for Speakers of Other Languages. Sp Ed – Students who are receiving special education services, AA-African American students, A-Asian students, H-Hispanic students, and W-White students.

It should be noted that this study was dependent upon school district approval of the study, and at their request, the identities of the schools and principals were not revealed. The permission for the study was sent for approval to the Deputy Superintendent and the Associate Superintendent of Research. Permission was granted in December 2009. This approval allowed me to begin sampling procedures outlined next.

**Data collection.** Once sampling was complete and the invited principals had agreed to participate in the study between December 2009 and May 2010, I gathered data from three sources (a) public reports about each of the four schools (b) a survey questionnaire administered to each of the four principals, and (c) interviews lasting from one to one and a half hours with each principal.

**Survey.** Prior to conducting interviews, each principal completed a written survey asking them to rate the factors of their jobs, as identified by Pounder and Merrill (2001) and to identify potential demands and constraints of their positions in the area of instructional leadership. I made minor modifications to the Pounder and Merrill instrument to create a questionnaire that helped to establish background information about the principals and to identify the factors that influenced them in becoming a high school principal. The results of the survey helped me identify potential demands; such as work problems, time constraints, management tasks, and fiscal management (see Appendix A).

**Long interviews.** Once the surveys were completed, I conducted interviews with each principal. I used a long interview format to elicit from the principals very detailed descriptions of demands, constraints and choices in their work. The interview questions addressed the research questions and the study's guiding conceptual framework. All

interview questions were based on Stewart's (1982) framework regarding demands and constraints on managers, and were restated in the context of the high school principal's role. The questions I asked were related to the primary research questions of this study:

1. What do high school principals describe as the instructional and non-instructional demands of their jobs?
2. What do high school principals describe as job constraints that have an impact on instruction?
3. In light of the demands and constraints of their positions, what do high school principals choose to do in order to focus on instructional leadership?

During the initial long interview, the principals gave their perceptions of the non-instructional demands, constraints, and instructional demands of their positions as they talked freely about their work as a high school administrator.

*Document and memo review.* School officials provided the link to the Eastland School District webpage to access school information such as student demographics, student performance on state assessments, staff demographics and the facilities. Also job description memoranda and policies and procedures regarding the school district were available from the same link to the Eastland School District webpage. Document and memo reviews were used to triangulate the data and responses from the principals and to develop follow-up questions intended to enhance clarity and obtain additional details from the informants

*Follow-up interviews.* During the follow-up interviews, I shared with the principals the components of the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework, and

asked them to provide additional information pertaining to specific components of the framework. The follow-up questions provided additional information on the strategies the principals adopted to increase their focus on instructional leadership. Since one of the principals had left Eastland School District, and another principal was promoted to a Central Office position, only two of the four principals were asked clarifying questions. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. I reviewed each transcription for accuracy and removed any identifying information.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis was guided by the work of Stake (1995), who identifies four forms of data analysis for the type of case study employed in this inquiry: "categorical aggregation, direct interpretation, patterns, and naturalistic generalizations." I used all four forms of analysis, first conducting a within case analysis of each principal's data, and then conducting a cross-case analysis (comparing and contrasting the responses of the four principals).

**Within-case analysis.** First, I uploaded transcripts of the interviews into a computer software program (NVivo). I then began to code statements from the transcripts as non-instructional demands, constraints, choices, and instructional demands (see Table 2.).

I then coded the principals' choices as instructional leadership, as defined by the MILF and Bolman and Deal's (2008) four frames<sup>1</sup> (see Table 3). Results of the within case analyses are presented in Chapter 4.

---

<sup>1</sup> Human resource, political, symbolic and structural

Table 2

*Within Case Coding of Demands, Constraints, and Choices*

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Code</b>
Demands	Instructional Demands Non-Instructional Demands
Constraints	Constraints
Choices	HR – Human Resources PF – Political Frame SyF – Symbolic Frame SF – Structural Frame

Table 3

*Coding for Principals' Perceptions*

<b>Instructional Demands</b>	<b>Construct</b>	<b>Code</b>
	Vision	F1
Maryland	Student Adult Learning	F2
Instructional	Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	F3
Leadership	Instructional Practices	F4
Framework	Appropriate Assessments	F5
	Technology and Multiple Use of Data	F6
	Professional Development	F7
	Community Stakeholders	F8
Choices	Frames	Code
	Human Resources	HR
Frames	Structural	SF
	Political	PF
	Symbolic	SyF

**Cross-case analysis.** Once the background information about the schools and principals and the principals' perceptions was described, patterns emerged in the principals' responses. I looked for commonalities among the principals by reviewing the



coding system that classified their actions when dealing with components of instructional leadership. I also looked for differences among the principals either based on their schools or their experience as a school administrator. The cross-case analysis was used to provide an overview and to draw conclusions, which will be presented in Chapter 5.

### **Standards of Quality and Ethical Issues**

Stake (1995) asserts that triangulation and member checking are necessary to assure the quality of a case study. I verified "assertions" and "key interpretations" with two of the participants and provided rough drafts of the case studies to the participants in the study to verify the content. The other two participants were unavailable for follow-up, because one of them was no longer working for the school district, and the other principal was working in a Central Office position. In order to enhance the validity of the study I identified a "critical friend" who worked as an administrator and could thus validate my interpretation of data. As a principal, I had to remain objective and not become evaluative of the comments that the principals made during their interviews.

Because participating principals wanted to speak freely it was important to ensure their anonymity. In the final report, schools and principals' names were changed to protect their identity. The principals were asked to speak honestly about their experiences at their schools and to provide as much detailed information as possible.

### **Summary**

In summary, this chapter has outlined the case study method to develop an in-depth picture of the context which influenced each principal's perceptions of demands, constraints, and choices of instructional leadership. This chapter described the research design, and the methodology used for collecting and analyzing the data. The results of the

data were used to describe each of the four case studies and to draw conclusions about the choices of the high school principals in order to focus on instructional leadership as defined by the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework.

## **Chapter 4: Findings of Within-Case Analyses**

In this chapter, I present the findings of a within-case analysis of demands and constraints described by the four high school principals who participated in this study. This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section describes the demographics of each of the four high schools, the backgrounds of the principals, and their descriptions of non-instructional demands, constraints, and instructional demands. The second section summarizes the principals' perceptions of demands and constraints. These within-case analyses respond to the following research questions:

1. What do high school principals describe as the instructional and non-instructional demands of their jobs?
2. What do high school principals describe as job constraints that have an impact on instruction?

### **The Cases**

In this section, I present case studies of each of the four target high schools and provide with background information about the principals. In addition, I present the description of the factors that caused the four informants to become high school principals and their perspectives of the non-instructional demands of their jobs. Table 4 lists the selected high schools, the principals, and the principal's years of experience.

Table 4

*Schools and Principals in Case Study*

<i>High Schools</i>	<i>Student #**</i>	<i>Location of School in Eastland</i>	<i>Staff #</i>	<i>Name of Principal</i>	<i>Principals' Yrs of Service at School*</i>	<i>Principals' Yrs of HS Principal Experience*</i>
Eastern	1500	SE	123.5	David Washington	4	6
Lexington	1800	NE	122	Susan Anderson	13	13
Reading	1700	NW	125	Patricia Hamilton	4	4
Ackerman	2000	Central	157	Sharon Carter	3	9

\*As of end of school year 2008-2009

### **Case One: Eastern High School and Its Principal**

In this section I describe Eastern High School and its principal, David Washington. I present the constraints and demands that Principal Washington described as influencing his work.

**Eastern High School.** Eastern High School is located in the southeastern section of the school district. At the time of the study, the population consisted of 1552 students (approximately 43% African-American, 11% Asian-American, 36% Hispanic, and 11% White). Eastern High School is unique from other high schools because of its large Hispanic and African –American populations and 9.2% of the total population received instruction in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). In addition, 41.5% of the student population participated in the Free and Reduced Meals Program (FARMS) at the time of the study, and 69.3% of the student population had participated in FARMS at

one time in their educational experience. The mobility rate was 17.20%, the student attendance rate was 95.5%, and the graduation rate was 84.8%.

Eastern High School offered Learning Academic Disabilities, Physical Disabilities, and Secondary Learning Center programs for its special education students, as well as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs for students who have taken the necessary prerequisite courses and want to experience a rigorous program of study. In addition, Eastern provides Career Pathway Programs, which are electives, and core courses and work experience to prepare students for post-secondary employment. Each year between 2005 and 2009, Eastern met Adequate Yearly Progress targets, but struggled to meet state assessment targets for reading for ESOL and special education populations. The average SAT score was 1342 out of 2400 points. Eastern High School had 72.4 classroom teachers and 52.6 supporting services staff. The administrative team consisted of one principal and three assistant principals. There were 10 department chairpersons, 18 special educators, and eight full-time counselors.

**Principal David Washington of Eastern High School.** David Washington, an African American male who had been principal of Eastern High School for four years at the time of the study, was recruited to his position from a nearby school district. Mr. Washington had a total of 10 years of experience as an administrator (four years at Eastern, two years as a high school principal at another high school in the nearby school district, and four years as an assistant principal in Eastland School District). He had taught high school English for six years before advancing to an administrative position, and he holds a master's degree in educational administration.

*Becoming the principal of Eastern High School.* Principal Washington welcomed the idea of sharing the instructional and non-instructional demands that he faced at Eastern High School, as well as his motivation for becoming a principal. He indicated that he became a high school principal because of his desire to make a difference in the lives of students, staff, and parents. He explained that while pursuing his goal of becoming a high school principal, he sought to make changes in the school environment and to influence others. While serving as a high school principal in the nearby school district, he had learned about the vacancy at Eastern High School and quickly submitted his application for the principalship. He had worked in Eastland School District previously as an assistant principal, and according to Principal Washington, this new position was an “opportunity to display his leadership” as the principal of a high school. He had no desire to work as a middle school principal, although he was certified to teach English in grades 6 – 12. High school had been his passion, and he had left Eastland School District to serve as a high school principal in a troubled school district. Returning to Eastland was an opportunity for him to display his experience and expertise in focusing on a school’s instructional program to the superintendent, area superintendent, and other administrators.

Principal Washington described his leadership style as that of a chameleon, because he had to “adapt and adjust to different places.” He felt he used a shared approach to leadership, an approach he learned when he played team sports. He explained that he taught the team concept to his administrative team to facilitate an environment of camaraderie and collaboration. Further, he highlighted the importance of establishing relationships, and stated that, as a principal, “you must build a relationship”

with staff and students. He further stated that “the importance of relationships must be built [among the team in order to] know your team members’ strengths and weaknesses.”

*Principal Washington’s perceptions of non-instructional demands.* When asked about the non-instructional demands he faced in his position, Principal Washington first identified safety as a significant issue. “Safety and security of the building is a huge piece, and the facility itself, which has nothing to do with instruction, but it has everything to do with setting up an environment that is appealing and is going to promote instruction.” Principal Washington gave an example of how his building services staff affected instruction in the school building:

The steps are an extension of the building. Don’t wait for the outside person who cuts the grass to sweep the steps. I should never walk up these steps and see that it’s a mess. Now it has nothing to do with instruction but it’s the perception of coming into the building. And it consumes time, but every morning when I’m walking around just kind of feeling the climate of the building, popping into classes and those type of things, it’s instruction but it’s also management in looking at the facility and the security of things.

Principal Washington found that it was sometimes difficult to separate management issues from instructional concerns. He gave an example of an incident when students were in the hall without hall passes. The situation initially appeared to be a management issue, but soon led to concerns about instructional matters and considerations of why the teacher gave the students permission to miss a part of the class.

Principal Washington felt that the school system’s requirements for principals to serve on committees or workgroups and meet monthly with the superintendent were another non-instructional demand. This non-instructional demand required his attendance at a number of meetings that occurred during the day and resulted in his

absence from his school building. These meetings could not be delegated to an assistant principal.

Like other principals in the district, Principal Washington also served on special county-wide committees and workgroups. These workgroups often were scheduled during the instructional day or during the dismissal of school. In addition to these external meetings, athletics and extracurricular activities served as additional non-instructional demands on Principal Washington's time. In his view, meetings, athletics, and extracurricular activities created “extra demands.” He explained that after a meeting, “we’re expected to come back to school, cover the games, and you don’t get home until ten thirty at night.”

*Principal Washington’s constraints.* Principal Washington described a number of constraints during his interviews. For example, he felt that Eastland School District imposed a number of constraints he had not experienced in the district he had previously worked for as a principal. He commented on the constraint of having 130 faculty and staff members and developing staff members new to his school, and working with experienced staff that were not performing as they should. He further described the implications of hiring key staff positions; such as an assistant principal, guidance counselor, and two department chairpersons. He stated that the “drawback [with hiring staff] is the time” that it takes to hire staff, identify areas of strength and weaknesses, and develop specific professional development opportunities. Principal Washington described the frustration of not having the authority to hire staff and noted that because of this district’s policy, he lost good candidates every year. He had experienced and appreciated that greater autonomy in hiring at his previous school district.



Principal Washington's administrative team consisted of two male assistant principals and a female assistant principal. Washington noted that he had "no right-hand man or woman; it's a team," but he felt a need for more support in administration. The allocation of assistant principals was based on the student enrollment in a school building. Principal Washington expressed some frustration when he described his working relationship with Central Office staff. He noted that while he arrived at work early, the Central Office staff might "not be there 'til, at the earliest, maybe seven thirty," and some Central Office staff conducted official business as late as "a quarter to five or five o'clock. He indicated that the work schedule of Central Office staff was not always aligned with his schedule and school activities. The lack of congruity between his schedule and that of the Central Office staff proved a notable constraint for Principal Washington.

Principal Washington mentioned several constraints on his work as principal that stemmed from challenges with his school building's design and resources. For example, his school did not have "wireless throughout the building" for the administrators and staff to access the internet for their work in other parts of the building. He noted a general dearth of technology in the building, although he acknowledged that the "Promethean boards were a great addition" to the classroom.

Eastern High School sits on "little less than 30 acres" and the students "don't have enough space" for practice fields. Having the "dance floor on the second floor," away from the Physical Education department, also created some scheduling and supervision issues. Principal Washington stated, "We have money that can only be used for instructional materials, which is great; but in there, I cannot buy any more desks."

Eastern High School receives a special grant that funds one of their special programs, but Principal Washington saw a decrease in the financial resources during the year this study took place. “For all the special programs that we have, the county has funded them. I can’t say they funded them pretty well.” He described other programs that were initially funded by Eastland School District, but each local school is beginning to fund these programs themselves. “We can’t afford to pay for all of them anymore.”

*Principal Washington’s perceptions of instructional demands.* Principal Washington identified professional development for teachers and staff as a prominent instructional demand of his position. He further described these instructional demands as the “the opportunity to be able to go into the classrooms, go in and observe what we believe should be effective instruction, but then coming up with support plans, being able to have a better analysis of their structural practices that are being delivered by the teacher every day.” He labeled this process a demand because “you end up dealing with teachers who create issues outside of the instructional part of it that takes attention away from the delivery of the instruction, because you’re dealing with something else that’s impacting the relationships in the room, keeping them from being able to deliver that type of instruction because the relationships are poor, which therefore is going to impact” the classroom instruction. The instructional demand of having high expectations for all students and teachers in a culture of continuous improvement included hiring the best teachers and providing effective professional learning communities where teachers plan collaboratively, review and grade student work, and monitor student performance.

Another instructional demand that Principal Washington faced was the requirement that he complete the department chairperson evaluations. Despite this

demand on his own time, he felt that not having the assistant principals write the evaluations of the department chairperson “helps those relationships with the assistant principal.” He felt that the arrangement facilitated open communication between department chairpersons and assistant principals, since he/she would not be signing their evaluations. “I think they [the assistant principals] can get a lot more done with the [department chairpersons], and it gets rid of that ‘us versus them’ type of attitude.”

The instructional demand of using multiple sources of data to improve classroom instruction and meet the school district’s targets also was a priority for Principal Washington, and his supervisor had established targets for SAT, PSAT, honors and AP classes. “There are specific penalties for not meeting these targets. Well, I guess the penalty would be having to have extra meetings [to address the targets].”

Dealing with all community stakeholders seemed to be very important to Principal Washington, but he had worked with his community to “get them to understand that you can’t just walk into a building and expect to see the principal.” He described that his parents were used to arriving to the school without appointments and demanding to see him about an issue involving their students. He discussed times when he was not in the building and did not know the issues of the parents at that time. Parents began to send email messages expecting a quick response, according to Principal Washington. He described the need for the community to have access to their principal and his responses to the community had to be timely and accurate. Because these inquiries from the community dealt with instruction or student learning, Principal Washington described this work as an instructional demand.

## **Case Two: Lexington High School and Its Principal**

In this section I describe Lexington High School and the principal, Susan Anderson. I present the demands that Principal Anderson described as influencing her work.

**Lexington High School.** Lexington High School is located in the northeastern section of the school district. At the time of this study, the population included 1816 students (41% African-American, 9.8% Asian-American, 14% Hispanic, and 35.1% White). At Lexington High School, 1.4% of the school population received instruction in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). In addition, 20.4% of the student population participated in the FARMS Program, and 39.2% of the student population had participated in the FARMS at one time in their educational experience. The mobility rate was 11.4%, the student attendance rate was 95.3%, and the graduation rate was 91%.

Lexington High School offered Learning Academic Disabilities and School/Community-Based programs for its special education students. The Advanced Placement program was offered for students who had taken the necessary prerequisite courses and wanted to experience a rigorous program of study. In addition, Lexington provided Career Pathway Programs in the arts, business, computers, and humanities; which are electives; and offered core courses to prepare students for post-secondary work or work experience. Each year between 2003 and 2009, Lexington met the Adequate Yearly Progress targets. The average SAT score was 1490 out of 2400 points. Lexington High School had 85 classroom teachers and 53 supporting services staff. The administrative team consisted of one principal, three assistant principals, and one

assistant school administrator. The school had nine department chairpersons, 12 special educators, and seven full time counselors and one part-time counselor.

**Principal Susan Anderson of Lexington High School.** Susan Anderson, a White female, had been principal of Lexington High School for 13 years. She was recruited from the ranks of middle school principals in the district. Mrs. Anderson had 21 years of experience as an administrator (13 years at Lexington, five years at a middle school in the school district, and three years as an assistant principal). She taught theater for 16 years before advancing to an administrative position. She held a master's degree in secondary education and a graduate certificate in educational administration.

*Becoming the principal of Lexington High School.* Principal Anderson was one of the most experienced high school principals in the school district. She indicated that she received numerous requests for interviews because of Lexington High School's academic and athletic programs, the prestigious and distinguished accolades she had over the years for her effective leadership and training of future principals, and her community involvement. Principal Anderson explained that she was chosen to serve as the founding principal of Lexington High School after serving as principal of a middle school in a high performing section of the Eastland school district. She further indicated that she had taken the job because she wanted experience beyond her middle school background, and she described her desire for a school environment that was more diverse.

As the first principal of Lexington, she was instrumental in the design of the school, which included not only the selection of school colors, mascot, and paint colors, but also the hiring of staff and development of school policies and procedures. Principal Anderson described her leadership style as "empowering." She liked to be creative and

wanted to be hands-on without micromanaging. “I love to build the capacity in other people. And I feel like I was given a very unique opportunity to build something special.” She commented that she wanted students, staff and parents to look back over their years at Lexington as a good experience and feel that the principal had been a positive factor in that good experience.

*Principal Anderson’s perceptions of non-instructional demands.* When asked about non-instructional demands, Principal Anderson stated that “ultimately, everything’s related to instruction. While it may not look like it directly, two clicks away it’s related to instruction.” However, she described time demands as an example of a non-instructional demand. She noted a difference between her work during the day and demands on her time after school hours. “I love my day job, love it. I don’t always love my night job because my night job is exhausting. My night job is the additional time in hours that I put in, and sometimes it’s not even about what you’re there for, because that may ultimately be enjoyable.”

Principal Anderson also discussed the demand to improve the supervision of her athletic program by observing and evaluating her athletic director. Because of problems during the athletic events, her involvement was critical. She needed to conduct numerous observations of the athletic program and schedule numerous meetings with her athletic director, who had spent 39 years in the school system with 12 of those years at Lexington. Also, she explained that certain events consumed her time, especially when students misbehaved in the school building. She gave the example of an incident, prior to the homecoming pep rally, that had to be investigated by the assistant principals and security, and that required that she assess the situation to determine whether or not to

cancel the pep rally. This incident consumed a significant portion time for Principal Anderson and her administrative team, as they focused on the management of the school and the safety of students and staff.

Principal Anderson also gave the examples of facility issues that consumed her time. The gym and auditorium lobby spaces were too small to provide a safe environment for students, and she and her team were forced to develop alternate plans when scheduling events. Principal Anderson also described having issues with the heating and cooling systems, which had begun as an issue for her building services manager, but became an issue that she had to resolve with the Central Office staff. She described how each of these factors contributed to the creation of an environment that was conducive to learning, as she explained, “some of it is just comfort of the temperature in your room.”

***Principal Anderson’s constraints.*** Principal Anderson identified one of the major constraints of her position as having “only four years to make a difference in a student’s life,” since they come to her school from so many different backgrounds and experiences. Because Eastland School District placed such a strong focus on student achievement, the local high schools prioritized student performance on standardized tests. However, Anderson noted a “disconnect” with these demands and the “reality” among students. She described the disconnect of meeting the school district’s student performance targets and recognizing student achievement even if the students did not meet or exceed the performance targets. She gave an example of students performing a certain score on the SAT, yet the “reality” is that some students will be content with their SAT score in spite of the system’s target for SAT. She explained that “reality” of having

students to graduate from high school as their accomplishments and not the system's demands of having students meet or exceed the school district's student performance targets.

Principal Anderson explained that an additional constraint involved the fact that key positions in her building had been filled either with newly hired staff members or staff members who have been in their position far too long. She felt that she had been in Eastland School District a very long time, and that all of her mentors and supporters had left the field. "My heroes are gone," she lamented, "There aren't many heroes left when you've been around as long as I've been around, and that's when you become a lot more self-sufficient and I think take on a different role."

Principal Anderson explained that hiring staff was becoming more complex, because the current staffing formula does not meet the needs of her school. She explained, however, that she had become "very creative" in hiring staff members for positions in her building by reallocating the given staff allocations. The staffing formula is calculated based on the projected student enrollment for the upcoming school year (Eastland School District, n.d). at the time of this study she had gained new staff members in her building- two of the four administrators were new to their positions. She commented on the need for additional assistant principals in her building and the need for building teacher leaders or department chairpersons to improve teaching and learning.

Principal Anderson stated that her biggest funding source was the "cell phone tower" that was located on her school campus. Because of this mobile phone tower, Lexington received financial resources every year that were used at the principal's discretion. According to Principal Anderson, these funds ensure that the school is "able



to do some things we might not have been able to do before.” Principal Anderson further described the financial constraints that she regularly faces:

So, yeah, that constraint is-- well, the other thing is we used to have a lot of money in the grant, and a lot of things that we could do for staff, we can't do anymore. And we lost hours for clubs and all those kinds of things, and the grant's a real issue for us, because that was a huge-- it was \$750,000 over five years. It brought four team leaders in ninth grade, a release period.

Principal Anderson highlighted several additional financial constraints, such as nonrenewable grants and school system policies that prevented her from purchasing instructional materials and realigning her teacher staffing allocations. “In the old days, when you had a federal grant, there was a commitment from [Eastland School District] to pick up. So, like the signature program, we used to get an additional 2.4 staffing. We don't get that anymore.”

Principal Anderson noted that facility issues also proved a constraint, citing the fact that the school has “seven portables,” which meant the school district had to place mobile classrooms on the school campus to relieve overcrowding in the main structure of the school building. She also described the physical location of the auditorium and gymnasium and the heating and cooling of classrooms as “annoyances.” Anderson noted that her building had insufficient computer labs, and that students and staff had inadequate access to technology. “It creates 'haves' and 'have nots,' and that's one of the things you have to manage.”

Principal Anderson explained that working with her supervisor and other individuals in leadership positions also served as a constraint. She described her working relationship with the teacher union representative in her building as “positive” and commented that her “only grievance” with a staff “ended up turning around very

positively.” Despite this positive relationship, she acknowledged that she did not have a positive relationship with a previous supervisor, because the supervisor was “micromanaging” and “difficult to work with.” Since the previous supervisor left the position, she had developed “a wonderful relationship” with her current supervisor. She explained, “I feel like she trusts me to do the job. She doesn’t micromanage me because I’m doing the job. If I were not, she might have to be more directive.”

*Principal Anderson’s perceptions of instructional demands.* Principal Anderson described the instructional demands as “everything.” She explained, “It’s the all-encompassing reason we’re here. The demands, I think, go back to good hiring and a vision in hiring people who you know are going to accomplish what you want to see accomplished for students.” She portrayed instructional demands as an “overarching umbrella – the lens that you look through at everything.” According to Principal Anderson, “instructional demands are bigger than just instruction. They’re climate.” In order to foster a positive climate, Principal Anderson suggested that principals have to “build a climate that makes people want to come to work with your students.” She described this climate of learning, support and professionalism that would make staff and students want to come to school every day. Principal Anderson described this school culture of student and adult learning as vital in a school building. She felt that providing ongoing professional development opportunities for staff, as well as the human resources or other kinds of resources, support the school culture of student and adult learning. The master schedule needed to support the vision of the school to support and advanced level courses for students and sufficient planning time for teachers.

Anderson also discussed the importance of hiring the best staff. “If you put a lot of time into your hiring, you reap the rewards on the other end, because you’re not micromanaging.” She clarified by much work goes into the hiring of staff which includes screening potential candidates and selecting the best person for the position. She explained that hiring was the most important responsibility of her job, noting that she was involved in every interview for a position in her school and never delegated the task to another administrator in her building. By participating in every interview, she knew the strengths of each candidate and knew which one would be an asset to her school. She stated the importance of “good hiring and a vision in hiring people who you know are going to accomplish what you want to see accomplished for students.” Principal Anderson also noted the value of “knowing when you go in what you’re seeing in the class, what you’re seeing in the students, what the engagement looks like, what the tone, the climate.”

Principal Anderson contended that the analysis of student data often proved another instructional demand of her position. Proper data analysis is particularly important when dealing with incoming students, identifying student needs, and programming students for academic achievement. She scheduled the time to review data and work with her staff and community to program and provide opportunities for students. She described these actions as her vision for the school which was “believing” in students. “If you stop believing that you can make a difference and you can change lives and you can move kids beyond where they think they can go, then [it’s] time to go, time to retire. You’re not in the right business.”

### **Case Three: Reading High School and Its Principal**

In this section I describe Reading High School and its principal, Principal Hamilton. I present the constraints and demands that Principal Hamilton described as influencing her work.

**Reading High School.** Reading High School is located in the northwestern section of the school district. At the time of the study, the population was 1722 students (18% African-American, 14.2% Asian-American, 18.2% Hispanic, and 49.7% White). At Reading High School 6.9% of the total population received instruction in ESOL. In addition, 17.1% of the student population participated in FARMS, and 33.9% of the student population had participated FARMS at one time in their educational experience. The mobility rate was 14.6%, student attendance rate was 94.8%, and the graduation rate was 88.8%.

Reading High School offered Learning Academic Disabilities, Learning for Independence, and School/Community-Based programs for its special education students. The school offered a Multidisciplinary Education Training and Support program for students with interrupted education. The Advanced Placement program was offered for students who had taken the necessary prerequisite courses and want to experience a rigorous program of studies. In addition, Reading provided elective and core courses in their Career Pathway Programs to prepare students for post-secondary work or work experience. Reading had met the Adequate Yearly Progress targets from 2007 to 2009 but struggled to meet state assessment targets for reading for its ESOL and special education populations. The average SAT score was 1635 out of 2400 points. Reading High School had 79.6 classroom teachers and 74.6 supporting services staff. The

administrative team consisted of one principal and three assistant principals. The school employed seven department chairpersons, 20 special educators, and seven full time counselors.

**Principal Patricia Hamilton of Reading High School.** Patricia Hamilton, a White female with 10 years of administrative experience, was recruited from the ranks of high school assistant principals in the district to lead Reading High. At the time of the study, she had served at Reading for four years. Prior to her six years as an assistant principal at two high schools within the school district, she served as an office assistant and technology specialist at two high schools in Eastland school district, and in three other states, before advancing to an administrative position. She held two master's degrees and a graduate certificate in educational administration.

*Becoming the principal of Reading High School.* Of the four high school principals who participated in this study, Hamilton had the least experience in administration. She was among the few administrators in the school district who were promoted from the position of assistant principal to high school principal. Principal Hamilton was appointed principal at Reading High School in late July 2006. She recalled that this date of appointment caused her to miss the annual Summer Instructional Leadership Team meeting held in early July. Principal Hamilton indicated that this annual summer meeting with school administrators, department chairpersons, students, and parents was very important because it was during that meeting that decisions were made on school policies and procedures for the upcoming school year. To make up for her inability to participate in the Summer Instructional Leadership Team meeting, Principal Hamilton scheduled an additional week for the school-based Instructional

Leadership Team to reconvene and decide on their focus for the upcoming school year. She indicated that this was intentional because she needed to make great changes in the building, based on feedback from her predecessor and her supervisor.

Principal Hamilton described her leadership style as “very hands-on,” but not “micro-managing.” She has been described as “intense” by her staff. “I try desperately not to be. I don’t think I can hide it, from anybody. You know? I think if we decide we’re going to do it, we’re going to do it.”

*Principal Hamilton’s perceptions of non-instructional demands.* Principal Hamilton described the non-instructional demands she faced as “a lot of just life things.” She noted that some examples of these “life things” included the matters in the school building, such as overheated third floor classrooms, insufficient paper towels in the restrooms, malfunctioning Xerox machines, and a shortage of financial resources for textbooks and instructional materials for students. Principal Hamilton stated that these non-instructional demands are the “managerial tasks” that she felt were impossible to resolve because they kept reoccurring. She gave a humorous description of herself as the “major trash picker upper at lunch, or straightener.”

Principal Hamilton felt that principals had a lot of mandated meetings that required them to be out of their buildings. She was involved in several of the school district’s committees, such as “principal advisory groups or committees mandated by Central Office.” She traveled with the superintendent and other administrators to Taiwan to meet with the Ministry of Education regarding public education policies and procedures. Hamilton also attended a number of other mandatory engagements, such as the superintendent’s meetings and the high school principals’ meetings. On one

occasion, Principal Hamilton had to deal with an incident at her school and missed a good portion of the high school principals' meeting. Her supervisor called her, asked where she had been, and cautioned her not to miss another meeting.

She indicated that staff and students noticed when she was off site, and expressed their displeasure at her absence from the building. To counteract these absences, she held numerous meetings with student leaders, such as the club presidents, Student Government Association members, and student athletes. Principal Hamilton commented on the pressure of numerous time demands on her position, and likened her job to that of "a juggler." She went on to explain jokingly that, "one day, you realize one of those balls is your head. Yes, I work very hard to fit all of it in. There are demands on my job about being visible in the community and at school events, and attending a wide variety of things." She felt that she was a lazy principal, because she arrived at work at seven o'clock in the morning. She admitted that her "late" arrival was due to her one-hour commute to work. She explained that she did not arrive home until seven o'clock at night, even when there were no evening meetings. According to Principal Hamilton, other time demands included the time she spent conferring with her assistant principal, problem-solving difficult situations involving students and staff, and preparing for the school's graduation ceremony.

During Principal Hamilton's first year at Reading, the principals of the schools feeding her high school met and talked frequently, but Principal Hamilton was not a part of these meetings. Instead, as a first-year principal, she was assigned a mentor principal with whom she was expected to meet and share issues and concerns. Once she completed

her first year as the principal, she was able to reestablish professional working relationships with her colleagues.

As wonderful as the mentoring program was, Principal Hamilton felt that it “isolated you from your colleagues. Because if you’re spending two hours every week having the mentor advise you, you don’t have enough time left to go ask the same question” of your colleagues. In addition, this mentor principal came to her building every week and stayed at least two hours, which took away from the time she could devote to her school. She also described having unannounced visits from Central Office, such as representatives from Safety and Security or the Recycling Team.

*Principal Hamilton’s constraints.* Principal Hamilton described her biggest constraint as the “working relationships” with her assistant principals, department chairpersons, parents, and supervisor. She had one experience with a site-based management team prior to her principalship at Reading, and that was a “multi-stakeholder” group of “school administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members.” She felt that a site-based management team was a group with established members, and she felt that there needed to be “a lot of consideration given to trying to get a really diverse representation of students and parents” to serve with the group. She believed that there needed to be “some different voices at the table” in order to get stakeholders input and have a strong management team.

She concentrated her efforts to improve the leadership team at Reading and focused on her staff. She felt that the assistant principals and department chairpersons at Reading “worked with a different set of expectations” when focusing on instructional leadership. She even described a conversation with a teacher who stated that “male



principals were principals and female principals were mothers,” and her response to the teacher was “Excuse me!” She explained that staff felt that because she was accessible, she was considered a mother, but she continued to maintain her accessibility.

Dealing with this type of perception required her to prove her qualifications as a principal and to build relationships with her staff. She stated, “I spend time in departmental offices, because I want to spend time hearing some things on their turf. So although, technically, I’m supervising halls or students at lunch, I may drop in some places for ten minutes.” She felt the need to build capacity among her team and especially with her leaders and assistant principals. Principal Hamilton stated that her leaders and assistant principals “have to understand where we’re going [as a school]. And they have to not be afraid of it, which of course, they are part of the time.” This constraint involved building the capacity within her staff and working relationships with her assistant principals, department chairpersons, and staff.

According to Principal Hamilton, at Reading, the parents’ only involvement was “to run the concession stand and raise money for athletics.” She further explained, “It took me a while to figure out how to work productively with groups of parents and to actually be able to get them to be partners in working within the school.” She had to expand the parents’ involvement in other areas of the school community that included “[the] college fair and mock SAT testing.” The parents “do not support in the main office or counseling because [they] might see a moment [where a student might not display his or her best conduct].” She further explained that she was able to get parents to support departments by assisting with some paperwork for teachers. This limited participation of parents in the instructional program caused Principal Hamilton to explore

other ways in which parents can be involved in the school community and instructional program.

Principal Hamilton's working relationship with her supervisor also served as a constraint on occasion. She described the relationship as “very supervisory; it is very hierarchical.” She further explained that her supervisor is “devoted to achieving the performance targets or addressing any problem that landed on the desk.” Her boss communicates with Principal Hamilton “by email,” and requested information has a “short turnaround time.” She felt that her supervisor does not have the experience or knowledge of the job of a high school principal, and other “people outside of the school building don’t really understand that kind of dynamic.”

Principal Hamilton described other constraints, such as financial resources and management. “I can’t spend over a certain amount of money without asking the Chief Financial Officer’s office to approve it.” She felt that the school never has enough financial resources. “I’m constrained by what they give me, in the end.” She wanted more computers and other technology in the building, but did not have the resources to purchase the necessary equipment.

The teacher staffing allocation also was “somewhat constrained” because of her need to hire additional teachers to meet the needs of students. Principal Hamilton felt that principals were bound by the content of the teachers’ contract and their recent loss of cost of living increases and benefits. To her, since the workforce did not receive raises, that meant that staff was “asked to work under pressure” and to be “held accountable” for improved results in student achievement without what they perceived as fair compensation. As a result, she felt that staff members were under “enormous pressure.”

She described concerns regarding staff members' commitment to their jobs and students. Sick leave was used frequently throughout her building and the school had a high suspension rate of minority males during Principal Hamilton's first year at Reading. "One teacher quit after the first week of school, and [there were] several who quit" either after the first month or first marking period of a school year. She described a school environment of students and staff with low expectations and questioned whether teachers were providing rigorous instruction.

Principal Hamilton spoke positively about her administration team and described her team as "very strong." However, she revealed specific information that presented challenges to the cohesiveness of the team. The school employed four assistant principals, and the newest member was not "liked" by others according to Principal Hamilton. Two of her assistant principals were new to the position, and the other two were "inexperienced." She stated that they were "very new" to the administrative positions which she later defined as having less than three years of administrative experiences. She also noted that the previous principal did not hold weekly leadership team meetings, and department chairpersons would not attend Principal Hamilton's meetings regularly during her first year as principal.

Principal Hamilton also described her school building as a constraint and explained, "Right now, I don't have enough space." She felt that she had "too many special programs with special needs for space" at her school. She mentioned that while the school had classroom portables on campus at one point, they were relocated to another school. "We don't have them right now, but we're kind of cramped." Other

issues have arisen because Reading was a relatively older school. The elevator failed regularly and she had “gone two months being absolutely not wheelchair accessible.”

*Principal Hamilton’s perceptions of instructional demands.* Principal Hamilton commented that her instructional demands included the oversight of the “entire instructional program and its delivery.” She explained that she was always thinking about the direction of the school and about “pursuing new programs or taking an existing program in a different direction.” She felt that this work was not an exceptional or unusual demand, but rather served as an expected component of “the work” of the instructional leader of the school.

As part of her role as an instructional leader, she felt the need to stay abreast of the aptitudes and abilities of her teachers. She also made it her job to know which teachers needed to improve their skills. To this end, Principal Hamilton stayed “very involved with the delivery of instruction in the classroom by conducting classroom observations and scheduling many conferences with teachers.”

Principal Hamilton also identified relationship building with external stakeholders as a demand of her position. For example, she encouraged parents to accept shared responsibility for students and school success. She felt that it was very important that principals were “working with parents to try to make sure that we’re both working together in the best interest of the child and to get the kid the best education possible...and to actually be able to get them to be partners in working within the school.”

### **Case Four: Ackerman High School and Its Principal**

In this section I describe Ackerman High School and its principal, Sharon Carter. I present the constraints and demands that Principal Carter described as influencing her work.

**Ackerman High School.** Ackerman High School is located in the center of the school district. At the time of this study, the population consisted of 2002 students (27% African-American, 10.4% Asian-American, 33.8% Hispanic, and 28.7% White). At Ackerman High School, 12.2% of the total population received instruction in ESOL. In addition, 30.3% of the student population participated in FARMS, and 57% of the student population had participated in FARMS at one time in their educational experience. The mobility rate was at 17.7%, student attendance rate was at 94.3%, and the graduation rate was at 89.2%.

Ackerman High School offered a Bridge Program; as well as Learning Academic Disabilities, Learning for Independence, and School/Community-Based programs; for its special education students. Ackerman also provided a Multidisciplinary Education Training and Support program for ESOL students. The Advanced Placement program was offered for students who had taken the necessary prerequisite courses and wanted to experience a rigorous program of study. In addition, Ackerman High provided Career Pathway Programs such as computer technology and business which are electives and core courses to prepare students for post-secondary work or work experience. Ackerman High had met the Adequate Yearly Progress targets since 2005, but struggled to meet the state assessment targets for reading for its ESOL and special education populations. The average SAT score was 1514 out of 2400 points. The school had 91.4 classroom

teachers and 71 supporting services staff. The administrative team consisted of one principal and four assistant principals. The staff also included eight department chairpersons, 24.8 special educators, and 8.5 counselors.

***Principal Sharon Carter of Ackerman High School.*** Sharon Carter, an African American female who had been principal of Ackerman High School for three years at the time of the study, was recruited from a nearby school district. Principal Carter had a total of nine years of experience as an administrator (three years at Ackerman, six years at another high school in a nearby school district, and one year as an assistant principal at that high school). She taught special education for nine years before advancing to an administrative position. She held a master's degree in secondary education, another master's degree in educational administration, and a doctorate in educational leadership.

**Becoming the principal of Ackerman High School.** Principal Carter had interviewed for a high school position in Eastland School District before, but she did not accept the position and decided to remain in a nearby system. She accepted the high school principalship one year later and began work at Ackerman, a school with a high principal turnover. Principal Carter was the fifth principal at Ackerman in six years. She sought to provide stability and continuity in school policies and procedures by recreating school pride and civility in her building.

Well-versed in addressing the demands and constraints of the high school principalship, but new to this school district, she described some challenges during her first year with staff, parents, and community members who had held positive feelings for the previous principal. She knew she had to “place her signature” on the school without tarnishing the reputation of the previous principal, who had been moved to another high

school by the superintendent. The local newspaper ran articles expressing concerns about whether or not Principal Carter could handle a large and diverse school like Ackerman, since she had come from a much smaller school district and high school. From the beginning of her appointment, she felt she had a lot to prove to her staff, students, and the local community about her ability to effectively lead the school.

Principal Carter described her leadership style as that of a coach. She viewed herself as the head coach who sought to “work with a team with goals.” She described her assistant principals as her assistant coaches and explained the need for collaboration and the development of “our game plan.” She further described herself as a “collaborative, visionary and strategic thinker.” She considered herself to be very open-minded and did not believe that she was the only one with the answers. “When you look at what a head coach does, take a football coach, they have somebody that does offense, somebody that does defense and people who have specialties, you know, they work with the defensive back, the quarter back, the kickers. The head coach doesn’t know all those things but when you bring it together as a team, you know on game day, we’re ready.”

***Principal Carter’s perceptions of non-instructional demands.*** Principal Carter identified the non-instructional demands of her position as “management pieces:”

To have a safe school – safety deals with not just the building and making sure everything – your building, the facilities and things like that are safe. You have snow, you got to make sure everything is safe, the sidewalks are clear of ice. You got all those kinds of things, but you’re also dealing with safety – making sure that students feel safe in your school. So you’re making sure that you’re bully-free, that the whole drugs and weapons and all of that kind of stuff, and the discipline, that kids feel safe coming to school and that you have an environment conducive to instruction. Respect and responsibility are important to learning. That’s non-instructional, but it ties into instruction. So all the safety piece, disciplinary, your facilities, and you’re dealing with buses and transportation and you’re dealing with your food services.

Principal Carter listed many other considerations outside the area of instruction:

In a high school, you're dealing with vendors, you're dealing with graduation, you're dealing with trying to get a graduation speaker, I mean, all kinds of other demands, and although it's done as a collaborative process so it's not like the principal works on an island and works alone, but you are responsible for it, and that's what makes it a demand.

Principal Carter shared that much of her time was spent in meetings that she felt were mandatory. "Maybe things can be delegated, but you just feel the need to take care of it yourself. A lot of things can be done collaboratively, and there are some things that you can delegate pieces of it, but in the end, it falls on the principal."

*Principal Carter's constraints.* Although Principal Carter noted a number of constraints that were similar to those mentioned by the other principals in this study, she also noted several factors that helped to counteract the impact of many constraints. For example, she noted that her positive relationship with her supervisor diminished a number of constraints on her leadership practice that she might have otherwise felt. She viewed him as "supportive," and stated, "I feel comfortable asking questions and asking for advice in situations." Her supervisor established the type of relationship that made his principals feel at ease. She expressed that she felt "comfortable talking to him and walking through things and sharing with him [her] thoughts and getting feedback from him or asking questions." According to Principal Carter, "While he was demanding, he had high expectations and high standards" for the school and his principals. In her view, this supportive supervisory relationship was a valuable tool in her efforts to successfully address all of the constraints and demands that principals must face on a daily basis.

Principal Carter also felt that she had a "very good" and "very strong" leadership team, including four assistant principals. She explained that all but of the assistant



principals had “a lot of experience.” Furthermore, she felt constraints on her role were diminished because her leadership team was “very diverse,” (including parents who were regularly involved in the monthly parent meetings and who actively served on her leadership team), and was “very involved in the decision making process for how we develop programs and policies and procedures.” Team members were “willing to do what it [took] to get the job done.”

While she recognized the strength of her team, she acknowledged that teachers in the school had “mixed feelings” about the administrative team, largely because of the history of turnover of principals. She noted that she faced concerns over leadership by faculty and staff who voiced their frustrations by asking Principal Carter “How long are you going to stay?”

While the above relationships proved helpful in achieving her goals for the school, Principal Carter noted that her relationship with the school union representatives often proved a challenge. Although her relationship with the union was “getting better,” she acknowledged the constraints it often created because teachers “won’t work beyond the contract” to support students. As a result, she felt that the “contract that the teachers have limits what we can do for kids.” At the same time, she indicated that the school union representatives were members of the leadership team, and she considered their involvement limited options for teachers that had a negative impact to the school. The union representatives needed a student advocate who was led by a broadly based coalition of constituents.

Turning to the resource constraints on her work as an instructional leader, Principal Carter noted that although she had “an adequate school budget,” she often faced

“constraints on how the money” was spent. For example, she noted that she did not have the autonomy to “hire additional staff members” because of the staffing guidelines and financial restrictions. Additionally, she did not have the flexibility to purchase technology and other “materials of instruction” to support innovative ideas from staff. She felt that teachers were “feeling stressed.” Not only had teachers not “gotten a raise,” but she was unable to provide incentives and rewards because she had only a “certain amount of money...to recognize and support” her staff.

Like the other principals in this study, Principal Carter described a number of facility problems that served as constraints on her work as instructional leader. “We have an older school....We don’t have as many [computer] labs as we would like to have.” Teachers at Ackerman High School also did not have the work space environment, such as “seminar rooms,” to provide unique opportunities for learning and academic support. The school had insufficient classrooms and lacked adequate “space for some of our clubs, like our student government and our newspaper,” to work as a large group. In addition, Ackerman High School had “mobile units,” or portable classrooms, that Principal Carter felt “isolate[d] some teachers.”

Principal Carter also mentioned the constraint of not having autonomy to “hire additional staff members” because of the staffing guidelines and financial restrictions. The staffing guidelines are based on the projected student enrollment (Eastland School District, n.d.), and can be limiting. She stated that the staffing guidelines and policies can be “very restraining, as far as allowing us to think outside the box-- things that we need to do for our kids and how we use our staffing and how we use the resources that we have.”

Principal Carter described these constraints as limitations and restrictions that impacted how she conducted her work as an instructional leader. .

*Principal Carter's perceptions of instructional demands.* Principal Carter felt that “every day relates to instruction because we’re responsible for the instruction at this school.” This broad focus had specific ramifications for her work. For example, Principal Carter viewed requests for meetings with parents, the media, and other members of the community as instructional demands; because she felt that certain requests could not be delegated. “Some people just want to see the principal, and dealing with the press, dealing with some of the community stuff, things that people want to see the principal.” While she realized the importance of these interactions, she also recognized that they often took away from time allotted to oversight of the school building. Principal Carter also viewed pressures from her supervisor and the school district as instructional demands, as they sought to ensure that the school achieved and meet certain instructional targets.

Generally, Carter identified instructional demands as “what’s happening in classrooms” and her work as that of “working with the leadership team of the school.” She felt that meeting these instructional demands entailed “making sure that [the school's operations are] all fully functional, [and her role as] ultimately being responsible for it all.”

She also noted the importance of “getting in classrooms as much as you can, being visible, overseeing and making sure your scheduling is done properly.” She asserted that principals must know “what’s happening in the classrooms, what we need to do to increase student achievement, looking at your data and how to make decisions that

relate to instruction, and what needs to be done.” She identified these responsibilities as demands because of the pressure that is placed on high school principals to produce a certain level of academic achievement. “Some of that’s outside pressure and some of it’s just your own personal pressure because you want your school to be the best, you want your kids to have the best, and you want students to be prepared for whatever it is that they want to do outside of school.”

### **Summary**

In Chapter 4, I presented the findings that addressed the first two research questions:

1. What do high school principals describe as the instructional and non-instructional demands of their jobs?
2. What do high school principals describe as job constraints that have an impact on instruction?

The chapter presented data collected from four high school principals with different backgrounds and experiences, who worked at schools with dissimilar student demographics, staff, and programs. .

Data from interviews with the four high school principals in Eastland School District revealed a number of constraints on their ability to fulfill their roles as instructional leaders. Rosemary Stewart (1982) described constraints as “the extent to which the work to be done by the manager’s unit is defined or the factors that limit what the jobholder can do.” She specifically provided a summary of the common constraints (p. 5):

- Resource constraints, including buildings,
- Legal and trade union constraints,
- Technological limitations of equipment and process,
- Physical location,
- Organizational policies and procedures, and
- Attitudes that influence what actions other people will accept or tolerate.

Following Stewart's (1982) work, in this chapter I described the constraints created by (a) the physical location of the school building; and (b) organizational policies and procedures (pertaining to students, staff, and educational programs). Beyond these two sets of constraints, the four high school principals described additional constraints that have an impact on instruction. Table 5 summarizes the constraints noted by the four high school principals.

**Summary of instructional and non-instructional demands.** After interviewing the four high school principals in Eastland School District about the demands and constraints that impact their work as instructional leaders, I found evidence that all of the principals faced demands from different stakeholders. Stewart (1982) described demands as "having to do certain kinds of work, and the overall satisfying of certain criteria." She summarized different kinds of demands as including:

- Overall meeting minimum criteria of performance, and
- Doing certain kinds of work, such as the extent to which personal involvement is required in the unit's work, who must be contacted and the difficulty of the work relationship, contacts' power to enforce their

expectations, bureaucratic procedures that cannot be ignored or delegated, and meetings that must be attended. (p. 3)

In Eastland School District, the job description for a high school principal reads as follows: the principal “is responsible for administering and supervising the total school program and providing educational leadership for the students and staff members consistent with the educational goals of the community. Functions of positions in the classification vary and include establishing a climate conducive to learning, defining roles, planning and coordinating programs, effecting change, and decision-making” (Eastland School District, n.d.).

In my efforts to address Research Question #1: What do high school principals describe as the instructional and non-instructional demands of their jobs? I first examined the non-instructional demands that the four principals felt affected their work as instructional leaders. These demands are summarized in Table 6 below. These demands are aligned with the findings from the study of Pounder and Merrill (2001). The data will be analyzed across the four case studies in Chapter 5.

This inquiry also examined the instructional demands perceived by the four principals. Each of the principals described a number of such demands that significantly impacted their ability to fulfill their roles as instructional leaders. Their responses are summarized in Table 7. In the right hand column of this table I listed the specific dimensions of the Maryland Instructional Framework that aligned with each of the instructional demands identified by the principals.

Table 5

*Summary of Principals' Perceptions of Constraints*

<b>Principals' Perceptions of Constraints</b>	<i>Principal Washington</i>	<i>Principal Anderson</i>	<i>Principal Hamilton</i>	<i>Principal Carter</i>
Overcrowding of school and portables; student enrollment	X	X	X	X
<b>Staffing allocations and formulas to staff schools</b>	X	X	X	X
Grant funding and MSDE funds to support programs	X	X		
<b>Facility issues and concerns</b>	X	X	X	X
Technology in the building	X	X	X	X
<b>Only have 4 years to make a difference in a student's life</b>		X		
Working with supervisor; knowledge or experience of high schools		X	X	X
<b>Financial resources to purchase instructional materials/insufficient</b>	X	X	X	X
Strict guidelines for purchasing instructional materials, furniture, computers, etc.	X	X	X	X
<b>Meetings and working relationship with union representatives in school</b>		X	X	X
Teacher Contract and duty day			X	X
<b>Number of assistant principals/knowledge and experience</b>	X	X	X	X
Job performance of department chairpersons	X	X	X	X
<b>Parental involvement in school activities</b>			X	X
Contract issues regarding raises, benefits and responsibilities			X	X
<b>Providing stability to a school with a high principal turnover</b>				X
New staff in key positions	X	X	X	X
<b>Increased use of technology and replacing basic of teaching / limited instructional strategies</b>	X			
Lack of principal involvement in initial screening / hiring of teacher candidates. (Central Office staff hire teachers)	X			

Table 6

*Summary of Principals' Perceptions of Non-instructional Demands*

<b><u>Principals' Perceptions of Non-instructional Demands</u></b>	<i>Principal Washington</i>	<i>Principal Anderson</i>	<i>Principal Hamilton</i>	<i>Principal Carter</i>
Time – many meetings including meetings with stakeholders and participation in committees	X	X	X	X
<b>Final decisions regarding complaints and issues</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Difficult conversations about performance of non-teaching staff	X	X	X	X
<b>Building relationship with supervisor</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Making people feel good		X		
<b>Having to clean up someone's mistakes</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>
School events including athletics	X	X		X
<b>School facilities; maintaining a clean building; resolving issues such as overheating, toilet paper, Xerox machines, furniture in offices</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Creating own Professional Development Plan		X		
<b>Staff grievances and complaints; parent complaints</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
Personal and Family demands such as appts, events, meetings, etc.	X	X		X
<b>Gossip; incorrect information and miscommunication among stakeholders</b>		<b>X</b>		
Working behind the scenes to accomplish program or goal			X	
<b>Visibility in halls, offices, cafeteria, etc.</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Seasonal events such as registration and graduation			X	
<b>Responding to emails and phone messages</b>			<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
School safety and food services				X
Dealing with budgets				X



Table 7

*Summary of Principals' Perceptions of Instructional Demands with MILF Standards*

MILF: Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework: 1 – Facilitate the development of a school vision; 2 – Align all aspects of a school culture to student and adult learning; 3 – Monitor the alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; 4 – Improve instructional practices through the purposeful observation and evaluation of teachers; 5 – Ensure the regular integration of appropriate assessments into daily classroom instruction; 6 – Use technology and multiple sources of data to improve classroom instruction; 7 – Provide staff with focused, sustained, research-based professional development; and 8 – Engage all community stakeholders in a shared responsibility for student and school success.

<u><i>Principals' Perceptions of Instructional Demands</i></u>	<i>Principal Washington</i>	<i>Principal Anderson</i>	<i>Principal Hamilton</i>	<i>Principal Carter</i>	<i>MILF</i>
Hiring staff	X	X	X	X	1, 2, 4
<b>Teaching assignments/Master Schedule</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>		<b>1, 3</b>
School climate; build so people want to come to work and school	X	X	X		2
<b>Student performance achievement including pressure from supervisor and state and national assessments</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>2, 3</b>
Student behavior	X	X			1, 2
<b>Owning everything</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
Difficult conversations with staff about work performance	X	X	X	X	2, 4, 7
<b>Observations and Evaluations</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>4, 7</b>
Meeting system's targets and monitoring work from supervisor	X	X	X	X	1, 3, 6
<b>Working with stakeholders – parents, students</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>8</b>
Teachers teaching and utilizing technology and data to inform instruction and to maintain communication with students and parents		X	X		6, 7

These findings provide insight into their perceptions of the demands and constraints the principals face, in their positions, on a daily basis. Despite the differences in these principals' background, experience, and school environment, their schools all maintained high levels of student achievement under the leadership of these individuals, yet faced uncommon non-instructional demands and constraints. The next chapter details a cross-case analysis of these findings that will provide further insight into each principal's perceptions of the demands and constraints that led to the principal's choices to focus on instructional leadership.

## **Chapter 5: Cross-Case Analysis of High School Principals' Perceptions**

The previous chapter provided a within-case analysis of the findings and responded to the first two research questions examined in this inquiry:

1. What do high school principals describe as the instructional and non-instructional demands of their jobs?
2. What do high school principals describe as job constraints that have an impact on instruction?

Chapter 5 responds to the third research question addressed in this study:

3. In light of these demands and constraints, what do high school principals choose to do in order to focus on instructional leadership?

In the response to this question, I defined “instructional leadership” as actions that meet the outcomes specified as “evidence of practice” by the Maryland State Department of Education's (2005) Instructional Leadership Framework (MILF).

This chapter presents the findings of the cross-case analysis of transcripts of recorded interviews with the four high school principals participating in the study. In this analysis, I compared the strategies that the principals adopted to maintain their focus on instructional leadership, in spite of the demands and constraints of their jobs. I considered how their responses reflected “the work to be done” (Stewart, 1982), and then categorized their responses as evidence of practices associated with components of

MILF. Lastly, I analyzed their responses to consider how they reflected Bolman and Deal's (2008) human resources, structural, political, or symbolic frames of leadership.

### **Cross-Case Analysis of High School Principal's Perceptions**

Chapter 5 is organized into two sections. In the first section, I describe the frames that each of the four high school principals adopted, when focusing on aspects of instructional leadership, associated with the MILF. I detail specific choices they made to place a particular emphasis on this area of their work. The study revealed both strong similarities, and notable differences among the four high school principals; however, each of the principals described distributed leadership as a strategy that helped them to focus on instruction. In addition, the principals shared core beliefs, or visions as leaders, which led to their choices to focus on instruction. In the last section of this chapter, I summarize all of the strategies adopted by the four high school principals that supported their focus on instruction. The summary presents the various commonalities among the principals, which included their shared employment of a distributed leadership style.

### **A Four-Frame Model of Leadership**

The principal's responses to instructional leadership are categorized as a frame from Bolman and Deal's (2008) model. Each frame is described as structural, human resources, political, and symbolic leadership.

**Structural leadership.** The structural frame, as defined by Bolman and Deal (2008), draws attention to the importance of leadership practices that enhance the clarity of defined roles and responsibilities. Leadership practices focusing on such structural concerns and emphasize strategies like communicating, realigning, and renegotiating formal patterns and policies (see Appendix G). Leadership practices focused on the

structural aspects of organizations emphasize the use of rules; focus on clarifying roles, goals, policies, technology; and consider environmental influences (see Appendix E).

All four of the high school principals spoke about the importance of structural leadership in their work. Each principal noted the importance of articulating a vision for their school and of monitoring the instructional program--both key dimensions of instructional leadership in the MILF. The MILF suggests that the development of a school vision requires that principals develop processes that ensure all staff and other stakeholders can articulate the vision and all resources are aligned to support the vision (Maryland State Department of Education, 2005). As I outline in the next section, all of the principals in this study spoke about the importance of developing a vision to support their school community and working with many stakeholders such as the assistant principals, leadership team members, staff, students, and parents. Within the frame of structural leadership, I reference the use of distributed leadership from all of the principals and the careful use of the principals' work schedule and time.

*A clear vision.* All four principals described how they worked with staff and other stakeholders to create a school vision that focused on academic achievement. They each did so by aligning resources and developing structures to support their school's vision for enhancing student achievement. Each principal talked about the importance of redesigning the roles and responsibilities of staff so that they focused on instructional leadership.

At the same time, all four principals were very aware of their own responsibilities as school leaders. They each noted that principals must be responsible for each aspect of the school's operation. Ultimately, principals are responsible for everything. Principal

Anderson expounded to say, "You own the trash in the parking lot." Principal Carter agreed, and described this responsibility as owning "the whole shebang." At the same time she was clear that she chose to "make instruction a focus and to make sure that vision is known throughout the school." Carter indicated that everything that she did was aligned with the instructional focus of the school, and that her role as leader required that she ensure that school faculty and staff recognize that "[the work] we do is all about the vision [of the school]" to serve the learning needs of students. .

Two other principals took similar stances toward the importance of practicing the structural aspects of instructional leadership. Principal Washington, for example, described taking risks in order to create a school vision and putting structures in place to further that vision. He explained, "If you're going to take a risk, you got to figure out, Okay, what am I going to do to make sure we do this the right way" in meeting the vision of the school as a place that enhanced student learning. Principal Hamilton was also explicit in focusing on the structural aspects of instructional leadership. She noted that her vision was to create a "climate for learning," and that it was her job "to make sure that [everyone was] staying focused." She sought to ensure that everyone was clear about the direction in which the school needed to go to improve student achievement. Hamilton felt that she was responsible for "oversee[ing] the entire instructional program and its delivery."

In summary, detailed analysis confirmed that the principals in this study were very aware of their own role and responsibility in promoting instructional leadership. Also, principals articulated a vision for their work as an instructional leader and the development of a school vision is an outcome of MILF. As I describe in the next section,

they viewed their own instructional leadership as distributing the work of instructional leadership to other members of the school leadership team.

*Administrative team and distributed leadership.* All four principals acknowledged that they relied upon their administrative and leadership teams to address instructional issues. Typically, their administrative teams consisted solely of their assistant principals. Their leadership teams, however, consisted of those administrators, along with department chairpersons, staff development teachers, and selected parents and students. All four principals also required their Business Administrators to serve as members of the administrative and leadership teams. In each case, the principals relied upon these teams to assist them with the overall supervision and management of their schools.

Interviews revealed commonalities in how all four principals described their working relationships with their administrative teams, or their "A Teams". Similarities also emerged in the way that all four principals described the roles and responsibilities of their "A Teams," and in the structures they created to ensure that the teams supported the instructional focus of their schools.

Principal Anderson acknowledged that she "delegated a lot" to her administrative team. Both Principal Carter and Principal Hamilton described using a "collaborative process" while working with their administrative teams. Both recognized that because principals cannot work "on an island," they must foster distributed leadership through enhancing the work with their administrative teams. Principal Carter used a sports analogy to describe her administrative team. She was "the head coach," and as the head coach she was responsible for ensuring that the "assistant coaches" fulfilled their

responsibilities. She worked individually with her assistant principals by "helping them to problem solve." However, Principal Carter also noted that she specifically ensured that there were many days when she provided no coaching or assistance and allowed her assistant principals to function independently. All four principals described the important role that the administrative team played in their efforts to focus on instruction and explained that all key tasks are "shared" among the team members.

Interviews also revealed commonalities in all four principals' approaches to assigning duties and responsibilities to their assistant principals. Each of the principals provided leadership experiences for their assistant principals by distributing to them certain managerial and supervisory responsibilities of the school. The principals carefully developed the roles and responsibilities for their administrative team members based on their background, experiences, and the specific goals established for both the assistant principals and the school.

Principal Anderson assigned supervisory responsibilities to her assistant principals on a rotational cycle of three to four years. Anderson shared that she believed this approach would cultivate a positive working relationship and foster continuity in the monitoring department goals. She assigned departmental supervisory responsibilities to her assistant principals based on either their teaching experience, their desire to continue with the current working relationship with teachers, or an interest to increase their skills and knowledge of a particular department.

Principal Carter described the supervisory responsibilities as a "hierarchical structure," where her assistant principals "worked directly with the department chairpersons, who worked directly with the teachers." She divided the administrative



responsibilities "based on [her] administrative strengths and based on experiences that [the assistant principals] need based on their goals and aspirations." The principals viewed the supervision of departments, including the observation of teachers as the responsibility of the assistant principals.

All four principals acknowledged that assistant principals took on additional responsibilities outside of the general supervision of their departments. Principal Anderson, for example, expected the assistant principals to attend the departments' Professional Learning Communities, where staff members analyzed student data and shared best practices regarding instructional strategies. Principal Washington specifically mentioned that his assistant principals were responsible for discipline, testing, lunch duty, community events and meetings, athletics, and other managerial responsibilities necessary to the successful operation of the school. .

To ensure that the assistant principals received the support they needed to meet their responsibilities, all four high school principals met regularly with their assistant principals. Principal Anderson explained that the A team meetings served as a professional learning community where "members participate in a non-threatening" environment. Each of the four high school principals met with their A team weekly, and these meeting usually occurred after school.

Despite the similarities in meeting frequency, the facilitation of format and agenda for these A Team meetings differed significantly. Since Principal Anderson preferred her A team meetings to be "pretty informal," they did not use agendas, and topics were presented for the first time during the meeting. Conversely, Principal Washington encouraged members on his A Team to submit topics prior to the meeting so

that they could be included on the team meeting agenda. Despite these differences, the structure of the A Team meetings commonly consisted of reviewing teacher observations; discussing student discipline; planning parent meetings, school events and activities; and preparing for upcoming county-wide training sessions and meetings.

This work with the assistant principals coincides with the MILF outcomes that encourage school leaders to align all aspects of school culture to student and adult learning, improving instructional practices through the purposeful observation and evaluation of teachers, and engaging all community stakeholders in a shared responsibility for student and school success (Maryland State Department of Education, 2005). Depending on the agenda topic, Principal Washington invited additional participants; such as his business manager, building service manager, school resource officer, security team leader, guidance department chairperson, special education department chairperson, English Speaker of Other Languages (ESOL) department chairperson, staff development teacher, and athletic director.

Principal Washington was the only principal who spoke about additional A Team meetings, which occurred after the students' lunch. During that time, he and his administrative team ate lunch together and conducted "a little business." He admitted that he scheduled these meetings in order to eat lunch, because otherwise, he often would miss the meal altogether.

In summary, my analysis revealed that the principals in this study distributed leadership among the administrative team members and established clearly-defined roles and responsibilities for the administrative team that supported the principals' focus on instruction and the successful operation of the schools. As a part of the school culture of

student and adult learning, MILF suggests “opportunities for leadership and collaborative decision making distributed among stakeholders, especially teachers” (Maryland State Department of Education, p.9). Distributed leadership plays a major role of a high school principal and the work with the administrative and leadership teams. The A Team meetings provide an opportunity for communication and problem solving and served as a forum for building relationships and trust. Although the structures of the meetings differed at each school (formal or informal meetings), each principal considered this A Team’s work as an important component of instructional leadership. In the next section, the principals shared another approach to distributing the work of instructional leadership to the school leadership team of administrators, department chairperson, and other leaders.

*Leadership team.* An analysis of the data suggested that three of the high school principals discussed an effective school leadership team, which is the second outcome of the MILF. Specifically, this outcome identifies the behaviors of a successful team, which include continuous improvement, opportunities for leadership, collaboration, and a professionally learning community (Maryland State Department of Education, 2005). All of the principals stated that they had an effective school leadership team and they described the team as the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT)

The four high school principals identified their ILT as “the leaders of school building.” The teams were comprised of the principal, assistant principals, department chairpersons, and on occasion, a few parents and students. Three of the principals met with their ILT once a week after school. Principal Anderson was the only principal that

met with her team during “a common planning time” of the day. Attendance at ILT was mandatory.

Commonalities among the four principals emerged in the way that they each described the ILT as a vehicle for monitoring student achievement and discussing ways to meet the system’s and state’s targets. All four principals also explained that their work with ILT involved analysis of teaching and learning in the classrooms. The work of ILT corresponds with the MILF component of aligning all aspects of a school culture to student and adult learning; monitoring the alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; improving instructional practices through the purposeful observation and evaluation of teachers; ensuring the regular integration of appropriate assessments into daily classroom instruction; providing staff with focused, sustained, research-based professional development; and engaging all community stakeholders in a shared responsibility for student and school success.

Each principal provided a synopsis of the work of their ILT. Principal Anderson explained that her ILT developed and monitored the action steps on the School Improvement Plan that addressed the system’s and state’s targets. These action teams included staff and parents, who participated in walkthroughs to monitor progress toward the objectives on the School Improvement Plan. Principal Anderson scheduled departmental walkthroughs, and the department chairperson and staff development teacher created specific items that they should look for during their classroom reviews. The teams presented their findings to the department and the ILT, which then analyzed student data and data collected during the walkthrough to make recommendations for improvement in classroom instruction.

Principal Carter and her ILT also placed a significant focus on their School Improvement Plan, which made “instruction a priority” and let the entire school know that “this is the vision” of the assistant principals' and department chairpersons' work. They collaborated in small groups to focus on improving the instructional program, such as encouraging enhanced student performance on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and in advanced level and advanced placement courses. Carter and her team conducted instructional walkthroughs with specific "look fors."

Principal Hamilton created a professional learning community for her ILT by teaching them how to analyze data. She scheduled sessions in the computer lab where the department chairpersons were required to analyze and interpret their department data with the ILT. She required the members of the leadership team to read professional books, and she taught them "how to use data" to make informed decisions. Her vision was to create a "climate for learning," which meant that all leaders had to be involved in some sort of professional development opportunity.

Principal Hamilton participated in walkthroughs with her ILT members and encouraged them to focus on the delivery of instruction in the classroom. She also personally conducted administrative walkthroughs at the beginning of the school year to make sure instruction was at an acceptable level.

Principal Washington made sure that his ILT talked about instruction and classroom observations. He explained that he instituted these discussions, “So we make sure we get in [classrooms], and that [the leadership team] meeting does not focus on any management issues.” He further explained that he handled management and instructional issues by allotting a few minutes on the agenda each meeting to discuss management

issues, such as “tardy students.” He used an index card strategy to capture all of these issues and scheduled a different meeting to discuss management. He acknowledged that during ILT meetings, the group analyzed “equitable classroom practices and classroom observations.” He provided opportunities for ILT members to discuss teacher performance issues with classroom instruction and classroom management.

In summary, these principals established a leadership team and regularly meeting times to analyze data on teaching and learning to facilitate the school's focus on instruction. Their ILT meetings provide opportunities for communication and problem solving with a group of content experts, such as department chairperson and other stakeholders with different perspectives. Creating an effective school leadership team is a part of the alignment of the school culture to student and adult learning (MILF, 2005). The principals used the structures of the meetings to monitor the vision of the school, instructional programs, and student and teacher performance. In order to meet with the A team and ILT on a consistent basis, these principals designated structured time as a way to focus on instructional leadership.

**Structured time.** Each principal identified demands on their time as a significant challenge of their position as a school leader. The principals adopted varying strategies to address these demands on their time and ensure that they had the leeway to address both personal and professional priorities. However, they all agreed on the importance of structuring their time to meet the myriad demands of their jobs as instructional leaders.

Principal Anderson, for example, commented that the role of a high school principal can be consuming, and she established parameters for doing her job. She felt that balance is very important in the role of high school principal and "that you need to

remember that this is your job, and your job shouldn't be your life." She commented that by not having this balance in your life, "you're shortchanging everyone when you walk in the door of the school building."

Principal Hamilton likened her job to that of a juggler. She worked hard to complete the tasks for the day, while meeting the demands from the community, students, and staff. She scheduled activities involving instruction during the school hours and scheduled meetings after school hours. She spent her afternoons and evenings responding to and sending email messages. The principal's work day extends beyond a typical eight hour work day and the principals need to accommodate these work schedules with not only personal but professional responsibilities. Principals must schedule work tasks to occur after school hours, but they must utilize the school day to accomplish the work that is related to teaching and learning.

Principal Carter felt that a greater demand of her job is to schedule time to oversee classroom instruction. Carter prioritized her involvement with instruction by scheduling "two days a week" to leave her office and do instructional things such as visiting classrooms. She would reflect on the needs of an ineffective teacher and then design the supports and feedback necessary to improve the skills of that teacher. She utilized her secretary to schedule these observations, and asked that she make them a top priority. Principal Carter's motto was, "I work from can to can't. Can is when you start in the morning. You start out very able. And then 'can't' is when you're just too tired and can't go any further. Then you must go home." She used the day to work with students, teachers, and parents, and used the "quiet time in the evening when everybody's gone to handle the paperwork." These are examples of how a principal schedules her time

to complete the work, but she relies on her secretary to play an instrumental role in scheduling this time. Also, the principal has the flexibility to begin her day early in the morning and if necessary, stay late to accomplish additional tasks. As demanding as the job of the principal can be, principals have to maintain a balance of work hours and personal commitment and responsibilities.

Like the other three informants, Principal Washington established parameters about how he allotted his time. He clearly delineated that he was “not going to meetings that start[ed] at four o’clock,” because his work day began as early as “five thirty to five forty-five, which is a very long day,” and he tried to leave work at four thirty. Sometimes he had to manage evening events and activities, but he stressed that “there has to be some balance.” He carefully planned his schedule with his secretary. According to Washington, principals “have to create those situations where we force someone to balance,” because “otherwise, [the job will] be all-consuming.”

Establishing a designated time to visit classroom to conduct observations was yet another strategy that the high school principals adopted to support their focus on instruction. The principals rarely found enough hours in the day to complete the many tasks and responsibilities of their role as principal. These principals used structured time to monitor the vision of the school, instructional programs, and student and teacher performances, as well as complete paperwork. These strategies aligned with the following MILF outcomes:

- facilitate the development of a school vision;
- align all aspects of a school culture to student and adult learning;
- monitor the alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; and



- improve instructional practices through the purposeful observation and evaluation of teachers.

Although there is no mention of structured time in MILF, a principal who is an instructional leader allocates time in the daily schedule devoted to instructional practices. In the next section, I describe the principals' views of the role of department chairpersons in prioritizing instructional leadership within the school.

*Department chairpersons.* All four high school principals discussed the important role that their department chairpersons played in monitoring the alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. They described the department chairpersons as the “experts” in the content area and “instructional leaders” of their departments. They and the assistant principals worked together to improve instructional practices through the purposeful observation of teachers in their areas. This practice represented a distribution of leadership among the assistant principals and department chairpersons. The principals stressed the importance of hiring very competent department chairpersons to lead departments and serve on ILTs. They also described the roles and responsibilities of the department chairperson that helped them to focus on the alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; examine instructional practices through the purposeful observation and evaluation of teachers; ensure the regular integration of appropriate assessments into daily classroom instruction; utilize technology and multiple sources of data; and provide opportunities for professional development. All four principals explained that they interviewed and hired every department chairperson personally, and outlined clear expectations for them in their roles as instructional leaders for their departments.

Principal Anderson described the necessity of “hiring people who you know are going to accomplish what you want to see accomplished for students.” Since the department chairperson serves on the ILT and must demonstrate “leadership in their content area,” Principal Anderson interviewed and hired every department chairperson in her school. Regardless of the time constraints, Anderson saw her involvement in hiring every department chairperson as critical to the fulfillment of her school vision and the establishment of clear expectations. Her expectations for the position were outlined in the job description for the department chairpersons, and their duties included: assisting and supporting the teachers with the implementation of curriculum, providing resources such as textbooks and instructional materials, administering of summative assessments, observing the classroom teachers, and providing feedback about the teaching and learning (Eastland School District, n.d.). Principal Anderson described the department chairperson as the primary person responsible for monitoring the integration of assessments into daily classroom instruction, ensuring that the teachers “follow[ed] the curriculum,” and working with the teachers to “develop and administer assessments.”

Principal Carter emphasized the need to have specific roles and responsibilities for the department chairperson in order to implement the school vision. She described department chairpersons as “instructional leaders.” She further stated that the role of the department chairperson is “to make instruction a focus, and to make sure that vision is known throughout the school.” In a later interview, she also described the department chairpersons as “pseudo administrators for the department.” She felt these were “key positions” that helped high school principals accomplish their work as instructional

leaders, and believed that the department chairpersons knew the content area better than the administrator or principal. The chairpersons were the “experts of the subject matter.”

Principal Carter felt that hiring the right person for the position of the department chairperson provided an additional staff person qualified to monitor the instruction within the school building. Carter explained, “I don’t want [department chairpersons] that are just managers of their departments, but are instructional leaders in their department. So the choice is to make instruction a focus, and to make sure that vision is known throughout the school.” She required an “observation schedule” of teachers and department “meeting agendas” from the department chairpersons, as a way to monitor their work as instructional leaders.

Principal Washington's description of the importance of department chairpersons and their roles aligned with Principal Carter's views, but they stated that there was “no formalized training for them.” He shared the job description with the department chairperson and discussed the need for them to be instructional leaders. As he built the capacity of his department chairpersons, he “empowered” them to do the work as instructional leaders and gave them specific duties to support the school vision and programs. He held the department chairpersons accountable for observing and providing feedback about classroom instruction and doing the work as outlined in the job description.

In Eastland School District, the department chairperson must have a master’s degree or equivalency in the subject, a minimum of three years of successful secondary teaching experience, and a standard or satisfactory rating on the most recent evaluation. The position of department chairperson can be a prerequisite for future administrators in

the school system as a way of gaining leadership experience, and the district conducts a different evaluation for a department chairperson as indicated by the job description and evaluation tool for department chairpersons. According to the school system's performance standard for department chairperson, individuals must demonstrate that they are "committed to student and staff through effective school and department leadership" (Eastland School District, n.d.)

According to Eastland School District (n.d.), the position of department chairperson is responsible for the following:

- "Assisting teachers in new instructional strategies, classroom organization and management;
- Apprising teachers of curriculum changes and requirements in specific field(s);
- Providing strategies and implements programs/practices for improving student achievement and school climate;
- Meeting frequently with school administrators on instructional issues;
- Working with administration and the department/subject field(s) to prepare students for examinations and standardized tests;
- Ensuring implementation of approved and new curriculum;
- Collaborating with other department/grade level teachers;
- Fostering cooperative relationships within department/school;
- Participating in the planning and implementation of staff development activities;

- Observing instructional formally and informally and writes observation reports for inclusion in teacher evaluation summaries;
- Analyzing data to help teachers improve areas of instruction;
- Participating in the design and implementation of the local school improvement plan;
- Serving as an active participant in Leadership Team or Instructional Council meetings as needed;
- Dialoguing with consulting teachers and mentors assigned to teachers within the department/subject field(s);
- Working with the administration, school finance staff, and teachers to order and distribute instructional materials;
- Managing the departmental/subject field(s) budget;
- Developing master schedule for assigned courses in collaboration with school administrators;
- Assisting counselors and others in determining best placements for students;
- Assisting with hiring of new teachers and other staff where appropriate;
- Assisting school secretarial staff with classroom coverage in emergency situations;
- Attending appropriate central-office and school meetings, works with subject coordinators and shares information with department/subject fields(s) teachers;
- Holding departmental meetings as needed; and

- Participating in student/teacher or parent/teacher conferences as needed”  
(Eastland School District n.d).

My analysis suggested that the principals in the study were very aware of their role of hiring department chairpersons and of the importance of employing distributed leadership in the monitoring the classroom teacher, curriculum, and instruction. The principals also acknowledged their own role and responsibility in promoting instructional leadership. Each respondent worked with department chairpersons to monitor the vision of the school, instructional programs, and student and teacher performances, with the assistance of their assistant principals. These strategies aligned with the following MILF outcomes:

- facilitate the development of a school vision;
- align all aspects of a school culture to student and adult learning;
- monitor the alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment;
- improve instructional practices through the purposeful observation and evaluation of teachers; and
- engage all community stakeholders in a shared responsibility for student and school success.

In the next section, the principals described their own instructional leadership by structuring the work of the classroom teachers, parents and students.

***Classroom teachers.*** The four principals described how they work with assistant principals and department chairpersons to create a focus on teaching and learning in the classroom. The classroom teacher really makes the difference in student achievement, and the principals described their efforts to achieve the goal of having highly qualified

teachers in every classroom and using effective instructional strategies to meet the needs of all students. Each respondent discussed the importance of the role and responsibilities of classroom teachers.

The four principals were aware of their responsibilities in the process of hiring classroom teachers, and they stressed the importance of hiring the best candidate for their students; however, not all of the principals conducted the interviews of the classroom teachers themselves. Many of them delegated that responsibility to the assistant principal and department chairperson. Principal Anderson, however, interviewed the majority of the classroom teachers in her building and stressed the importance of “hiring” teachers and seeing the teachers establish a “certain tone” and create opportunities for “student engagement.” She structured the time to interview many of her classroom teachers, which was a very important task in her eyes.

All four principals stressed the importance of establishing clearly defined expectations for the classroom teachers, and each principal emphasized certain instructional strategies for all of their teachers based on the School Improvement Plan. Principal Hamilton worked with her ILT to stress the importance of having “daily mastery objective, [an] agenda, and homework assignments” in every classroom. She wanted her teachers to have an “understanding of certain educational pedagogy or what we’re really emphasizing, or how much writing” is being taught in the classroom. Principal Hamilton shared these expectations with her teachers and the ILT then monitored teacher progress in meeting the expectations. Professional development trainings were offered to any teachers who needed additional support and guidance to fulfilling assigned tasks.

Principal Carter indicated that her desire was to increase the number of students in advanced level courses and explained that, to accomplish this goal, all classroom teachers had to become familiar with “equitable classroom strategies” and “working with [their] varied populations.” To increase her enrollment in Advanced Placement (AP) courses, Principal Carter began by tackling the recommendation process, supports in AP courses, scheduling of AP classes, and teacher assignments. Her philosophy about student achievement and the vision of the school was to “move [her] kids forward” to college or the workforce and prepare them to be successful. She too had to monitor the work of the classroom teachers and relied upon her assistant principal and department chairperson to support her vision by observing the classroom teacher and recommending professional development.

Principal Washington mentioned the importance of “his students receiv[ing] the type of instruction that they need” from his teachers. He referred to this pedagogy as “sound instructional practice.” He too monitored the classroom instruction with the assistance of his assistant principals and department chairpersons. All principals need to know the academic performance of their students and plan accordingly as stated by Principal Washington. Also, principals must provide careful monitoring of the instruction and effective feedback to teachers to help guide their pedagogy

All four the principals mentioned the importance of providing the resources and professional development opportunities for classroom teachers to be successful. The principals explained that the staff development teacher played a vital role in the classroom teachers' professional growth, because the staff development served as a



mentor, coach, and support person to the teachers and aided them in meeting these goals and expectations.

The four principals all described the creative approaches they used in staffing to make up for insufficient staffing allocations. Reallocating staff proved another strategic choice that two principals employed to prioritize instruction. Changes in staffing included the restructuring of positions and the redesign of the mission of leadership teams. Each of these tactics were designed to support the vision of the school, increase the human resources available within the school, and avoid the loss of teaching positions. Principal Anderson, for example, wanted to align resources to support her vision for her school. She traded in 1.5 teachers for another assistant principal and a paraeducator. In doing so, she was able to expand her administrative team and delegate supervisory responsibilities to the new assistant principal. In addition, the new paraeducator was hired to provide additional support to her students. She built her school based on her vision for student learning and put a number of structures into place to fulfill that vision. Being a visionary is helpful as a high school principal, and it is necessary to possess the skills to be creative to fully implement a vision. She worked around the constraints and realigned duties and responsibilities to meet the needs of her school.

Principal Washington had the vision of creating a position in his building to support student performance on the many state and local assessments. He took a department chairperson position and realigned the responsibilities to another department chairperson, which freed up that person to become the "Program Assessment Coordinator." He felt he could justify this newly created position because "this [had] to be done and that's what we did. I was being creative about it." This creativity provided

job opportunities for staff and, in some cases, job promotions. He realigned job responsibilities and designed a position that he felt was necessary to support the needs of his students and staff.

Two of the principals identified a need for additional staffing to address the instructional programs at their high schools, and they chose to be creative with the staffing allocation to create or reallocate staffing additional positions in the school building. These principals acknowledged the risk in choosing to reallocate staffing, but their actions were meant to address the needs in the school building. These principals used creative staffing strategies to support the vision of the school, enhance instructional programs, and improve student and teacher performance. The respondents demonstrated strategies for facilitating the development of a school vision and aligning all aspects of a school culture to student and adult learning, which are key components of MILF. In the next section, the principals discussed their view of instructional leadership by distributing the work to other members of the school leadership team.

*Other staff positions.* As illustrated above, the principals use of distributive leadership entailed “empowering others” to help fulfill the duties of the principal, and these other positions played a significant role in supporting the principals as they focused on instructional leadership. The positions of librarian, instructional technology specialist, staff development teacher, and business manager all provided valuable support to each of the principals. In some cases, these positions freed up the principals to focus on monitoring teaching and learning within the school and provided the support to the principals in the form of classroom observation, professional development, and addressing non-instructional demands. Initially, the principals did not refer to the

position of the librarian or instructional technology specialist, but two principals discussed the importance of these positions during a follow-up interview.

Principal Hamilton and Principal Carter described the role of the librarian and instructional technology specialist in furthering their efforts to prioritize instructional leadership. They described two components of instructional leadership that were very important to teaching and learning: the integration of appropriate assessments into the daily classroom instruction and the use of technology. The department chairperson, librarian, and instructional technology specialist assisted the classroom teachers with the integration of assessments and technology in their classroom instruction. The principals initially did not feel that these two components were demands of the principal, and stated that they were the primary responsibilities of other key positions in their buildings. However, the principals discussed the importance of having a staff development teacher that supports the instructional program in a school.

The creation of the staff development teacher position provided continual professional development opportunities for staff and served as another key resource to the principals. All four high school principals observed that the staff development teacher played a vital role on the ILT and met regularly with classroom teachers to improve instructional strategies. The role of the staff development teacher appeared to be customized to the needs of the school and the action steps in the School Improvement Plan. All of the principals stressed that the staff development teacher helped to create and monitor the School Improvement Plan.

Principal Washington worked with the staff development teacher to conduct peer observations and provide training sessions for teachers. The staff development teacher

also served on his administrative team when the group discussed observations and instructional strategies. Principal Carter worked with her staff development teacher to schedule walkthroughs and to plan staff meetings and staff trainings. Likewise, Principal Hamilton supervised her staff development teacher, who served in “several informal roles” such as “coaching individual teachers, planning lessons with teachers, and co-teaching” a lesson. Her staff development teacher also served on the ILT.

Having another “teacher leader,” such as a staff development teacher who understood good instruction and supported instructional strategies, was another strategy the four principals adopted to support their focus on instruction. These principals used positions in the school building; such as librarians, instructional technology specialists, and staff development teacher; to monitor the vision of the school, instructional programs, and student and teacher performance. These strategies aligned with the following MILF outcomes:

- facilitate the development of a school vision;
- align all aspects of a school culture to student and adult learning;
- monitor the alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment;
- improve instructional practices through the purposeful observation and evaluation of teachers;
- ensure the regular integration of appropriate assessments into daily classroom instruction;
- use technology and multiple sources of data to improve classroom instruction;
- and

- engage all community stakeholders in a shared responsibility for student and school success.

The respondents referenced one additional position in the school building when they spoke about the non-instructional demands—the business manager; who provides overall leadership related to the financial management, facility management, and administration of other aspects of the school not directly related to the instructional program (Eastland School District, n.d.). All four principals indicated that the business manager served on the A Team and the ILT, and they explained that the business manager played a significant role in dealing with the financial management of the school. According to Principal Anderson, the position often had an “impact to the instruction in the school,” and influenced the allocation of materials of instruction, textbooks, and other resources to teachers. In each case, the business manager often supervised building service workers and facilities, cafeteria and food services, and transportation. Principal Clark commented that her business manager was discovering “other daily things that [were] his responsibilities” because “certainly the principal can’t do it all.” All four principals noted that they met regularly with the business manager regarding the financial management of the school. The involvement of the business manager on the A Team and the ILT appeared to be a common expectation of the four high school principals.

In summary, my analysis confirmed that each respondent was very aware of other positions in the school building whose responsibilities helped to promote instructional leadership. The four principals acknowledged these roles and responsibilities as components of instructional leadership and worked with these positions to address the teaching and learning in the classroom. In the next section I describe how the principals

viewed their own instructional leadership as engaging all community stakeholders in a shared responsibility for student and school success.

*Parents and students as stakeholders.* All four high school principals spoke about getting feedback from students and parents regarding the instructional program. In seeking this feedback, the principals provided a forum for parents and students to have an active role in the decision-making process. The principals acknowledged that parents and students served on their ILT, and their involvement helped the group to make better decisions as a school. Principal Anderson shared that she “makes a better decision when [she doesn’t] make it in a vacuum.” She also shared that when she had to make a big decision, “pulling my people in and processing it” helped to make the final decisions with the feedback from stakeholders.

Principal Hamilton expressed her desire to have parents involved in the academic programs of the school rather than in fundraisers, athletic events, and extracurricular activities. She had parents “doing things that I think are significant for us, and also help take some work from teachers,” such as “proctoring SAT and ACT.” Principal Hamilton emphasized the necessity of having parental involvement in a school and the challenge of “working with parents to try to make sure that we’re both working together in the best interest of the child and to get the kid the best education possible.” She admitted that she struggled with this concept of working “productively with groups of parents,” but managed to partner with them because the results were aligned with school improvement and higher student achievement. The parents “feel like they’re very involved in the school and they feel like it’s a partnership, which is what I very much would like them to

feel like.” According to Principal Hamilton, this involvement and partnership helped to built upon the school's success.

All four principals included parents and students on their ILT and in the development and monitoring of the school improvement plan. The principals described other activities that involved the parents. Principal Anderson, for example, conducted a one hour information session prior to the PTA meetings, where students presented or performed. These sessions resulted in significant parent involvement. She also described her monthly meetings with student groups, such as class officers, to get their perspective of school-wide initiatives and activities.

Principal Hamilton asked parents to volunteer at “college fairs, PSAT nights, and student town hall meetings.” She too met with class officers and leaders of sports clubs to learn “how to get kids to buy in more and take responsibility for school more.” Principal Carter learned to “utilize the expertise of the parents” by having them to serve on the ILT and she partnered with the PTA for “parent sessions” on specific topics related to high school, such as “academic intervention.” She met regularly with the Student Government Association and other student groups in order to “address their concerns” about the school. Principal Washington also had parents to serve on the ILT. He also described that, on a regular basis, he took a table and “[would] sit in the hall” in order to have conversations with students about the school.

In summary, these principals identified the importance of having stakeholders’ involvement and input in the instructional program. The engagement of stakeholders including students at the high school level is an outcome of MILF (MILF, 2005). In the

next section I describe how the principals discussed the importance of a human resource approach when focusing on instructional leadership.

**Human Resource Leadership.** As defined by Bolman and Deal (2008), the Human Resource Frame focuses on leadership practices that consist of the need to feel safe, to feel appreciated, and to feel that [educators] make a difference. They further described the human resources frame as having the training to develop new skills, participation and involvement (see Appendix G). Leadership practices focusing on the human resources aspects of organizations emphasize empowering staff, focusing on understanding needs, identifying skills, and building relationships (see Appendix E).

Each of the four high school principals spoke about the value of human resources leadership and noted the importance of facilitating the development of a school vision; aligning all aspects of a school culture to student and adult learning; and providing staff with focused, sustained, research-based professional development. These three elements represent three dimensions of instructional leadership in the MILF. The MILF encourages principals to develop mutual respect among the staff; cultivate teamwork that produces effective professional learning communities; establish high expectations and opportunities for leadership and collaborative decision making; and assign teaching assignments that are rigorous, purposeful and engaging (Maryland State Department of Education, 2005). As I outline next, all of the principals participating in this study spoke about the importance of hiring the best staff, building the capacity of staff members, and building a school culture to improve student achievement.

**Hiring staff.** All four high school principals described the importance of building capacity within the school community and having their human resources aligned with the



school's vision. The MSDE's (2005) MILF contains guidelines that impact the hiring of staff. For example, the expected outcomes for instructional leadership require that principals establish “a process for ensuring that all staff and other stakeholders are able to articulate the vision,” “high expectations for all students and teachers in a culture of continuous improvement,” “an effective school leadership team,” and “teacher assignments that are rigorous, purposeful, and engaging” (pp. 9-10). The people who are hired to move the school in the right direction help to fulfill the school vision, and the principals spoke at length about their hiring process.

The four high school principals described the importance of having an administrative team that brought different strengths to the group, but shared the same vision for the school and students. Specifically, Principal Anderson stated that she liked “hiring people at the beginning of their careers, because they’re hungry. They want to prove themselves. They have a lot of energy and ideas. And being able to cultivate that in them is a real kick for me. I love the energy they bring, but they also need to be open that some of their good ideas may get shot down.” Principal Washington, Principal Cater, and Principal Hamilton described the importance of hiring “your own people” and working with them to improve their skills. These principals arrived at their schools with assistant principals in place, but hired their own assistant principals during their tenure. These changes happened because of retirements, promotions, and transfers of their assistant principals. All of the principals described the importance of creating their administrative team from of individuals whom they hired. In their view, these assistant principals brought the experience necessary to make valuable contributions to the leadership team.

The principals were involved in the hiring of teaching staff and paraeducators. Principal Anderson commented on the importance of “hiring people who you know are going to accomplish what you want to see accomplished for students.” Both Principal Hamilton and Principal Carter discussed how having the right people in key positions facilitated the implementation of the school vision. All four principals mentioned that when hiring staff, interviews typically included themselves, an assistant principal, and the relevant department chairperson. Depending upon the position; “other stakeholders” might serve on the interview panels, as well. Principal Anderson candidly stated that she spent a lot of time “researching the background of potential candidates, calling the current supervisor for feedback, and participating in every interview of a staff member.” The principals emphasized the necessity of being a part of the hiring process and not distributing that responsibility to an assistant principal.

Hiring the right people to meet the needs of the school community helped the principals to focus on instruction. These principals used the hiring process to support the vision of the school, improve instructional programs, and enhance student and teacher performance. These choices aligned with the following MILF outcomes:

- facilitate the development of a school vision;
- align all aspects of a school culture to student and adult learning; and
- monitor the alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

***Building capacity among staff.*** All four high school principals observed that the most valuable use of their time involved building relationships and training their assistant principals. Principal Anderson, for example, believed in establishing close relationships with her assistant principals. Jokingly, she described her administrative team meetings as

a place where they “probably wasted more time than needed, but some of that is just, ‘what’d you do this weekend? What crazy things happened?’” Principal Hamilton described similar feelings about establishing relationships, but she struggled, initially, with her administrative team, since they were hired by the previous principal. She explained that “it was very clear that they had worked with a different set of expectations.” Despite this initial challenge, she taught them how to become effective at monitoring instruction and discipline. She explained that she considered “what they already [knew],” but also provided opportunities for them to learn other disciplines and subjects. She gave an example: “Like, I’m ready to make one of them learn Special Education, because the person who works with it really knows it, and they’re there to advise, and I’m there to advise, but somebody else needs to learn more about it.”

Principal Carter considered all of her assistant principals to be future principals, and she made sure that they had “various experiences,” while at her school, to prepare them for the principalship. As mentioned earlier, she described herself as the “head coach,” when working with her team. The sports analogy of a head coach is a good example of the role of the principal because the head coach is usually a more public position and supervises other coaches. The principal is a public position in the school community and supervises assistant principals and other staff. Just like the head coach is responsible for operations of a sports program, the principal is responsible for the total school program. Principal Washington also delegated key responsibilities to his assistant principals but he “talked through” these responsibilities with the team. Washington felt that he and his assistant principals must “be able work together” and learn from each other's leadership styles. The principals worked closely with the assistant principals and

their working relationship was described as a “trusting” one. Each of the principals noted that they learned from their assistant principals, but they felt responsible for the assistant principals’ professional development and sought to provide opportunities for advancement.

The four principals also discussed their efforts to build capacity among their department chairpersons. The respondents described much of this work as the purpose of the leadership team and other professional development meetings for department chairpersons and staff. Principal Hamilton provided an example of her work with the department chairpersons on the leadership team during a time when she needed to educate staff whose grading practices were not aligned with the school vision. She explained that she “spent hours” with her department chairpersons reviewing the grades given by teachers. She had to teach the department chairpersons how to have these courageous conversations with staff. “Sometimes we role-played, and I would coach the other person to make them recognize” erroneous practices.

Principal Carter spoke about building the capacity of her department chairpersons to facilitate the implementation of the school vision. She wanted department chairpersons who were instructional leaders. Carter explained, “The choice is to make instruction a focus, and to make sure that vision is known throughout the school.” Staff members need to see their principals involved in the instructional program at their schools by observing classrooms and providing constructive feedback. By doing such, the principal needs to know the areas of strength and weakness among staff and departments which requires classroom observations and the collaboration and positive working relationship with the assistant principals and department chairpersons. Principal Washington stated

that in order for him to establish a school vision, he had to know the “strengths and weaknesses of each individual” in the building. By knowing these attributes, he could provide more suitable professional development and leadership opportunities. He described the importance of relationships and stated that “everyone should be treated with equal respect.” These are examples of how principals are building capacity among the assistant principals, department chairpersons, and staff.

Principal Hamilton helped her staff to move from working in “obscurity to a different set of expectations.” She felt that her staff did not have specific direction regarding student achievement and the overall focus on the school. She saw the need to provide feedback and coach her assistant principals about “certain things about instruction.” She also worked with her department chairpersons to provide feedback to teachers regarding instruction and learning in the classrooms. She and her instructional leadership team conducted over “150 observations” and analyzed the data to “[make] sure students received the type of instruction that they need.” To a similar end, Principal Washington and his team redefined what they considered “effective instruction,” develop “support plans,” and worked to develop “a better analysis of their instructional practices that were being delivered by the teacher every day.”

This component of instructional leadership focused on creating opportunities for teachers to engage in collaborative planning and critical reflection during the regular school day; differentiating professional development according to career stages, needs of staff, and student performance; encouraging personal involvement in professional development activities; and promoting professional development that aligned with the teacher’s standards. Principal Anderson felt that “building the capacity in people makes

[her] job easier. Part of it is how you cultivate people.” She further commented that “you just have to kind of keep your finger on it, but not micromanaging it unless something happens to a point where you discover you need to.”

Principal Washington also felt the need to teach his department chairpersons, since “there’s no formalized training for them.” He also described how he “empowered” the department chairpersons to become instructional leaders by first looking at the job description and then building capacity. He explained that he made changes to staff in the department chair positions and that, “the changes that I made, it’s very clear about the direction we’re going and having those conversations.” He focused a lot on “their role as a leader in the building and what’s expected of them.” Principal Washington stated that it was not about him “wanting to get rid” of staff, but about the need for them to “step up and do some things a little bit better.”

All four principals relied on the staff development teacher to provide staff with focused, sustained, and research-based professional development, with the collaboration of the department chairperson and supervising assistant principal. In addition, the principals worked with the staff development teacher and Instructional Leadership Team to develop the initiatives for the school, to create and monitor the school improvement plan, and to provide specific professional development opportunities for staff to meet their own professional development goals. The staff development teacher assisted the staff with the formation of their own Professional Development Plan and the creation of a portfolio of student work, offered training and professional development opportunities, and provided evidence to support the evaluation rating.

Hiring the right people and building their capacity to meet the needs of the school community helped the principals to focus on instruction. The principals relied on the assistant principals, department chairpersons and staff development teacher to monitor the vision of the school, instructional programs, and student and teacher performances. These strategies aligned with the following MILF outcomes:

- facilitate the development of a school vision;
- align all aspects of a school culture to student and adult learning;
- improve instructional practices through the purposeful observation and evaluation of teachers; and
- provide staff with focused, sustained, research-based professional development.

***Building a school culture.*** All four high school principals identified the need to empower others, open lines of communication, and establish positive relationships as strategies for building a productive and positive school culture. Principal Anderson described her practice of removing “all the annoyances in people’s days so that they can focus on what’s really important, if you make them feel valued, if you reward their successes, and deal with their shortcomings in a positive way.” Each of the principals expressed their desire to hear from staff and students, and explained that they employed an “open door” policy created many opportunities for staff and students to express their opinions and perspectives.

The principals viewed their accessibility and visibility during the school day as a priority in building a school culture, and acknowledged that this availability helped to build relationships and trust. Principal Hamilton felt the need to build “strong personal

relationships” with all of her department chairpersons by just “dropping by” the department offices and inviting staff to share their perspectives. After building these relationships, Principal Hamilton began to address continuous improvement within the team by teaching skills to her department chairpersons, such as “how to use data.” She “role-played and coached” her department chairpersons about how to have conversations about teaching and learning in the classroom. She built relationships with her department chairpersons and then began to build their skills in certain areas.

All four principals discussed the importance of building relationships with students that helped to build a positive school culture. They explained that their visibility during the school day helped to shape the school culture and climate. They all commented on the importance of visibility at certain activities, such as athletic events, and at specific times like at the exchange of classes, lunchtime, and dismissal. All four principals emphasized the importance of taking the time to build positive relationships with students. Principal Anderson stated that “when you walk around, it’s like, ‘This is your building.’” While Anderson recognized the importance of talking to students and learning about them during lunch time, in the halls, and at events, she warned that this practice can consume a principal's time. She described herself as a “mother” to her students. She knew all of her students by name, and she too talked to students in the cafeteria, hallways and at school events.

Principal Carter noted that she “made time for students” in spite of her schedule, because “they needed [her].” She stated that “kids write me notes and things like that. So from that, I get a good indication that I have a good relationship with kids. I even had a lot of graduates that came back to see me over the break, and that meant a lot to me as



well.” Principal Hamilton stated that she scheduled time to “hear from her students,” which could be time consuming. She expressed an interest in knowing the “frequent flyers,” which she later described as the most challenging students because of disciplinary infractions. Carter, like the other four principals, shared that they developed a positive school culture, in part, because of their relationships with students. They acknowledged that being visible and building relationships with students could be time consuming, but they expressed the importance of this effort.

Principal Washington further commented that each day, “[he walks] around just kind of feeling the climate of the building, popping into classes and those type of things,” which helped him to gauge the instructional program and “[look] at the facility and the security of things” that add to the school culture. He later described this as a time of modeling for his staff. He wanted his teachers, administrators, and security to be visible during the day, which helped to create a “positive school climate.” Washington worked with teachers to model positive behavior, but he acknowledged that he had to work with the teachers in order for them to demonstrate positive behavior. He and his administrative team helped teachers to build relationships with students and to practice effective classroom management strategies. Principal Washington stated that “dealing with teachers who create issues outside of the instructional part of it take attention away from the delivery of the instruction because you’re dealing with something else that’s impacting the relationships in the room.” He further observed “keeping them from being able to deliver that type of instruction, because the [student] relationships are poor, is going to impact [instruction].” In order to build a positive school culture, Principal Washington began by focusing on teacher expectations.

When building a school culture, Principal Anderson referred to her “exposed tape” theory. She explained that “when something looks good, people feel good about it” When hanging a poster or flier, the tape to secure the poster on the wall is never exposed. She did not imply that problems are covered up and not discussed, but explained that the school culture began with a very attractive school building, clean classrooms, restrooms, cafeteria, and floors, and orderly hallways. She felt that this philosophy led to a positive school climate, where “things [are] being done just so, classrooms [are] being set up a certain way, and things [are] aesthetically looking good.” Principal Anderson had an advantage because she was involved in the school from its inception and played a key role in establishing the school vision and the expectations for every staff member that she hired.

Principal Hamilton also described the importance of having a clean building, and she described herself as the “major trash picker upper.” She felt that “modeling” this behavior for others to see helped to build a positive school culture. All four principals emphasized that their building services workers were visible during the day cleaning the school facility. Principal Anderson shared that her workers “shared a sense of pride” in keeping the building clean, and it was noticeable by students and staff.

Principal Hamilton was the only high school principal who described an example of a “culture of learners” by detailing her working relationship with the principals in her cluster of schools. She felt that this time of relationship helped to establish a positive school culture among the different schools in the cluster. She stated that she had “very good communication with [the] feeder school principals,” and they met monthly to discuss school-related issues. She further explained the positive working relationship

with her colleagues: “We have a very comfortable back and forth. ‘Can we help you with this?’ or you know, ‘Over at the high school, we’re thinking we might like to add this to the articulation process.’ What do they think? And you know, we now have things where kids go over and help at the middle school.” Hamilton believed that principals cultivated a positive school culture when they supported each other and shared based practices.

As I discussed in previous sections of this chapter, all of the principals mentioned their positive working relationships with students, which helped to build a strong school culture and reminded them about their reasons for serving as a principal. Principal Anderson enjoyed establishing relationships and building trust by working directly with students. She commented that her greatest excitement was when she took “a lump of kid, who had underlying skills but hadn’t developed them, and develop them to go far beyond [the norm].” She further explained that, as a high school principal, the “teachable moments,” where she saw “the light [go] on in a child’s eye,” kept her in a school building and not in central office. She expressed enjoyment of these teachable moments with both students and staff members.

In summary, building a school culture to meet the needs of the school community helped the principals to focus on instruction. These principals stressed the importance of building relationships with and listening to the opinions and thoughts of staff, and particularly with students, to support the vision of the school and to build a positive school culture. The principals described school culture as a part of the school vision, along with student and adult learning which are outcomes in MILF.

**Political leadership.** The political frame, as defined by Bolman and Deal (2008), focuses on the leadership practices that deal with the interactions of individuals and

groups with differing backgrounds, beliefs, agendas, positions, race, ethnicity, social class and ideology. Political leadership practices focuses on the choices that have to be made or negotiated because of scarcity of resources. Bolman and Deal further explain that leaders who operate in the political frame must create arenas where issues can be renegotiated and new coalitions formed (see Appendix G). Political leadership practices are characterized by advocacy and political savvy, power, conflict, competition, and organizational politics (see Appendix E). In the next section, I examine the principals' obstacles, negotiations, and agreements as they focused on instructional leadership.

*Obstacles, negotiations, and agreements.* Three of the four principals operated from a political frame as they dealt openly with differences, negotiated expectations and procedures, clarified their agenda, and built relationships and alliances. These three principals, Carter, Hamilton, and Washington, each had less than five years in their school building. In establishing a vision for their schools and demonstrating instructional leadership, they described a fortitude or perseverance in overcoming obstacles and challenges that were presented when recreating the vision for students and staff.

Principal Hamilton stated that she endured a number of obstacles when she first arrived at the school, and one staff member shared publicly that “male principals were principals and female principals were mothers.” Her biggest concern was that the “mind set” that the staff had about her would slow down her vision for the school. She recognized that she had to do certain things that led to “maneuvering unseen from behind.” For example, she occasionally had certain key staff members in her building act as “the voice and the face” of an initiative or focus area. She felt that doing this encouraged a certain level of staff “buy-in,” and the focus would be on the actual

initiative rather than the presenter. However, she remarked that “if [the leadership team] decide we’re going to do [a school wide focus or initiative], we’re going to do it.” She had to rely on others to get “buy-in” and to move forward with her vision. Getting staff to agree or buy-in to change or implementation of newly developed policies and practices in a school building requires collaboration of impacted staff members and agreements. It is the principal’s political leadership to gather the beliefs of the stakeholders and work with them to reach agreements or buy-in regarding new ideas and practices.

Principal Hamilton commented that her role as principal was to “take a little pressure off [the staff], because these pressures are beyond school.” These pressures were further described as the challenges in the classroom such as curriculum demands, assessments, learning styles, behaviors, and necessary resources in the classroom. She did not ignore the politics within her building, but learned how to navigate around them as she worked to create an action plan for establishing her school vision. Specifically, she described the need to “weave the collaboration” when building an effective school leadership team and establishing effective professional learning communities. She thought it necessary “to really feel and be sensitive to what’s happening to climate and to call off the mid-course adjustment if it doesn’t feel right.” When building relationships, she sought to hear the differences and make provisions, but never change the direction towards which she and her school were moving. “It’s something that comes from the principal; it’s a tone thing almost. But I think holding onto the compass is, maybe, the absolute first thing.”

Principal Hamilton described her leadership team as a group of staff members who, at first, were not consistent in attending the leadership team meetings. She created a

team mentality among the group by learning from their oppositions and building alliances and relationships. She explained that through this process they developed into a “very strong leadership team...Strong in that they are very involved in the decision-making process for how we develop programs and policies and procedures for our school. So they play a very vital role”. While acknowledging that this required some adjustments to her leadership practices, Principal Hamilton recognized that by forming new coalitions with staff members she ultimately built a strong leadership team. Building new coalitions is a strategy within the political leadership.

Principal Carter also acknowledged the “naysayers” in her building and described the obstacles that existed from the “non-vocal” staff members. She noted that staff members complained about initiatives and staff expectations to other staff members but not to her, giving her a false impression that staff members were following the expectations and embracing the initiatives. To overcome this problem she had to know “the key players” in the school building and community and what “their agendas” were for the school. Obtaining this knowledge often entailed having meetings with many stakeholders; including staff, students, and parents in leadership positions, as well as those staff members identified as “influential” because of their status in the building. These influential staff members and stakeholders were the ones with the most years of experiences, served on the teachers’ union, or served in their leadership role for the longest. She spent many hours listening to issues and, in some cases, fears, about her vision for the school. She had to address the concerns from the staff which at times, “slowed down” her plans for change.

Principal Carter also indicated that she had to “quickly know the teacher’s contract,” because her staff often referenced what teachers could or could not do, according to contract. She realized that her staff was thinking about “what impacted them, versus thinking globally” about the impact on student learning. She further explained that, as the principal, she had to “have that global perspective of how it impacts the entire school and how that even impacts our community and our school district,” and not every stakeholder shared her beliefs. She provided an example of this phenomenon, describing how during a time when departments conducted after-school tutorials, staff reminded her about their “duty day” ending 30 minutes after the official school day. Most teachers did not stay after school because of other commitments. She later initiated negotiations with the staff, and they agreed on lunchtime tutorials, which became problematic because the staff quoted the contract of a “duty-free lunch.” She noted that during her first few years in the school, staff members had a different perspective of the school vision; her message was “students first,” and the work that staff did was to improve student achievement. After many discussions, they ultimately came to some agreements regarding tutorials during lunchtime and after school. This is an example of a principal’s political leadership of dealing with obstacles and reaching negotiations.

Principal Washington arrived at his school with experience from another high school and found a number of differences among his leadership staff, in terms of the vision of the school. He dealt openly with the differences by realigning resources to support the vision and reassigning department chairpersons to the same end. He replaced two department chairpersons because they did not share “the same vision” for the school and “their involvement in instruction and management” was very different from the other

chairpersons and they did not supervise their departments. He believed that his staff needed to know the vision of the school, and that his approach was to be “hands-on.” According to Washington, having a principal who was “hands-on” and who modeled the work created “credibility” and helped the school to establish a vision. He further commented that, as principal, he had to “justify” his actions, and “being creative” and “taking risks” led to the development of a school vision. Again, he modeled these behaviors to his administrators and department chairpersons, as well as to parent and student leaders, in order to further his school vision. However, he expressed his political belief that, as the principal, “you take the blame. Let everybody else take the credit.”

The four principals each acknowledged the pressures of test scores and competition added to their role as a school leader, and they all noted the pressures of meeting the local and federal testing requirements and the focus on student data and preparation for these testing requirements. The conflict existed with the teachers teaching the curriculum and the principals preparing for the local and federal testing requirements. Principal Washington acknowledged the rhetoric about improving “teaching and learning,” but explained that these conversations with his principal supervisor led to discussing results on national assessments, such as SAT, ACT, and Advanced Placement (AP) examinations instead of “looking at how this is impacting what’s truly happening in the classroom.” He experienced a lot of pressure from the Central Office to focus on increasing student performances on the SAT, ACT, and AP examinations, but he stressed to his teachers the importance of “good instruction” and increasing the students’ abilities to “read and write.”



Principal Anderson stated that she noticed a “disconnect” between the “demands of the system and the reality” among students, particularly when dealing with the benchmarks for the system initiatives and passing the federal test requirements. However, she felt that her school did “an incredible job getting kids, who others may have given up on long ago to a point where they’re college bound.” Anderson sought to balance the emphasis on test requirements and preparing students for post-secondary education. She stated that high schools have only “four years and it’s tough,” but these pressures cannot “keep [the students] from realizing that there is a school for everybody.” She emphasized that she and her staff tried to provide “what the students needed.” These principals were focused on the students needs and meeting the students’ goals and aspirations. In summary, each of the four principals employed a political frame of leadership in their efforts to overcome obstacles by negotiating with staff and key stakeholders. This approach ultimately helped the principals to focus more intently on instruction. These principals stated that their experiences with conflict and politics, in their schools, helped them to keep their focus on the students. It appeared that the principals with the least years of experience had more issues with internal obstacles and challenges, but all of them had to deal with the politics of the demands of local and federal testing requirements and teaching of curriculum. Although there was no mention of political leadership in MILF, there are suggestions of mutual respect, teamwork, trust, and collaborative decision making when focusing on instructional leadership (MILF, 2005). Political leadership involves problem solving strategies and these principals use this frame when there are problems or conflicts.

**Symbolic leadership.** As defined by Bolman and Deal (2008), the symbolic frame draws attention to the importance of leadership practices that consist of celebrations and ceremonies within a school building. These leadership practices focus on creating transition rituals to mourn the past and celebrate the future (see Appendix G). Leadership practices focused on the symbolic aspects of organizations emphasize inspiration and the use of culture, memory, metaphor, ritual, ceremony, stories, and heroes (see Appendix E). . In this section, I examine the principals' celebrations, recognitions, and ceremonies related to instructional leadership.

*Celebrations, recognitions, and ceremonies.* The review of the data from the interviews did not provide many examples of celebrations, recognitions, and ceremonies related to instructional leadership as defined by MILF. However, listed below are the examples from the principals that related to symbolic leadership. Principal Anderson acknowledged that in order to develop an effective school leadership team and professional learning communities among staff, staff need to celebrate successes by creating traditions such as ceremonies and routines. She felt that “if you reward their successes, it translates into how they interact with students.” She had celebrations at the annual opening of school staff meetings, which were entertaining and “rather amusing” for the staff, but the school vision, staff expectations, and policies and procedures were a part of the entertainment. In addition, she mentioned recognized staff during the preparation of the opening of school. She also stated that during her administrative team meetings, she and her team “laugh a lot.” She used that time to build relationships and solve problems collaboratively. She further reported that most of the time, her

administrative team meetings were settings to celebrate successes, both personal and professional.

In summary, the high school principals did not comment about the celebrations and recognitions that related to instructional leadership except for Principal Anderson. One can assume that every school has a tradition or some type of celebration that makes the school unique and a special place to work. It is noteworthy that these principals in the study did not provide examples of symbolic leadership based on the interview data. .

### **Summary of Choices**

The four high school principals differed both in their leadership styles and the demographics of their school; however, the study revealed many commonalities among their choices to focus on instructional leadership through the lenses of Human Resource and Structural frames. All four high principals described how they distributed their leadership among staff members, such as the assistant principals, department chairpersons, staff development teacher, and other key positions. It appeared that the principals used more of human resource and structural frames leadership, but some of their responses demonstrated political and symbolic frames of leadership. Listed below are some of the choices that the principals made while focusing on instruction:

- Structural Leadership of roles and responsibilities/Distributed Leadership:
  - Divide supervision of staff to assistant principals and department chairpersons.
  - Delegate responsibilities to assistant principal which included some community and school related activities including the “lead assistant principal” or “acting principal” in the absence of the principal.

- Assign student supervision to the assistant principals who manage disciplinary actions.
- Become creative with the staffing allocation to hire additional support staff and leaders such as a staff development teacher to facilitate meeting and monitor the school improvement plan.
- Have a clear focus on instruction that involves the leadership team focusing on ways to improve teaching and learning and providing relevant professional development opportunities for staff.
- Create monitoring tools for departments to focus on instruction.
- Monitor the work of all staff members without micromanaging.
- Balance the job and family responsibilities and have secretary to monitor principal's calendar. Don't serve on too many committees.
- Demonstrate decision-making processes to assistant principals and staff in leadership positions.
- Maintain open and frequent communication with assistant principals.
- Schedule time to do paperwork when it's quiet/after-hours.
- Schedule time to conduct observations and meet with people.
- Human Resources Leadership of building capacity and meeting needs:
  - Hire the best staff.
  - Build capacity among staff including assistant principals and department chairperson, and future leaders within the school building by meeting regularly with the assistant principals and other leaders and providing opportunities for them to problem solve collaboratively.

- Establish positive relationships with colleagues and supervisors to serve as critical friends to help problem solve and provide feedback while maintaining confidentiality.
- Increase the involvement of other staff members such as the business manager, athletic director, media specialists, and union representatives on the leadership team.
- Celebrate successes and make staff feel valued and supported.
- Help staff to display professionalism and great customer service in offices and public places.

One commonality among the high school principals was the use of distributed leadership among the staff and the desire to build capacity. It was very clear that high school principals used distributed leadership in their work as instructional leaders. Because of the complexities of high school and their positions, principals create structures to monitor the total school program through the work of the assistant principals, department chairpersons, and other stakeholders. The principals described many times their working relationships with their assistant principals and the importance of that role to monitor the total school program. The principals stated that other positions such as the department chairpersons and specific staff positions helped to monitor the instructional program within a department. Together, these positions created a leadership team of staff and stakeholders to monitor school improvement and school initiatives. In order to distribute the work, the principals described their vision for their schools and carefully developed the steps to make their vision a reality through the work with their leadership team.

The equally important choice that principals made other than the use of distributed leadership is the creation of a school vision. The principals created a vision based on student data which informed the necessary steps to reach their vision. Everyone's job had to be aligned with the school vision and the principals created the structures for their staff to monitor or supervise certain aspects of the work based on their vision. All of the principals used their vision and purpose for their schools to clarify job responsibilities, redefine the leadership team and its purpose, monitor teaching and learning in the classroom, and establish time limits to their work schedules. The principals chose to reexamine how and when the monitoring on the instructional program was being completed.

Lastly, the principals stressed the importance of having the best qualified people in their buildings. They described the importance of having a hiring process that involved the principal and providing opportunities for their leaders and staff to build capacity and a positive school or work culture. These principals spoke about their attention to the capacity of the staff and their own work with their assistant principals to build trust and skills. The principals also stressed the importance of building the capacity of all staff especially classroom teacher and establishing positive working relationships with students, teachers, parents and community members. There was conflict among stakeholders, but the principals stressed the need to maintain frequent communication with the student leaders, parent organizations, and teachers.

## Chapter 6: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This chapter consists of six sections: research summary, findings of the study, conclusions, recommendations, suggestions, and final thoughts. The research summary frames the major issues that led to this case study. It restates the purpose of the study, problem statement, research questions, and methodology. The findings are based on the principals' perceptions of the demands and constraints of their job, and the conclusion section summarizes the common strategies that the four high school principals adopted to support their efforts to focus on instructional leadership. The chapter concludes with recommendations for practice and extended research.

### Research Summary

This section summarizes the statement of the problem and purpose of the study. It includes the research questions and brief overview of methodology. This study employed a qualitative case study to examine common strategies utilized by four high school principals in the same school district to support their efforts to focus on instructional leadership. The researcher sought to design a study that utilized multiple data collection methods to yield reliable data that would make a significant contribution to the field of educational administration.

**Statement of the problem.** The role of the high school principal has become increasingly challenging, and expectations from recent reform initiatives now call for principals to provide instructional leadership within the school building. The principalship is complex, and it is difficult for one person to fulfill the myriad duties of

both a manager and instructional leader. Every great school needs to have an effective principal and an effective teaching staff, but demands and constraints have an impact on many principals' ability to fulfill the expectations of their position. Currently, little research exists that examines how high school principals address the demands of their schools, while cultivating instructional leadership among their staff.

**Purpose of the study.** The purpose of the study was to identify strategies that principals used to lessen the demands of their daily operations and to collaborate more effectively with key staff members, such as assistant principals, department chairpersons, and other individuals with supervisory responsibilities. This researcher also sought to examine the demands and constraints encountered by four high school principals in one school district as they focused on instructional leadership (as defined by the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework).

**Research questions.** To aid in the understanding of how high school principals choose to focus on instructional leadership, in spite of the demands and constraints, the following research questions were developed. These questions provided the structure for data collection and analysis in this study:

1. What do high school principals describe as the instructional and non-instructional demands of their jobs?
2. What do high school principals describe as job constraints that have an impact on instruction?
3. In light of the demands and constraints of their positions, what strategies do high school principals adopt to support their efforts to focus on instructional leadership?



**Methodology.** This dissertation reported on a qualitative study of four high schools in a suburban school district. The study explored the experiences of each high school's principal; and the demands, constraints, and choices they face as instructional leaders. Chapter 3 explained the research design and methodology, and Chapter 4 provided a description of the schools and background information for the principals.

The high schools were selected based on location, student enrollment, staff size, academic performance, and the availability of special programs at the school. The principals of these four high schools agreed to participate in this study and then completed a survey that explored the principals' backgrounds, along with the potential demands and constraints of their jobs. The principals also participated in interviews, where they answered a number of questions about the demands and constraints that they frequently faced in their roles as instructional leaders. The interview questions were based on the work of Rosemary Stewart (1982) and Bolman and Deal (2008). Chapter 5 provided an analysis of the findings of the study and detailed both the similarities and differences in leadership styles and choices among the four participants.

## **Findings**

Four high school principals were interviewed in an effort to understand their perceptions of the demands and constraints they faced as instructional leaders. They were asked to describe the strategies they adopted to support their focus on instruction. The surveys and individual interviews revealed the following eight findings:

**Finding #1.** Sergiovanni (2001) reported that leadership serves several functions in public schools, and according to Stewart's (1982) work, managers must face numerous demands to fulfill their job description. Pounder and Merrill (2001) found that additional

expectations and responsibilities are being placed on the principal, while little is being removed from their long list of job responsibilities. The data from this study indicate a number of non-instructional demands that high school principals face in their schools.

Results from this inquiry reveal that the most common perceptions of non-instructional demands included the following: attending meetings that take time away from other tasks; responding to complaints and issues, correcting other individuals' mistakes, discussing job performance of non-teaching staff, working with and responding to requests from direct supervisor, maintaining visibility by attending school events and programs, and addressing school facility issues. The principals reported that these identified non-instructional demands significantly impacted their work as instructional leaders. These perceptions of non-instructional demands were just some of the challenges identified in Pounder and Merrill's (2001) work.

**Finding #2.** Stewart (1982) found that a number of factors in the workplace; including the physical environment, location, resources, organizational restrictions, attitudes of other people, culture, and climate; can serve as constraints that hinder an individual's ability to perform the functions of their position. In the school setting, particularly at the high school level, examples of these constraints include the school building, the number of students and staff, available financial and human capital resources, a principal's supervisor, and the school culture and climate. The data from the current study reveal that high school principals face a number of constraints in their schools.

The most common perceptions of constraints included the following:

- school system's policies on staff and financial allocations and expenditures,
- the composition of staff members, the design and working conditions of the school,
- accessibility to technology,
- capability and experience of the principals' supervisors,
- insufficient financial resources,
- strict guidelines for purchasing instructional materials, and
- type of working relationship with union representatives.

**Finding #3.** The data from the study indicate a number of instructional demands that high school principals face in their schools. These instructional demands were defined by the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework (2005). Hallinger (2003), Murphy (1994) and Horng, Klasik, and Loeb (2010) refer to the principal as a leader of the total operation of the school; including teaching, learning, and allocating resources. The most common perceptions of instructional demands included the following:

- hiring staff,
- focusing on student performance based on state and national assessments and meeting targets,
- having conversations with staff about performance,
- conducting observations and evaluations, and
- working with stakeholders including teachers, parents, and students.

According to Horng, Klasik, and Loeb (2010), “hiring personnel, an organization management task, may be the most influential role principals have in the instructional practices of their schools” (pp. 519-520)

**Finding #4.** Three of the four high school principals found it difficult to separate non-instructional demands from instructional demands. They described the demands of their job as “owning everything” as a high school principal. Stewart (1982) stated that leaders must “change their view of demands and constraints, and so, their perception of the available choices” (p.8). The three high school principals had the perception that they must “own everything,” and felt responsible for each aspect of operation in the school building. The implications of this interpretation of owning everything created multiple demands that were not associated with the job description of a principal. However, identifying “what is to be done,” and by whom, helped principals to focus on instructional leadership and instructional demands.

**Finding #5.** The data indicate that the four high school principals’ responses were aligned with many of the components of the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework. They noted that “the work to be done” included

- facilitating the development of a school vision;
- aligning all aspects of a school culture to student and adult learning;
- monitoring the alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment;
- improving instructional practices through the purposeful observation and evaluation of teachers; and
- engaging all community stakeholders in a shared responsibility for student and school success.

**Finding #6.** The data show that high school principals distributed their leadership to their assistant principals, department chairpersons, and other key members of the school building, in order to further their efforts to focus on instruction. This action supports the research by Hallinger (2003), Hallinger and Murphy (1985), and Spillane (2001), which indicated that the work must be distributed to others in the school building in order to monitor and improve instruction. Mayrowetz (2008) stated, “distributed leadership promotes the notion that by having multiple people engaged in leadership, these individuals will all learn more about themselves and the issues facing the school. Eventually, the collective capacity of the organization will increase to the point that the school can address its own shortcomings” (p. 431).

**Finding #7.** The four high school principals noted that the following strategies enabled them to focus on instruction in their school buildings:

- having a clear focus on instruction and professional development;
- monitoring the work and create monitoring tools;
- delegating supervision of staff to assistant principals and department chairpersons;
- assigning specific responsibilities to assistant principals, including attending meetings, events and other school related activities;
- assigning student supervision to the assistant principals;
- building capacity among assistant principals, department chairpersons, and other teacher leaders;
- creating opportunities for other key staff members to demonstrate leadership and to be a part of the decision making process;

- establishing positive relationships with colleagues and supervisors who can serve as critical friends;
- becoming creative with staffing allocation and monitor financial resources;
- balancing the work with family responsibilities;
- maintaining open and frequent communication with all stakeholders;
- scheduling time to do paperwork outside of instructional time;
- conducting observations; and
- building a culture of professionalism and great customer services.

Managers need to recognize that they can make choices about their work in an organization and they are in a position where they can influence their work. (Stewart, 1982).

**Finding #8.** According to Bolman and Deal (1991), “managers often use only one or two frames, but need to rely on all four to be fully effective as both managers and leaders” (p. 529). Although all four high school principals appeared to use all four frames of human resources, structural, political, and symbolic leadership, the structural and human resources frames were commonly used by principals in order to further their efforts to focus on instructional leadership. Within the human resources frame, the principals built capacity, created opportunities for leadership and decision making, established positive relationships with colleagues and supervisors, and made staff feel valued and supported. The structural frame was used by the principals when they monitored the work of others, created monitoring tools, delegated supervision of staff, established clear roles and responsibilities of leaders, maintained open and frequent

communication, and scheduled time to complete paperwork and conduct observations. Principals need to focus on the instructional program by designing a strong teaching staff through the hiring and observation process by monitoring student success and achievement.

### **Conclusions**

The findings of this study lead to a number of key conclusions. First, the four high school principals had similar non-instructional and instructional demands and constraints despite differences in the characteristics and locations of their schools. Size of student and staff populations, student demographics, and school programs did not reduce or increase the number of demands. School policies including staffing allocations and facility issues were common constraints that affected the work of the high school principals. Also, the desire for access to additional financial resources and autonomy with staffing appeared to be common among the high school principals. Based on the needs of the school and the vision of the principals, this financial access and staffing autonomy would provide the freedom to reallocate staffing positions and to purchase instructional materials and technology.

The four high school principals appeared to navigate between human resource leadership and structural leadership frames in order to balance these demands and focus on instruction. They established certain designs or placed certain structures in their buildings in order to focus on instruction, yet built capacity, support and empowerment within the administrative team, instructional leadership team, and other leaders. This choice of leadership led to the focus on instruction and ultimately to student achievement.

Each of the four principals described their structured administrative and instructional leadership teams as very important supports that allowed both the principals and other staff members in leadership positions to focus on instruction. To this end, knowledgeable and competent assistant principals and department chairpersons are needed to help the principal focus on instruction. Also, other key positions, such as a technology specialist, media specialist, staff development teacher helped the school leaders in this study to focus on instruction and may prove useful resources for other leadership teams in the field.

The four high school principals described the need to establish a clear and focused vision and to hire staff members who support that vision. These high school principals empowered their staff to perform their respective job duties and used structures such as specific job responsibilities and expectations or individuals in key leadership positions to monitor their work. In their 2008 study, Bolman and Deal found that “effectiveness as a manager was particularly associated with the structural frame, whereas the symbolic and political frames tended to be the primary determinants of effectiveness as a leader” (p. 325). Specifically, Bolman and Deal (2008) described effective leaders as those who use multiple frames and assess the situation to determine which frame would be most useful in getting the best results. The findings showed that the principals used multiple frames and confirmed the research of Bolman and Deal. However, this study revealed that the principals used two frames consistently as they focused on instructional leadership. It is critical that educational leaders are familiar with the four-framed model and are equipped to use the components in their work as leaders.



Rosemary Stewart's (1982) framework provided an understanding that individual managerial positions must face many demands and constraints. Her study involved observations of managers in various fields. This inquiry employed her framework and applied it to the field of education to show that principals, like other organizational managers, have many demands and constraints that significantly impact their ability to perform their assigned job functions. Her framework allowed the researcher to ask specific questions of principals to understand the strategies they adopted and the choices they made to further their efforts to focus on instructional leadership. Her research described these choices of the managers and discussed delegation of work. Bolman and Deal's (2008) frames proved useful in categorizing the principals' actions and determining similarities among the principals.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

The data revealed in this study revealed a number of demands and constraints and subsequently led to several recommendations specific to Eastland School District. However, other school districts also can benefit from this research as they consider key strategies for adequately preparing, appointing, and retaining effective high school principals. As such, a number of implications for practice arose from this study

**Recommendation #1.** Based on these findings, school districts in Maryland should utilize the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework as an evaluative and professional development tool for principals and other administrators. All principals and supervisors would have a framework for planning professional development opportunities and system wide meetings.

**Recommendation #2.** The school district should assess the number of non-instructional demands that principals face in their job and examine ways to lessen these types of strains on time and attention, so principals can focus more on instruction. For example, the school district could reexamine the number of meetings that principals must attend outside of their buildings.

**Recommendation #3.** The school district should provide some flexibility and autonomy for principals to implement changes to staffing and financial allocations. Principals would have the flexibility to realign resources, based on the needs of the students and the goal to place greater emphasis on instruction.

**Recommendation #4.** The school district should examine the need for additional training for principals based on Bolman and Deal's (2008) framework of human resources, structural, political, and symbolic. This training would help principals navigate among these different frames when dealing with situations and share best practices with other principals and administrators. Such trainings would also help principals to focus on both the non-instructional and instructional demands of their positions.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

This study illustrates four high school principals' perceptions of the demands and constraints of their positions. The data provide details of the choices that principals made to further their efforts to focus on instructional leadership and identified the more frequently used leadership frames they employed to balance the demands that they faced. However, the findings of this study raised additional questions for further research.

**Question #1.** How do other school districts support high school principals' effort to focus on instructional leadership?

**Question #2.** How does a principal's background and experience to impact the principals' leadership style?

**Question #3.** Does the use of one particular frame positively impact student performance and achievement? Among schools that did not achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and school that did make AYP, what are the similarities and differences among the principals' reframing leadership style?

**Question #4.** What are the similarities and differences of the demands, constraints, and choices of high school principals from different school districts? What are the differences and similarities in how they focus on instructional leadership?

**Question #5.** How effective is the use of the leadership frames and the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework as indicated by the principals' supervisors?

### **Final Thoughts**

As an experienced principal, this case study allowed me to reflect on my own experiences and preparation for the high school principalship. I have served as a principal at the middle and high school levels, and each time, my appointment to the principalship was during the month of July. Beginning my tenure of a principalship during the summer gave me time to identify areas needing improvement in the instructional program and to create a timeframe to address these areas. This convenient timing also allowed me the opportunity to meet the leaders of the school and gather data from their perspective.

Using the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework provides an opportunity for any principal to identify those critical components of instructional leadership and lists examples of effective practices in each area borne out by evidence from national

organizations. I have used the framework to focus on the “demands” of my job and have chosen to delegate other responsibilities, or expectations from stakeholders, to staff members in leadership positions. These stakeholders include parents, teachers, students, and Central Office staff. This case study validated that the job of a high school principal is very demanding; because of the many extracurricular activities, athletic events, and meetings that are scheduled each year. However, the expectation from all stakeholders; including teachers, students, and parents; is that the student body is achieving goals based on the state benchmarks and the local school district requirements.

By looking at my choices as a high school principal through the lenses of Bolman and Deal’s (2008) frames of structural, human resources, political, and symbolic; I realized that I too must navigate through multiple lenses and cannot be perceived as a leader who demonstrates a certain leadership style. A classroom teacher who is studying to become an administrator interviewed me in December, 2010. He was assigned to identify my leadership style, as it related to Bolman and Deal’s work. I was shocked that the classroom teacher saw me as a principal who operates primarily within a political frame.

When we talked about his categorizing of me, I learned that was his impression of me when I first arrived at my school almost four years ago. My school was in a critical condition because the graduation rate was down, the students did not meet the state benchmarks for AYP, and the school was scheduled for accreditation. My time and attention were taken up with getting staff and students to take ownership of behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs and creating coalitions with teacher leaders, administrators,

students, staff, and parents. It was incredible for me to reflect on my own practices and realize how I had been perceived.

A few months later, the classroom teacher came back and gave a different perspective. He shadowed me for a few days and discussed his findings with one of my assistant principals. He was able to give specific examples of how, recently, I used more of the structural and human resources frames in increasing student achievement in the school building. He also shared that he saw the political frame when dealing with difficult situations that involved staff and parents. Although I was pleased to hear that he could see that I was using different leadership strategies in the building, I kept thinking about ways to better utilize the symbolic frame.

According to Bolman and Deal (2008), the “effectiveness as a manager was particularly associated with the structural frame, whereas the symbolic and political frames tended to be the primary determinants of effectiveness of a leader” (p.325). This case study caused me to reflect on my own practices and improve my ability to use multiple frames, while focusing on instructional leadership. Also, I feel that I need to increase leadership opportunities for staff by working directly with my administrative and instructional leadership teams, and for students by providing a forum for their opinions to be heard and ideas to be implemented. This study has helped me to reflect on my practices and has served to strengthen my own professional development.

## Appendix A Quick Survey

Items taken from Pounder D.G., & Merrill, R.J. (2001, February) Job Desirability of the High School Principalship: A job choice theory perspective. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 37(1), 53-54.

### Attraction to the High School Principalship

Factors	1	2	3	4
Factor 1 – Desire to achieve/influence education				
• Desire to make a difference				
• Empower school change				
• Personal/professional growth				
• Leadership opportunities				
• School improvement/vision				
• Influence on others				
• Personal professional relationships				
• Developing curriculum				
• Develop community relations				
• Develop school policies				
Factor 2 – Work – problems/dilemmas				
• Student behavior issues				
• Ethical dilemmas				
• Assuming accountability				
• Countering problem situations				
• Teacher grievances/unions				
• Terminating unfit employees				
Factor 3 – Work – time demands				
• Extracurricular supervision				
• Extended work day				
• Balancing demands – job/family				
Factor 4 – School Context				
• Reputation of school				
• Location of school				
• Socioeconomic composition				
• Enrollment size of school				
Factor 5 – Objective – salary/benefits				
• Salary				
• Retirement benefits				
• Salary versus position demands				
• Flexible vacations				
Factor 6 – Work – External relations				
• Site-based councils				
• Partnerships/fundraising				
• Laws/regulations/policies				
• IDEA/504 issues				
Factor 7 – Critical Contact				
• Encouragement from educators to remain				
• Attend conferences				
• Support from superiors				
• Attending required meetings				
Factor 8 – Work – management tasks				
• Define staff roles				
• Registration of students				
• Master schedule				
• FTE management				
Factor 9 – Work – fiscal management				
• School budgeting				
• Adequate funding				

1 – N/A      2 – Not important      3 – Important      4 – Very important

## Appendix B

### CONSENT FORM

Project Title	<i>The High School Principals' Perceptions of the Demands, Constraints, and Choices in Their Work as Instructional Leaders</i>
Why is this research being done?	<i>This is a research project being conducted by Dr. Hanne Mawhinney and Darryl L. Williams at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you were nominated by the community superintendent because of your years of experiences as a high school principal and role as an instructional leader and The purpose of this research project is to get your perceptions of the demands and constraints of your role as principal and the choices that you make in order to focus on instructional leadership. We are seeking this information that may contribute to the role as instructional leaders and the actions to support that role, reexamination of training programs and professional development opportunities for principals, and the promotion and retention of high school principals.</i>
What will I be asked to do?	<i>The procedures involve a quick survey identifying the instructional and non-instructional demands of the job as high school principal. You will be asked to participate in 2 hour interview sessions with the researcher where you will describe the demands and constraints of your job. Based on your responses, you will be asked to participate in other interview sessions with the researcher to describe your choices fully and provide any documents, portfolios and memos to support your responses. These interviews will take place at your school or other agreed upon location. These interviews will be recorded and later transcribed. The estimated number of sessions is three or until the data are saturated. Interview Questions for the high school principals: Demands What are the demands of your job that related to instruction? Why are these demands? What are the demands of your job that do not relate to instruction? Why are these demands? What is the regular work that cannot be delegated? Why? Describe the working relationships with your principal supervisor, assistant principals, department chairpersons, students, teachers, and parents. What is the occasional work of your job? What is your work on site-based committees? What is your work with county-wide or state committees? What are the time demands of your job? Are there certain hours that you have to acquire during the day?</i>

	<p><i>Exercise (Rosemary Stewart) Consider demands from the following sources:</i></p> <p><i>Subordinates: the minimum time that must be spend with subordinates to avoid penalties</i></p> <p><i>Boss: What your boss expects and you cannot ignore without penalty</i></p> <p><i>Peers: The request for services, information, or help from people outside your unit that you cannot ignore or delegate without penalty</i></p> <p><i>People outside the organization: Requests for services, information, or help that you cannot ignore or delegate without penalty</i></p> <p><i>Administrative demands: returns, budgets, and other procedures that cannot be ignored or wholly delegated; Meetings that cannot be skipped</i></p> <p><i>In deciding on the demands under each of the headings above you will need to consider how serious are the penalties for not doing them</i></p> <p><i>Constraints</i></p> <p><i>What are the financial constraints?</i></p> <p><i>What are the staffing constraints?</i></p> <p><i>What are the organizational policies and procedures that cause constraints?</i></p> <p><i>What is your organizational structure?</i></p> <p><i>Common constraints that limit a manager's choices are listed below. Describe the following:</i></p> <p><i>Resource constraints, including buildings</i></p> <p><i>Legal and trade union constraints</i></p> <p><i>Technological limitations of equipment and process</i></p> <p><i>Physical location</i></p> <p><i>Organizational policies and procedures; roles and responsibilities of administrators; standard operating procedures</i></p> <p><i>Attitudes that influence what actions other people will accept or tolerate</i></p> <p><i>Choices</i></p> <p><i>Describe your actions to focus on instruction.</i></p> <p><i>What impacts these decisions? Who impacts these decisions?</i></p> <p><i>Within your unit:</i></p> <p><i>What is delegated?</i></p> <p><i>What emphasis is place on different aspects of the job?</i></p> <p><i>What are the changes in the nature of the work?</i></p> <p><i>Are there any changes in the methods, organization and technology</i></p> <p><i>Describe your leadership style. Give examples.</i></p> <p><i>Within the management team(s); administrative team and instructional leadership team</i></p>
--	--



	<p><i>Who has influence?</i></p> <p><i>How do you share the tasks?</i></p> <p><i>What role do you play?</i></p> <p><i>Boundary management:</i></p> <p><i>How and when do you protect the unit from disturbance?</i></p> <p><i>When do you permit changes in outputs or inputs?</i></p> <p><i>Upwards:</i></p> <p><i>When and how do you influence the boss and other senior managers?</i></p> <p><i>When and what do you delegate up?</i></p> <p><i>When and what do you delegate down?</i></p> <p><i>Elsewhere in organization:</i></p> <p><i>When and how do you work with other parties?</i></p> <p><i>When do you empower and allow others to become experts?</i></p> <p><i>Outside the organization:</i></p> <p><i>How do you establish professional contacts?</i></p> <p><i>How do you develop networks and bargaining strategies?</i></p> <p><i>Questions from Choices For The Manager, Appendix 2, p. 129</i></p> <p><i>What are your key tasks including whether the jobholder saw it as one job or a combination of different kinds of jobs?</i></p> <p><i>What is the scope of your job including the number of subordinates?</i></p> <p><i>How is your job performance assessed?</i></p> <p><i>What was distinctive about the job compared with any with similar titles in the organization?</i></p> <p><i>What is the work that had to or could, be done by the manager's unit, divided between work input, conversion and output?</i></p> <p><i>What work could or could not be delegated and why it could not?</i></p> <p><i>List the decisions in which the manager gets involved/got involved?</i></p> <p><i>What is the membership of any work teams?</i></p> <p><i>What could the manager do to limit disturbances to the unit?</i></p> <p><i>What opportunities do you have for innovation?</i></p> <p><i>What kind of work that the manager could do outside the unit for which a checklist was provided as well as comments being invited?</i></p> <p><i>What are the different kinds of constraints? What could be done to reduce any of them?</i></p> <p><i>How has the job compared with the manager's previous jobs in the opportunities for choice?</i></p> <p><i>What does the manager do that another job holder might not do?</i></p> <p><i>What are the choices in the range of contacts and the time spent with different types of contact?</i></p>
<p>What about confidentiality?</p>	<p><i>We will do our best to keep your personal information confidential. To help protect your confidentiality, you and your school will receive pseudo names. All data, documents, memos</i></p>

	<p><i>and portfolios will be locked in a filing cabinet off of the property of Eastland School District. The surveys are anonymous and will not contain information that my personally identify you. A code will be placed on the survey and other collected data and through the use of an identification key, the researcher will be able to link your survey and transcripts to your identity and the researcher will have access to the identification key. If we write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.</i></p> <p><i>In accordance with legal requirements and/or professional standards, we will disclose to the appropriate individuals and/or authorities information that comes to our attention concerning child abuse or neglect or potential harm to you or others.</i></p>
What are the risks of this research?	<p><i>There may be some risks from participating in this research study such as fear in speaking your truth, or making derogatory comments about staff or sharing differences of opinion about how the school system functions. The researcher will maintain confidentiality and identities will not be revealed.</i></p>
What are the benefits of this research?	<p><i>This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about principal training programs and promotion and retention of high school principals. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of the role of high school principals.</i></p>
Do I have to be in this research? May I stop participating at any time?	<p><i>Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify. However, if you decide to withdraw from the research after the quick survey, then this will prolong the data collection process for the researcher.</i></p>
What if I have questions?	<p><i>This research is being conducted by Dr. Hanne Mawhinney, Department of Educational Leadership, Higher Education and International Education at the University of Maryland, College Park. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Dr.Mawhinney a t301-405-4546 or <a href="mailto:hmawhinn@umd.edu">hmawhinn@umd.edu</a>.</i></p> <p><i>If you have questions about your rights as a research subject or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact: Institutional Review Board Office, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20742; (e-mail) <a href="mailto:irb@deans.umd.edu">irb@deans.umd.edu</a>; (telephone) 301-405-0678</i></p>

	<i>This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.</i>	
Statement of Age of Subject and Consent	<i>Your signature indicates that: you are at least 18 years of age, the research has been explained to you; your questions have been fully answered; and you freely and voluntarily choose to participate in this research project.</i>	
Signature and Date	<i>NAME OF SUBJECT</i>	
	<i>SIGNATURE OF SUBJECT</i>	
	<i>DATE</i>	

## Appendix C

Interview Questions for the high school principals taken from examples in Rosemary Stewart (1982). Choices for the manager, Appendices, pp125-140.

### Demands

1. What are the demands of your job that related to instruction? Why are these demands?
2. What are the demands of your job that do not relate to instruction? Why are these demands
3. What is the regular work that cannot be delegated? Why?
4. Describe the working relationships with your principal supervisor, assistant principals, department chairpersons, students, teachers, and parents.
5. What is the occasional work of your job? What is your work on site-based committees? What is your work with county-wide or state committees?
6. What are the time demands of your job? Are there certain hours that you have to acquire during the day?
7. Exercise (Rosemary Stewart) Consider demands from the following sources:
  - a. Subordinates: the minimum time that must be spend with subordinates to avoid penalties
  - b. Boss: What your boss expects and you cannot ignore without penalty
  - c. Peers: The request for services, information, or help from people outside your unit that you cannot ignore or delegate without penalty
  - d. People outside the organization: Requests for services, information, or help that you cannot ignore or delegate without penalty
  - e. Administrative demands: returns, budgets, and other procedures that cannot be ignored or wholly delegated; Meetings that cannot be skipped
8. In deciding on the demands under each of the headings above you will need to consider how serious are the penalties for not doing them

### Constraints

1. What are the financial constraints?
2. What are the staffing constraints?
3. What are the organizational policies and procedures that cause constraints?
4. What is your organizational structure?
5. Common constraints that limit a manager's choices are listed below. Describe the following:
  - a. Resource constraints, including buildings
  - b. Legal and trade union constraints
  - c. Technological limitations of equipment and process
  - d. Physical location
  - e. Organizational policies and procedures; roles and responsibilities of administrators; standard operating procedures
  - f. Attitudes that influence what actions other people will accept or tolerate

## Choices

1. Describe your actions to focus on instruction.
2. What impacts these decisions? Who impacts these decisions?
3. Within your unit:
  - a. What is delegated?
  - b. What emphasis is place on different aspects of the job?
  - c. What are the changes in the nature of the work?
  - d. Are there any changes in the methods, organization and technology
  - e. Describe your leadership style. Give examples.
4. Within the management team(s); administrative team and instructional leadership team
  - a. Who has influence?
  - b. How do you share the tasks?
  - c. What role do you play?
5. Boundary management:
  - a. How and when do you protect the unit from disturbance?
  - b. When do you permit changes in outputs or inputs?
6. Upwards:
  - a. When and how do you influence the boss and other senior managers?
  - b. When and what do you delegate up?
  - c. When and what do you delegate down?
7. Elsewhere in organization:
  - a. When and how do you work with other parties?
  - b. When do you empower and allow others to become experts?
8. Outside the organization:
  - a. How do you establish professional contacts?
  - b. How do you develop networks and bargaining strategies?

## Appendix D

### Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework

Instructional Leadership Outcome	Evidence in Practice
<b>1. Facilitate the Development of a School Vision</b>	<p><b>The principal is able to demonstrate that there is/are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1A written school vision that encompasses values, challenges, and opportunities for the academic, social, and emotional development of each student</li> <li>1.2A process for ensuring that all staff and other stakeholders are able to articulate the vision</li> <li>1.3Procedures in place for the periodic, collaborative review of the vision by stakeholders</li> <li>1.4Resource aligned to support the vision</li> </ul>
<b>2. Align All Aspects of a School Culture to Student and Adult Learning</b>	<p><b>The principal is able to demonstrate that there is/are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 Mutual respect, teamwork, and trust in dealings with students, staff, and parents</li> <li>2.2 High expectations for all students and teachers in a culture of continuous improvement</li> <li>2.3 An effective school leadership team</li> <li>2.4 Effective professional learning communities aligned with the school improvement plan, focused on results, and characterized by collective responsibility for instructional planning and student learning</li> <li>2.5 Opportunities for leadership and collaborative decision making distributed among stakeholders, especially teachers</li> </ul>
<b>3. Monitor the Alignment of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment</b>	<p><b>The principal is able to demonstrate that there is/are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.1 Ongoing conversations with teachers as to how state content standards, voluntary state curriculum and/or local curriculum, and research-based instructional strategies are integrated into daily classroom instruction</li> <li>3.2 Teacher assignments that are rigorous, purposeful, and engaging</li> <li>3.3 Student work that is appropriately challenging and demonstrates new learning</li> <li>3.4 Assessments that regularly measure student mastery of the content standards</li> </ul>
<b>4. Improve Instructional Practices Through the Purposeful Observation and Evaluation of Teachers</b>	<p><b>The principal is able to demonstrate that there is/are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.1 A process to determine what students are reading, writing, producing, and learning</li> <li>4.2 Use of student data and data collected during the observation process to make recommendations for improvement in classroom instruction</li> <li>4.3 Formal feedback during observation conferences as well as ongoing informal visits, meetings, and conversations with teachers regarding classroom instruction</li> <li>4.4 Regular and effective evaluation of teacher performance based on continuous student progress</li> <li>4.5 Identification and development of potential school leaders</li> </ul>
<b>5. Ensure the Regular integration of Appropriate Assessments into Daily Classroom Instruction</b>	<p><b>The principal is able to demonstrate that there is/are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.1Multiple and varied assessments that are collaboratively developed</li> <li>5.2Formative assessments that are a regular part of the ongoing evaluation of student performance and that serve as the basis for adjustments to instruction</li> <li>5.3Summative assessments that are aligned in format and content with state assessments</li> <li>5.4Appropriate interventions for individual students based on results of assessments</li> </ul>
<b>6. Use Technology and Multiple Sources of Data to Improve Classroom Instruction</b>	<p><b>The principal is able to demonstrate that there is/are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6.1Effective use of appropriate instructional technology by students, staff, and administration</li> <li>6.2 Regular use of the MSDE websites (Maryland Report Card and School Improvement)</li> <li>6.3 Review of disaggregated data by subgroups</li> <li>6.4 Ongoing root cause analysis of student performance that drives instructional decision making</li> <li>6.5 Regular collaboration among teachers on analyzing student work</li> </ul>
<b>7. Provide Staff with Focused, Sustained, Research-based Professional Development</b>	<p><b>The principal is able to demonstrate that there is/are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7.1 Results-oriented professional development that is aligned with identified curricular, instructional, and assessment needs and is connected to school improvement goals</li> <li>7.2 Opportunities for teachers to engage in collaborative planning and critical reflection during the regular school day (job-embedded)</li> <li>7.3 Differentiated professional development according to career stages, needs of staff, and student performance</li> <li>7.4 Personal involvement in professional development activities</li> <li>7.5 Professional development aligned with the Maryland Teacher Professional Development Standards</li> </ul>
<b>8. Engage All Community Stakeholders in a Shared Responsibility for Student and School Success</b>	<p><b>The principal is able to demonstrate that there is/are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8.1 Parents and caregivers welcomed in the school, encouraged to participate, and given information and materials to help their children learn</li> <li>8.2 Parents and caregivers who are active members of the school improvement process</li> <li>8.3 Community stakeholders and school partners who readily participate in school life</li> </ul>

## Appendix E

### Overview of the Four-Frame Model Bolman and Deal (2008) p. 18

	Frame			
	Structural	Human Resource	Political	Symbolic
Metaphor for organization Central concepts	Factory or machine Rules, roles, goals, policies, technology, environment	Family Needs, skills, relationships	Jungle Power, conflict, competition, organizational politics	Carnival, temple, theater Culture, meaning, metaphor, ritual, ceremony, stories, heroes
Image of leadership Basic leadership challenge	Social architecture Attune structure to task, technology, environment	Empowerment Align organizational and human needs	Advocacy and political savvy Develop agenda and power base	Inspiration Create faith, beauty, meaning

## Appendix F

### Choosing a Frame

Question	If Yes:	If No:
Are individual commitment and motivation essential to success?	Human resource Symbolic	Structural Political
Is the technical quality of the decision important?	Structural	Human resource Political Symbolic
Are there high levels of ambiguity and uncertainty?	Political Symbolic	Structural Human resource
Are conflict and scarce resources significant?	Political Symbolic	Structural Human resource
Are you working from the bottom up?	Political	Structural Human resource Symbolic

Bolman and Deal (2008) p. 317



## Appendix G

### Reframing Organizational Change

Reframing Organizational Change		
FRAME	BARRIERS TO CHANGE	ESSENTIAL STRATEGIES
Structural	Loss of direction, clarity, and stability; confusion, chaos	Communicating, realigning, and renegotiating formal patterns and policies
Human resource	Anxiety, uncertainty; people feel incompetent and needy	Training to develop new skills; participation and involvement; psychological support
Political	Disempowerment; conflict between winners and losers	Create arenas where issues can be renegotiated and new coalitions formed
Symbolic	Loss of meaning and purpose; clinging to the past	Create transition rituals; mourn the past, celebrate the future

Bolman and Deal (2008) p. 379

## Appendix H

### NVivo Analysis Charts – Summary of Principals’ Responses to Leadership Frame with the Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework

1 = Data supported the category and 0 = no data supported the category

	A : F1 Vision	B : F2 Student and adult Learning	C : F3 Curriculum, instruction, and assessment	D : F4 Instructional practices	E : F5 Appropriate assessments	F : F6 Technology and Multiple sources of data	G : F7 Professional development	H : F8 Community stakeholders
<b>Principal Anderson</b>								
1 : Human Resources Frame	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1
2 : Political Frame	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
3 : Structural Frame	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
4 : Symbolic Frame	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Principal Hamilton</b>								
1 : Human Resources Frame	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
2 : Political Frame	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
3 : Structural Frame	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1
4 : Symbolic Frame	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Principal Carter</b>								
1 : Human Resources Frame	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
2 : Political Frame	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
3 : Structural Frame	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
4 : Symbolic Frame	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Principal Washington</b>								
1 : Human Resources Frame	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0
2 : Political Frame	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
3 : Structural Frame	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1
4 : Symbolic Frame	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

## Appendix I

### NVivo Analysis – Principals' Responses

4 = four principals responded to the category, 3 = three principals responded to the category, 2 = two principals responded to the category, 1 = one principal responded to the category, and 0 = no one responded

	A : F1 Vision	B : F2 Student and adult Learning	C : F3 Curriculum, instruction, and assessment	D : F4 Instructional practices	E : F5 Appropriate assessments	F : F6 Technology and Multiple sources of data	G : F7 Professional development	H : F8 Community stakeholders
1 : Human Resources Frame	4	4	3	3	1	0	2	2
2 : Political Frame	3	2	1	1	0	1	0	3
3 : Structural Frame	4	4	4	4	0	1	1	4
4 : Symbolic Frame	4	2	2	2	0	0	0	1

## Appendix J

### NVivo Chart – Principals’ Responses

1 = Data supported the category and 0 = no data supported the category

	A : F1 Vision	B : F2 Student and adult Learning	C : F3 Curriculum, instruction, and assessment	D : F4 Instructional practices	E : F5 Appropriate assessments	F : F6 Technology and Multiple sources of data	G : F7 Professional development	H : F8 Community stakeholders
Principal Anderson	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
Principal Hamilton	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1
Principal Carter	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1
Principal Washington	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1

## Glossary

**Administrative Team** – consists of principal and assistant principals.

**Assistant Principal** – Eastland School District (2010) describes the assistant principal as an administrator that assists with administering and supervising the total school program and providing educational leadership for the students and staff members consistent with the educational goals of the community. Functions include establishing a climate conducive to learning, planning, and coordinating programs, effecting change, and decision-making.

**Business Manager (School-based)** – Eastland School District (2010) describes the business manager as the individual who provides overall leadership related to the financial management of the school, facility management, and management of other aspects of the school not directly related to the instructional program. The position shall be responsible for the school's budget and financial functions in accordance with Board policy and regulations; oversees the use of the facility; provides guidance to food service school personnel, transportation, purchasing and procurement programs; collaborates with the school leadership team to effectively manage human resources; ensures the school derives maximum benefit from its budget. Business Manager contributes to the school's overall development as an active member of the school leadership team. He or she is responsible for providing comprehensive and accurate financial information to school leadership and the Board in a timely manner to enable the school to plan and take appropriate management action.

**Department Chairperson (resource teacher)** – Eastland School District (2010) describes the department chairperson (high school resource teacher) as a teacher who supervises a department of teachers. The department chairperson (resource teacher) provides leadership to departments or subject field(s) within high schools under supervision of school administration. A department chairperson (resource teacher)

supports classroom teachers in the instructional program, serves as an instructional role model, supports the development of a professional learning community within the department and school, observes and analyzes instructional practices related to teachers' professional growth and evaluation, collaborates with supervisors and colleagues on instructional issues, takes a leadership role in the handling of instructional resources, supports the development of the master schedule, keeps current on content and best practices in the specified subject field, and serves as a liaison to the central office on subject matter and instructional issues.

**Distributed Leadership** – Spillane (2006) stated that distributed leadership means more than shared leadership. It is the collective interactions among leaders, followers, and their situation that are paramount. Three elements are essential to distributed leadership: leadership practice is the central and anchoring concern; leadership practice is generated in the interactions of leaders, followers, and their situation; each element is essential for leadership practice; and the situation both defines leadership practice and is defined through leadership practice.

**Instructional Leadership** – Developed by Hallinger (2011), the Instructional Leadership model with three dimensions: defining the school's mission; managing the instructional program (focusing on supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum, and monitoring student progress); and promoting a positive school-learning climate (protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, and providing incentives for learning).

**Instructional Leadership Team** – consists of principal, assistant principal(s), department chairpersons, and other key staff, students, and parents as defined by the four principals in this study.

**Instructional Technology Specialist** – Eastland School District (2010) describes the Instructional Technology Specialist as the staff person that provides all levels of user support and technology administration. Based on the assigned level, this work may

include analyzing and resolving problems related to workstations, networks, servers, and printers; performing systems analysis; designing and implementing configuration changes; and performing related duties as required or assigned. (Eastland School District; Job description, website)

**Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework** – The Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework (MILF) (2005) consists of eight outcomes: facilitate the development of a school vision; align all aspects of a school culture to student and adult learning; monitor the alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment; improve instructional practices through the purposeful observation and evaluation of teachers; ensure the regular integration of appropriate assessments into daily classroom instruction; use technology and multiple sources of data to improve classroom instruction; provide staff with focused, sustained, research-based professional development; and engage all community stakeholders in a shared responsibility for student and school success.

**Media Specialist** – Eastland School District (2010) describes the media specialist as the individual who plans and administers the school's library media program. The media specialist plans and provides direct instruction to students and training to staff; manages library media center material, facilities, and equipment; and communicates the school library media program to administrators, staff, students, parents and the broader community.

**Paraeducator** – Eastland School District (2010) describes the paraeducator as the staff person that assists teachers by performing a variety of tasks that promote student learning and well being. Duties involve working with students individually and in small groups assessing performance, reinforcing instruction, motivating learning, assisting with classroom management, clerical, and other non-instructional work. (Eastland School District' website)

**Staff Development Teacher** – Eastland School District (2010) describes the staff development teacher (SDT) as someone who fosters the development and growth of

professional learning communities within the school and facilitates job-embedded staff development. In collaboration with administrators, teachers and other stakeholders, the SDT supports the goal of building staff capacity to meet system-wide and local school initiatives to increase student learning (Eastland School District, 2010)



## References

- Bolman, J. G. & Deal, T. E. (1991). Leadership and management effectiveness: A multi-frame, multi-sector analysis. *Human Resource Management*, 30(4), 509-534.
- Bolman, L., & Deal, T. (2002). *Reframing the path to school leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.
- Bolman, L., & Deal, T. (2008). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and leadership*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Brown, M., Rutherford, D., & Boyle, B. (2000). Leadership for school improvement: The role of the head of department in UK secondary schools. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 11(2), 237-258.
- Browne-Ferrigno, T. (2003). Becoming a principal: Role conception, initial socialization, role-identity transformation, purposeful engagement. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 39(4), 468–503.
- Cameron, D. H. (2010). Working with secondary school leadership in a large-scale reform in London, UK: Consultants' perspectives of their role as agents of school change and improvement. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 38(3), 341-359.
- Chrispeels, J. H., Burke, P. H., Johnson, P., & Daly, A. J. (2008). Aligning mental models of district and school leadership teams for reform coherence. *Education and Urban Society*, 40(6), 730-750.
- Chrispeels, J. H., & Martin, K. J. (2002). Four school leadership teams define their roles within organizational and political structures to improve student learning. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 11(1), 327–365.
- Coldren, A F., & Spillane, J. P. (2007). Making connections to teaching practice: The role of boundary practices in instructional leadership. *Educational Policy*, 21(2), 369-396.
- The Council of Chief State School Officers. (2008). *Educational leadership policy standards: ISLLC 2008*. Retrieved from [http://www.ccsso.org/Documents/2008/Educational\\_Leadership\\_Policy\\_Standards\\_2008.pdf](http://www.ccsso.org/Documents/2008/Educational_Leadership_Policy_Standards_2008.pdf)
- Creswell, J.W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Cuban, L. (1988). *The managerial imperative and the practice of leadership in schools*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

- Cushing, K., Kerrins, J., & Johnstone, T. (2003). Disappearing principals. *Leadership*, May/June, 28-30.
- Danielson, C. (2007). The many faces of leadership. *Educational Leadership*, 65(1), 14-19.
- Eastland School District. (2004). *The report of the high school task force: The high-achieving high school*.
- Eastland School District. (2009). *Administrative & supervisory professional growth system handbook*.
- Eastland School District (2008). *Schools at a glance*.
- Eastland School District (n.d.). *Human resources job description*.
- Educational Research Service (1998). *Is there a shortage of qualified candidates for openings in the principalship?: An exploratory study*. Alexandria and Reston, VA: National Association of Elementary School Principals and National Association of Secondary Principals.
- Gall, M. D., Borg, W. R., & Gall, J. P. (2003). *Educational research: An introduction* (7th ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Ghamrawi, N. (2010). No teacher left behind: Subject leadership that promotes teacher leadership. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 38(3), 304-320.
- Gronn, P. (2002). Distributed leadership as a unit of analysis. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 13, 423-451.
- Grubb, N., & Flessa, J. (2006). A job too big for one: Multiple principals and other nontraditional approaches to school leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 42(4), 518-550.
- Hallinger, P. (2011). A review of three decades of doctoral studies using the principal instructional management rating scale: A lens on methodological progress in educational leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 47(2), 271-306.
- Hallinger, P. (2003). Leading educational change: Reflections on the practice of instructional and transformational leadership. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 33(3), 329-351.
- Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. (1998). Exploring the principal's contribution to school effectiveness: 1980 - 1995. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 9(2), 157-191.

- Hallinger, P., & Heck, R. (2010). Leadership for learning: Does collaborative leadership make a difference in school improvement? *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 38(6), 654-678.
- Hallinger, P., & Murphy, J. (1987). The social context of effective schools. *American Journal of Education*, 94(5), 328-355.
- Hallinger, P., & Murphy, J. (1985). Assessing the instructional leadership behavior of principals. *Elementary School Journal*, 86(2), 217 – 248.
- Hanushek, E. (2011). The economic value of higher teacher quality. *Economics of Education Review*, 30(3), 466-479.
- Harris, D. N., Rutledge, S.A., Ingle, W. K, & Thompson, C.C. (2006). *Mix and match: What principals look for when hiring teachers and implications for teacher quality policies*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, California, April 11.
- Hornig, E., Klasik, D., & Loeb, S. (2009). Principal's time Use and school effectiveness. *American Journal of Education*, 116, 491–523.
- Hornig, E., Klasik, D., & Loeb, S. (2010). New thinking about instructional leadership. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 92(3), 66-69.
- Hulpia, H., Devos, G., and Rosseel, Y. (2009). The relationships between the perception of distributed leadership in secondary schools and teachers' and teacher leaders' job satisfaction and organizational commitment. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 20(3), 291-317.
- Hulpia, H., Devos, G., and Van Keer, H. (2010). The influence of distributed leadership on teachers' organizational commitment: A multilevel approach. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 103, 40-52.
- Krug, S. E. (1992). Instructional leadership: A constructivist perspective. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 28(3), 430-443.
- Leithwood, K. A., Louis, K. S., Anderson, S. A., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). How leadership influences student learning. New York: Wallace Foundation.
- Leithwood, K, and Riehl, C. (2003). *What we know about successful school leadership*. Philadelphia: Temple University Laboratory for Student Success.
- Lowe, Kevin B. (2003). Demands, constraints, choices and discretion: An introduction to the work of Rosemary Stewart. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 14, 193-238.

- Marzano, R. J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. A. (2005). *School leadership that works: From research to results*. Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Marshall C and Hooley R (2006) *The assistant principal: Leadership choices and challenges*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Maryland State Department of Education (2000). *Maryland task force on the principalship*. Retrieved from [http://marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/20FBD612-415E-42D0-9B35-886DB1A972AF/18214/Taskforce\\_Principalship\\_final.pdf](http://marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/20FBD612-415E-42D0-9B35-886DB1A972AF/18214/Taskforce_Principalship_final.pdf)
- Maryland State Department of Education (2002). *Achievement matters most: The final report of the visionary panel for better schools*. Retrieved from <http://www.msde.maryland.gov/NR/rdonlyres/F7D49A8D-E9D0-4C49-9DE6-3A878BC9F1F4/12061/VPReport.pdf>
- Maryland State Department of Education (2005a) *Implementation plan*. Retrieved from <http://www.msde.maryland.gov/.../rdonlyres/20FBD612-415E-42D0-9B35-886DB1A972AF/10150/SuccessionGuide062106.pdf> - 2011-09-07
- Maryland State Department of Education (2005). *Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework*. Retrieved from <http://www.msde.maryland.gov/NR/rdonlyres/20FBD612-415E-42D0-9B35-886DB1A972AF/9383/InstructionalLeadershipFrameworkFeb2006.pdf>
- Maryland State Department of Education (2006). *Leadership succession planning guide for Maryland schools*. Retrieved from <http://www.msde.maryland.gov/NR/rdonlyres/20FBD612-415E-42D0-9B35-886DB1A972AF/10150/SuccessionGuide062106.pdf>
- Maryland State Department of Education (2010). *Differentiated accountability model*. Retrieved from [http://www.msde.maryland.gov/.../17672/Maryland\\_diff\\_planREVISED\\_FINAL\\_081908.doc](http://www.msde.maryland.gov/.../17672/Maryland_diff_planREVISED_FINAL_081908.doc) - 2010-12-06
- May, H., & Supovitz, J. A. (2011). The scope of principal efforts to improve instruction. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 47(2), 332-352.
- Mayrowetz, D. (2008). Making sense of distributed leadership: Exploring the multiple usages of the concept in the field. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44(3), 424-435.
- McAdams, R. P. (1998). Who'll run the schools? The coming administrator shortage. *American*

*School Board Journal*, 29(8), 37-39.

- Mintzberg, H. (1975). The manager's job: Folklore and fact. *Harvard Business Review*, (Jul/Aug), 49 – 61.
- Murphy, J. (1994). Redefining the principalship in restructuring schools. *NASSP Bulletin*, 78, 94-99.
- National Association of Secondary School Principals. (NASSP). (2004). *Breaking ranks II: Strategies for leading high school reform*. Retrieved from <http://www.nassp.org/school-improvement/breaking-ranks-ii-and-high-school-reform>
- National College for School Leadership. (2004). *Distributed leadership in action: Full report*. Retrieved from <http://www.nationalcollege.org.uk/index/docinfo.htm?id=17152>
- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), 20 U.S.C. § 6319 (2008)
- Noordegraaf, N., & Stewart, R. (2000). Managerial behavior research in private and public sectors: Distinctiveness, disputes and directions. *Journal of Management Studies*, 37(3), 427-443.
- Orr, M. T. (2011). Pipeline to preparation to advancement: Graduates' experiences in, through, and beyond leadership preparation. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 47(1), 114-172.
- Pijanowski, J. C., & Brady, K. P. (2009). The influence of salary in attracting and retaining school leaders. *Education and Urban Society*, 42(25), 25-41.
- Pilbeam, C., & Jamieson, I. (2010). Beyond leadership and management: The boundary-spanning role of the pro-vice chancellor. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 38(6), 758-776.
- Portin, B. (2004, April). The role that principals play. *Educational Leadership*, 61(7), 14-18.
- Pounder, D., & Crow, G. (2005). Sustaining the pipeline of school administrators. *Educational Leadership*, 62(8-?), 56-60.
- Pounder D. G., & Merrill, R. J. (2001). Job desirability of the high school principalship: A job choice theory perspective. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 37(1), 27-57.
- Printy, S.M. (2008) Leadership for teacher learning: A community of practice perspective. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44(2), 187-226.

- Printy, S. M., & Marks, H. M. (2006). Shared leadership for teacher and student learning. *Theory into Practice, 45*(2), 125-132.
- Rayner, S. & Gunter, H. Rethinking leadership: perspectives on remodeling practice. *Educational Review, 57*(2), 151-161
- Reitzug, U. C., West, D. L., & Angel, R. (2008). Conceptualizing instructional leadership: The voice of principals. *Education and Urban Society, 40*(6), 694-714.
- Rhodes, C., & Brundrett, M. (2009). Leadership development and school improvement. *Education Review, 61*(4), 261-374.
- Rintoul, H. M., & Goulais, L. (2010). Vice principalship and moral literacy: Developing a moral compass. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 38*(6), 745-757.
- Sergiovanni, T.J. (2009). *The principalship: A reflective practice Perspective*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Spillane, J. P. (2006). *Distributed leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Spillane, J. P., Halverson, R., & Diamond, J. B. (2001). Investigating school leadership practice: A distributed perspective. *Educational Researcher, 30*(3), 23-28.
- Spillane, J. P., & Healey, K. (2010). Conceptualizing school leadership and management a distributed perspective. *The Elementary School Journal, 111*(2), 253-281.
- Stake, R. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stewart, R. (1982). A model for understanding managerial jobs and behavior. *The Academy of Management Review, 7*(1), 7-13.
- Stewart R. (1982). *Choices for the manager*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Stewart, R. (1989). Studies of managerial jobs and behaviour: The ways forward. *Journal of Management Studies, 26*(1), 1-10.
- Supovitz, J., Sirinides, P., and May, H. (2010). How principals and peers influence teaching and learning. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 46*(1), 31-56.
- Walker, A., & Kwan, P. (2009). Linking professional, school, demographic, and motivational factors to desire for principalship. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 45*(4), 590-615.
- Young, M. D., Petersen, G. T., & Short, P. M. (2002). The complexity of substantive

reform: A call for interdependence among key stakeholders. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 38(2), 137-175.

Yu-kwong, P. K., & Walker, A. (2010). Secondary school vice-principals: Commitment, challenge, efficacy and synchrony. *British Educational Research Journal*, 36(4), 531-548.