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2014

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY SAN MARCOS

The Promise of Transformational Leadership for Closing the Achievement Gap

A dissertationsubmitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Education

in

Educational Leadership

by

Timothy Heck

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2014

The Dissertation of Timothy Heck is approved, and is acceptable
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University of California, San Diego

California State University San Marcos

2014

DEDICATION

I dedicate my dissertation work to my family and many friends. A special feeling of gratitude goes out to my loving parents, Matthew and Dr. Carol Heck, whose words of encouragement, love, and support are never ending. I also dedicate this dissertation to my many friends who have supported me throughout the process. I will always appreciate all they have done, especially Dr. Cheree McKean for always giving me a gentle nudge in the right direction, Dr. Abigail Larrison for the many hours of IRB assistance and data review, and Dr. Jenifer Golden for her advice.

I dedicate this work and give special thanks to my wonderful son Shawn for being there for me throughout the entire doctorate program and recent trials of life. You have been my best inspiration.

"Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."

Sir Winston Churchill

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Promise of Transformational Leadership for Closing the Achievement Gap

by

Timothy Heck

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

University of California, San Diego, 2014
California State University San Marcos, 2014

Professor Amanda Datnow, Chair

High-stakes accountability mandates such as *No Child Left Behind* and *Race to the Top* set minimum achievement criteria for students in US schools. Instituting the change necessary to meet these student achievement goals requires leadership. School leaders often need to implement changes to the curriculum and culture of schools to meet the academic needs of the students served. Especially in schools that are identified as underperforming, principals are held accountable for transforming failing schools into systems that provide academic support. Prior research suggests that transformational leadership may be a critical factor in school improvement.

Through the lens of transformational leadership, this study sought to discover the key leadership attributes shared by principals and other personnel in schools formerly under sanction, specifically Program Improvement (PI) Schools. Using case study methods, this research focused on principals and teacher leaders of two California middle schools formerly designated as PI schools in order to understand which leadership attributes help middle schools transition out of PI status.

The following seven themes were discovered in relation to the leadership attributes and practices shared by principals and teacher leaders in two middle schools formerly under sanctions: (1) teamwork, support, and collaboration; (2) accountability; (3) planning and structure; (4) modeling and leading by example; (5) using data in decision making of data; (6) fostering increased parent involvement; and (7) promoting respect. Transformational leadership played a key role in the two schools studied. Findings from this study also suggest that school leaders who implement the tenets of transformational leadership could promote the requirements for a school to improve and exit PI status. As such, transformational leadership does hold promise for helping to narrow the achievement gap in schools.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The work of the contemporary principal in any setting is complex, fraught
with decisions, and replete with pressures for performance.
(Moolenaar, Daly, & Sleegers, 2010, p. 661)

Failing to implement positive change in schools is causing school leaders across

the country to fear for their jobs. Government directed programs and accountability

efforts such as *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* and *Race to the Top* have created the drive

toward sweeping changes in schools. NCLB ushered in a new era of public school

accountability with requirements that all students, including those who are

socioeconomically disadvantaged or students of color, meet minimum proficiency

standards or Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Failure to meet AYP goals for two

consecutive years results in a school being labeled as in Program Improvement (PI) and

incurs progressive corrective actions and sanctions (California Department of Education

(CDE), 2011). The increased urgency and demand to innovate is leading schools and

districts to develop new ideas and practices to improve academic performance and

narrow achievement gaps (Moolenar et al., 2010).

Current efforts directed toward the reform of schools assume that leaders and

teachers have the capacity to successfully implement changes (Leithwood & Jantzi,

1999). Effective school site leadership is seen as critical to the successful

implementation of reform (Brown, Anfara, Hartman, Mahar, & Mills, 2002). Moreover,

the role and leadership capacity of the school principal is crucial to the faculty's sense of

self-efficacy (Hipp, 1997). During the course of implementing a change initiative, such

as a new instructional strategy, teachers will be required to rethink the manner in which

they view the content of their subject matter, be creative and responsive to the individual

needs of each student, and take risks in trying new instructional methods (Putnam & Borko, 1997). The implementation of new ideas and practices requires leadership to influence and motivate others in a change process.

Leading such reforms is made easier with transformational leadership which clearly articulates vision, sets the compass for the school, and empowers stakeholders. For the purposes of this study, transformational leadership is defined asleadership in which the leader identifies the needed change, creates a vision to guide the change through inspiration, and executes the change with the commitment of the members of the groupvia the 4 I's: 1. Idealized influence, 2. Individualized consideration, 3. Inspirational motivation and 4. Intellectual stimulation (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999; Bass, 1997; Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003; Hater & Bass, 1988).Accordingly, through the lens of transformational leadership, this study seeks to discover some of the key leadership attributes shared by principals and other key personnel in schools formerly under sanction, specifically Program Improvement Schools. This study focuses on principalsand teacher leaders of California middle schools formerly designated as PI schools in order to understand which leadership attributes help middle schools transition out of PI status.

Context of the Problem

At the conclusion of the 2010-11 academic year when this study began, 3,169 schools in the state of California were in Program Improvement (PI) status; this equates to approximately 52% of all Title I schools in the state (CDE, 2012). Middle schools make up a significant number of this percentage. In 2009 26% of California middle schools achieved AYP goals. However, in 2010 only 19% attained AYP goals (CDE,

2011). Thus, more and more middle schools are falling into PI as a result of failing to meet AYP standards in language arts and mathematics over 2 consecutive academic years. Furthermore, the schools which lapse into PI face varying levels of sanctions that become more stringent over time. For example, a school that remains in PI over an extended number of years could face possible replacement of school staff to include the principal or even closure (CDE, 2011).

Within NCLB, there are prescriptive corrective actions for PI schools from year 1 to year 5. A school that remains in year 5 is labeled a multi-year 5 PI school. Corrective actions for a year 1 PI school include revising the school's single plan for student achievement (SPSA), specifically allocating some Title I funds toward professional development for faculty, and giving parents the choice to transfer their children to non-PI schools. Over time the corrective measures become more punitive. Hence, year 4 and 5 PI schools face replacement of the principal, major restructuring of the master schedule, closing and reopening as a charter school, or being taken over by the state (CDE, 2011).

The person ultimately responsible for effecting positive changes in schools that will result inincreased student achievement as measured by standardized tests is the principal (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). In the era of NCLB, an effective principal may find it necessary to transform the existing culture of a school in order to narrow the achievement gap and allow all students to be academically successful. Moreover, given the high stakes, accountability measures, and possibility of sanctions the leadership of the school principal has come under intense scrutiny (Mintrop & Trujillo, 2007). The principal has become the focal point at the school level in articulating the implementation of effective

instructional practices and evaluating the generation of an effective learning environment (Smith, Guarino, Strom, & Adams, 2006). As principals endeavor to foment positive change and increase student achievement, they may benefit from adopting specific leadership traits and behaviors. Transformational leadershipis intrinsically linked in the promotion and sustainment of successful organizational change in school settings throughout the United States through enhancing motivation, morale, and performance of teachers (Herold et al., 2008). According to prior research, transformational leadership allows principals to connect the faculty's sense of self-efficacy and contribution to the mission and culture of the organization; allows principals to role model for the teachers challenge teachers to take greater ownership for their work; and allows principals to focus on ascertaining the strengths and weaknesses of each teacher, so the principal may then align teachers with assignments that maximize their potential (Bass & Bass, 2008).

I am interested in this field of study from both a personal and professional standpoint. In my own workplace, I would like to act more as a transformational leader who can successfully implement school improvement strategies. My school site has a large population of English language learners, and change in the school's culture and status quo is required in order to best meet the academic needs of these students. As I progress in my own career I hope to learn, adopt, and implement transformational leadership strategies that will assist in improving the achievement of all students. This research will also hopefully aid teachers, site administrators, district administrators and researchers interested in the generation and implementation of transformational leadership practices.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine and identify some of the key leadership attributes shared by principals and other key site leaders in California middle schools formerly designated as in Program Improvement. The goal was to determine which leadership traits and attributes are effective in assisting schools movement away from further sanctions. The middle schools in this study areschools that have exited Program Improvement status. This study was guided by one overarching research question and two sub-questions:

What are the leadership attributes and practices of principalsand teacher leaders in California middle schools whose schools were designated as in Program Improvement (PI) but which have successfully exited PI under NCLB guidelines?

(a) Does the principal or other key personnel engage in transformational leadership activities, and if so, in what ways and under what conditions?

(b) What similarities or differences in leadership behaviors exist among these principalsand teacher leaders?

These research questions were addressed through case study qualitative research methods. Two schools were selected as cases in which to study leadership. The in-depth, qualitative case study methods approach provided venues with which to collect data regarding leadership traits, practices, and behaviors of principals.

Significance

Major industries and educational systems want leaders who can clearly communicate a vision for the future, set the compass for the organization or school, inspire people to go beyond what is normally expected, and empower people to be creative in the process (Bennis, 1982; Kouzes, 2004). The leader who employs the skills mentioned above is a transformational leader, and according to Zimmerman (2004), "Transformational leaders are also obliged to prepare to lead change, understand the process and nature of change, and provide the essential gear and support for those involved to be successful" (p. 239). Transformational educational leaders who have met with success might empower teachers in order to motivate them to embrace change (Daly, Der-Martirosian, Ong-Dean, Park, & Wishard-Guerra, 2011). Such principals call for teachers to clearly understand and take ownership of the implementation of change initiatives.

Research on leadership indicates that transformational leaders are rated higher in performance and ability than transactional leaders (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003). It is not surprising to discover that when surveyed, employees consistently reported higher performance and employee satisfaction when reporting to, or working for, a transformational leader (Bass, et al., 2003; Bycio, 1995; Hater, 1988). Schools may need leaders with transformational skills in order to promote employee performance and satisfaction as well as be able to improve academic achievement and successfully implement change within their organizations. This study will help illuminate these issues.

It is reasonable to expect that school principals, particularly at the middle grades level, may want to explore leadership strategies which are proven to be effective in turning schools and school cultures around. The dearth of literature on specific leadership methods, traits, and attributes which have been proven effective in turning around middle schools may indicate a lack of specific knowledge possessed by middle school principals and other site leaders in achieving this goal. An examination of the impact of leadership in middle schools that have exited Program Improvement status, through this study, adds to the body of literature available and help provide a more clear understanding of the successes others have attained.

The information gleaned from this study may help advise middle school principals and other site leaders in PI about best leadership practices as well as inform school districts about professional development for principals in schools requiring reform. Moreover, the findings may be useful to school district personnel departments by providing information regarding practices in the recruitment and hiring of middle school principals.

Definition of Terms

The following terms will be referred to frequently throughout the study:

1. *Change*: an alteration of difference from the current state

2. *Culture*: the basic underlying beliefs and patterns of interaction of a group or school

3. *Reform effort*: any initiative aimed at school improvement implemented by participants of the study. May also be referred to as a change effort.

4. *Traits*: qualities of leadership; also referred to as characteristics.

5. *Transactional Leadership*: leadership that is based on the setting of clear objectives and goals for the followers as well as the use of either punishments or rewards in order to encourage compliance with these goals.

6. *Transformation*: reform with the goal of changing the culture and structure in significant ways.

7. *Transformational Leadership*: leadership in which the leader identifies the needed change, creates a vision to guide the change through inspiration, and executes the change with the commitment of the members of the groupvia the 4 I's: 1. Idealized influence, 2. Individualized consideration, 3. Inspirational motivation and 4. Intellectual stimulation (Bass, 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. In this first chapter an introduction to the study and its significance was provided. Chapter two provides a thorough review of the literature related to transformational leadership in relation to narrowing the achievement gap. Chapter three describes in detail the qualitative methodology used to conduct the study. Chapter four discusses the results of the qualitative study. Chapter five provides insight and discussion surrounding the results and the implications for future research and practice.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The focus of this literature review is to examine research related to the closing or narrowing of the achievement gap at the school site level as viewed through the conceptual framework of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is explored primarily from the perspective of school principals promoting cultural change and contrasted with the more traditional style of transactional leadership; however, research from other fields is also included. Before delving into transformational leadership in more detail, I first discuss the middle school context and leadership in schools under sanction. In subsequent sections, I provide an overview of the research on transactional and transformational leadership and discuss how they have been measured in prior research.I also discuss critiques of transformational leadership. The chapter concludes by carving out a niche for this study.

The Middle School Context

Schooling at the middle school level is characterized by a set of special challenges. Children ages 11-14 experience a wide variety of physical, social, emotional, and intellectual changes. These changes make them unique when compared and contrasted to both younger and older students (Juvonen, 2004). History indicates that similar concerns have existed for over 100 years regarding the education of young teens. Junior high schools emerged in the early 1900s, and the middle school began to become mainstream in the 1960s. The premise of a separate middle school was to better hone in on and serve the unique qualities of this age group of students (Juvonen, 2004; Styron, Ronald, Nyman, & Terri, 2008). Moreover, the middle school was thought to provide the

best instructional program for young teens as well as create a smooth transition between the elementary and high school grade levels (Styron, et al., 2008).

Despite the advent of first the junior high school and then later the middleschool in the 20th century, there are still misunderstandings regarding how context, socio-cultural factors, and environmental factors affect adolescents. Accordingly, only about half ofmiddleschools appear to be demonstrating positive student achievement (Scales, 1996). Research has identified characteristics of middle schools that demonstrated success in educating students. Middleschoolsthatare characterized by committed teachers, a shared vision from site leadership, high standards for all stakeholders,healthy, positive relationships, family and community partnerships, and a positive school climateshow higher levels of student performance(Scales, 1996; Styron, et al., 2008). However, changing middle schools in ways that reflect these features has proved to be a formidable challenge.

Leading Schools Under Sanction

As noted in chapter 1, school leaders are under pressure to narrow the achievement gap based upon demands for high levels of student performance among all students. An examination of how schools perform under these sanctions is of urgency and creates an environment which restricts the ebb and flow of the life of a school. In recent times many schools, particularly middle schools, across the nation are facing sanctions or falling into more consequential levels of sanctions due to underperformance. "The statistics in California are even worse, with only 1-2 percent of the schools and districts exiting [Program Improvement status]" (Daly et al., 2011, p. 198-199). Some researchers consider this decline to be the result of leadership that lacks the ability to lead

teachers toward positively impacting student achievement (Elmore, 2000; Roeschlein, 2002; Styron, et al., 2008; Weiler, 1999).

Schools which fail to maintain the levels of student proficiency demanded under NCLB for two consecutive years are placed under sanctions, and middle schools, in particular, across the country are having difficulty meeting AYP for all students (Hoff, 2009; Styron el al., 2008). However, notwithstanding the growing demands for school leadership, the leadership type or style required to lead a school away from being subject to sanctions is understudied (Daly, et al., 2011). Furthermore, the dearth of literature regarding leadership on leading schools away from being under sanction demonstrates the need for more research, particularly at the middle school level.

Despite the lack of research, specifically on how principals bring schools out of sanction, researchers have pointed out that the leadership in schools under sanction tends to be more directive in nature (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008; Styron et al., 2008). This is in direct contrast to research on higher performing schools, which shows that leaders in these schools set the direction for the schools, assist in the development of teachers, and promote organizational change (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). It is not surprising then to find that schools under sanction require a teacher support system to develop a more open and collegial environment which may assist in increasing student achievement as indicated in higher performing schools (Daly et al., 2011; Styron et al., 2008). Accordingly, student achievement tends to improve when leadership demonstrates individualized teacher skill promotion, collaboration among teachers, and teacher motivation while continuously focusing on teaching, student learning, and teacher learning (Robinson et al., 2008). Furthermore, leadership often focuses strictly on the

principal, but student achievement statistics provide evidence that school leadership

requires the leadership of key stakeholders such teacher leaders in addition to that of a

lone principal to improve student assessment scores (Hallinger & Heck, 2009; Sheppard

& Dibbon, 2011).

It does not appear that school accountability and subsequent sanctions are going

away in the near future. However, the leadership type necessary to lead a school away

from or out of sanctions remains understudied (Daly et al., 2011). Therefore, the

leadership type and style demonstrated by a leader of a school that has exited sanction

requires further attention and study, and there is promise in exploring the conditions and

constructs surrounding transformational leadership (Daly et al., 2011; Leithwood &

Jantzi, 2008; Robinson et al., 2008). The following sections delve into a more detailed

discussion of transactional and transformational leadership.

Overview of Transactional Leadership

In American schools, transactional leadership has been the typical leadership style

over the past century. Transactional leadership may be specifically defined as: leadership

that is based on the setting of clear objectives and goals for the followers as well as the

use of either punishments or rewards in order to encourage compliance with these goals

(Daly et al., 2011). This style of leadership presents in different variations which

include: contingent reward, active management by exception, passive management by

exception, and laissez-faire leadership (Bass, 1997). Contingent rewards are based on

incentives such as the promise of additional resources and rewards for successful

performance. Active management by exception revolves around negative consequences

for poor performance, and passive management by exception transpires when the leader

waits until it is too late not to take action. Laissez-faire styles are indicative of leaders who avoid taking responsibility and fail to share opinions (Daly et al., 2011).

Transactional leadership is distinguished by contingent exchanges, negotiation, and contractual regulation adherence between managers and employees based upon rewards or consequences (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003). In other words, this type of leadership consists of specific "transactions" between the leader and the followers based on the followers' carrying out tasks, meeting goals, and adherence to rules (Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasubramaniam, 2003). Change within a transactional leadership based system is typically accomplished by attempting to fix or repair that which is considered to be ineffective, and or when a clearly defined problem exists for which a solution might be implemented. However, such leadership may not inspire the individuals to find the stimulation necessary to alter "practices and attitudes that may be maintaining lower achievement" (Daly et al., 2011, p. 178).

This type of leadership has fostered teachers who answer directly to the principal based on a "quid pro quo" exchange (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999; Hater & Bass, 1988). This exchange could promote mediocre results with a focus on contractually defined minimum standards of performance (Daly et al., 2011). Moreover, transactional leadership creates a status quo and limits unit confidence and innovation (Bass et al., 2003). In terms of K-12 schools, unit confidence centers on individual teachers' self-efficacy, or the inner belief that they can make a difference (Ross & Gray, 2006). Furthermore, in the educational field, where collaboration directly impacts student learning, transactional leadership historically has provided less opportunity for teachers to work together.

Overview of Transformational Leadership

Teachers, like members of all organizations, want leaders who inspire them while leaving room for creativity (Kouzes, 2004). Accordingly, to increase student learning, instructional leaders may need to embrace a new approach to creating group efficacy; an approach to leadership involving elements of transformational leadership is likely to produce the results desired (Moolenaar et al., 2010; Ross & Gray, 2006).

In order to implement change, teachers need to feel supported and a principal who exudes a transformational style of leadership may have a positive impact on teachers' perceived sense of self-efficacy (Hipp, 1997). According to Bass (1985), transformational leadership is marked by raising the level of awareness among all stakeholders concerning significant matters. Increasing situational awareness among stakeholders requires a leader who can impart a clear vision, exude self-confidence, and persuade followers toward outcomes the leader views as correct despite what may be the popular response or what current practice may be in place (Bass, 1985; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Marks & Printy, 2003).

However, creating positive change in school environments can prove difficult and staff resistance to change may have a negative impact on school culture. Two major challenges can be associated with bringing transformational leadership to an established school culture. First, introducing a new leadership style may bring about reluctance from some faculty members who are resistant to embracing change in giving extra effort when facing the challenge of raising student performance on high-stakes standardized assessments (Geijsel, Sleegers, Leithwood, & Jantzi, 2003). Second, an administrator may need to relinquish absolute control and facilitate collaborative efforts for the

betterment of the team in seeking to narrow the achievement gap with the collective development of instructional methods and sharing of knowledge (Moolenaar et al., 2010). This is significant inasmuch as the individual teachers in a school are critical in the successful and complete implementation of new or different instructional strategies (Moolenaar et al., 2010).

Proponents recommend transformational leadership as a possible solution to the shortcomings of the transactional leadership style (Bass et al., 2003). "Transformational leadership was seen as moving beyond transactions to increase the level of followers' awareness for valued outcomes by expanding and elevating their needs and encouraging them to transcend their self-interests" (Bycio, Hackett, & Allen, 1995, p. 468). Thus, transformational leadership may be viewed as a special type of transactional leadership; both are linked to the attainment of goals or objectives (Hater & Bass, 1988).

Sometimes the terms transformational and transactional leadership are used interchangeably; however, using these words interchangeably would be an error (Hay, 2007). For example, the principal giving a specific directive to an individual is not the same as the principal empowering an individual to arrive at their own conclusion. Therefore, this interchange of the terms transformational and transactional leadership is incorrect because transformational leadership delves beyond the quid pro quo nature of leadership to inform and empower followers through influence, motivation, mental stimulation, and personal considerations (Bass et al., 2003, Bycio et al., 1995).

Several researchers suggest that there are four main components of transformational leadership (Avolio et al., 1999; Bass, 1997; Bass et al., 2003; Hater & Bass, 1988). These four main components, when combined, create the transformational

leadership model. Transformational leadership starts with idealized influence – a charismatic vision that inspires other to follow. Next, individualized consideration is the ability to recognize the unique gifts of each team member and find ways to use their talents and knowledge. Inspirational motivation allows followers to connect to the meaningful work they do. Last, intellectual stimulation provides opportunities for leaders and followers to propose new ideas in an open, accepting forum. These components are discussed in more detail below. Research suggests that when the cornerstones of transformational leadership are put into practice, schools are able to meet and exceed their targets for student achievement (Avolio et al., 1999; Bass, 1997; Bass et al., 2003; Hater & Bass, 1988).

Employees at all levels recognize their leaders' abilities, or lack thereof, to drive change and innovation (Gilley, Dixon, & Gilley, 2008). It is fitting then that transformational leadership practices are touted as effective in settings targeted for reform and strongly related to the commitment of teachers to accept and support change (Leithwood, 1994; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Yukl, 1994). The increase in teacher commitment resulting from transformational leadership could in turn result in an increase in effort put forth creating an additional increase in productivity (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978).

Articulating the goal or vision of the school through clear communication and motivating teachers to attain the goal or goals in accordance with the vision are the critical factors for transformational leaders (Gilley et al., 2008). This process begins with the building principal and the site's leadership team that includes administrators, teachers, and classified employees. Training must take place for these leaders regarding

collaboration and overcoming resistance in order for them to implement successful change over the long-term (Olsen & Chrispeels, 2009).

Characteristics of Transactional and Transformational Leadership

Hater & Bass (1988) assert that transformational leadership may be a subset of transactional leadership. However, the preponderance of the literature indicates that they are distinct leadership types which when combined can effect positive change. Leaders may blend these two types of leadership for maximum effectiveness (Bass et al., 2003).

Leaders who base their power or ability to persuade others on a system of contingent rewards in order to drive employee performance may be construed as transactional leaders. The style of leadership exhibited by such a leader is based upon deliberate management by exception (whether it is active or passive), laissez-faire leadership, and contingent rewards (Bass, 1997). Transactional leaders tend to set clear expectations, provide rewards for successful performance, promise resources for support, and use disciplinary action as a coercive measure to dissuade poor performance (Bass, 1997; Bass et al. 2003). Further, the transactional leader who manages by exception can be found to monitor the performance of employees and take corrective action and enforce system rules in order to avoid mistakes (active), or only step in once problems become so severe as to be brought to the transactional leader's attention (passive). The laissez-faire transactional leader will not be present when needed, avoid taking responsibility for problems, fail to follow-through on promises, and fail to share viewpoints on critical issues (Bass, 1997).

Compared to transactional leadership, transformational leadership tends to associate with a more enduring leader-follower relationship (Hay, 2007).

Transformational leadership redefines individuals' missions and visions, renews their commitment, and restructures their systems for goal accomplishment through a relationship of mutual stimulation and empowerment that converts followers into leaders and leaders into moral agents (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). Transformational leaders unite organizations reinforcing attributes that highlight confidence and trust within the team. They lead changes in vision, mission, strategies, structures, and organizational culture through a focus on qualities such as shared values, shared ideas, capacity building, and relationship building techniques (Marks & Printy, 2003). Transformational leaders are also able to give meaning to a variety activities transpiring within an organization such as a school.   They give praise and highlight the ways in which different people and groups might be working toward greater goals and objectives (Hay, 2007). Transformational leaders discover and create common ground with employees through charm and magnetism to enlist followers in processes of change (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

As noted earlier, transformational leadership is demonstrated through the "4I's," characteristics (Figure 1) which work together to generate performance beyond normal expectations.

Figure 1: 4I's Characteristics. Example of how idealized influence (attributes & behaviors), individualized consideration, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation can result in performance beyond expectations (Avolio et al., 1999; Bass, 1997; Bass et al., 2003; Hater & Bass, 1988).

The characteristics of transformational leadership will be discussed to provide a deeper understanding of this leadership style.

Idealized influence (also known as charisma). Charisma implies the possession of innate charm and persuasive skills with which a group or groups of people may be influenced. The behaviors and actions of transformational leaders translate into modeling for those who follow them (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Subordinates frequently seek to emulate and mimic the behaviors and work capacities of leaders who display idealized influence because they trust and respect such a leader. In the literature, such leaders are often described as being charismatic and one may find the terms used interchangeably (Avolio et al., 1999; Barling, Weber & Kelloway, 1996; Bass et al., 2003; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Hater & Bass, 1988).

Charismatic or idealized influence characteristics of leadership are exemplified in a variety of manners. These leaders are viewed as possessing exceptional capabilities, making ethical decisions, being transparent, and sharing the risks in the workplace with subordinates while simultaneously continuously maintaining and expressing the vision for the future (Bass et al., 2003; Hater & Bass, 1988; Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Moreover, such leadership qualities trigger an emotional response from followers resulting in a feeling of success throughout the organization (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

Individualized consideration. Leaders who personify this characteristic of transformational leadership see employees as individuals, consider their unique capacities, needs as workers, and desires for the future. The individualized considerate leader will actively listen and delegate tasks while acting as a coach, facilitator, and

mentor in order to promote, stimulate, and further the development of followers (Bass, 1997; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Hater & Bass, 1988). Such mentoring solidifies the foundational basis of transformational leadership by increasing trust and respect for the leader through open communication and stimulating the needs of subordinates by creating buy-in regarding decisions based on individualized needs (Bass, 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2006).   Leaders who master this component of transformational leadership truly listen to the needs of their employees and are able to remember previous conversations, concerns, and the long-term desires of followers. Such leaders create a personalized experience for the employees within an organization (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Inspirational motivation. The inspirational, motivational leader will discover and exercise his or her charisma in order to energize, motivate, and inspire individuals. This may be accomplished through being optimistic, challenging others with high standards, providing meaning for the work being completed, arousing a sense of team spirit, developing and articulating the vision for the future, and encouraging employees to envision a future state that is attractive to them (Bass, 1997; Bass et al., 2003; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Daly et al., 2011; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). Acting as an inspirational, motivational leader requires charisma, as described under idealized influence, and charisma is definitely a trait unique to each individual (Bass, 1985). Not everyone is comfortable being a charismatic leader, but the inspirational, motivational leader will find the necessary charisma and exude the enthusiasm necessary to develop the enthusiasm of followers (Bass, 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2006).

During periods of stress within organizations, charismatic leaders can generate loyalty by their mere presence (Bass, 1985). This contributes to the capacity of followers

and elevates their individual desires to perform which, in turn, expands the collective

esprit de corps of the organization. With the interest of employees elevated, the

inspirational, motivational leader can propagate their own vision of the future, generating

an increased awareness of the mission and purpose of the organization among the

employees (Brown & Moshavi, 2002). This then allows the inspirational, motivational

leader to set realistic, attainable goals with employees who give meaning to the work as

well as challenge the employees (Ross & Gray, 2006). The stage is then set for

employees to become involved in the development of their own vision for the future

(Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Intellectual stimulation. Intellectually stimulating leaders call prior assumptions

into question, solicit new ideas and solutions to problems from followers, inspire others

to look at problems in new manners, and encourage the use of reasoning and creativity

(Bass, 1997; Bass et al., 2003; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Hater & Bass, 1988). Through the

interaction of these behaviors, the leader provides followers the opportunity to view and

take on problems from a wide variety of possible solutions, perpetuates a sense of

increased output from employees, and generates new ideas within the organization (Bass,

1985; Bass, 1997; Bass et al., 2003; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Brown et al., 2002).

Moreover, it has been reported that through this process employees attain an increased

sense of self-efficacy (Ross & Gray, 2006).

Employee drive and desire may then be clarified through the process of problem

solving based on individual goals with the complement of inspirational motivation (Bass,

1985, Bass & Riggio, 2006). When organizational issues or problems are complex,

intellectual stimulation may play a key role in the leader's articulation of desired

outcomes, delegation of tasks, and solicitation of possible solutions (Bass, 1985; Bass et al., 2003). Schools are inherently complex institutions. Moreover, external pressures and factors can be extremely inconsistent in nature, thus making this component of transformational leadership important in the approach to organizational concerns (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

Measuring Transactional and Transformational Leadership

Prior to 1985, the preponderance of research on transformational leadership had focused on charisma and inspiration that omitted a number of aspects of the full scale of leadership traits and characteristics. Subsequently, Bass developed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) in order to assess the full scope of leadership behaviors (Bycio et al., 1995; Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996). This survey tool was specifically developed to measure transactional and transformational leadership behaviors as well as to explore organizational effectiveness and employee satisfaction based on the qualities of each style of leadership. Bass (1985) initially outlined a series of questions designed to analyze the constructs of transactional and transformational leadership; five subscales came to be accepted as reliable: three of the subscales identified transformational traits, and two of the subscales identified with transactional qualities (Lowe et al., 1996).

The MLQ instrument was reevaluated in 1999, and the latest version of the MLQ, MLQ (5X), was discovered by Avolio et al. (1999) to be the most useful in measuring the constructs of transformational leadership through its expanding of the full range of leadership behaviors. While Avolio et al. (1999) also reported that the MLQ (5X) had the limitation of assessing the effectiveness of transactional contingent reward factors;

the scales for transformational leadership have proven to have a greater positive

correlation with organizational effectiveness. Currently, the MLQ (5X) is still in use as it

provides a more comprehensive assessment of transformational leadership constructs

then its previous version (Avolio et al.,1999; Bass, 1985; Bass et al., 2003). It has

become widely accepted that the MLQ is the best tool for the assessment of

transformational leadership behaviors (Avolio & Bass, 2004).

The research indicates that transformational leaders are rated higher in

performance and ability than transactional leaders. It is not surprising to discover that

when surveyed with various versions of the MLQ, employees consistently reported

higher performance and employee satisfaction when reporting to or working for a

transformational leader (Bass, 2003; Bycio, 1995; Hater, 1988). Therefore, successful

school leaders may want to bring these skills into practice in order to promote employee

performance and satisfaction as well as be able to successfully implement change within

their organizations.

Despite the lack of research available regarding the transformational leadership of

middle school principals whom have turned Program Improvement schools into effective

schools, there are correlations or connections with transformational leadership in other

professional fields such as for profit businesses and the military. For example, Bass et al.

(2003) and Bycio (1995) also used varying versions of the MLQ in order to test the

hypotheses and determination that transformational leadership would produce elevated

indicators of performance and satisfaction by subordinates. Bycio's (1995) research

confirmed Hater's & Bass's (1988) similar findings. Bass' et al. (2003) analysis

surveyed United States Army personnel in a stressful and challenging situation. Seventy-

two light infantry platoons, each consisting of approximately 30 individuals, were surveyed using a modified MLQ in a classroom setting. In addition to the Likert scale survey, light infantry platoons were rated during realistic, stressful field exercises by trained observers. Using a 5-pointscale, the observers rated unit leadership, potency, cohesion, and performance. The researchers' discoveries affirmed both the studies of Bycio (1995) and Hater & Bass (1988). Transformational leadership was determined to produce extra effort in others, more effectiveness in meeting job related goals, and more satisfaction with the leaders' leadership style. Bycio's (1995) inquiry determined that the critical component of transactional leadership as described by Hater & Bass (1988) is charisma. However, it is important to recognize that charisma is only a factor in transformational leadership as a construct. Barling et al. (1996) and Bass et al. (2003) reinforced these findings asserting that transformational leadership augments transactional leadership when it comes to day-to-day, routine practices and when clearly expressed interactions between leaders or managers and subordinates transpire. More importantly, in the research included in this review transformational leadership has been discovered to have a higher impact on individual as well as organizational performance and cohesion than transactional leadership (Bass et al., 2003; Bycio, 1995; Hater & Bass, 1988).

Blending Leadership Styles

In his seminal work, Burns (1978) articulated the notion that transactional and transformational leadership styles were polar opposites on a continuum of leadership. However, according to Dalyet al. (2011), varied situations demand different leadership responses, and therefore, both transactional and transformational leadership practices

might need to be present concurrently. Moreover, it has more recently been postulated

that these two styles of leadership actually complement one another (Bass, 1997; Bass et

al., 2003; Bycio et al., 1995; Hater & Bass, 1988). Burns (1978) views leadership as a

relationship between leaders and followers based on the meeting of goals as the leaders

and followers interact while striving to attain a specific purpose. The nature of such an

interaction in a leadership construct could be either transactional or transformational.

Bass (1997) contends that transactional leaders could assume greater levels of personal

commitment, which would result in such leaders practicing leadership in more of a

transformational manner. In short, transactional and transformational leadership can

coexist and complement one another, but transformational qualities are preferable in

certain contexts (Bass, 1997; Bycio et al., 1995; Hater & Bass, 1988).

Prior research based on surveys such as the MLQ, open-ended survey questions,

and qualitative interviews indicates that both transactional and transformational

leadership have a positive correlation to the performance and satisfaction of subordinates

(Bass et al., 2003; Bycio et al., 1995; Hater & Bass, 1988). Both transactional and

transformational styles of leadership are geared towards the attainment of goals and

objectives. To this end, transformational leadership may be conceptualized as a subset of

transactional leadership (Hater & Bass, 1988). Leadership and management can be

considered the primary factors in determining employee performance and satisfaction.

Hater & Bass (1988) hypothesized that performance ratings and evaluations of superiors

made by subordinates would be higher for transformational leaders. The researcher used

the MLQ in order to anonymously survey employees to generate data about the

performance and satisfaction of subordinate personnel, and found that their hypothesis was accurate (Hater & Bass, 1988).

Leadership Impacts on Practice

Empowering others to translate a vision into reality is a critical component of leadership as allowing others to demonstrate creativity creates ownership (Bennis, 1982). This is one of the cornerstones of transformational leadership. Successful leaders who generate higher rates of performance and maintain higher percentages of employee satisfaction must exercise integrity, be the compass for the organization and set the direction for others to follow, be inspiring, and be competent in his or her abilities (Kouzes, 2004). Bennis (1982) refers to these skills as the following competencies: "1. vision 2. communication and alignment 3. persistence, consistency, focus 4. empowerment 5. organizational learnings," and claims, "Leadership is the first component of transformative power" (p. 54).

Research in the field of education has explored various aspects of transformational leadership. Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins (2008) concluded that the principal ranks right after classroom teaching as having the largest impact on student achievement. Accordingly, the principal has an effect on generating reform and changing teachers' practices (Geijsel, Sleegers, Stoel, & Krüger, 2009; Letihwood et al., 2004). Implementing transformational leadership in the generation of reforms can also expand commitment and the efforts exerted by teachers (Geijsel et al., 2003), and resulting school improvements may build upon the teachers' self-efficacy (Ross & Gray, 2006).

Leadership is the connection between management and the rank and file. Research indicates that the stronger the identity with the leader, the better results are

achieved in organizational performance, individual performance and job satisfaction, perceptions of the leader, and group cohesion (Bass et al., 2003). People want their leaders to be credible. In other words, when a leader has the skill set required to combine integrity, set the direction and illustrate the vision, and inspire subordinates, those subordinates will see the leader as credible (Kouzes, 2004). Those thoughts reaffirm the claims made by Bennis (1982). When the leader is personally driven, excited, and energetic in the communication of his or her vision for the future of the organization he or she is exhibiting the traits, qualities, and principles espoused by both Bennis (1982) and Kouzes (2004). In order to increase success and move the organization forward the leader must clearly articulate his or her intent and yet still allow for leeway in employee creativity in the accomplishment of that intent.

In a study conducted by Sheppard (1996), the characteristics of transformational leadership were found to facilitate moving a school forward toward improvement and narrowing the achievement gap. This study sought to determine whether instructional leadership was positively correlated to the characteristics of schools regarded as being effective. Sheppard (1996) surveyed 624 teachers and concluded that the correlation between transformational leadership and the characteristics of effective schools was not only positive but also strong. Moreover, numerous other studies have also concluded that a positive relationship or correlation exists among leadership and positives outcomes resulting from organizational changes generated via leadership (Charles A. Dana Center, 1999; Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999c; Leithwood, Jantzi, Earl, Watson, Levin, & Fullan, 2004; Pollard-Durodola, 2003; Sheppard, 1996).

Employees in major industries and education want leaders who can clearly communicate the vision for the future, set the compass for the organization or school, inspire people to go beyond what is normally expected, and empower people to be creative in the process (Bennis, 1982; Kouzes, 2004; Leithwood & Janzti, 2006). The leader who employs the skills mentioned above is a transformational leader, and according to Zimmerman (2004), "Transformational leaders are also obliged to prepare to lead change, understand the process and nature of change, and provide the essential gear and support for those involved to be successful" (p. 239). Transformational educational leaders who have met with success empower teachers in order to motivate them to embrace change; such principals' call for teachers to clearly understand and take ownership of the implementation of change initiatives (Geijsel et al., 2003). Consequently, transformational leadership is intrinsically linked in the promotion and sustainment of successful organizational change in school settings throughout the United States (Herold et al., 2008).

As the principal moves the school forward as a leader for change, it is imperative to continuously reevaluate the process based on data that evolves and develops over time (Bennis, 1982). In this case, the principal must work as a motivator and facilitator of change rather than as an enforcer in a traditional transactional leadership style (Leithwood & Janzti, 2006). In schools that transform to being superior schools as measured by standardized testing, change is a process or movement generated at the grassroots level by teachers who have been empowered and want to make a difference (Healey, 2009). This provides a basis for taking action to close the achievement gap. School leaders need to look out for and promote changes that will help the entire

organization to close the achievement gap, as opposed to only parts of the whole

(Moolenaar et al., 2010). Although this task is difficult and must transpire over time, it is

well worth the effort needed to implement successful cultural changes aimed to close the

achievement gap. The faculty might be inspired, begin to think in new ways, and

collaborate with success. Students, particularly students identified as affected by the

achievement gap, could reap the benefits of learning from a cohesive staff as the teachers

may be more innovative in increasing student learning for all students (Healey, 2009).

As previously discussed, there are two primary issues to consider when bringing

transformational leadership into an established school culture. First, introducing a new

style of leadership will undoubtedly bring about hesitation in some faculty members who

are resistant to embracing change when facing the challenge of raising student

achievement as measured by standardized assessments. Embracing change is counter to

human nature and up to three-quarters of employees who respond to surveys indicate that

leadership teams are rarely successful in the implementation of strategic organizational

change (Gilley et al., 2008). Second, the research suggests that a forward-thinking

administrator may need to relinquish absolute control and facilitate collaborative efforts

for the betterment of the team, thus improving student achievement. This accomplishes

the translation of the principal's vision into reality by empowering others to think in new

ways (Bennis, 1982). This requires that the building principal be rated high in charisma

by the faculty for the teachers' to develop a sense of not only being open to cultural

change but also a sense of urgency in the change implementation process (Herold et al.,

2008).

Ethical Criticisms of Transformational Leadership

Charisma can possess, and at times, exhibit an undesirable side, a side that lends itself to ethical criticisms. A transformational leader could possibly abuse power by appealing to emotional responses regardless of the effects upon moral values when motivating followers. For example, leaders such as Hitler, Stalin, Charles Manson, and Jim Jones were all charismatic and used their power base and ability to influence and persuade others for immoral purposes. Bass (1997) asserts that transformational leadership lacks a moral inducing counterbalance of competing interests, influences, and power base that could help to avoid draconian measures or a state of dictatorship. Therefore, in the absence of moral righteousness, it is possible that transformational leadership may be applied for amoral purposes. A recent example could possibly be the scandal in Atlanta, Georgia. School leaders in the Atlanta school system permitted fear and a conspiracy of non-reporting to lead to forty-four schools fabricating documentation and results pertaining to standardized testing (Severson, 2011).

Bass (1997) succinctly summarizes some criticisms of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership makes use of impression management and could therefore allow for an amoral attitude of selfishness on the part of the leader. Bass (1997) additionally suggests that impression management and its amoral possibilities are counter to shared leadership, equality, consensus building, and participative decision-making. Accordingly, transformational leadership could encourage followers to go beyond their own self-interests and the best interests of the school by emotionally engaging in pursuit of an amoral leader's desires. Teachers become socialized in the school culture, so while acceptable behavior might be supported in this way, so too might socially unacceptable

behavior.   In short, transformational leadership could see followers manipulated in a negative manner (Bass, 1997). These criticisms about the morality and ethics of transformational leadership have been addressed by the argument that to be a truly transformational leader, the leadership must have honest, well-meaning moral foundations (Griffin, 2003). Accordingly, "To bring about change, *authentic* transformational leadership fosters the moral values of honesty, loyalty, and fairness, as well as the end values of justice, equality, and human rights." (Griffin, 2003, p. 8).

Through exuding the traits of idealized influence, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation transformational leaders possess a powerful potential to promote performance beyond expectations. In turn, shifts within individuals and the culture of organizations may also be promoted. Transformational leadership appears to be a form of leadership well suited to this era of school accountability characterized by high stakes testing. However, there are some risks associated with this form of leadership, particularly with respect to idealized influence, also known as charisma. Therefore, the capacity for transformation must be accompanied by ethical responsibility and values.

Conclusion and the Need for Further Research

California's schools have been entering Program Improvement, particularly at the middle school level. The dearth of literature on this specific topic and transformational leadership at the middle school level indicates a need for further research. Additional qualitative studies on transformational leadership will benefit school principals and school district leaders by providing data that may be useful in promoting successful turn-around in Program Improvement schools. Such research could supply evidence of the

success of transformational leadership as well as why it is successful compared to other leadership styles. Additionally, a study of leaders who are considered by followers to incorporate a blend of transactional and transformational leadership styles could provide informative insight into the utility of such a style of blended leadership. A future study could research how not only the principal, but also, the overall leadership team effects change and achievement.

This study on leadership styles within schools that have exited PI status and are subsequently redesignated as PI will help illuminate how leadership can specifically help to close the achievement gap. Many implications for leadership can be revealed from such studies. As more schools lapse into PI status, qualitative studies like this one on leadership within schools that have demonstrated success in exiting PI, which are lacking in the existing literature, could provide answers the question of how to better approach closing the achievement gap.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction of Study Design

This chapter describes the design, sample, data collection, and analysis of this qualitative study. The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership processes and practices of principals and teacher leaders in two San Diego middle schools that have exited Program Improvement (PI). PI schools are considered underperforming under the guidelines of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). With this focus, this study sought to identify the leadership behaviors and practices of middle school principalsand other key personnel who have been successful in exiting PI status. Leadership theory indicates that transformational leadership may be an effective leadership style for school leaders' intent on exiting their school from PI status. During the course of an in-depth qualitative study, this theory was examined using interviews and questions designed to solicit the specific leadership traits, behaviors, and practices of middle school leaders.

Research Questions

To reiterate, this study was guided by one central research question and two sub questions:

1. What are the leadership attributes and practices shared by principalsand teacher leaders in California middle schools whose schools were designated as in Program Improvement (PI) but which have successfully exited PI under NCLB guidelines?

   (a) Does the principal or other key personnel engage in transformational leadership activities, and if so, in what ways and under what conditions?

(b) What similarities or differences in leadership behaviors exist among these

principalsand teacher leaders?

Research Design

To answer the research questions for this study, a qualitative, descriptive, and

analytic case study method was used (Yin, 2009). The qualitative research method was

appropriate for this study because it provided an in-depth description of the leadership

behaviors, practices, and processes used by principals and school site leaders in exiting

their middle schools from PI status.

The organizational unit for this study was the middle school level which consists

of grade levels 6 through 8. This study focused on the collection of data and information

from the personnel working in each case of interest school. Specifically, the focus within

each of the two school sites which have exited PI status was on principals and other site

leaders as subjects of analysis.

Qualitative methods were employed to investigate specific leadership traits,

behaviors, and practices used by middle school principals and school site leaders to move

their schools out of PI status and designation. Inductive analysis was conducted using

data from semi-structured interviews held on specific school sites. The inductive

approach, in qualitative data analysis, reflects frequent patterns. The purpose for using

the inductive approach was to condense extensive raw data into a concise summary

format, establish connections between the objectives of the research and the findings

derived from the data collected, and to develop a theory based on the processes and

experiences which are evident in the data collected. Specific and general patterns were

identified from the analysis of the data and information collected. Further, this analysis

lead to the generation of theories about leadership and its role in assisting a middle school in exiting PI designation.

Sample and Population

This study focused on two middle level schools in California. I selected this geographic area as I both reside and work within California; hence, it was convenient for data collection purposes. The County of the study contains forty-two separate and distinct K-12 school districts, and within those various districts there are approximately one hundred twenty comprehensive middle or junior high schools which host grade levels six – eight (CDE, 2011). Of the approximately one hundred twenty comprehensive middle or junior high schools serving students in grades six – eight, only three have been determined to meet the specific criterion of having exited PI status. The schools determined to have exited PI status were discovered via a search of the California Department of Education's website using the Data Quest tool and mining the information for PI status over successive years (http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/).

Each of the three schools was formerly in PI status and comprises the full sample of middle schools in the county under study to have exited PI status. I selected the two traditional middle schools serving grades 6 – 8 which is the current norm, rather than the junior high school which served up through 9th grade. The schools that participated in this study have been given pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants.

Initially founded in the 1850s, the Blair District is among the largest school districts in California. The district serves approximately 132,000 students from pre-K – 12th grade. The student population is extremely diverse serving over 15 ethnic groups and over 60 different language and dialect speakers (Blair Unified School District,

2012).Within the Blair Unified School District, Blair Middle School is traditional and serves 1,096 students in grades 6 – 8. After twoconsecutive years of meeting all AYP growth targets, Blair Middle Schoolsuccessfully exited Program Improvement status, and over the past four years, Blair's Academic Performance Index Score (API) has risen from 808 to 879 (Blair USD, Report Card, 2012) .

In the northern portion of the county of study, the Dodgson Union School District serves 2,005 students in grades pre-K – 8th grade with 4 schools: 3 elementary and 1 middle school. The Dodgson Union School District has a rich history dating back to 1895, but was not officially named until 1919. Currently, the district serves students in an 88 square mile rural area (Dodgson Union School District (DUSD), 2012). Within the Dodgson Union School District, Dodgson Middle School was built in 1994 and serves 533 students in grades 6 – 8. Over the past two years Dodgson Middle School's API has risen from 816 to 831 (DUSD, Report Card, 2010).

Accordingly, it was hoped for and anticipated that the principals and district leaders of each school respectively, would agree to voluntarily participate in this research study. This proved to be the case. The principals and teacher leaders of two of the identified schools agreed to participate in the study. Additionally, the Dodgson superintendent volunteered to participate in the study as he was present and involved with the school's exit from Program Improvement. The Blair superintendent was not present for Blair Middle Schools exit from Program Improvement and was therefore not included in the study. Through such purposeful sampling, I was able to collect and subsequently interpret pertinent data and information related to how middle school leadership

philosophies, practices, and actions have assisted in moving the specific schools out of PI status.

Data Collection Procedures

I collected data over a three-month period between December 2012 and February 2013. All data gathered from the participants was collected with explicit permission from the participants and was in full compliance with UCSD Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines. Invitation letters and consent forms are included in the AppendixA-E. All electronic files or recordings for transcriptions created from the data collection process were saved on my password protected laptop computer. Hard copy files and documents generated during the data collection process were secured in a locked safe at my personal residence. In the following sections, I provide an explanation for the qualitative data collection methods practiced.

As previously stated, interviews were the primary method for collecting information and data during the course of the study. Yin (2009) asserts, "Overall, interviews are an essential source of case study evidence because most case studies are about human affairs or behavioral events" (p.108). The gathering of qualitative data and information began with semi-structured, in-depth interviews with the two selected school sites' principals, one superintendent,and teacher leaders. The principals, superintendent,and teacher leaders played the role of key informants (Yin, 2009). Teacher leaders were selected from department chairs or grade level leaders. Each interview consisted of a series of guided questions which were informed by the literature on transformational leadership (Appendix F & G). Three teacher leader interviews were conducted at each site; these teachers represented the full sample of teacher leaders at

each site who were present when the school exited PI status, resulting in a total of 6 teacher leader interviews.

These interviews were open ended and conversational with a focus on how the principals and other key personnel first perceived and then sought to change school culture, how they influenced the faculty and staff, how they motivated the faculty and staff, how they stimulated the faculty and staff, and what considerations did they hold for individuals on the faculty and staff. The interviews allowed me to better understand the cultures and atmospheres of the selected school sites from the participants' viewpoints as well as interpret meaning from their experiences (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Interviews took place in administrative offices or in individual teachers' classrooms over a time spanof approximately 60 minutes. Moreover, each interview was conducted in person and recorded.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The recordings of one-on-one interviews of middle school principals and teacher leaders were transcribed verbatim for analysis. The researcher personally listened to each audio file and read the transcription in order to ensure accuracy. Prior to analysis, all interviews were read to obtain an understanding of the data. General concepts were mentally gathered to form an understanding of the overall meaning and tone of the nine interviews. To further analyze the data, the interviews were assessed on a per question basis. Each participant's response to a question was organized together so that each interview question is proceeded by all nine participants' corresponding responses. The organization of data in this manner allowed for the simplification of the coding process. Once data was reorganized, the participants' responses were analyzed for commonalities

among each of the interviews. Commonalities that were discovered were extracted to

become themes. The response from which the theme was extracted was referred to as an

excerpt.

According to Yin (2009), qualitative interview data may be examined, combed for

patterns, categorized, coded, and used to formulate conclusions that are empirically

based. In this manner, I was able to get to the root of what subjects have stated, establish

patterns, and compare and contrast the data collected from each case of interest. Codes

were generated to assist in the classification and organization of the data for analysis.

Such a use of codes allowed themes to emerge in the information gathered. Additionally,

once coded, the information was tested for validity and reliability as well as scoured for

redundancy between the various participants (Saldaña, 2009). To ensure the validity of

the coding, I engaged the assistance of two raters. A list of excerpts for rating appears in

Appendix I. As Appendix I shows, this data was completely anonymous with no

identifiers.

Seven themes were identified from the coded interview data, and Kappa

coefficients were calculated to add validity to the data codes. All of the Kappa

coefficients were evaluated using the guideline outlined by Landis and Koch (1977),

where the strength of the kappa coefficients range from 0 - 1 where 0.01-0.20 indicates

slight agreement; 0.21-0.40 indicates fair agreement; 0.41-0.60 indicates moderate

agreement; 0.61-0.80 indicates substantial agreement; and 0.81-1.00 indicates almost

perfect agreement, according to Landis & Koch (1977). The seven themes and a list of

58 quotes from the interview data was provided to the raters in separate documents. The

themes were listed across the top of an Excel spreadsheet, and the raters then had to

individually code the distinct quotes from the interviews in accordance with which theme or themes they believed the quote aligned with.

Of the seven themes, two had almost perfect agreement, three had substantial agreement, and two had moderate agreement. These coefficients indicate strength in the agreement of the data in correlation to the themes discovered. The themes of respect and use of data presented moderate agreement between raters, and the themes of accountability, planning and structure, and modeling and leading by example presented substantial agreement between raters. Finally, the themes of teamwork, support, and collaboration and parental involvement presented almost perfect agreement between the raters. Themes and corresponding kappa coefficients are presented in Table 1 and elaborated in Chapter 4.

Table 1: Kappa Coefficients for Themes

Theme	Theme name	Kappa
1	Teamwork, support, and collaboration	0.90****
2	Accountability	0.62***
3	Planning and structure	0.62***
4	Modeling and leading by example	0.62***
5	Use of data	0.58**
6	Parental involvement	0.92****
7	Respect	0.57**

Note: Kappa=**0.41-0.60 moderate; ***0.61-0.80 substantial; ****0.81-1.00 almost perfect, according to Landis & Koch (1977).

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited by geography and by the fact that only two schools were studied in-depth. The study also transpired over a condensed time period of only seven months. The results may have varied if a larger sample size of schools were to have beenexamined over a longer period of time. Therefore, with only two middle level

schools studied, fewer schools than desired may find this study relevant. However, that could be mitigated by the fact that so few middle level schools actually exit PI status.

While the sample size was neither broad in scope nor comprehensive in nature, the selected schools do operate in different school districts. Hence, they receive different types of supports and were therefore able to be compared and contrasted to a degree. Regardless, the small sample size and limited number of participants may not allow for this study to be generalized to all schools. However, despite these limitations, the findings may be relevant to other middle level schools.

Positionality

As a middle school administrator myself, I may have brought certain personal bias when conducting the interviews. Some of these biases may have been derived from my own experiences with leadership at my own school site. Previously, I have had both positive and negative experiences with leadership both inside and outside the field of education. Therefore, I am aware that my own biases could have influenced the study. However, being aware of this limitation, I took steps and measures to avoid allowing any personal biases that I may possess to have had an adverse impact upon the study. The purpose of conducting this study was to produce a newly generated piece of research which was be influenced by my own subjectivity in order to provide a resource for middle school leaders in their efforts to move their schools out of PI status.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to understand the leadership attributes and practices of principals and teacher leaders in two California middle schools that were in Program Improvement (PI) status at one point in time but then subsequently exited PI status.

The principal is the person ultimately responsible for effecting positive changes in schools that will result inincreased student achievement (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Therefore, the principal has become the focal point at the individual school level in articulating the implementation of effective instructional practices and evaluating the generation of an effective learning environment (Smith, Guarino, Strom, & Adams, 2006). As principals endeavor to stimulate positive change and increase student achievement, they may benefit from adopting specific leadership traits and behaviors. Transformational leadership is intrinsically linked in the promotion and sustainment of successful organizational change in school settings throughout the United States through enhancing motivation, morale, and performance of teachers (Herold et al., 2008).

As I will explain, an analysis of the data reveals that the principals and teacher leaders in both schools exhibited similar transformational leadership attributes and practices. While the principals were ultimately held accountable for their schools' performance, the process of improvement was a joint endeavor among many individuals. The principals who found success in moving their schools away from sanctions challenged the old, traditional vision of the principal as a lone wolf through exhibiting the tenets of transformational leadership. There was very little divergence across the sites. This chapter is organized to connect the themes revealed in the data with the research

questions. The following seven themes were discovered in relation to the leadership

attributes and practices shared by principals and teacher leaders in two middle schools

formerly designated as being in need of improvement under NCLB guidelines: (1)

teamwork, support, and collaboration; (2) accountability; (3) planning and structure; (4)

modeling and leading by example; (5) using data in decision making; (6) fostering

increased parent involvement; and (7) promoting respect. Additionally, whether the

principal or other key personnel engaged in transformational leadership activities, how

they may have do so, and how the manner in which they practiced leadership was similar

or different was examined.

Prior to addressing the themes and other findings, I will first provide an overview

of the contexts for leadership at each site.

Contexts for Leadership

Blair and Dodgson middle schools were both at the same stage of having exited PI

status. In other words, they both exited PI after having been in PI for two years. Though

each school is unique, the principals and teacher leaders at both schools shared multiple

commonalities regarding leadership within the school setting. Interestingly, both

principals were transferred from other schools within their district to their current school

sites because the previous site leadership led the schools into PI.   The leadership

experiences, practices, and attributes discussed at each school have provided valuable

insights to inform this study.

As I will explain, the principal of Blair Middle School strongly exhibits the

attributes and practices of a transformational leader. At the time of this study, he had

been the principal at this school for the past six years, and a principal at another school

for nine years prior to moving to Blair. Thus, he had fifteen years of principal experience at the time of this writing. He possesses a master's degree in education, but he has no plans to pursue a doctoral degree. His transformational style was evident throughout the seven themes identified. He is a strong believer in stakeholder involvement, considering the strengths and abilities of individuals, positive relationships, open communication, creating structure, and using data to drive decisions.

The principal of Dodgson Middle School also exhibits the attributes and practices of a transformational leader to a large degree. At the time of this study, she had been the principal of this school for five years. Moreover, she had three years of additional principal experience in other schools. Her total principal experience is thus eight years overall. Additionally, she possesses a master's degree in education, but she has no plans to pursue a doctoral degree. Her transformational leadership style is evidenced throughout the seven themes identified for this study. This principal is also strong in the areas of stakeholder involvement, considering the strengths and abilities of individuals, positive relationships, open communication, creating structure, and using data to drive decisions.

In the sections that follow, I will describe the seven themes in detail with evidence of how the principals and teacher leaders demonstrate the attributes and practices described by these themes.

Teamwork, Support, and Collaboration

Both principals and teacher leaders consistently indicated teamwork and group collectiveness as being important in the leadership and transformation of the school. The Dodgson principal's description of her personal leadership style emphasized this theme in

stating, "And as I moved into this position…, it is more of that teamwork, bring the team together, build the background, get the information, and really ask people to tell me their strengths." The Dodgson principal went on to add, "And if you can get the team and build that team, that relationship part…you can have people help you. You don't have to do it all on your own." The superintendent of the district in which Dodgson is located felt similarly in regards to the support and collaboration in teamwork by stating:

> …five times a year, [we have] two and a half hours where the entire district would come together. So we were all – this is the same team. This was the same message that everyone was getting. It wasn't just that principal. But we were all a team.

The Blair principal indicated an involvement of not just the staff in collaborative meetings to set the vision for the school, but parents as well. The Blair principal also commented that upon arrival to the school, he started a collective effort to develop a school vision statement:

> From there we took those vision statements and we took them into our governance team with our parents and the teachers, and we said here are the three vision statements we have so far. Now it's your turn. Please take these, revise, change, do whatever you think needs to be done. By doing this, everybody in the school had an opportunity to put their hands on, their thinking into whatever was going to come out as the final piece.

A Dodgson teacher leader indicated collaboration and collectiveness in sharing ideas and in decision making, "Of course we collaborate. Yesterday we met for PD [professional development] and all sat together and talked about our at-risk students…And then we get together and decide strategies that would help these kids succeed." A Blair teacher leader emphasized support as what lends to the comfort level, "I feel so supported by… my administration. I mean, it's – I just – I know they have my back. I know like, just – I get a lot of positive feedback from them, which helps… I feel so comfortable." Another

Blair teacher leader also indicated support, "So I think my biggest focus that year was just creating camaraderie…just showing them that I was here to help them and be a level of – you know, a level of support." When asked about individual consideration towards others, a Dodgson teacher leader indicated closeness and support, or teamwork; however, this same teacher leader later emphasized the strengthening of communication and collaboration, "We realized the theme was going to be collaboration. We were forced – I mean, for lack of a better term, we were forced, as most teachers would see it, to work together." Later on this teacher leader also added, "…a lot of it [the movement out of PI status] has to do with the collaboration. It had to with the – these meetings, getting together, giving us time to collaborate, [and] seeing results." Another Dodgson teacher leader made a similar remark, "And then with communication ...you know, once we started collaboration, we started seeing scores go up. And student success went up." A Blair teacher leader added, "And if everybody could collaborate and learn and share their own ideas, you can really kick a school higher, I think." The new, higher levels of collaboration generated by the principals was explained as leading to a feeling of greater support overall.

The statements of the teacher leaders, principals, and superintendent reinforce the idea that everyone benefited from teamwork, support, and collaboration. The participants each noted teamwork all the way down the line, from the superintendent and principals working together to the collaboration of the staff and parents as well. Teamwork, support, and collaboration at every level was appreciated and helped to strengthen communication among those involved. Working together not only improved the relationship among the staff, but also encouraged student success.

Accountability

Accountability was noted by principals and teacher leaders with regard to expectations, consistency, and follow-through. Expectations were seen as a form of accountability… A Blair teacher leader demonstrated support for this theme by stating, "…I think for leadership it really starts with just high expectations of your staff, of your classified [staff], of your students, of your community. I'm just thinking of having the highest expectations for everybody involved is the first thing." This same Blair teacher leader expressed the importance of accountability throughout the interview. Later on, this teacher leader added, "I think a leader is one who says it and follows through with it and, you know, the time, the place, the setting, [and] the expectations." A Dodgson teacher leader demonstrated support for this theme in stating, "…we had basically no consistency whatsoever…in the past there [was] a lot of, you know, 'we'll get to it, we'll get to it. We'll get to the data.' We'd never get to it." This teacher leader also added, "She [the principal] had her nose in all of our business. There was accountability. Like we – things had to be turned in. Things had to be looked at." When asked about the attempts to get performance beyond normal expectations, another Dodgson teacher leader indicated accountability as well, "I know this sounds cliché, but holding somebody accountable for what they do or keeping them – the situation." Similarly, when a Blair teacher leader was asked the same interview question, the response was also in regards to accountability, "...when you say oh, 'did you do this? Is it working? Yes or no? Oh, what did you do that worked?' It's just little conversations." A Dodgson teacher leader remarked on student accountability:

> …they [the students] hold themselves accountable. Because once they've done their assignment, then they – I've shown them how to run their own reports. I've shown them how to create their own grade….It's not only teaching them just about math; it's teaching them how to be accountable.

The Blair principal similarly remarked on accountability, but among teachers, "And so when people became more aware that their peers' performance was being gauged on some of these different measures, then they themselves wanted to align." The superintendent agreed:

> And the board members know which teachers have kids that haven't performed or aren't showing growth. And they [the teachers] don't want to be there. They don't want to be on that list. …I guess the real thing is, again, …that they've risen to the challenge. And they continue to, you know, want to do – to do better in a time when there isn't money.

Accountability was found to be important among the staff and among the students. Accountability among the staff encouraged them to get their jobs done, stop pushing tasks off, and learn from what others had done. It also helped to hold the teachers to a higher standard. For the students, accountability helped them to understand they were in charge of their own grades and they had the ability to influence the outcome. Accountability, holding high expectations for all stakeholders, increased performance at every level.

Planning and Structure

For the purposes of this study, structures involve the organization of personnel and resources. Planning revolves around the creation of structures. Structures and planning are thus interrelated and go hand-in-hand to create effective systems. The planning processes and structures created in both schools helped lead to exiting PI status. The superintendent, both principals, and two teacher leaders discussed the changing or

improvement of structuring and planning processes for the schools and staff. The

superintendent also noted a change, "…part of the structure was really just changing up

how they did things, where they're more on their toes." The Blair principal demonstrated

this theme when describing how the principal attempted to get performance beyond

normal expectations, "So that… kind of changing the mindset of the purpose and really

carrying that mission/vision of 'we're not going to get academic excellence by doing

what we used to do.'" The Blair principal elaborated on his reasoning on why a total

overhaul of the school's mission statement was needed:

> When I got here, this mission statement was literally an entire paragraph
> long… nobody could tell me what this mission statement was. It was
> extremely wordy and unclear. And so I basically asked people in a staff
> meeting, I said were going to stop, and I'd like everybody to write down
> the mission of our school, please. Nobody really could.

To the Blair principal, a change in the mission statement meant a change in the way the

staff functioned. The mission statement carried a meaning and had a more precise and

definitive mission plan and created a structure that the staff could model their principles

after. This was a structural change in that staff could now be organized to pursue a

specific mission together across the curriculum. The Blair principal later went on to say

when addressing changes made to exit PI, "And what I think will help tremendously in it

is all the planning we've done already... Now we just are – the structure is changing that

multiple choiceness to the critical thinking and explaining yourself." A Dodgson teacher

leader emphasized on structure and organization, "I mean, I'm organized…and the kids

thrive on it. Yeah, they love structure….I think I definitely have people coming to me

with, you know, 'oh, help me get organized.' So I think my organization skills are pretty

good." Another Dodgson teacher leader remarked on the consistency and its benefits,

"And it's sad to say, but when the boss is away, the mice will play….But once the consistency came and once the 'this is how we're going to do it' came, then, sure enough, the success came." Additionally, this same teacher leader demonstrated planning by noting the improvement from a newly formed release-question packet,

> And I believe we had like a 24 [or] 25 point jump in seventh grade, just by looking at the release questions. You know, going from a concept order to actually looking at the standard and then actually looking at the release questions….And I believe it came from [the superintendent], you know. [the superintendent] came in with a formula [plan].

The perceptions of the superintendent, principals, and teacher leaders indicate that planning and structure is a must. In these sites, planning and structure helped to add an element of organization to the learning environment. The implementation of consistency and organization into the environment seemed to provide a much needed structure that allowed both the students and the staff to thrive.

Modeling and Leading by Example

Both principals placed an emphasis on modeling and leading by example. Moreover, the responses of the nine participants revealed leadership by example and modeling as positive and effective attributes. A Blair teacher leader expressed that a good leader should be able to interact in any classroom and model strong leadership:

> There's nothing at the middle school level, other than very specialized classes like band or language, that I feel a leader shouldn't be able to come in and model strong instruction in every room, every class. I really want that person who is an academic leader.

Similarly, another Blair teacher leader expressed what a strong leadership should entail, "I think leading by example, so being present, being visible, going in classroom, being

aware of what the teachers are doing, and what reality is. That's important to me." This

teacher leader further elaborated this theme in stating:

> …I think, above and beyond is just to provide examples of what that [the
> best thing to do] is. You know, I think we can say do more, but if you
> don't show them what doing more is, it probably falls on deaf ears…I'm a
> believer in you lead by example…But I just think you have to model for—
> for them for—to get higher expectations, you have to model what that
> looks like first and then follow through.

A Dodgson teacher leader further added support for this theme by stating, "…when you

look at what demonstrates a teacher leader, a teacher leader is somebody that another

teacher can look at and go, 'wow, they're doing something right.' Okay?" Another

Dodgson teacher leader emphasized that her principal was a great educator and modeled

high energy and drive with the staff. A Dodgson teacher leader additionally added, "So it

wasn't only that she [the principal] really provided a great model for the teachers, but it

was set to the point that she went and put in time and instruction herself." The Dodgson

principal further elaborated on the lead by example theme in stating,

> So part of that leadership style is I jump in. If they're going to go visit
> somewhere, I cover their class. You know, 'I'm going to be gone for just
> two periods.' Hey, I'll do the algebra and be able to – and they see that
> you want to roll up your sleeves and get to it. Or I did a math club for an
> hour and a half every day after school that first year just because I knew
> the teachers were already doing before school, lunchtime and stuff. So
> then they came in and saw 50 kids in here and said, 'can't we come in and
> help you?' Yeah. So they see you do it, and they see it working, and
> therefore the proof is in the pudding.

Additionally, the Dodgson principal later went on to say, "And so it was a lot of training

that way and really giving them…I would model for them…a parent is really concerned

about this or they want to ask why I'm doing this, then we'd role model, role play." The

Blair principal strongly supported this theme by simply stating, "I like to lead by

example. I don't ask teachers to do things that are unrealistic, that I don't feel that I

could do myself…And so I think that I am a person that leads by example."

Additionally, the Blair principal explained how he would demonstrate and model what he

wanted done when identifying students to be targeted for specific interventions such as

extra tutoring:

> And then I created a key for them, and then I model for them how to
> highlight each of their students' names in a way that was comprehensible
> and not going to take more of their time than should be. But I don't like to
> just hand people something and say, 'here, do this.' So I do try as much as
> I can to have a model in place so that they can see it and then work with it
> in a more effective manner.

Leading by example was indicated as an important aspect of the role of leadership

in helping the schools exit PI status. Providing strong leadership and being someone for

others to model themselves after seemed to allow the participants to take greater notice of

those leaders and feel their presence. For example, the Dodgson principal taught model

lessons and created a math club, and the Blair principal mentored students the same way

he expected teachers to. Neither principal would ask a staff member to perform any task

they would not be willing to do themselves. Teacher leaders also followed suit. Setting

the example allowed the leaders to show exactly what they wanted to achieve and gave

the others a wonderful example and model of how to achieve those goals.

Using Data to Inform Decision Making

The use of data to inform decision making was a critical element of the leadership

of both the principals and teacher leaders. As the principal moves the school forward as a

leader for change, it is imperative to continuously reevaluate the process based on data

that evolves and develops over time (Bennis, 1982; Knapp, Copland, & Swinnerton,

2007). Throughout many of the responses, the use of data was consistently brought up.

Support for this theme involved comments regarding the sharing of data among staff,

students, and parents, as well as using the information from the data to apply better or

different improvement strategies. When asked about personal leadership style, the

Dodgson principal noted data sharing, "So by showing the data, explaining myself, and

being up front, that – you know, no secrets." The Dodgson principal later elaborated on

applying the information from the data:

> There was a new superintendent in town. And, you know, the data-driven
> component and being able to say, 'hey, you have 50 percent of your kids
> blow blah, blah, blah, blah.' So the idea is to show them [the teachers]
> how to read the data. And once they started seeing it and they saying,
> 'you know what, let's not look how it reflects to you. Let's look at growth
> and learning.' And so when we could say, 'here's the data, here's what
> they had, where are we moving them,' and then actually have organized
> our PD [professional development] Thursdays.

The superintendent also commented multiple times on data sharing, "…one of the things

we had started doing in the district is sharing the data." And, "…another influence… had

that was really powerful, was [that] she made sure that the teachers shared individual data

with students." Data the superintendent was referring to included, but was not limited

to, California Standards Test data, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) testing scores,

ST Math data, benchmark exam scores, and Compass Odyssey data[1]. The Blair principal

went on to add:

> Say, for example, you know, we realized, okay, if we are in a standards-
> based system, we have to start with assessment. So let's apply technology
> to the assessment. And that gave us incredibly much deeper data than
> we'd ever had….Because we had – you know, that depth of data showed
> us that we had a wide array and a continuum of mastery in each class.

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[1] CST is the California state standardized testing program; MAP is a computer based, adaptive assessment
tool; ST math is a visual based software instructional program; and Compass Odyssey is an adaptive,
digital curriculum with diagnostic assessments.

A Dodgson teacher leader remarked on data in regards to instruction, "And there starts to become more of a focus on data…you have to have data to back up your instruction. So kind of a data-driven-type focus." Another Dodgson teacher leader commented on the support from data to teacher effectiveness, "…if this teacher is successful enough to push these kids and – and if data is driving that they are an effective teacher, that's pretty impressive." In further support, this teacher leader went on to add, "I think he's a really good superintendent, which is really data-driven. Because I don't think before we paid much attention that that."

Similarly, a Blair teacher leader indicated the appropriate application given data, "Another thing that I thought was real…was we would go through our rosters. And this is all data-wise. We'd go through and figure out, okay, we need to move all the kids into proficient. Right?" An additional Blair teacher leader emphasized the use of data in the following elaborated statement:

> So basically, Data Director is just – it's basically an – it's an online data pool. And it has their benchmark information, their CST information…So we use it. And we use it. We look at results. We look to see where kids are. We look to see where gaps are. And that really – I mean, when I – when we really got out of Program Improvement, we looked at CST data, and we really focused on not subgroups but specific situations.

The practice of using data to inform decision making was supported by the superintendent, principals, and teacher leaders. Sharing the data among staff, students, and parents was mentioned and indicated to be an important part of the process. The more the staff was able to read and comprehend the data, the more they were able to benefit from its use. Using data was seen as a powerful tool that allowed the participants

to determine where the gaps in proficiency were and adjust instruction via differentiation and intervention to address those gaps.

Fostering Increased Parent Involvement

According to the leaders, promoting increased parent involvement proved to be a critical factor in moving the schools away from sanctions. A Dodgson teacher leader noted the details with her attempts to increase parent involvement, "I'm calling those parents. I mean, I am on those – calling those parents. I even had recently a parent lately leave me a message and say, 'do not call me anymore [regarding homework and the student's lack of participation].'…So, you know, there isn't much that a parent can say to me – about the program." And, "…in the program I run, you know, I always tell parents, you know, I want your child to learn." A Blair teacher leader added support for this theme by stating, "We have a community that wants to see well – the students do well. So parents are highly involved here."

The teachers' efforts with increased parent communication regarding student achievement also contributed to the shift in parent involvement that was crucial to exiting PI status. A Blair teacher leader elaborated, "Every teacher has their grades online. We have access to it to the parents through – it's called Student Connect. So there's no surprises like, for the parents, when they say 'what's the homework?' It's online." The Dodgson principal remarked on this theme in stating, "…as I speak of parents, I've included parents in on some of our conversations with teacher and teacher practice." The Dodgson principal later went on to add, "And we did trainings with parents on here's what the CST means and here's what the results are." The Blair principal noted on parental support, "So what I'm saying is [that] you get your parents behind you. And you

get a lot of muscle by having the parents with you on a lot of things that come

through…So you really leverage parents to help you get things done."

The superintendent, principals, and teacher leaders all encouraged increased

parental involvement. Persistence was used to get the parents involved in knowing the

homework, knowing their child's grades, and using the newly implemented Student

Connect electronic telephone calling system messages in order to support the home to

school connection which all helped both schools to exit PI status. The staff felt that the

parents had no reason not to be involved and should always know what was going on

with their child. Thus, the new, increased flow of information being sent home was

evident in both schools. Principals, teachers, and teacher leaders strongly believed that

the staff and children need the support of the parents to succeed academically.

Promoting Respect

Among the teacher leader responses, the theme of promoting respect was revealed

to a large degree as being an essential element of leadership. Respect was strongly

supported by comments that illustrated the relationships among teachers, students, and

others. A Dodgson teacher leader commented on respect and trust as part of the

description on student-teacher relationships:

> The student-teacher relationship to me is a situation where the students
> trust you or the students are comfortable, they respect you, where your
> subject matter knowledge is obviously good enough for them to succeed.
> And then the trust and -- trust and respect relationship between teacher and
> student is good enough that they want to produce for you. And if the
> students don't trust you or respect you as a leader and as their teacher, then
> you're not going to get anything out of them.

This Dodgson teacher leader went on to explain that he took the time to get to know his

students on a personal level. He made himself accessible before school, during lunch,

and after school to meet with and assist students. This extra support for all students

demonstrated caring, concern, and increased trust and respect. Similarly, a Blair teacher

leader noted respect as a very important leadership value, especially among peers and the

sharing of new ideas. She elaborated on this by stating:

> You need to have leadership over your students. And I feel like that
> includes respect, but just like that you have a good grasp on what's going
> on in your school. I think that's important. And I think it's important that
> you -- leadership, to me, shows that your staff will do what you say and
> respect -- respect the wants and needs of the principal and vice principals.
> But the students are respectful, too, and following the rules. To me, that's
> how you know a school is well run, you know, when your staff is
> respectful in doing what they're supposed to be doing and as well as the
> students, too.

A Dodgson teacher leader commented on respect as a two-way relationship, where

respect is given to and received from others:

> …the way I treat kids with respect, you're going to get the respect back
> from them. And my eighth-period class, they -- they can be a little out of
> control. But I instill into them the respect, and the fact that a guest teacher
> is even more important than I am in this classroom, because you're
> representing me and you're representing us. And so if you disrespectful to
> a guest teacher, then it's being disrespectful to yourself. And there's
> constant talk of that.

When asked about the three most important values demonstrated as a teacher leader, A

Blair teacher leader responded with respect shown to students:

> Well, I think respect, in the sense of showing my students respect. And
> that -- I mean, that's very vague, but just I think respect in who they are,
> how they dress, how they speak, how they present their work. You know,
> everybody is different.

Teacher leaders believed that respect needed to be evident at all levels in the learning

environment. Respect is a must, not only among the staff, but also between the students

and teachers. The teacher leaders at both sites feel, more so than was evident among the

principals' responses, that respect is reciprocal and if they are able to demonstrate that they respect the students, they expect the students to respect them in return. Respect is an important leadership value that needs to be on display.

Connections to the 4Is of transformational Leadership

This discussion will address substantive findings according to the major themes that emerged from participant interviews and the ways in which the discovered themes are interconnected with the 4 Is of transformational leadership. Table 1 provides a chart linking each of the 4 Is of transformational leadership with one or more of the themes that emerged during the data analysis.

Table 2: The Connections Between the 4 Is and Emerging Themes

The 4 Is of Transformational Leadership	Emerging Themes
1. Idealized Influence	Modeling and Leading by Example Fostering Increased Parent Involvement
2. Individualized Consideration	Promoting Respect Planning and Structure
3. Inspirational Motivation	Accountability
4. Intellectual Stimulation	Teamwork, support, and collaboration Using Data to Inform Decision Making

Idealized influence, modeling and leading by example, and fostering increased parent involvement. When school leaders practice idealized influence they inspire others to follow the vision established for the school as well as create opportunities for others to take on important roles in the organization. The research indicates that school leaders are most successful when they can incorporate all members of the school community, including parents, to carry out the vision (Bass et al., 2003;

Bass & Riggio, 2006; Olsen & Chrispeels, 2009). Creating an atmosphere of shared

leadership throughout the school has the potential to promote collective efficacy and

cohesion (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

   The principals and teacher leaders at the two schools studied empowered other

teachers by leading by example and modeling for them. The behaviors and actions of

transformational leaders translate into modeling for those who follow them (Bass &

Riggio, 2006). When principals modeled instruction, parent meetings, or how to interpret

data for targeted students they exemplified dynamic leadership and inspired others to

work to higher potential and performance levels. This is consistent with Hay (2007) who

purports that the charisma of the leader is a significant factor in determining teacher

commitment. Teachers articulated that their principals were charismatic and led by

example, and that they were highly capable and shared risks (Bass et al., 2003; Hater &

Bass, 1988; Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

   The principals and teacher leaders at the two schools provided opportunities for

parents to be involved in the educational process, and parent involvement was considered

a key factor in moving both schools away from PI. Parents could access teachers,

homework, and grades online, and the electronic calling systems at both schools allowed

for information to be disseminated to parents quickly and frequently. Informed parents

were seen as stakeholders who could carry out the schools' vision at home by mimicking

the influence of the teachers. Such a view of parents being ideally influenced fits

perfectly with prior research (Avolio et al., 1999; Barling, Weber & Kelloway, 1996;

Bass et al., 2003; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Hater & Bass, 1988).

Modeling and leading by example and parent involvement were indicated as important aspects of the role of leadership in helping the schools exit PI status. Being a model for others to emulate seemed to allow the participants to make larger contributions by having others feel their presence. Setting the example allowed the leaders to demonstrate their desires and expectations by giving an example and model of how to achieve those goals. Moreover, principals, teachers, and teacher leaders strongly believed that the staff and children need the support of the parents to succeed academically. Diligence in communication with the parents fostered the parents in knowing the homework, knowing their child's grades, and supporting the home to school connection that all helped both schools to exit PI status.

Individualized consideration, planning and structure, and promoting respect. The leader adept in individualized consideration will actively listen and delegate tasks while acting as a coach, facilitator, and mentor to promote, stimulate, and further the development of followers (Bass, 1997; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Hater & Bass, 1988). In order to provide individualized consideration careful thought must be placed into planning and structure (the organization of personnel and resources) as well as respectful relationships. These leadership qualities were extremely evident in both schools studied.

In both schools studied, the mindset revolved around student achievement. There was emphasis on the mission statement and having everyone working toward the same end. Teachers were aligned with their best talents, and there was a focus on standards and released questions from the state exams. This planning and creation of structures in which to focus on the mission of closing the achievement gap generated teamwork and buy-in from the faculty, staff, and students (Bass, 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Respect was another crucial component in helping these two schools exit PI status. Respect was viewed as reciprocal; it had to be given to be received. This was described as vital in both staff as well as student-teacher relationships. Common respect amongst the stakeholders, especially the students and teachers, helped to create a personalized experience that led to ownership and resulted in increased student achievement as measured by the state exams (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Inspirational motivation and accountability. The inspirational, motivational leader exercises charisma in order to motivate and inspire others. In both of the schools studied this was accomplished by being optimistic and challenging others with high standards and expectations. This had the benefit of providing meaning for the work being completed, arousing a sense of team spirit, and encouraging employees to go beyond what might normally be expected (Bass, 1997; Bass et al., 2003; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Daly et al., 2011; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

In both schools studied high standards, consistency, and follow-through were expected from all stakeholders. Student data such as grades, reports, and state test results were used as conversation subjects with teachers as well as students. Peer pressure resulted which created an internal sense of accountability brought about from the enthusiasm of the principal in starting the conversations. This challenged both students and teachers in a subtle manner which also led to them then setting their own vision for future student outcomes (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Ross & Gray, 2006).

Accountability among the staff encouraged them to work harder, avoid procrastination, and learn from what others had done. It also helped to hold the teachers to a higher standard. For the students, accountability helped them to understand they

were responsible for their own learning and that they had the ability to influence the outcome and their grades. Accountability and holding high expectations for all stakeholders increased performance at every level. The connection between accountability and challenging others to perform at their best was an important part of inspirational motivation in these two sites.

Intellectual stimulation: teamwork, support, and collaboration and using data in decision making. Intellectually stimulating leaders question the status quo, solicit new ideas and solutions to problems, inspire others to look at problems in a different light, and encourage the use of logic and ingenuity (Bass, 1997; Bass et al., 2003; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Hater & Bass, 1988). The intellectually stimulating leader also provides opportunities to examine problems from a wide variety of possible solutions, perpetuates a sense of increased output from employees, and generates new ideas within the organization (Bass, 1985; Bass, 1997; Bass et al., 2003; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Brown et al., 2002).

In the two schools studied, intellectual stimulation was supported by collaboration, supportive relationships, and data use for a common purpose, namely student achievement. School leaders influence student learning when they provide opportunities for leaders to share data and their learning with others (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). In the case study schools, intellectual stimulation provided opportunities for the leadership to propose as well as solicit new ideas for closing the achievement gap in an open, accepting forum via Professional Learning Community (PLC) time. Moreover, this allowed purposeful teamwork and collaboration in both formal and informal contexts. The common PLC time also allowed teachers the opportunity to meet and review their

student achievement data with each other. Target students were identified with specific

student data pieces and teachers used the time to devise intervention and differentiation

plans to best support them.

Schools are intricate institutions in nature. Narrowing the achievement gap is a

complex organizational issue, and intellectual stimulation played a key role in the

leader's articulation of desired outcomes, delegation of tasks, and solicitation of possible

solutions (Bass, 1985; Bass et al., 2003). The leaders in both schools created

opportunities for open communication and data sharing. This was evident during

common collaboration time when ideas were shared, data was shared, plans were devised

to support students needing to become proficient, and communication with all

stakeholders was strengthened. Moreover, there seemed to be growth in the self-efficacy

of the school staffs, though this was not measured in this study(Ross & Gray, 2006).

Differences between the Sites

As previously noted, there was very little divergence across the two sites.

However, there were a couple of minor variations in the theme of teamwork, support, and

collaboration. In both schools, it was evident that students and teachers had strong

connections. At Blair there was a specific mentoring program in place in which students

who had not yet reached proficiency on the California Standards Test (CST) were

assigned an adult mentor. At Dodgson, which housed fewer than 500 students, a much

smaller school than Blair, there was not a formal mentor program. At Blair the students

had at least one adult connection, but in the smaller setting of Dodgson the teachers

discussed multiple student connections despite not having a formalized mentoring

program.

Another subtle difference involved professional learning communities (PLCs). While both sites had weekly PLC time created from an early release of students on a given day, Dodgson also had five specific days set aside during the academic year for a district wide professional development. This allowed the Dodgson teachers time to collaborate with their feeder elementary school teachers on a limited basis. Blair teachers were not provided such time.

These differences were only meaningful inasmuch as adult connections with students were considered crucial in forming strong, inter-personal relationships. Larger schools may benefit from more formal mentoring programs because forming multiple teacher-student connections is more difficult with a broader base of students to get to know. Additionally, vertical articulation and collaboration with feeder schools may afford teachers insight on students' past performance and specific academic preparations for higher grade levels.

Conclusion

This chapter represents the research and analysis on transformational leadership as reported by teachers and administrators at two middle schools that exited Program Improvement status. The aim of the study was to determine which leadership attributes and practices principals and teacher leaders in two middle schools, which have exited PI status, demonstrate in professional practice. From the analysis of the data, seven prominent themes emerged. These themes were explored and subsequently linked to the sub questions posed for the study. The themes were critically examined and the data relevant to the themes were analyzed to determine their impact on the research questions.

The sub questions address the practice of transformational leadership and the similarities and differences in leadership styles in both school sites in the study.

A common discovery among the principals and teachers leaders in both sites was that they exhibited similar leadership attributes and practices. There was little divergence across the two school sites in the themes. Common themes which emerged are: 1)teamwork, support, and collaboration; 2) accountability; 3) planning and structure; 4)modeling and leading by example; 5) the use of data to inform decision making; 6) fostering increased parent involvement; and 7)promoting respect. Both principals solicited the strengths of the teachers, built positive relationships, and provided time for collaboration. Among both the principals and teacher leaders at both school sites it was discovered that high expectations, organization, and consistency were very apparent. Each of these themes also led to a higher level of communication among the stakeholders in both school sites.

In short, the findings of this study indicate that both of the school sites had shown evidence of similar leadership attributes and practices through the lens of transformational leadership. The leadership style practiced by the principals and teacher leaders at both schools demonstrated little divergence within the data. According to the data, transformational leadership was evident during the processes of by school exiting PI status.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Summary of the Study

As school accountability becomes more apparent, a leader's ability to transform a school from underperforming to good to great and beyond becomes increasingly difficult. The nationwide focus on accountability for the country's public schools has created an intense need for many school leaders to increase student achievement, particularly as measured by NCLB standards. This has been true at every level K-12, but has been particularly evident at the middle school level. As previously stated, there is a dearth of research data with regards to the specific leadership traits and principles present in middle schools in terms of exiting Program Improvement (PI) status. The purpose of this study was to provide the educational community, both researchers as well as practitioners, with timely and informative data on the leadership style present in two middle schools that exited PI status. This chapter will provide a summary of the study supported by conclusions drawn from the data analysis and will conclude with implications for educational leaders as they practice leadership, encouraging all stakeholders to successfully lead their schools in the 21st century.

Middle school leaders not only influence the educational community, but they also have a direct impact on student achievement (Scales, 1996; Styron, et al., 2008). Student achievement tends to improve when leadership demonstrates individualized teacher skill promotion, collaboration among teachers, and teacher motivation while continuously focusing on teaching, student learning, and teacher learning (Robinson et al., 2008). The practice of transformational leadership encourages school leaders to

weigh the interests and needs of others as well as to consider how shared leadership promotes a sense of group efficacy.

This study was designed to examine the leadership traits and characteristics present in two San Diego county middle schools that had successfully exited PI status through the lens of transformational leadership. A qualitative study was conducted to observe the relationship of leadership on closing the achievement gap in two California middle schools that had demonstrated increasing student achievement and exited PI status. I analyzed qualitative data on the leadership traits and practices used by principals in two middle schools. The data examined was in the form of one superintendent, two principals', and six teacher leaders' interview responses at the two different school sites.

Accordingly, the following questions guided this study, and the answers to those questions follow:

What are the leadership attributes and practices of principals and teacher leaders in California middle schools whose schools were designated as in Program Improvement (PI) but which have successfully exited PI under NCLB guidelines? The leadership attributes and practices of the principals and teacher leaders in this study are: 1) teamwork, support, and collaboration; (2) accountability; (3) planning and structure; (4) modeling and leading by example; (5) using data in decision making; (6) fostering increased parent involvement; and (7) promoting respect.

(a) Does the principal or other key personnel engage in transformational leadership activities, and if so, in what ways and under what conditions?

The principals and other key personnel at both schools in this study engaged in transformational activities. They exercised the fundamentals of the 4 Is of transformational leadership regularly during both formal and informal settings such as departmental collaboration and pre-determined common planning times.

(b) What similarities or differences in leadership behaviors exist among these principals and teacher leaders?

The leadership behaviors were nearly identical in both schools studied. Limited differences included a formal mentoring program at Blair middle school, and limited district wide common planning time in the Dodgson district.

Overall, the data suggests that common practices of transformational leadership had a positive impact upon the schools' exiting of PI status (and improving student achievement) in the two schools.

Connections to Prior Research

The type of leadership necessary to lead a school away from Program Improvement (PI) status lacks specific study (Daly, et al., 2011). However, the findings of this study may be linked to other existing literature on transformational leadership. This study supports the notion that transformational leadership could enhance or nurture

aschool's academic achievement and adds to the body of research regarding leading middle schools away from sanctions.

The 4Is of transformational leadership were evident in the schools studied as determined by the seven themes that emerged. The themes are aligned with the 4Is in Table 1 in Chapter Four. The discussion that follows will explain how this study extends the existing knowledge in the field of transformational leadership in schools as well as how middle schools might use transformational leadership to escape sanctions.

As previous research states, principals who practice transformational leadership motivate teachers to go beyond what might normally be expected (Bass et al., 2003). Once a strong foundation of transformational leadership is embedded in the school environment, teacher leaders who also practice transformational leadership will arise. Going beyond what has been stated in the existing literature, this study indicates that these teacher leaders model and emulate the leadership style presented to them, i.e. practice the 4Is of transformational leadership with their colleagues, parents, and students. This leads to all members of the educational community to being considered an equal stakeholder.

To meet the needs of their students and parents and empower all stakeholders, teachers relied heavily upon the opportunity for consistent, structured common planning time at both the district and school site levels. Prior research indicates that promoting changes, sharing knowledge, and positive relationships are critical, but it does not explain how to achieve change or build relationships or best practices (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Moolenaar et al., 2010; Styron et al., 2008). During these plannedtimes, teachers were able to collaborate and develop and create modifications to curriculum and interventions

to differentiate instruction dedicated to best practices. Collaborating promoted positive relationships and allowed teachers to focus on individual student needs through the analysis of student achievement data such as benchmark exams, CST scores, and MAP scores in accordance with the school vision.

Additionally, students' achievement data was also provided to both the students themselves as well as the parents. Prior research indicates that principals who include teacher leaders in data use were more successful with explaining data (Park & Datnow, 2009). However, in the case study schools both students and parents were also provided instruction and tools to be able to interpret their own individual data. These tools and instruction included parent nights and online access to assignments and grades. Involving the students and parents in the learning process extended the reach of the schools' leadership and helped maximize the home to school connection by improving relationships and easing communication difficulties and tensions.

Sharing the data with all stakeholders created transparency and a data driven learning environment. Teachers knew how students were performing, students knew exactly where they were in terms of achievement, and parents knew exactly which performance band their children were in. This created accountability among teachers with their peers, with students regarding their own learning, and with parents as an extension of the schools' influence.

Each participant in the study indicated that leadership played a key role in his or her school's high academic achievement and exit from PI status. As articulated in the literature review, leadership involves a unity of purpose, common mission, and common vision for the future (Bass, 1985; Bass et al., 2003; Bass & Riggio, 2006). School leaders

who practice transformational leadership carefully consider the value of close, personal relationships with fellow faculty and staff members. Moreover, when these relationships stem from transformational leadership, teachers discover empowerment and an increase in self-efficacy.

> Transformational leadership enhances the followers, challenging them to think in ways in which they are not accustomed to thinking, inspiring them to accomplish beyond what they always felt was possible, and motivating them to do so by keeping in mind the values and high moral standards that guide their performance (Bass et al., 2003, p. 215).

As discussed earlier, the four components of transformational leadership, the 4 Is: idealized influence, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation contributed to effective results in closing the achievement gap in the schools studied. Additionally, findings of this study extend or build upon prior research inasmuch as teacher leaders will imitate the leadership style and practices of the principal.

Implications for Future Research

This study provided an in-depth look into the effects of transformational leadership on narrowing the achievement gap and assisting schools in exiting sanctions. The study began with an overview and comparison of both transactional and transformational leadership. Though elements of both of these styles of leadership may be blended together, transactional and transformational leadership can illicit different results in varied school settings. However, the research has demonstrated that there are benefits to practicing transformational leadership in schools, one being a narrowing of the

achievement gap and exit from PI status. While this study provided valuable insight into the leadership of two middle schools that narrowed the achievement gap and exited PI status, further research could deepen our comprehension of leadership implementation and practice. Listed below are suggested areas for potential future research regarding transformational leadership at the middle school level.

- ➢ Examine personality traits or personal motivations that may explain why a school leader might choose one style of leadership over another.

- ➢ Evaluate the structure of middle schools and its effects on leadership. Perhaps traditional infrastructures could be altered in order to provide more leadership opportunities.

- ➢ Additional qualitative studies on leadership in more schools that have successfully narrowed the achievement gap and exited PI status. Studies in more middle schools, elementary schools, and high schools would expand the body of research as to how leadership impacts the ability of schools to exit sanctions.

- ➢ A mixed methods study on both high and low achieving middle schools to determine leadership tendencies or differences, if any.

- ➢ Survey a large sample of teachers to analyze the effect of school leadership on their sense of self-efficacy. Does a principal who is a transformational leader directly affect the self-efficacy of the faculty?

- ➢ Evaluate the effect of new technology on leadership and its impacts on principals and teacher leaders. What are the effects of technology on open communication, transparency, and collaboration?

> ➢ Evaluate how the issue of staff resistance affects a principal's leadership practice. How does staff resistance affect the implementation of transformational leadership within a school?

Implications for Policy and Practice

In this era of high stakes testing, school leaders are faced with making numerous decisions that affect the effectiveness of a school. Leadership involves promoting a shared vision and involving all stakeholders in the implementation of the vision. Accordingly, school leaders must work as a motivators and facilitators of change rather than as an enforcer in a traditional transactional leadership style (Leithwood & Janzti, 2006). Effective school leaders set the example and model, show respect, communicate openly, use data, foster teamwork, support, and collaboration, provide collaboration time, and practice inclusion to ensure that all stakeholders have a voice in the decision making process. Such leadership promotes overall efficacy in the learning community (Ross & Gray, 2006). When school leaders practice the 4 Is of transformational leadership schools can improve and the achievement gap can be narrowed.

In accordance with the findings of this study, with regards to previous research on transformational leadership, schools or districts that implement transformational leadership or which desire to implement transformational leadership in the future, may want to consider the following:

Professional development. In order for a school or district to effectively implement transformational leadership, both administrators and teacher leaders must be thoroughly trained in the practice of transformational leadership. Such an investment in human capital has the potential to pay enormous dividends. If the site principal does not

have the leadership traits and characteristics to implement transformational leadership, then the school wide implementation will be difficult and will likely fail. If the principal has the skill set to implement transformational leadership, then he or she can build the capacity of the faculty and staff.

Such professional development must be on going and not a "one stop shopping" experience or type of training with no follow up. The training must be robust and relevant. District administrators and site principals should plan for and develop comprehensive training for teacher leaders with an end goal of successful transformational leadership implementation. This will build the capacity of the faculty, empower principals and teacher leaders, and lead to a greater sense of self-efficacy among the faculty and staff.

Leadership of the site principal. The importance of the role of the principal cannot be stressed enough. A lasting culture of transformational leadership can only develop and thrive if the principal is a transformational leader. A principal who exercises and practices the 4 Is of transformational leadership will promote the things necessary for a school to improve and exit PI status such as modeling and leading by example, involving stakeholders, maintaining accountability, using data, stimulating teamwork, support, and collaboration, and fostering an atmosphere of respect. Listed below are strategies for principals to consider incorporating into their leadership plan.

➢ Provide additional educational training and tools for students and parents centered on student achievement data analysis. Some examples may include: online resources, family nights/universities, parent clubs, and extension of school tutorials.

➢ Involve both parents and students as respected stakeholders and provide them with methods to be involved in their academic success. Examples may include: School Site Council, Parent/Student advisory committees, Parent Teacher Student Associations, and Education Foundations.

➢ Increase open lines of communication to strengthen the home to school connection. Specific examples could be Connect Ed calling systems, email blast systems, Twitter, Facebook, Peachjar (electronic flyer system), newsletters, and websites.

➢ Involve all stakeholders, including students and parents, in creating the school's vision statement.

➢ Inspire teacher leaders to emulate transformational leadership to spread influence throughout the educational community.

➢ Remember to celebrate successes, no matter how small. Examples could include awards assemblies and staff recognition in front of their peers such as the school's teacher of the month.

➢ Frequently solicit feedback. This may be informal as well as more formal with a tool such as a survey.

➢ Build relationships with the intention to also build trust.

- Principal/Teacher relationships: as evidenced by this study, teamwork, support, and collaboration are critical

- Principal/Student relationships: In my experience, I have seen this relationship frequently ignored, but I have also observed that a strong

bond between administrators and students can decrease disciplinary

incidents and increase student grade point averages.

Opportunities to be explored. My positionality as principal provides me with a

unique insight upon which to reflect upon the study findings and consider opportunities

for the future. While the traditional measures of accountability that accompanied NCLB

are no longer, there are still pressures for producing high student academic performance.

This is especially true as we enter the era of Common Core. Just as in this study, the old,

traditional vision of the principal acting as the sole or primary leader of the site will not

take schools where they need to go. Rather, leadership for school improvement is

practiced along, beside, and with other people. The following are some of my own

reflections as a principal based on this research and the 4 Is of transformational

leadership in the era of Common Core.

> ➤ Consistently promote the vision and restate the rationale of why the work you are
>
>   doing is so important. Link this vision to the goals of the Common Core
>
>   standards. This will foster teamwork, commitment, and collaboration.
>
> ➤ Leverage parents with students as well as for site needs. Moreover, specifically
>
>   engage and partner with parents as stakeholders with a voice. This will be critical
>
>   with California's shift to the local control funding formula (LCFF) process of
>
>   allocating funds to schools.
>
> ➤ Empower the staff and capitalize on the excellence you have existing on site.
>
>   Align teachers to their strengths and let them share with others during
>
>   professional development. Peer to peer professional development is powerful.

Peer driven professional development can also help promote trust while simultaneously generating peer-to-peer accountability.

➢ Intentionally frame conversations in ways that turn challenges into opportunities to embrace professional learning. The shift to Common Core with the need for project based learning and performance tasks is radically different for most teachers and takes them out of their comfort zone. Ensure them of your support and allow them to have things fail without fear.

➢ Encourage teachers to try new methods of instruction. In California, we have a tremendous opportunity to explore new instructional strategies without fear of evaluative oversight for at least one year. This is the time to try something new. The new Smarter Balanced assessments linked to the Common Core will drive our instruction, so we must shift our practices. The allowance for instructional experimentation and change without fear of recrimination will foster teamwork, support, and collaboration.

➢ Encourage teachers to use data from multiple sources to focus on instructional practices and differentiation based on individual student needs. Traditional standardized tests may be on the way out, but we still have other measures such as benchmarks and other common assessments. It remains important to disaggregate data by subgroups and identify areas for growth.

➢ Leverage district resources for data analysis and professional development for the teachers to learn how to use the data they have.

➢ Look in and outside the district for sources of support for these important shifts. Universities or other external organizations could provide a vehicle for sharing ideas across districts and within regions.

➢ Taken together, these recommendations apply the findings from this study to provide guidance for the future.

Conclusion

The final result desired for schools is the education and learning of students. In this era of high stakes testing with both federal and state policies placing high levels of accountability on schools, it is important for school leaders to remember that transformational leadership positively influences the learning environment and promotes student achievement. While this study specifically examined the leadership traits and characteristics present in two middle schools that has successfully increased student achievement and exited PI status, I believe that the lessons gathered from this study could be transferred to all levels of education. However, there exists a need to conduct further research to exemplify the benefits of transformational leadership and encourage school leaders to practice it. The success of schools can be enhanced by the deliberate implementation of transformational leadership practices.

APPENDIX A: EMAIL INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN QUALITATIVE STUDY

Dear Educator,

I am a student in the Joint Doctoral Program at California State University San Marcos (CSUSM) and University of California, San Diego (UCSD). I am conducting a research study that seeks to explore the role of transformational leadership in exiting a middle level school from Program Improvement. You are being contacted because you were identified as an educational leader who has experience working in a middle level school which has exited Program Improvement.

The purpose of this study is to examine and identify some of the key leadership attributes shared by principals in California middle schools designated as in Program Improvement in order to determine which leadership traits and attributes are effective in assisting schools move away from further sanctions under NCLB. Accordingly, the middle schools researched in this study will be schools which have exited Program Improvement status.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be interviewed individually. The interview will have a conversational style and will be in-depth. You may choose to have the interview take place at your school site or off campus—which ever makes you feel most comfortable. During the interview, you will be asked to describe your leadership style, experiences and processes or systems you feel pertinent to your school having exited Program Improvement. With your permission, the interview will be audio taped and transcribed. You will be provided with a transcript of the interview for checking and clarifying the information.

Your confidentiality will be respected throughout this process. Pseudonyms for schools, districts, and educators will be used to minimize the risk of identification. You will be given the opportunity to review the transcribed interview and to eliminate any comments or references you feel may be identifiable or have negative connotations. Additionally, you will have the opportunity to add any information which you feel may have contributed to your success. Your responses will not be linked to your name or address. I hope you will agree to participate in this research project. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Respectfully,

Tim Heck
Doctoral Student: UC, San Diego and CSU, San Marcos
760.443.7909
timheck@gmail.com

APPENDIX B: JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL INFORMED CONSENT

University of California, San Diego
Consent to Act as a Research Subject

The Promise of Transformational Leadership for Closing the Achievement Gap

Tim Heck, under the supervision of Dr. Amanda Datnow, Professor and Chair, UCSD Education Studies, with approval of the Sweetwater Union High School District, is conducting a research study to find out about the key leadership attributes shared by principals in California middle level schools designated as in Program Improvement in order to determine which leadership traits and attributes are effective in assisting schools move away from further sanctions under NCLB. There will be approximately 20 principals and other site leaders participating in individual interviews as part of this study. The purpose of this study is to examine and identify some of the key leadership attributes shared by leaders in California middle schools formerly designated as in Program Improvement in order to determine which leadership traits and attributes are effective in assisting schools move away from further sanctions under NCLB. Accordingly, the middle schools researched in this study will be schools which have exited Program Improvement status.

If you agree to be in this study, the following will take place:

You will participate in an interview about their experiences working at a middle level school which has exited Program Improvement. The interview will be conducted sometime between May 17, 2012 and June 15, 2012. The interview administration will be in-depth, and will be conducted in English. The researcher, who is also a credentialed teacher and school administrator, will ask the questions. The interviews will be held in a location that is mutually agreed upon by the principal and researcher (school office or neutral off-site location).

Participation in this study may involve some added risks or discomforts. These include:
1. A potential for the loss of confidentiality. This is highly unlikely since no names will be used. Research records will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law. Research records may be reviewed by the UCSD Institutional Review Board.
2. The interview is in-depth; there is a possibility the participants may become bored or fatigued. Because the interview is voluntary, participants may skip a question or discontinue the interview if this occurs.
3. The administration of this interview and its contents do not, in any way, create a risk for the principal or his/her students or faculty. The results are in no way related to any evaluation or judgment of the staff member or students.

Because this is a research study, there may also be some unknown risks that are currently unforeseeable. You will be informed of any significant findings.

There may or may not be a direct benefit to participants from participating in this study. The interview may serve participants to reflect on how they feel about school (leadership, instruction, extracurricular activities, relationships, etc.) The researcher may learn more about how to best provide a school environment that fosters transformational leadership and society may benefit from this knowledge.

Your participation in the interview is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in the interview at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled.

You will be told if any important new information is found during the course of this study that may affect your wanting to continue.

There is no compensation or cost for you participating in this study.

Tim Heck has explained this study to you and answered your questions. If you have any additional questions or research-related problems, you may reach Tim Heck at (760) 443-7909. You may call the Human Research Protections Program Office at (858) 455-5050 to inquire about your rights as a research subject or to report research-related problems.

You have received a copy of this consent document.

I agree to participate in the interview.

_____   _____
Subject's signature   Witness   Date

University of California, San Diego
Consent to Act as a Research Subject

The Promise of Transformational Leadership for Closing the Achievement Gap

Tim Heck, under the supervision of Dr. Amanda Datnow, Professor and Chair, UCSD Education Studies, with approval of the San Diego Unified School District, is conducting a research study to find out about the key leadership attributes shared by educational leaders in California middle level schools formerly designated as in Program Improvement in order to determine which leadership traits and attributes are effective in assisting schools move away from further sanctions under NCLB. There will be approximately 20 site leaders participating in individual interviews as part of this study. The purpose of this study is to examine and identify some of the key leadership attributes shared by educational leaders in California middle schools formerly designated as in Program Improvement in order to determine which leadership traits and attributes are effective in assisting schools move away from further sanctions under NCLB. Accordingly, the middle schools researched in this study will be schools which have exited Program Improvement status.

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2. The interview is in-depth; there is a possibility the participants may become bored or fatigued. Because the interview is voluntary, participants may skip a question or discontinue the interview if this occurs.
3. The administration of this interview and its contents do not, in any way, create a risk for the principal or his/her students or faculty. The results are in no way related to any evaluation or judgment of the staff member or students.

Because this is a research study, there may also be some unknown risks that are currently unforeseeable. You will be informed of any significant findings.

There may or may not be a direct benefit to participants from participating in this study. The interview may serve participants to reflect on how they feel about school (leadership, instruction, extracurricular activities, relationships, etc.) The researcher may learn more about how to best provide a school environment that fosters transformational leadership and society may benefit from this knowledge.

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You have received a copy of this consent document.

I agree to participate in the interview.

_____   _____
Subject's signature   Witness   Date

University of California, San Diego
Consent to Act as a Research Subject

The Promise of Transformational Leadership for Closing the Achievement Gap

Tim Heck, under the supervision of Dr. Amanda Datnow, Professor and Chair, UCSD Education Studies, with approval of the Bonsall Union School District, is conducting a research study to find out about the key leadership attributes shared by educational leaders in California middle level schools formerly designated as in Program Improvement in order to determine which leadership traits and attributes are effective in assisting schools move away from further sanctions under NCLB. There will be approximately 20 site leaders participating in individual interviews as part of this study. The purpose of this study is to examine and identify some of the key leadership attributes shared by educational leaders in California middle schools formerly designated as in Program Improvement in order to determine which leadership traits and attributes are effective in assisting schools move away from further sanctions under NCLB. Accordingly, the middle schools researched in this study will be schools which have exited Program Improvement status.

If you agree to be in this study, the following will take place:

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Participation in this study may involve some added risks or discomforts. These include:
1. A potential for the loss of confidentiality. This is highly unlikely since no names will be used. Research records will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law. Research records may be reviewed by the UCSD Institutional Review Board.
2. The interview is in-depth; there is a possibility the participants may become bored or fatigued. Because the interview is voluntary, participants may skip a question or discontinue the interview if this occurs.
3. The administration of this interview and its contents do not, in any way, create a risk for the principal or his/her students or faculty. The results are in no way related to any evaluation or judgment of the staff member or students.

Because this is a research study, there may also be some unknown risks that are currently unforeseeable. You will be informed of any significant findings.

There may or may not be a direct benefit to participants from participating in this study. The interview may serve participants to reflect on how they feel about school (leadership, instruction, extracurricular activities, relationships, etc.) The researcher may learn more about how to best provide a school environment that fosters transformational leadership and society may benefit from this knowledge.

Your participation in the interview is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in the interview at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled.

You will be told if any important new information is found during the course of this study that may affect your wanting to continue.

There is no compensation or cost for you participating in this study.

Tim Heck has explained this study to you and answered your questions. If you have any additional questions or research-related problems, you may reach Tim Heck at (760) 443-7909. You may call the Human Research Protections Program Office at (858) 455-5050 to inquire about your rights as a research subject or to report research-related problems.

You have received a copy of this consent document.

I agree to participate in the interview.

_____   _____
Subject's signature   Witness   Date

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO
AUDIO RECORDING RELEASE CONSENT FORM

As part of this project, an audio recording will be made of you during your participation in this research project. Please indicate below the uses of these audio recordings to which you are willing to consent. This is completely voluntary and up to you. In any use of the audio recording, your name will not be identified. You may request to stop the recording at any time or to erase any portion of your recording.

1.   The audio recording can be studied by the research team for use in the research project.

2.   The audio recording can be used for scientific publications.

3.   The audio recording can be reviewed at meetings of scientists interested in the study of Transformation Leadership in Schools Exiting Program Improvement.

4.   The audio recording can be reviewed in classrooms to students.

5.   The audio recording can be reviewed in public presentations to non-scientific groups.

6.   The audio recording can be used on television and radio.

You have the right to request that the recording be stopped or erased in full or in part at any time.

You have read the above description and give your consent for the use of audio recording as indicated above.

_____
Witness   Date

_____
Signature   Date

APPENDIX F: PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The Promise of Transformational Leadership for Closing the Achievement Gap

Date	
Time of Interview	
Place	
Interviewer	
Participant	
Title	
School	
School District	

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The purpose of this study is to examine and identify some of the key leadership attributes shared by educational leaders in California middle schools formerly designated as in Program Improvement in order to determine which leadership traits and attributes are effective in assisting schools move away from further sanctions under NCLB. Accordingly, the middle schools researched in this study will be schools that have exited Program Improvement status.

Your interview data will be kept confidential, available only to the researcher for analysis purposes. Only the researcher and a professional transcriptionist will listen to and transcribe the information you provide. The audio tapes will be destroyed following final analysis; no later than June, 2013.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and may be withdrawn at any time. If the length of the interview becomes inconvenient, you may stop at any time. There are no consequences if you decide not to participate.

Questions:
General:

1. Tell me a about yourself. What is your position at this school? What are your responsibilities?

2. In your opinion, what does leadership on a middle school campus look like?

3. Please describe your personal leadership style. Include how you influence, motivate, stimulate, and give each person consideration.

4. How do you attempt to get performance beyond normal expectations from teachers?

5. What steps have you taken to ensure that teachers have an active role in carrying out the school vision?

Cultural, Academic and Social Expectations
6. Within the context of education and the middle school specifically, what is/are your goals for the school?

7. Do you think educators (teachers, counselors, administration, etc.) at this school believe all students can learn? Please provide some specific example/evidence.

8. Do the educators at this school challenge all students academically? Please provide example(s).

9. What happens if teachers don't provide their best or effective instruction? What are the consequences or interventions?

10. What happens if they don't behave in an appropriate/acceptable manner?

11. What are the three most important values you demonstrate as a leader? Tell me a story that demonstrates each of these leadership values in practice within your workplace.

Opportunities for Participation and Contribution

12. At this school, what are your expectations of teacher leaders?

13. Are they involved in any activities on campus? Please tell me about them.

14. How do you give faculty members individualized consideration to best align them with their talents?

15. What would you like to see your district leadership do to better support your leadership or the development of your leadership skills?

Caring and Supportive Relationships

16. How do you seek to build positive relationships?

17. In what ways do you empower your teachers?

18. How do you get teachers to transcend their own self-interests and support your vision?

19. How do you think the staff would characterize you as a leader?

20. What would the staff's characterization tell me about you as a leader?

Conclusion

21. Please explain just how your school moved out of Program Improvement.

22. Is there any other pertinent information that you would like to share?

23. If further questions should arise, may I contact you again?

APPENDIX G: TEACHER LEADER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The Promise of Transformational Leadership for Closing the Achievement Gap

Date	
Time of Interview	
Place	
Interviewer	
Participant	
Title	
School	
School District	

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The purpose of this study is to examine and identify some of the key leadership attributes shared by educational leaders in California middle schools formerly designated as in Program Improvement in order to determine which leadership traits and attributes are effective in assisting schools move away from further sanctions under NCLB. Accordingly, the middle schools researched in this study will be schools that have exited Program Improvement status.

Your interview data will be kept confidential, available only to the researcher for analysis purposes. Only the researcher and a professional transcriptionist will listen to and transcribe the information you provide. The audio tapes will be destroyed following final analysis; no later than June, 2013.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and may be withdrawn at any time. If the length of the interview becomes inconvenient, you may stop at any time. There are no consequences if you decide not to participate.

Questions:
General:

1. Tell me a about yourself. What is your position at this school? What are your responsibilities?

2. In your opinion, what does leadership on a middle school campus look like?

3. What are some of your principal's best leadership characteristics?

4. Could you please share what your definition of teacher leadership is?

5. In what ways does your principal support teacher leadership on your campus?

6. Please describe your personal leadership style. Include how you influence, motivate, stimulate, and give each person consideration.

7. How do you attempt to get performance beyond normal expectations from fellow teachers?

Cultural, Academic and Social Expectations
8. Within the context of education and the middle school specifically, what is/are your goals for the school?

9. Do you think educators (teachers, counselors, administration, etc.) at this school believe all students can learn? Please provide some specific example/evidence.

10. Do the educators at this school challenge all students academically? Please provide example(s).

11. What steps has your principal taken to ensure that teachers have an active role in carrying out the school vision?

12. What happens if teachers don't provide their best or effective instruction? What are the consequences or interventions?

13. What happens if they don't behave in an appropriate/acceptable manner?

14. What are the three most important values you demonstrate as a teacher leader? Tell me a story that demonstrates each of these leadership values in practice within your workplace.

Opportunities for Participation and Contribution

15. At this school, what are the expectations of teacher leaders?

16. Are they involved in any activities on campus? Please tell me about them.

17. What would you like to see your principal do to better support your leadership or the development of your leadership skills?

18. How do you give other faculty members individualized consideration to best align them with their talents?

Caring and Supportive Relationships

19. How do you seek to build positive relationships?

20. How do you think the staff would characterize you as a teacher leader?

21. What would the staff's characterization tell me about you as a teacher leader?

22. In what ways does the principal empower you?

Conclusion

23. Please explain just how your school moved out of Program Improvement.

24. Is there any other pertinent information that you would like to share?

25. If further questions should arise, may I contact you again?

APPENDIX H: DISTRICT OFFICIAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The Promise of Transformational Leadership for Closing the Achievement Gap

Date	
Time of Interview	
Place	
Interviewer	
Participant	
Title	
School	
School District	

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The purpose of this study is to examine and identify some of the key leadership attributes shared by educational leaders in California middle schools formerly designated as in Program Improvement in order to determine which leadership traits and attributes are effective in assisting schools move away from further sanctions under NCLB. Accordingly, the middle schools researched in this study will be schools that have exited Program Improvement status.

Your interview data will be kept confidential, available only to the researcher for analysis purposes. Only the researcher and a professional transcriptionist will listen to and transcribe the information you provide. The audio tapes will be destroyed following final analysis; no later than June, 2013.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and may be withdrawn at any time. If the length of the interview becomes inconvenient, you may stop at any time. There are no consequences if you decide not to participate.

Questions:

Idealized Influence:

24. Please describe the principal's leadership style. Include did they influence others?

25. How did the principal attempt to get performance beyond normal expectations from teachers?

Individualized Consideration

1. What steps did the principal take to ensure that teachers had an active role in carrying out the school vision?

2. How did the principal give faculty members individualized consideration to best align them with their talents?

Inspirational Motivation

1. What are the three most important values the principal demonstrated as a leader? Tell me a story that demonstrates each of these leadership values in practice within the principal's school site while exiting PI.

2. How did the principal seek to build positive relationships?

Intellectual Stimulation

1. In what ways did the principal empower his or her teachers?

2. How did the principal get teachers to transcend their own self-interests and support his or her vision?

Conclusion

1. Please explain just how this school moved out of Program Improvement.

2. Is there any other pertinent information that you would like to share?

3. If further questions should arise, may I contact you again?

APPENDIX I: EXCERPTS FOR INTER-RATERS

1. And as I moved into this position here in Dodgson, it is more of that teamwork, bring the team together, build the background, get the information, and really ask people to tell me their strengths.

2. And if you can get the team and build that team, that relationship part…you can have people help you. You don't have to do it all on your own.

3. …five times a year, come together for two and a half hours where the entire district would come together. So we were all – this is the same team. This was the same message that everyone was getting. It wasn't just that principal. But we were all a team.

4. From there we took those visions statements and we took them into our governance team with our parents and the teachers, and we said here are the three vision statements we have so far. Now it's your turn. Please take these, revise, change, do whatever you think needs to be done. By doing this, everybody in the school had an opportunity to put their hands on, their thinking into whatever was going to come out as the final piece.

5. Of course we collaborate. Yesterday we met for PD and all sat together and talked about our at-risk students…And then we get together and decide strategies that would help these kids succeed.

6. I feel so supported by my administration. I mean, it's – I just – I know they have my back. I know like, just – I get a lot of positive feedback from them, which helps… I feel so comfortable.

7. So I think my biggest focus that year was just creating camaraderie…just showing them that I was here to help them and be a level of – you know, a level of support.

8. We realized the theme was going to be collaboration. We were forced – I mean, for lack of a better term, we were forced, as most teachers would see it, to work together.

9. …a lot of it has to do with the collaboration. It had to with the – these meetings, getting together, giving us time to collaborate, [and] seeing results.

10. And then with communication, I put that, you know, once we started collaboration, we started seeing scores go up. And student success went up.

11. And if everybody could collaborate and learn and share their own ideas, you can really kick a school higher, I think.

12. …I think for leadership it really starts with just high expectations of your staff, of your classified, of your students, of your community. I'm just thinking of having the highest expectations for everybody involved is the first thing.

13. I think a leader is one who says it and follows through with it and, you know, the time, the place, the setting, [and] the expectations.

14. …we had basically no consistency whatsoever…in the past there [was] a lot of, you know, 'we'll get to it, we'll get to it. We'll get to the data.' We'd never get to it.

15. She [the principal] had her nose in all of our business. There was accountability. Like we – things had to be turned in. Things had to be looked at.

16. I know this sounds cliché, but holding somebody accountable for what they do or keeping them – the situation.

17. ...when you say oh, 'did you do this? Is it working? Yes or no? Oh, what did you do that worked?' It's just little conversations.

18. …they [the students] hold themselves accountable. Because once they've done their assignment, then they – I've shown them how to run their own reports. I've shown them how to create their own grade….It's not only teaching them just about math; it's teaching them how to be accountable.

19. And so when people became more aware that their peers' performance was being gauged on some these different measures, then they themselves wanted to align.

20. And the board members know which teachers have kids that haven't performed or aren't showing growth. And they [the teachers] don't want to be there. They don't want to be on that list. (Interviewer) Yeah, that's good. That's accountability right there. (Interviewee) I guess the real thing is, again, the challenge to them and stuff, and that they've risen to the challenge. And they continue to, you know, want to do – to do better in a time when there isn't money.

21. …the Common Core as a positive change to make the accountability easier.

22. So that, you know, kind of changing the mindset of the purpose and really carrying that mission/vision of, you know, we're not going to get academic excellence by doing what we used to do.

23. …part of the structure was really just changing up how they did things, where they're more on their toes.

24. When I got here, this mission statement was literally an entire paragraph long that nobody could tell me what this mission statement was. It was extremely wordy and unclear. And so I basically asked people in a staff meeting, I said were going

to stop, and I'd like everybody to write down the mission of our school, please. Nobody really could.

25. And what I think will help tremendously in it is all the planning we've done already... Now we just are – the structure is changing that multiple choiceness to the critical thinking and explaining yourself.

26. I mean, I'm organized…and the kids thrive on it. Yeah, they love structure….I think I definitely have people coming to me with, you know, 'oh, help me get organized.' So I think my organization skills are pretty good.

27. And it's sad to say, but when the boss is away, the mice will play….But once the consistency came and once the 'this is how we're going to do it' came, then, sure enough, the success came.

28. And I believe we had like a 24 [or] 25 point jump in seventh grade, just by looking at the release questions. You know, going from a concept order to actually looking at the standard and then actually looking at the release questions….And I believe it came from Justin, you know. Justin came in with a formula.

29. There's nothing at the middle school level, other than very specialized classes like band or language, that I feel a leader shouldn't be able to come in and model strong instruction in every room, every class. I really want that person who is an academic leader.

30. I think leading by example, so being present, being visible, going in classroom, being aware of what the teachers are doing, and what reality is. That's important to me.

31. …I think, above and beyond is just to provide examples of what that [the best thing to do] is. You know, I think we can say do more, but if you don't show them what doing more is, it probably falls on deaf ears…I'm a believer in you lead by example…But I just think you have to model for—for them for—to get higher expectations, you have to model what that looks like first and then follow through.

32. …when you look at what demonstrates a teacher leader, a teacher leader is somebody that another teacher can look at and go, 'wow, they're doing something right.' Okay?

33. So it wasn't only that she [the principal] really provided a great model for the teachers, but it was set to the point that she went and put in time and instruction herself?

34. So part of that leadership style is I jump in. If they're going to go visit somewhere, I cover their class. You know, 'I'm going to be gone for just two periods.' Hey, I'll do the algebra and be able to – and they see that you want to roll up your sleeves and get to it. Or I did a math club for an hour and a half every day after school that first year just because I knew the teachers were already doing before school, lunchtime and stuff. So then they came in and saw 50 kids in here and said, 'can't we come in and help you?' Yeah. So they see you do it, and they see it working, and therefore the proof is in the pudding.

35. And so it was a lot of training that way and really giving them…I would model for them…a parent is really concerned about this or they want to ask why I'm doing this, then we'd role model, role play.

36. I like to lead by example. I don't ask teachers to do things that are unrealistic, that I don't feel that I could do myself…And so I think that I am a person that leads by example.

37. And then I created a key for them, and then I model for them how to highlight each of their students' names in a way that was comprehensible and not going to take more of their time than should be. But I don't like to just hand people something and say, 'here, do this.' So I do try as much as I can to have a model in place so that they can see it and then work with it in a more effective manner.

38. So by showing the data, explaining myself, and being up front, that – you know, no secrets.

39. There was a new superintendent in town. And, you know, the data-driven component and being able to say, 'hey, you have 50 percent of your kids blow blah, blah, blah, blah.' So the idea is to show them [the teachers] how to read the data. And once they started seeing it and they saying, 'you know what, let's not look how it reflects to you. Let's look at growth and learning.' And so when we could say, 'here's the data, here's what they had, where are we moving them,' and then actually have organized our PD Thursdays.

40. …one of the things we had started doing in the district is sharing the data.

41. …another influence the principal had that was really powerful, was [that] she made sure that the teachers shared individual data with students.

42. Say, for example, you know, we realized, ok, if we are in a standards-based system, we have to start with assessment. So let's apply technology to the assessment. And that gave us incredibly much deeper data than we'd ever

had….Because we had – you know, that depth of data showed us that we had a wide array and a continuum of mastery in each class.

43. And there starts to become more of a focus on data…you have to have data to back up your instruction. So kind of a data-driven-type focus.

44. …if this teacher is successful enough to push these kids and – and if data is driving that they are an effective teacher, that's pretty impressive.

45. I think he's a really good superintendent, which is really data-driven. Because I don't think before we paid much attention that that. (Interviewer) Okay. So I'm hearing a lot about data…

46. Another things that I thought was real…was we would go through our rosters. And this is all data-wise. We'd go through and figure out, okay, we need to move all the kids into proficient. Right?

47. So basically, Data Director is just – it's basically an – it's an online data pool. And it has their benchmark information, their CST information…So we use it. And we use it. We look at results. We look to see where kids are. We look to see where gaps are. And that really – I mean, when I – when we really got out of program improvement, we looked at CST data, and we really focused on not subgroups but specific situations.

48. I'm calling those parents. I mean, I am on those – calling those parents. I even had recently a parent latterly leave me a message and say, 'do not call me anymore.'…So, you know, there isn't much that a parent can say to me – about the program.

49. …in the program I run, you know, I always tell parents, you know, I want your child to learn.

50. We have a community that wants to see well – the students do well. So parents are highly involved here

51. Every teacher has their grades online. We have access to it to the parents through – it's called Student Connect. So there's no surprises life, for the parents, when they say 'what's the homework?' It's online.

52. …as I speak of parents, I've included parents in on some of our conversations with teacher and teacher practice

53. And we did trainings with parents on here's what the CST means and here's what the results are.

54. So what I'm saying is [that] you get your parents behind you. And you get a lot of muscle by having the parents with you on a lot of things that come through…So you really leverage parents to help you get things done.

55. The student-teacher relationship to me is a situation where the students trust you or the students are comfortable, they respect you, where your subject matter knowledge is obviously good enough for them to succeed. And then the trust and -- trust and respect relationship between teacher and student is good enough that they want to produce for you. And if the students don't trust you or respect you as a leader and as their teacher, then you're not going to get anything out of them.

56. You need to have leadership over your students. And I feel like that includes

respect, but just like that you have a good grasp on what's going on in your school. I think that's important. And I think it's important that you -- leadership, to me, shows that your staff will do what you say and respect -- respect the wants and needs of the principal and vice principals. But the students are respectful, too, and following the rules. To me, that's how you know a school is well run, you know, when your staff is respectful in doing what they're supposed to be doing and as well as the students, too.

57. …the way I treat kids with respect, you're going to get the respect back from them. And my eighth-period class, they -- they can be a little out of control. But I instill into them the respect, and the fact that a guest teacher is even more important than I am in this classroom, because you're representing me and you're representing us. And so if you disrespectful to a guest teacher, then it's being disrespectful to yourself. And there's constant talk of that.

58. Well, I think respect, in the sense of showing my students respect. And that -- I mean, that's very vague, but just I think respect in who they are, how they dress, how they speak, how they present their work. You know, everybody is different.

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