A Comparative Study on Graduates from an Educational Leadership Management and Policy Program at a Local Catholic University and how Selected Leadership Responsibilities Influence their Perceptions in Daily Practice

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON GRADUATES FROM AN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP MANAGEMENT AND POLICY PROGRAM AT A LOCAL CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY AND HOW SELECTED LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES INFLUENCE THEIR PERCEPTIONS IN DAILY PRACTICE

BY

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Education Seton Hall University 2008
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this three-part qualitative study was to investigate the perceptions principals had with their professional training based on selected leadership responsibilities that strongly correlated to student achievement. From the Marzano et al. (2005) quantitative study, the researcher selected the five strongest correlated responsibilities to use as a foundation for this work. The categories under investigation were, flexibility, outreach and discipline, monitoring/evaluating and situational awareness. Twenty-five district superintendents were solicited throughout northern and central New Jersey. Eight superintendents agreed to allow this researcher access to district principals. Nineteen prekindergarten to grade twelve principals participated in the study. Four were from a local catholic university and fifteen were from other graduate programs. Principals first completed a short demographic survey, agreed to an observation and then a follow-up open-ended interview. The average time spent at any one site was approximately 7 hours. This study attempted to compare and examine graduate perceptions and behavior based on leadership responsibilities that connected to their training and preparation. Principal’s individual on the job behaviors compared with perceptions was generally similar. Other factors such as NCLB accountability seemed to influence the outcome of certain leadership responsibilities. The overall findings were somewhat inconclusive therefore; recommendations for continued research were presented. Finally, there were two leadership responsibilities that seemed to imply preparation programs did prepare graduates to meet the needs of 21st century schools, they were flexibility and situational awareness.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr. Gutmore, thank you for your patience, your wisdom, your understanding and guidance. Your mentorship has been truly an experience that helped to develop untapped editorial skills. Dr. Mitchell, thank you for providing the opportunity to re-enroll and move from ABD. Dr. Jennings, my deepest appreciation goes to you and your family, June and Thayer. Thank you for your hospitality and friendship. This process would not have been attainable without your assistance. Dr. Pryor, thank you for remembering my initial request over 10 years ago and for your continued support. My gratitude goes out to all who have played a roll in this process and achievement.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Lorraine Marie Justice (1926 – 1964) who always encouraged educational achievement and noted in my junior high school yearbook; Dear Chris, May the fire of ambition that burns within you be quenched in the halls of knowledge.

This is also dedicated to my daughter Jerilyn Renae Maire, who is encouraged to follow her dreams without limitation.

Psalm 95: 1-3

O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation, Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Over the last 30 years, findings from the research and analysis of university preparation programs and the resultant criticism of these programs have been consistent. In one significant study, Achilles (2005) highlighted the inability of university preparation programs to transition from a theoretically based to a practically based training platform. In another key study, Levine (2005) reported that future school leaders have difficulty building the required knowledge base as students in graduate school educational leadership programs that will guide them in their efforts to negotiate reform and school improvement. Based upon the findings of studies such as these, Elmore (2003) recommended that graduate programs focus upon practice by teaching the essentials of school management.

In their survey of the impact of selected responsibilities on school improvement and student achievement, Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) identified 21 leadership categories that significantly correlate to academic reform according to their level and order of change. Their findings complemented those of other researchers who have found that effective leaders understand the key stages of change (Cotton, 2003; Marzano, 2003, 2004; Reeves, 2006) as well as both the caliber of change and the skill level needed to translate that change into effective practice, depending upon the context of the school setting (Marzano et al., 2005; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003).

In this study, I investigated and compared the thoughts and behaviors of graduates of cohort and/or traditional educational programs at a local Catholic university and the graduates of other educational programs at other types of educational institutions. I also solicited principal perceptions to determine whether there is a relationship between
leadership preparation and on-the-job conduct and conducted further research into the leadership responsibilities that Marzano et al. identified in their 2005 study. To facilitate this process, I based my study upon the grounded theory principles introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and improved upon by Creswell (1998), Denzin and Lincoln (1994), Haig (1995), and Strauss and Corbin (1998) to enhance the rigor and credibility of my analysis.

I present my research in five chapters. In chapter 1, I introduce my research by describing the research problem, purpose of the study, research questions, limitations of the study, definition of the terms, and significance of the study. In chapter 2, I provide a review of related literature on my area of inquiry. In chapter 3, I describe my research methodology, population, design, procedures, instruments, and means of data collection before presenting a summary. In chapter 4, I report and discuss the findings of the study in order to provide insight into my area of inquiry. In chapter 5, I discuss the results before summarizing the study and providing recommendations for educational leaders and institutions and suggestions for future research.

**Statement of the Problem**

The study’s complexity is in part a reflection of the scrutiny that has been given to the data collected on the investigation of university programs (Achilles, 1994, 2005; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004; Levine, 2005). My research into the data led me to ask the following question: Have formal preparation programs in higher education institutions adequately trained today's principals to meet the demands of the 21st century? I desired to determine whether, as Achilles (1994) had reported, “Practicing administrators claimed their educational preparation classes did little to provide useful
information for the job” (p. 164) and, referring to studies by Brown, Markus, and Lucas (1988) and Pitner (1988), concluded, “Education programs provided no opportunity for applying theoretical knowledge to the field” (p. 167). In accordance with Achilles’ (1994) and Marzano’s (2003) findings on leadership, Waters and Grubb (2004) concluded,

Many principal leaders have difficulties in identifying the right work to do. . . .

Leaders today lack the experiential knowledge of knowing why something is important. They also lack the declarative knowledge of knowing what to do when they find something is important. Today’s leaders lack the procedural knowledge of knowing when and how to do the right work. (pp. 2–7)

Today’s leaders require the critical knowledge base necessary to lead and implement change. However, in the reality of daily practice, many leaders concede that “urgency often trumps what is important in schools to what is essential and even more challenging” (Waters & Grubb, 2004, p. 6). Researchers continue to seek different means of supporting effective leadership practice. In their studies, Copeland (2001), Elmore (2000), Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2001), and Whitaker (2003) identified strategies aimed at resolving many of the systemic leadership concerns persistent in today’s schools. Their collective research supported Waters and Grubb’s (2004) suggestion that in “sharing responsibilities to help in fulfilling essential leadership needs,” principals should begin to find “the right work to do (p. 6).”

Many researchers have suggested that principals alone cannot fulfill all the leadership responsibilities required for managing schools and increasing school improvement and student achievement. Elmore (2004) reported that several levels of complexity have been added to the process of change, requiring enhancement of the
leader's knowledge and performance. Elmore explained, "To be successful the educational leader must understand and recognize the improvement phase in which the school is involved. Leaders have to understand it is necessary to develop a leadership team that will accept distributed responsibilities" (p. 11) before concluding "knowing the right thing to do is a central concern for addressing school improvement and managing for successful change" (p. 9).

Marzano et al. (2005) proposed an association between effective leadership practices and behaviors and the fulfillment of leadership responsibilities (Cotton, 2003; Marzano, 2003, 2004). Marzano et al.'s examination of 21 key leadership responsibilities allowed them to identify what are the "right things" to do. When they quantitatively associated subsequent responsibilities with school improvement and student achievement in their study of more than 2,800 public school principals, they found that "the correlation between the average leadership behavior of the principal and the average academic achievement of students in the school is $r = .25$" (p. 30), with .25 representing the 50th percentile in student achievement and leadership ability.

Marzano et al. (2005) identified the following 21 leadership responsibilities and their correlations with average student academic achievement:

1. Affirmation, $r = .19$
2. Change agent, $r = .25$
3. Contingent rewards, $r = .24$
4. Communication, $r = .23$
5. Culture, $r = .25$
6. Discipline, $r = .27$
7. Flexibility, $r = .28$
8. Focus, $r = .24$
9. Ideals/beliefs, $r = .22$
10. Inputs, $r = .25$
11. Intellectual stimulation, $r = .24$
12. Involvement in curriculum and instruction, $r = .20$
13. Knowledge of curriculum and instruction, $r = .25$
14. Monitoring/Evaluating, $r = .27$
15. Optimizer, $r = .20$
16. Order, $r = .25$
17. Outreach, $r = .27$
18. Relationships, $r = .18$
19. Resources, $r = .25$
20. Situational Awareness, $r = .33$
21. Visibility, $r = .20$

Marzano et al. (2005) found an average correlation of $r = .25$ between the independent variable of leadership practice and the dependent variables of school reform and student achievement. Similar research conducted over the last 25 years has established that effective school leaders play an important role in school improvement (Beck & Murphy, 1996) and (Cotton, 2003). Because successful leadership is essential for developing effective schools, the quality of principal preparation and training is important for higher education institutions and society in general (Bell, 2005). I provide further discussion and analysis of the quantitative associations between the five strongest
associated leadership responsibilities to student achievement in chapter 3 when I describe my research methodology.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this three-part qualitative study was to discover the influence, if any, of the five most strongly correlated responsibilities to school improvement on the perceptions of graduates of an educational preparation program at a local Catholic university and the perceptions of graduates of other educational preparation programs at other educational institutions. I attempted to investigate significant issues regarding principal perceptions and behavior in order to gain understanding of the connection between theoretical training and practice and investigate principal behaviors that have been shown necessary to foster and sustain achievement and school improvement (Leithwood et al., 2004, as cited in Laine, 2005).

My research focused upon graduates’ attitudes and behaviors toward selected leadership responsibilities. Using feedback from graduates, I attempted to identify whether graduates from an educational, leadership, and management policy program (ELMP) at a local Catholic university had developed stronger leadership responsibilities than had graduates of other public or private universities. The five classes of responsibility I examined and their correlations with average student academic achievement were situational awareness, $r = .33$; discipline, $r = .27$; monitoring and evaluation, $r = .27$; flexibility, $r = .28$; and outreach, $r = .27$. I attempted to determine whether the perceptions of a Catholic university's graduates aligned with their behaviors to determine whether successful leadership training results in successful leadership practice (Cotton, 2003; Levine, 2005; Marzano, 2003, 2004; Marzano et al., 2005).
Finally, I attempted to determine whether a preparation program equipped principals with the general knowledge base required to manage critical stages of change. Specifically, I examined whether a private Catholic university and its preparation program supplied principals with the knowledge required to manage schools in the 21st century (Pierce & Stapleton, 2003). To do so, I observed and conducted open-ended interviews with ELMP graduates of a local Catholic university and graduates of other university preparation programs, all of whom worked as principals in a public setting.

To guide my research, I attempted to answer the following research questions, which addressed the five leadership responsibilities that have the strongest connection to student achievement (Marzano et al., 2005):

1. What perceptions do graduates have of the leadership category of flexibility?
2. Is a graduate’s educational preparation correlated to his or her leadership ability based upon the leadership category of outreach?
3. Do cohort, traditional, or other graduates respond differently to their training and preparation based upon the leadership category of discipline?
4. What perceptions do graduates have of the leadership category of monitoring and evaluating?
5. Do a graduate’s race or ethnicity, gender, years of experience, years of experience at present school, and age significantly influence his or her situational awareness?

Limitations of the Study

I limited my data collection for this study to the data relevant to the research questions. My sample was limited to principals who had graduated from or were currently enrolled in cohort or traditional programs at a local Catholic university or at
other educational institutions. Because I limited this study to the ELMP program, its findings and conclusions may not be applicable to the general university population. This study was limited by the methods that I used for the collection of data and my interpretation of data was limited to the skills and knowledge that I possess. Finally, this study was limited by the sample size, as is further explained in chapter 3.

Delimitations of the Study

This study was confined to my observations of, interviews with, and demographic data collected from 19 building principals employed by prekindergarten through Grade 12 (PK-12) public school districts in the state of New Jersey.

Definition of Terms

*Cohort:* A group of students or graduates from an educational institution who share the same courses, periods of attendance, and experiences within a predetermined time frame (Quigley, 2005).

*Grounded theory:* A theory inductively generated from fieldwork that emerges from a researcher's observations and interviews in the field rather than in the laboratory or the academy (Patton, 2002).

*Knowledge taxonomy:* Classification of the types of knowledge, which in this study consisted of the 21 leadership responsibilities (Waters & Grubb, 2004).

*Leadership:* Activities tied to the core work of an organization designed by organizational members to influence the motivation, knowledge, affect, and practices of other organizational members (Spillane, 2005).
Meta-analysis: The statistical procedure for combining data from multiple studies when the treatment effect (or effect size) is consistent from one study to the next (Cooper & Hedges, 1994; Hunt, 1997).

Preparation program: For the purposes of this study, a university program that may not or may not be cohort-based that prepares principals to meet the demands of their position in the 21st century (Hale & Moorman, 2003).

Responsibilities: For the purposes of this study, features that define the standard operating procedures in a school (Marzano et al., 2005).

School administrator: For the purposes of this study, a principal of a public school building that serves grades PK-12 students who is considered the leader responsible for student learning (Hale & Moorman, 2003).

School improvement: as derived from No Child Left Behind Annual Yearly Progress (NCLB AYP) indicators such as daily attendance, dropout rate, school climate, grades, standardized tests, and local school assessments (New Jersey Department of Education [NJDOE], 2005) as well as recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) results (Perry, 2008).

Traditional program graduates: For the purposes of this study, graduates from a local Catholic university who enrolled at different times, completed various courses, and matriculated at their own pace (Quigley, 2005).

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies within its limitations and findings for a Catholic university and its educational preparation program. As the role of principals has become increasingly complex over the last decade (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Peterson, 2000),
district administrators and supporters of higher education have investigated ways to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and on-the-job practice (Newman, 2005). In this study, I determined whether graduates from a local Catholic university perceived that their preparation had significantly influenced their leadership behavior (Cotton, 2003) by recording the first-hand accounts of graduates on the quality of their training based upon selected leadership responsibilities (Marzano et al., 2005). I also attempted to determine whether there is a significant difference among the perceptions of cohort, traditional, and other graduates regarding their daily routines in their field of practice (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002). Finally, I attempted to determine whether cohort and traditional graduates responded in a manner appropriate to their training and leadership preparation (Quigley, 2005).

The findings of this study provide useful information to leadership programs as they continue to review and evaluate existing methods of training and establish new programs (Achilles, 2005). Effectively designed educational programs that successfully bridge the gap between theory and practice ensure that future leaders positively impact overall school management in PK-12 public school settings (Foundation for Educational Administration, 2006).
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter is divided into two sections to provide the appropriate review of the literature and background information necessary to understand the goal of this study. In the first section, I provide insight into and review of the quality of preparation programs in the context of theory and practice by discussing factors that influence whether educational preparation programs bridge the gap between theory and practice. In the second section, I review the leadership responsibilities related to school improvement and describe the behavioral indicators useful for the field practitioner. I also provide the background information necessary to gain a historical perspective of the ongoing national concern with the U.S. educational system and the conditions associated with student achievement and leadership, which have prompted investigation into whether preparation programs are adequately training their graduates for school leadership roles.

Preparation and Leadership

To provide insight into what a “new generation of school leaders should look like” (p. 13), Hale and Moorman (2003) researched effective leadership efforts that take a policy-focused approach in order to alter how educational leaders are prepared. In support of this effort, the Wallace Foundation, through its “Leaders Count” program, created the State Action for Educational Leadership Project (SAELP) consortium of national organizations that serve state policymakers, which is managed by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO; Hale & Moorman, 2003).

Graduate education programs that have received the highest marks for principal preparation that meets the demands of 21st century are cohort-based programs that serve between 20 and 25 students (Hale & Moorman, 2003). Fry, O'Neil, and Bottoms (2006)
and Levine (2005) suggested that much of the research evidence the supports school improvement and student achievement points to high-quality school leadership, arguing, “The education climate could not be more susceptible to change. Schools cannot wait for principal preparation programs to find solutions to their design problems on their own” (p. 15). A commitment of governors and state legislators to making the preparation of quality school leaders a state priority is essential, as is united leadership from higher education and public school leaders at the state and local levels (Spence, 2006).

In his study of principal and vice principal perceptions, Levine (2005) outlined nine indicators that influence the quality of educational preparation programs. Levine offered the following nine-point template to judge the quality of school leadership programs:

1. **Purpose**: The purpose is explicit and focused upon the education of practicing school leaders.

2. **Curricular coherence**: The curriculum mirrors program purposes and goals and is rigorous, coherent, and organized.

3. **Curricular balance**: The curriculum integrates the theory and practice of administration.

4. **Faculty composition**: The faculty includes academics and practitioners who are experts in their fields.

5. **Admissions**: The admissions criteria are designed to recruit students with the capacity and motivation to succeed.

6. **Degree**: The graduation standards are high and the degrees awarded are appropriate to the profession.
7. Research: The research carried out in the program is of high quality, driven by practice, and useful to practitioners and policymakers.

8. Finances: The resources are adequate to support the program.


Levine explained that a model program is one that meets all nine criteria.

Achilles (2005) criticized Levine's (2005) work as repetitive, citing similar research (Boyan, 1981; Erickson, 1979; Haller, 1979; Haller & Knapp, 1985; Hawley, 1988; Iannaccone, 1976) that questioned the quality of leadership preparation programs. Achilles contended that the educational preparation field "has known and been concerned about the quality of their research and leadership preparation for some time" (p. 9). Levine (2005) somewhat accorded with Achilles, suggesting that universities and educational researchers in general continue their current research and analysis of preparation program quality. By strengthening content through the use of in-depth mixed methodology that consists of surveys and questionnaires with follow-up interviews, practical applications to the theoretical approach can be grounded (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Several authors who come from a criterion research-based perspective have provided background information over the last 10 years regarding the evolution of preparation programs within universities that support leadership preparation and development. Lashway (1999) reported that educational preparation programs that have started to move in promising new directions include performance assessment, cohort programs, and higher standards. To provide a historical perspective, Lashway identified the following five early researchers and their leadership development efforts:
1. Murphy (1998) traced the history of leadership preparation and principal training from the 19th century to the early 20th century.


5. Danzig (1997) examined the value of practitioners' stories in the process of learning to lead.

Lashway concluded that preparation programs provide keen insights into the evolution of beliefs about school leadership from a past perspective.

Browne-Ferrigno (2001) conducted a case study that used a university-based principal preparation cohort model based upon the research of Norris and Barnett (1994) and Peel, Wallace, Buckner, Wrenn, and Evens (1998), who had found that "keeping students together as a unique group of learners . . . noticeably improved professional learning and skill development" (p. 5). Browne-Ferrigno focused upon the professional growth of educational practitioners who participated in a leadership preparation program, that differed from most programs in the study because the research was based on the evidence collected at the end of the program.

Barnett and Muth (2000) reported that case study findings imply that cohort programs tend to be more successful than traditional preparation programs because cohort programs perform the following:

1. Linked career aspirations with learner engagement.
2. Provide encouragement and support by mentors within the community of aspiring principals.

3. Provide a means of the conceptualization of the principalship as related to years of teaching experience.

4. Provide experiential learning and interaction with practicing administrators, which are critical to the socialization process in principal preparation.

5. Provide an environment from which many stimuli emerge to prompt professional transformation and ongoing community building activities needed for optimum learner benefit.

Differences in age and professional experiences of students negatively influenced learning opportunities within the cohort (Browne-Ferrigno, 2001).

Andrews and Grogan (2002) investigated the scope of the positions of principal and superintendent over the last 50 years. Regarding the position of principal in the current context, they asserted,

Effective principals were those who could assume multiple leadership roles and employ countless strategies successfully in order to survive and thrive personally and professionally while at the same time helping their schools to do the same for students and teachers. (p. 9)

Over the years, the role of the principal has evolved from a predominately managerial to more facilitative capacity. A facilitator is an instructional leader who focuses upon the teaching and learning processes within a school. In this respect, university-based programs should train aspiring principals to reconceptualize both their
knowledge base and learning methodology in order to address leadership reform (Andrews & Grogan, 2002).

Gerald Tirozzi (2001), former Executive Director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), recommended the transformation of principal preparation programs, criticizing them as “generally woefully lacking and often staffed by people who had very little, if any experience in school leadership” (as cited in Andrews & Grogan, 2002, p. 11). Several other studies conducted by the National Education Association (NEA; 2001) concluded that administrators provide inadequate support and that teachers often feel abandoned.

Andrews and Grogan (2002) recommended that the role of principal shift from that of manager to facilitator and that preparation programs should be redesigned to include the following:

1. Collaborative instructional leaders who work through transformational processes and conceptualize school-site leadership.

2. An essential knowledge base in accord with Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards organized around the problems of practice and delivered in collaboration with practitioners.

3. Opportunities for both novices and experts that are reflected while in-action and about-action.

4. A selection of a cohort of diverse and talented professional educators who have already demonstrated that they are reflective professionals who share a deep commitment to social justice.
5. Developmental evaluation processes that assess aspiring principals based upon their level of development.

5. An assurance that aspiring principals understand their ethical and moral obligations to create schools that promote and deliver social justice.

6. A critical mass of five to six faculty devoted to the preparation of new forms of leadership for schools.

Andrews and Grogan (2002) concluded that the nation needs a new generation of school-site leaders who build shared vision while working with others to make decisions necessary to improve American schools.

Aitken, Bedard, and Darroch (2003) investigated growing concerns relevant to the current context of educational leadership preparation. Although their research was based upon a university preparation program in Canada, the topics they considered are applicable to most colleges and universities in the United States. Their findings accorded with other research that has shown that educational leadership preparation experience difficulty related to content, alignment, relevance, and pedagogy. In particular, Elmore's (1999) distributive leadership theory "implied a shift from the idea that leadership emanated from a hierarchical position-power authority to a shared, collaborative form of leadership" (as cited in Aitken et al., p. 27).

One of Aitken et al.'s (2003) research questions—Does the program content and pedagogy of curriculum delivery match the evaluation of leadership programs within the last 15 years?—was a theme throughout their study. Addressing this question, they concluded,
The research cited significant shifts in contextual factors that had resulted in a need for preparation programs to have a foundation in preparing school leaders in relevant, purposeful content, pedagogy and curricula experiences. . . . Preparation programs need to develop knowledge, skills and dispositions toward school improvement, democratic and collaborative community and social justice. (pp. 31–35)

In their research, Hess and Kelly (2005) conducted a survey of 56 preparation programs to assess their effectiveness managing the following factors: (a) academic results, (b) personnel, (c) technical knowledge, (d) external leadership, (e) norms and values, (f) classroom instruction and leadership, and (g) school culture. Their findings suggested that preparation programs have difficulty providing aspiring principals with the skills and technical knowledge required to manage today's schools and that professors in educational administration have been slow to change. Because educational programs are preparing principals to manage schools as schools have traditionally been managed, many practicing principals are uncomfortable with the changing environment and less eager to experience new managerial freedoms.

Leadership Categories

In a study summarizing research from 81 different reports to identify how successful principals increase student achievement, Cotton (2003) identified 25 principal behaviors associated with school improvement. The following behaviors, which indirectly influence student opportunities to learn and teacher expectations for student achievement, are similar to the 21 leadership responsibilities identified by Marzano et al. (2005):
1. Provide a safe and orderly environment.

2. Maintain visions and goals focused upon high levels of student learning.


5. Maintain visibility and accessibility.

6. Promote a positive and supportive climate.

7. Promote communication and interaction.

8. Provide emotional and interpersonal support.

9. Promote parent and community outreach and involvement.

10. Engage in rituals, ceremonies, and other symbolic actions.

11. Promote shared leadership, decision making, and staff empowerment.

12. Promote collaboration.

13. Provide instructional leadership.

14. Promote ongoing pursuit of high levels of student learning.

15. Maintain the norm of continuous improvement.


17. Engage in classroom observation and provide feedback to teachers.

18. Provide support for teacher autonomy.

19. Provide support for risk taking.

20. Provide professional development opportunities and resources.

21. Provide support for instructional time.

22. Monitor student progress and share the findings.

23. Apply student progress measures for improving programs.
24. Recognize student and staff achievement.

25. Engage in role modeling.

Unlike Marzano et al. (2005), Cotton (2003) "did not quantitatively estimate the effect of principal leadership on student achievement" (Marzano et al., p. 25). Cotton's findings suggested "a strong relationship between student achievement and the degree of instructional leadership provided by the principal" (Cotton, p. 58). Marzano et al. (2005) recognized that the 21 principal responsibilities they had identified were similar to the 25 principal behaviors that Cotton had identified. Marzano et al. found significant correlations between the leadership responsibilities and school improvement associated with first- and second-order change. Their primary finding from their factor analysis was that "two traits or influencing conditions seemed to underlie the 21 responsibilities; these two factors were first and second-order change" (p. 65).

These 21 responsibilities must become part of the day-to-day management of the school to become first-order change dynamics (Marzano et al., 2005). Marzano et al. explained that principal behaviors and responsibilities merged with a community of ideals and beliefs in order to achieve a second-order change initiative:

First-order change is incremental; it is strongly considered as the next most obvious step to take in a school or district. Second-order change is anything but incremental; it involves dramatic departures from what is expected, both in the definition and solution of a given problem. (p. 65)

If school reform is to occur successfully, it must occur at the second-order change level. Coincidentally, second-order change is assigned exclusively to the principal in the role of the change agent.
Levine (2005) recommended a number of revisions in university preparation programs based upon a study that included several national surveys, 28 case studies, and a demographic study of schools and departments of education. Of the 1,800 principals surveyed, 41% responded regarding their own education, the education of the people they had hired, and their attitudes toward education in general. Levine selected specific preparation programs to reflect the “diversity of the nation's education schools by region, control, religion, race, gender, and Carnegie type. All factors were the traditional typology used to categorize institutions of higher education” (p. 9). As Levine examined university education programs and their capacity to educate principals in the skills and knowledge necessary to lead today's institutions, He consistently criticized educational administration programs as the “weakest of all the programs at the nation's education schools” (p.13).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of graduates regarding the leadership responsibilities identified by Marzano et al. (2005). My data-collection technique encompassed grounded theory principles to solicit participant reactions and review the model developed by Marzano (2003) in “What Works in Schools: Translating Research into Action.” This reform model identified the following 11 determining features subdivided into three major groups:

1. *School-level factors*, which include (a) a guaranteed and viable curriculum, (b) challenging goals and effective feedback, (c) parent and community involvement, (d) a safe and orderly environment, and (e) collegiality and professionalism.

2. *Teacher-level factors*, which include (a) instructional strategies, (b) classroom management, and (c) classroom curriculum design.
3. *Student-level factors*, which include (a) the home environment, (b) learned intelligence and background knowledge, and (c) motivation.

These 11 factors combined with 39 prospective action steps assist schools in the identification of work critical for academic success (Marzano, 2003). In this study, I applied the findings of the meta-analysis performed in Marzano et al.’s (2005) study to assist in the development of a 360-degree leadership profile evaluation taken from the 92-item survey (McRel, 2005). Cotton (2003) suggested there is a connection between positive principal behaviors and school improvement after observing what principals did successfully in high-achieving schools and specifically categorizing those behaviors. When they are compared, Cotton’s 25 principal behaviors appear quite similar to Marzano et al.’s (2005) 21 leadership responsibilities.

Whereas Cotton's (2003) research was based on “a logical analysis of research looking for patterns and trends” (p. 24) in successful schools, Marzano et al. (2005) developed a statistical correlation from a meta-analysis. Additional studies similar in conceptual context but at a quantitative level were conducted by Witziers, Bosker, and Kruger (2003) and Leithwood et al. (2004). Witziers et al. found a weak correlation \( r = .02 \) between leadership and academic achievement. On the other hand, Leithwood et al. found a significant correlation \( r = .22 \) between leadership and academic achievement, similar to the correlation \( r = .25 \) found by Marzano et al. For the purposes of the current study, I selected the five leadership categories from among Marzano et al.’s 21 responsibilities that have the strongest relationship with student achievement for analysis.
Student Assessment

In this section, I provide a chronological timeline of the educational reports and studies relevant to my area of inquiry, including the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). I then provide a brief historical account of student achievement that links overall concern for the condition of the national system of education and leadership preparation (Jones, 1996). I conclude by presenting a summary of NCLB and NAEP results in New Jersey schools (Hanover, 2005; Hechinger, 2007; King, 2008; NJDOE, 2006).

In this section, I review the following reports and policies:


*A Nation at Risk*

In late 1981, the Secretary of Education, T. H. Bell, created the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE), whose purpose was to examine the
quality of education in the United States and provide a report thereof to the nation within 18 months of its first meeting (U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 1983). Bell established the commission due to his concern regarding “the widespread public perception that something was seriously remiss in our educational system” (p. 4). In its resultant report, *A Nation at Risk*, published in 1983, the NCEE argued that “the educational foundations of our society are being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity which threatens our very future as a nation and a people” (p. 10). It asserted that declining educational performance was the result of an inadequate means of attaining and measuring educational process and that “evident deficiencies in content, expectations, time and teaching lead the commission in its task to create a sense of urgency and public agenda” (p. 7).

Part B of the report, entitled “Standards and Expectations,” and Part E, entitled “Leadership,” “focused on schools, colleges and universities adopting more rigorous and measurable standards, and higher expectations, for academic performance,” (USDOE, 1983, p. 8). In its recommendations for standards and expectations, the NCEE suggested that higher education institutions raise their admission requirements, and in its recommendations for leadership, the NCEE recognized that principals must play a crucial role in the development of school reform.

*A Nation Still at Risk*, published a decade later, found that little had changed since *A Nation at Risk* had first been published (Bennett et al., 1998). The NCEE based its assumptions upon data compiled by the Heritage Foundation, Empower American, the Center for Education Reform, and the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. Based upon student data compiled from the Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS;
the NCEE determined that U.S. students placed 19 out of 21 among developed nations in mathematics and 16 out of 21 in science, and that American Advanced Placement students scored last in physics (Bennett et al., 1998).

Ravitch, a co-author of *A Nation Still at Risk*, and a 2003 member of the Hoover Koret Task Force on K-12 Education, asserted that *A Nation at Risk* established “the platform for debate and ushered in an era of reform” (p. 2) but agreed with others that “its goals had not yet been realized” (p. 2). In the Koret report *A Nation Still at Risk: Twenty Years Later*, the task force presented a reform agenda for schools based upon the principles of choice, transparency, and accountability (Finn et al., 2003). Finn et al. suggested that the principal’s role and responsibilities have changed with the increased demand to meet today’s diverse society and changing expectations.

According to the report, *A Nation Reformed: American Education 20 years After A Nation at Risk*, most if not all of what administrators learn is largely learned on the job (Gordon, 2003). When the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration (NCEEA), sponsored by the University Council Educational Administration (UCEA), issued its report and recommendations in *Leaders for America's Schools* (LAS) in 1987, it brought national attention to the needs and concerns of educational leaders, in particular to those leaders developing preparation programs for critical leadership positions in American schools (Jackson, 2001). The LAS identified key areas that educational leaders reported were problematic to the administrative profession at that time. Of the eight areas of concern reported, the following five focused upon how school leaders were trained within educational preparation programs:

1. The lack of a definition of good educational leadership.
2. An absence of collaboration between school districts and colleges and universities.

3. The poor quality of candidates for preparation programs.

4. The irrelevance of preparation programs; programs devoid of sequence, modern content, and opportunity for clinical experience.

5. The absence of a national sense of cooperation in the preparation of school leaders.

Although significant, the LAS, sponsored by the UCEA and NCEEA, “did little to promote sweeping changes within the profession,” (Jackson, 2001 p. 4). However, the NCEEA findings did create a platform for discussion with the CCSSO in 1996 that led to the development of a set of standards for school leaders adopted by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC). Many states advocated the use of ISLLC standards and used them as a guide in the development of principal training and educational preparation programs. Opponents of the standards argued that they were “not sufficiently researched and lacked operational guidance to assist school leaders” (Achilles & Price, 2001, p. 11). Harris (2006) criticized the LAS conclusions because “educational leadership preparation programs lack collaboration between school districts” (p. 5) and, citing research performed by Milstein and Krueger (1997), contended there was “a lack of modern content” in the report (p. 9).

In the report Reculturing Educational Leadership: The ISLLC Standards Ten Years Out, Murphy (2003) discussed a refocused effort to link educational leadership to school culture. Murphy had previously developed the framework used by the ISLLC in the mid-1980s (Murphy, Hallinger, & Mesa, 1985). Murphy’s definition of school
effectiveness consists of a high level of student achievement (a quality dimension),
achievement results that are fairly distributed across the student population (an equity
dimension), and outcomes that are attributable to the school (a value-added dimension,
(Murphy, Hallinger & Mitman, 1985) and (Murphy, Hallinger, & Peterson, 1986).
Murphy (2003) found that the following conditions are linked to core mechanisms that
serve to explain student learning: (a) the opportunity to learn, (b) direct instruction of
basic skills, (c) a tightly aligned curriculum, and (d) careful and systematic monitoring of
student performance. Murphy also cited an additional number of school-level cultural or
environmental variables associated with achievement, including (a) a safe and orderly
learning environment, (b) academically focused rewards and incentives, (c) a
personalized learning environment in which children are well-known and cared for, (d) a
sense of community among staff, and (e) well developed and academically focused
linkages between home and school.

In their study, Leithwood and Riehl (2003) “linked the beginning and
development of the current wave of systematic policy-relevant attention to school
leadership (p. 4)” back to the 1987 LAS, concluding that the report had laid the
groundwork for a rationale for improving the preparation and performance of school
administrators. In 1989, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration
(NPBEA) recommended major revisions to professional preparation programs to ensure
an appropriate balance between theory and practice (Kowalski, 2005). To support this
action, then-President George H. Bush convened an educational summit and appointed a
commission to study the state of education in America. The commission laid the
groundwork for National Education Goals (NEGs), originally part of the Goals 2000
Education Program, which was renamed America 2000 by the Bush administration (Austin, 1995).

The NEGs were the centerpiece for educational reform in both the Bush and Clinton administrations; specifically, the “passing of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act in 1994 under the Clinton administration provided the federal government with a new role in its support for education; it could now promote a comprehensive approach to help all students in their effort to succeed in life” (Austin, 1995). The Goals 2000 objectives were the following for the year 2000:

1. All children in America would start school ready to learn.
2. High school graduation rates would increase to 90%.
3. All students would leave Grades 4, 8 and 12 having demonstrated competency in the required subject matter.
4. Teacher would enter the classroom more prepared.
5. U.S. students would become first in the world in mathematics and science achievement.
6. Every adult American would be literate.
7. Schools would be drug, gun, and alcohol free.
8. Parental involvement would be greatly increased.

After conducting another comprehensive report on the state of education in the United States in 1994, the Goals 2000: Educate America Act was enacted. Researchers recognized that the reforms from 1977 through 1992 had achieved some positive results but reform efforts were often limited to a few schools or to a single part of the educational system (USDOE, 1994). President Clinton's educational commission agreed
that leadership should come from all stakeholders, including principals and policymakers, in order to achieve lasting improvements in student performance. State and local systematic improvement strategies were therefore provided to all students in order to facilitate effective mechanisms and appropriate pathways to the workforce as well as access to higher education (Austin, 1995). Goals 2000 recommended that institutions of higher education be encouraged to enter into partnerships with schools to provide information and guidance on the skills and knowledge graduates need to gain entrance to and successfully complete postsecondary educational programs. Schools were instructed to provide information and guidance to institutions of higher education on the skills, knowledge, and preservice training teachers needed and the types of professional development educators needed in order to meet these goals (Austin, 1995).

In essence, Goals 2000 indirectly attempted to bridge the gap between educational theory and practice with policy. Goals 2000 established a framework that identified academic standards that measured student progress and attempted to provide the support that students needed to meet those standards (Paris, 1994). However, few if any of the goals had been achieved by 2000; many believed that the goals were too vague and completely unrealistic (Sauders, 2000).

In a speech given for the National Newspaper Association (NNA) in 2001, the Secretary of Education, Rod Paige, criticized the lack of educational progress and compared that year's educational statistics to those in A Nation at Risk 20 years earlier. Paige highlighted the continued complacency toward mediocrity and failure in the nation's public schools and argued that there had been no significant progress in student achievement; 20 years later, high school seniors still lagged behind every industrialized
nation on international math tests, and nearly one third of college freshman arrived academically unprepared for their college-level courses, requiring them to take remedial courses (USDOE, 2001).

Paige's criticism at the NNA conference inevitably laid the groundwork for the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), adopted into law by Congress in 2002. Another noteworthy 2001 report and survey prepared by Public Agenda, a nonprofit, nonpartisan educational research organization, found that 69% of principals responding to a questionnaire for educational leaders agreed that traditional leadership preparation programs were “out of touch with the realities of what it takes to run today's schools” (Farkas, Johnson, Duffet, Foleno, & Foley, 2001, p. 32). The principals reported that they were less worried about standards and accountability than with politics and bureaucracy. Only 34% of the principals thought it desirable to hold them accountable for standardized tests scores in their building and 48% thought it undesirable. In contrast, 67% of superintendents thought it desirable to hold principals accountable for test scores.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) required by law the production of the Condition of Education report in 2001 to provide educational indicators for a general audience of readers interested in educational progress (USDOE, 2001). The report’s recommended indicators represented a professional consensus on the most significant national measures of the condition and progress of education for which accurate data were available at that time (Wirt et al., 2001). Of particular significance were student academic outcomes on the 1999 Third International Mathematics and Science Study-Repeat (TIMSS-R), which followed the previous 1995 TIMSS and focused on the mathematics and science achievement of eighth graders in 38 countries.
(USDOE, 2001). Both the TIMSS and the TIMSS-R assessed eighth graders, thus allowing for a comparison of performance at two points in time. Of the 38 countries that participated in TIMSS-R, 23 had also participated in the TIMSS. The TIMSS-R reported that the international average of the 23 countries that participated in both studies was 521 in both mathematics and science whereas the average score in mathematics for all 38 participating countries was 487 and the average score in science was 488 (USDOE, 2001).

Among U.S. eighth graders, there was no statistical difference between their TIMSS scores in 1995 and their TIMSS-R scores in 1999. When compared to the scores of other countries, the U.S. mathematics score for eighth graders in 1999 was below the international average (Wirt et al., 2001). The U.S. science score for eighth graders in 1999 was similar to the international average. Therefore, U.S. student performance in both mathematics and science decreased relative to the international average of 17 countries from 1995 to 1999 at the 8th-grade level. Essentially, American students showed no significant increase in scores from 1995 to 1999 and, depending upon how the data are interpreted, American students scored worse than students in less-developed countries, who had experienced an increase in their scores in the interim.

The No Child Left Behind Act

In 2002, the NCLB, legislation that called for more federal funding for Title I and stricter state and local accountability for improving education, was passed and signed into law. The NCLB “included penalties for failing schools and new options for students that attended them” (Vinovskis, 2003, p. 135). The NCLB mandated more scientifically based educational research and the use of more randomized trials. The Office of Educational
Research and Improvement (OERI) was restructured into an independent agency and the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) placed more emphasis upon rigorous research and evaluation.

Elmore (2004) provided an overview of the new NCLB accountability factors and their impact across the nation in the following statement:

Under NCLB, states set a minimum percentage of students required to be proficient on state reading and math assessments in every school. These performance targets are called the state starting points. These targets rise incrementally until all students are expected to be proficient in reading and math in 2013–14. Low-performing schools are required to make larger gains in the percentage of proficient students because the target is further away. Schools that already meet the performance target are required to make smaller gains or, at least initially, no gains at all. In addition, schools have to include 95 percent of the entire student body and each subgroup of students in the assessments and meet one additional indicator (e.g., graduation rate for high schools). For schools or subgroups that miss state targets, NCLB includes another way for schools to make adequate yearly progress or AYP. “Safe harbor” allows a school or subgroup to meet AYP if the school or subgroup decreases the percentage of non-proficient students by 10 percent. To meet safe harbor, a school or subgroup would also have 95 percent of its students included in state reading/language arts and math assessments, and meet the state’s additional academic indicator. (p. 6)
Reporting on the progress made under the NCLB during the 2005-2006 school year, New Jersey Commissioner of Education L. Davey stated, Schools have made significant gains. Almost 71 percent of the 2,209 schools in which state tests were administered this spring met the standards for annual yearly progress (AYP) and made “Safe Harbor” as mandated under the federal NCLB act based on preliminary analysis of their test results. . . . The concern lies in the fact that, from the total 2,422 schools, 643 schools or 29 percent of the schools tested failed to make AYP. In 2006, 547 schools or around 24 percent of the total 2,422 schools missed AYP for two or more years in a row and have been identified as “Schools in Need of Improvement” (SINI) under the NCLB act. This is up from the previous year, where around 23 percent or 544 schools were identified as (SINI). Schools that have not made AYP come under several “punitive” mandates. In New Jersey during 2006, 439 schools were in the first level of “Early Warning.” Two hundred and fifty-one of those schools were in “Early Warning Hold” status, which means they did not make AYP during the previous year (2004-2005). Schools must make AYP two years in a row in order to be eliminated from either the early warning or SINI list. (as cited in NJDOE, 2006, pp. 1–3)

In year 2 status of failing to achieve AYP, 194 schools failed 2 years in a row. The previous year, 173 schools were in year 2 status. Sanctions were imposed on schools that failed to achieve AYP 2 or more years in a row (New Jersey Association of School Administrators [NJASA], 2004). These schools offered parental notification, intradistrict school choice, and the use of 20% of their federal Title I funds for tutoring and assistance to struggling students (NJDOE, 2006). School improvement plans and technical assistance are required from the district and state. As of the writing of this paper, 52
schools in New Jersey had failed to achieve AYP for 6 years in a row. Schools under year
6 sanctions must engage in school restructuring, which requires that their principal is
either replaced or fired if nontenured and transferred to another location within the
district if tenured. All of the schools I have visited have been impacted in some way by
NCLB accountability.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as the
“Nation’s Report Card,” is a congressionally mandated project of the NCES. Since 1969,
the NAEP has regularly conducted assessments of samples of the nation’s students
attending public and private schools at the elementary, middle, and high school levels
(NCES, 2006). The NAEP assesses student progress in reading and mathematics every 2
years in Grades 4 and 8. Each state selects a representative sample of students who
participated in an intact classroom of students as the “sampling unit.” The NAEP
assessment is the only national assessment that keeps continuous records on what U.S.
students know and can do in various academic subjects.

Under the NCLB in 2006, the NAEP assumed a new role in its efforts to improve
student achievement. Whereas state participation in NAEP testing had previously been
voluntary, the NCLB now requires all states to participate annually in the NAEP Grades
4 and 8 reading and mathematics tests. However, these NAEP scores are not considered
when determining whether schools have achieved AYP; therefore, there are no
consequences for states or schools that attain low NAEP scores. Generally, NAEP and
NCLB testing is conducted to confirm state test results. The NCLB views NAEP scores
as independent measures of a state's success in meeting NCLB goals as reported by the National Education Association (NEA; 2006).

The NCLB requirement for achieving AYP allows each state to set its own standards. Because each state decides which tests to use, leading to the use of a variety of tests and standards, the NAEP provides a national benchmark so that the public can see how students in their state scored on state tests compared to NAEP guidelines (NEA, 2006). In a November 2007 article in The Wall Street Journal that compared NAEP scores from 1990 to 2007, Hechinger (2007) concluded that “U.S. school children won higher marks on the national report card, which intensified the battle over the renewal of NCLB, which was President G.W. Bush’s signature education law.”

The NAEP, administered by the USDOE, has indicated increased achievement in math and reading among U.S. fourth and eighth graders. The increases were measured from 2005, the last NAEP report card, to its 2007 current assessment (Hechinger, 2007). When the NCLB came up for renewal in 2007, supporters pointed to the success of the NAEP in relation to the NCLB. Hechinger (2007) explained, “The results of the NAEP, often called the nation’s report card, are closely watched because the assessment is considered the most rigorous, broad and significant set of tests given to U.S. children.” (p. D1, D12). Over 700,000 students participated in the 2007 reading test. On a scale ranging from 0 to 500, fourth graders achieved an average score of 221, up 2 points from the 2005 assessment, and eighth graders achieved an average score of 263, up 1 point from 2005. The 4th-grade math test scores increased to an average of 240, up 2 points from 2005, and the 8th-grade math test scores increased to an average of 281, up 3 points from 2005. No state showed a decline in achievement, and 14 states, including New
Jersey, and Washington, DC improved their overall mathematics scores at both the 4th- and 8th-grade levels from 2005 to 2007. Hechinger concluded, “Since NCLB took effect in 2002, national eighth grade reading scores have declined one point, to 263.”

In a recent article, King (2008) discussed the possibility of impaired accounting when reporting the recent NCLB results:

The report took score results from reading and mathematics tests over several years and determined the portion of students who scored at the proficient level, the target established under NCLB, but also the portion of students who showed any progress, even if they could not pass the test.

When NCLB results were measured against NAEP results, the findings suggested that progress was more pronounced in elementary and middle schools than in high schools, which echoed past research. In states that had sufficient data with which to make valid comparisons, gaps were seen between the achievement of White and minority students, especially Black students, though the gap narrowed much more than it widened. North Dakota and Tennessee showed moderate to large gains in reading only, and Louisiana, Mississippi, New Jersey, Ohio, and Oklahoma showed progress in mathematics only.

In the current study, I attempted to determine whether the educational studies, assessments, and reviews I have discussed applied to the purposes of this study. I adopted techniques from Marzano et al.'s (2005) meta-analysis research, which focused upon selected leadership categories that strongly correlate to student achievement. My understanding of the level of relevance between principal behaviors and the selected
responsibility’s impact on student achievement was crucial to this study. I explained and connected information on leadership perceptions with principal leadership behavior, using several studies within the last 10 years to provide additional background information.

Summary

This review of literature, which summarized over 20 years of research, focused upon the following three main actions:

1. Establishing a foundation from which to examine educational improvement in the United States from the analysis of a variety of sources, beginning with the 1983 report *A Nation at Risk* to Marzano et al.’s 2005 study “School Leadership that Works,” and the inclusion of recent information on testing and assessment from 2006 and 2008. I enhanced the application of original grounded theory introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1967) by the inclusion of other research findings that I had reviewed for clarification in the context of this study.

2. Establishing a platform from which to trace the evolution of school improvement and the role that preparation programs and school leadership play in the 21st century, focusing upon principal behaviors and the selected leadership responsibilities that have the strongest relationship to school and student improvement. I identified these five responsibilities as discipline, flexibility, monitoring and evaluating, outreach, and situational awareness.

3. Establishing the parameters in which preparation programs have made educational progress to seek a more practical approach to theoretical pedagogy and determine whether those efforts have been successful in the field.
This chapter attempted to connect factors associated with leadership training, school improvement and the ability of preparation programs to transition from teaching theory to understanding the essentials of on the job practice. The next chapter will describe how this investigation was conducted.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I describe the study’s research design, population, instruments, and data collection and the analysis procedures that I used to make my findings and conclusions.

Research Design

In this study, I used a mixed methodology to answer the research questions though primarily through the use of a qualitative research design. My primary research tools were demographic surveys, field observations, and follow-up confidential interviews. The categories or dimensions of analysis that emerged from the opened-ended interviews and field observations (Labuschagne, 2003) assisted me with understanding patterns that exist in the phenomena I investigated (Patton, 2002). I attempted to examine quantitative data through employing qualitative techniques to allow a more in-depth explanation of the area under study (Patton, 1990, 2002). Marzano’s meta-analysis yielded a reliability coefficient of $r = .92$ for the responses of the 652 principals who completed a questionnaire (Marzano et al., 2005). My use of several elements from that questionnaire along with the use of consistent procedures led my results to be reliable (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, as cited in Allen, 2006).

Population

A population is any group of people within certain demographic parameters (Thompson, 1999). The participant population in this study was 19 graduates (DePaulo, 2000) who had successfully completed cohort or traditional leadership programs at a local Catholic university or who had successfully completed other preparation programs at other educational institutions and were currently principals in a PreK-12 public school.
setting. I used arbitrary criterion sampling to select the principals (Patton, 1990), soliciting their participation through the approval of eight district superintendents throughout northern and central New Jersey.

Instruments

In this study, I used a mixed methodology for data collection that consisted of a brief demographic survey, a one-time field observation, and a follow-up interview. My demographic survey solicited factors of identification for each participant, including years of experience, age, and highest degree completed. My field observation focused upon selected leadership responsibilities that correlated to student achievement to determine such factors as whether the participant adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the situation and is comfortable with dissent. My interview script contained five sections of four or five questions that corresponded to each of the selected leadership responsibilities, with 21 interview questions. The entire follow-up open-ended interview lasted approximately 1 hour per participant.

Each of my observation records contained five sections similar to those in the open-ended interview. I followed a behavioral checklist that provided the basis for evaluation for each section of the observation. The checklist consisted of activities associated with specific behaviors identified in Marzano et al.’s (2005) research and that I would observe during a principal’s typical work day. I then compared and associated these activities with the five leadership responsibilities of flexibility, outreach, discipline, monitoring and evaluating, and situational awareness. I judged whether a principal’s actions closely mirrored the researched behaviors by assigning them a rating ranging from 1 to 5, with 1 = not at all observed and 5 = completely observed.
I attempted to understand the impact those behaviors have had upon the magnitude of change from an insider perspective and the implications that change holds for those expected to implement it and those affected by it (McRel, 2005). Principals are inherently assigned the level of second-order change solely based upon their position of authority within an organizational setting. Thus, an implemented change reaction facilitates either positive or negative results, depending upon a person’s perspective. Second-order change implies a fundamental or significant break with past and current practices. Therefore, implementing this type of change is more difficult than is first-order change, as it represents a dramatic difference in current practices and requires energy and new knowledge and skills for successful implementation. I used the demographic data I had collected from the respondents to address research question 5: Do a graduate’s race or ethnicity, gender, years of experience, type of degree achieved, and age significantly influence the leadership category of situational awareness?

Data Collection

My data collection procedures were performing a one-time field observation for each participant and conducting a standard open-ended interview with each participant. I recognized that “evaluations that included brief site visits to a number of program locations served the purpose of simply establishing the existence of certain levels of program operations at different sites” (Patton, 2002, p. 274). Ideally, I would have been able to solicit 10 graduates from a Catholic university and 10 graduates from other preparation programs for this study. In actuality, I was only able to solicit 4 graduates from a Catholic university and 15 graduates from other colleges and universities to serve as research participants. To identify potential participants, I contacted 25 school
superintendents in northwestern, central, and northeastern New Jersey via telephone or e-mail and then faxed them a copy of the letter of superintendent solicitation. Once I made contact with them, I sent the superintendents a package by postal mail that contained a hard copy of the letter of solicitation (see Appendix A) and a self-addressed stamped envelope for the return of the letter of approval to contact principals within each district.

I provided the eight superintendents who had agreed to participate in the research with the same packet of information that I had prepared for the principals. I took strict measures to ensure that all respondent information that I received remained confidential and secure. I asked all the principal participants to provide dates when they would be available for an observation and follow-up interview and mailed them packages numbered and indexed to facilitate follow-up and/or additional mailings. I included a self-addressed stamped envelope to return the forms. I specifically designed the informed consent forms (see Appendix B) for this study before distributing them to be signed and copied. After I had completed all data collection, I destroyed all numbered, named, and/or indexed forms to preserve participant confidentiality.

I sought written permission from McRel and Dr. Waters the president of the organization (see Appendix C) to use the selected leadership responsibilities (flexibility, outreach, discipline, monitoring and evaluating, and situational awareness) that have the strongest correlation to school improvement and student achievement (Marzano et al., 2005). Of paramount importance to me were the perceptions of graduates who had been appropriately trained as school leaders to meet the variety of modern challenges they now face (Achilles, 2005; Bell, 2005; Hale & Moorman, 2003; Levine, 2005; Newman, 2005).
Data Analysis

My data analysis procedure consisted of the comparative analysis of demographic data and interview transcriptions and the evaluation of the observational phenomena (see Appendix D). I gathered, organized, transcribed, and inductively analyzed these data to determine their associated influences within my research. I used computer-assisted analysis as a supplementary tool to help me gain understanding of related themes and/or underlying theories.

My primary analysis consisted of a thorough line-by-line manual review of the observation transcription narratives (see Appendix E). I used the five leadership categories and their associated behaviors as a scanning device to filter large amounts of data. I reviewed the narrative transcriptions and compared the participant actions to the evaluated behaviors and open-ended interview data (see Appendix F). I found the differences and/or similarities among the graduate participants became somewhat evident within the context of Marzano et al.'s (2005) research on leadership.

I found support for the methods that I used within the work of Creswell (1998), Marshall and Rossman, (1999), and Tesch (1990, as cited in Kozlik, 2006), which described the process of data analysis as (a) categorizing the information and examining properties and dimensions of the data and (b) identifying a central phenomenon, exploring causal conditions, specifying strategies, identifying the context and intervening condition, and delineating the consequences for the central phenomenon identified. I used information collected from my observations, follow-up interviews, and demographic surveys (see Appendix G) to identify patterns and pattern exceptions, keeping in mind that “any common patterns that emerged from great variation are of particular interest
and value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared dimensions of a setting or phenomenon” (Patton, 2002, p. 235). For the purposes of this study, I employed open and axial manual coding and established grounded theory benchmarks in the analysis process (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

I used observational analysis techniques in an effort to move from an observational to a participatory role, depending upon the setting and the participant’s comfort level (Lang & Lang, 1960; Patton, 1990, 2002; Schultz, 1991) based upon my understanding that

the ideal in evaluation is to design and negotiate that degree of participation that would yield the most meaningful data about the program given the characteristics of the participants, the nature of staff-participant interactions, the socio-political context of the program, and the information needs of intended evaluation users.

(Patton, 2002, p. 267)

My fieldwork included but was not limited to the following actions: (a) descriptive note taking, (b) collection of information from different perspectives, (c) cross validation and triangulation of data, (d) recording of quotations, (e) remaining sensitive to my surroundings, (f) experiencing the phenomena, (g) separating description from interpretation, (h) asking for formative feedback, and (i) recording my own experiences (Patton, 1990).

I applied the selected leadership responsibilities described by Marzano et al. (2005) as the foundation of the principal interview tool, which I had developed based upon grounded theory protocol (Glazer & Strauss, 1967) in order to gain a more in-depth, descriptive understanding of the quantitative data. I recognized that “qualitative methods
can be used to better understand any phenomenon and gain new perspectives on things about which much is already known which may be difficult to convey quantitatively” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 8). I incorporated the suggestions and findings of other researchers including Charmaz (2002), Creswell (1998), Denzin and Lincoln (1994), Glaser (1978), Lobiondo-Wood and Haber (1994), Patton (1990, 2002), and Strauss and Corbin (1998) to aid me in understanding the processes involved in my chosen methodology. I also reviewed Denzin’s (1978) discussion of how to triangulate data sources and apply different analytical perspectives to increase the accuracy and credibility of my findings (as cited in Patton, 2002).

Summary

Chapter 3 described my research methodology which included the study’s design, population, instruments, data collection and analysis procedures. This information set a platform for an explanation of the research findings.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter, I present the findings from my observations of, interviews with, and collection of survey data from principals who had participated in an educational leadership preparation program at a local Catholic university and those who had participated in a variety of other preparation programs at other educational institutions. My research attempted to determine whether selected leadership responsibilities aligned with principal perceptions and behaviors in daily practice. The participants in this study had attended Rutgers University, Kean University, Montclair University, Nova Southeastern University, University of Cincinnati, Lehigh University, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Hofstra University, Morgan State University, Georgian Court University, and Seton Hall University. I randomly selected to study participants from the Phillipsburg, Hackettstown, Hillsborough, South Orange, East Orange, Union, Westfield, and Belleville school districts, all of which are located within northwestern, central, and northeastern New Jersey (see Appendix H). A total of 19 principals participated in this study, 4 of whom had attended an educational leadership preparation program at a local Catholic university and 15 of whom had attended an educational leadership preparation program at a variety of other educational institutions. The number of participants per gender was roughly equal; of the 19 participants, 10 were males and 9 were females. The participants represented four high schools, three middle schools, and eleven elementary schools.

Table 1 summarizes the principal demographics and highlights NCLB accountability factors associated with the demographic findings that address research
question 5: Do race or ethnicity, gender, years of experience, years of experience at present school, and age significantly influence the leadership category of situational awareness? I found that the factor of years of experience at present school seemed to significantly align with NCLB accountability. Principals in schools who do not achieve AYP for more than 3 years risk transfer if tenured and/or termination if nontenured (Elmore, 2004). Principals with less than 5 years of experience at the present school represented 67% of the study’s population, with the largest group within this category consisting of 5 principals with less than 2 years of experience at the present school. The reasons for this phenomenon remain unclear, but I suggest that NCLB accountability has had a direct impact on the number of years principals have served at their present schools. Additional research should be conducted to support or reject my conclusion.

Table 1
Principal Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of principals</th>
<th>Percentage of principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26–35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36–45</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46–55</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56–65</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16–20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Experience at Present School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6–10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average = 6.6 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>Median = 3.0 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest degree completed</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EDD</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MED</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Analysis

In an effort to connect the data I had gathered in the field to this study's research questions, I identified the specific themes and patterns that emerged from my data analysis and used a method of triangulation to generate consistent findings. This process began with my observation, analysis, and comparison of principal behaviors and beliefs based upon the selected leadership responsibilities (see Appendix I).

At the beginning of each site visit, I informally observed or shadowed each principal to collect observational data to compare to the researched criteria. I then manipulated the same criteria in an open-ended interview to test the authenticity of the principal responses against their behavior for validity. In other words, I determined whether the principals’ beliefs aligned with their actions and whether there are differences between and/or similarities between the two principal groups. Finally, I linked the principal demographic data to the factors associated with situational awareness. When I did so, I found that grade level variation may have an indirect impact on the principals’ ability to perform certain behaviors pertaining to the selected
leadership category of monitoring and evaluating. I found other behaviors not to be as
evident in the categories of outreach and discipline, mainly because of exigent
circumstances within sites or due to factors that became evident as impractical within the
research data. I found the categories of flexibility and situational awareness to be more
aligned with the selected leadership behaviors.

Through the use of open and axial coding, I found several connections between
the data in the form of networks that suggested dominant patterns and overarching
educational themes. I performed content analysis to engage in qualitative data reduction
and make sense of the volume of material in order to identify core consistencies and
meanings (Patton, 2002). I organized my presentation of data organized around the five
main research questions. My first step in data analysis was developing a manageable
classification or coding scheme for the data (Patton, 2002). To do so, I analyzed my
observations and interview questions to determine what was important. After organizing
the data into topics, I developed a formal coding system by first manually grouping then
comparatively analyzing the observational data by site visitation. I developed my first set
of data codes from the observational data presented as a collective network of coded
behaviors or associated relationships (see Appendix J). The behaviors and relationships
were based on how closely participants aligned with the 5 leadership categories.
Networks A through J, represented in Figures 1 through 10, show the codes that I derived
from the field observations.

As shown in Figures 11 through 33, I developed the next set of data codes from
my comparison of observational data and interview responses. I derived the codes, which
represented the five research questions, from a comparison of principal perceptions and
practice. I derived the final set of data codes shown in Figures 34 through 38 from the answers to the open-ended interview questions. From my analysis, a total of 282 codes emerged that allowed me to categorize the data into units. I divided the codes into three main categories based upon the mixed research methodology that I used in this study. I found that 75 codes emerged from the field observation, 151 codes emerged from the interview questions, and 46 codes evolved from the research questions.

I subdivided the codes into four groupings based upon the number of participants. I grouped the codes with a count of 10 or more participants, which represented the majority of participants, as primary factors and prioritized the data in the hierarchal order of codes (Allen, 2006). I grouped codes with a count of 6 to 9 participants as secondary factors, codes with a count of 3 to 5 participants as tertiary factors, and codes with a count of 1 or 2 participants as quaternary factors. Several factors that linked data codes with beliefs and practices provided me with a foundation upon which to draw most of my conclusions and make most of my recommendations. In addition to coding data, I rated the participants based upon selected leadership responsibilities as evidenced in the 360-degree balanced leadership profile evaluation.

Principals as Change Agents

In my research, I found that the industrialized learning methodology developed in the middle of the 20th century continues to serve as the primary pedagogical approach for teaching and learning in the 21st century (Murphy, 2003). Classrooms and instructional methods appear the same as they did in the 1950s and 1960s; in spite of the many technological advances made during in the late 20th century, the American school organizational structure has not changed. In some cases, principals use the technological
advances of the late 20th and early 21st centuries as tools to assist in the management of school programs. However, every school in this study, regardless of grade level, uses the same approach to educate students. Although I observed differences among the schools’ physical settings, I observed little difference in their educational approaches and, not surprisingly, educational outcomes. All of the schools are focused upon achievement as defined by the NCLB. In such an atmosphere, the principals’ success is solely based upon whether student subgroups achieve AYP.

In spite of their educational training, the principals themselves are a contributing factor to this institutionally pressurized environment. One problem with the transition of theoretical platforms to the field of practice for the principals has been that all their management responsibilities have been narrowed to the confines of assessment and accountability. The NCLB approaches improvement in education as a regulatory problem rather than an educational and professional problem that has many roots in the poverty and inequality existing outside of the schools (Sunderman, Orfield, & Kim, 2006). Due to this misguided focus, theoretical processes have had little or no opportunity to develop and expand with practice.

The data that I collected at first suggested a relationship between student achievement and leadership. However, I soon realized that if those criteria were applied in the field and the school failed to achieve AYP, then the theoretical research tools and the attempted transition into practice at that school would be all but dismissed because of NCLB. In other words, principals had little time to process theory into practice on the job. Principals who fail to achieve AYP for 3 or more years are often sanctioned. For tenured principals, this often means being transferred to another location within the
district, a fact supported by the demographic data, which indicated that the principals in this study had served at their present school for a median of 3 years and a mode of 1.26 years. If a principal’s school achieves AYP, it is believed that his or her practice has been enhanced by the theory learned in preparation programs and the resultant outcome is successful.

This type of seesaw effect (achieved AYP = use of successful theory, failed AYP = only failed practice) influenced the research surrounding all the principals in the study. In other words, applying the theoretical data to research in the field suggests a relational significance when the school achieves NCLB benchmarks. If the school does not achieve NCLB benchmarks, then the principal’s behaviors and beliefs appear out of alignment. I did not clearly understand why this phenomenon occurred and whether it was the result of a coincidence. I also found it difficult to determine whether the application of leadership responsibilities influence student achievement independent of NCLB benchmarks.

The NCLB has tended to result in principals of low-achieving schools feeling the need to produce very large gains every year for every subgroup (Sunderman et al., 2006), which naturally leads them to experience high levels of frustration. Because the schools that I visited are structured in the same manner, their principals have generally had the same or similar experiences. For example, all of principals take part in the same daily routine that commences with visibly appearing in and around the school. The principals greet staff and students in front of the building at the beginning of the day. After everyone enters the building, usually at either 8:00 a.m. or 9:00 a.m., students and staff follow their assigned schedules. At the elementary level, the students remain with the
same teacher for all subjects except for specialty curriculum pullouts. At the middle and high school levels, the students move among classes that are either 40 or 80 minutes in duration. By 3:30 p.m., the academic school day is over. Throughout the school day, the principals are involved in a variety of activities which may or may not be related to the researched leadership responsibilities.

Although the educational system appears not to have transitioned from its industrialized foundation, most of the students have already transitioned into a global society by default through their participation in free market capitalism, use of information technology, and consumption of global media. Although industrialization versus globalization does not appear to be a problem for these schools, they appear to place greater focus upon older rather than newer learning techniques despite the fact that, as explained by economist Robert Solow, “the probable effects of globalization . . . [are] dramatically increased levels of low-skilled labor while technological change increases the demand for high-skilled workers” (as cited in Perry, 2008 p. A1).

The evolution of technological inequality may be negatively impacting the poorer districts that participated in this study. I wondered whether the broader impact of globalization would be felt in a localized economy and thus affect the entire school community (Perry, 2008). Students, more so than principals and teachers, use advances in technology to their benefit and for the benefit of others. Ironically, instruments of technological ingenuity (e.g., cell phones and MP3 players) are not allowed in the classroom as tools for instruction but rather excluded due to their potential to distract students from instruction.
Principals are given the task of changing a nearly unchangeable educational institution in order to enhance student achievement. Naturally, principals are able to function within the organization and make the necessary relational connections for job survival, but are unable to engage in creative thinking outside of the limits of traditional education. At the same time, students have personal access to technology that supplements their education by providing a global worldview. They make connections with other students, in some cases with students in different countries, via cutting-edge technology. Those who do not have access or only limited access to technology progress at the same pace or a slower pace than that of their schools, which remain in the 20th century. Whereas many schools have dedicated areas for computer access, whether in the business department, library, or computer center, other schools have less access and some have little to no access. Generally, the schools that have the most access to technology are in districts with a distract factor grouping (DFG) closer to J. Students’ personal computer use off-site is often four times that of school access in all districts. At several schools, either the parents or the principal discussed concerns with student access to the Internet for uses not related to school matters. Unfortunately, neither the principal nor parents are aware of the depth of social networking or the extent of time students spend online.

In such an atmosphere, my primary challenge as an investigator was determining whether a principal’s behavior as a change agent in conjunction with the use of selected leadership responsibilities when aligned with beliefs has truly made a difference in the school setting. The greatest impediment to meaningful cultural change is the gap between what leaders say they value and what they actually do. Staff members are not persuaded
by a leader’s claim of collaborative culture when every meeting is only a series of lectures, announcements, and warnings (Reeves, 2007). Could I accurately predict a principal’s leadership success from a single site visit? What is the substantive significance of a principal’s behavior and could it impact meaningful change? Could leadership preparation tunnel through the monotony of daily educational routine and crack the foundation of outdated educational values in need of replacement? These are the questions that occurred to me as I analyzed the observational data, in which the principals seemed indistinguishable at face value. However, when I closely scrutinized their behaviors and beliefs, the following principal traits or characteristics emerged as factors in successful leadership: (a) ability to multitask, (b) ability to collaborate, (c) knowledgeable of district matters and educational research, (d) youthful, (e) compassionate, (f) trustworthy, (g) confrontational, (h) intelligent, (i) innovative, (j) resourceful, and (k) honest. These characteristics seem to link principals with students and staff and are particularly important for effective one-on-one conferences and group meetings.

Those principals who are not as successful with leadership management could be described by the following adjectives, which suggest the existence of traits that may contribute to their leadership problems: (a) sedentary, (b) egotistical, (c) naïve, (d) aloof, (e) skeptical, (f) indifferent, and (g) disorganized. Successful principal characteristics seem to explain the positive relationship between behaviors and perception. Principals who manage various responsibilities in a collaborative manner and are knowledgeable of district matters and educational research understand which aspects of the school program need to change and when to implement measures to effect that change. They are
principals who, when confronted with a problem, deal with it directly in a compassionate yet resourceful style. Their actions align with beliefs because they are trustworthy and honest in dealing with staff and students and were trustworthy and honest with me during my site visitation. One could not but concede that training and leadership preparation have played a key role in their success. On the other hand, I observed that principals who exhibit discrepancies between their behaviors and beliefs often spend longer than usual in their office at the computer sending e-mails or completing reports due at the central office. They gave hints of egotistical behavior by stating, “I’m more popular than the president of the United States,” “My subjects adore me,” or “I’m the best thing that’s happened here since sliced bread.” While complementing themselves, these principals remain unaware of informal groups within the school that disagree with their management style and openly share their feelings with staff, and shared their feeling with me during my site visit.

These principals are disorganized, aloof, and indifferent toward the concerns of parents, students and teachers, affecting an attitude that “school rules do not apply to me.” At their schools, parents and teachers are treated indifferently, and on occasion, with disrespect. These principals often reject the opinions of staff and ignore the warning signs of potential internal conflict. In the end, this group of principals are negative change agents upon whom the tenets of practice have had little or no impact upon their teaching and learning. As educational research has confirmed, the key person in the process of change is the principal, yet in reality, outside influences such as a dated institutional framework, a lack of site preparation, aspects of the NCLB, and local and state mandates
make it difficult to maneuver successfully within the school system and address priority demands.

I am not certain that all the principals understand the connection between what they say and what they do, at least not in the context of this research. I observed or shadowed the principals for most of the day prior to conducting an interview with them. After I had completed an observation, I felt a disconnect on the principal’s part between the observation and interview. For example, if I observed a meeting about mathematics, the principal discussed language arts during the interview. Most principals advanced ideas about behaviors that they would perform at future events but had not performed during my recent observation of them. Their perceptions about those behaviors were almost always connected to or affiliated with learned routines instead of research-based criteria. The principals’ thoughts about leadership responsibilities were confined to the open-ended interview questions as opposed to a holistic knowledge base acquired naturally as part of their educational training.

I believe that what I had experienced was a principal’s stronger focus on behaviors learned on the job as opposed to the mingling of theoretical initiatives. In a few cases, the principals displayed the mental agility that supports second-order change logistics, as well as a willingness to do “grunt” work in and around the school. Unlike first-order change, second-order change is related to only 7 of the 21 responsibilities. Principals in this category, who were mainly “cohort” participants, are knowledgeable about how innovation affects curriculum and tend to challenge the status quo (Marzano et al., 2005).
Many principals understand that one of the secrets of successful leadership is a willingness to do unglamorous work. When a school leader puts down his or her briefcase and picks up a stack of trays in the cafeteria or a pile of writing portfolios for personal review, everyone knows that the leader takes every job in the school seriously (Reeves, 2007). However, most principals seem unable to maneuver beyond surface fluctuations in the school program and are only successful at simply managing the daily routine of a school.

However, as my findings supported, not all 21 leadership responsibilities are equally important in first-order change. Marzano et al. (2005) ranked monitoring and evaluating as first in priority among the 21 leadership responsibilities, so that was a behavior that was closely observed. With an understanding of the circumstances surrounding each site visitation, it is discouraging to note that the principals are not as involved with monitoring and evaluating as they should be.

Have Preparation Programs Trained Graduates to Meet the Demands of the 21st Century?

Educational leaders of the future need a substantial reserve of skills and characteristics extensively different from those of successful school leaders in years past. Quality preparation programs are an essential component in producing competent school leaders (Fullan, 1998, as cited in Byrd, Slater, & Brooks, 2007). Researchers have found that selected leadership responsibilities alone cannot compensate for a lack of sound judgment and have identified the specific characteristics that support successful leadership.
Although I often found it difficult to identify effective leaders, I found it very
easy to identify poor management (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Leithwood and Riehl
identified the following three primary actions of successful school leadership that should
be the focus of educational leadership programs to create successful school
administrators: (a) setting directions, (b) developing people, and (c) developing
organizations. I found that most principals are good at setting directions and developing
organizations but lack the skills for developing people. Twenty-first century principals
must have the skills necessary to improve instructional methods, analyze and interpret
assessment data, and compare the school’s achievement level to schools in a similar
DFG.

A primary question regarding educational administrator preparation is whether the
faculty experience has impacted the principal’s ability to increase student success (Byrd
et al., 2007). Tirozzi (2001) reported that more often than not university preparation
programs in educational administration have few faculty, if any, who have experience
with public school leadership. Although I did not address this subject in this study,
several principals agreed that their exposure to coursework had steeped them in the
theory and history of school leadership. Reading about various theories and models of
leadership had given them the opportunity to reflect upon their own leadership styles and
set contemporary theories into a broader context, both of which are critical (Michael,
Nicholas, & Young, 2006).

Most if not all of principals expressed concern that their preparation program had
generally lacked a broad social sciences foundation. I found that courses in psychology,
human relations, cultural diversity, public relations, conflict resolution, and change
management should clearly be part of educational preparation programs. Although many studies have examined the characteristics of successful school leadership, few have investigated the characteristics of successful educational administration preparation programs to create leaders of successful schools (Byrd et al., 2007).

According to Moore, Dexter, Berube, and Beck (2004), graduates of the same educational leadership program often go on to lead schools with drastically different results (as cited in Bryd, Slater, & Brooks, 2007). I found this to be somewhat true for the graduates of the Catholic university and very much true for the graduates of other university programs. Graduates who had attended cohort and traditional programs at a local Catholic university were prepared to address many of the concerns in today’s public schools. Most graduates from other universities were similarly prepared but exhibit more variation between their beliefs and behaviors, specifically within the overall management of the school and the monitoring and evaluation of instruction related to curriculum and district standards. With this said, I recognize that relational effects are not necessarily causal and could simply imply an association. Therefore, it is possible that the sample used in this study could not have allowed any stronger of a recommendation toward the suggested outcomes.

Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the research findings of my investigation and compared the two groups of graduates to determine whether selected leadership responsibilities have influenced their perceptions and behavior. In the first section, I focused upon describing what happened by bringing insight to the problem identified. I used data networks to show connections and patterns between open and axial codes for
each research methodology. I used a mixed methods research design that employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches within and across the stages of research (Johnson & Onweugbuzie, 2004). According to Morgan (1998) and Morse (1991), “Consideration may be given to the dimension of paradigm emphasis; that is, deciding whether to give the quantitative and qualitative components of a mixed study equal status or to give one paradigm the dominant status” (as cited in Johnson & Onweugbuzie, 2004, p. 19). The dominant paradigm for this study was qualitative because I attempted to fully answer the five research questions based upon a quantitative meta-analysis of field observations, open-ended interviews, and demographic data. I concluded the chapter by discussing whether principals could be effective change agents in the shadow of institutional stagnation and NCLB mandates and whether preparation programs have successfully trained leaders for the challenges of the 21st century.
CHAPTER FIVE: STUDY SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Study

In this chapter, I summarize and discuss the results of the study before making recommendations for preparation programs and public school principals in PreK-12 districts based upon the qualitative analysis of the data. Addressing the five research questions by observing and interviewing the participants allowed me to develop a platform for the data analysis, discussion, and summary presented in this chapter. In chapter 1, I presented an introduction to the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the limitations of the study, the study delimitations, a definition of terms, and the significance of the study. In chapter 2, I reviewed the literature on preparation programs, educational leadership, leadership responsibilities, and student assessment and achievement. In chapter 3, I presented the research methodology, the population, research design, instruments, and data collection and analysis procedures. In chapter 4, I presented the patterns and themes that emerged through coding the data and compared and discussed the participants’ behaviors and beliefs.

In this chapter, I present my conclusions from my research and their implications for educational leadership in the 21st century. The research questions aligned with the interview questions and the leadership responsibilities found in the observation record, which were both linked to the explanation of the leadership categories. The data contributed to a variety of special insights derived from the field experience and helped ground the theoretical implications.
This three-part qualitative study consisted of observational analysis, open-ended interviews, and demographic data collection from 19 principals working in a PreK-12 public educational setting. I used mixed methods research in an attempt to legitimize the use of multiple approaches that address the research questions and the process of thought about the conduct of research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). I focused upon the selected leadership responsibilities of flexibility, outreach, discipline, monitoring and evaluating, and situational awareness, as derived from Marzano et al.'s (2005) meta-analysis. I also considered similar contributing research conducted by Cotton (2003) and Leithwood et al. (2004). I applied grounded principles to generate or discover theory that developed into an analytical scheme of the phenomena that was connected to my site visitations (Creswell, 1998). As research has suggested, the value of grounded theory lies in its ability to not only generate theory but also ground theory to the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

After a thorough line-by-line rating and continuous review of the field transcriptions, I developed an open coding synopsis that led to conceptual connections between categories and subcategories. This task, perhaps the most difficult, challenged my skill level throughout the transcription review. I also assigned single and often multiple overlapping ratings to participant behaviors based upon the researched criteria for each category. To assist with the transcription evaluation, I used only selected elements of Atlas.ti V5.0, a computer-generated, scientific analysis software program. From my review, I transfixed open and axial codes throughout the five leadership categories, which became more and more evident until I could develop no new codes or subconcepts (Creswell, 1998).
I concluded that the principals who had provided more detailed descriptions of their actions during my observations and in their interview responses generally showed evidence of a near seamless alignment in their perceptions and behavior within certain leadership categories. I perceived them to be more consistent with the research findings established in the Marzano et al. 2005 meta-analysis. I concluded that the principals who were indiscriminately more willing to assist with my transition from observer to observer-participant more than likely realized the unbiased benefit of the study. At the same time, I understood that I should not interject intentional biases. The only exception to this rule was my subconscious affinity to a well-organized school program. I also understood that if I remained at the observer stage, I would gather less detailed information (Patton, 1990). As a result, I attempted to minimize my outsider status by shadowing rather than simply observing the participants, as explained in the field transcriptions.

When I was accepted into a observer-participant role, there seemed to be less contrasting elements exposed in the individual comparative analysis compared to a group analysis (Patton, 2002). I believed that the principals view their role proudly as leaders of the school organization. At times they are willing to share their leadership in a collaborative manner, but only with “inside” organizational workers and community stakeholders. I believe that in order to get a somewhat closer view of the reality of a leader’s character at work, a more subordinate role and title, other than that of research observer, must be introduced. The leader’s character, I understood, must be connected to specific ideas and beliefs about education.
According to Marzano et al. (2005), "Principal beliefs and ideals are joined to intimacy . . . the beliefs come from polices, standards or practices" (p. 51). I found that although most principals at the upper grade levels have specific notions of what those ideals and beliefs are, few demonstrated zest, passion (intimacy), or excitement in their practice. A possible reason for the differences among the responses and observed behaviors in the elementary, middle, and secondary settings could be district organization, in that districts have more elementary schools than middle or secondary schools. Therefore, more elementary schools responded, and thus more elementary principals participated in the study. Of the 19 participants, 11 were elementary principals compared to 4 middle and 4 high school principals. Therefore, elementary sites provided a larger variety of similar responses.

The other area that became more evident as my research continued was the ideological and conceptual differences among the grade levels and subject matter. Spillane's (2005) work on the influence of subject matter on teaching and teachers suggested that instruction in particular subject areas is an important context for or influence on school leadership. Leaders influence teacher development, monitor instruction and program implementation, and target multiple school subjects. I found that "instructional similarities across the elementary grade levels mask substantial differences in how leadership is arranged and carried out" (p. 387). The principal and staff at certain elementary sites appeared more teacher-student-parent centered and more subject oriented. Principals at the middle school level seemed to be in a prerelational transition with teachers, students, and parents that mirrored the grade level transition from elementary school to high school. Principals at the high school level appeared more
pragmatically focused on programs and organizational success. Staff at elementary sites appeared exuberant, open, and more willing to share information voluntarily.

The best way to describe the differences or spectrum of differences among grade levels is describing the way the students learn the color spectrum using the acronym ROY G BIV. My elementary level field experiences literally represented single colors of bright reds, yellows, orange, greens, and blues. Those colors in combination translated into presentations of the curriculum through a variety of academic subjects, especially when I perceived that I was allowed full program access. My middle school field experience had a lower frequency of color representation associated with the curriculum and subject matter. My secondary school field experiences seemed representative of all colors but indistinguishable. Most secondary sites had evidence of the absence of color or curriculum, especially when I felt less involved as an observer. That is, I would have been more able to understand elementary curriculum and content by the visual display and presentation of student work in the halls and classrooms.

It was very clear what teachers at the elementary level teach arithmetic, science, reading, writing, or geography and when that subject is taught. It was clear in which classrooms the subjects are taught and which strategies are being used at what level of sophistication. As the grade level increases, the subject matter becomes less visible, even undetectable, at most middle and secondary sites. Occasionally, I observed one or two projects on display at upper grade levels, but the content dealt exclusively with art, music, or vocational education. I surmised that this lack of displayed student work impacted children, who by their very nature are visual learners. I pondered why the upper grade level sites do not display student work in science, mathematics, social studies, and
writing samples in the halls and throughout the school. Is it possible that more children who transition through public education are turned off to learning because the institutional structure (the box) stifles creativity? Is it possible that more students have problems in science and mathematics at the upper grade levels because those subjects have literally become less visible in and around the school? Does the loss in the visibility in science and mathematics over the years create a perception of difficulty? Could lost creativity explain why, independent of public school education, an explosion of Web sites such as Myspace.com, Youtube.com, and Facebook.com have engendered that creativity? Should the increase in children’s use of the Internet and their need for independent expression and social networking be cause for educational concern? Have elements of the system of public education become the source of mediocrity?

Spillane (2005) described the institutional structure as composed of cultural or normative ideas that organize how people interact with one another. Structure is a cultural phenomenon that directs social action—roles, positions, and expectations. From my observational experiences and perspective, I concluded that the institutional structure is the same at all the schools that I observed. The only exception is the presence of a marginal, grade-level variation; specifically, the relational structure between sites and human agency. As the grade level increased, I found that the principal’s relational behavior seems to decreased. The principals at the middle and high school levels seemed less willing to allow me to transition into certain categories and provided a more scripted or guarded exposure. Because of this behavior, I was unable to observe interactions between the principal and staff in critical day-to-day activities surrounding instruction. For example, no middle or high school principals invited me to participate in teacher
evaluations or take part in visiting a classroom for that purpose. In all cases, they passed by classrooms in the process of touring the building. If the principal stopped, it was because the teacher gestured to attract the principal’s attention to ask a question. The principal also stopped to check on empty classrooms. I took special note of this behavior because it was in contrast to the majority of elementary principal behaviors. I believe that the middle and high school principals’ actions limited a more in-depth review of educational programs linked to student achievement. In the context, I understood that because of the timing of this study, most principals would have already completed formal evaluations. However, it was never my intent to conduct an independent evaluation and become part of a teacher’s permanent record simply for the sake of this study.

However, all the principals have other instructional tools available, such as informal evaluations and walkthroughs, that could be linked with teaching and learning. Unfortunately, they did not consider sharing those instructional avenues with me during my site visitation. Another action that could be construed as demonstrating this subdued behavior occurred at three of the four high schools in this study. It became evident through the principals’ unwillingness to discuss certain topics that they perceived them as confidential, although I believed them to be part of public knowledge, particularly specific concerns with instruction, observations, and evaluation. Regardless of whether I placed a focus upon these topics, it seemed that in the performance of daily duties, these issues or concerns did not arise in our conversations, as if they were “off limits.” In some instances, I found myself reemphasizing my “binding” commitment to anonymity and confidentiality by repeatedly asking for the participant’s comfort level within certain discussions.
On several occasions, I inquired whether a participant needed privacy when meeting with teachers, staff, or the superintendent. I believe that through these actions, I reinforced the voluntary nature of participation expressed in the informed consent form provided to each principal at the beginning the field experience. I remain uncertain whether the principals’ subdued behavior was due to a high level of discomfort or simply an unwillingness to share intimate details of their experiences. I believe that most upper grade principals perceived participating in this study as a way of being politically correct within the district, and perhaps had difficulty understanding their impact on individual student achievement and the community’s involvement within that school. In retrospect, I believe that these principals exhibited a subtle but continued need to control every aspect of my site visit.

Elementary principals, on the other hand, exhibited a more trusting attitude and allowed this investigation to benefit by allowing me to engage in a true field experience. Most elementary principals invited me into the classroom to observe both formal and informal instruction. Although 3 middle school principals and 1 high school principal allowed me to observe different group meetings, those site visitations seemed to be constrained by limitations and somewhat guarded. Although I was unable to distinguish any significant differences between cohort and traditional graduate participants from a local Catholic university and graduates from other preparation programs, I was able to identify several relationships that existed among the data codes for each category, which served as the foundation from which I drew conclusions to make future recommendations.
Overall, I was impressed with and grateful for the respondents’ participation in the study. I believe that regardless of the implications, each principal deserved my honest and most thorough interpretation and analysis of the data findings and results.

Implications for the Research Questions

*Implications for Research Question 1: What Perceptions Do Graduates Have of the Leadership Category of Flexibility?*

Regarding the category of flexibility, all the principals perceived themselves to be flexible in their attitudes toward people, their leadership style, their comfort level with dissent, and their ability to be directive or nondirective. I perceived that my role and acceptance as either an observer or observer-participant as based upon the category of individual leadership (Patton, 2002). Within the category of flexibility, I perceived myself to be an observer-participant. Therefore, I believe that the respondents were more willing to share with me specific details related to the adaptability of their leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and their comfort level with dissent.

This leadership category seemed generally less complex than did the other categories because most information pertaining to it was within the arena of the public domain. The principals seemed more relaxed and responded with less effort when answering interview questions addressing this category. However, I was unable to readily observe some of their leadership behaviors related to instructional practice and taking greater interest in instruction by adding their voice to the discourse about it in groups and one-on-one meetings with teachers. I did not observe this behavior at the middle and high schools, leading me to consider the reasons why. High schools are generally more specialized entities organized around a departmental format. In most cases, this format
consists of supervisors serving as department chairpersons who have direct contact with teachers. In all the high schools in this study, the departments are overseen by a vice principal who provides additional support. As this scenario became apparent, I realized that the theoretical implications associated with the research for high school principal leadership may not be as applicable for certain behaviors within the categories of flexibility and monitoring and evaluating.

Marzano et al. (2005) found a significant correlation of $r = .28$ between the leadership category of flexibility and student achievement, yet I found that principals at the high school level relied heavily upon others such as department chairpersons, vice principals, and district supervisors to maintain flexibility (Reeves, 2006). I believe that this implies elements of vulnerability in Marzano et al.’s correlation. Based upon my findings, I suggest that the correlation established by Marzano et al. is less strong than they had found it to be. I asked myself, Would principals give themselves a higher rating on the survey based upon their perceived ability to delegate supervisory tasks? Would principals give themselves a higher rating on the survey if chairpersons were doing a better job and teachers were more satisfied? At the high school level, department chairpersons would more likely take a greater interest in instruction and add their voices to the discourse about it in groups and one-on-one meetings with teachers.

Naturally, I am not suggesting there is no association between a principal’s instructional responsibilities and the high school’s departmental design. I am simply interested in considering the extent to which an association exists, if any, between departmentalization and the principals’ level of delegation or perceived involvement in those leadership responsibilities related to it (Spillane et al., 2001) All the districts that I
observed in this study consider their high schools to be their flagship schools, as they are the largest schools with the greatest levels of complexity and within which the principal has the most responsibilities. Because of this increased level of complexity, it is difficult for high school principals to connect to classroom teachers on a one-to-one basis. In most situations, principals have a greater affinity for relying on supervisory staff for that connection. I understood that it is difficult to draw any specific conclusions from this category because I had observed only a small sample of high schools. However, it is possible to suggest or infer that this study’s implications for high schools may pertain to high schools in general. For example, the implications of Waters et al.’s (2003) meta-analysis, upon which this study was based and which examined 70 studies that involved 2,894 schools, approximately 1.1 million students, and 14,000 teachers, and Marzano et al.’s (2005) study, which involved 69 studies and 650 principals, have been extrapolated to the general population of schools. Is it possible that upper-grade level principals would themselves higher on the survey in areas where subordinates are more successful based upon the principal’s delegated authority in studies with larger samples? High school principals, more so than elementary and middle school principals, establish a hierarchy of trust, loyalty, and confidentiality with vice principals more so than with department chairpersons. Because of this formal detachment from the principal, many chairpersons become by default “site buffers” between teachers and the administration (principals and vice principals).

From the high school principal’s perspective, certain administrative functions are departmentally specific. The stronger relationship between chairpersons and teachers is probably based upon the length of time chairpersons spend in the classroom.
Chairpersons most likely have teaching as well as supervisory responsibilities. This additional instructional load provides more intimate (policy, practice, and theory) contact with teachers than with the principal. Chairpersons, in turn, spend more of their time with teachers in the classroom. Is it possible that the principals' "effect" on student achievement is due to the relational framework established departmentally at the secondary level?

Another factor that became evident is that the principals are overworked in certain respects. All the principals stated that the volume of paperwork that they receive from the central office and from outside of the building is truly staggering, requiring them to put forth incredible effort to stay abreast of this daily onslaught. I believe that this factor detracts from other more pertinent responsibilities and has a greater influence than has previously been considered or anticipated (Cotton, 2003).

Within the leadership category of flexibility, the participants perceived and practiced most behaviors associated with the quantitative research established by Marzano et al. (2005). In fact, their overall behavior rating seemed to align with their perceptions associated with student achievement. The participants were more than willing to make changes if the changes positively influenced students and achievement. These perceptions corresponded with my observational evaluation of the narrative transcriptions. The actions of the middle and high school principals that I observed somewhat conformed to the definition of leadership in that they referred to activities tied to the core work of the organization that had been designed by organizational members to influence the motivation, knowledge, affect, and practices of other organizational members or that were understood by organizational members as intended to influence
their motivation, knowledge, affect, and practices. (Spillane, 2005 p. 384). I believe that this definition was based upon the observation of leadership behaviors at an upper grade level school over an extended period and included the examination of distributive leadership data. When I compared this definition to the secondary setting, I found it more appropriate.

Another insight that I believe beneficial is that at more than three quarters of the sites that I visited, the staff and faculty perceived me to be either the principal’s replacement or immediate supervisor. The staff at these sites seemed to believe that I was evaluating the leader’s performance and insisted on this belief, regardless of what the principal said to the contrary. This phenomenon occurred because the principals at these sites have fewer years of experience on the job, and staff therefore perceive them as needing more supervision. Another possible reason is that the staff perceived me as the principal’s replacement. Districts are required to respond to factors associated with accountability and sanctions per NCLB mandates. As a result, schools consistently in need of improvement replace their principals.

The staff’s interesting reaction to me at these sites may be connected to their principals’ unwillingness to tread any deeper into program evaluation or instructional concerns related to this category. I further addressed the factor of leadership inexperience by posing research question 5, which addressed situational awareness and demographic data. I also found that elements of the category of flexibility merged and overlapped with specific behaviors from within the categories of monitoring and evaluating as well as situational awareness.
Implications for Research Question 2: Does a Graduate’s Educational Preparation Correlate to His or Her Leadership Ability Based Upon the Leadership Category of Outreach?

This question presented a more mixed review of principal perceptions compared to behaviors once individually compared through group (elementary, middle and high school) analysis. All the principals believe that their schools comply with district and state mandates. They accepted this aspect of the job as routinely connected to the central office and then to the district. A few principals seem to be advocates of the central office when doing so is beneficial for their schools. The majority of the principals view the central office and the board of education as one entity and consider that relationship compelling.

Because the principals perceive their role as mandated, I was uncertain what implications this perception would have for the results of Marzano et al.’s (2005) study, which found that the leadership responsibility of outreach has a significant correlation ($r = .27$) with student achievement. Would the correlation for this behavior be weaker if it were not based upon its mandated nature, specifically the requirement that all schools comply with all district and state mandates? Alternatively, did the principals who took the 92-item survey report that they often or completely comply because doing so is a district or state mandate? It is questionable whether principals would admit on a survey that they are not in compliance with district and state mandates. To that end, all the principals in this study responded positively to the research question about mandates, agreeing that “you just do them.” However, I am not completely convinced that policy mandates are addressed in a timely manner at all of the sites.
Correspondingly, although all the principals understood the necessity of connecting their school to the community at large, few did so well. Although most principals ensure that the school staff treats all parents with respect and appreciation, several find it difficult to solicit input from parents and community members. The same principals have less success encouraging parents to participate on decision-making committees despite advocating for the parents through a variety of mediums, such as community associations, ad hoc committees, newspapers, newsletters, parent councils, and Web sites, as well as by making the parents stakeholders in their children’s education.

During many of my site visits, I observed principal behaviors not synchronous with principal beliefs. Whereas many participants showed evidence of direct contact with parents and the community, others provided no evidence of contact with parents during my site visit. However, I understood why this may have occurred, given the limitations of this study. If I was not introduced to a parent or parent representative at a particular site, I made note of it in the transcription. When a principal did introduce me to parents but the relationship between the parents and the principal seemed strained, I recorded this phenomenon by assigning the behavior a rating of either not at all or rarely observed. For example, a few principals discussed having contact with parents, but the parents’ behavior seemed to be somewhat negative. In those cases, the principals demonstrated a greater range of variance, from observed contact, to no contact, to contact where parents displayed open hostility. When I observed contact that was cordial, I rated the principal’s behavior as completely observed, and when I observed no contact, I rated the principal’s behavior as not at all observed. When I observed contact that was negative, I rated the
principal’s behavior as rarely observed. If the principal resolved parental concerns in an amicable manner, I rated the principal’s behavior as occasionally observed or often observed. In many instances, the participants were actively involved with parents in their schools. That involvement included adding parents to decision-making committees, escorting students home, and visiting grandparents. Overall, the participants showed the greatest differences in behavior within this category.

In addition, generally most participants were rated either 1 or 2 for behavior m, which is, principals arranged for teachers to ride school buses in order to meet parents, because this behavior was not observed or used as an outreach tool. I believe that assigning teachers to ride school buses would cause discord at the sites due to concerns related to the teachers’ (a) union, (b) contracts, (c) safety, (d) reimbursement, and (e) selection process.

I found that the leadership categories of discipline and situational awareness have correlations of $r = .28$ and $r = .33$, respectively, with leadership effectiveness. Of all the responsibilities, these two responsibilities are perceived the most similarly and received the highest behavior ratings among all participants. However, I believe that in the category of outreach, some principals have difficulty with several behaviors designated in the research. The first behavior that presents difficulty relates to the significant positive relationship between parents’ active participation in their children’s learning and academic performance. I believe this relationship to be one sided and more likely to occur when parents are willing to accept this role. All the principals encourage this behavior but do not have any control over its outcome. As my research suggested, parents seem more willing to participate at lower grade levels than at upper grade levels.
District factor grouping (DFG) plays a role in parental involvement and the principal's level of encouragement. In districts in an H or J DFG, the principals conveyed that parents demonstrate a sense of entitlement. Specifically, the parents have a perceived expectation of excellence of which they make the principals aware. The principals in these districts seem to have more difficulty confronting parental intrusion though they must do it more often, which concerns parents who have instructional issues or academic concerns. In districts in an A or B DFG, many parents are either concerned about an educational matter or not involved in the education of their children. In most cases, the main distraction for principals in A and B districts relates to discipline or the need to modify a student’s behavior. These principals seem to take on the role of informant and then compromiser of rules and regulations to gain parental favor.

The second area where principals seem to have difficulty concerns those principals who have arranged for teachers to ride the school bus in order to prevent student conflict on the buses and to meet parents. Although I did not observe this behavior, I surmised that principals would have problems assigning teachers to ride buses if not first approved by the district and teachers’ union. I perceived this action as one more teacher oriented and voluntary as opposed to a responsibility that could be successfully connected to a principal. Finally, I am uncertain whether principals of high performing schools devote 66% or more of their working time on parent and community relations then do average school leaders. I remain uncertain how this percentage was developed and measured.

From a researcher perspective, most principals seem to have many responsibilities and do not wish to add more to a full schedule. This category has the largest capacity to
encompass unforeseen political potholes. Political naivety presents the greatest professional risk to schools and principals. For example, principals that are new to a district must become aware of the political landscape surrounding the community, identify the key stakeholders, and determine their alliances. They must answer the following questions: Are board members elected or appointed by the mayor? Is the superintendent a new or seasoned leader? Are the members of the superintendent’s cabinet loyal and trustworthy? What community organizations have stronger than usual ties to the school and district?

The principals are aware that if they do not remain alert, they could easily become entangled within district and community squabbles. Therefore, I am uncertain whether most principals responded to certain aspects of this category based upon a need to be politically correct. For many, it was difficult responding in a manner reflective of their educational character and leadership training. I also found it difficult to make sound comparisons among the graduate participants because of the small sample size (Thomson, 2004), but still attempted to provide insight to guide future investigations. While doing so, I understood that my site visitations only provided a small glimpse into the reality of the day-to-day activities and responsibilities performed by principals. Each principal has specific district job responsibilities that, while sometimes aligning with the researched leadership responsibilities, are mostly distinct from them, and thus add to his or her overall leadership load. Although I attempted to explain this phenomenon and its implications for my research question addressing monitoring and evaluating, I could not conclude that graduate school preparation is synonymous or can be correlated with
leadership ability. Additional research must be conducted to make a definitive conclusion.

Implications For Research Question 3: Do Cohort, Traditional, or Other Graduates Respond Differently in Their Training and Preparation Based Upon the Leadership Category of Discipline?

I observed that all the principals are more than willing to act as a “buffer” between teachers and their instructional practice and outside interference. All the principals attempt to move noninstructional issues aside to prevent them from causing confusion and distraction in the school and classroom, and most succeed at doing so. Some principals stated that teachers are more focused upon doing this task for themselves rather than seeking assistance from the principal. I believe that most of the educational programs I observed operate well and would continue to do so even in the absence of leadership for brief periods. My assumption may be accurate based upon the premise that all districts within this study seek and applaud academic excellence.

Year after year, the framework within certain high achieving districts establishes a baseline of academic performance upon which the district’s educational benchmarks are based. As a result, the school structure evolves automatically with continued systemic support for institutional change over time (Murphy, 2003). Change occurs because of the collective will and professional collaboration of teacher leaders. I observed evidence of these phenomena at several sites. Most principals seem content to accept and embrace change and act as educational overseers. By doing so, they ensure that specific deadlines are met and that the overall instructional program operates well without interference. The principals at these sites either help create structures and procedures around the core of
teaching structures or they support those structures already in place prior to their arrival. Their educational overseer responsibilities are divided among several major leadership categories that focus upon protecting instructional time. The principals’ leadership subcategories are designated by their individual level of importance and priority. These categories and subcategories are dynamic, periodic, and often repetitious. For example, one principal notified his staff by e-mail announcing my site visit because he would be absent from the site until almost noon. Despite his absence, I observed that the school ran exceptionally well; the teachers and staff knew what they had to do and they did it. In my opinion, this is a perfect working example of the organizational framework moving the educational foundation; specifically, the teachers and staff within the institutional structure of the school are able to perform their duties automatically.

Other factors involve specific behaviors at single sites that are likely not performed at all other sites. For example, I observed several indications of flexibility at one site that I did not observe at another site, and observed strong monitoring and evaluating at one site but weak monitoring and evaluation at another. My observations suggest that most leadership responsibilities are cyclical and periodic and not likely to occur except during specific times of the year or on certain days of a cycle. Regardless of this phenomenon, it seemed that operations were conducted in the same way without deviation and within a traditional educational framework during my site visits (Murphy, 2003). This led me to consider the following: If leadership responsibilities occur within a cycle, would those behaviors aid in forecasting coming academic events? Would actually knowing the right thing to do strengthen the association between leadership and teaching and learning (Waters & Grubb, 2004)? In other words, does experienced leadership have
more of an impact on student achievement than less experienced leadership? Does the foundational nature of repetitive, institutional behavior play more of a role than does a principal's experience? What influence does the institutional environment have on the principal's practice and leadership training? Waters et al. (2003) described the need of "getting to the essential," but determining what is essential is easier than doing what is essential.

I observed that the principals perceive what is essential for this category. They explained that they are more successful at maneuvering classes and students through scheduling to support teaching and learning; through scheduling and establishing a daily routine, they are better able to control outside interferences. Generally, their responses differed from the overall understanding of the meaning of the term discipline as defined by the research. The principals overwhelmingly understand discipline narrowly or completely as the modification, correction, and/or sanction of student behavior. Although the vice principals assist the middle and high school principals with discipline, elementary principals receive no assistance, so must be the primary enforcers of discipline. When principals intervene to stop disruptive behavior within the classroom, only one subcategory seems to be less manageable for teachers.

The principals have concerns regarding facilitating special educational expansion and managing students with mild to severe disabilities. Evidently, many districts return out-of-district placements or classified students with severe disabilities. In some cases, classified students are the main source of distraction and confusion, detracting more often than not from the overall school program. Most districts return less severely disabled classifications as a method of cutting costs. I believe that instead of focusing upon cutting
costs, a better practice would be to focus more effort upon the referral process and increase individual education plan (IEP) declassifications. Few sites handle the special education population's need for a "least restrictive environment" well.

As I continued my review of the data, I found that most principals have established and enforce a policy of making no announcements during instructional time, but others could not uphold this edict. In some cases, I observed that principals used the public announcement system to communicate with teachers and students. Their schools seemed less focused on instruction than those with limited announcement use. Most principals agreed that protection against all other school activities during instructional time was part of the behavior associated with this category. Few principals discussed whether they have made arrangements for additional instructional time outside of the school day as needed.

Elmore's (2000) explanation that "school leaders were hired and retained based largely on their capacity to buffer teachers from outside interference... Buffering consists of creating structures and procedures around the technical core of teaching" (p.6) applied to the schools that I visited. Although ideal, buffering may not completely take into account increasing aspects of "built-in" interference such as district and state assessments. With the recent advent of NCLB benchmarks, more district and state assessments have become cumbersome and the main cause of periodic interference. I concur that "there was a role for leaders in moving non-instructional issues out of the way to prevent them from creating confusion and distraction in school systems, schools and classrooms" (Elmore, 2000 p. 7). Surprisingly, some of the principals I visited had not established buffering as a priority. One principal repeatedly made announcements,
called students over the public announcement system, talked with teachers over an intercom, and received calls on a cell phone in the hall, all during instructional time. At another site, the district superintendent transferred a different principal into a rather tenuous situation without regard for the overall impact on the receiving school. The staff at this school were more than willing to share their frustration over this situation with me, explaining that the principal is unable to protect them from external pressures and interference from the community and central office.

I wondered how other principals would respond in a similar situation. How would a principal, especially an inexperienced principal, shield teachers from the potentially negative effects of new district initiatives? Given the stronger than usual influence and control that the central office has on newer principals, it seems highly unlikely that effective “buffering” occurs within this situation. Ensuring discipline can be a natural consequence of attending to the primary work of the school’s teaching, although other factors have a greater impact on the extent to which this might occur. Based upon the responses and observed behaviors of participants associated with this category, I was unable draw discernable conclusions, at least none that indicated significant differences in the training and preparation among the graduates from cohort, traditional, and other programs.

*Implications For Research Question 4: What Perceptions Do Graduates Have of the Leadership Category of Monitoring and Evaluating?*

I believe that research question 4 addressed the most important category within this investigation of selected leadership responsibilities. Monitoring and evaluating has a tangible influence on student achievement, and as such, leadership for instructional
purposes is grounded in a framework for examining instruction (Spillane et al., 2001). This principle is one of the more compelling that supported this category. Before conducting this study, I had maintained the preconceived notion that principals held this responsibility in higher regard than other responsibilities. However, I found the largest contrast between perceptions and behaviors for the category monitoring and evaluating. The participants’ open-ended interview responses did not align with their observed evaluation narratives. Although I understood that the principals have different personalized leadership styles, few provided insight into the instructional activities that occur between teachers and students.

I believe this category to be easily observable and structured compared to the other categories. Marzano et al. (2005) explained, “The most powerful single modification that enhances achievement is feedback. A system that provides feedback is at the core of monitoring and evaluating” (p. 55). The extent to which the school leader monitors the effectiveness of school practices in terms of their impact on student achievement reinforces the feedback process. This category encompasses a number of related behaviors and probably interconnects to a number of other areas that support teaching and learning. For example, when the principal monitors and reviews student and teacher performance, these actions are supported by the research because they represent a strong advantage in the overall management of the school.

For the principals unable to conduct either formal or informal evaluations but participated in noticeable walkthroughs during my site visit, I made a two-fold assumption: (a) that these principals understand the importance of feedback and that feedback in and of itself does not occur automatically but rather as a function of some
type of design and (b) that they remain continually aware of the impact of school practices on achievement and thought by systematically observing the implementation of new and effective programs to gain first-hand feedback (Marzano et al., 2005; Reeves, 2006). Those principals unable to participate in formal or informal evaluations or walkthroughs but who extensively discussed monitoring student performance helped me understand teacher performance from the principal’s perspective, linking student performance with teacher performance.

Of the 19 principals, 4 directly monitor and evaluate of teacher instruction by conducting classroom observations and providing feedback to teachers. Because of these behaviors, the principals are able to study a teacher’s instructional approach and participate in the delivery of instruction, which provides follow-up feedback for the teachers. Because the institutional framework is in place, the principals do not have difficulty creating a system that provides feedback at the core of monitoring and evaluating. Average or inexperienced principals benefit greatly from the guidelines, deadlines, and established practice within this type of framework.

I believe that most principals in this study perceive providing feedback as an essential aspect of their efforts to monitor the effectiveness of their schools’ curricular, instructional, and assessment practices. To obtain a more precise understanding of this category and its connection to each principal subgroup, I reviewed and compared similar responsibilities by job title as established by the district and board of education to gain understanding of the positions. I felt that it would be appropriate to compare the district’s written description for a position against individual perceptions and the principals’
observed behaviors in this category, as the selected responsibilities appear to define what successful principals are expected to do based upon the survey data.

Because each job description has similar lengthy written expectations for this category, I decided to select those job functions linked to the following:

1. Functions that pertain to organizing, managing, evaluating, and supervising effective and clear procedures for the operation and functioning of the entire school consistent with the philosophy, mission, values, and goals of the school district, as well as functions that ensure compliance with all laws, administrative codes, board policies, and regulations. These include instructional programs in the core curriculum and those that pertain to content standards, extracurricular activities, discipline systems that ensure a safe and orderly climate, financial management, facilities maintenance, program evaluation, personnel management, office operations, emergency procedures, and community relations.

2. Functions that pertain to supervising the instructional programs of the school, evaluating lesson plans, and observing classes on a regular basis to encourage the use of a variety of instructional strategies and materials consistent with research on learning and child growth and development. These functions ensure that the instructional programs engage the learner in tasks that require analytical and critical thinking, questioning of the known, problem solving, and enhancing creativity while addressing each student’s needs, interests, and skill levels. At the same time, they encourage each student to define individual goals and accept responsibility for learning by providing a variety of methods for the student to demonstrate performance and accomplishments.
3. Functions that pertain to the supervision of all certificated and noncertificated personnel assigned to the building that ensure that all job responsibilities are met and exceeded. These include developing professional improvement plans with individual staff members; ensuring that personnel evaluation procedures are conducted in a fair and consistent manner that encourages accountability, growth, and excellence in accordance with law, board policy, and contractual requirements; and recommending to the superintendent the renewal, dismissal, withholding of increment, promotion, or other action for all personnel assigned to the school following established procedures and timelines.

I chose related job responsibilities that are part of the district’s written expectations because they closely resemble the behaviors identified within the category of monitoring and evaluating. Each job description identified duties that are the actual daily responsibilities that each principal must perform. It would be interesting to determine the actual similarities and differences between job title responsibilities and research the 21 responsibilities. Had the job descriptions been developed from practice, policy, or theoretical research? Although I believe they had been developed from a combination of all three, they still fail to convey the relational importance of the job titles. The district job descriptions are overly vague and seem to be more of a comprehensive “cover your assets” document provided in the unforeseen event a principal needs to be terminated or removed. I believe these responsibilities to be those that a principal would be least likely ask others to fulfill because of their contextual nature and links to the position. How had the principal’s job responsibilities been developed by the board of education and the superintendent?
Within this category, the participants responded that instructional practices are monitored through classroom observations. Most principals reported that they monitor the curriculum through curriculum mapping and evaluation and examining data every 8 weeks to measure student progress in the classroom. Six principals who regularly conduct classroom evaluations or walkthroughs invited me into the classroom as an observer-participant. The remainder of the principals neither conducted classroom evaluations nor participated in classroom walkthroughs while I was visiting their schools. I understand that all the participants likely conduct classroom evaluations at specific periods during the school year as part of their contractual responsibility and that, as I visited the sites in May and June, I was visiting the sites at a date after which most of the participants had completed both their formal and informal evaluations for the calendar year.

However, I believe that a principal’s involvement with instructional walkthroughs was not constricted by this study’s time limitations. Walkthroughs, in all cases probably could have occurred but did not. I found the participant behaviors and perceptions for this category to be fundamentally similar as determined by this study’s three-part investigation. My findings provide for a more in-depth understanding of the researched criteria that pertain to the five leadership categories. However, it is not clear whether I made a connection between leadership behaviors and a principal’s leadership ability. By behaviors, I refer to those activities tied to the core work of the organization that are designed by organizational members to influence the motivation, knowledge, affect, and practices of other organizational members (Spillane, 2005). Based upon the data that I collected, it appears that principals’ educational preparation is linked to their on-the-job
preparedness, but as my findings is not conclusive, it should serve as the basis for future research.

Implications For Research Question 5: Does A Graduate's Race or Ethnicity, Gender, Years of Experience at Present School, Type Of Degree Attained, and Age Significantly Influence the Leadership Category of Situational Awareness?

I found that years of experience at the present school and race influence situational awareness. Years of experience at the present school most greatly influences situational awareness, followed by race, and then gender and type of degree in equal measure. I wondered whether these findings could be generalized to a larger population. Do years of experience at the present school and race or ethnicity impact student achievement by region? Would studying a larger sample provide more evidence that a participant’s terminal degree influences student achievement?

Race or ethnicity. Of the 19 principal participants, 12 are White and 7 are Black. Of the 7 Black participants, 3 are Black males and 4 are Black females. Of the 12 White participants, 7 are White males and 5 are White females. Although my sample was small, its small number of Black males is a matter for concern, especially at the elementary level as a missing role model. I also wondered whether DFG played a role in the ethnic composition of the study. Two Black males are in an A DFG and one Black male is in an H DFG. Does a larger percentage of Black principals come from certain DFGs? I could not determine whether the study’s small number of Black males was reflective of the larger population of principals from districts in northwestern, central, and northeastern New Jersey. I believe that using a larger sample would have provided for greater racial and ethnic representation.
Gender. Of the 19 participants, 10 are male and 9 are female. The concerns I expressed regarding race may also apply to gender. How could I explain the larger number of female principals at the elementary level? At one elementary school, the secretary indicated that a male principal had previously held the position prior to the current female principal, but when he spoke with younger children, his voice was so deep that the children started crying, causing him to be transferred to upper-grade level school within the district. This leads one to believe that male principals at the elementary level are considered too intimidating. Do more female graduate candidates take elementary education training and leadership courses and more male graduate candidates take middle and secondary education leadership training courses? Does DFG have an impact on principal gender and grade level assignment? Of the 4 middle school principals who participated in the study, 3 are male and 1 is female. Of the 4 secondary school principals who participated in this study, 3 are male and 1 is female. I considered whether the middle and secondary gender demographics supported my premise that districts abide by the traditional culture of female elementary principals and male upper-grade level principals. If this is true, what implications can be drawn? What impact, if any, does gender have on student achievement? Does leader gender have a great impact on student gender and achievement? For example, do male principals have a greater impact on male student achievement and female principals a greater impact on female student achievement? I believe gender may have a marginal influence on this category.

Age. Of the 19 respondents, 1 participant is between 26 and 35 years of age, 6 between 36 and 45, 8 between 46 and 55, and 4 between 56 and 65. Participant age appears to have no implications for leadership effectiveness.
Years of experience at current school. Of the 19 participants, 13 have between 1 and 5 years experience at their current school, 4 have between 6 and 10 years of experience at their current school, 1 between 11 and 15 years, and 1 over 31 years. Because years of experience at the same school was the largest group I took a closer look at this demographic. Within the largest group of 13 respondents, 9 are male and 4 are female. Six males are White and 3 are Black. Three females are white and 1 is Black. Seven males have doctorates and 2 have master’s degrees. One female has a doctorate and 3 have master’s degrees. Four males are between 46 and 55 years of age, 2 between 56 and 65, 2 between 36 and 45, and 1 between 26 and 35. Three females are between 36 and 45 and 1 between 46 and 55. Three males have 2 years of experience at their current school, 1 has 3 years, 1 has 5 years, 1 has 6 years, 1 has 7 years, and 2 have 20 years. One female has 15 years of experience at her current school, 1 has 6 years, and 2 have 1 year. Do these findings imply that most candidates who become new principals are older? Is this because there are more principals retiring or fewer younger candidates entering the profession? Does a principal’s number of years at his or her current school significantly influence student achievement?

Type of degree. Of the 19 participants, 9 have a doctoral degree. Of this group, 5 are White males between 46 and 55 years of age, 2 are Black males, 1 is a White female, 1 is a Black female, 4 have between 1 and 5 years of experience at the present school, 1 has between 16 and 20 years of experience at the present school, 2 are high school principals, 1 is a middle school principal, and 2 are elementary school principals. The 2 Black doctoral participants are in different age and experience brackets; 1 is between 36 and 45 years of age and has between 6 and 10 years of experience whereas the other is
between 56 and 65 years of age and has between 16 and 20 years of experience. The 1
White female doctoral participant is between 46 and 55 years of age and has between 11
and 15 years of experience and the 1 Black female doctoral participant is between 36 and
45 years of age and has between 6 and 10 years of experience. Both women are
elementary school principals. This was the fourth largest group demographic in the study.

The large of number of participants with doctoral degrees implies that the position
of principal has become more sophisticated and complex, leading districts to actively
seek candidates with this terminal degree. I discovered that most of the principals with a
doctoral degree are interested in moving to a higher position, some to the position of
assistant superintendent either within or outside of the current district and others to the
position of superintendent within a smaller district. Three principals are actively pursuing
a higher position. I could not determine whether other doctoral candidates from other
colleges and universities had been in cohort or traditional programs.

Of the 19 participants, 7 have master’s degrees in administration, 2 have master’s
degrees in science, and 1 has a master’s degree in education. Although more participants
have master’s degrees than doctoral degrees (10 versus 9, respectively), I found no
significant difference between these participants’ perceptions and their practice. Most
principals who responded to the category do fairly well and all are able to predict what
could go wrong on a daily basis. Most principals are keenly aware of the mechanisms and
dynamics that define the daily functioning of their schools and use that awareness to
forecast potential problems. Only a few principals recently met with teachers who were
disappointed with a decision that had recently been made.
All the principals were willing to share their anticipatory leadership experiences. Some principals had difficulty with forecasting opportunities and threats. In most of these cases, the principals seem unaware of their schools' vulnerabilities, evidenced by my ability to enter several buildings unobserved at those sites with little to no security measures in place. I believe that these principals may not be aware of the inner workings of the school organization. A few principals have difficulty remaining aware what is occurring at their schools because they are unable to distance their ego from daily events and honestly appraise the state of their organization.

Some participants in this category responded they are concerned with busing and accidents. Others reported that on occasion, teachers are absent without a substitute, an important consideration in their schools. Many reported that safety and security of staff and students is important, as "anything and everything could go wrong." Many have taken measures to ensure the safety of staff and students. On principal explained, "Staff and student attendance is important in all aspects of the running of the school." When I asked how he communicated with staff, one principal replied, "Through the use of a daily bulletin, being visible, and written communication. All teachers in their assigned classes is an issue of importance."

Because this category aligned with the demographic results, I sought to identify demographic factors that influence participant perceptions and behaviors, but was unable to draw any definitive conclusions because of the small sample size. Based upon the demographic findings, I concluded that the category of situational awareness is influenced by the following factors: (a) being a White male principal, (b) having a doctoral degree, (c) having 5 or fewer years of experience as a principal, and (d) having 5
or fewer years of experience at the current school. This means that the behavior of situational awareness is influenced by principals who are White males with a doctorate degree and with 5 or fewer years total experience and 5 or fewer years experience at their current school. I found that 15 graduates of other colleges and universities and 4 graduates of a local Catholic university had these characteristics.

Explanation of Findings

Sample Size

If I had used a larger sample size, it would have been more likely to identify those perceptions related to the behaviors being researched (DePaulo, 2000). The smaller the sample size, the narrower the range of perceptions that can be identified. Because I examined fewer than 20 subjects, this qualitative study may not have been large enough to ensure that most graduate perceptions had been identified, especially at the middle and high school levels, which were each represented by only 4 participants. For example, the behavior and practice of only 1 participant at the elementary level out of (n = 11) and 3 participants at the upper grade level out of (n = 8) seemed not to align with the selected leadership responsibilities. If I had examined a larger sample, perhaps this negative spike on the graphical examples would flatten and show true significance based upon several educational factors, specifically the leadership responsibilities of monitoring and evaluating, and discipline. Did I fail to observe significant factors as a result of observing and interviewing only 19 participants? Most likely I failed to do so. In addition to the use of mixed methodology as a method for grounding theory, I would want to discover perception with an incidence as low as 10% if the risk of missing subgroups (6–8, n = 4 and 9–12, n = 4) were to be reduced to less than 5%, then a sample of n = 30 would be
required from random selection (DePaulo, 2000). This occurrence would be analogous to achieving 95% confidence in the effort to discover a perception with a 10% incidence. That is, confidence expressed in uncovering meaningful qualitative insight (DePaulo, 2000, p. 3).

NCLB Accountability

Substantial problems exist within the NCLB testing and accountability structure. In particular, researchers have found that states, districts, and schools can use techniques to raise scores without actually improving student learning. These methods make changes at the state level (e.g., making test items easier and lowering cut scores); at the school level (e.g., excluding low-performing students and tutoring students just below the cut score who are more likely to move to proficiency); and at the teacher level (e.g., encouraging or discouraging certain students to attend school on test days) that undermine the accountability system. These techniques raise test scores but do nothing to help students (Laitsch, Lewallen, & McCloskey, 2005, as cited in Guilfoyle, 2006).

When states, districts, and schools fail to achieve AYP, NCLB accountability affects principals more than any other educational leaders. In an NCLB-driven atmosphere, what is not measured far exceeds what is measured. As Guilfoyle (2006) explained, “Any system that hinges the evaluation of an entire school and its leadership on one test score average from one group of students at one grade level cannot hope to accurately assess that school” (p. 13). NCLB accountability may influence the way that the principals in this study perceive their selected leadership responsibilities.
Theory and Practice

I briefly observed how principals use research through the application of visibility within the leadership responsibility of situational awareness. Contrary to common belief, I got a sense that the principals in this study respect and apply educational research. To support this notion, I closely examined their responses to the opened-ended interview questions in which most, if not all, discussed the value and use of educational research. Biddle and Saha (2006) concluded that “most principals are actively interested in education research that is relevant to their profession” (p. 73) when they found that the principals in their study had no difficulty volunteering examples of research knowledge that they considered useful. The participants in this study provided meaningful information on at least four and sometimes eight or more different research traditions, including information on learning styles, effective schools, and mastery learning. They suggested that future professional training incorporate a stronger focus on the importance of research knowledge, including its use and misuse. Again, my impression of the exchange or transition of knowledge between theory and practice was not that it did not occur; I understood that it did indeed occur, and therefore focused upon how it occurred in the context of its relevance to the practitioner.

The Absence of Visible Curricula at the Middle and High School Level

Many adults, many of whom are parents, proudly proclaim their ignorance of mathematical and scientific matters. Phobias about mathematics and science create avoidance behaviors that children pick up from their parents, friends, and even some teachers. According to Steen (2007), “The many students who have been conditioned to disdain, fear and avoid quantitative reasoning confront mathematics and science teachers,
especially at the secondary level, with the dual challenge of motivating as well as teaching” (p. 17). As difficult as it is to teach these subjects well, overcoming society’s phobia of engaging in quantitative thinking is a far greater challenge (Steen, 2007). In general, the products of student progress becomes less and less visible with an increase in grade level. For lasting learning to occur, mathematics and science must be seen by students as both meaningful and useful (Steen, 2007). Contributing to the lack of understanding of numeracy is the watered-down curricula offered in schools unable to offer Advanced Placement courses in these subjects. Unfortunately, some believe that the mathematics and scientific curricula designed in the 1950s for physics and engineering remain the best curricula in the 21st century (Steen, 2007).

Principal Leadership

Although I observed the interaction of many variables in this study, I believe that three factors account for much of the difference between those who excelled and those who seemed to struggle during my site visits. Leadership that focuses upon relationships and results seems to be at the heart of leadership success (Phillips & Phillips, 2007). This type of leadership leads to differences among administrators who appear equally qualified based upon their demographic profiles yet achieve different results in practice. The first important cluster of attributes and skills are vision and goal setting, initiative, drive, high expectations, accountability, and a focus on results (Phillips & Phillips, 2007). The second group of attributes are the ability to build relationships, attention to processes, problem-solving abilities, political savvy, and culture building. The final cluster of attributes are knowledge of the district and research methods, compassion, trustworthiness, resourcefulness, and honesty. The most successful leaders demonstrate
all three sets of attributes. Inversely, school site administrators who are less effective in their leadership roles struggle because of a weakness in two of these three key areas. These administrators seem to address too many initiatives at once and have precious little time to address teacher concerns (Reeves, 2006).

Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Research

My recommendations and suggestions for further research evolved from the study’s limitations and the responses provided by participants. Based upon my results, I provide recommendations for practice for public PreK-12 district personnel, including principals, district personnel, and boards of education, as well as for developers of educational leadership preparation programs. I conclude my providing recommendations for further research for educational researchers.

Recommendations for Public PreK-12 District Personnel

Based upon my findings and insights gained thereof, I provide the following recommendations for public PreK-12 district personnel:

1. Develop articulation agreements with local universities in an effort to enhance professional leadership within the specific leadership categories identified in this study.

2. Closely examine the overall amount of paperwork given principals and how it detracts from formal and informal classroom observations and walkthroughs and the principal’s ability to provide quality, time-sensitive feedback to teachers.

3. Develop ways to assist elementary principals who have large student enrollments (550 or more students) but no assistant principal.
4. In light of the recent school violence across the nation, carefully examine and address security concerns. Corrective measures should focus upon installing automated door locks and a buzzer and intercom system. If possible, security cameras should be placed at the main entrance.

5. Access the 360 Degree Balanced Leadership Profile Assessment online to gain knowledge of the factors correlated to student achievement (Marzano et al., 2005).

6. Work with new principals to help facilitate a more seamless community outreach transition.

7. Manually review the crisis management plan with building principals. Focus should be placed upon lockdown, evacuation, and emergency management procedures.

8. Create a dedicated Web page for principals to monitor student achievement across grade levels.


10. With the assistance of parents, investigate the impact of the Internet on academic performance.

11. Acknowledge that students are taught in the same manner that they were 50 years ago and implement systemic change. Alter the delivery of instruction to address the needs of the student in the 21st century.

12. Address the high dropout rate. Every year, 1 million students drop out of public high schools (PBS, 2008).
13. Develop a principal mentoring program in conjunction with the New Jersey
Principals and Supervisors Association (NJPSA) and local colleges and
universities.

14. Change the physical structure of the classroom to support multifaceted
curriculum modules or pods with dedicated student work areas that are more
laboratory oriented.

15. Incorporate the many technological advances of the 21st century into
classrooms to immerse students in a visual curriculum. Classrooms should be
equipped with ceiling-to-floor LCD panels that have fiber optic video and
Internet capability.

16. Recognize students’ need to be challenged with hands-on, problem-solving
curricula that allows them to engage in critical thinking. Public schools should
become the problem-solving institutions of the future. Mathematics and
science curricula should be focused upon developing solutions to the energy
crisis. Social studies and language arts curricula should focus upon how to
develop better foreign relations policy with our global neighbors. Business
departments should focus upon the moral and ethical responsibilities of
operating financial institutions.

17. Get every student involved with some form of academic competition, not just
Advanced Placement students, such as by holding an online DFG academic
competition by grade level. Public schools have become much too
complacent.
18. Require teachers and principals to become involved in subject-matter competition.

Recommendations for Developers of Educational Leadership Preparation Programs

The study participants reported that their educational leadership preparation programs had provided them with the appropriate theory for practice and have allowed them to develop the ability to process information. However, I found that many have had difficulty applying the theories that they had learned to the practice of their educational leadership roles, and that many programs had neglected important areas of instruction. I therefore provide the following recommendations for the developers of educational leadership preparation programs:

1. Include coursework that addresses the social, family, and crisis management aspects of education in cooperation with local and state social service agencies to better equip principals with the skills to address probable events. Include discussion of managing school crises (e.g., bomb threats and lockdowns) and school-affiliated family crises (e.g., suicide and natural or accidental death) and address them in the form of courses or a lecture series in cooperation with local and state police agencies. The study participants reported that their educational leadership preparation programs had not prepared them to deal with these concerns.

2. Develop articulation agreements with local districts in order to facilitate onsite training centered on the leadership responsibilities found essential in this study.

3. Develop a dedicated server that allows graduates to provide ongoing feedback to share in their successes and perceived failures on the job.
4. Consider developing an “interactive educational workshop,” a dynamic laboratory where practitioners and policymakers gain first-hand experience with the transition of theory into practice.

5. Establish user-friendly district or regional information centers where principals and district personnel can meet with university staff to engage in educational problem solving.

6. Continue to work directly with principals and districts determined to be in need of improvement under the NCLB. Specifically, aid them in developing the 21 leadership responsibilities found to be correlated with student achievement.

7. Continue to develop a postgraduate monitoring program where representatives from university educational department regularly visit districts employing cohort or traditional graduates, especially inexperienced, nontenured principals.

8. Develop a principal mentoring program in conjunction with local school districts and the NJPSA.

9. Investigate developing a traditional cohort program for graduates who require flexibility.

10. Focus upon first changing practice based upon research on the transition of theory to practice. Principals need to understand the architecture and mechanics of a successful theoretical mode, how it works, and what it looks like.

11. Develop a principal internship program where cohort or traditional candidates are provided an opportunity to shadow practicing principals in the field.
12. Develop a global graduate exchange program where students are able to experience "seat time" at other colleges and universities locally, nationally, and internationally.

13. Investigate the likelihood of conducting research on the transition of theory into practice at different sites. NCLB accountability and AYP achievement should be one set of variables and researched leadership behaviors or responsibilities should be the other set of moderating variables. The experiment would test whether the practice of specific leadership behaviors has a significant impact on NCLB accountability and AYP achievement.


15. Maintain an active contact list of graduates who are willing to become future research participants.

16. Include a section in school newsletters that updates principals on the latest educational trends. Only a few principals in this study expressed knowledge of Marzano et al.'s (2005) research or current educational trends.

17. Familiarize graduates with the appropriate technology to assist with their practice. For example, voice-type technology is currently available that allows principals to tour the building with a head-set and recorder in a jacket or shirt pocket. Voice-type notes could be gathered during walkthroughs, formal and informal observations, meetings, and other events. Once in the office, the principal could then connect the device to the computer and download written recorded messages.
Voice-type software can also be connected directly to a computer via Microsoft Word.

18. Provide online national library access so that graduates can have unlimited access to university research libraries across the country. This would facilitate a broader single knowledge base for dissertation research and give graduates direct access to research archives at one location. Developing this technology can help offset or justify the rising cost of tuition and a college education.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

1. Conduct a study using a larger sample of principals, such as a sample that represents an entire region. With this larger sample, examine only the two leadership categories of outreach and monitoring and evaluation to more closely examine the relationship between perception and behavior regarding these responsibilities.

2. Compare a larger sample of regional secondary school principals regarding the leadership category of monitoring and evaluating.

3. Compare a larger sample of regional middle school principals regarding the leadership category of discipline.

4. Compare a larger sample of regional elementary school principals regarding the leadership categories of outreach and situational awareness.

5. Compare similar and contrasting DFG with race, ethnicity, and gender within the leadership category of situational awareness.

6. Many principals seem to have a somewhat strained relationship with parents in the category of outreach for a variety of reasons. Because this leadership
responsibility is instrumental in the development of an association between successful principal leadership and student achievement, further research should be conducted to explore whether this is a growing phenomenon.

7. The leadership category of monitoring and evaluating received a mixed behavior rating that may have been due to the timing of this study, as explained in the research. If the study’s timing was not a factor, this may be cause for concern. Could the strong quantitative correlation in Marzano et al.’s (2005) meta-analysis be the result of systemic organizational mandates? Future research should specifically investigate how often principals do walkthroughs and their influence, if any, on student achievement.

8. Explore the actual relationship between student achievement and the leadership category of monitoring and evaluating using specific student achievement criteria, such as reading, science, and mathematics scores, for schools with a DFG of A to D.

9. Explore principal effectiveness as perceived by university professors who train graduates in preparation programs. The criteria for determining principal effectiveness should be based upon university perceptions and compared to district, state, and national benchmarks.

10. Determine the number of university preparation programs that require or encourage their teaching personnel to spend segments or blocks of time mentoring principals in public schools.

11. Determine and measure the effect of preparation training on principal leadership.

12. Determine and measure the effect of preparation training on student achievement.
13. Determine the number of public schools that use different approaches in their approach to teaching and learning that break out of the institutional, industrialized mold of the 20th century. Identify where they are and how have they changed the educational paradigm.

14. Determine the impact of Internet social networking on public education and academic achievement. This research should specifically examine such Web sites as Myspace.com, Youtube.com, and Facebook.com and the number of students willing to discuss their involvement.

15. Conduct studies to confirm the specific personal traits of successful leaders as well as those who are not successful.
References
References


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Murphy, J. (2003, September). *Reculturing educational leadership: The ISLLC standards ten years out*. Paper prepared for the National Policy Board of Educational Administration, Nashville, TN.


Quigley, T. (2005). *A study of perceptions and beliefs of graduates regarding their school leadership skills based on their educational leadership management and policy program at a Northeastern Catholic university*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ.


The Wallace Foundation. (2003). Beyond the pipeline: Getting the principals we need, where they are needed most. New York: Author.


Appendix A

Letters of Solicitation
October 27, 2006

Dear Superintendent,

I am writing to request your approval for the Principals in your district to participate in a study I am conducting for my doctoral dissertation at Seton Hall University. My research will investigate the perceptions and level of satisfaction that Principals have with their professional training based on selected leadership responsibilities that strongly correlate to school improvement and student achievement.

This research entitled, "A Comparative Study on Graduates from an Education Leadership, Management and Policy Program at a local Catholic University and how selected Leadership Responsibilities influence their perceptions in daily practice" focuses on the comparison of two groups of Principals. The first group consists of Principals who have graduated from Seton Hall University, and the second group consists of Principals who have graduated from Colleges and Universities other than Seton Hall.

Using method triangulation (the process of reconciling quantitative and qualitative data) and a grounded theory Principals will be informally observed, depending upon their comfort level, for approximately 1 to 5 hours in a K-12 setting. A follow up 30-minute interview will be scheduled with the Principal preferably the next day and prior to the start of school hours.

I am asking your permission to meet briefly with Principals at your next principal meeting. If this is not possible, then I am asking your permission to mail a letter of solicitation with a short survey that will ask for identifying factors and possible observation/ interview dates. Participation by the Principal is voluntary. If permission is granted the solicitation letter, the survey (attached) and a copy of this letter with your written approval will be mailed with a return self-addressed stamped envelope.

The results of this study will provide information of interest to practicing Principals and Superintendents as well as to contribute to the literature in the field. All respondents' information will be held in the strictest confidence. Individual participants will not be identified when analyzing the data. Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained throughout the process. A coding system will be employed to identify feedback and follow-up for participants as well as to those who do not respond.

Please accept my appreciation for your professional assistance with this research. If you would like a copy of the dissertation abstract after completion or have any other questions or concerns, please contact me 908.329.4146 or through my advisor, Dr. Daniel Gutmore at 973 275 2853.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

[Name]

Note: The rest of the page contains the college's logo and address.
November 7, 2006

Dear Principal,

I am a graduate student at Seton Hall University, conducting research on "The Comparison of Graduates from an Education Leadership and Management Policy Program and their Perceptions on Selected Leadership Responsibilities in Daily Practice." This study will focus on two groups of 10 Principals, one group will have graduated from Seton Hall's school of education. The second group will consist of Principals that graduated from other colleges and universities.

The study will first ask Principals to complete a very short demographic questionnaire for the purpose of identifying groups, based on the completion of the survey, Principals will be solicited to take part in an informal observation and follow-up interview. I am asking your permission to informally observe your style of leadership and how you conduct daily business in your organization. A follow-up interview will take place the next day. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you are not willing to participate, please indicate this on the demographic survey.

This study is based on the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McRel) meta-analysis over a 35 year period which, as a result, identified 21 leadership responsibilities that correlated to school improvement and student achievement. These quantitative findings prompted my interest in conducting qualitative research to provide a more in-depth understanding of the significance of these responsibilities in the field.

Information obtained from all Principals will remain strictly confidential and the reporting of results will be reflected only through group analysis. No names or identifying factors will be used in reporting results. Surveys, observations and interviews will be secured and only the researcher will have access to this information.

If you agree to participate please complete the demographic survey and list possible observation and interview dates. Those Principals willing to participate will be contacted by phone.

Please accept my sincere appreciation for your professional assistance and participation with this research. If you have any questions or a need for more information please do not hesitate to contact me at 908 329 4140 or through Dr. Daniel Gutman at 973 275 2835, Seton Hall University.

Sincerely,

P. Christopher Embrey

College of Education and Human Services
Department of Education Leadership, Management and Policy
Tel 973-761-9397
400 South Orange Avenue - South Orange, New Jersey 07079-2685
Appendix B

Informed Consent Form
Informed Consent Form

Researcher's Affiliation

The researcher, Pierre Christopher Embrey, is a doctoral candidate in the College of Education and Human Services' Department of Educational Leadership, Management and Policy at Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey. The researcher's study is entitled: "A Comparative Study on Graduates from an Educational Leadership, Management and Policy Program at a Local Catholic University and How Select Leadership Responsibilities Influence Their Perceptions in Daily Practice."

Purpose

The purpose of this three part study (demographic, observation and follow-up interview) is designed to evaluate the perceptions of graduates from different preparation programs on selected leadership responsibilities. The researcher will look at quantitative data and employ qualitative techniques to compare and contrast leadership responsibilities and behaviors gathered from the field. The leadership responsibilities that strongly correlate to student achievement are flexibility, outreach, and discipline, monitoring/evaluating and situational awareness. The demographic responses should take approximately 10 minutes, the observation between two hours to five hours and the follow-up interview around 45 minutes to 50 minutes.

Procedures

Graduates currently employed as principals in a K-12 setting will be observed and given follow-up interviews. At the beginning of the study, participants will complete a brief survey that includes a section for possible observation and follow-up interview dates. The survey with this signed consent form should be returned to the researcher in the self-addressed, stamped envelope. Once both forms are received the researcher will contact the participant. The observation and follow-up interview will be scheduled at the convenience of the participant. There are no experimental procedures involved in this research.

Instruments

This research will use mixed methodology containing a brief demographic survey, a one-time field observation and a follow-up open-ended interview for gathering data. The demographic survey solicits identifying factors for each participant such as, years of experience or highest degree completed. The field observation will focus on selected leadership responsibilities that correlate to student achievement for example; does the participant adapt his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent? The interview has five parts corresponding to the select leadership responsibilities with each part containing four or five interview questions. There will be a total of 21 interview questions in all. An example of an interview question in part five of the interview entitled situational awareness is: how do you become aware of the informal groups and relationships among teachers in your school?

Seton Hall University
Institutional Review Board

MAR 26 2007

Approval Date

College of Education and Human Services
Office of the Associate Dean
Tel 973.761.9688
400 South Orange Avenue • South Orange, New Jersey 07079-2685

Expiration Date
MAR 26 2008
Voluntary Nature

Participation in this study is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any time. Refusal to participate in the study or the discontinuation of participation at any time will not result in penalty or loss of benefits to subjects otherwise entitled.

Anonymity

The anonymity of all subjects will be preserved throughout this research. Given the nature of the procedures subscribed by the researcher in soliciting demographic information and by conducting field observations and face to face open-ended interviews, all identifying factors will be changed. The information gathered through the survey, observation and interview will be used solely for purposes of analysis and to report findings. To this extent the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants' survey, observation and interview data as well as school and district information will be carefully preserved. To maintain anonymity in reporting and analyzing data, each participant will be assigned a letter/number/Color code. Names will be removed to protect the identity of all participants.

Confidentiality

All transcriptions will be kept in a secure, metal locked file cabinet in the researcher's home. Strict measures will be used to maintain the confidentiality of all participants.

Confidential Records

The researcher and his advisor will see the raw data which will be securely kept and maintained in a metal locked file cabinet in the researcher's home for a period of three years.

Risks or Discomforts

There are no anticipated risks or discomforts associated with participation in this research.

Benefits

The expected benefits derived from participating in this study include a personal understanding of select leadership responsibilities that may assist participants in their role as agents of change within the school community. Potential benefits may include specific information for participants and their development of school improvement plans.

Compensation

There is no compensation for participating in this research.

Alternative Procedures

There are no other alternative procedures or treatments that might be advantageous for the participant as a result of this research.

Seton Hall University
Institutional Review Board

MAR 26 2007

Expiration Date

MAR 26 2008

Approval Date
Contact Information

The researcher, Pierre Christopher Embrey a doctoral candidate at Seton Hall University, may be contacted for answers to questions about the research and research participant's rights. The researcher's advisor and IRB director may also be contacted.

Pierre Christopher Embrey, Researcher
P.O. Box 16
Stewartsville, New Jersey 08886-0016
pembry357@verizon.net

Dr. Daniel Gutmore, Researcher's Advisor
Seton Hall University
400 South Orange Avenue
South Orange, New Jersey 07079
973.275.2853

Dr. Mary Ruzicka, Institutional Review Board Director
Seton Hall University - Presidents Hall
400 South Orange Avenue
South Orange, New Jersey 07079
973.313.6314

Audio Tapes

Audio-tapes will not be used in this study.

Informed Consent Form Copy

Signing this Informed Consent Form grants the researcher permission to collect demographic information, observe and interview the participant. A copy of the signed and dated Informed Consent Form will be given to the participant.

Participant _____________________________ Date _____________________________

Seton Hall University
Institutional Review Board

Exp. 2 6 2007

Approval Date

MAR 2 6 2008
Appendix C

Author Approval of Use Letter
From: "Karan Thoma"<kthoma@mcrel.org>
To: <zeus357@verizon.net>
Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2006 10:22 AM
Subject: MCREL’s Balanced Leadership Profile 360™

Dear Mr. Embrey:

I spoke with Dr. Tim Waters who said he would be delighted to grant you permission to use MCREL’s Balanced Leadership Profile 360™ under the following conditions: You agree not to publish the survey items except as they are incorporated, used, and disclosed in context of the actual survey for survey-takers only. Expressed differently, the items may not be published or excerpted for third parties. They may be used by survey-takers only. You also agree to share the results of your findings with MCREL.

Please review MCREL’s confidentiality and copyright information below.

---

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**How is aggregate information used?**

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10/25/2006
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Should you or any member of your Human Subjects Review Board require additional information, don't hesitate to contact me.

10/25/2006
Thank you for your interest in our Balanced Leadership work. We wish you well and look forward to reading your findings.

Regards,
Karen Thome
Project Coordinator
Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning
4691 DTC Boulevard, Suite 500
Denver, CO 80237
303 832-6543
kthome@mcrel.org

From:  P C P EMBREY [mailto:zeus357@verizon.net]
Sent: Monday, October 02, 2006 10:02 AM
To: Karen Thome; Daniel Gutmore
Subject: Permission to use

Dear Ms. Thome,

As per our conversation on Friday, September 29 2006 I would like to use certain elements of the research done by Marzano, et al (2005). Specifically those responsibilities with the strongest average correlation to school and student improvement to build on the development of a grounded theory. Attached is an example of the work proposed and the scope of use. If tentatively approved I would naturally provide your organization with a formal letter of request on Seton Hall stationary. Thank you for your assistance. Sincerely, P. Chris Embrey - Graduate Student at Seton Hall University.

10/25/2006
Appendix D

Instruments
Open-Ended Interview Script

Table D1  Perception: Discipline

1. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of discipline (protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus):

1.1 How were you successful in eliminating interruptions and undue distractions to teaching and learning?

1.2 How was the instructional time of teachers protected?

1.3 How did you deal with external issues that detracted teachers from teaching?

1.4 How were controversies or disagreements prevented from escalating into school-wide issues?

Table D2  Perception: Flexibility

2. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of flexibility (adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent):

2.1 What was your comfort level with making changes in how things are done?

2.2 How were people encouraged to express opinions that were contrary to your own?

2.3 How did you adapt your leadership style to the specific needs of a given situation?

2.4 Describe those situations where you were either highly directive or nondirective.

Table D3  Perception: Monitoring and Evaluating

3. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of monitoring/evaluating (monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning):
3.1 How did you monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum?

3.2 How did you monitor the effectiveness of instructional practices in your school?

3.3 How did you monitor assessment practices in your school?

3.4 How did you accurately determine how effective your school was in terms of enhancing student achievement?

Table D4  Perception: Outreach

4. **An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility outreach (is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders).**

4.1 How did you insure that your school complied with all district and state mandates?

4.2 How did you advocate for your school to the community at large?

4.3 How did you advocate for your school to the parents of your students?

4.4 How was the central office, made aware of your school’s accomplishments?

Table D5  Perception: Situational Awareness

5. **An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility situational awareness (is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems).**

5.1 How did you become aware of the informal groups and relationships among teachers in your school?

5.2 How did you become aware of issues that have not formally come to the surface but might cause discord?

5.3 What details regarding the day-to-day running of the school were important to you?

5.4 What things did you predict, that could go wrong in your school on a day-to-day basis?

5.5 How did you know what was running smoothly and what was not running smoothly in your school?
Observation Record

Table D6  Behavior: Flexibility

Name: ______________________

Date: ______________________

Observation Narrative:

1. The leadership responsibility of flexibility (adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent):

   Indicators Activity Description/Materials 360 Profile Rating (1-5)

   Making changes

   Accepts contrary opinions

   Adapting style

   Directive or Non-directive

Evaluation Behavior:

a. Accepts diverse opinions

b. Encourages/nurtures individual initiative

c. Encourages/protects voices of participants who offer differing points of view

d. Adopts leadership style to the needs of specific situations

e. Being directive or non-directive as the situation warrants

f. Comfortable with making major changes in how things are done
Table D6 continued

g. Supports teacher autonomy

h. More involved in teachers’ instructional practice

i. Allows teachers great latitude to teach as they see fit

j. Respects teachers judgment, knowing that teachers are engaged with other

staff in learning activities regarding instruction

k. Intervenes when decision will have negative consequences for others

l. Decides to refrain from an opinion to ensure the other groups feel ownership over that
decision

m. Supporting teachers by giving autonomy to adjust to in-class and over-time situations

accommodating student ability

n. Takes greater interest in instruction and adds her/his voice to the discourse about it, in
groups and one-to-one with teachers. This increases his/her understanding of the
instructional issues teachers face and renders them much more useful in working with
teachers as equals in resolving such issues

o. Displays mental agility

p. Encouraging people to express diverse/contrary opinions
Table D7  Behavior: Outreach

2. The leadership responsibility outreach (is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Activity Description/Materials</th>
<th>360 Profile Rating: (1-5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complies with district/state mandates</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocate for school to the community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocate for school to parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School accomplishments to Central Office</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluation Behavior:

a. Ensuring the school complies with all district and state mandates

b. An advocate of the school with parents’

c. Advocate of the Central Office

d. Advocate of the school with the community at large

e. Ensuring that school staff treats all parents with respect, appreciation, warmth, sensitivity and care

f. Solicit input from parents and community members for decision-making

g. Has a higher level of parent and community satisfaction
Table D7 continued

h. A significant positive relationship between parents active participation in the child's learning and academic performance

i. Receive constituent input and make certain that resulting goals are broadly understood.

j. Parents and the community communicate their vision for their school

k. Engages parents and community members as classroom helpers

l. Take meetings to neighborhoods

m. Arrange for teachers to ride school buses in order to meet parents

n. Have the school serve as a community center

o. Principals of high performing schools devoted 66 percent more of their work time on parent and community relations then did average school leaders

p. Encourages parents to work with their children on instructional activities at home
Table D8  Behavior: Discipline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Activity Description/Materials 360 Profile Rating: (1-5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eliminating distractions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to teaching/learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Protects instructional time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deals with external issues that detract from teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prevents escalation into school-wide issues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluation Behavior:

a. Buffering teachers from outside interference

b. Creating structures and procedures around the technique core of teaching

c. Moving non-instructional issues out of the way to prevent them from creating confusion and distraction in the school and classroom

d. School is scheduled for maximum teaching effort

e. Protects instructional time

f. Protects against administrative intrusions

g. Protects against too frequent assemblies
Table D8 continued

h. Protects against all other school gatherings during instructional school time

i. Arranges for other instructional time outside of the school day as needed

j. Shields staff from excessive intrusions or pressure exerted by forces outside of the school

k. Protects staff from external pressures and interference from the community and central office

l. Manages for other things that has no control over

m. Establishes and enforces a policy that no announcements are to be made during instructional time

n. Handles issues with the local media in a way that does not involve individual teachers

o. Protects or shields teachers, as from potentially negative effects of new district initiatives

p. Discipline is a natural consequence of attending to the primary work of the schools' teaching
Table D9  Behavior: Monitoring and Evaluating

4. The leadership responsibility of monitoring/evaluating (monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Activity Description/Materials</th>
<th>360 Profile Rating: (1-5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monitors the effectiveness of the curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monitors the effectiveness of instructional practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monitors assessment practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Determines the effectiveness of school in terms of enhancing student achievement</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Evaluation Behavior:

a. Creates a system that provides feedback is at the core of monitoring and evaluating

b. Insure feedback does not occur automatically, but is a function of design

c. Monitors the effectiveness of school practices in terms of their impact on student achievement

d. Superintendent and system level staff active in monitoring curriculum and instruction in classrooms and school

e. Performance review represents a strong leverage point in the management of the school
Table D9 continued

f. Continual evolution is the norm

g. Continually monitors the effectiveness of the schools curricular, instructional and assessment practices

h. Continually aware of the impact of the schools practices on student achievement

i. Implements standards-based report cards and uses the information from the report cards to determine the extent to which the school is meeting its goal to increase the number of students who are at or above the standard in writing

j. Exhibits monitoring/evaluating by systematically observing the implementation of new effective instructional programs

k. Conducts classroom observations and gives feedback to teachers

l. Involved in curriculum, instruction and assessment

m. Studies teachers instructional approach and takes a turn at the delivery of instruction with follow-up feedback

n. Makes regular visits to the classroom, if possible, to visit each classroom everyday

o. Does not “wing it” actually participates in extensive training to increase skills in performance evaluations

p. Realizes the single most powerful modification that enhances achievement is feedback
Table D10  Behavior: Situational Awareness

5. The leadership responsibility situational awareness (is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Activity Description/Materials</th>
<th>360 Profile Rating: (1-5)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aware of informal groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>and relationships among teachers</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Aware of issues not formally</td>
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<tr>
<td>to surface but may cause discord</td>
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<tr>
<td>Details regarding the</td>
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<tr>
<td>day-to-day operation that are</td>
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<tr>
<td>important</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Predict things that can go</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>wrong daily</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knows what is running</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smoothly and what is not in your school</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Evaluation Behavior:

a. Knows what is running smoothly and what is not in your school
Table D10 continued

b. Knows what is happening in the school, distancing ego from daily events and honestly appraising the state of the organization

c. Uses anticipatory leadership

d. Identifies clues of coming opportunities and hints about threats

e. The organization is well positioned to survive and prosper

f. The leader accurately predicts what could go wrong from day to day

g. Is aware of informal groups and relationships among staff

h. Is aware of issues in the school that have not surfaced but could create discord

i. The leader studies the schedule in an attempt to identify hidden problems that it creates for teachers or students

j. Meets with groups of teachers who she/he has heard are disappointed in a decision they had recently made

k. Is keenly aware of the mechanisms and dynamics that define day-to-day functioning of the school and using that awareness to forecast potential problems

l. Knows about the inner workings of an organization, the more one is able to lead and manage that organization
Table D11  Demographic Survey

Principal Name ________________________________

School ________________________________

District ________________________________

Your completion of the following questions indicates your understanding of this project and your willingness to participate.

Principal Demographics

1. Gender: Male _____ Female _____

2. Race/ethnicity:
   _____ White
   _____ Black or African American
   _____ Asian
   _____ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
   _____ Hispanic or Latino
   _____ American Indian or Alaska Native
   _____ Other (please specify) ______________________________

3. Age:
   _____ 26 – 35
   _____ 36 – 45
   _____ 46 – 55
   _____ 56 – 65
   _____ Over 65
Table D11 continued

4. Total years as a Principal: _______

5. Number of years in present school: _______

6. Highest degree completed: _______

7. Graduate school attended: _____Rutgers Univ. _____Seton Hall Univ. _____Kean Univ. _____Montclair Univ. _____Other (specify)

8. Dates for Observation and Interview
Appendix E

Field Experience Transcriptions

Observations
Findings, Part 2: Narrative Transcriptions of Site Observations

All subjects participating in part one of the findings were given a signed copy of the informed consent form for their records.

Participant 1 = GP1  Date: May 7, 2007   Field time = 7:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

7:45 a.m.

I arrived at the site at approximately 7:45 a.m., driving into a large asphalt school parking lot on a clear, warm, sunny day. My car’s temperature indicator read 84° F. Seeing a person whom I assumed to be a staff member, I asked the person if there was an area designated for visitor parking. The staff member quickly replied, “You can park anywhere” then hurried into the school.

I parked and walked about 15 yards toward an immense two-story light beige brick building, approaching a dark gray metal side door with a narrow, elongated safety glass window. I tried to open the door but it was locked. From that location, I observed several students moving in the direction of another entrance and followed them. The students entered the main entrance, but as I approached, the door closed and locked. I tapped on the door then peered through the window. I saw two or three students sitting on the receptionist’s table, but they did not respond to my tapping. I wondered why they did not respond to me; perhaps it was because I was a stranger and, because of safety concerns, they did not open the door or acknowledge my tapping on the window. When another student entered, the student suggested that I ring the buzzer. When I did so, the door buzzed open and I entered the building.

The first thing I noticed were warning signs stating “All visitors must report to the main office” that covered both walls on either side of the main entrance. The office was
only a few feet from the entrance door. I entered the main office, introduced myself to a person whom I thought was the secretary, and asked, “Is the principal (GP1) available?” The person whom I thought was the secretary replied, “No, I don’t work in the office. I am a teacher but I expect GP1 should arrive in a few minutes. If you would like to have a seat, GP1 and the secretary should be here pretty soon.” I replied, “Thank you” and sat among a row of two metal folding chairs facing the main office’s wooden counter sign-in area.

As the teachers began signing in, the secretary entered and inquired, “Can I help you?” I again stated, “I have an appointment with GP1.” The secretary asked, “What is your name and where are you from?” I gave my name and explained that I was a doctoral candidate from a local catholic university. At that moment, GP1 entered and introduced herself and invited me into her office. On the way to the office, GP1 and I discussed the general purpose of the research and agreed on the time for the interviews after I had conducted my observation/shadowing. I sat down in an air-conditioned office (the building was not air-conditioned) and inquired, “What do you do during a ‘normal’ day as the building leader?” GP1 began to review what she did as part of her daily routine:

Every Friday I do little things for the staff, like coffee and pastries or finger sandwiches for lunch; you know, little things. First thing in the morning I check the calendar to see if I have any appointments, meetings at central office or meetings with parents and the like. We’ve been having problems with the bell system, sometimes it rings and other times it rings late.
When I asked her, “What can you do to fix it?” GP1 responded, “Configuration of the bell system originates from the district. A technician from the district must correct this problem.” GP1 then discussed her seasonal responsibilities:

I see my role as a facilitator who tries to assemble the best teachers that I can find.

I believe in horizontal leadership with open access. The big thing on the plate during this time of the school year is staff evaluations. The expectation in the district is that principals have a pre-evaluation and post-evaluation conference with each teacher. Teachers give feedback when you meet with them before you write the official document. Only a few prefer the feedback, or at least they tell me they prefer it.

When I asked, “How many teachers do you evaluate?” GP1 responded, “Fifty three. Typically two evaluations are done on tenured teachers, district supervisors also come in and assist. Some district supervisors do not do pre- or post-conference. Observations are always clinical.” When I asked, “What is your enrollment here?” GP1 responded, “I estimate around 735 students.”

8:05 a.m.

At 8:05 a.m., GP1 walked into the halls near the main entrance and greeted staff and students as they entered the building. A teacher (T1) approached GP1 and explained that another teacher (T2), was absent, and a third teacher (T3), had decided to take over T2’s lesson from the day before so that the class would not have to have a substitute teacher when reviewing a new unit. GP1 explained,

By contract, 10 days before the end of each semester period, teachers worked with a colleague on interdisciplinary units then participated in end-of-semester student
evaluations, one on December 15 and the other on June 6. Vice principals also work with each interdisciplinary team. This particular teacher, T3, is an English major that taught in the high school and decided to move to the middle school. When she arrived, we put her in a team. . . . It’s an underlying assumption that everyone on the interdisciplinary team shows mutual support and works within a type of freedom they know will exist . . . Faculty meetings do not go beyond 4 o’clock and for nonessential things I e-mail staff. I only have a faculty meeting if it is something that is really important.

As we walked in the halls on the first floor, GP1 also explained how the building is divided by grade level. On the first floor are seventh and eighth graders and on the second floor are sixth graders. She also indicated that 80 PreK special-needs children are housed on the first floor rear side of the building from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

9:15 a.m.

At 9:15 a.m., GP1 returned to the main office for a meeting with several staff and two parents (PT1 and PT2). I was invited to sit in on the meeting. The meeting consisted of two parents and one vice principal (VP1). GP1 talked about the logistics of the 8th-grade graduate program and the transition of fifth graders to the sixth grade. PT1 suggested that something be done about the temperature in the auditorium, suggesting, “Maybe we could bring in a portable air-conditioning unit and blow it into the auditorium.” VP1 talked about getting help for fun night from teachers with the students and how last year one student had acted like a “dimwit.” GP1 reminded VP1 that at 10:30 a.m. that day the fifth graders who would possibly be sixth graders in September 2007 were going to the school auditorium. Fun Night and Lipstick Night are annual events for
eighth graders and the Annual Kids Night is an event for the entire school. VP1 continued with his update then asked, “Should we change the starting time of the program from 6:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.?” Each member of the group contributed to the discussion on the logistics of the 8th-grade program. PT2 inquired, “Is it possible to limit presentations to one speaker?” PT1 asked, “Is the color of the booklet okay and is the ramp on the stage okay? Does it violate a fire code?” The discussion continued on the venue and the location of the stage and its measurements. PT2 continued, “Is it possible to move the piano before and after students come across the stage?”

GP1 allowed the discussion to continue then brought up the issue of whether parents would be allowed to see the traditional video. GP1 then refocused the meeting on the program schedule for that evening, inquiring, “If you have a quest speaker, would an additional talk by the principal be meaningful?” to which both parents replied, “Yes. The principal should do the opening remarks, the welcome and introduction.” GP1 asked, “Is it possible to have the 8th-grade graduation at the high school auditorium?” VP1 responded, “Only if you could tape dark paper over the windows; it’s too light and people would not be able to see the video.” GP1 again asked, “What about the high school gymnasium?” VP1 responded, “Because of the location of the windows, you can’t properly darken the area or cover them. Curtains would cost thousands of dollars and then there would be an issue of parents finding their way to the seats.” GP1 asked VP1, “Would you like to present some awards this year?” VP1 gave a silent nod. PT2 suggested, “I think we have video yearbooks.” I got the impression that VP1 was not that enthusiastic about presenting awards.
10:00 a.m.

When the meeting concluded at 10:00 a.m., GP1 and VP1 continued to discuss several issues. GP1 stated, “The faculty meeting is scheduled for May 16, 2007. We will review a trip scheduled to Great Adventures.” GP1 and VP1 discussed the special accommodations provided for one of their 8th-grade students. GP1 continued, “JY, a special education student confined to a wheelchair, is cooperatively learning.” Evidently, JY’s mother prefers that her son ride with the other students rather than use the separate specially equipped bus with a lift that the school district provides for him. Just then, the GP1 received a call from the superintendent. When I asked GP1 if she wanted privacy, GP1 replied that she did not. During her conversation, I overheard GP1 state, “Yes, we have 19% special education students in the building.”

After her conversation with the superintendent, GP1 asked VP1, “What about Bill’s [the business administrator’s] level of integrity with custodial overtime? We were told there is no budget for custodial overtime, yet certain custodians received overtime.” VP1 responded, “Yeah I know.” GP1 and VP1 exchanged brief insider comments on the recent activities of the business administrator. VP1 then stated, “Some parents are trying to organize a trip to Washington, DC, and I’m already going on the trip to the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia. I also have to meet with the elementary school principals on the 21st-Century Principals’ meeting.” GP1 moved to the computer to record this information.

VP1 continued to advise PT1 on items of concern, stating, “We need to let teachers know about applying to the gifted and talented program.” GP1 stated, “Let’s target the 2008-2009 school year. We can put out a letter of interest to all teachers.”
Originally, VP1 and the staff wanted to implement the gifted and talented (G/T) program, but GP1 postponed its implementation. At the beginning of GP1’s tenure at the current school, the staff were overtly displeased at this postponement, but GP1 ignored their reaction. Eventually, attitudes changed as GP1 began a process of helping teachers and staff with a variety of school-related issues and providing coffee and pastries in the mornings, or, as GP1 describes her actions, “[Doing] little things.” The industrial arts staff opposed the G/T program because of the possible stigma for non-G/T students.

VP1 described how there usually is a “packed house” for the concerts. GP1 complained, “There are too many students using cell phones in the class and halls, too much of this text messaging, the Board of Education may want a flash on this.” Noting that the current superintendent was retiring, GP1 stated, “I think he is very fair; he actually makes decisions on what’s good for kids.” VP1 indicated that he was leaving to start the 5th-grade assembly program. GP1 continued to review the logistics of the graduation program with me and PT1 and PT2. The meeting concluded around 11:30 a.m.

11:45 a.m.

At approximately 11:45 a.m., a very agitated female student stopped me and GP1 as we were walking in the halls to report that a male assailant had just mugged her. According to one of the lunch aides, this student had stolen a handful of cookies during lunch from the “assailant,” a male student, who had simply taken his cookies back; the female student had simply exaggerated this entire incident. When the females student had first approached us, my first thought had been to call the police to report a male intruder and initiate a school-wide lock down to find the “assailant.” I then considered the reality
of fieldwork, during which anything can happen that may interfere with conducting and completing the research for the day at this particular site. GP1 explained the situation in greater detail:

    Our female cookie bandit has a lot of problems at home; her mother is an addict and her father is incarcerated. Really school is the only stable thing in her life at this time; she has naturally had a difficult time in school and periodically sets out through behavioral outbursts.

GP1 told the female student to report to VP1.

    As GP1 and I moved to the assembly, GP1 stated, “Earlier this year I allocated money from our budget for 18 teachers to attend the National Middle School Convention [NMSC].” GP1 supports teachers taking professional development and recognizes that when teachers see others going, they too want to become involved. GP1 explained, “It’s my way of getting teachers to buy into the program. The NMSC adds to the 100 hours professional development credit needed within five years.”

12:00 p.m.

    After GP1 and I entered the auditorium, I sat in the rear and GP1 walked to the front, where VP1 was answering the questions of 5th-grade students. At the front of the auditorium, GP1 asked, “What did you like so far?” A student (ST1) responded, “The painted lockers” and another (ST2) responded, “The auditorium.” GP1 asked, “Did you know the auditorium is 61 years old, because people take care of this place.” GP1 continued, “In the summer, you will get a letter inviting you to a pizza party.” A counselor next to VP1 said, “Raise your hand if you want to go here for sixth grade in the fall.” All but a few students raised their hands. GP1 asked, “Do you have any other
questions?” ST3 asked, “Can you come in the building during the summer to explore?”
GP1 replied, “Yes, just ring the doorbell and let the office know who you are and what
you want.” ST4 asked, “Can you get extra math help?” GP1 responded, “Yes, extra help
in mathematics is available.” ST5 asked, “Do eighth graders push you into lockers?” GP1
emphatically responded, “No, we don’t tolerate that here.” ST1 asked, “Do the lockers
that are painted belong to students?” GP1 responded, “Yes.” ST1 asked again, “How
many times can we go to our lockers?” GP1 responded, “Morning, lunch, and the end of
the day.” GP1 gestured to VP1 and stated, “Now I’m going to give you back to VP1.”

GP1 sat down and listened to the VP for the remainder of the meeting. VP1 said,
“One of the things that we do is go on science field trips.” ST6 asked, “Do you have a
student newspaper?” VP1 responded, “Yes.” ST7 asked, “Do you have bake sales and a
talent show?” VP1 replied, “Yes. We also have spirit days and spirit week. Last year
sixth graders won spirit week.” The counselor added, “Think about a good strategy to win
next year.” VP1 stated, “One more question.” ST8 asked, “How long is recess?” VP1
responded, “Twenty minutes” before concluding, “Just remember to be the best sixth
grader you can be and it will all work out okay.”

12:30 p.m.

At 12:30 p.m., GP1, VP1, and I returned to the main office, leaving the counselor in
charge of the dismissal of the fifth graders back to their home schools. During the
assembly, I had been impressed with the maturity of the fifth graders and the manner in
which they had conducted themselves; they had been very attentive and their behavior
excellent. Just outside of the auditorium, GP1 met with a parent who had concerns about
her children being with children whom they did not know. GP1 assured the parent that
her children would be okay because others would be in the same situation. After her meeting with the parent, GP1 asked me, “Do you want to break for lunch before I go to the scheduling meeting? Do you want to come with me to the scheduling meeting? I’m going to have an apple, do you want something from the cafeteria?” I replied, “I’m okay for lunch. I had a large breakfast and it would be great if I could attend the scheduling meeting with you.” In the main office, GP1 went to a corner closet that contained a small refrigerator, opened it, and asked, “Do you want an apple or a banana?” I responded, “I’ll take the banana.”

GP1 invited me to ride with her to the central office for the meeting with the scheduling committee. At the central office, GP1 introduced me to all the district principals. After meeting them, I sat down and listened to the discussion. Evidently, there was an issue with student use of excused and unexcused absences. The assistant superintendent (AS1) asked, “How do teachers know it is excused or unexcused?” A principal (PL1) replied, “Students are given a note.” PL2 said, “Teachers are the ones that receive the note.” PL3 asked, “Can the note go to the same person because of consistency? If a student has five teachers, will all five teachers receive a note?” PL4 replied, “Yes, is there a difference at the elementary level?” PL5 asked, “How many days can I be absent district wide, including for religious observances?” The discussion continued on this topic until the principals agreed that the main categories that they need to observe for excessive use are fieldtrips, college visits, out-of-district placement, truancy, bereavement, and excused and unexcused absences.

Interaction among the principals was brisk as AS1 moved to the next topic of special education codes. GP1 stated, “The annual student and staff attendance report will
list special education classification codes.” Every principal receives an annual ASSA report. PL6 stated, “The problem is getting the codes to teachers and the Child Study Team staff.” AS1 brought up the topics of parent custody and the requirements for district proof of residency, checking for restraining orders, and proper identification. The meeting concluded at approximately 1:55 p.m.

2:15 p.m.

GP1 and I returned to the school by 2:15 p.m. and walked to the main office. In her office, GP1 e-mailed the mathematics teachers a notice indicating that any eighth grader who wanted to take the math final exam early could do so. While at the computer, a custodian entered the office and gave GP1 money. After the custodian had left the office, GP1 explained, “He hit my car and agreed to pay me directly instead of going through my insurance company. That way both of our insurance policies do not go up.” GP1 reviewed student grades based upon teacher assessments and standardized tests from a record booklet she had created to monitor each student’s academic progress, especially those students who tend to fall behind.

Seeing pictures of a man standing next to an off-road vehicle on her bulletin board, I asked, “Who is that standing next to the off-road vehicle?” GP1 responded, “My husband. He’s always wanted to go off-road with his buddies.” In the background of the picture was a mountainous terrain with large boulders speckled throughout the landscape. GP1 indicated that she would be getting hip-replacement surgery sometime during this summer. GP1 talked extensively about the community’s false perception of her school as compared to another middle school in town, describing it as somewhat like living uptown as compared to downtown or on a hill as opposed to next to the railroad tracks. Somehow
this perception has been interpreted to apply to student intellect, grades, and the site’s overall level of accomplishment in the eyes of certain community members. GP1 stated, “It’s not true and very damaging to our kids’ and to our parents’ morale.”

2:35 p.m.

At 2:35 p.m., I conducted an open-ended interview with GP1.

Documents: GP1 provided me with the following documents:

1. The *EN Flash* publication, whose motto is “Where the attitude is excellence in academics, activities and the arts.” This seven-page document contained morning announcements, notices to parents, the day’s words of wisdom, and the EN date book with notable dates for that month.

2. The preconference worksheet given to teachers prior to their formal observation, which describes proposed discussions about the nature of the class, the goals of the class, the particular methodology to be used in the class, and the type of student assessment that will be used.

3. The *Staff Supervision/Evaluation Procedure*, an 18-page document for teachers and school administrators for the 2005-2006 school year that contains information about the philosophy behind the evaluation, the goals and objective of the evaluation, and the job description of a teacher.

4. The educational technology standards for teachers, which provides understanding of and outlines five standards for the concepts and operation of older and newer technologies.
5. An observation form with which to record observations on classroom performance, planning and preparation for learning, methods and techniques of instruction, teacher/pupil relationships, and observable results in pupils.

6. The interim evaluation report, which evaluates classroom and nonclassroom performance.

7. The annual evaluation report form used to assess overall classroom performance.

8. A summary report of school activities.

9. A copy of the school’s newspaper, EN Insider.

10. A copy of a report comparing the current schedule to an 80-minute schedule and a dropped period schedule.

11. A document concerning feedback from teachers on the selection of the schedule.

12. A document entitled the Ten Principles of Successful Classrooms.

13. A letter from GP1 to the staff detailing possible proposals for a school schedule and the activities that will follow.


15. A copy of the current schedule and a letter of introduction from GP1 to parents, students, and friends of the school taken from the school’s Web site.

Participant 2 = SP1 Date: May 10, 2007 Field time = 7:15 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

7:15 a.m.

At 7:15 a.m., I drove from the end of the road into a large open cul-de-sac that contained a large grassy area and park-like setting. Across from the single-level brick school building, I saw a number of fields (football, baseball, and track) and the visitor parking area, where I parked and walked across the parking area and bus lanes into the
school. After I introduced myself to the secretary, who told me that SP1 was not in yet and motioned for me to be seated in the waiting area. There is one chair in the main office that is a bit small but serves its purpose. Other staff and teachers entered the office, some saying hello and others continuing to their work area. In general, the teachers’ regular sign-in is around 7:30 a.m.

After approximately 10 minutes, SP1 came out into the main office and introduced himself to me before inviting me into his office. His office contains two large windows facing the parking area, a desk, a small round conference table, and several pictures on the wall. SP1 talked positively about his experiences at a local catholic university and his executive cohort program, stating, “It provided the vocabulary for what I do naturally, validation.” SP1 explained that he chose the executive program because he needed someone to press him to complete the program and he knew that “54% of cohort [eight] candidates graduated on time and 80% of the cohort finished in 2007. . . . The collaborative leader qualities style may be a weakness in school based management.” He also acknowledged knowing my advisor and his fondness of either the Yankees or the Giants. SP1 described the schedule at this site as “a four-by-four semester block, and students take four periods a day with a 52-minute lunch and 80-minute classes.” SP1 said he would like to do more research on a modified block, “maybe something like a four-by-four (AB) alternate day schedule; we’ll visit other schools.” When I asked, “What is your enrollment?” he responded, “Nine hundred students and 100 staff. Seniors are off-campus a good portion of the year with internships. Most of the students walk, a few are bused.” When I asked, “How long have you been in this school?” he responded, “Two years, but people are still tied to my predecessor; there were still covert staff at the beginning of the
year.” SP1 stated, “Yesterday was a negative day,” but did not elaborate or give any
details on this statement. I assumed that he was referring to a personnel issue.

SP1 then began describing his experience and philosophy:

Overall the community at large has welcomed me, but there are staff that are still
tied to my predecessor. My style involves moral leadership, being kind to people;
here’s where we are going and this is what is required; create a team to discuss
what to do or to make a decision. One of the frustrating things is that I trust
people completely; I assume things are going to get done but when they don’t get
done it’s frustrating. You get bogged down in paperwork, on some days you
literally just sit in your office and do paper work; daily, 20% of my time is spent
in the office doing paper work and not enough time in the classroom. I have a
young family and I miss watching my kids play sports, I have a life after school.

People want the principal at most events, so we share this responsibility;
ultimately my average day is 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

SP1 explained that he tries to do daily walkthroughs and divide his week into long
and short days; on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, he stays until 5:00 p.m., and on
Tuesdays and Thursdays, he stays after 5:00 pm to attend board meetings or board of
education presentations. His overall work week can be between 60 to 80 hours. SP1
suggested, “Maybe a part of your study could focus on older principals versus new
administrators.”
8:00 a.m.

At 8:00 a.m., SP1 and I went outside to stand in front of the building as the students entered, which SP1 typically does every day. SP1 continued to describe the high school program:

The semester ends in February. Throughout that time, teachers have an informal common planning period; teachers do a lot of activities including differentiated instruction. Each teacher has three classes and a duty/preparation period; because of the block, a lot of students graduate early. The school has been block scheduled for the last 11 years and teachers like this type of schedule. Recently, the board of education approved an Advanced Placement audit policy [students will be able to audit AP classes] except for physics. We have a full slate of athletic teams. Discipline is traditional and done by the Vice Principal and Dean of Students. During the 52-minute lunch period, coaching staff assist with monitoring students.

8:15 a.m.

At 8:15 a.m., SP1 and I returned to the main office. The main office complex houses guidance offices and two vice principal offices. In his office, SP1 indicated that earlier this year television crews from just about every station camped out on the campus to record the district’s announcement that drug testing would be enforced at the high school. SP1 stated, “Nothing in the cohort program at the university prepares you for an army of media; other than that it does.” SP1 continued, “I would like to know more about budgeting and changes in the course curriculum; our budget is done by the VP.” This year the budget had been completed in October, which is the annual deadline for all projects. The budget is then moved to the board of education by the superintendent for
approval and then to a general election. By April 15, notification is given on whether the
budget had passed; the business administrator provides monthly reports to principals and
the community at large. I asked, “How is your relationship with the superintendent?” SP1
responded, “Good, I believe it’s not so much what your position is but how you got
there.” SP1 was referring to an earlier conversation we had on future job opportunities
and the possibility of professional advancement. SP1 glanced at a palm pilot and said,
“We have an assembly today. Approximately 15% of the school is classified and there
are 504 [students in need of a physical accommodation] in the school; if there is a
difficulty with daily life, they don’t have to be classified. We have over a 97% graduation
rate.”

When I asked, “How often do you evaluate instructional staff?” SP1 responded,
Nontenured teachers receive three formal clinical evaluations and tenured
teachers receive one formal clinical evaluation. Teachers also receive informal
evaluations that are general narratives describing the commendable points of the
lesson as well as points of recommendation. A number of nontenured teachers
receive evaluations throughout the year. There was a large turnover because of
my predecessor.

H explained that his predecessor, who had been at the high school for 5 years, had been a
“deal maker” and “good old girl,” not an instructional leader. His predecessor had
allowed courses to run with very low enrollment in order to appease certain staff
members with smaller classes. Under SP1’s supervision, these practices had stopped. SP1
explained, “I don’t believe in making announced evaluations.” SP1 had assigned the
guidance chairperson to be in charge of scheduling. The courses and classes were being
scheduled now (May), later than usual, because the guidance director had retired. SP1 asked, “How long do you wait to decide what courses to run [new vs. old]?” This year the high school had advertised for two positions, a business and technology teacher and an HSPA mathematics teacher.

During lunch, SP1 had to deliver two nonrenewal letters. SP1 explained,

It’s a RIF [reduction in force] letter. Every nontenured teacher receives one; the board has this as an agenda item. People that are not being renewed don’t get the letter. Usually this type of notification is given in either April or May to satisfy the 60-day requirement, depending on the district. Getting rid of a tenured person is much more difficult to do.

SP1 then left the office, saying, “I’m going to talk with the guidance chairperson, he’s right next door.” SP1 had the teachers’ lounge painted for the teachers. Upon his return, SP1 commented,

My predecessor was a nasty individual, especially when she wrote daily memos. At every opportunity she would give digs or insults to the staff. She was not a cordial person; she would not use please and thank you as a common sense communication.

SP1 then reflected,

I think I could have done a better job this year. I could have given more direction. I observed and learned, not with the intent to change anything; the faculty counsel [liaison] was a place to discuss issues, brainstorming on positive impact helped me to understand the culture of the school and prepared me for September during the summer.
Every month there are principal meetings with the superintendent. The parent counsel is composed of parent volunteers who meet every 2 months to discuss what is happening in the community. SP1 does much, if not all, of his own typing. He has no issues or concerns with security. Students had begun receiving their IDs in January. There are hidden cameras in the halls. The only security concerns occur during lunch, when students are allowed outside of school and the school is a wide open. SP1 continued to write a letter to parents for September and explained, “The secretary suggested that I use my predecessor’s letter but I wanted to change the wording and time of the events.” There are no problems with drug testing because students must participate in random drug testing that had been previously approved by the board of education. Student names are randomly called on a certain day of the week. His predecessor brought this policy to the high school and some people are still against it.

9:30 a.m.

SP1 explained, “At 9:30 a.m., the daily attendance is taken at the end of first block.” A 10-minute homeroom occurs during the first block, when teachers take attendance and daily announcements are made over the public announcement system. Students have a 5-minute passing time to get to their second class. I could not hear the bell or announcements in SP1’s office. SP1 and I went outside of the main office to observe students moving through the halls to the next class. At the beginning of the second block, the halls were clean and quiet. All the students were in class by the sound of the bell. SP1 gestured proudly at the empty halls and with confidence stated, “Block scheduling works.”
SP1 and I returned to the main office. A teacher entered the office and asked whether he would be able to use a sick day. SP1 responded, “You will have to get approval from the superintendent before or after a holiday; I will probably have to use my days also.” Another teacher entered the office to discuss the nonrenewal letter she had received. SP1 introduced me and asked the teacher if it was okay for me to stay in the office. The teacher preferred to have privacy, so SP1 suggested that I sit outside of his office. I sat on a wooden bench outside of the office, but could clearly hear their conversation, so moved to another location in the main office, sitting next to a secretary for approximately 10 minutes.

After I returned to the office, SP1 told me that the teacher was in fact the mathematics supervisor who was also in charge of the Future Farmers of America (FFA). The problem was that teachers were telling students to drop out of the FFA because of internal difficulties and disagreements with teachers. I assumed the mathematics supervisor was the upset teacher based upon two previous conversations I had had with SP1. In his office, SP1 continued to work on a letter to all parents that contained information on prom concerns: no drinking, no DUIs, and appropriate behavior at all times. When this letter was completed, SP1 went to check with the VP on a date. When he returned, he complained that the secretary had given him the wrong dates, so he had to go back and make the necessary corrections in the letter. After completing this letter, SP1 continued to write an end-of-year message. SP1 commented, “The previous principal came across as not liking kids.”

SP1 explained that because of his previous experience as a Dean of Students in the NYC public schools, he was equipped to handle any discipline problems at his current
school. He also indicated that he had received his master’s degree from Montclair State College. I asked, “Do you have any written materials that would speak about your leadership at this school?” SP1 provided me with a newspaper article from when he first became principal. I asked, “Is there anything else, like a mission statement, school newspaper, or Web site articles?” SP1 responded, “No, that’s about it, but nothing prepares you for the job of principal.” Referring to a student (SH) who had died during this year, he stated, “You think about who SH was.” He mentioned SH in reference to the upcoming Senior Award presentations, an event run by counselors where SH would be acknowledged and board members would be invited. When the secretary entered and showed SP1 a letter to send home with students to parents, SP1 compared the letter with his letter to see if they differed. I asked, “Is there anything you are not comfortable with within the organization of the district?” SP1 responded, “No, I’m okay, but it depends on who you talk to about me. Some will say I’m the best thing since sliced bread, others will say I’m the epitome of evil.”

This week was teacher appreciation week. SP1 left the office briefly and returned to explain, “You go out there and you get information almost on a need-to-know basis, it’s like the CIA.” SP1 asked about the number of graduates participating in my study at the university. I replied, “You are the first one for a total of three.” SP1 replied, “MB in Dr. CN’s office may be able to give you the names of graduates in all cohorts.” I recalled the letter that I sent prior to conducting research and a conversation with someone in the alumni office for the possible identification of graduates, which had produced no results.
10:45 a.m.

At 10:45 a.m., SP1 and I left the office and walked toward the cafeteria as he explained, "Lunch is an open forum, and students are able to participate in activities or do anything they would like during the 52-minute period." Counselors are available during lunch to work with students and have their lunch after the student period. Lunch is an open campus, as students eat outside on the lawn or in the halls. SPI and I had lunch in the cafeteria as we continued to discuss issues surrounding the management of the school. SPI commented, "Toward the end of the lunch, around the last 20 minutes, students start to get much too loud then explained,

Theory into practice, students were given the opportunity to use the freedom provided during lunch. When they violate that trust or become out of control, their lunchtime is modified. They have a number of activities, like basketball, counseling, and science review. Seniors are able to leave campus.

After a tour of the building (one level), SP1 reminded several students to remove their hats or sit on the appropriate side of the hall. At that point, SP1 and I went to a dedicated classroom to celebrate a teacher's nomination for the Teacher of the Year Award. While waiting in the classroom for the nominee, a small group of teachers talked. One person asked if they could ask the main office to page that person, and they did so. A few minutes later, the page was made over the public announcement system. One teacher (T1) inquired about the research being conducted and, commenting on the flexibility of their lunchtime, stated,

On at least one or two occasions previously, the school had to move back to a 22-minute lunch period because of inappropriate student behavior. After
experiencing this other students, mostly seniors, made sure that everyone kept the school and lunch room clean.

At that point, the “teacher of the year” entered to applause. SP1 and I congratulated her and enjoyed the pineapple cake provided for us. After lunch on the way back to the main office, SP1 was notified by another staff member that the superintendent was in the building. As SP1 and I entered the office, a secretary informed SP1 that a student wanted to get a book out of his car. When the secretary had called the student’s teacher to check if permission had been given prior to contacting the principal, the student’s teacher said that it had. SP1 asked the student, “Do I have to call Mr. SS to cancel your graduation award?” The student went back to his class.

12:45 p.m.

SP1 introduced me to the superintendent and then asked me to leave the office for purposes of privacy. After their meeting SP1 invited me back into his office, explaining, Every other Monday, K-12 supervisors meet, and every Friday, the high school administrative team meets. Building and grounds are in excellent shape. One problem is the number of e-mails from many different sources and you try to answer them with compassion but it starts to wear you down.

SP1 was referring to the volume of e-mail that he received from district sources on a daily basis. “The school dress code is business casual for adults and straightforward for students,” explained SP1. The hockey team was outstanding this year and had an undefeated record. In the main office, there is a sign on the wall that you can only see as you are leaving that says “Qui audet vincit.” When I asked what language it is written in
and what it means, a foreign language teacher who happened to be in the office at the
time responded, "It is Latin and means he who dares wins."

1:40 p.m.

At 1:40 p.m., I conducted an open-ended interview with SP1.

Memo: My thoughts on the level of detail and/or description of the site and participants
influenced all the other transcriptions after this case. For example, I considered what is
truly important and what is trivial.

Documents: SP1 provided me with one letter entitled, "HN High School Hires a New
Principal." I found a letter to the community on the district Web site entitled "Academic
Excellence Is Job Number One" that was authored by SP1.

Participant 3 = GP2   Date: May 15, 2007   Field time = 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

7:15 a.m.

At 7:15 a.m., I arrived in the town where this site is located earlier than expected
and had breakfast at a local dinner.

8:50 a.m.

I drove into the parking area and parked in the last row by the driveway. I walked
over to where a group of parents had formed to watch their children play in the
playground behind the school and asked a parent which door to use in order to enter the
building. The parent responded, "The main entrance is in the front of the building." I
thanked the parent and proceeded to the main entrance. I rang a bell in front of the
building, the door buzzed open, and I entered the building. I observed signs posted on the
inner doors that say "Visitors Please Report to the Main Office" with arrows on the walls
directing the way.
I entered the office and introduced myself to the secretary, but before she could respond, GP2 entered the office and said, “Good morning.” I responded, “Good morning.” GP2 began to explain his school program and asked me to walk with him as part of his daily routine, explaining, “Staff development is something that is important; that’s why we’ve been working on a new teacher induction presentation during the first half of the summer institute.” I had previously talked extensively with GP2 during two separate calls to confirm his participation. GP2 had expressed great interest in this study, as his participation could help the district establish possible professional development and/or training for future administrators. GP2 explained,

We also talked about your research and how it would contribute to the development of a Principals’ Academy in the district. I’m interested in the possibilities. We did curriculum mapping this year where each grade level mapped curriculum and then did a PowerPoint presentation to all staff. Each month schools meet and map curriculum according to grade level with New Jersey ASK [Assessment of Skills and Knowledge] and the Terra Nova. This school was paired with another elementary school which also supports a working collaborative platform. Curriculum mapping helps the district through comparative analysis to see how the third or first grades compare across the district. There is a district-wide assessment and the individual school assessment. This interprets into assistance for those students that are behind. Teachers will be able to determine a student’s deficiency and provide differentiated instruction to address that issue. Compared to the rest of the district, this school has advanced approximately one grade level beyond. For example, the average NJASK [New
Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge] score in mathematics for Grades 1 and 2 in the district was 0.8 and the average NJASK score in mathematics for this school for Grades 1 and 2 was 0.9. The difference of one tenth of a percent interprets into one grade level. The average NJASK score in mathematics for Grades 3 and 4 in the district was 1.4. The average NJASK score in mathematics for Grades 3 and 4 in this school was 1.6. The average NJASK score in language arts for Grades 1 and 2 in the district was 1.7 compared to 2.1 for this school. The average NJASK score in language arts for NJASK in the district was 2.3 compared to 2.7 for this school. This is my first year doing this and September 2007 will be the first staff development using data to guide instruction. We are collaborating with another school and we are the only schools in the district doing collaborative staff development.

I then asked him, “How many staff and students do you have?” to which he responded, “There are 500 students and 42 staff. We surveyed teachers for staff development.” I asked, “What percentage of your enrollment is classified?” GP2 explained, “Less than 5%, maybe 7 or 8 students. The Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) program is more active in providing support services before getting to the point of classification.” Discussing his experiences, GP2 explained, “I’ve had experience with different aspects of administration as a VP and Supervisor.” GP2 had also worked with another principal mentor who had probably provided more hands-on experiences: “My graduate program also provided excellent background information theoretically and you had to apply it practically.”
Two or three high school students passed us in the hall near the cafeteria. GP2 began discussing his school program:

The district’s high school practicum is on site and did send a number of seniors and juniors to work with a 2nd-grade teacher as helpers. The students work with the teachers to help out around the school and they get credit back at the high school.

I commented, “I thought those kids were a bit large to be in elementary school.” GP2 introduced me to the high school students. When one high school student asked about my study in joking manner, I explained the overall details of the research to him, and was pleased to observe that he seemed sincerely interested. The student shook my hand and gave me a high-five before resuming work with a cafeteria aide.

GP2 and I continued to tour the building, GP2 occasionally introducing me to staff who engaged in a variety of conversations in the hall while GP2 walked and talked with students and staff. GP2 impressed me as a person who enjoyed working with people and getting teachers involved. GP2 stated, “There are 3 kindergarten classes, 12 4th-grade classes, 34 3rd-grade classes, and 1 prekindergarten class. The pull-out classes are music, physical education/health, and art, which are used so regular education teachers can have their preparation time.”

10:00 a.m.

As GP2 and I walked back to the main office, GP2 stated,

We will do an observation and you can attend. We do not have to notify teachers prior to the observation. A lot of walkthroughs are done and we pretty much know what is going on in the classroom. If a teacher has a problem, we schedule a
preconference meeting. After the observation, all teachers receive a postevaluation conference. The evaluation is not punitive, because focus is on content, scope and sequence, class participation, and the types of student activities. Evaluations are done on my laptop and sometimes the battery is low because of a weak charge.

I inquired, “How is your relationship with the superintendent?” GP2 responded, “It is a pretty good relationship. He contacts principals, and when he does, he asks for your opinion. He also disseminates helpful information from his office.” At that moment, GP2 began working on his computer, writing a letter to parents about student absences and tardiness. I asked, “How do you handle a teacher’s absence?” GP2 responded, “You get a substitute.” A female teacher (T1) entered the office and GP2 introduced her to me as one of the 4th-grade teachers. T1 wanted to leave the building for a few minutes. GP2 asked T1 to sign out and explained,

During the preparation time, teachers must also sign out if leaving the school premises. Principals are provided with a copy of all teacher schedules and class lists as a method to keep track of when and what is happening in the building.

Another staff member, the head custodian, entered the office and stated, “One of the students kicked the ball over a fence and the security guard stopped the student from getting the ball because of the poison ivy.” GP2 responded, “Leave the ball and contact the person who owns that property, we do not want staff or students getting poison ivy.” When a male student entered the office and asked for a pencil, GP2 gave him one. GP2 picked up his laptop and stated, “This battery was charged yesterday. . . . It was 97%” before explaining,
We will have an assembly program for students on reading, to inspire them to read during the summer. Also on Mondays we have Monday morning moments, which are talks disseminating information for the week. Teachers receive information on activities and programs occurring in the school. We will change the traditional goals and objectives from 2005-2006/2006-2007 to a more humanities-based approach in 2007-2008.

I inquired, “How often do you observe staff?” GP2 responded, “Nontenured teachers receive three evaluations and tenured staff receive one evaluation.” At that point, GP2 received a phone call from a district coordinator asking the school to return testing information. I again inquired, “What percent of teachers are nontenured?” GP2 responded,

We have five nontenured teachers. We will also interview for a new teacher for the third grade. Actually, the new teacher is tenured because she only needed 2 years of experience and she was already a supervisor in the district.

GP2 continued to review and make copies of the class lists. When another female teacher (T2) entered the office, GP2 asked, “What happened?” T2 responded that a female student had gone home yesterday and told her parents that T2 had cursed at the students in class, which obviously was not true. GP2 responded sarcastically, “Here is a good example that proves everyone loved the other teacher who used to teach that class.” T2 said, “No, that’s not true, we hated him.” GP2 said, “Okay then, you remember the situation. Call the parent (CF) and explain that you have never had any problems like this in the past and he will understand.”

After this exchange, GP2 continued to work in his office while explaining,
The NJASK rosters of students that took the test must be reviewed at the beginning of the year. The state sends labels and you are able to update the list of names by checking all statistics. If it checks, you peel off the label and place it on the test booklet. You do not learn this in graduate school. A private company scores the test. NJASK is part of the Annual Yearly Progress of the No Child Left Behind law, which includes Grades 3 and 4. The district uses the Terra Nova to assess Grades 1 and 2 and the results determine what students are placed in the alternative assessment program [AAP]. If a student scores below 200, they are placed in the AAP. When we walked past the library, that bank of computers is where the AAP program was housed. Everyone next year will have time on the computer using Success Maker. AYP benchmarks this year, 2007, was 62 in mathematics and 75 in language arts, next year 2008 the AYP benchmark is 73 in mathematics and 82 for language arts. By 2014, 100% of students must pass AYP, including all classified students. NCLB is driving the train right now; its goal is not realistic and money is not the answer. Abbott has received millions of dollars and look at their record of accomplishments. Title 1’s percentage of this building identifies a certain number of disadvantaged children who qualify for free and reduced lunch.

Discussing his role as principal, GP2 stated, “I have no assistant principal but rely on Mrs. AS [T3] and the technology instructor [T4]. Depending what time of year, I try to spend as much time in the halls as possible.” GP2 called the custodian to get a work order to get the poison ivy sprayed. This morning a teacher (T5) was absent because she
had gone to a workshop demonstrating the use of a rubric for doing assessments. When teachers are absent, they call the central office, which assigns a substitute.

While GP2 continued to work on his desktop computer, I noticed pictures of various golf courses and asked GP2 if he played golf. GP2 responded, “Yes, I’m a golfer.” I responded, “I am a hacker.”

11:00 a.m.

At this point, GP2 received a call over the intercom that there was a problem in a teachers (T5’s) class. GP2 and I walked over to the classroom, where I stood by the door as GP2 entered the room. A male student (ST3) who was having problems began to cry. With tears streaming down his face, he stated, “I don’t want to be in trouble.” Another teacher (T6) entered the room and explained what the student had done:

He wanted to take time away from the class by being disruptive. I want to see him again to do the mathematics and reading sections of this lesson. There must be consequences for wasting time and not doing your work.

GP2 told ST3, “You must allow the teacher an opportunity to speak and you must listen to what she is saying, do you understand?” ST3 agreed and went back into the classroom and sat down.

After intervening for T6 on the second level, GP2 I walked to the cafeteria on the first level. GP2 explained, “All students rotate into lunch and then out to the playground during this 40-minute period.” GP2 and I stayed in the lunchroom for a brief time, during which he introduced me to several high school students whom he gave high-fives. From the lunchroom, GP2 and I started walking to the office, but were stopped in the hall by a teacher (T7) who was upset because another teacher (T8) had volunteered them to be
responsible for kids getting home from an upcoming event. Evidently, parents at this site are notorious for not picking their children up from events on time, and teachers are then responsible for getting them home. T7 did not want to experience that situation again.

Another teacher (T9) was upset because she had to switch her preparation time with a teacher (T10), who was also going on the fieldtrip. T9 was very upset and spoke loudly in the hall, stating that she had told GP2 in August that she was not going to do this event with the PTA. During this mild frenzy, a pizza delivery arrived for a PTA fundraiser with over 50 pies. GP2 indicated to the pizza deliveryman that he was not paying for it or signing for it and that someone from the PTA should be there shortly to take care of it.

GP2 explained,

Last year we had a 4th-grade dance and pizzas were ordered again, but the parents did not sign for them. We were stuck with the bill; the teacher’s are not responsible for this. Last year the PTA parents cornered a 1st-grade teacher and they were told she could not do it.

Around the same time, another teacher (T11) entered the office with a male student (ST4) who had hit two female students (ST5) and (ST6) in the classroom. GP2 asked, “What happened?” ST4 started to explain but GP2 interrupted, “No, you did touch those students, you spread yourself everywhere. You were not doing what you were supposed to do. Is this the first time you’ve done this in chorus?” ST4 said, “Yes.” GP2 asked the question again, “Is this the first time you’ve done this in chorus?” ST4 remorsefully responded, “No.” GP2 began to talk about consequences with ST4: “You make poor choices, you’ve had detentions and lunch removals, now there will be things that will be taken away that are important to you.” T11 said, “You were given many
warnings." ST4 responded, "You never gave me any warnings." T11 replied, "Yes I did." T11 then escorted the student back to the classroom.

GP2 began to talk to me about the NCLB, AYP, and the difficulties that Abbott and non-Abbott districts have demographically: "Mobility has a large effect on proficiency. Our district is not Abbott but we were part of the desegregation and busing mandate. All schools in the district are community schools so any student can go to any school."

12:00 p.m.

At 12:00 p.m., GP2 and I walked out to the playground area in the rear of the school, passing by the pizza deliveryman still waiting for the PTA president to arrive. A teacher (T12) escorted two male students past GP2 and me. The students were being disciplined by being separated in the lunchroom during lunch and losing recess. GP2 explained,

The end-of-year evaluations for teachers had to be reviewed in order to develop their professional development plan. We must create class lists for next year using the data from testing. NCLB provides consequences for schools in need of improvement. If you make a 10% increase across the board in all subcategories, you can make safe harbor. Do I think it's a great idea, I do. . . . It is a nice day, maybe we will do a fire drill, we must get in two per month. I would also like to use different exits for different grades. We spend about 2 hours to feed the entire school.
GP2 and I went to retrieve the two male students being punished in the lunchroom. GP2 commented, "I take in a lot of student teachers, maybe one or two look really good as possible employment candidates. I also encourage students to eat a healthy lunch; we have fruity Fridays and Milk Gray Monday. As we walked into the hall, GP2 commented on the students’ artwork, stating, "This is very good work."

12:26 p.m.

At 12:26 p.m., GP2 and I returned to the main office. Two female students entered to pick out some goodies from the "treasure chest." As each student picked something from the chest, GP2 said, "Happy birthday." Both girls chuckled and left the office. The staff reacted very positively to my description of my research and seemed sincerely interested. The secretary reminded GP2 of a teacher who had worked in the special education department in 1979 and asked if he had a copy of her Professional Improvement Plan (PIP). The secretary also indicated there were several messages from a man regarding television channel 34’s program for Mother’s Day. GP2 stated,

We have a star-based scheduling system for student records. A photograph is attached with the student information record. This system is shared from kindergarten to the high school. . . . Every time a fire drill is conducted you must contact the alarm company and the fire department. We must list the time and date of the fire drill as well as any incidents that occur during the drill.

At that moment, GP2 received a telephone call from another principal. GP2 said to him, "I’m here with the researcher and he wanted to know if you were still interested in participating in his study." I had originally contacted this principal via e-mail and by
telephone, and although he had agreed to participate, he had not contacted me to set up an actual site visitation date. The same principal indicated that he was retiring and did. I subsequently discovered that GP2 had relocated from one school to another. When I contacted GP2 for additional information on two missed questions in the open-ended interview, I congratulated him on his promotion.

GP2 was on the telephone again with district administrators and several parents to discuss a number of issues and concerns. Another person entered the office on another issue. I was not certain whether this person was a teacher until she was identified as a staff member. GP2 then met with a counselor to discuss the placement of classified students in the special education program. GP2 wanted to make sure that students were placed in the appropriate classroom. GP2 told the counselor, “I need to know your In Class Support (ICS) and Resource students.” GP2 and the counselor continued to discuss issues dealing with class size and the number of classified students in each classroom. GP2 and the counselor then had a detailed conversation about a specific student. The counselor stated, “BN writes his name, and words like cut, apple or hot all within the lines but the issue was whether the student was at grade level.” The other concern centered around the issue of residency. GP2 indicated, “I need the learning consultant to produce a list of all classified students in this building by the end of the day.”

1:30 p.m.

At 1:30 p.m., GP2 conducted a fire drill. After the alarm rang, teachers and students lined up in the field behind the school by assigned location and classroom. GP2 explained, “Teachers are evaluated on how will this is done.” After the entire school had exited into the rear playground, another bell rang, and teachers and students reentered the
building by single file. After the fire drill, GP2 and I walked back to the main office where GP2’s secretary gave him the payroll sign-off sheets for all cafeteria workers. At the end of each pay period, GP2 must sign off on all staff payroll sheets. The letter authored by GP2 earlier on attendance had been mailed to parents. In addition, the information about the fire drill that had just been conducted was faxed to the central office.

2 p.m.

After GP2 had finished signing payroll sheets, I conducted an open-ended interview with him.

Documents: GP2 provided me with the following documents:

1. A letter from him thanking me.


3. A document entitled *Monday Morning Moments* that provides information for the week.

4. A document entitled *Building Level Objectives*.

5. A four-page document entitled *Building Level Goals* that outlines the school’s action plan for the year.

6. A document from the school’s Web site entitled *About LN Elementary School*.

Participant 4 = SP2    Date: May 16, 2007    Field time = 8:15 a.m. to 3:20 p.m.
8:30 a.m.

I arrived at 8:30 a.m., approximately 20 minutes late due to an accident on Rt. 78 and heavy residual traffic. I parked on a side street two blocks away from the school, as had most of the staff, because the small school parking area was full. I walked around to the front of the building by the main entrance, opened the door, and entered the building. I met the head custodian (HC), who asked for identification and the purpose of my visit. I answered him and he gestured to me to follow him to the main office. The school looked like a wealthy 40-room stone castle or mansion. When I walked to the main office, I saw SP2 in the hall outside the office having a conversion with a teacher. SP2 and I introduced ourselves before SP2 stated, “A staff member died this morning from lung cancer and everyone is the school is a bit subdued.”

I walked outside with SP2 to view some vandalism that had occurred on the railing of a trailer near the back parking area and rear playground. We arrived at that location to find the stair rail leading to the trailer ripped from its foundation. After observing the vandalism, SP2 called HC1 on her walkie-talkie. While we waited for HC1, a number of students and teachers gathered in the rear playground (grass and dirt) preparing to line up by classroom before entering the building. A teacher (T1) asked SP2 about her mail. SP2 nodded and T1 returned to her location in the playground. SP2 commented, “I initiated this process in the morning in an effort to get some type of organization. Prior to this everyone just came in with the doors wide open.” SP2 commented on the cleanliness of the area and suggested that HC1 was not doing all that he needed to ensure that the building and grounds were appropriately cleaned. SP2 stated, “He thinks he is slick but I know the deal.”
HC1 arrived and looked at the damage for several minutes. SP2 indicated that she would make a violence and vandalism report and call the local police. SP2 addressed the teachers and students about proper decorum (the students had a lot of energy) as the bell rang and they entered the building. SP2 and I walked back to the main office, where SP2 met with the assistant superintendent (AS1), who also knew the staff member that had died, near the office door. SP2 talked with another teacher (T2) about the teacher who had died, a woman in her 50s who had smoked cigarettes for over 25 years. T2, who had been on leave for several months, had received a call this morning from a relative informing her of the death. After that conversation, other teachers (T3, T4, and T5) inquired about the teacher who had died. After meeting with the teachers and AS1, SP2 entered her office, where her secretary informed her that she was having difficulty getting the approximately 10 substitute teachers needed for that day. As SP2 assisted her, another staff member entered the office and asked for the elevator key to let the science team enter the second level. The secretary seemed to have difficulty finding the elevator key. SP2 said, “Having a good secretary makes all the difference.

9:15 a.m.

Upon resolving a number of issues, SP2 invited me into her office at 9:15 a.m. The telephone rang and SP2 had a brief conversation with the VP. After this call, SP2 said, “Excuse me, but I must make a personal call to my daughter’s school.” SP2 finished that call and began talking about her schedule for the day: “At 9:30 a.m., you can sit in on an observation and at 11:30 a.m., there is a meeting to attend.” I asked, “What type of schedule is used?” SP2 responded, “Possibly a modified block. Second grade is the oldest and first grade has 3 hours of uninterrupted instruction. We have eight classes of
classified PK children, which interprets to 25% of the school is special education.” SP2 then talked about her experience:

I was an assistant principal at a charter school and an AP in this district for one year. I applied for this position, and have been at this school for 6 years. Most of the teaching staff is tenured; that is, approximately 95%. In 2001, we got a $3 million dollar building addition, but the fire department had to shut the second level down because it was constructed with only one egress.

I asked, “How could that happen?” SP2 explained, “The district went with the lowest bid, and I guess you get what you pay for.” At that point, HC1 entered and gave SP2 the railing report, stating “You know the other rail is loose and may be a hazardous situation, or an accident waiting to happen.” SP2 then called the police department to make a police report, indicating that she knew a few of the officers and that the police were on the way.

SP2 also reported this incident to the central office.

SP2 then remained in her office answering a number of phone calls and explaining,

What has been most beneficial about the experience at the university has been the self-reflection. The university provided excellent preparation with a foundation of theory to complement practice. This has helped to change the chemistry of each grade level in this school. It helped in the process of building bridges and greatness through our students.

She then indicated, “The new superintendent for the district started yesterday.” Her relationship with this district leader was beginning to develop.
9:45 a.m.

At 9:45 a.m., SP2 and I went to do a classroom observation. We entered the class and I sat toward the rear of the classroom while SP2 sat toward the front. Two girls and a boy were in the class. The assistant teacher (AT) worked with the boy, who was evidently slower, while the other two girls drilled each other on word identification and word drills. The students seemed to have memorized the material. Using a laptop, SP2 typed her observations into an evaluation program. After working with the slower student, AT had the students begin a reading section where one student read aloud and the other silently followed. The students first read the passage together then read it aloud individually. After the reading section had been completed, AT provided the students with a writing assignment.

After the observation, SP2 and I returned to the office. I asked, “Do you need prior notice before conducting the evaluation? SP2 responded, “By contract all teachers are given pre- and postevaluation conferences.” SP2 then commented on the lesson just observed:

That assistant teacher has no ability. I inherited him from my predecessor, who was in the school only for 1 year prior to my appointment. During my predecessor’s time, the staff was completely disrespectful, cursing during faculty meetings and doing whatever they wanted to do. Prior to the 1-year principal, there was a principal that had been in this school for 10 years. . . . That lesson [that we had just observed] was outrageous; no rigor, no goals or objectives. The problem is you have a teacher with no talent teaching basic skills students. The
reverse should happen; the more talented teachers should be with students that are challenged.

A mosquito interrupted our conversation; SP2 took off her shoe and unsuccessfully tried to kill it, saying, “I hate mosquitoes.” I crushed the mosquito on the wall with my hand. SP2 did not want the mosquito in her office trashcan and asked me to go to the bathroom to flush it down the toilet and wash my hands.

10:30 a.m.

At 10:30 a.m., SP2 received a call from a learning consultant about her daughter’s sensory perception. After the call, I inquired, “How does the staff view you as the building leader?” SP2 responded, “Teachers must be held to a standard. Not every person is meant for every job. You must have confidence and not be easily deterred.” The librarian entered her office and SP2 had a brief discussion about the use of the library for an upcoming event. SP2 continued, The previous superintendent hired me, but now I have a very difficult interview with the new assistant superintendent.” SP2 and I continued to talk about her role as the principal as well as the researcher of other observations (names were not revealed). SP2 continued to comment on her experiences as a principal in this district: “We have a zero-based budget process and monies designated for this year were taken away. Running a school in this atmosphere is like being on an island. We are getting very little help from central office staff.” SP2 then talked about an electronic qualitative program analysis tool called Atlas Ti software for compiling data, instructing me to “leave pages blank for writing. The program’s introduction will explain it.”
11:15 a.m.

At 11:15 a.m., SP2 and I were walking out of her office when the secretary told us that a student in the office had been running. SP2 told the student, “Remember our slow-motion zone in the playground area.” After speaking with this student, SP2 and I went on a tour of the building. I was impressed with the large fish tank in the main entrance of the building on the first floor, which was very beautiful and had a peaceful, relaxing effect. Just outside of her office, T3 asked SP2, “May I talk to you in private?”

After they had spoken, SP2 continued to discuss the budget problem with me:

The business administrator should consolidate our phone lines, it takes 10 minutes for a parent or staff member to get through to a particular school. It lowers school moral, you can see it going down. ... It is a challenge running this building with an assistant principal.

SP2 talked about the Pajama Day last year, which had been very successful and will be held again this year. SP2 met with two teachers who had been assigned to serve the needs of the autistic population in the school for the following year. SP2 talked about having a full day of inclusion and then stated,

We have no replacement for the mathematics/science vacancy. The first and second grades have a model number of autistic children, and it increases each year. We retain autistic children to provide the necessary help. Most autistic children in this school are actually at the best placement possible in the district.

SP2 asked a parent, “Can you provide a letter for approval of the classification of your child, that will initiate the process, and I will need it by Friday?”
11:30 a.m.

At 11:30 a.m., a group of three teachers entered the office to discuss the next year’s classes. SP2 stated, “Next year seven students are too many to start with, you will have five.” T4 asked, “What happened to the other two?” SP2 responded, “They do not need in-class support. You will have three seats available for any other children.” T4 replied, “Are there any children of the five that have emotional or behavioral problems?” SP2 responded, “You are starting your class on the opposite end of the building. I thought you and T5 would work well together in a positive mix.” T4 replied, “If we need to change kids academically, do we come to you? Obviously the more hands, the more efficient.” SP2 again responded, “Paraprofessionals are not the solution because of their lack of training. The current push is to get them appropriately trained in order to free you up to do other things with the remainder of the class.” T5 asked, “This student was the best kid to finish the mathematics assessment, it just takes him so long. The pace of the class versus his pace is extreme. What will happen to him in the third grade?” T6 stated, “The parents were going to take him to a neurologist.” SP2 then stated, “If we could refer him in September it would be better. I do not like summer team meeting involving the 504; he needs a diagnosis and our doctors are usually all on vacation.” T7 stated, “We have a student that is being declassified, he was able to test out of his placement. At this point, that is the same vision that we have for at least one of the autistic children. Currently we have 0% of autistic children being declassified.”

SP2 concluded,

We should take the approach of having a full day for autistic children; let’s look at giving every child what they need. Now we have a situation where one class is
overcapacity and that is one case where looping will not help, but we all know that historically looping works very well. What you do is combine the best and make it better.

T7 commented, “That works well.” SP2 stated, “It should be a looping class.” T7 continued, “You are really thinking of the kids when you declassify them. I do think looping will be successful.” SP2 stated, “You gain extra time in your instruction through looping.” T6 commented, “You want to have a group that is better.” SP2 replied, “You always need good modeling.” T6 responded, “So I guess at this point we’re leaning toward looping.” SP2 said, “I want to thank this committee so much for your participation. The district does not have a committee like this because of funding, but the returns are great. The new superintendent is very big on what we are doing.” T8 stated, “So what are we doing with the space upstairs?” SP2 replied, “I would like to get a fifth person to teach those replacement classes. We can talk about it at another time. Thank you ladies very much.”

12:00 p.m.

At 12:00 p.m., SP2 went to a classroom and returned with two students who had splashed water all over the bathroom. Both students wrote notes of apology to SP2 and on a note for their parents, for which they would get their parents’ signature. Describing the paraprofessional, SP2 explained,

It is a full-time position and the person was not working out, but the union wanted to keep her. The paraprofessional was not good with children. So we reached a compromise and allowed her to work with two teachers that have 504 plans.
SP2 then commented, "I think I should stay at the school on Friday because everyone else will be at the funeral. Earlier today the high school had a bomb threat and had to evacuate." HC1 entered the room reported to SP2 on the police recommendation: "The police recommended that we get floodlights and keys for teachers to open and lock that door." HC1 gave SP2 new keys for the teachers' room and complained, "We have a child that vomits three times a day when he eats." SP2 responded,

Put a request in for a vacuum and vomit power; we also need to talk about the logistics for Friday. Also please clean under the benches and tables outside; there is too much debris out there. You know that parents are the engine that drives this school.

After a brief meeting with HC1, SP2 commented about the previous superintendent: "He added an additional three assistant superintendents." As SP2 and I continued on a tour of the building, I found myself impressed with the student artwork and its level of sophistication, especially the multicolor collages.

1:15 p.m.

At 1:15 p.m., SP2 and I returned to the office where a teacher (T9) met with SP2. T9 explained, "Building comradery is most important in a school environment, in which we all work together." SP2 responded, "She treats her students like human beings. She conducts a well-managed classroom and kids clap for each other." T9 replied, "I understand that you must respect them for who they are." SP2 commented, "You have to own the whole child." T9 continued, "You never grow up; we are the children we were." SP2 commented, "If I complain, so will my teachers." SP2 then commented on the makeup of the district: "Last year this section of the district had all Black principals and
that section of the district had all White.” I believe that SP2 made this comment because of the perceived differences that each area had of itself. SP2 also stated, “The custodial staff in the entire district has been privatized.”

1:30 p.m.

At 1:30 p.m., SP2 and I walked to lunch as we discussed several issues dealing with the curriculum and personnel. After we had returned to the main office, I conducted an open-ended interview with SP2 at approximately 2:20 p.m.

Documents: SP2 provided no additional materials.

Participant 5 = SP3    Date: May 22, 2007    Field time = 8:15 a.m. to 5:15 p.m.

7:00 a.m.

When I arrived in the vicinity of the school at approximately 7:00 a.m., I drove to see the location of the school, then went to have breakfast at the local McDonald’s. The sun was out and the temperature was a mild 74°F. On the way to McDonald’s, I stopped at a local convenience store to buy a newspaper. After breakfast, I drove to the school and found parking on one of the side streets adjacent to the school. I walked around the school to the front entrance and rang the front doorbell. Over the intercom someone asked, “Can we help you?” I replied, “I have an appointment with SP3.” I was buzzed in and a teacher’s aide came to the entrance to escort me to the main office. I thanked the aide and entered the main office.

The secretary bade me good morning and asked me to have a seat, stating that SP3 would be finished with her meeting in a few minutes. While waiting for SP3 to finish her conversation, I observed a clever environmental poster that used letters of the alphabet to explain and represent environmental actions, for example a = adopt an
animal, c = conserve energy, and z = protect the ozone. I thought that this was an excellent way to get children to understand their responsibility for the environment at an early age. From the outside office, I overheard voices in the conference room. As SP3 opened the door and moved toward me, she said to another staff member, “I do understand your point of view and respect your opinion.” SP3 then greeted me as we exchanged introductions.

SP3 and I walked into the inner office and SP3 began explaining her schedule for the day:

At 9:00 a.m., there will be a meeting at another school to discuss Program Assessment and Strategies (PASS). Lunch is from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; we will also begin conducting interviews at 12:00 p.m. There will be a faculty meeting this afternoon, the man from Xerox will explain to staff the use of a new copy machine, but I will not keep teachers beyond 4:00 p.m.

At that point, SP3 received a call from a parent letting the school know that her child would be absent for the day. SP3 received another call and indicated to me that she had to take this call privately, so I left her office and waited in the main office. After that call, SP3 invited me back into the office as she explained,

NJPASS is the standardized test for first and second graders but we have not yet completed the mathematics portion of the test. NJASK focuses on Grades 3 and 4 and NJPAS focuses on Grades 1 and 2. What we need is the whole school testing, which covers a 2-year period for NJASK and a 1-year period for NJPASS. Hopefully during the week of June 4, 2007, the mathematics second will be completed.
I asked, “How many students do you have?” SP3 responded, “Approximately 353. All elementary schools in the district are grades K-6. We also have approximately 10 special education classes, 4 self-contained, 2 resource, and 4 inclusion classes.” I could hear a number of activities occurring and stated, “Your Web page is really very good, I like the classical music.” SP3 responded, “We have a very good district Web master.”

Before taking another call, SP3 asked the custodian to put a box of tests in her car, then went in her office to take that call. After the call, SP3 and I walked to SP3’s vehicle, which was parked on the street in the front of the school, and drove to the 9:00 a.m. meeting. SP3 took me on a brief tour of the surrounding area, which had a combination of urban and suburban features. As SP3 and I entered the meeting in the library of the other school, I stated, “It’s a big plus having a small school compared to a large one.” SP3 explained, “This is a workshop on improving feedback, you know by saying something positive or conferencing.” The composition of the room was 10 female teachers and one female facilitator. Two tables arranged at a right angle contained five teachers each. The exchange between teachers continued as one teacher (T1) stated, “You know we can overpraise kids, which is different than encouragement.” The facilitator stated, “We must expect more from students.” Another teacher (T2) asked, “How can a student get all As? the grading issue is a big question.”

As the discussion continued to focus on the comparison of standardized test scores to that of local assessment, SP3 explained to me,

This program is a series of workshops adopted from X district. Two teachers in third and fourth grades were sent to district X for professional development.

Tomorrow afternoon there will be a meeting just for administrators. The other
schools in the district chose not to be involved in this workshop or they are involved with other programs.

The facilitator then announced, “We will be divided into two groups, one group or table will be a task-centered table and the other will be a people-centered table.” Before the group moved to their respective tables, identified by a basic on a T or P on an index card, SP3 stated, “I know you’re all wondering who is this man with me. This is a researcher who is doing research for his doctorate on principal leadership responsibilities.” After my introduction, two additional teachers joined the group for a total of 12 teachers.

The style of the task-centered group consisted of the following characteristics: realistic and logical, direct and truthful, and tough minded and straight forward but not mean spirited. The style of the people-centered group consisted of the following characteristics: charming but not blunt, looks at circumstances and personality, sarcastic, and cannot get to the task unless they know the person. Both groups had to discuss and evaluate their individual characteristics and leadership style. The facilitator explained, “Certain teachers need some of both types of feedback.”

After the groups discussed their style, the facilitator asked for volunteers to set up a real-life scenario of what each style looks like. The first scenario was a situation where the parents of a student were upset about the grade the student had received. The facilitator wanted a task-centered approach for feedback. One person in the task-centered group played the teacher and two played the parents. The “parents” stated, “We never received a letter or a phone call from you letting us know that our child was failing.” When we received his report card, we were shocked.” The “teacher” responded,
Well, based on your son’s 504 plans, he was supposed to do his homework on drafting paper. I provided your son with drafting paper but I received no homework. I also sent at least two notes homework via your son to inform you about his poor attitude and the lack of completed assignments.

The “parents” responded, “We never received any note, nor did you contact us by phone.” The “teacher” replied, “Yes, I did call, I left a message on your answering machine.” The “parents” replied, “We did not receive your message; we checked the machine. You know something, we don’t like your attitude; maybe if we contacted the principal we would get better results.” The teacher responded, “Well go right ahead, suit yourself.” At that point, the facilitator said, “Very good, did you see what needed to be said and how the parents responded to the verbal feedback?”

When the facilitator asked the entire group to comment on how that exchange could be improved, the group responded with the following ideas:

1. Keep academic folders and have the parent sign off on them.
2. Keep a supply of graphing paper to accommodate the 504 plan.
3. Provide parents with a list of homework assignments that are required.
4. Give the student additional time to complete assignments
5. Explain that there are four marking periods during the year for which the student will receive a report card.
6. If the student is struggling, the 504 formal document must be reviewed by the Intervention and Referral Service (I&RS) committee. Even though the student is not classified, the team must review this document.
7. The teacher can leave an academic folder with the principal so that the principal can review it with the parents. Doing so may be especially appropriate if the parents and teacher are having difficulty communicating.

8. As the parents had questioned whether the teacher had truly called their home, the teacher should create a phone log with dates and messages.

When the facilitator asked the people-oriented group members to respond, they suggested the following ideas:

1. Get a study buddy for the student.

2. If the student has a computer at home, post the assignments on the school Web page.

3. Review the 504 plan every other month.

4. Do not use the word “stupid” to describe the student; instead, say that the student is not working up to his potential.

5. The teacher should be less defensive when criticized by parents; do not take things personally.

6. Keep in mind that the purpose of feedback is to make the other person feel better.

When the facilitator asked the task-oriented group members to respond, they suggested the following ideas:

1. Stop appearing rough and offensive.

2. Follow the 504 plan.

3. Collect the assigned work, put it in a folder, show the parents what their child has done, and then have the parents sign off on the folder.

4. Make phone calls to the parents every 2 weeks.
5. Be politically correct; do not respond "Suit yourself."

The "teacher's" reaction to the task-oriented response was obvious; she sat there like a robot, not responding and appearing even more uncomfortable and annoyed. Her response to the people-oriented group she much better; she appeared more relaxed and answered their questions. She stated that the student's homework would be posted on the Internet and she would be as discrete as possible with his accommodations.

10:35 a.m.

At 10:35 a.m., the facilitator began discussing another area of feedback called *mindsets*, which she described as

what will you say to a student in your class based on his/her accomplishments or the lack thereof. There are essentially three ways to respond to a student: (a) highlights and prompts—what are the things that you think are good about the student, (b) bubbles and boxes, and (c) two stars and a wish.

At that point, the assistant superintendent (AS1) entered the room and sat at the table with SP3 and me. SP3 introduced me to AS1. The facilitator provided the group with a number of handouts, which were materials associated with the workshop, and stated, "Look at the chart; the number 4 represents the range of students in class that are similar to the category." The group made comments about their own mindsets, covering the topics of grades, assistance, and criticism vs. praise. The facilitator again stated, "Look at the assignment and give feedback on the writing style of the student." The teachers at our table discussed the writing and then started talking about issues and concerns around the school and how the group could offer the student feedback in a
productive way. The group identified the following ways that the student could improve his writing:

1. Identify three valid points.
2. Improve usage and mechanics.
3. Provide a better introduction.
4. Review the writing elements
5. State that it is a great paper with good ideas and that we should work together to make a better version.
6. Use contractions as they are used in speaking.
7. The main ideas are fabulous; there were six revisions.

The facilitator then commented,

Your responses were excellent; what you did today could be applied to all students. There is no way a parent can respond negatively to teachers’ prompts when they are done in the correct way. The next thing you want to do is work on your mechanics by picking two or three areas to concentrate on. I think the easiest thing is the mechanicals; prioritize where to start. Do you think there is value in prioritizing or do you get more if you are more organized? In the rubric, my sense is how to make this better with little strategies that are better suited to the responsibility, so we can figure out where and what needs to be corrected.

T1 commented, “In the rubric, each category can be a color, just as the handout on a persuasive essay indicates.” AS1 added, “They finally realized that kids are not cattle. When we understand how kids learn, it becomes clear.” T2 responded, “The emphasis should be on the mechanics of writing.” AS1 asked, “Then why do we have so many
people with writing issues?” T2 replied, “Knowing the mechanics of writing is the main thing; trends will come and go, we need to get back to the basics.” AS replied, “What is the finished product, which is the bottom line? Did the kid get the point across?” T2 asked, “The right way or the wrong way?” AS1 replied, “We have tried to teach all students the same way. If a student receives a corrected essay or short writing with red ink marks on it, instead of looking to see what was written wrong, they throw the paper away.” T3 responded, “When using the compass learning method, you can only visit the students’ work twice, and that is a problem. Students cannot return to their work to make corrections, it makes them feel overwhelmed.” AS1 asked, “Is the software compatible, can a kid copy and paste his work? The district file server will not allow kids to save their document as a district file.” I asked, “What about memory sticks?” AS1 responded, “We would need to supply each student in the district. That would be cost prohibitive.” The group continued to discuss several issues concerning NJASK and whether the writing rubric would be graded for spelling errors.

11:15 a.m.

At 11:15 a.m., the facilitator closed the meeting by stating, “We will see you on the 31st. Thank you for coming.” AS1 commented, “We must figure out how much time it will take to test the kids using the rubric structure.” As SP3 and I left the library, SP3 commented on a colleagues’ retirement: “We are honoring her at a dinner She has been the associate director a very long time and now she is retiring. She is always shopping.” As we arrived back at her office, a student entered the office and complained that someone had written on his hand. SP3 talked with the student about the difficulty of
someone writing on her hand unless she wanted that person to write on it. Eventually, the student admitted that he had allowed another student to write on his hand.

SP3 then described the school:

We have over 355 students without an assistant principal. The kids are well behaved, a bit noisy but well behaved. An assistant principal would greatly assist in the running of the school and free me up to do more work in the classrooms.

SP3 then described the inequity among certain schools in the district. One school has only approximately 120 students and the other school has around 500 students. It would be ideal if the district balanced the load evenly. SP3 and I walked down the hall to the cafeteria to talk with two students who had been fighting, after which she explained what occurs during lunch: “We have two shifts that get 1 hour each for lunch. On one shift, the teachers eat while the other shift is on duty.” While grades 1 through 3 were outside, grades 4 through 6 were eating lunch. SP3 indicated that a few years ago there had been a fire and the school had been remodeled.

At that point, an elderly woman approached SP3 in the playground and stated, “I am applying for a job for the café. SP3 responded, “You must go to the central office.” The old woman responded, “I don’t have a car. I am not familiar with the area. I don’t know when I could do that.” After meeting with the woman, SP3 returned to her office and met with a parent, who stated, “My son had an accident. He hurt his finger and this note is for his absence today. He cannot take gym for the rest of the year.” SP3 called the nurse over and gave her the information.
12:40 p.m.

At 12:40 p.m., the interview committee gathered to begin interviewing candidates for two teacher vacancies. I was invited to sit in on the interviews and ask the interviewees questions from a script that had been provided. The interview committee consisted of SP3, the school psychologist, an administrative intern, and me. Prior to allowing the candidate in the room, the committee briefly discussed which questions would be asked and by whom. Each committee member received a sheet with different questions. The first candidate (C1), who was from GS, a private parochial school, entered the office and sat in a chair directly across from me.

Interview One

SP3: How do you structure a language arts period?

C1: Introduce the objective based on Madeline Hunter’s lesson plans.

SP3: Everyone is following MA. How do you teach phonics?

C1: I use the Wilson program workshops with stories on CDs and rhyme charts.

SP3: How do you zero in on special education children?

C1: With cooperative learning and instructional aides. Sometimes I cannot always get to special education kids, so I do sensors and they eventually get it. I am interested in teaching Grades 3 through 6.

AI: Did you have the 2-day training with the Wilson reading program?

C1: Yes.

SP3: How many 1st-grade teachers are at your school?

C1: Four.
SP3: What universal behavioral interventions do you implement? What do you do for students that are challenging?

C1: I would not like to take away from instructional time, so after the class I would address the child and the parent.

PSY: You give twice a week after-class detention?”

C1: Yes.

PSY: When your aide comes in the classroom, is there a tutor also?

C1: No.

PSY: Did you get your training at SL?

C1: Yes.

AI: Did they [SL] also show you foundations?

C1: Only nonsense words and an overview of the workshop.

SP3: Do you have experience with NJASK and NJPASS?

C1: Only the Terra Nova. Teaching skills that apply to the test gives kids a feel for what will come. Teach to the skills that they need for the test.

SP3: We just finished the NJPASS and NJASK.

PSY: Do they [Terra Nova] have a writing assessment? I don’t think it is open ended.

AI: It is an open-ended essay for reading and for science.

SP3: NJASK is geared toward the new SF textbook. Do you have any questions for us?

C1: How many computers are in the classroom?

SP3: One per class, we share. There is great opportunity for professional development where teacher’s turnkey their experiences. The positions are for K through 6. We will let
you know either way by phone. Do you have a portfolio? I will take a look at it. [SP3 reviewed C1’s portfolio]. So what do you like the most about teaching?

C1: I like the kids, I enjoy it, I feel that I am able to teach any grade.

SP3: How many students are at SL?

C1: Two hundred and thirteen.

SP3: Are there any other questions?

C1: No.

C1 went to another location to complete a writing sample. After the interview, the committee discussed any concerns that they had with her. SP3 asked me for my opinion. I responded, "She seemed to have a problem with classroom management." The next candidate (C2) entered the office.

*Interview Two*

SP3: So how are you doing at F school?

C2: I am substituting in for a full-day kindergarten teacher.

SP3: Tell me about your experiences.

C2: Well, I teach the HB literature series two 50-minute periods a day. I try to introduce different things.

SP3: How do you structure your language arts period? We use SF.

C2: No, I am not familiar with that program. I use LF, computers, differentiated instructional alpha centers, and the library.

SP3: How many students are in your class?

C2: Twenty one students in the first class and 14 students in the second class. I also teach 12 prekindergarten children.
SP3: What type of rewards system do you use?

C2: Treasure box.

SP3: What do you do for students that just lost it? How do you motivate them?

C2: I am pretty tough with kids, I am not a softy. I give one-on-one communication and tell them what needs to be done.

PSY: What type of certification do you have?

C2: I have a provisional certification.

SP2: When did you graduate?


PSY: How did you graduate in May?

C2: I know the principal at the school and she asked me to come and substitute. I am an Art major.

SP3: Let us see your portfolio. [C2 gave SP3 his portfolio and she reviewed it.]

SP3: What is your favorite grade level?

C2: Anything in an elementary school. I like second grade and I think I would be able to express my ideas more creatively.

SP3: What format do you use for lesson plans during the week?

C2: Weekly objectives, journals, diagrams of diversity, and table arrangements for the choir. I also use inquiry-based projects in mathematics.

SP3: Great, awesome, very nice. What questions do you have for us?

C2: What curriculum do you use?

SP3: HM mathematics, benchmark tests, and enrichment titles that were selected by the curriculum committee.
C2: What positions are available?

SP3: A K3 position and a 6th-grade position. You can go into the other room and finish your writing sample portion of the interview.

The next candidate (C3) entered the room.

_Interview Three_

SP3: Are you certified?

C3: Yes, elementary certification. I work with an autistic student on speech therapy, hands-on tools, and I realize that as a teacher I will have students like him.

SP3: Where did you do your student teaching? How was it?

C3: At the R school. It was based on differentiated instruction.

SP3: What did you do to help classified, low-achieving students?

C3: I used different instruction and different tools.

SP3: What language arts curriculum did you use?

C3: HM small group rubric with hands-on activities.

SP3: Did you have blocks of time or 40-minute periods?

C3: Forty minute periods, so I was able to assess students that needed extra help.

SP3: Are you familiar with NJASK?

C3: Yes, I had to do make-up tests with the students that I work with.

PSY: What would you do with an autistic child?

C3: The teacher I worked with asked me to work with an autistic student, and I began tapping out letters in order for her to understand.

SP3: What type of reward system did you develop in particular?
C3: I called home with good news for the parents. I created behavioral charts and blue
bucks in class.

SP3: Blue bucks in the school store?

C3: No, in the class.

SP3: Do you have a portfolio and transcripts? I would like to include them with your
resume. When did you graduate from high school?

C3: 2001. [C3 had graduated from a high school in the current district].

SP3: Teachers lead on family night?

C3: Yes, teachers are in each classroom.

SP3: What do you like the most about the elementary school?

C3: Building great relationships. I gave private drum lessons.

SP3: Are you computer savvy? Do you have any questions for us?

C3: I am going back for my MA.

SP3: Yes, we have workshop in-house and elsewhere. We have tuition reimbursement.

Once you get your MA, you move up on the pay scale.

AI: Yes, you do.

SP3: Does anyone have any further questions?

The next candidate (C4) entered the office.

*Interview Four*

SP3: What do you do at your current school?

C4: I substitute for teachers out or on leave.

SP3: How would you teach phonics and reading? How would you address struggling
learners?
C4: Take each letter and sound it out. Also, if the child does not understand, use peer learning to assist.

SP3: Peer partnering?

C4: Yes, with tapes and a continual walk-around.

SP3: How would you motivate a child not interested and who did sloppy homework and was slower than the other children were?

C4: Have another child help that student then make the student feel comfortable with me.

I would write letters home to parents, I do not have problems calling home to parents.

SP3: If the child were failing, why would the parent not know? How would you structure that call?

C4: I would try to find out if there were any problems at home.

PSY: Why do you want to teach? You work for the post office.

C4: I reported a manager taking $700 dollars from a coworker and was terminated. I love children, I am from this town, and I helped kids during Christmas. I got my certification by an alternate route and I love being here. I would first not look so much at a plan book but incorporate my experiences and explain what the American flag means to me. I have to do everything that a regular teacher does. [C4 then showed the committee a number of photographs.]

SP3: You know you will hear from me one way or the other. I know you stay here long hours and your work does not go unnoticed.

The next candidate (C5) entered the office.

Interview Five

SP3: Did you bring a portfolio?
C5: No, someone stole my car last year and the portfolio was in it. But I do have the information I saved from copies of the originals. [C5 offered a few copies of her original documents.]

SP3: Where was your car found?

C5: Kip street in Newark.

SP3: And they wanted your portfolio? Are you all right? So you have not taught?

C5: Right, but I am an instructional aide.

SP3: So what do you do?

C5: For Grades 3 through 5, I make copies and help out.

SP3: How many students are in your class?

C5: Twenty.

SP3: What is the enrollment in the school?

C5: Approximately 500. When I first started last year, we had 26 students in the classroom.

SP3: What strategies would you implement to teach reading?

C5: We use Open Court, last year we had Wilson by syllables M-A-N and M-O-M.

SP3: We use SF with homework and the Dido. What knowledge do you have about NJASK?

C5: I was a proctor for the test.

SP3: Have you had any direct involvement in teaching to the test?

C5: No, but I could learn.

SP3: There is nothing like picture prompts; kids respond to picture prompts. You are a brand-new teacher; how would you establish interactive communication with parents?
C5: I would send e-mails and letters home giving times and dates when I am available for contact.

SP3: What do you do to help that child be successful?

C5: A red folder goes home with the child every day for parents to sign and return with the child.

SP3: Who is that child?

C5: Grade 2.

SP3: What are you going to do to get that parent on your side?

C5: You pick your battles, take it one day at a time. Last year we had a third grader and the parents were getting a divorce, so we worked with that student.

SP3: Do you have any questions for us?

C5: What is a typical day like?

SP3: We do no switch classes, each block is 90 minutes, we have two classes in each grade level, and the position available is for K through 6. We will let you know one way or the other. Thank you for coming in.

3:15 p.m.

At 3:15 p.m., SP3 completed interviewing the candidates and prepared for the faculty meeting. SP3 and I walked over to the library, where I sat in a side chair to take notes. SP3 introduced VW, the photo-imaging representative from Xerox. VW explained the mechanics of the machine and gave the teachers tips on how to use it. SP3 then distributed the following agenda items for the faculty meeting:

1. NJPASS.

2. Donuts for Dad.
3. Class lists.

4. The awards ceremony.

5. Child Study Team (CST) considerations.

6. Aftercare.

7. Meeting dates.

8. The spring show.


10. DARE and professional development.


12. Lock-down procedures.

13. Volunteers.

14. The NCLB.

After discussing these items, SP3 concluded the faculty meeting at 3:50 p.m. by stating, “Please make sure that you signed the sign-in sheet.”

4:05 p.m.

At 4:05 p.m., I conducted an open-ended interview with SP3.

Documents: SP3 provided the following materials:

1. A document entitled *Giving Verbal and Written Feedback on Student Work* created by the Center for Evidenced-Based Education (CEBE). This document was provided during my meeting with SP3 and other district personnel in the high school library.

2. Several documents entitled *Classroom Assessment Practices and Strategies*—*CAPS* created by the CEBE.

4. A copy of an interviewing form for instructional staff.

5. A three-page document containing updated interview questions for the school.

6. A copy of the faculty meeting agenda containing 17 items and concluding with a call for teacher input.

7. A document containing information from the school’s Web site that included *A Message From the Principal*.

8. A copy of a writing sample from a student in the fourth grade.

Participant 6 = GP3  Date: May 23, 2007  Field time = 7:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.  

7:30 a.m.

At 7:30 a.m., I parked in the site’s rear parking area by the lower-level entrance and entered the building by that entrance. The school is a large two-level building situated on a hill. When I asked a student where the main office was, she replied that the office is on the second level. I walked further down the hall and two teachers asked if they could help me. One teacher escorted me to the main office, explaining “I’m already going that way.”

In the office, I noticed that a large Middle States accreditation banner hung against the sidewall. I introduced myself to the secretary, who asked me to wait a few minutes. GP3 came out from his rear office and I asked, “Can I shadow you today until around 2:00 p.m. and then give the interview?” GP3 responded, “Excuse me a moment, we have a situation outside.” GP3 then left the office and returned 10 minutes later saying, “This time of year you go crazy around here.” The phones in the main office were
ringing quite a bit. GP3 indicated that his visit outside was because several students had been giving a police officer stationed in the school a hard time.

GP3 then invited me into his office in the rear section of the main office and explained his routine during this time of year:

At 4:45 a.m., my day starts and I’m at the high school by 5:10 a.m. Usually my day lasts until around 5:30 p.m. During May and June, we have Battle of the Bands. It is a family atmosphere and I bring my wife, it’s the only opportunity that I get to see her. . . . [At the end of the year] the awards assembly usually lasts until 10:30 p.m. at night, on Friday we have the Powder Puff Football Game, which is a fundraiser for several local charities, and we just finished Advanced Placement Testing last week. The students come up with a number of the fundraising ideas. The senior prom will last until 1:30 a.m. or 2:00 a.m., and if there is school the next day, the kids know that they must be here with no exceptions. . . . It becomes 12-hour days from 5:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and on occasion school work is done at home.

When I asked, “How many staff and students do you have in this building?” GP3 responded,

Around 1,700 students and 135 staff, we also have a school resource officer [RO] who assists with criminal activities and the drug dealers, he is in the halls and cafeteria. We have a Child Study Team who works with the counseling staff and the school runs on a modified block schedule. Approximately 12 to 15% of the school is special education, which is about average
After brief talk in his office, GP3 invited me to walk with him, explaining, “Usually during the morning I walk the halls and greet students and teachers daily.”

While GP3 was talking with me, the school’s police officer told him that an intruder had entered the building and started a fight with one of the cosmetology students, but that he had checked his ID and let him go. In the hallway, GP3 asked two students why they were always late to school. The students shrugged their shoulders and continued to their classes. GP3 explained, “After the late bell rings in the morning, all doors automatically lock and the only way into the building is through the front entrance.”

GP3 then took me on a tour of the school, describing sections of the building along the way:

We have therapeutic counseling, which helps students with their problems. We also have Channel One Television; you must pledge at least 75% coverage and we have 100%, with each classroom equipped with a television supplied by Channel One. Students watch programming during the announcements in first period homeroom. That eliminates extra movement. We have an excellent culinary arts program where our students prepare lunch for the staff. In this section of the building, we have general classes and health.

GP3 checked with one student by the library and another student by the cafeteria. I observed no graffiti in the halls or on the lockers.

We continued our tour and then entered student services. This area houses the counseling department, the CST team for the high school and middle school, and a conference room for the district. Adjacent to this area and just below it on the first level are the board of education offices. GP3 commented,
This building was built in three sections. The first wing in 1964 was for small class instruction, then the district brought up the ninth grade and the second section was added with an elevator for handicapped students. The new wing was added in 1981, which was mixed use. It housed the science rooms and world language department. The science rooms could also be used for computer technology and the business department.

An announcement was made over the public announcement system for the student fundraiser. GP3 continued,

Classes in the section include mock trial, law internship, international relations, and keyboarding. If we find graffiti on the walls or locks, the custodial staff removes it immediately. We have three daytime custodians and seven nighttime custodians. . . . In this section of the building are print shops and graphic arts, drum and bugle core and music, driver education, drafting, and art, which have automatic computer assisted design. Down a little further is cosmetology, where a student can receive his/her vocational license in 750 hours or 1 year of training. Over there we have a 3,000-square-foot television studio and art room, adjacent to that is automotive, chorus, and a dance studio. The electronics room can also be used for woodshop.

I asked, “Are the VPs in charge of grade levels?” GP3 responded, “Yes, the VPs’ office for Grades 9 and 10 is located on the side of the main office and the Grades 11 and 12 VPs’ office is located in the front of the main office.”

At that point, we walked down a set of stairs to the rear auditorium area. GP3 attempted to close a door but it would not lock, so he called for a custodian. GP3 and I
passed a wall of recognition that had a number of photographs and plaques. We walked past an outside courtyard filled with a group of students, GP3 explained, “That’s a chemistry class.” As GP3 and I passed the print shop, GP3 commented, “We do the printing for the district. We also do IDs for our students, and if they lose their ID, we provide a replacement.” As we walked back to the main office, GP3 explained his situation and the high school schedule:

I have worked in the district for over 40 years but this is my first year as the high school principal. The principal at the high school moved to be in charge of elementary services but will be retired from that position and placed at one of the elementary schools. . . . We have a flexible schedule using semesters, with full-year courses, double courses, triplets, and quarter courses. We can combine any number of schedules to benefit the students. There is a 12-month VP in charge of the schedule and the Grades 9 and 10 VP is also the mathematics supervisor. We schedule approximately 400 plus students per lunch period but the cafeteria only fits 320 students; this is one of the driving factors when creating the schedule: to change the lunch period.

At that point, GP3’s phone rang but he did not answer it. The phone continued to ring and his secretary noted, “You really need to answer that please.” After taking the call, GP3 continued,

Our schedule is based on student requests, which in turn must be fed into the computer. The number of students, the number of teachers, and the availability of rooms determines sections. After looking at that, we look at approximately 15% of the student body that have conflicts, such as oversubscription to a class or two
classes in the same room during the same period. Once conflicts are resolved, we introduce our lunch period and have been able to manually schedule lunches to within 5 to 7% of each other. The next large challenge is to schedule the physical education and health classes by gender. Everyone must take health; there are no alternatives. The lunch period is 21 minutes and students are able to enjoy hot and cold lunch menus.

GP3 went on to explain that the lunch lines often lead to a great a bottleneck in the cafeteria because of the sheer numbers. The business administrator had said that the school would install an electronic scanning program that reads student IDs, and the numbers of students in the line should decrease by at least 40 students. GP3 also indicated that the enrollment is stable by the equilibrium created by incoming transfer students from other districts. Transfers are created by downsizing when families in the more affluent surrounding districts experience hard times, divorce, or the loss of a home. This marginal influx is balanced by a similarly marginal dropout rate.

GP3 continued to explain the scheduling process, the electronic database SASSY, and his role in the school:

Student information is integrated into the program along with a current photograph. Teachers are not able to manipulate a student’s grade, as all students must meet NJ state graduation requirements. Chairpersons and district supervisors also assist with student requests. If program data specifies general class size as 20 students, then classes will not run that are under that number. Occasionally, and only for honor classes, that number can go as low as 12. . . . My current title is interim principal reappointed, and I previously taught welding. The last principal
at the high school was appointed in 2004, but because of NCLB sanctions, there has been a lot of movement in the district.

GP3 then explained that he went to a workshop on the new procedures for Middle States accreditation and that although they have a sign in the front office, they still have not achieved accreditation. The high school did receive temporary certification for 2007 while waiting for final certification that will enable operation until 2014. I asked, “What is your relationship with the superintendent?” GP3 responded, “It is hard to describe a relationship when the superintendent is new also.”

A supervisor said, “We cannot reduce staff in my department. I recommended no reductions.” GP3 asked, “What about T1?” The supervisor responded, “No, he is not a headache, he wants to teach in the high school. You cannot cut staff at the high school.” GP3 replied, “I gave you the alternate route teacher who graduated from Penn State. He retired from business and finance; he is 52 or 53 and speaks Spanish.” The supervisor replied, “I have had people teach honors that were more cerebral, his paperwork is not that impressive, but he gives me results.” GP3 explained, “This was a bad year, with DYFS [Division of Youth and Family Services] investigations on some of the coaching staff. DYFS received anonymous phone calls.” I asked, “How can you investigate anonymous phone calls? There may be more to it.” GP3 explained that the other superintendent had retired and there is a new superintendent, a new assistant superintendent, and new director of curriculum. GP3 stated, “I think the new superintendent is starting to trust my judgment. He promised me support, but it is really determined by the board of education.” GP3 continue to explain that the high school would be used for training by the police department for crisis intervention: “They will
train on taking back a building from armed terrorists and will be at the high school from Thursday through Saturday.” I recalled an article in the local newspaper on this training and asked, “Do you have any bomb threats?” GP3 responded, “Yes, the students involved were caught by police through the RO. We have a written crisis management plan which is provided to the police along with student photographs and a floor plan.”

GP3 then talked extensively about the school and community:

We get bad press not matter what we do. The elected board keeps changing the political structure. One board member was escorted out of a board of education meeting. That member is now mayor and he retaliated by removing all previous board members. Many of our students come from countries like the Philippines, Croatia, and Sierra Leone, where internal unrest and civil wars are common. We are looking at bringing in a few more programs, like study skills, 5 days a week.

You have to maneuver, so I let the staff know now instead of September.

GP3 explained that over the last 10 years the school population has changed from 30% to 70% minority but “knock on wood, we have not had any serious problems. We have outstanding baseball, soccer and volleyball teams.” I replied, “I actually saw your volleyball team in the local newspaper, I think you’re competing for a title.” GP3 said, “Our bowling and tennis teams are doing very well.” I asked, “When do you have your Grade 9 orientation?” GP3 responded,

June 6th and 7th for a 50-minute tour. Midterm exams are included this year; normally we would have only final exams at the end of each marking period. The previous principal received a 60-day notice, I started in December 2006, and so
teachers did not like me. If you make alliances, they can come back to bite you. I also fired two teachers because of poor performance.

GP3 continued to explain the exam schedule and how teachers wanted half days during the exam period. GP3 did not allow this, so a compromise was made and teachers developed another schedule. Parents were not happy with the change because of the short notice but went along with it. The exam is based on the HSPA. Teachers have an exam review but need better follow-up. They also have a problem with sports eligibility because of student failures.

GP3 described himself as consensus builder who had created a principal advisor committee: “I will listen but if it turns into a bitch-and-moan session, I will close it down.” GP3 described his predecessor as giving over-the-top discipline laced with very little education. The predecessor held no staff or principal meetings and told the supervisors to run their own departments. GP3 was concerned with the limited English proficient (LEP) students who were not able to pass the HSPA. Under GP3’s predecessor, LEP students had not been able to get help; there had been no programs in place for them. The following year English would be used as a world language and to fulfill the LEP language requirement. GP3 said, “This is not necessarily true for Asian students, who are very proficient in English.” Physical education has a written final. Nova Net is a self-paced program for the Saturday Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) preparation. Under this program, the students have increased their average SAT score by at least 100 points. GP3 stated,

We are looking at software to bring in a whole range of self-paced programs. Our faculty meetings start with teacher and student recognition for a variety of
accomplishments. We had a mock trial night where students wrote the case and
the board attorney was the judge. We invited members of the business community
to be part of the gallery to view the case. The person who teaches the course is a
lawyer. He said he was fed up with the rat race and decided to become a teacher.
GP3 received two additional phone calls, one regarding scheduling and the other
from a council member. I asked, “Do you have a high mobility rate?” GP3 responded,
I do not know the last number, but it was below the state average. We try to assist
with students who have problems in that area. Our Intervention and Referral
Service [I&RS] committee is responsible for finding out the particulars. It is
possible that they may consider making a recommendation to the CST, but we try
to intervene with modification first. We also try to get the parents involved but the
parents are looking to the school for help and answers. Before making a referral to
the CST, we try to see if a 504 plan can be developed; I would rather go with a
504 document first if possible. . . . I don’t have enough people for all of the
committee.
GP3 explained that some grade levels are exaggerated:
We are looking at restructuring grades that are out of synch. Instead of taking core
mathematics, that student should take introduction to algebra. We instituted a
world languages course and dance to enhance physical education. A student could
take 4 years of dance without repeating the same material. The theoretical is good
if it talks about the practical. . . . We are now looking at the educational
specifications of what is going on in a classroom. Trying to determine the amount
of square footage per students. How do you calculate the functional capacity of a
building? Requisitions, code numbers, there must be practicality. . . . I would like to know more about the evaluation of testing measurements and educational trends to get in on the theoretical bandwagon. We readily accept too many different theories. There is really no common sense; you have to watch that your ego does not get in the way. You must understand your people. . . . I have a Master’s in Industrial Administration and certification for principal/supervisor and superintendent. I have experience with internships and understand the theory supporting ISLLIC standards for colleges and universities. I have had training as an administrator and participated in professional development. I read the news about who is doing what and attend the board of education meetings. But they did not teach me about grant writing or the level of legality involved in this position.

GP3 explained that you must look at the human relationships in education and not just the paperwork. It is good to be sensitive and know the issues that are important to your staff. One student asked GP3, “Are those hot dogs beef?” GP3 replied, “Yes,” then continued:

One girl was wearing a scarf like a turban and we had to call her parents. We have a no-hat policy, but if for religious reasons, we can allow it. I was actually very happy in auto shop; I decided to get involved with changing the school. Some things needed to be changed. One of the things that had to be done was the replacement of typewriters with computers. There was money available but I did not go with e-rate and the big money. The first and second years we deposited the money; by the third year we had a $200,000 dollar grant. I had Perkins Grant money coming in and this September you will not find one computer in the
business department. . . Overt teachers are addressed one time. At the beginning of this year, I had a few grievances, but I still say good morning to those teachers. It is not personal; 46 years of experience give you confidence at parent conferences. Most teachers in the parent conference talk too much; they do not allow the parent to express their concerns.

GP3 then explained events and policies at the school and his proposal for a new disciplinary procedure:

In June there will be a half-day lock-down with the police. The HSPA results are back in raw score form, we are waiting for the assortment. The visual and performing arts program performances can astound a person. I have daily meetings with the VPs and an official meeting once a month. . . . There are a number of online Web sites that provide information on how to use discipline successfully. It is actually great for discipline by breaking down discipline by behavior and occurrence. This is another thing that I am planning to do.

When I a poster in GP3’s office that says, “Success is very easy if you fail,” GP3 explained,

Our kids understand failure, and it has become so ingrained into their mindset that they believe there is no disgrace if there is no effort. It is like they do not have time for their own lives, but the girls are a bit more focused than the boys.

GP3’s phone rang and he took the call. After the call GP3 continued,

People that I worked with understand my style and process of management.

Other staff was uncomfortable with asking teachers to demonstrate successful lessons during staff meetings. Some felt that they were being put on display.
However, the older, more experienced teachers understood that they had the freedom to do what was best for kids, naturally within budgetary constraints and central office approval. . . . Home at school [HAS] is equivalent to the PTA. During one of their monthly meetings, HAS asked for a half day for these meetings. I said no.

I asked, “Are you satisfied with your progress?” GP3 responded,

I received a grant for $95,000 to spend on school improvement. I wanted to make AYP this year but did not. I am not happy with discipline; we need a third VP because all-year students have not been able to establish self-discipline.

I asked, “How do you do it all?” GP3 replied,

You must prioritize; you pick what you are going to do and do it. For example, in my e-mail just for today I have four major items to address: (a) Friday I must pick the honor society, (b) I must finish final evaluations, (c) I must review HSPA results for next year, and (d) I must create a schedule of events for next year.

GP3 excused himself for a bathroom break and asked, “Do you need to. . . .?” I responded, “No, I am alright.” When GP3 returned, he continued,

I have to look at the dress code; however, this week we will be reviewing the HSPA final report. I have stacks of evaluations that have to be done by the timeline. This is a lot of work. I had to suspend two special education students and the paperwork was tremendous. One of the students had to be taken to the hospital and the nurses are complaining that they had to go. The school becomes a community resource. . . . One e-mail was from the police department wanting to set up classes on the hazards of gambling. A few students from a neighboring
town were beat up because they were behind on their gambling debt.

I received via e-mail 11 pages of a technology survey and three pages from IBM, who are sponsoring the automotive program.

I asked, "Do you use e-mail to address the staff?" GP3 responded, "I will start to use e-mails to communicate with my staff and stop sending paper memos; it saves paper. It also saves the secretary from making copies and placing them in teacher boxes." I asked, "Do you have any summer programs?" GP3 responded, "If money is restored, we will have summer school with 60 hours remediation for failures and 120 hours for new credit."

GP3 reviewed documents on his desk and read a few letters. I asked, "What is your leadership style?" GP3 replied,

Sometimes you have to have different leadership agenda. You have to be at the front of what is taking place. The staff usually assists, but you have to convince people that a program or initiative will work. You have to be able to encourage teachers to take on a leadership role. You need to evaluate the situation in order to get things done. If you give a kid an option, you need to respect the option he takes. For example, a teacher said a student kept bothering him about going to the bathroom; the teacher told the student to pee in the garbage can and the student did.

12:40 p.m.

At 12:40 p.m., GP3 and I left the office to go to the cafeteria, where the culinary arts program presented lunch. I sat with GP3 and other administrators while culinary arts students dressed in black-and-white service uniforms prepared lunch and served the table. I talked with the staff about my research.
2 p.m.

GP3 and I finished lunch at 2:00 p.m. and returned to the main office, where I conducted an open-ended interview with him at 2:15 p.m.

Documents: GP3 did not provide any additional materials.

Participant 7 = GP4 Date: May 25, 2007 Field time = 7:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

7:30 a.m.

I arrived at the school at 7:30 a.m., parked on the street adjacent to the school, an older four-level red brick building, and walked to the main entrance. I introduced myself to the secretary, who asked me to wait a few minutes. The office was busy, but the atmosphere was relaxed. After 5 minutes, GP4 came out to greet me and indicate that he was assisting the secretaries manage substitutes for the day. GP4 introduced me to the two VPs, both of whom talked about the vibe they feel at the beginning of the day to sense if it is going to be “wired.” GP4 stated, “At 8:30 a.m., I have an Individual Educational Program [IEP] meeting with a child that has had some difficulties this year. Yesterday he was out of control in class.” I asked, “What type of schedule do you follow?” GP4 responded, “We have a modified four-by-four block schedule, with class rotation.” GP4 continued to explain his schedule for the rest of the day:

At 9:00 a.m., I have an interview with a candidate that has dual certification in English and Social Studies. At 10:00 a.m., the VPs and I have a scheduling meeting. After that, I walk the halls up to the lunch periods. I will also meet with a parent who is in charge of our mentor group; he is also a prosecutor and has his own record label.
GP4 left the office to deal with a student who had injured his foot while I sat with the VPs, who were discussing the transition of the 8th-grade class to high school. Evidently, that transition would take place first at this school then at the high school. After GP4 returned, he explained several logistics regarding the building: “There are three separate entrances for students to enter in the morning and exit after school. We receive some transfers from Abbott districts.”

GP4 and I walked outside as Grades 7 and 8 entered the building. After the majority of students had entered the building, GP4 and I walked back to the main office. GP4 held a CD player to the PA system prior to the morning announcements to play a song for a contest for which students had to name the correct artist and song. GP4 stated, “The staff believed that hearing the principals’ voice in the morning changed the school’s atmosphere for the students.” GP4 then began giving the announcement, providing information on (a) the day’s schedule, (b) the lunch menu, (c) two lessons cancelled by teachers, (d) hydrate ourselves, and (e) the faculty-student game, and then told everyone to have a great weekend. I recall thinking, “Today’s temperature is 96°F and the school is not air conditioned.” GP4 finished the announcements then talked with me about the political landscape in his district:

An assemblyman wanted to use this school as a platform to discuss reduced funding for rim schools and a number of desegregation issues. I said no because of a number of friends and associates in the Abbott districts. We found out later that the assembly member’s ultimate objective was to make school SB in his district a magnet school. If rim funding supports an opportunity for improving the achievement gap, then that is a good thing.
9:00 a.m.

GP4 and I walked from the main office to the auditorium. We entered and I sat in the rear as GP4 walked to the front stage. The students were quiet as the a VP took attendance. GP4 then addressed the students for conducting themselves poorly in a Spanish class yesterday. In a low, even tone, GP4 stated,

The information I received was that inappropriate behavior occurred. Some of you began singing in class while others were insubordinate. Some of you were not respectful to the teacher and their classmates. Your behavior does not come from the principal or VP; it comes from the individual. What I heard was that many students were joining the cause of disruption.

A student said, “We thought that we were being locked in the classroom.” GP4 explained, “The classroom doors are only locked from the outside so no one can get in to possibly harm you.” During his reprimand, a student or stage crew worker came onto the stage area and interrupted GP4; both VPs immediately responded. GP4 continued, “You were not locked in a classroom, you all must take responsibility for your actions. Now let’s have questions!” GP4 and the students exchanged questions and answers about this incident. A VP indicated that as a group, all of the students are responsible for each other. GP4 stated, “The class must realize that there are consequences to your actions and behaviors.”

After this discussion with the students, GP4 and I continued to walk through the school on a brief tour. GP4 explained, “The students in that class were eighth graders with a new teacher and felt empowered.” While touring the building, I observed displays in the halls and on tables of student artwork and class projects. This work, fire-glazed
masks from different countries, seems to be of a high level of sophistication and intricacy for this grade level.

As we walked, GP4 explained,

We have some students that are moderately disabled. One youngster is having a lot of difficulties; he is ADHD, bipolar, and cognitively impaired. The student resents his parents because they want home instruction and he wanted to be promoted to Grade 9. We are having difficulties trying to motivate him. We are getting these types of cases in increasing numbers. Our special education population is approximately 15%.

GP4 and I walked over to the CST office. When GP4 asked if I could be included in the IEP meeting, the CST workers evidently said I could not. GP4 told me that the meeting was just about over, so we walked to the main office to prepare for interviews. After bringing additional chairs into the conference room, the VPs, the language arts supervisor (LAS), a social studies teacher (SST), GP4, and I reviewed the first candidate’s (C1’s) resume. C1 had been laid off from her other position. After reviewing her materials, the group was ready to interview her. GP4 called the secretary to send in C1. C1 entered the conference room, sat in the designated chair, and was introduced to everyone. GP4 then started the questioning.

*Interview One*

P4: Tell us something about yourself.

C1: I started out as a 1st-grade teacher. My student teaching was done in a middle school with classes on social studies and language arts. I incorporated Julius Caesar and a lesson on Rome into literature circle.
LAS: You did the entire play Julius Caesar?

C1: I did parts of the play.

LAS: Was your experience balanced or did you favor one more than the other?

C1: I taught both comfortably.

SST: What commonality did you find with the first grade?

C1: You had to model everything.

LAS: What is your personal background to the community?

C1: I went to the local high school, which was not as diverse as this school, but I was able to meet a number of people where I am now, which is very diverse and is actually a lower SES [socioeconomic status] than I originally thought.

LAS: What was your population like?

C1: I had to use a number of differentiated instructional strategies. I used a lot of teaching accommodation.

VP: How did you use differentiated instruction?

C1: I started with mathematics and geometric shapes and students had to create smaller groups of different shapes. I worked with one student on the sounds of the shapes to assist with his developmental process.

SST: If you were to start in a new school in September and you knew nothing about that school, explain what your thoughts are on that.

C1: I would talk to teachers, staff, and the principal to get a better understanding of that location and better direction.

SST: What would you want to find out about the kids?

C1: I would want a writing sample from them.
LAS: How would you find out their reading ability?

C1: I use *Red Beat* readers, read quietly or silently, and tell me what you read.

SST: How much professional development have you had?

C1: Quite a bit—Web page design, zoning, software training.

SST: If you were able to acquire 100 hours PD [professional development] over the summer, what would you do?

C1: Because this position is a higher grade level, I would utilize those resources. Go to workshops on middle grades learning and get different books on SS [social studies] and LA [learning arts] learning. There would be so much that I would like to buy.

LAS: What is your classroom management philosophy?

C1: I think it is important to develop individualized behavior plans.

LAS: Are you fluent in French?

C1: Polite; if you do not use it, you lose it.

LAS: We have a large Haitian population in this school.

C1: I can understand but not write French.

SST: Give us an idea of your classroom discipline.

C1: I had a student that sunk her nails into my wrist. That situation had escalated since November. The student was disciplined, suspended, and even up to a few months ago, the situation has gotten better. The parents are drug addicts and she is in a foster situation. Most teachers yell and scream in this situation and that is the worst thing to do. I used a warm, kind voice to calm her down. I have dealt with some tough stuff.

VP: Let us say the principal is in your classroom and a student is being disruptive.
C1: Depending on what my rules are, I would try first to speak with that student on the side and make it known throughout the class that that behavior is not acceptable.

GP4: Do you have any questions for us?

C1: Would you tell me more about the LA program?

LAS: Our emphasis is on reading transition. The class must write out the source of the novel based on the language arts study guide. We focus on building skills, but you might find three or four students per class not at grade level. We have a very strong immersion of writing levels. There has not been a lot of emphasis on spelling. Teachers are trying to introduce vocabulary and strong verbs to get kids to personalize grammar. Teachers are all trying to get on the same page in terms of meaning.

C1: I guess you cannot go to another place and say give me a juicy word.

LAS: Yes, the use of adjectives and predicates is very important.

C1: For colorful words I use verbs. What are you looking for in a teacher?

GP4: You need to have enthusiasm, passion, and commitment. Great leaders have wonderful teachers. This school offers a wonderful opportunity for growth. It is not an easy population; we want people that want to work hard.

VP: We want people that will hold students to a higher expectation, but also assist them to achieve that expectation.

LAS: We want people who have a passion for the vocation. Someone who loves to be with kids. Someone that is open with colleagues, where you can grow from their experiences and they can grow from yours.
SST: A person who is able to blend collaboration and initiative; where you can take an idea, tweak it, and improve it by trial and error. Someone who completed curriculum projects based on examination and is comfortable with curriculum revision.

GP4 then asked the candidate to step outside of the conference room so that the committee could discuss her interview.

GP4: She is enthusiastic; she drove around the vicinity of the school in the neighborhood and browsed our Web page.

SST: Do we know why she is leaving?

GP4: Riffed.

LAS: I think her transition from HW to HOB was pretty drastic.

GP4: She could align herself with RY.

LAS: She will definitely fit in.

GP4: Energetic people will be drawn to her.

VP: Also, the kid that dug her fingernails into her arm even had a connection.

GP4: How far and how fast do we want to go with this? Our lack of haste can be our loss.

My worry is losing someone that may be a strong candidate.

SST: Have her do a demonstration lesson.

GP4: We also need to give her writing prompt.

SST: A demonstration lesson will reveal what we need to see.

LAS: Yes.

SST: Yes.

LAS: I am very interested to have her come in to do a demonstration lesson only to see how she compares to other teachers that have gone through the same process.
10:20 a.m.

At 10:20 a.m., the meeting was adjourned while the candidate completed a writing sample. GP4 left the office to have a private conversation with another staff member and returned to start another meeting with the VPs and me regarding scheduling. GP4 explained, “This mathematics section is a problem. I could move it over here but that would make world language problematic. If you flip it, WL would not be a problem. Who is teaching 5th-grade Spanish? VP1 responded, “GE during first period, but if you move it someone else may be light a class.” GP4 replied, “My thought was instead of GE getting it again, move it to AC and go with that scenario.” VP1 responded, “We did talk about having the team pick up that instruction.” GP4 asked, “What about DS and WM; what will they end up with?” VP1 responded, “I tentatively put PP there.” GP4 responded, “The names are meaningless at this point; if you review DS’s schedule she has a lot of different preparations. How about if we ask LA if she would roll over to mathematics?” VP1 responded, “One thing that CL brings up is that she does not like four level fours and three level threes.” GP4 responded,

I agree, it forces our top kids to be one team. What about those kids who want to accelerate to mathematics; you will have some imbalances. It is worth investigating if it works. Rather than have two classes of 30, we will have three classes of 20. It gives more flexibility to create two lists of kids in exclusive reading and writing classes. You have CL and OS, and it depends on where we are going to place them. Then you have the special education students on one line and the Project Ahead kids on the other line. You have two people who can do
this, CL and OS. Have two special education classes on 2 days and flip the other 8th-grade class 2 days.

GP4 then said, "Makes sense." VP1 responded, "Yes, but my pencil is quicker than my head. I have to write this out to digest it. Look, here are the incoming sixth graders; I think they will be identified with a 4-day-a-week schedule." GP4 responded, "What position is pull-out support; this is only four students, it is almost better to have a larger group." VP1 replied, "That would be the best answer for this group here, then we do not have the solution that we thought we had. What will they do for second period?" GP4 responded, "I was thinking in a 6th-grade mindset." VP1 responded, "But we do not know if these kids are going to be offered WL." GP4 asked VP1, "So can you play with it?"

10:50 a.m.

GP4 checked with C1 to see how she was doing with the writing prompt while I waited in the main office.

11:00 a.m.

At 11:00 a.m., GP4 got his walkie-talkie and we walked to the cafeteria. GP4 explained, "The 6th-grade lunch is not the largest lunch. Teachers walk around the tables talking with students." The building was somewhat old, built in 1969; the central office has not given enough monetary support to maintain the physical infrastructure. Each lunch period is 30 minutes. The 7th- and 8th-grade lunches are much livelier than are the 6th-grade lunch. Teachers and the VPs supervise each lunch and students usually sit with their particular group. Announcements are made in the cafeteria to inform students how long the lunch line will be open.
GP4 left the cafeteria to meet with the new teacher who had completed her writing sample. On the way to the main office, GP4 talked about his administration. During his talk, the head custodian (HC) informed GP4 over the walkie-talkie that five students who had been fighting had run when HC approached them. GP4 and VP1 intercepted this group, who were all girls. While GP4 and VP1 dealt with this group, I sat in the main office. GP4 returned to the office and talked with C1.

After their conversation, GP4 invited me on a tour of the building. As we left the main office, I noticed a sign in the office that stated, “If Education Was Truly A Priority. . .” During the tour, GP4 took me to where classes were held in the basement, explaining, “When it rains, kids slip and slide along his floor.” There was a very steep incline leading to a lower level; it really did look like a dungeon. GP4 stated, “Students can seriously hurt themselves on this floor. Our 8th-grade classes have shown real character.” GP4 continued the tour, showing classrooms and offices. GP4 stated, “This building is not air conditioned in the classrooms and halls, but some of the offices are air-conditioned.”

After touring the guidance area, GP4 and I returned to the conference room with the VPs. GP4 remembered that C1 had missed the LA praxis by one point. He also indicated that he knew of two boys who were dealing drugs in the school and was in contact with the police regarding them. GP4 stated, “That information is for the annual meeting with the PD [police department] on at-risk kids and their issues or problems.” The VPs reviewed a list of students with similar issues. The mother of one 13-year-old student had gone to Haiti and left the student to watch her 5- and 8-year-old siblings, during which time their house burned down as the result of an accident. Another student
had brought a pellet gun to school. GP4 brought in a community member—the prosecutor who owned a record label—to help him work with these types of students. The students listened to his music. He then talked with the students about music and its message. His program focuses on the middle school, using songs to tell a story and send a message. GP4 then walked over to the library to show the local prosecutor and parent the school’s collection of classical and contemporary record titles. “Do you know what this means, inquired the prosecutor?” GP4 and the prosecutor continued their conversation privately.

2:45 p.m.

GP4 and I left the library and returned to the conference room, where I conducted an open-ended interview with GP4.

Documents: GP4 did not provide any additional materials. I found information about the school on the district Web site and in a document entitled Principal’s Welcome, which had been authored by GP4.

Participant 8 = GP5  Date: May 30, 2007  Field time = 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

8:00 a.m.

I arrived at 8:00 a.m. at the rear parking area of the building. Seeing no cars in the parking area, I thought I had arrived too early, so I drove around the building to the main entrance and parked near a walk leading to the front door. The front door was open and I entered the building, proceeding to the main office to the left of the front entrance. I introduced myself to the secretary, who commented that teachers start to arrive around 8:40 a.m. and that GP5 would arrive at 11:30 a.m. because he had to take his son to orientation. The secretary was very helpful and gave me permission to walk around the school and talk with staff. GP5 had sent the secretary an e-mail to let her know that I
would be coming today. She provided me with a substitute teacher badge (she was out of visitor badges) and introduced me to the school nurse, whose office is next to the main office.

I could overhear a conversation that the secretary was having with another teacher. Evidently, the secretary’s son would use the car and not refill the gas tank, and she was complaining that with gas at $3 a gallon, it adds up. She said her son’s favorite saying is “Mom, it’s all about the money with you.” The secretary went on to add, “I pay the bills and it’s all about the money.” I chuckled and asked if I could tour the building grounds first, and the secretary gave her approval.

As I walked around the grounds, I mentally noted that the location of the single-level building was ideal for security and privacy. After my tour of the grounds, I reentered the building and noticed a plaque on the front lobby's sidewalk from the Red Cross and the New Jersey Senate and General Assembly recognizing the school for outstanding academic performance. I also noticed flags from different countries hanging from the ceilings throughout the school. A large picture of President G.W. Bush hangs in the main lobby and terms such as “Perseverance,” “Leadership,” “Self-Reliance,” “Compassion,” “Excellence,” and “Respect” are hung near the nurse’s office and faculty lounge. A display case holds glazed animals created by kindergarten and the 1st-grade students. The library is equipped with new computers and a laser printer. In one hallway, I observed a bulletin board with the names of the faculty and staff and flags on the ceiling leading to the custodial office and boiler room rear the art and music room.

At around 8:50 a.m., teachers and students began entering the building. I noticed a plaque by the door of the gymnasium that reads “The CMB Memorial Gymnasium,
2003” in memory of a former staff member or school associate. I was not sure whether the gymnasium was a mixed-use facility; I noted that I would ask GP5 upon his arrival. Opposite the gym, an outdoor sitting area with a huge oak tree leads to an expansive park-like playground area. Paintings of African masks created by the first grade hang in that hall adjacent to the outdoor area. Next to the paintings is a sign that says, “Go Wildcats,” which I believe refers to the school mascot. I also noticed that each corridor is named after a road or trail; for example, one corridor is named “Respect Road” and another “Trustworthy Trail.” A large map of the United States with each state’s capital also hangs near the lobby. In another area on the wall hangs the phrase “Let’s All Pull Together” accompanied with pictures of the cartoon characters Snoopy, Lucy, and the gang tugging on a rope. Various instrument cases line the floor by the gym. Another bulletin board contains students work on the theme of “How to Survive in the Wilderness.” A display case contains a sculpture of a monkey with bananas accompanied by the phrase “Top Banana.” Further down that hall in a brighter area is a bulletin board entitled “A Long Way From Chicago” that contains pictures of the St. Valentine’s Day massacre, Al Capone, Royal Crown soda, trains, and Shirley Temple. Below a plaque signifying that this section of the school is an addition built in 1993 is a bulletin board with student work on the theme of “The Art of Persuasion” that contains student papers on homework, allowance, and a longer school day. A bulletin board on the other side of the hall contains the periodic table of elements and related work by fifth graders.

By around 9:05 a.m., all the students and teachers were busy teaching and learning. While I was in the hall, a teacher and her class in a single file moved to the side so that they could pass me. The teacher asked, “Do you need anything or do you have any
questions?” I responded, “No, I am okay.” At that time, the morning announcements were made and the whole school recited the Pledge of Allegiance. I noticed that “Fairness Freeway” is in front of the main office in an area where one bulletin board contains student work on the theme of “Our Best Efforts” and another displays the district’s mission statement. The lobby contains chairs and a coffee table for visitors and guests. A quilt composed of flags from different nations created by the class of 1990 is displayed near the library. Beside a copy machine in the hall is a bulletin board entitled “read all about me” that contains facts about different students and photographs of students and teachers at different events. A display window entitled “Stop and Smell the Flowers” identifies all that is found in a flower garden. Another quilt from the class of 1994 also hangs in the vicinity.

The wing contains two more bulletin boards, one entitled “Rain Poems” that displays student writings on raindrops and another entitled “Cruising Through the Rainforest” that depicts a mural of children’s faces in the rainforest in two sailboats. Next to the mural is the diagram “Layers of the Rain Forest,” which was taken from a textbook. Pictures of student faces taken by a digital camera were attached to the artwork. The “Beetle Bog” and the “Piranha Pool” are on top of this display. A work tree contains samples of student writings. Across from the rainforest is a sign announcing “Celebrating 50 Years of Excellence at W School 1954-2004.” Continuing with the theme of the rainforest is another series of posters and student drawings, including “Monkey Mountain.” Toward the end of the hall is another bulletin entitled “Tops and Bottoms” that shows different types of fruits and vegetables and how they are grown.
After touring the interior, I walked outside and noticed that the entrance path is paved with bricks that have different names inscribed on them. The building is a single-level brick structure constructed in 1954. While I was walking outside, two parents asked whom I was substituting for, and I indicated that I was not a substitute teacher but rather a researcher. One parent asked, “What is your dissertation on?” I explained my topic and the parents seemed satisfied. The other parent responded, “That is good that you would use GP5’s school. He is good at situational awareness, he analyzes everything. He is much better than his predecessor; we are glad that he is here.” At that point, a PE class came out of the building and started doing calisthenics. I noticed that the rear of the building is shaped like the letter “U” as I walked over to a bench to write additional notes. The sky was a rich, clear deep blue with a slight breeze and birds were singing.

10:00 a.m.

Three men were working outside on the front lawn, planting flowers and shrubs using fertilizer, mulch, and manure. The manure had a strong pungent odor that filled the air in the front of the building. I walked past the men back into the main entrance. The school nurse invited me into her office to explain her immediate concern with fifth’s disease in the school. I had never heard of this type of disease, but the nurse described it as a common occurrence. We continued to talk about various events, mentioning that the school’s production of Shakespeare had taken place yesterday. The nurse also talked about how the school offers training and drills in crisis management every year: “They think of different scenarios or examples of an emergency and everyone responds appropriately. On occasion teachers must stay in their classrooms with students and at another time, the school evacuates to the church around the corner.” The nurse indicated
that she is presently getting the kindergarten and 1st-grade medical papers ready for the next school year (2007-2008), explaining, “Whatever the state DOE tells us to do, we do it.” The nurse indicated that GP5, the new principal, is focused on crisis management, and as such created a team consisting of the nurse, the custodian, selected faculty, and GP5 called the Multiple Casualty Incident Team.

The nurse stated that has been at the school for 20 years. I asked, “How would you compare the current principal to his predecessor?” The nurse responded, “The two styles are different. GP5 uses a lot of e-mail for communication. His predecessor was a face-to-face person.” The nurse reported that there are 43 staff and 338 students in the school. She explained that she teaches health classes to Grades 3 through 5 in the media center, works with the police department through Project DARE, and is in charge of the safety patrol. Describing the school infrastructure, she reported that the gymnasium is an all-purpose (cafeteria, gym, and auditorium) structure and that “we are really tight for the number of classrooms [16] with 20 to 25 students per room.” I asked, “So classes stay in one room. Do teachers get a preparation every day? She replied, “Yes, though art that is 40 minutes, also classes vary. The lunch is between 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Students have recess for 30 minutes and lunch for 30 minutes. The school day starts at 8:40 a.m. and ends at 3:05 p.m.”

A number of students then started entering the nurse’s office and she indicated that she would walk with me over to the library to talk with the librarian. We walked to the library media center, which contained a full complement of computer technology. After introductions, I asked the librarian, “In what ways have you worked with the principal?” The librarian responded,
I was a teacher first and taught for 5 years Grades 2 through 4. I love kids and I love books. We have 13 computers in the library designated for research, and every other week four to five classes at 45 minutes per class use this facility. That was changed to 30 minutes per class, which is not enough time to check out books. It would be better if 30 minutes once a week were changed to 60 minutes every other week.

I asked, “Can foreign language be used as a preparation time?” The librarian responded,

Yes or for class projects. This year GP5 wanted to return to using 30 minutes a week; that would provide only 15 minutes for checking out books every other week. Alexandria is the name of the computer system geared toward the grading system in the school. It also provides students with the author, title, and subject for their research. GP5 is very different from his predecessor; all communication is done through e-mail. Harry Bliss, the author of *Diary of a Worm*, came to visit the library.

The librarian and I walked outside during her recess duties. Students played dodgeball and kickball. A few students were playing by poison ivy, so the librarian gestured for them to move. The librarian said that she had received an e-mail warning about the poison ivy. The librarian was not happy with the movement of the previous principal to another school.

I then moved over to an outside table and talked briefly with two teachers. I returned to the main office and was introduced to GP5, who then walked a student to his classroom. At the same time, the custodial staff started setting up the auditorium for the spring show kindergarten presentation. Parents had entered the auditorium and GP5 asked
them to move to the front of the room. GP5 continued to the student’s classroom, and upon arrival started talking with the teacher outside of the room about the student. GP5 and the teacher moved away from the classroom and when the teacher started to cry, GP5 consoled the teacher. I could not hear their conversation.

After this meeting, a few students entered the hall from another classroom to practice reading with each other. GP5 walked back to the auditorium to check on the setup progress. GP5 then asked parents to move out of the area so that the custodians could finish their setup. Parents stood in line from the auditorium door to the main entrance. GP5 checked the auditorium again and allowed parents to enter and take a seat. Parents filed into the room and were seated. GP5 walked back into the auditorium briefly then returned to the front door and then his office. GP5 opened the front door for a parent then stopped to ask a custodian, “Can you fix one of the outside doors?” A post office truck was parked in the rear playground area as the mail carrier delivered mail. In the main office, GP5 talked with the parent briefly, and then walked over to a side door toward the rear playground. At that point, GP5 turned to me and said, “I am going to ignore you.” I responded, “At the end of the day I will give you an interview, okay?” GP5 replied, “That is fine.”

Grades 1 through 5 were preparing to participate in a walk-a-thon fundraiser in the rear playground. I walked to the auditorium and sat in the back observing the activity. Kindergarteners entered the auditorium reciting their ABCs and walked onto the stage to introduce themselves and talk about what they had each learned. GP5 entered and briefly sat in the rear to observe the activity and then left. The kindergarteners sang songs about an alligator then sang “Can You Bake a Cake?” Parents took pictures and shot videos.
GP5 returned and left again and returned, then sat next to an elderly woman. Kindergarteners continued to sing. GP5 left again but said to me, “Save your legs. I am going to check outside and go back and forth between both locations. Do you want to hang out here or go with me? You can do whatever you want.”

The play continued with children singing and jumping rope to music as GP5 and I left for the rear playground. In the playground field, fourth and fifth graders were walking in an oval designated by red cones with music playing. GP5 said, “In another 15 minutes, the first and second grades will start their portion of the walk-a-thon.” Parents and teachers standing around the oval ensured that the students were adequately hydrated. GP5 went back into the auditorium to check on the play. I noticed a large quilt made of student handprints with names and signatures as murals on the walls above the windows. I stayed in the gymnasium as the play finished and parents left with their children. The fourth and fifth graders entered the building from the playground while the first and second graders exited to the walk-a-thon. As the first and second graders started walking, an announcement was made that they had 30 minutes to complete their portion of the walk.

GP5 held a private meeting while I waited in the front lobby. While outside the front office, a student whizzed pass, picking up attendance cards from each classroom door that he brought to the main office before returning to class. The main entrance was open and the breeze into the building felt great. The front lobby had a beautifully framed picture of George Washington. GP5 came out of his office and said, “You can follow me around, just not to the bathroom.” After returning from the bathroom, GP5 had a brief conversation with a teacher, then returned to his office to work on the computer, where I
followed him. GP5 stated, "The air conditioning is helping my allergies." When I asked if I could question GP5, he responded, "No, right now, I must get a few things done."

While in the office, GP5 gave a memo or letter to a teacher who responded, "This seems like an unnecessary communication." GP5 responded, "That is what it is for." The teacher left the office without incident. GP5 added, "This seems to be a good way to prevent issues of no interest." The secretary entered GP5's office and stated, "I will tell you what is getting on my nerves: these papers from the county office." GP5 jokingly responded, "Do not worry about it. Go back and do your work; you cannot do anything about it." GP5 continued to work at the computer while briefly answering questions from teachers who entered the office. GP5 commented, "The lunch recess is 1 hour, and from those teachers that I have talked with, they really appreciate that time."

3:00 p.m.

At 3:00 p.m., GP5 walked outside the front of the building for dismissal to supervise parents picking up their children. After dismissal, GP5 and I returned to the office to conduct an open-ended interview.

Documents: GP5 did not provide any additional materials. I obtained information about the school on the district Web site and in the "Traffic; Parking; Safety" e-mail authored by GP5.

Participant 9 = GP6  Date: June 7, 2007  Field time = 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

7:30 a.m.

I arrived in the vicinity of the school, a small, light brown brick structure adjacent to a church, at 7:30 a.m. I parked behind the school at 7:50 a.m. and walked into the school's main entrance, where I saw a sign stating, "No cell phones." I passed the
gymnasium where teachers and students were waiting for the bell to begin school. The gymnasium was also the cafeteria, so the students were able to have breakfast while they waited. When I asked a security guard for directions to the main office, he replied, “The office is around the first corner to the left.”

As I entered the office, I observed two students talking to the secretary about project graduation. I greeted the secretary and explained why I was at the school. The secretary stated, “Please be seated, GP6 will be with you in a moment.” After approximately 5 minutes, GP6 invited me into his office and explained the extent of his administrative responsibilities: “I am in charge of student placements in 16 other schools within the district. Because we are a district of choice, parents are able to send their children to any school of choice. What I do is the placement, not scheduling.” GP6 then asked me to join him in a walk around the building, explaining, “It is always good to be out in the halls so people see that you are here.” In the front hall by the entrance, GP6 gestured to a plaque and stated, “This is the honor roll wall of fame.” GP6 and I walked into the gymnasium and GP6 stated, “The gym is a holding area; students stay in the gym in the morning and have a snack.” GP6 introduced me to a student named KT and commented, “KT is the student that is most likely to fall and then talk and fall and talk.” KT laughed and walked away. Another student (ST2) asked GP6 for a meeting. GP6 escorted this student to his office to discuss her concerns. On the way to the office, GP6 explained,

This school is in need of major reconstruction; it is one school in two different towns. The school is divided into two different locations, one building [current location] for Grades 3 to 5 and the other much larger building for grades PK to 2.
Today we have a puppet show at the other site, and children from this building are bused to that site. Because this location is not big enough for a VP, I will leave people in charge; just do not make any decisions. We have an 11:30 a.m. Whole School Reform [WSR] closeout meeting in the other location with success for all [SFA], a WSR model.

After the meeting with the student from the cafeteria in his office, GP6 and I walked back to the cafeteria. When GP6 entered, a group of students approached him with many questions. GP6 introduced me to four students (JY, ME, LN, and JE) who walked down the hall to the cafeteria with GP6. While in the cafeteria, GP6 made the morning announcements and introduced me to the rest of the school. During the announcements, GP6 talked to students about their behavior and absences. GP6 reminded students to act appropriately when he was not at the school. Next, GP6 called the names of students who had received district mathematics and spelling bee honors and gave them trophies for their accomplishments. After the announcements, all the teachers and students were dismissed. GP6 stated, "I have approximately 250 students in both locations."

As the students left the cafeteria, GP6 held up his hand and the students jumped to give him hi-fives. A few students tried to slap his hand as hard as they could, and GP6 said, "Not so hard." GP6 then provided an explanation for his special education class called Youth Entering Stabilizing Services (YES): "There are four adults in the room, two aides, one teacher, and one child study team member." GP6 and I visited the YES class, which rotated on a 42-minute SFA general education schedule and a 90-minute reading block. GP6 entered the class and the teacher (T1) asked, "GP6, did we decide on
a place for graduation yet?" GP6 responded, "Let's go down and see..." GP6 then walked up the hall to another classroom and talked with a teacher who knew the graduation location. A discussion took place among three teachers, and one teacher in the classroom asked students to raise their hands if they were participating in the graduation ceremony.

After talking with the teachers about the graduation site, GP6 and I returned to the main office because GP6 wanted to check on which teachers were absent today. GP6 explained, "Students are going to Baltimore to the Wax Museum." GP6 asked the secretary, "Do you have the permission slips for that trip?" The secretary responded, "I do not have the permission slips." While in GP6's office, a student (ST2) entered and said, "Good morning Mr. GP6." GP6 responded, "What do you need?" ST2 responded, "My stomach hurts." GP6 replied, "The nurse is not here today." GP6 then explained to me that the district has seven vacancies for a school nurse. The secretary asked ST2, "Did you have breakfast?" ST2 replied, "Yes." GP6 explained, "The district's head nurse tells me what to do for something simple. If that does not work, then the parents are called to take the student home." The secretary stated, "I need the time sheets for tomorrow. Every Friday time sheets are sent to the central office for payroll." GP6 called Ms. GI. to bring the time sheets from the central office.

A temporary nurse or nurse substitute arrived at the school. GP6 escorted her to the nurse's office and returned to the main office. A parent who was waiting for GP6 seemed very upset. GP6 and I passed the parent and walked to GP6's office. Evidently, the parent believed that a female student had stated a rumor about her son (RD). The parent said, "The female student is spreading a lie that my son allowed her to suck his
penis.” GP6 told RD’s mother that he would call the girl to the office and talk with her. RD’s mother remained in the office and said, “I want to talk with her also.” The girl arrived and sat in a chair next to RD’s mother. GP6 asked RD’s mother to leave the office prior to speaking with the girl. GP6 explained, “I cannot have you in the office because the girl’s parent is not with her.” After RD’s mother left, GP6 asked the girl if she had said what RD had alleged. The female student responded, “No.”

At that point, RD’s mother returned to the main office and GP6 went out of his office to talk with her and RD. GP6 then spoke with both students privately in his office. After talking with both students, GP6 asked them to wait outside and he invited RD’s mother into his office. By now, she was angry and using debasing terms directed at GP6. Once she was in the office, GP6 called the parent of the female student and allowed both parents to speak. At that point, I decided to leave the office and wait in the main office by the secretary. After a short period, RD’s mother stormed out of GP6’s office, slamming the door extremely hard and stating, “I will see the assistant superintendent.” GP6 came out of his office and stated, “This is the beginning of the reading period.” GP6 then explained what had happened in his office: “Both parents were on the phone and started cursing at each other; I could not control what was being said.”

At that point, a carrier delivered the time slips to the main office. The carrier was upset that she had to bring the time slips. The secretary seemed upset with GP6 because of the way he had handled RD’s mother and the situation. The security guard seemed upset with GP6 for the same reason. GP6 invited me into his office to explain the situation between RD’s mother and himself: “The parent was out of control with the
other parent on the phone and they both started yelling and screaming and cursing at each other.”

GP6 and I left the office and started touring the building. GP6 approached a teacher’s classroom and said, “Good morning Ms. WS, or should I say Moanin?” GP6 then said, “They did not read my resume; I got it if they need it.” While in the hall, a security officer told GP6 that RD had just kicked another girl in the stomach. GP6 said, “I will call that parent again and have her take her son home.” GP6 addressed RD and then walked to the CST to initiate a report. A CST member asked, “Should we suspend him?” GP6 replied, “No, let’s de-puppet him.” I asked, “What is de-puppet?” GP6 explained, “We will take him out of the puppet show.”

GP6 then walked over to the nurse’s office to check on the girl that had been kicked in the stomach. GP6 and I returned to the main office to call RD’s mother. GP6 left a message for her and then we returned to the YES class, where he said, “Ms. MY is our teacher for the YES class and she is very good.” While in the hall a teacher said, “That student named RD was already off the puppet show because he went after another kid with a baseball bat.” GP6’s cell phone started ringing loudly. GP6 answered the phone and returned to the main office. Evidently, RD’s mother had returned to his office and then left again. GP6 said, “I am glad she left because I really did not want to see her.” The secretary stated, “Mr. DN, the president of the PTA, called and left his cell number for you to call.” GP6 told RD to tell his mother that the girl she had accused of saying derogatory remarks about him had not said them.

While talking about that incident with me in his office, a father entered with his daughter, a member of the YES class, who had a very swollen black eye. GP6 asked,
"What happened?" The girl responded, "I walked into a wall." A teacher and a CST member talked with the father of this girl. GP6 received another cell phone call, which involved a private health issue. The father left after talking with GP6 and the girl returned to the YES classroom. I reentered GP6's office and said, "That was quite a shiner she had." GP6 responded, "I do not think it was because she walked into a wall. I will call a social worker." I responded, "CYA - cover your ass." At that point, the girl that had been kicked in the stomach entered the office and asked to call her mother and leave a message. GP6 stated, "How can I explain to the parent of the girl that got kicked in the stomach that I am not going to suspend the boy who kicked her? I could tell her that it is none of her business." I noticed a "Choice" sign on the wall across from the office.

While GP6 was on his cell phone talking about district placements, another call came in from the social worker. GP6 explained the situation about the girl who had come with a black eye, especially her father's statement, "You will not have any problems out of her for the next 2 weeks." GP6 finished with the social worker and began to explain the Whole School Reform provider situation with the state DOE: "The DOE position is that we should still do practice management with SFA but not pay any money. That is why we are one of the districts seeking additional state aid." GP6 moved to another topic: "I have to write a letter to respond to a parent who wrote two pages of complaints." GP6 then left his office to visit two teachers, saying to one "I need a list of those students not going on the trip to Baltimore" and then to the other "I need a list of those students not going on the trip to Baltimore."
GP6 returned to the office and continued to compose a letter of response for the
confrontation parent he talked with earlier in the day GP6 explained,
I scheduled a meeting at 9:00 a.m. for the parent at the board of education, and the
parent refused to meet me with me. I told CO [the central office] not to cancel this
meeting because I could use that time to meet with other parents. We had the
meeting, but the parent wrote this letter because when she did not show up. I
suspended her son for fighting. The parent did not show, so her kid served the full
suspension.

GP6 explained what his previous responsibilities had been in this district: “I was
the Director of Secondary Education, then I was in charge of suspensions. I listened to
parent complaints for 3 years.” GP6 finished the letter, leaned over his desk, and
whispered to me, “This is a YES student also.” At that point, the secretary entered with
the time sheets for GP6 to sign. GP6 began signing time sheets when a very excited
student came into the main office and started talking with the security officer, whose
office was next to the secretary’s desk in the main office. GP6 received a call from the
Director of Administrative Services dealing with desks and chairs. While GP6 was on the
phone, the girl with the black eye entered the office and gave GP6 a note of apology. GP6
asked, “Did you write this?” The girl responded, “Yes.” GP6 was ready to say something
funny about her note when I indicated that the girl’s father was coming down the hall to
his office. The girl’s father entered the office and thanked GP6 for accepting his daughter
back in school and then left. GP6 explained, “I do not believe she wrote this note; maybe
a teacher did.”
GP6 continued to sign the time sheets, explaining, “I sign times sheets twice a month.” I asked, “Do you have a crisis management plan?” GP6 responded, “Yes, at the other school, but if you ask for it I could not put my hands on it.” After signing the time sheets, GP6 walked over to the YES classroom, which now contained three aides, one teacher, and one CST member. GP6 whispered to me concerning the YES class, “Teachers said they would handle it.” Upon returning to his office, GP6 passed Ms. WM’s class and again said, “Moanin,” then checked with several students in the room and left.

GP6 returned to his office to compose another letter and check on student permission slips for the trip tomorrow. The bell rang and GP6 walked over to the main office door to observe students in the hall. The students were noisy as they lined up in the hall against the walls. GP6 commented, “This is a lousy line and it is much too loud out here.” The students continued to talk. GP6 walked to the end of the hall to address a few students as they walked into their classroom. On the wall next to the classroom I saw a poster stating, “A Few Shining Stars.” GP6 explained, “Students are now in their SFA reading block for 90 minutes.” GP6 and I walked by the computer room. GP6 said hello to the computer teacher and continued on to the main office. In the main office, GP6 called several students over the PA system to receive district awards for the spelling bee, saying “Let’s make some people famous.” When the students moved to the front hall to take a picture in front of the PTA sign for parents, a teacher said, “Smile.” GP6 replied, “Look at those teeth, I bet you know that student has teeth.” The computer teacher asked a student, “How do you spell relief?” The student spelled, “R-E-L-I-E-F.” The computer teacher said, “No, Rolaids” and laughed.
After the photo session, GP6 returned to the main office. While in the hall, GP6 saw a student and said, “Not you again.” In the main office, GP6 told the secretary, security officer, and head custodian, “Let’s do a fire drill.” During the 2-minute fire drill, GP6 told the classes, “Take a deep breath and come back in.” GP6 walked back to the main office to take a call from the parent whose son had been suspended. GP6 also called a teacher at the other site on special assignment to see if everything was okay for the WSR-SFA meeting. The Nextel speaker was not working properly and GP6 called the custodian to fix it. At this point, students were walking to lunch outside the main office, and GP6 walked over to give hi-fives again, saying, “Here comes my famous group now, the ‘NO’ group [referring to the YES class], look at this group.”

GP6 returned to his office to finish the letter to the parent and wait for a telephone call from the other site informing him when the meeting had started. I noticed a crisis management plan in GP6’s office on the wall by the door describing the school’s emergency code system: code red (lockdown), code orange (immediate evacuation), code yellow (individual with a weapon), code blue (intruder), and code green (resume normal activities). GP6 read me a letter from a parent that said he should be president of the United States and said, “That is my favorite.” GP6 continued to type the letter to the parent. I asked, “How many staff do you have?” GP6 responded, “Fifty staff including teachers, café workers, security, and custodial.”

GP6 then explained his history in the district:

I was a teacher and was very successful, so I decided to become a principal. I guess I am ambitious like the presidential candidates. In 2003, I was the Director of Secondary Education and replaced a principal for a week at the middle school.
In 2005, I moved to the elementary school, sometimes to return to the middle and
get hugs from the kids; you do not get that from adults. This is where you really
want to be. I am having too much fun. I was thinking about applying for a
superintendent’s position but stopped because I like being a principal so much.

GP6 explained that once he had received a call about another student having problems,
so he visited the parents at home to review the child’s progress. I said, “That is rare.”

GP6 responded, “It is a small school.” GP6 then stated, “Even though the move to put me
here was not my idea, I try to enjoy it.” At that time, GP6 received a phone call from
RD’s mother asking to speak to her son. GP6 called RD into the office to answer the
telephone. On the telephone, the boy tried to explain to his mother, “But she kicked me .
. . but mom, but, but.” Then the boy’s response was only “Yes, yes . . . yes.”

I noticed a sticker on GP6’s office wall of a cartoon character jumping up and
down with a caption that said, “I am disrupting the learning process and I love it.” GP6
then said, “It sounds like my public needs me” in reference to a disturbance outside of
this office. Four students were involved, and one student told the other three that his
father was coming to the school to cut them up in pieces. GP6 addressed the issue and
walked the student who had made the threat to the CST member. GP6 walked back to the
main office to talk with a teacher in charge of the QWEST Program. GP6 asked me if I
wanted him to read the letter to the parent. I told him I would, and said it was good after
he had read it. GP6 then made copies of the letter.

At that time, an announcement was made for all students to get on buses waiting
outside to transport them to the second school site for the puppet show. GP6 made the
final announcement, “There should be no children in the building.” I walked to the
entrance door and waited for GP6 to follow him by car to the second location. We arrived at the second school 12:45 p.m. and walked to the main office, where we observed two students, DA and RA, pushing each other. GP6 chastised one student and put his arm around the other. A teacher entered the office and informed GP6 that they were waiting for him in the auditorium. GP6 and I walked to the auditorium, where GP6 introduced me and addressed the school on appropriate behavior during the show.

From the auditorium, GP6 and I walked to the WSR-SFA meeting. At the meeting, GP6 introduced me to the team, who were discussing the percentage of national norms compared to NJPASS and NJASK by grade level in reading. Specifically, the team reviewed the 90-minute reading block, reading fluency rates, and several concerns with mobility, transfers, and classified students. The SFA chairperson stated, “You have a lot of transfers. What is happening next year SFA recommends fluency and its use, they are going to need practice.”

The team discussed fast-track phonics for first graders with open-ended writing prompts to clarify predictors. The chairperson continued, “You will need fluency first.” The meeting was based on the proficiency levels of students with reading deficiencies and the successes achieved by those students. Deficient students have problems with vocabulary and do not know how to read. The SFA chairperson commented, “We need an overall clarification of stage five and for writing.” A team member started reviewing student names from a list in order to provide an overall status (clarification) for stage five. The team continued to mathematically determine the clarification of stage five, then discussed the next meeting date and how many days they would have SFA during the next school year. The SFA chairperson stated, “Based on prioritizing, what is realistic. I
think it will be good right at the end of the cycle. Four visits would be ideal, three visits would be good, and two visits would be useless. For two buildings, that would give you 2 days for two buildings.” A team member commented,

We should ask for six visits and hope for four. The two buildings are key, so four visits should be the minimum. If it were 2 days, then it would be a matter of prioritizing which days. Two days is better than none.

1:20 pm

The meeting and discussions continued while GP6 and I excused ourselves at 1:20 p.m. so that we could conduct an open-ended interview.

Documents: GP6 provided the following materials:

1. The GN Times, a principal newsletter outlining issues, concerns, and events occurring in the school.

2. A document entitled and describing Success for All, a program that encourages the academic progress of all subgroups.

3. The Legal Eagle, a newspaper about the law for young people.


Participant 10 = GP7  Date: June 8, 2007  Field time = 8:15 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.

8:15 a.m.

I arrived 8:15 a.m., parked in a visitor’s space, and entered the school. When I arrived at G7’s office, we introduced ourselves and G7 invited me into her office. GP7 explained,
Students start classes at 8:30 a.m. We have 452 students, 21 homerooms, and 35 staff. We are not an Abbott school and made AYP. The school was built in 1956 and is a straightforward L-shaped structure. We use a shift system; third and fourth graders start school at 8:30 a.m. and PK to 2 start at 9:00 a.m.

GP7 and I left the office as part GP7's daily routine. I asked, "Do you have an assistant principal?" GP7 responded, "No, but I work closely with the interventionist, learning consultant, social worker, and teachers." I asked, "How do you manage?" GP7 responded, "With great support staff, good children, and everyone knows the expectations." GP7 and I walked past the gymnasium and down the hall as GP7 introduced me to faculty and staff. Near the library, GP7 talked with a staff member about next year's assignments. GP7 explained,

I learned much of what I do on the job, not from my graduation program. We do have not security, but teacher managers are usually in the building around 8:30 a.m. Parents drop off students by the rear playground and stay with their children until it is time for school to begin. I am very satisfied with the children and staff. . . . There was whole group instruction when I came here as principal. That has changed to literary centers and differentiated instruction involving a 3-year plan and writing process. Actually, the organization of the school and building were already in place when I took over as the administrator.

Lunch consists of a 20-minutes recess and a 20-minute lunch period. Art, music, physical education, and computer classes are used as preparation times for general education teachers. The second through fourth grades attend Spanish classes twice a
month. Student also have chorus, and in some cases, home instruction. The schedule contains a number of special education classes with a variety of classifications.

GP7 then introduced me to a teacher as we walked to the rear playground area. GP7 stated, “We have different entrances for third and fourth graders.” GP7 talked with a group of students in one play area as other students stopped by and one girl talked with her about relationship issues. GP7 and I walked to the other side of the playground to move students to their proper location. GP7 wanted to make sure that the students were in areas where they can be seen for safety measures.

The students continued to play and talk about a variety of concerns. I overheard two or three students say, “I did not do it.” Another student female student with a textbook asked a male student, “Is everything okay? and then asked a female student, “Are you okay?” Another male student asked, “Are you okay?” This went on for a few minutes. When a younger child walked up to GP7 with her shoes untied, GP7 knelt down and tied her shoes. GP7 explained that through the YMCA, a before- and aftercare program had been implemented in the building. A student told GP7, “I just saw a whole ant” then ran off to play with other students. Another student female student told GP7 about a problem that she was having with her friend. GP7 said, “Give her time to accept your apology.” GP7 explained the makeup of the school: “After a retirement, I was assigned to this building. I am required to go to the PTA meetings and any other night events, concerts, and Bingo Night. I do not have to go to board of education meetings.” GP7 then noticed a girl who had had her nails done, and told her, “That looks so pretty, dear.”
After the students and teachers had entered the building from the playground, GP7 and I walked back to the office. When I asked GP7 about her daily routine, GP7 continued to describe it:

Usually in the morning, I am outside in the playground with the teachers and students. Before that I arrive at around 6:30 a.m. and review e-mails, do paperwork, and at this time of year I review the year-end evaluations and professional improvement plans [PIP].

When the lunch period begins at 11:30 a.m., GP7 goes quickly in and out of the cafeteria to observe what is occurring, but prefers not to stay in the cafeteria because if she does, staff and students do not give her a chance to eat by asking many questions. GP7 assigns aides and music, physical education, and computer teachers to intervene in the lunchroom. Grades 1 through 4 rotate between lunch and recess. GP7 explained, “Most issues in the lunch room get resolved; if not, then it gets bigger, so it is better to have adults in the cafe to address conflicts.” GP7 then discussed instruction:

I try to get in the classroom as much as possible. Nevertheless, you first try to find out what methods work best for you and it comes with experience. When I was an assistant principal, the principal would ask me to do it their way. Now that I am principal, I am always being reminded of how someone else did it. . . . The previous principal left under not so good circumstances. Some staff feel, We got rid of one, bring on the next one.

GP7 talked about how the organization had been in place when she had arrived at the school, so she decided that because it was not broken, she would not try to fix it. GP7 started typing a document at the computer in her office. GP7 indicated that she had a
private meeting at 10:00 a.m. with the assistant superintendent and would need to leave
the building to go to the central office. GP7 gave me permission to walk around the
building and take notes. Before GP7 left, she introduced me to the PTA president then
took me on a brief tour of the school, during which she introduced me to almost all the
staff prior to leaving the building. As we walked into the faculty lounge, the staff greeted
me with a cordial acceptance.

After GP7’s meeting had ended, GP7 and I visited several classes, including the
autistic, preschool, kindergarten, academic achievement program (AAP), and self-
contained integrated speech classes, with the teachers whom I had met in the lounge.
While in the preschool class, the teacher said, “Good morning” and told the class to say
good morning to me. The students together said, “Good morning.” One student asked
GP7, “Is he your boss?” GP7 responded, “No, he is here doing work.” I said, “She is my
boss.” Another female student said, “Is he your husband?” GP7 said that I was not and
the adults had a short laugh. GP7 stated, “We receive no Title One funding but we do
have basic skills classes.” This was mainly because the school’s test scores are high.

At that time GP7 had to go to the meeting at the central office. When she asked
me if I wanted to attend this meeting, I indicated that I would rather stay in the school
and walk the halls taking notes for the observation. I said this because GP7 had earlier
suggested that it would be a private meeting.

10:00 a.m.

At 10:00 a.m., GP7 left for the meeting and I toured the building, taking notes for
my observation. A display window outside of the main office contains flowers made by
students. Opposite the flower display is a display containing the Constitution of the
United States, the Bill of Rights, the Monroe Doctrine, the Gettysburg Address, the Star Spangled Banner, and the Declaration Of Independence. There are also plaques for the Governor's Teacher of the Year Awards and awards for people respecting others within the school. There is a display and gift for each person in the school. A teacher was showing videos to students in the auditorium down the hall from the main office. The sound of the video could be heard throughout front corridor of the school. Masks of different animals are at the top of the corridor wall with a sign stating, “We are soaring in AAP Kites,” and student names are written on different colored kites. A poster of trees surrounding the earth states, “Save the earth.” There is a picture of a smiling frog next to a gallon and a drop of water and fraction flowers that give examples of arithmetic fractions created by students. One bulletin board is dedicated to describing facts about bees and another states, “I love reading.” While in the hall, a class sang happy birthday to a student. Next to this class is a bulletin board entitled “Animals of Action” that has pictures of animals drawn by the first graders.

The building was quiet but I could hear the sounds of teaching and learning. I walked back to the main office past the gymnasium, where students were watching cartoons with their teacher. I thought that this school is very fortunate to have a dedicated gymnasium, cafeteria, and auditorium. Most the elementary school I had visited have one all-purpose room. At the opposite end of this hall are pictures of different geometric designs created by fourth graders. Only certain offices, not the entire building, are air conditioned. Down the hall near the cafeteria is a mural entitled “Pre-Kindergarten—Take Time to Think Things Through.” Next to the mural is a display of seahorses, fish,
and jellyfish. Over the water fountain is a sign stating, “Be proud of your heritage.”

Another poster says, “Birds of fruit.”

At that point, a 4th-grade class walked down the hall and the teacher said, “I want you to be quiet.” Another class was waiting by their door. Above this door are pictures of flags from various countries, including Canada, the United States, Ireland, France, England, Italy, Scotland, Australia, and Spain. The flags are part of a display referencing the Field Day 2007 International Games. On the classroom is another sign that says, “Let’s build a better world through teamwork.” Next to another poster that says, “Have a good heart get fit with exercise” is a bulletin board that contains fruit bowls and a message to fourth graders stating, “Farewell fourth graders.” A number of students walked the halls, either with a teacher escort or alone. The corridors and classrooms were busy with learning. On occasion, a teacher would move several students to different classrooms. As the students passed me, they said hello.

11:00 a.m.

At 11:00 a.m., I walked back to the main office and sat in the receptionist’s area. The secretary asked, “Were you a principal or are you a principal?” I responded, “I started as a science teacher and then moved into secondary administration and supervision and as a science supervisor.” The secretary explained that she had been at this building for quite some time and through the leadership of many different principals. She said that some of those principals “were not cut out to work with small children.” She explained, “One principal had a very deep voice, so in the process of just talking to the little ones, many of them would cry because they were intimidated by his voice.” The secretary also explained that “a few principals were not able to or had difficulty with
toning down their level of intelligence, to bring it down to meet with the student level, in order to understand them." The secretary told me that rumors were already traveling around the school that I was GP7's replacement. After this exchange with the secretary, a staff member introduced herself as the librarian and talked about graduate studies and trying to get into a school that will accept one of her three master's degrees.

At that point, GP7 returned to the main office from her meeting with the assistant superintendent. GP7 invited me into her office and continued to talk about her administration:

I give a questionnaire to teachers asking them if they think that they met their individual goals or special projects. I also focus on the end-of-the-year evaluations with performance areas; did the person improve and what are their strengths and weaknesses? It creates an atmosphere during the year end and has people thinking about whether they met their responsibilities.

Quite a few six graders in the district are at an elementary level in mathematics. Two male students who had fought in the boy's bathroom entered GP7's office. GP7 asked several questions and found out that one student, LY, had asked another student, SM, to wrestle JN. Evidently, JN put his hands on LY first. Therefore, only JN was disciplined.

After resolving this issue, GP7 indicated that lunch was starting at 11:30 a.m. with fourth graders, so we walked over to the library, where the librarian was having a small party for those students who had completed a reading assignment and research project for the book club. One librarian offered me a cookie and piece of candy. GP7 and I walked over to the cafeteria, where the students were very well behaved and quiet. I talked with the head cook about the possible automation of the line. She said that it had not worked
well so now they use the student ID cards. Students do not need a card; they just have to punch in their password. GP7 dealt with a student who had been hurt while I continued to talk with the head cook. Another student approached GP7 and asked, “Is the researcher the health inspector?” GP7 said, “No.”

GP7 and I walked through the cafeteria outside to the playground to check on students during their recess. GP7 said, “The playground is divided into certain areas for specific play activities—kickball, soccer, jump rope, etc.” This organized the playground so that all students were playing in coordinated areas. GP7 asked me whether I wanted to have lunch. I replied that I would and ate in the cafeteria with the students. Sitting toward the end of a rear table, I thought that students would not sit near me. However, as more and more students entered the cafeteria, my entire table became filled with students. One student standing in front of me asked, “Is this your seat?” Another female student sitting across from me said in a low voice, “No.” Therefore, the student left. I finished my lunch in the cafeteria. As that lunch period ended, the students were instructed to be quiet and pick up their trays and garbage. One student sitting across from me watched me take notes during the entire lunch. All the students finished cleaning their area and the lunch aides wiped down the tables, getting ready for the next group.

After lunch, I walked back to GP7’s office, where two students sat for detention inside instead of going outside for recess. GP7 explained her meeting schedule:

Each month the principals have a meeting with the superintendent and each month elementary principals meet with the curriculum and instruction committee. Prior to that, the entire district would meet at the high school. Classes are 40 minutes for general education, 90 minutes for reading, and 60 minutes for mathematics
instruction. We have a site-based planning committee developed by teachers who
determine when and where professional development [PD] takes place. We also
have a PD coordinator responsible for ensuring all teachers accumulate 100s
during a 5-year period. This is the coordinator’s second year reviewing both our
PD program and the districts.

GP7 and I walked back to the cafeteria to see if everything was okay during the
first graders lunch/recess. We stood next to the line as first graders received their lunch. I
shook hands with one student and then had to shake hands with the entire lunch line.
Two students were having a problem in the line and GP7 disciplined and escorted both
boys to her office. One young male student in the lunch line received a cheese sandwich
and the cafeteria worker explained, “He did not have any lunch money and students that
have no money receive a cheese sandwich rather than no lunch.” Two other students were
in GP7’s office serving detention because they had a problem in the playground when
playing kickball. Now there were four students sitting in the office with GP7 and me. I
was tempted to say something to the students but refrained from speaking.

GP7 disciplined the two students she had just brought in and continued to explain
the problem with the kickball game:

There is a captain for each team who picks his/her team. If the captain is a popular
student, he/she will be able to pick all big kids. That leaves the captain of the
other team with all very little people. In some cases when there is no supervision,
one team has five children and the other team has eight. The older students know
it is supposed to be five vs. five but they do nothing. I will talk with the physical
education teachers who are on duty in the playground.
GP7 then explained the identification process for disciplining a student:

When a student misbehaves for running or playing in the bathroom, they get a blue card with their name on it. Teachers can place the blue cards in one of two lockboxes around the school. Any teacher can give a student a blue card during the day; potentially, if a student is having a bad day, they can receive several blue cards. The teachers developed the rules for discipline in the building. The sets of rules were 1, show respect to all adults through a, speaking, b, following directions, and c, raising hands. The second set of rules was 2, respect yourself and others through a, kindness, b, their property, c, keeping your hands to yourself, and d, resolving conflict peacefully. The third set of rules was 3, respect the school through a, walk quietly in the halls, b, after the bathroom wash your hands, c, drink water at the fountain quietly, and d, clean up work areas quietly.

The fourth set of rules was 4, be prepared, a, come to class prepared with completed homework and b, dress appropriately. The fifth set of rules was 5, there is no violence on school property.

Another student was waiting in the outer main office for GP7. GP7 invited all the students into her office because they had additional problems over the kickball game. One student had taken the ball from the other student. GP7 indicated that she would write a note to both parents. GP7 wrote two notes and gave one to each student to be signed by their parents and returned to her office. One student said, “Today is a good weekend day.” GP7 said, “Yes, after today is the weekend.”

After she had sent the four students back to their classes, GP7 and I walked to a mathematics classroom to sit in on the lesson. The students were using a number map to
determine the proper placement of a number based on the decimal system. Using a six-figure number, the students were grouped at stations with six to eight students at each station. The students took turns at each station, moving the hand on the number clock (up to nine) to a specific number. In the background, the song “You Will Never Walk Alone” played softly on a CD player. The purpose of the game was for each student to determine whether a number was a high number (e.g., 925,133) or a low number (e.g., 114,692). Each time the teacher asked the groups to move to different stations, the selection of the high or low number would change. The student with the lowest low number and the student with the highest high number won. The game focused on a student’s ability to pick the highest or lowest number based on the other’s spin. All the students were engaged and the teachers and aides sat at each station to make sure the students stayed on track. The following is an example of the number game:

Table C1

*Example of Student Number Game*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hi</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lo</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lo</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1:15 p.m.

After we returned to the main office after our classroom visit, GP7 and I had a conversation about GP7’s experiences. She then moved to the computer to type a document. GP7 asked me if I wanted something to drink and gave me a ginger ale. I then conducted an open-ended interview with her at 1:15 p.m. because she had to leave at 2:30 p.m. for an appointment.

Documents: GP7 provided the following materials:

1. A 14-page document entitled Math Day Student Packet that outlines the student activities that I had observed during a classroom lesson.


Participant 11 = GP8  Date: June 11, 2007  Field time = 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

8:00 a.m.

I arrived at the school around 8:00 a.m. GP8 was standing in front of the main office and we introduced ourselves. GP8 explained that her daily routine involved consulting with the head custodian and checking telephone messages, staff attendance, and e-mails. GP8 indicated that the school consisted of 497 students and 50 staff. GP8 stated, “I check to see if there is enough teacher coverage and whether teachers have enough preparation time. In the mornings we receive the attendance sheet from central office for teacher absences for that day.”

As various staff passed by the office, GP8 introduced me to them. GP8 and I walked into the main office and I asked, “Is it okay to park on the side street next to the school?” GP8 said, “it should be okay. You could have parked in the parking lot across
the street. Today fourth graders have a picnic as part of their graduation to the fifth 
grade." GP8 returned to the office to pick up a district-wide walkie-talkie, explaining, 

We must have this radio with us at all times, especially during this time of year. 
It is setup with several bands to connect to a number of locations. One band is for 
school-wide conversations, another is for interdistrict communication, and yet 
another other for the police department, fire department, and emergencies. Safety 
and preventative measures for teachers and students are very important. 

GP8 explained that during October, plans and goals for the district for the next year are 
developed, and in January and February, building goals for the next year are developed. 
GP8 also talked about implementing other enrichment programs and strategies, such as a 
writing workshop after school for all grade levels. In addition to this workshop, GP8 
would like an increase in the time for the common planning period for teachers. 

GP8 indicated that during the site-based planning conducted three times a year, 
the school-based planning team discusses a number of issues germane to the school, such 
as teacher workshops, staff development and awareness, closing the achievement gap, 
traffic issues, the PTA, and student and teacher activities. GP8 also explained that 
building goals are based on the state assessment. Teacher observations and evaluations 
are completed in April and year-end evaluations in May of each year. She reported, 

Occasionally, teachers have problems with irate parents or with students. You 
must plan at all times. But through conferencing and observation and evaluations, 
teachers understand that it is for their benefit. I am always available to see and 
talk with staff, when they sign in or in the hallway. They in turn were told to do 
the same for the children, greet the children.
In February, teacher assignments will change. GP8 commented, “When we developed a relationship, teacher tardiness went to zero.” GP8 and I walked outside of the office into the hall because, as she explained, “Staying in the office is not a way to develop relationships.” Students in the hall greeted us. GP8 continued, “If you are not around, people get too relaxed, so you need to be where they can see you.” GP8 and I walked over to a classroom that had a substitute teacher. GP8 entered the class and said, “Good morning class.” The class responded in harmony, “Good morning, Ms. GP8.” GP8 explained,

This is the last week of school, but parents do not want school to end because students want to attend and our teachers are having fun. During the summer the building is closed for maintenance; teachers are not allowed into the building until the last 2 weeks of August. Although this is the last 2 weeks of school, we are also getting ready for the first 2 weeks of school in September. During the summer, deliveries are made to the school. Our secretaries are 10-month employees, as well as me, but the custodial staff is 12-month employees, so they keep track of the supplies.

Evidently, everyone in the school has a walkie-talkie, including teachers, GP8, and the custodian. GP8 and I took a brief tour of the building, walking down to the ground floor cafeteria as GP8 explained that students have 20 minutes for lunch and 20 minutes for recess. After passing through the cafeteria, GP8 and I walked past the custodial office and boiler room. GP8 said, “The position of interventionist is a natural transition to principal.” Teachers have a preparation period five times a week; they also
have a duty period during which they either monitor the cafeteria or building. GP8 manages the schedule. GP8 then explained the make up of the school organization:

The Child Study Team has a schedule to plan when cases will be reviewed on a daily basis. Speech teachers are encouraged to review cases along with resource and regular education teachers. There are approximately 10% classified students in the school. Twice a month we have a faculty meeting and three times a year grade levels PK to 2 and grade level 3 and 4 are divided for meetings.

While walking in the hall, GP8 observed items in the hall next to a teacher’s door. She walked over to the classroom and asked the teacher to remove the items from the hall. GP8 commented, “Teachers know that they are not to put anything in the halls. All trash should be kept in the classroom for the custodian to pick it up. Additionally, items in the hall are a hazard to students and staff.” GP8 walked to another classroom and assisted at teacher with a difficult student. GP8 and I then returned to the main office, where GP8 stopped to talk with a teacher about two students in the playground. GP8 entered her office and reviewed paperwork while another teacher removed artwork from the corridor walls. GP8 came out of her office to talk with her secretary about student placements for next year. GP8 left the office briefly then returned. Another teacher was on the telephone speaking with someone about talking to her directly and not through a CST member; she seemed a bit upset about this. GP8 returned and talked with a teacher who had seen GP8 earlier that morning.

While they discussed this issue, I noticed several patriotic items in a display case: the Bill of Rights, the Constitution, the Monroe Doctrine, and the Star Spangled Banner. GP8 finished her conversation and stated, “This Township once had the same name as
this school back during the Revolution and as early as 1705.” At that point, a parent brought $5 for her son, who had been loaned that amount from another student. GP8 later told me, “We teach character and honesty and we ask the parents to follow up at home; it is all about learning.”

PK to Grade 2 classes are on the first level of the building and Grades 3 and 4 are on the second level. GP8 explained her background prior to becoming a principal:

I had a background in psychology, counseling, and social work, and was an interventionist for 5 years. As an interventionist, you deal with parents, teachers, students, and the community. You have no favorites because the job must be done. One percent will agree. I did not know if I would be good at this, so I went back for my master’s degree. A professor told me that as an administrator, you deal with the community and parents as an educator first. What I had heard was that the clientele has changed, but I believed that students are our product and we must educate the whole child, the parent, and part of the community. Parents were upset with the previous principal because he did not focus on the child in parent conferences and you must. My graduate courses helped because of my psychology background. The adult education course was very helpful in understanding adults and how they process information.

At that point, a student entered the office and GP8 asked,

Why are you crying? Where are your sneakers? Have you had a problem listening to your parents? ... Go to the nurse to see if she has any sneakers, you can go to the picnic, but I don’t think you will be able to participate in any of the activities.
If the nurse has sneakers, then you will call your dad and ask permission to use those sneakers.

The student wanted to call his mother because he knew she would leave her job, go home, and get his sneakers. However, his father had punished him last week because he had called one of the female students the “B” word.

The nurse entered the office and GP8 introduced her to me. The nurse also discussed several behavioral issues with the student and the fact that he was retained last year. Another group of students entered GP8’s office, and one male student told GP8 that another male student had a toy gun. GP8 immediately called for that student. A teacher in the office at the time said that he would get the student from the cafeteria, where students were having breakfast. The teacher escorted the student to GP8’s office and left. GP8 asked for the gun. At first the student seemed surprised or confused, but when GP8 asked for the toy gun a second time, the student reached in his pocket and gave it to her. The toy gun looked very realistic and the student had removed the orange/red cover over the barrel to make it appear authentic. The student said that he had found the toy gun. GP8 asked, “Why did you bring it to school?” The student said, “I found it on the way to school.” GP8 destroyed the gun and had the student sit in her office until she was able to contact his parents.

A teacher entered the office to ask to shorten a meeting with parents. GP8 said, “Do not rush a meeting with parents and do not cancel it. If it runs over, you can meet with the other parents in the morning at 8:30 a.m.” In the main office, GP8 talked with the student that had the gun about an altercation he had had with a second student a week ago. GP8 called that student in and asked, “Did you see the gun then?”
student responded, "No." GP8 replied, "Now stop, are you lying to me, you do not have to go to the picnic either." The second student said, "Yes, I did see it." GP8 responded, "You need to report what you see, especially if it concerns a toy gun that could be mistaken for a real one." A third student entered the office and GP8 asked, "What do you want to tell me?" The third student admitted that he held the cap gun. GP8 asked, "Your parent is a police officer, isn't she? You and I are going to have a time out. If you see someone with a cap gun, you need to report it. When I asked you the first time, you lied." The third student said, "I forgot." GP8 said, "You did not forget, you lied. No, you did not forget, you were holding back. So you think you are supposed to keep your mouth shut."

GP8 walked from the main office to the nurse's office to see which students had arrived to school late. From the nurse's office, GP8 and I walked outside to the playground, where we talked about the incident of the plastic gun, a black replica of a .45 revolver. I stated, "If a police officer saw that gun at night, there is no doubt in my mind that the officer would respond with lethal force." GP8 and I walked over to a large crack in the playground asphalt. GP8 said, "Four students have fallen and hurt themselves while playing out here. It is only a matter of time before a student falls and gets seriously hurt." GP8 called the head custodian (HC) and asked him to check with maintenance again on getting the crack filled and cutting the overgrown weeds and shrubs on the cement stairwell leading from the playground to the sidewalk and street. Two children in the playground were very loud, so GP8 talked with them about appropriate behavior while outside. The crack in the asphalt was approximately 2 or 3 inches wide and 2
inches deep. Small children could easily get a foot caught and seriously hurt themselves in a fall.

GP8 and I went back into the building and walked past the nurse’s office while GP8 explained,

The medical director for the district provides specific criteria. For example, if a student has ringworm, it is a mandated 72-hour absence. If a student has a continuous cough, the nurse intervenes. We go over the medical guidelines with the faculty. The nurse keeps the medical flow of the building.

GP8 and I walked over to the main office then back to the nurse’s office because GP8 wanted to discuss another issue with the nurse. GP8 said,

The fourth grade is on the picnic and the mother of the young boy who did not have sneakers and was not allowed to go by the father came by the school and took her son to the picnic. The responsibility is with the school.

GP8 continued, “This job gives you a lot of paperwork, so much that I have to do it at home. I do not have the time at school.” Just then, two students ran past us down the hall. GP8 said, “Stop running.” One student stopped but the other student continued, so GP8 said again but louder, “Stop running and SN, come over here.” The student came over and GP8 assigned her a time out in the office.

GP8 and I then walked into a classroom, where GP8 asked different students about their class project. The students replied, “Gorillas, elephants, giraffes, crocodiles, lions, tigers, and polar bears, and each animal’s habitat.” GP8 continued to ask questions and promised that she would visit again, explaining, “Once you make a promise, you must keep your word.” After visiting the classroom, GP8 and I walked back to the main
office and met HC, who asked GP8 to come to the playground to inspect the cracks that had been repaired. GP8 and I walked to the playground with HC, where GP8 and HC inspected the patchwork and GP8 asked, “How long will this patchwork last?” HC jokingly responded, “As long as it would take to yank off a cheap toupee.” I laughed as we walked back to the main office to get ready to visit the picnic area with the fourth graders.

GP8 and I drove to the picnic in GP8’s vehicle. The picnic was held at a field next to the high school. At the picnic, the students and teachers participated in games and had a barbeque. GP8 introduced me to the staff and commented,

PTA parents put this together. It is very helpful to find a PTA president that you can work together. The other president was much too political and into all other issues except what mattered to the school. It makes all the difference, especially if you want to have a smooth relationship with the PTA.

GP8 talked privately with the teachers and parents while I talked with a teacher about flexible grouping, according to which a student in the third grade could move to the fourth grade for a certain subject, such as mathematics, so that the student would be able to take an advanced math class. After this conversation, I moved over to the picnic table to get a hot dog, potato chips, and a soda. While I was eating, a student came over to the table with a bloody nose. A teacher put a cold soda on the back of his neck while they waited for the nurse.

After talking with a few other teachers, GP8 and I drove back to the school. Once we arrived in the main office, GP8 went to a classroom where a student was having a problem. The teacher indicated that the student had been moved upstairs to another
teacher's classroom. GP8 went to that room to discuss this student's issues with three other teachers and a member of the CST. While I waited outside of the main office for GP8 to return, I observed the displays and pictures in the lobby rotunda. The displays contain student work that is advanced for the grade level. The overall building is in great condition for a 75-year-old building. The student who had held the plastic gun, who had been told not to go outside, had gone outside, where he called another female student a name. He was punished by being given a week with no recess.

GP8 returned to the main office and asked, "Do you want something from the cafeteria?" I responded, "Chips, if you have any." They were out of chips, so I ate a half of a sandwich. I commented, "If I am watching boxing, I can eat a large bag of chips in one sitting." GP8 said, "There you go." GP8 explained, "The superintendent usually contacts me through e-mail. I have to teach my secretary how to use a walkie-talkie."

Three teachers entered the office. One teacher said she had the results of the Terra Nova, and the three teachers and GP8 discussed different students and their scores as well as various academic strategies for the next school year. GP8 stated, "We need to put him in the morning program. Make a copy for my second young man upstairs, we have a meeting with the CST. The child's teacher has had stress because of his behavior in the classroom."

At that point, a parent entered the office because she thought dismissal was early because of the picnic. GP8 said, "We have a regular school dismissal today." GP8 noted that parents have a right to have someone with them at a CST meeting but they would not hold the meeting if parents brought an attorney "mainly because names and addresses are provided during the CST. You must know every student in each classroom." The teachers
created the class lists for next year based on the Terra Nova, NJPASS, and NJASK for the fourth grade.

*1:30 pm*

After the meeting, I conducted an open-ended interview with GP8 from 1:30 p.m. to 2:05 p.m. After the interview, two boys entered the office who had been playing with each other’s hair. One Black boy told a White boy, “Your hair is bald.” The White boy replied, “Your hair is spiky.” The Black boy said, “So I am glad I am not White.” Both boys started crying about this situation. GP8 said,

Do you like who you are? Tolerance is what this world is based on. You two owe each other an apology. On the outside you are different, but on the inside you are both the same. Go up stairs and apologize to the teacher and the student who reported this to the teacher.

Both students went upstairs to their teacher. Another teacher entered the office with a note written by the student who had called a female girl a name and held the plastic gun earlier.

GP8 continued with the grade-level meeting she was having with four 1st-grade teachers. GP8 asked, “So is everything okay with this? The teachers responded, “Yes.” GP8 continued, “I mean, are we okay with our lists? I do not know the other names from the other lists.” A fifth teacher entered and I gave her my seat. The group started talking about one particular student. I had a brief conversation with the secretary and overheard GP8 and the teachers continuing their discussion on student placement and school concerns. I briefly interrupted and thanked GP8 for her time and participation and left the
school at 3:00 p.m. GP8 is very well liked by faculty, staff, students, and parents. She is
direct and to the point yet compassionate.

Documents: GP8 provided the following materials:

A list of curricular activities.

Participant 12 = GP9  Date: June 12, 2007  Field time = 7:45 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

7:45 a.m.

I arrived at the school at 7:45 a.m., parked on a side street, and walked to the front
entrance. The bell had just rung and students were entering the building. I asked a
student for directions to the main office. At the main office, I introduced myself to the
secretary, who asked me to wait a few minutes. After several minutes, GP9 came out of
his office and invited me in. GP9 first explained his routine during a “normal” day:

First thing in the morning, the assistant principal and assigned teachers stand
outside on the sidewalk to monitor students entering the building and check for
anything not ordinary. If I do not get a good read on a student or there is a
problem, that student is referred to a guidance counselor. Around 11:00 a.m., we
can take a look at some classrooms. Then at 11:15 a.m. [today], during period
five, I have a meeting with a teacher I am assisting in the interview process. Last
night we had the TR scholars program, which was great.

GP9 explained that TR scholars are students who volunteer to participate in a
rigorous academic challenge to identify their particular field of interest. The program is
not graded and offers summer programs in drama, music, genetics, and DNA research, as
well as many other areas. Fourteen students are selected and they must maintain an A or
B average. Teachers work with the students during the school year. GP9 said, “It is a very
worthwhile program because participation is based on the love of learning.” GP9 went on
to explain,

Every Tuesday we have a core team meeting which consists of three child study
team members, three core team teachers, the nurse, the assistant principal and
principal. We discuss different students that have many very personal problems,
like families in crisis over cancer, divorce, or a death. Occasionally, it is a student
on medication.

GP9 explained that he usually participates in these meetings for about an hour then gets
an update from the counselors. The 6th-grade academic teachers meet with the CST to
give brief updates on each student. Last year the student enrollment was 725 students,
and this year is 775.

GP9 continued,

The Parent, Teacher, and Student Organization [PTSO] meets with the board of
education on a monthly basis. The BOE [board of education] keeps the door open
for updates from parents on new teachers; as a result, there have been seven to
eight personnel changes. In this town, we have a number of young families
because of the reputation of the school district.

I asked, “How many assistant principals do you have?” GP9 responded, “Only one; the
assistant principal left to be a principal in Rahway. It was a long process interviewing for
a replacement; after the first candidate was not confirmed, I recommended the second
choice. To the board of education, the second choice was the best.” GP9 continued,

The night custodial staff did not clean several classrooms last night, and later
today we are going to have meeting because this is not the first time this has been
done. This is an old building and it must be maintained; window sills need to be
dusted as well as several other areas cleaned. I brought the head custodian in and
talked with him about this, so now I need to meet with all-night custodians.

We then discussed the distance we each traveled to school before walking to a meeting
with the CST and CORE team. GP9 stated, “We had a great TS scholars program last
night. Two students started talking about DNA and green habitats, then a student who
was autistic just could not control himself and his father finally removed him from the
auditorium.”

At the meeting, GP9 indicated that last week the CST and CORE meeting had
ended with the 8th-grade student review. A member of the team (TM1) said that they had
a student (CR) who had been cutting herself was being treated by her aunt but “I do not
know what the policy is here.” GP9 stated, “As I said before, the BOE policy indicates
that we cannot retain any students. She will have a problem in high school.” TM1 stated,
“We will have to make her a deficiency.” GP9 asked, “Who is her counselor at the high
school?” TM1 replied, “Dr. MI, I spoke with him and he is aware of her situation.” GP9
commented, “I have talked with CR for the last 3 years. She gives all the right buzz
words but with no follow through. I hope that next year in high school counselors will
spend a lot more time with her.” GP9 continued, “Next, this father is in denial, he
believes that it is now not asthma but a throat infection that mimics asthma. He wants her
back in school.” GP9 explained that he could not stop the father from bringing his child
to school, but a precautionary plan would be put in place for LE to leave school at noon.
The father is trying to hold the family together because his wife is also having problems.
His daughter has had problems breathing throughout the campus. GP9 explained,
I told the father that the cause of her asthma may be that she is eating something that she is allergic to, like peanuts. His daughter may even be ingesting peanut butter intentionally. She can stay here for the first half of the day. We do not need to split hairs about this kid’s medical condition. Give her the benefit of the doubt on her grade.

A team member (T2) stated, “K.Y needs ESL but she is not receiving it. She should be removed from language arts.” GP9 responded, “Take her out of a cycle course, not language arts.” T2 commented, “This student said that someone wrote on her accounting booklet ‘fag’ several hundred times. We both think it was CR, the student with asthma.”

GP9 responded,

What I want you to do is bring them in and speak to them and call the father. Last week I had a big blow up with her father in my office. He gives the impression that he knows what is going on. He put his hand in my face; I told him if you and your wife communicated, you would know that your daughter is not turning in her homework. This man is a very angry man. He was going to take me to the superintendent. I told him I would make the call; your daughter is giving you two different stories. At the high school, she is going to be caught. Do not tell the mother about this incident, tell the father.

GP9 then asked, “What is next?” A team member (TM3) stated,

We are done, but yesterday two male students were talking during the fire drill and another student walked up to one of them grabbed him in his shirt, ripped it,
and said, “Silence fool.” The assistant principal talked with the aggressive
student’s father. That student needs to be in a military school.

Another team member (T4) said, “We must make it mandatory in his IEP.” TM3 agreed,
“He really needs a red beret, what is that, hell’s angels? No, it is the guardian angels.”

GP9 stated,

A father sent me an e-mail stating that he and his wife needed to know who is
responsible for their child’s education. Send them a return e-mail listing all the
things that you have done for their daughter, CR. The school is responsible, but
your child must be accountable also and accept responsibility.

Another team member (TM5) talked about other cases:

A student’s father passed away because of cancer, we are going to take him out
for lunch tomorrow. . . . At the beginning of the year, a student brought a knife to
school. We were working with him on his electives for next year but the parent
wants him to take woodworking. The parent said, “If you cannot change it, I want
to talk with the principal. Then she brought her son in and said, “I really want to
change it, I am not one of these parents that are always calling. I just want my son
to have a great year next year. I was thinking, oh I thought you really wanted him
to have a shitty year [said sarcastically].

A team member (TM6) asked GP9, “Can you call this parent to set up a meeting? I have
called and left three messages.” He gave the cell number to GP9 to call and continued,
“He is really a nice young man, but he gives up at the drop of a hat.” GP9 responded, “I
hope they get him involved over the course of the summer.” TM6 responded, “All he
wants to do is hang out.” GP9 replied, “Yes, and hanging out will get him in trouble.”
The assistant principal (AP1) stated, "Another student I am concerned with is a bit odd. He grabs and bites kids that hit him." TM6 added, "A few teachers have made comments that he is a pretty strange kid." AP1 added, "Pushing kids and hiding their binders." T6 replied, "One positive thing, he always participates in school plays, he was in *Grease.*" Another team member (TM7) discussed yet another case:

We have a student who is staying with another family because the father is going to Baltimore for surgery. . . . There is so much going on in her life, and I think she is crying out for help. If she is here, I would like to keep her in my office, with an air purifier, on the day for signing yearbooks.

GP9 said, "Next." A team member (TM8) said,

We are having a meeting for a student who has very low mathematics scores. Her midterm and final in Algebra 1 was an F. She receives Bs during the marking period because her father tutors her every day. I worry about her in Algebra 1 next year. I would like to see her in algebra preparation. We could recommend that she go to Algebra preparation instead of Algebra 1. The parents are very dissatisfied that she was not monitored this year. We need to discuss a pullout with the parents.

A team member (TM9) brought up another case:

This student is overweight and is teased. He joined the theater group to assist backstage. His mother said that he is not going to participate in sports. He has been with adults most of the time. He has not been invited to any birthday parties. He is a bit nerdy and is overweight. He has gone through all of his life like unleavened bread but he definitely has leadership qualities in him.
Another team member (TM10) stated,

I have a student, VN, which has Down Syndrome. She made a comment to another student that she did not like her because she was Black. The next day VN went to this student and said, “I do not like you.” It is very difficult to rationalize with someone with Down Syndrome. Some teachers had an issue with classified students playing with Playdough. They do not understand that it is about a child’s behavior modification. I am feeling some stress from June; June is wearing me out.

GP9 explained,

We are dealing with a different type of student entering this school. We need to get used to cases and services of any type. I cannot put up with a teacher’s attitude that asks why I have to have this type of kid in my class. It is unacceptable; all kids must be educated.

A team member (TM11) stated, “This is just a general discussion on classified students, these are not the more severe types of cases. I have seen some kids in schools on stretchers.” GP9 asked, “Is that it?” T11 said, “This afternoon we only talked about the different physical ways teachers can deal with classified children. We need to talk about how to educate them.” GP9 asked, “Anything else?” TM11 stated, “You forgot the RG thing. The parent of this student just wants her daughter to get the regular workload and make sure that she is challenged. RG is going to be on a modified half-day schedule next year.” Another team member (TM12) said, “EH is being classified for hearing loss.” Another (TM13) said, “PP went to a neurologist last Thursday.” Yet another (T14) said, “LR is coming next year with cancer. They say that she is very ill. We must be careful
with the family because they are very private. Who is the nurse at WW? Teachers need to know about a student that is that ill.” Finally, a team member who was retiring said, “Thank you, thank you for all of the wonderful years of enjoyment. On Tuesday may you all have the gift of retirement.”

At this point, the meeting concluded and GP9 and I walked back to the main office to debrief on this CST and CORE team meeting. GP9 talked briefly about the retiree:

That young lady was a counselor who moved to the CST as a social worker. She has been very helpful because she knows our students and their individual situations. This is the best case scenario as you can only be as good as you are.

GP9 went to get a cup of tea prior to the debriefing. I noticed that GP9’s office is very organized. After returning with a cup of tea, GP9 called his secretary into the office to discuss a concern that he had with the exorbitant use of copy paper school wide. GP9 said that he was caught off guard during a visit to the superintendent’s office. The superintendent had asked why so much paper was being used. GP9 thought that perhaps it was because of the new computerized system. The secretary added that a student had pneumonia and will need to take the examination at home. GP9 arranged to do so with that student’s teachers, who happened to pass by the office door.

GP9 then explained,

The community perception of learning from different sides of town has resulted in overcrowding in the schools that are perceived to be academically better. Our average class size is 28. I realize the load for counseling is heavy and they are extremely valuable to me in a number of ways. Even though it is late in the year, I
try to prepare the teachers for what is coming in the fall. We are one of the best special education service districts in the state. The previous principal, KE, was not offering replacement courses or in-class support ICS. The law calls for the least-restrictive environment or in some cases pullout support. However, we do not need all students in pullout support. The 6th-grade foreign language department established a course for students coming from another district that possibly needs assistance in the fourth grade. So by the time they get to the high school, they are in their second year of a foreign language. We feel that if we can implement this course, it looks good on their transcript.

AP1 entered the office and provided a summary of what would happen at the yearbook signing. He said that he would stress the appropriateness of what goes in the yearbook and that he would not tolerate sexual remarks or profanity, stressing that the yearbook follows students for life. He said he would also talk about appropriate behavior during the picnic and graduation. GP9 said,

Give them the logistics on how the program works. The choir will be on risers and period seven teachers will bring them down. The last day for students is Wednesday. Everyone will stand and the choir will continue right up to the risers. AP1 said, “I will talk about the appropriate behavior during graduation also.” GP9 added,

Let them know that shorts and sandals are not permitted. Any students not dressed appropriately will not be allowed to participate in promotion. Send out a letter to the parents that there are certain behavior expectations and dress expectations. We have 1 week of school left, and today is the last day for all report cards and
teacher schedules. When I was an AP at EN, I handled the schedule. The principal here waited until the last day after Labor Day. When I did the schedule here in August, kids would come in during July and August. Now I discuss the schedule for next year with teachers during their end-of-the-year evaluation. They teach five classes and have one duty period and two preparation periods. We have a total of 15 mathematics classes, the largest number in the school.

After this conversation, GP9 and I went on a tour of the building. As we were leaving the office, six cartons of copy paper were delivered. On the first level by the entrance, I observed photographs of different school activities. I also noticed a large Egyptian sarcophagus with a mural of ancient Egypt enclosed in a Plexiglas container across from the auditorium and diagonal to the office. GP9 and I walked past the auditorium, where the 6th- and 7th-grade instrumental classes were practicing for the orchestra. GP9 stated, “Every 6th- and 7th-grade student takes music 5 days a week. For 8th-grade students, music is an elective.” After listening to the instrumental class, GP9 and I stopped by the guidance complex, which contained three counseling offices and a SAC counselor’s office. From there we walked past the science wing and the art, wood shop, industrial technology, and graphics classes. GP9 said, “All teachers and students are engaged in schoolwork up to the last day of school. They know and understand what I expect.” GP9 and I walked past the chorus room, where the students were singing. GP9 commented, “We have approximately 150 students in chorus and a 60-piece band with two teachers, one for the orchestra/instrumental and one for chorus.”

GP9 and I turned left turn down a corridor and GP9 explained, “These are language arts classes, journalism, and in each classroom there are 50 computers.” We
then passed the nurse's office, which was a bit small for the size of this school. GP9 stated, "The original building was built in 1926. We have had other additions, and in the fall work will begin to enlarge the cafeteria so grade levels can eat together." We next went to the library, which was under minor construction. GP9 introduced me to the librarian and then signed a field-hockey stick for a retiring physical education teacher. GP9 and I then walked past a large gymnasium where GP9 explained, "Our students take archery along with track and field." GP9 and I walked outside of the building to an expansive side lawn area that had lunch tables with benches. GP9 said, "The neighbors complained across the street about the possible noise. I asked them, What did you think when you moved across the street from a school? That it was going to be quiet?"

In the front of the building near the main entrance is a large landscaped planter constructed of railroad ties containing evergreen shrubs. GP9 said, "The PTSO did the landscaping." I said, "It would be nice if during the fall tulip bulbs could be planted in the troughs on the window sills." GP9 responded, "That would look good during the spring, I will ask the PTSO." GP9 explained that the front door stayed locked after students entered in the morning. There was a camera by the door, but no security guards; GP9 and AP1 provide the security.

11:35 a.m.

At 11:35 a.m., GP9 and I returned to the main office to review possible strategies with a teacher who had an interview with another district. Evidently, this teacher was a finalist for the position. The teacher-candidate entered GP9's office and sat in a chair across from me. GP9 introduced me and asked the teacher if she would mind if I participated. The teacher said she would not mind. GP9 commented to the teacher,
See if you can arrive earlier to see the relationship the teacher has with the class. How long does it take the teacher to get students actively engaged in the lesson? See what is written on the board to visualize what is going on. Are manipulatives accessible to students? Look at safety conditions. Is the furniture spaced appropriately? No electrical cords should be stretched across the floor. See if the lesson is sequential. You want to know and see whether all students are engaged in activities that address all learning styles. Do the activities reflect part of the greater curriculum? Differentiation if applicable; how the teacher assessed learning and feedback, was there a summary to see the students’ level of apprehension. Check for effective closure. Did you cover what you said you would? Did the lesson align with the lesson plans? Ask students what they learned. Was the class student centered or teacher centered? How did the teacher leave students with that lesson? Was it age appropriate? When I come into your classroom, these are all of the things that I look for in an observation. I will sit with the teacher and ask, What about the lesson today? What did you do? You called on the same students. Develop wait time. Develop pacing. Teachers want to make themselves feel good in terms of what they did. Most teachers have a problem with wait time. We want immediate feedback, instant gratification. Teachers must develop wait time. If you call on that kid, first ask another student if he is right or wrong. These things you want to look for, especially in the ICS room. How is the teacher greeting students? Are all of the boys sitting together? Are all of the girls sitting together? The boys will usually have their hands up first
and the girls are just sitting there listening. It is not good practice to have students separated.

We finished our session and the teacher thanked GP9 and left the office. GP9 explained,

She is an ideal special education teacher in ICS science and social studies. She stepped into a situation where the regular science teacher went on maternity leave and the social studies teacher had breast cancer. She applied for a supervisory position in this district but did not get it. I told her that I would help her. I do not have a problem with letting be move on to better things. If they are not ready for the job, I will tell them, but if it is their time to go, they go with my blessings.

GP9 then said it was lunchtime and that it was as important to eat with the teachers just as it was to be in the classroom. He commented,

We had a beautiful TR scholar’s night. My first year at this school, kids were not allowed to leave the building. The previous principal had them in a study period for 20 minutes and them in the lunchroom for 20 minutes. Teachers have two 40-minute preparations. Kids need to have free time, which is just as much part of the school day as academics.

GP9 mentioned that he had an executive board meeting with the PTSO at 1:30 p.m. As we walked to the cafeteria, I noticed a beautiful sculpture in the corridor and a police van outside the front of the building. GP9 indicated, “Today is the DARE program.” This school is surrounded by suburban homes located in a J district. GP9 and I had lunch in the teachers’ cafeteria with several teachers who were having a rather light conversation about students. One teacher said, "Auditory speech should be auditory
speed.” Another said, “One kid had a large mouth and his jaw entered the room before he
did. He can clean an ear of corn with one bite.” The group of teachers laughed, as did we.
We finished lunch and returned to the main office for the meeting with the PTSO.
1:30 p.m.

At 1:30 p.m., GP9 and I met with members of the PTSO. One member (M1) asked, “What about that portable microphone?” GP9 responded, “I have one in the
gymnasium and one in the auditorium. Would you like to get a dedicated one for the
program? SN will get that information for you.” GP9 continued, “I am just about
finished with the interviews for the industrial arts teacher vacancy. We will also need to
hire an additional special education teacher. We may be losing a special education
teacher; I will let you know in a week.” GP9 asked, “ME, why don’t you give them an
update on the school?” AP1 responded, “The scheduling is just about done. We will have
teacher schedules next week.” M1 asked, “They will know then on the first day of
school?” GP9 responded,

Yes, the schedules will be given on the last day of school and mailed again in
August. After that, we will not make any other changes to the schedule. If there is
an error, we will change it. I know that giving schedules this time of year I will
get phone calls from parents about switching for many nonsensical reasons.

GP9 then talked briefly about the foreign language course: “Kids at grade level in
foreign language will interact with other kids somewhat behind. It allows more
interaction for the two different towns. I have gotten off-handed comments from teachers
about this.” M1 asked, “How will it affect teachers?” GP9 responded,
When you go to team meetings, you get to develop a relationship and teachers bulk, but they will get use to it. If teachers complain, that says something about the old Russian composer “Tuffshitsky.” The TR scholars program was excellent. One student did creative design another wrote a poem on moving from California to New Jersey. Students spent a lot of time on their work and bonded with teachers. The C hall was packed. Next year we will start the process over again with different students.

GP9 was very animated; he made it very clear to the PTSO that the TR scholars program was very worthwhile. GP9 continued,

Now we get ready for next Monday night. My expectation is that the AP will work with those students starting at 7:00 p.m. who will speak on behalf of those teachers retiring. At 8:00 p.m. the program will start. There will be 220 8th-grade graduates. Everything is set for practice on Monday during the elective periods seven and eight. The yearbooks are here, and each yearbook has the student’s name engraved on it. The books were done by Taylor Publishing.

M1 asked, “Are you publicizing the list of new teachers for next year?” GP9 responded, “I will put that online in a letter on the back of the schedule.” GP9 reviewed the list of teachers that will be returning next year. One teacher will be the new swimming coach. M1 explained, “One teacher this year came and helped during a maternity leave. What about Mrs. MS? She has been out a lot and lost around 20 pounds. She was in the hospital. Is she returning?” GP9 responded,

I am not sure, but there was a teacher at the high school whose son was murdered in Florida. Evidently, he and a woman were seeing each other and another man
started an altercation with the woman. Her son and the woman left and the perpetrator followed them to their house. When her son came out to confront the man, he stabbed him in the heart twice.

A PTSO member (M2) expressed concern regarding the content of the show, explaining that it may have been a bit risky last time. GP9 responded, “The girls and boys have been warned to be appropriate. At this age the girl should not be showing any cleavage.” M2 said, “I do not know if they have any cleavage.” GP9 said, “I saw one young lady stand outside with her girlfriends to see if they thought she was dressed appropriately.” M2 asked, “Did the grant for the art library come through? Would you check on that?”

GP9 brought up our conversation earlier about the shrubs outside the front of the building: “I would request one thing from the PTSO—money for shrubs—and I would like to get a plant club together to plant tulips bulbs in the fall for flowers in the spring.” M2 responded, “We have a beautification committee. Does RT school have mulch coming? We had a connection with a transitional member who owns a landscaping business.” GP9 commented, “Teachers were very happy with your luncheon.” GP9 then explained enrollment issues at RS; he explained why algebra classes would be smaller, what the average class size would be, and a possible increase in enrollment.

At the conclusion of the meeting, GP9 and I walked back to the main office. GP9 said, “I need a break for about 15 minutes and I will be right back.” After his break, GP9 had a brief meeting with the parents of a student who had a fight or was fighting and the parents had made him leave the house. GP9 had to call the division of youth and family services DYFS and introduce the parents to a guidance counselor. GP9 and I walked to
the next meeting with 6th-grade teachers. GP9 indicated that he would stay in this meeting for around 15 minutes.

2:20 p.m.

At 2:20 p.m., GP9 and I entered the classroom where the 6th-grade teachers were meeting. The teachers talked about study skills, replacement mathematics, ICS and team teaching, and the IEP. AP1 said, "If students are working in groups, differentiated instruction can be given. If a student is classified with a problem in mathematics, they will not receive support in science." During this meeting, there was a male teacher not involved in the group working on a laptop. GP9 said that he had problems with this individual, who had been challenging his authority during the year. GP9 said he would take care of it, but during the meeting was not the right time.

2:40 p.m.

After 20 minutes, GP9 and I returned to the main office so that I could conduct an open-ended interview with him. During our interview, the driver of a pickup truck parked his truck on the other side of the street in front of the school and got out to curse at the crossing guard. As he started walking toward the security guard, GP9 told his secretary to call the police and got up and walked outside. By the time he arrived at the scene, the driver had already left, but the crossing guard had recorded his license plate number and was in the process of reporting the incident. After this incident GP9 explained, "Some members of this community have a sense of entitlement. They do not want anyone telling them what to do or when to do it."

Documents: GP9 did not provide additional materials.
Participant 13 = GP10    Date: June 13, 2007    Field time = 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

7:30 a.m.

I arrived at the site by 7:30 a.m. and asked a security guard where the visitor parking was located. He indicated that I could park anywhere in the lot. I parked and walked through the school’s main entrance over to the security desk. A female security guard gave me a visitor’s pass and gestured to the elevator, but I said that I would use the stairs. The main office is on the second level, which is four flights upstairs. When I entered the main office, no one identified himself or herself as the secretary. Other people were in the office, so I sat down and waited and observed. At around 7:50 a.m., teachers as well as security staff filed into the office. The secretary entered and asked me the purpose of my visit. When I indicated that I had an appointment with GP10, the secretary asked me to wait.

8:00 a.m.

At 8:00 a.m., I met GP10, who was running a bit late from a previous meeting. GP10 got on the PA and asked security to move students to their classes and that a hall sweep would take place at 8:10 a.m. GP10 indicated that instructional classes start at 8:05 a.m. and “the doors are shut at 8:08 a.m. If students are not on time, they will miss their first-period class and receive a detention. If they receive a double warning, they may lose credit in first period.” GP10 and I walked to the second-level entrance as students entered the building through metal detectors at both doors. GP10 said, “We have approximately 1,900 students and they all have ID cards that can be scanned into the system. If a student loses his/her ID, they are given a temporary one for the day.”
A security guard with a security wand stood by the metal detectors. If a detector goes off, the student is taken out of the line and two security officers check him or her again with the security wand. The students must remove all items from their pockets and book bags before going through the line. The computer ID security system is very sophisticated and the building is immense and state of the art. Some of the construction resembles architecture seen on a historical university campus, such as Princeton or Columbia. For example, it has large sweeping cement arches mounted on top of 20- or 30-foot tall Greek or Roman columns approximately 6 feet in diameter.

GP10 saw a male student who was not wearing an appropriate shirt, so GP10 stopped him and asked him to change. The student complied. GP10 then said, “We must have some type of order in the halls. If not, we will have disorder in the classroom.”

GP10 and I walked past the cafeteria, within which a special education population was waiting for work release. GP10 commented,

There are approximately 2 to 3% of the school that does not have a first period class. Most of those students are in some type of program during that time. We do not have study halls; students cannot just walk around the building.

At that point, GP10 indicated that he had to leave and would introduce me to the vice principal (VP1), who would provide me with information about the school. GP10 then introduced to VP1, who seemed more guarded than normal. VP1 escorted me briefly around the building then introduced me to another vice principal (VP2). VP1 left while I sat and talked with VP2 in his office. Although I learned that VP2 is in charge of scheduling, I am not sure what VP1’s role is.
After a brief discussion with VP2, I was introduced to a female vice principal (VP3), who escorted me on a more extensive tour of the building. VP3 explained,

This building is 5 years old and there is no graffiti. When I first arrived, no one would speak, but I continued to say good morning. If you are respectful and cordial to students, they will be the same way toward you. The principal established order in the building and those students that had a hidden agenda were removed from the building. Test scores went up 12% for the first time in language arts and 5% in mathematics.

VP3 and I walked by the guidance area, which had a number of acceptance letters from different colleges and universities posted on the walls. VP3 explained that the guidance department had changed from a solely service-based provider to a more comprehensive provider. VP3 indicated that there were seven counselors and stated, “The hardest thing is getting students in control and creating a nurturing environment.” I observed flags denoting the countries of the students enrolled in the school. As VP3 and I walked past the nurses’ office, VP3 said, “We have two nurses and a full-time medical doctor.” VP3 and I visited the discipline office, of which VP3 is in charge, and family room, where lead discipline teachers spoke with several students. VP3 stated, “Discipline is the structural beam of the school. IDs for students, barcodes for lunch, and discipline when there is poor attendance. We get a peak value from the metal detectors and 15 security officers.” VP3 mentioned that GP10’s grandson was a student on campus. VP3 explained that there were 650 tenth graders, 500 eleventh graders, and 450 twelfth graders, plus the special needs population. VP3 said the school was ordering new Motorola radios and Blackberries for all administrators.
I observed that the science room has a greenhouse, but could not view it because the class was taking a test. Hidden cameras are strategically placed in the corridors. The scheduling system, called the comprehensive scheduler system (CASS), follows the student throughout high school. Based on the AS400 district database, the system is able to keep records of each student’s attendance, schedule, and disciplinary infractions. The final exams were being held, so VP3 and the administration were trying to prevent disruptions. VP3 said, “We are trying to engage those students in our no-violence and no-tobacco programs.

At that time, second-period students entered the building. The school is scheduled on a split-shift basis. The tenth and eleventh graders enter by 8:05 a.m. whereas the seniors enter at around 9:05 a.m. VP3 indicated that some students would be finishing their year tomorrow because they had met all the credit requirements. VP3 and I walked past the library, which contained conference rooms and an art gallery. We then entered the security room, which resembles what one would see in a casino or television studio. A security officer was monitoring 50 or more small rectangular video screens. VP3 said, “The cameras are connected to the fire alarm system and the building is evacuated when a laser goes off.”

VP3 and I then visited a lecture hall used for professional development and conferences. VP3 said, “Students have a total of 7 minutes to get to class.” VP3 said there are 700 tenth graders or maybe only 650 because of student mobility. We were on the third level and walked to the fourth level. The late bell rang for the second block class. VP3 commented, “We have nine periods, with a tenth period used for recovery. We also have an administrator’s office on each level.” VP3 saw graffiti and called the main
office to get it removed. VP3 stated, "The ideal is to have three security officers' stations on each level, but because of the building coverage that is not possible. We use certain teachers as disciplinarians. We have approximately 200 staff in the building."

At this location, we entered a full-court gymnasium equipped with weight training, exercise, and aerobics rooms. The physical education offices are near the locker rooms. I asked, "What were the police vans doing outside; was there a problem?" VP3 replied, "No, they are assigned to this school and throughout the district. We have four police officers stationed in this building." VP3 and I walked past art rooms and another gallery leading to a hall of fame, where pictures of famous graduates hung on both sides of the wall. Bette Davis, Althea Gibson, and Dionne Warwick, to name but a few, were among them. Next, we arrived at the auditorium that would be used for the PK graduation later today. VP3 greeted parents and said, "Our students operate the sound and lighting system." The JROTC was also there to greet guests. VP3 explained, "During the summer, the VPs and GP10 alternate their vacation time along with security to make sure the building is covered and because of summer school." VP3 then escorted me to an office and reintroduced me to VP2.

9:30 a.m.

VP2 discussed several staffing issues:

We are short one department chairperson and will appoint a lead teacher in that position. We also have small learning communities defined by houses with four to seven teaching staff in each cluster. We need to do honors courses analysis.

Seniors are scheduled within academies and have 90- to 95-minute blocks of time. The focus for seniors is the workplace readiness skills. This urban high school
campus is located on approximately 30 acres and possibly equivalent to one square city block. We have 9th-grade orientation where students are brought to the high school for a tour and provided information packets. We would like to try an experimental year with a four-by-four semester block schedule. Starting in September, every child in the building will be assigned to an adult mentor for one to one assistance. . . . A virtual high school program should contain AP courses, distance learning, integrated lunch periods with adult supervision. Our system is very close to that virtual high school. We monitor academic progress; we can even know when it is a student’s birthday. We have district-wide examinations in all schools, and everyone should be at the same pace academically. We have a curriculum instruction guide that contains testing data, information on the community and how to contact a teacher. We even tell you what temperature it is outside.

VP2 explained that department chairpersons evaluate teachers along with administrators. The school is equipped with a communications system that calls parents and provides updates and/or times of upcoming events. VP2 said,

When I started here, discipline reports were printed out each time something occurred. Now it is all computerized; I am definitely very pleased about that. I have been a principal for 6 years in this school; I think there needs to be more emphasis on student achievement.

VP2 and I then toured other areas of the building, including the art department and the animation and design department. We visited the print shop academy, which was capable of fulfilling the printing needs of the entire district as well of nonprofit
organizations. The teacher in charge of this academy said, “When our students graduate, they are capable of being hired as printers anywhere in the country at a starting salary of 40K.” The instructor then escorted me to another room that had a printing machine that was as large as the entire room. It resembled one of the machines that one would see if one toured the New York Times or Daily News printing facilities. The instructor said, “We can print books, magazines, or money.”

After visiting the print academy, VP2 and I walked into the television production studio control room, where the high school is connected to the local cable channel 34 and students are trained in all aspects of television production. Next to the television academy is the recording studio, where students receive training in audio production. VP2 and I also visited the culinary arts academy and the automated CAD and CAM department. VP2 explained,

At the beginning of the year, the guidance chairperson resigned. We were without a chairperson for the entire year. I was put in charge of guidance, and it was my first time in charge of that department. I had to oversee the SRA [senior review assessment]. As a result, there was a decrease in grade changes and we instituted a dropout prevention contract. Over 100 students are now in this program and I interviewed every child. It is like an in-house alternative program. We discovered a 20-year-old in the tenth grade; he was transferred to the adult school based on district and state policy. After October we inherit other people’s problems.

The attendance and student suspension report is required of each district by the State DOE. After the funding based on this report has been provided for the following year, many schools start removing problem children from their district. This is especially
true within the vocational and technical (vo-tech) districts. Even when a student is removed from a school’s rolls back to the sending district, the school is allowed to retain the student’s per-pupil funding. At an average per-pupil cost of $13,000 dollars in non-Abbott districts and around $18,000 dollars in Abbott districts, the funding adds up. Students must not be removed before the October date; if they are, vo-tech districts do not receive funding for them. To me, this situation appears to be a political shell game with taxpayer funding.

VP2 talked briefly with the president of the PTA. After the conversation VP2 continued,

Every student is not achieving in the dropout prevention program. GP10’s role is to empower people with a plan and a vision. GP10 has often said, “Either you come up with it or I will, and you might not like what I give you.” It is about accountability. We work with parents on a daily basis. We must have an attitude of customer service in guidance. We have many renegade counselors and it negatively affects people; they were asking for a preparation period for counselors. They wanted to implement a counseling form for parents. The main thing is you need a plan.

VP2 then explained the process for removing a student from school: “We have an exit man that will take parents to court for excessive student absences. Fifth-year students are removed when they are not cooperative.” VP2 escorted me back to the main office, where GP10 had returned from his meeting. I thanked VP2, who had provided an excellent tour and generally informative conversation.
At the main office, GP10 invited me into his office and explained, “Now that we have removed the kids out of the hallway and into the classrooms, teachers may not be ready for them.” This is GP10’s first year at this school; evidently, during his predecessor’s tenure, students were allowed to roam the halls. GP10 continued,

In between classes I try to catch up on the paperwork, analyzing data from the HSPA and formulating a plan that will address proficiencies. You are constantly planning on how to improve the organization. I am very big on being visible and formulating a relationship with students. It helps you keep your finger on the pulse of the school. I try to get in the classroom as much as possible. I expect results in a collaborative working environment. All stakeholders are part of the process. You must delegate; I cannot do it alone. Every Friday the VPs and I talk about what occurred during the week. Last Friday we talked for two and a half hours. I am very flexible with the administrators.

GP10 recommended a book entitled, *Good to Great: Built to Last* by Jim Collins and explained,

I will always try to stay abreast of current trends. We are here to service our clients/customers. You cannot use traditional strategies with a unique individual. We cannot keep using the same things. The biggest challenge is change. We have been doing the same things for the last 15 years. The VPs conformed to the past leadership; it took someone coming in to ask, Why are you doing it that way? The hardest thing to accomplish is getting people started in the change process and helping people get on board—getting on the bus. The old perception of this town was the CS high school only enrolled the upper class and ET OE high
school only enrolled the lower-class or poor folk. The perception today has now reversed or flip flopped because there is one senior high school for the district.

11:30 a.m.

At 11:30 a.m., I left the main office so that GP10 could have a private conference with a teacher. While I was waiting, a teacher asked me about my research and suggested that different districts (Abbott and non-Abbott) have different students and that the impact of the surroundings may influence their academic performance. I agreed with him. After our discussion, I made note of the interior design of the main office. It is enclosed with glass blocks and has several plaques dedicated to students and one dedicated to the construction completion date of April 2003.

GP10 finished his conference with the teacher and went into the hallway as I followed him. GP10 noticed a student in the hall whose parents had called to complain about his grades. GP10 asked the student how he was doing. GP10 then discussed logistics of the SRA and teacher coverage before stating, “We have no graffiti in the halls or bathrooms.” VP3 met us in the hall while students were going to classes and stated, “The fourth cycle will not need a class because these students are out of the building. We do not need extended time or extra pay for teachers.” GP10 responded, “Can teachers be flexible on alternative days?” VP3 was not able to respond because a group of students passed GP10 with Domino’s pizzas boxes. GP10 stopped the students and said, “Where are you going?” The students gestured toward the cafeteria but GP10 said, “No, come with me. How is it that you got past security?” The students responded, “Our teacher let us go.” GP10 responded, “This must stop because if I allow you to do it, all students will want to order food from outside vendors and bring it into the building.”
By this time, just about all the students had moved into their classes from all floors and the cafeteria. We passed a sign in the corridor indicating that algebra tutoring is held every Thursday after school. GP10 and I walked past the Future Leaders of America (FLA) club near the business office. Next, we walked to the cafeteria, which has a capacity of 400 students. Seniors are able to leave during lunch as part of their senior privileges. Students sit six to eight to a table during lunch. There is also an outside area adjacent to the cafeteria with picnic tables for eating lunch outside.

GP10 walked the students with the pizzas back to the first-floor security desk while explaining, “Students going out and ordering pizza must stop. Now no one can go out, including adults.” GP10 explained to the security officer that students are not allowed out of the building to get food. The security office indicated that she could not stop them from leaving the building, explaining, “I asked for help from all of the VPs and no one would respond.” GP10 called the VPs on the walkie-talkie but there was no response. GP10 indicated on the walkie-talkie that the guard would be moved to the third level and the guard on the third level would replace her. She was upset, as was GP10. The security officer again said with an attitude, “They [students] all rushed the exit; what do you want me to do?”

As GP10 and I returned to the main office, GP10 cleared students from the second floor. GP10 asked me to meet him in the main office so that I could conduct an open-ended interview with him. I went to the main office and waited for GP10 to return. After this incident, I concluded that three of the four VPs are weak in the area of student discipline. Only one VP is more visible in the halls and proactive in her interaction and relationship with students.
1:30 p.m.

At 1:30 p.m., GP10 returned with two supervisors and an interview candidate and introduced them to me. GP10 and the supervisors continued with their conversation, and GP10 asked, "Okay, debrief me. Kids motivated in the ESL II class were taught during the second half of the class using highlighters. ESL kids need good models of American English." The supervisors listened. The candidate did not respond or look at the principal. GP10 was impressed with the supervisor's relationship with the students. GP10 asked,

Why are we moving the Gifted and Talented program under the special education department? We must look at the possibility of introducing a Gifted and Talented program that will attract training for our students to become registered nurses.

Nursing is an area that is in high demand.

The supervisors and GP10 then asked the candidate several questions.

GP10 is generally very busy during this time of the day. A number of people entered the office and he kept leaving and returning to the office. GP10 also received several calls. His office seemed a bit chaotic. At that point, GP10 brought in a consultant who was a retired principal from another district. I knew the consultant because I had previously worked for her as a science chairperson. GP10 continued, "The number of students within special education class is important." From the office, you could hear students passing in the halls to the next class.

GP10 talked with VP4 on the SRA plan and then cleared the halls and talked with security about a patch of graffiti on one of the school's corridor walls. He then returned to the main office and stated to the supervisors,
See if we can get more information on special education. Get the tape *The Power of Two*; it is on an inclusion class. Bring teachers in for 3 days prior to the beginning of the school year and do a special training for them. The first day of school is just getting to know new faces and returning ones. We also need to get special education lesson plans on what they are doing and create a file on what they are doing. We should be doing IEP at a glance, coteaching, common planning periods for inclusion.

A VP entered and stated, "The parking issue has been resolved." GP10 told the supervisor to brief the VP on the interview. Two supervisors were asked to sit in on the interview with the special education candidate. Both supervisors commented on the success of the teachers, saying, "We have a low turnover and a beautiful campus." The interviewee said he was interested in other nations and that he had been in his previous district for 2 years. GP10 continued to ask questions and then told the two supervisors to give their recommendations. GP10 then sent the interviewee to the fourth floor to see another VP. GP10 said that the second floor was a hangout for students. I reminded GP10 of our open-ended interview at 2:00 p.m.

2:00 p.m.

I started the interview by asking GP10 one question, but he left to find a VP with whom the consultant could speak. GP10 returned, I said goodbye to the consultant, and continued with the open-ended interview. After the interview, I told GP10 that a good question for the candidate would have been "Why did you leave your previous district?"

Documents: GP10 provided the following materials:


3. A document entitled Alternative High School Programs for Students 16 Years or Older.

4. A menu from the Culinary Arts Department.

On my own, I obtained a one-page document from the district Web site describing GP10’s school and the community.

Participant 14: GP11  Date: June 14, 2007  Field time: 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
7:30 a.m.

Arriving early in the vicinity of the school, I found the exact location, then went to breakfast. After breakfast, I drove to the site, parked in a visitor’s space, and entered the main entrance by the main office. I introduced myself to GP11, who invited me into her office. GP11 explained her daily routine: “Every morning and evening I try to go through my e-mail. Sometimes I will get an e-mail and will go see the person. During this time of year it is very busy.” A teacher entered the office and said, “Students used the microphone and broke the wires.” GP11 called the head custodian (RC) and explained that the microphone on the stage floor was damaged. GP11 also asked RC, “Do you have a few minutes to take a look at faucet that was leaking?” RC said he did. After checking the faucet and sink, RC left toward the auditorium. GP11 greeted teachers as they entered the building: “Good morning, and thank you for covering yesterday, RE. This is the researcher.” RE responded, “Nice to meet you.” I responded, “Nice meeting you.”
GP11 continued with morning conversation as teachers entered the building. One teacher asked GP11 to speak with her privately; they did so for a few minutes. During that time, I noticed how the wonderfully decorated corridor walls, which have a variety of colors and textures. After her conversation, GP11 explained, “You learn a lot from experience that becomes layered by being advised from different people over the years. You also learn from different events such as Columbine and 9/11.” This site has approximately 415 students, 50 certified teachers, and 8 aides. GP11 does not have an assistant principal. Her secretary works only 10 months and her guidance counselor works part time. I asked, “How do you do it all?” GP11 responded, “I have done it automatically. A lot is done at home, but I am not for working a lot at home.”

As GP11 and I talked, more staff entered the building as buses pulled up to the front entrance with students. GP11 said, “Ninety eight percent of our students are bused.” I was given a substitute’s badge instead of a visitor’s badge and a red, white, and blue lei for Flag Day. GP11 asked the nurse for student folders and said, “The teachers have a good relationship with students and each other.” GP11 then talked with a group of parents and informed them that it was Flag Day. The end of the year seemed very hectic for GP11, who had a number of meetings with the school advisory board and was in the process of completing end-of-year state requirements. “How do I do it,” commented GP11, “with really good people. This is a building that really requires collaboration and team work.”

GP11 found the teacher whom she was looking for and talked with her in a classroom as a line of tiny bodies passed in a stream of noisy excitement. I asked, “Do you keep it at this energy level all day?” GP11 responded, “Yes, this is nothing.” Then
GP11 introduced me to a committee called Tools for Schools (TFS) that is responsible for reviewing the physical plant and reporting any concerns. The committee consists of a Home & School Association (H&SA) parent representative, the school nurse, a teacher representative, and the head custodian (RC). Its goal was to check the building and grounds for minor structural defects. GP11 also had to attend an IEP meeting, and asked me if I would like to go to the Tools for Schools committee. I said that I would like to, and toured the school and classrooms with the committee.

11:10am.

I returned to the office around 11:10AM, as GP11 typed an e-mail, and stated, “A teacher [SE] asked to be excused from the assembly. I think she is involved in some political issues in town. Evidently, she was not happy with the way the assembly was being organized. SE teaches the self-contained special education class, but I talked with her yesterday personally because it is her preparation period.”

I could hear a jackhammer digging outside the window of GP11’s office. GP11 explained, “They are fixing our water sprinklers and the school sign is being replaced.” GP11 talked with a student who entered the office. GP11 then talked with me about a district where both she and I had previously worked. GP11 asked, “Do you know JP?” I responded, “Yes.”

At that time, GP11 and I walked to the assembly for Flag Day. A teacher had earlier reminded GP11 to wear the colors of the day. In the gymnasium a student said, “You do not have your colors for today.” Classes entered the gymnasium and sat on the floor in assigned locations. Some students were already on the stage. As parents entered, they sat on the side of the room in metal folding chairs. GP11 said, “I need to connect
with a few teachers.” GP11 began talking with several groups of teachers and parents. I sat in the last row of folding chairs and watched the slides being shown as “The Star Spangled Banner” played softly in the background. A student told the audience, “Please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.” After the pledge, the student said, “Now we will sing ‘America the Beautiful.’”

While the audience and students sang, fourth graders played flutes and recorders. After this song, a student recited, “I am the flag of the United States of America. I was born on June 14, 1777 in Philadelphia. There my stars and stripes became part of our flag.” The student went on to describe the origins of this country from the 13 colonies to the 50 states represented by the stars on our flag today: “My red stripes tell of brave American men and women that protect us. My white strips stand for freedom so we are all equal. My blue is the blue of heaven. We will now all sing ‘There Are Many Flags.’” Another student recited, “I stand guard over my nation’s schools where children learn. I am in every schoolroom, every schoolyard, at the libraries, and in the parks. Everyday thousands of boys and girls pledge their allegiance to me. Everyone please sing ‘America.’”

The classes sitting on the gymnasium floor began to get restless and noisy, so GP11 moved to the front of the auditorium, and the students then quieted down. A third student recited,

Everyone, you need to take care of me. As you see me against the wind, remind yourself that I am the flag of your country, in happy times and in sad times. Please stand. We will all sing “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

After singing this song, a fourth student recited,
I was made in freedom. I made my first appearance in a battle for freedom. May I spend eternity in my land of the free and home of the brave and shall I always be known as Old Glory, the flag of the United States of America. Please sing

“You’re a Grand Old Flag.”

After that song, a teacher said, “This concludes our Flag Day ceremonies. Enjoy the rest of your day, thank you for coming.” The classes stood and waited in the gymnasium until they were each dismissed in an orderly fashion. The students had run the assembly. All the performances were wonderful, especially that of an autistic student. The art room contained exceptionally creative work. The student urns were outstanding. The art teacher reminded me of a young Ben Jones from Jersey City in female form.

After the assembly GP11, the TFS team and I met by the main office to tour the building to report defects. First, the group looked at the boiler room’s contents. The pipe enclosures are sealed but contain asbestos based on their age (the school was built in 1962). It was difficult to tell whether the boiler is for gas or oil. The group suggested that the boiler room should be locked for safety concerns. Next the group moved to the main office and the home and school (H&S) office. The boxes in front of the sink in the H&S office needed to be moved. The heater in the main office needed repair, as well as the cracked window above the heater. GP11 said to the head custodian (HC), “Let me understand how TFS works; after the tour you send in the form to central office?” HC said, “Yes.”

The tour continued through the nurse’s office, main office, and GP11’s office. A team member noted that certain ceiling tiles that were either damaged or discolored needed to be replaced. The teacher representative recorded the information on a notepad.
So far, most of the defects seemed cosmetic. GP11 said, “We have an active association and this TFS developed as a result of a push from the association. There is a spirit of independence in the school. I will talk to you later about this.” A member of the group said, “We have a pest control problem and must get the exterminator.” This member was referring to mice, as one had scurried past the group into GP11’s office. The recorder noted that the ceiling tile might be discolored by leaks in the heating and cooling ventilation system. I picked up a yearbook and GP11 said, “The yearbook is dedicated to J, a teacher who retired in December. She worked from 1974 to 2007 in this school.”

At that point, the teacher representative said to GP11, “The TFS report will go to the building principal and from the principal to the district building and grounds.” GP11’s computer was not working correctly so she called for technical support. While touring the main office, two computer technicians arrived to fix her computer. One member of the TFS team said that the paint on the corridor walls would always peel because of the wall’s surface. The team walked toward the rear of the school and then outside to a set of trailers. A team member noticed that a stair rail and the ramp in the back of the school needed to be repaired because the wood had rotted. I went with GP11 into one of the trailers, where a group of teachers was talking about individual students and their placements. GP11 joined the conversation: “What is recess going to look like with these kids. Will we have boom bam or bim and boom? What is your spin on these two, where would you put this one?” GP11 did not use names because of confidentially and the sensitivity of each student’s placement. GP11 continued, “How are our numbers? This one is 21 and that is 23. I say leave it, it is different but we knew it was going to be different.” A teacher stated, “We should move the researcher over here because he will be
torn to shreds by this one and this one.” GP11 commented, “I think it may be as good as it is going to get. I will put someone in that classroom that is very strong.” Another teacher said, “These two are not angels, you will have different kids in this class.” GP11 responded, “This is a tough group, it is not going to be easy.”

GP11 and I walked back to the principal’s office, where GP11 gave me a floor plan of the school and a copy of the family handbook. I noticed that a mural of faces created by students hangs in the main office. I briefly talked with a TFA member who said, “This work was generated by the association. GP11 is really a positive person, not really an association person.” A student entered the office and GP11 said, “Happy birthday WD.” GP11 talked about one student, JD, who is autistic and bipolar. GP11 was thinking about an out-of-district placement for JD because he gets violent and begins head-butting. GP11 added that three different self-contained teachers have been injured or bruised.

GP11 and I talked about research and certification and GP11’s personal goals and aspirations. GP11 started working on her e-mail as the phone rang, and she took the call. GP11 explained that they had a family that had been in a shelter for 4 months. The mother had not been calling to check on the child or returning phone calls. On several occasions, the mother had not picked up her child. The school was in the process of helping them get transitional housing.

11:30 a.m.

GP11 had an IEP meeting, and suggested that I continue touring the building with the TFA group and have lunch. I attempted to find the TFA without success, so I toured
the building alone as a researcher. I noticed that the school had a health and fitness club for teachers.

12:00 p.m.

I went to the cafeteria, where a 4th-grade girl in the lunch line said, "You rock." I smiled and went into the teacher's cafeteria and talked with several teachers.

1:00 p.m.

I continued my tour and located the TFA group, which was now outside at the back of the school.

2:00 p.m.

GP11 found our group outside and asked me if I could conduct the open-ended interview with her now because she had an appointment after school.

Documents: GP11 provided the following materials:

3. A Flag Day handout provided during the flag-day program in the auditorium.

On my own, I obtained a four-page document from the district Web site authored by GP11.

Participant 15: GP12 Date: June 15, 2007 Field time: 8:15 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.

7:30 a.m.

I arrived at the site by 7:30 a.m., parked in the rear lot/playground, entered the school, and walked to the main office. I asked for GP12 and explained the reason for my visit. The secretary responded, "She will be with you in 1 minute." After a few minutes, GP12 invited me into her office, where I reviewed my purpose for the research. GP12
responded, "This is the Law and Community Services, a unique school of choice. We developed the theme first then found the name, JLC Academy." GP12 explained the origin of the building: "The district purchased this site from the Catholic Diocese. When you enter to your left, there is a large Catholic church. This building was originally a Catholic school." I was impressed with the church's Greek or Roman architecture; it has bold granite columns with an ornately detailed, polished copper dome. GP12 continued, "We have 275 students and 40 staff." GP12 and I moved into the main entrance corridor. GP12 said, "Today we have a graduation ceremony for all fifth graders."

GP12 and I then walked into the auditorium so GP12 could check the air conditioning as she explained, "Every class is responsible for putting on an assembly once a month dealing with a mock trial. We have a trial judge who oversees and participates in this process." The auditorium walls are covered with paintings and photographs associated with the law and the community that present a truly a historical African American account of jurisprudence in New Jersey and the United States—indeed, a veritable visual buffet. An art historian named Edward Mungelo had painted the paintings. From the auditorium, GP12 and I walked to the rear of the building and outside to the playground/parking lot. Half of the playground is used as a parking area. Students were playing as staff watched. Using a megaphone siren to get their attention, GP12 asked the group to assemble for the pledge. Teachers and students recited the "Negro National Anthem." After reciting the anthem, GP12 said, "Good morning everyone."

GP12 went on to explain the lineup of activities for the day. GP12 did not have an assistant principal, but a designated lead teacher who filled that role stood in front of the school. After the announcements, GP12 gave the megaphone to the lead teacher then
said, “When I started as principal, only 10% of the school passed the NJPASS and
NJASK. Now over 80% of the entire school is passing language arts and 100% is passing
mathematics.” On the corridor wall outside of the main office near the entrance is a large
banner that says, “Governor’s School of Excellence 2004-2005.” GP12 explained, “We
have an open-door policy. Parents can come in and sit in any class at any time.” My
understanding is that teachers had previously agreed with this policy. GP12 and I went on
a tour of the building. The gymnasium is next to the library, which contains a reading
room and office. I asked, “Is this the basement?” GP12 said, “We are in the lower level of
the building; we do not have basements.” GP12 dropped something off in a teacher’s
room. I noticed that the murals and drawings on the corridor walls are incredible. One
corridor wall has murals of faces with different expressions. I did not quite understand
the meaning of the expressions until later that afternoon. GP12 walked into a classroom
and the students said, “Good morning Ms. H.” GP12 explained, “People come in and out
of our classroom, and students know that they should continue with their work.”

GP12 and I continued on our tour of the building, walking past special education
rooms, a kindergarten classroom, and computer classrooms with Apple computers. GP12
commented, “We have a very strong autism program here. Every student that came in
could not speak; now they all speak. One of my main goals is to improve literacy.” GP12
and I returned to her office, where GP12 began doing paperwork then said, “Kids do not
see autistic kids as any different then themselves. One of our autistic children will be
singing during the graduation ceremonies.”

GP12 indicated that she would be in the office doing paperwork, so I asked if I
could continue to tour the building, especially the auditorium. GP12 agreed. I returned to
the auditorium and sat in the last row of seats to get a better sense of the painter's message. The stage has ceiling-to-floor velvet blue curtains and murals on either side of the curtains. On the left mural is a painting of Moses entitled "The Moral Compass," which depicts Moses holding two tablets of the Ten Commandments in each hand. On the right mural is a painting of Justinian and the Social Code. On the right wall of the auditorium is a series of murals consisting of paintings of Thurgood Marshall, Judge Clarence Thomas, Barbara Jordan, Vernon Jordan, Constance Parker Motley, Martin Luther King, Jr., Charles Hinton Houston, and Ronald Brown. On the same wall under the murals are banners stating, "Libertas," "Justitia," and "Equalitas." The rear of the auditorium has framed pictures of noted Black judges and attorneys in New Jersey. The balcony of the auditorium has more murals, pictures, and photographs. The left side of the auditorium has floor-to-ceiling windows with purple curtains with gold trim. A mural with a painting of the Supreme Court Building in Washington, DC, is displayed in the main entrance to the auditorium. A caption at the top of the columns states, "Equal Justice Under Law." A caption at the bottom of the columns states, "The greatest gifts we can give our children are roots and wings."

I left the auditorium and continued to tour the building, taking note of a display case next to the main office with the names of students who have had perfect attendance and made the honor roll. Another mural contained the following message to students, "Just for academic achievement from the business coalition for educational excellence." I noticed that one banner states, "Benchmark School 2005, supported by Prudential Financial, Verizon Wireless, Johnson and Johnson, Washington Mutual and the New Jersey General Assembly Resolution for Governor's School." Another mural states,
“Parents as Partners = Success.” Under this mural are pictures of teachers and students working within the community. Another mural outside of GP12’s office depicts children holding a welcome sign.

I walked upstairs and noticed “The Peace Path” on the walls, along which different messages show students how to resolve problems and conflicts. The first message reads, “Think it through” and the next reads, “And agree on a solution.” The second level has classrooms with different themes written on the doors. One door reads, “Dr. Seuss,” another reads, “Spring into summer with good character,” and a third reads, “Shoot for the moon, even if you miss, you’ll land among the stars.”

I finished my tour of the second floor and walked down another set of stairs that has a caption that states, “Exit in peace.” I returned to the main office, where GP12 said, “At 1:00 p.m., I have a meeting with 3rd- and 4th-grade teachers on NJASK. If we can improve by 5% overall, we will be happy.” GP12 talked about a past elementary school graduate (AMA) who had gone on to study criminal justice in college. When GP12 had first arrived at JCA, the students did not respect the police department. Therefore, she took all the fifth graders on a visit to the local prison to put on orange prison issue jumpsuits to experience what it would be like to be in lockup. The first graders regularly visit traffic court, and on one visit the judge had asked the first graders what should happen to a habitual traffic violator. As explained by GP12, the judge said, “Should he get probation? I will leave it up to these children.” The first graders all agreed and responded, “Put him in jail for 10 days.”

GP12 and I walked back upstairs to the second level and entered a classroom, where fifth graders preparing for the graduation ceremonies started to clap. I asked,
“How many fifth graders and graduating?” GP12 replied, “Forty four.” After leaving that classroom, GP12 said, “I do a walk-through every morning. Observations are continual as well as the review of plan books.” GP12 and I returned to the main office down the other side of the “peace walk.” GP12 commented, “Teachers are supposed to share in the responsibility of disciplining students. It is a shared responsibility.”

GP12 and I walked into the auditorium to check on the ceremony preparation as parents slowly began to enter the building for the graduation program. GP12 met with a parent and they both went into her office for a conference. I noticed a large picture of the school’s namesake, “JCJ 1937-2005,” near the entrance to the auditorium next to a certificate of appreciation form the district superintendent. Another caption over the doorway that reads “Choices and Honesty” leads to the “Path of Respect.” The nurse’s office is across from GP12’s office. Six fourth graders paired two by two stood at the entrances to the building and auditorium to guide the graduation ceremony programs.

10:10 a.m.

At 10:10 a.m., GP12 finished her meeting with the parent and walked with me to the auditorium. In the school foyer, GP12 introduced me to the district supervisor who represents the board of education and superintendent’s office. The supervisor explained, “The superintendent wanted to make sure that all schools are covered during this time of year.” This district contains 22 schools and is the largest district. The supervisor said that he was retiring this year after 43 years in education.

After our conversation, GP12 and I walked to the front of the auditorium to sit on the stage with the other guests. At 10:15 a.m., fifth graders entered the auditorium twirling multicolored stringers on thin sticks and marching to music. As the students
gathered on stage risers, the group swayed like a choir to the music. The audience clapped, snapped pictures, and videotaped the activities. Selected students designated the masters of ceremonies thanked the guests and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance and the Negro National Anthem. One student introduced the district supervisor, who congratulated the students and gave a brief message on behalf of the board of education and the district superintendent. After this message, the pianist played a musical introduction as the graduates lined up on the stage. One student stepped out in front of the group and began to sing a solo. After his solo, the rest of the group joined him in “They Cannot Take That Away From Me” and “You Are the Wind Beneath My Wings.” A banner on the stage stated, “Celebrate, you are awesome.”

After the audience had applauded, GP12 introduced the guest speaker (GS), who was a past graduate of this school and valedictorian of the district’s high school. She graduated from high school with a GPA of 4.4 out of 5.0 and is now a university freshman. GS thanked God, proud of her religious background as a Jehovah’s Witness. GS continued, “Seven years ago I was one of you” before describing points of success and ways of being a good student with integrity and self-respect. After GS had finished, students gave several awards to the guests on stage, including the principal, the teacher’s assistant, the guest speaker, and the supervisor representative. GP12 then presented the 5th-grade class of 2007 to the audience. The audience stood to applaud. GP12 gave awards to two students; one to JN, who had lost his leg during the school year due to a serious accident, and the other to TE, who had assisted JN throughout the remainder of the year. GP12 said, “The school was not equipped with an elevator, yet TE did a great
job.” GP12 also commented on the student who sang the solo: “VL graduated at the top of his class. VL is also autistic.” The audience stood and applauded this young student.

As diplomas were distributed, one little boy walked up on stage, shook everyone’s hand very quickly, and got his diploma. The audience laughed. GP12 said, “Last but definitely not the least, WS, congratulations to the class of 2007.” GP12 then said,

Now, we have the final two students that received top honors. Each will receive the Presidential Education Award, given since 1983 to students who have demonstrated academic excellence. Mrs. Bush and President Bush have signed this special letter of recognition. First is RN, our salutatorian. He is reading at Grade 12 and scored advanced proficiency on the NJASK in mathematics and language arts.

The audience stood and applauded and cheered as other students called RN’s name.

GP12 continued, “This next student, AA, is the valedictorian, whose reading level is also at Grade 12. She scored advanced proficiency on the NJASK in mathematics and language arts.” The audience again stood and applauded. GP12 thanked the parents of the valedictorian and salutatorian and the other parents in the audience. GP12 shared the NJASK scores for the school with the audience:

Grade 3 scored 81% proficient in LA and 88% proficient in math. Grade 4 scored 93% proficient in LA and 100% proficient in math. Grade 5 scored 86% proficient in LA and 81% proficient in math. Our school topped many of the suburban schools on this assessment. You should be very proud of these scores.

I could feel the triumph and the challenges that some of these students had experienced. It was truly heart wrenching. After reading the NJASK scores, GP12
concluded the ceremonies and dismissed the 5th-grade class of 2007. I wondered whether a graduation ceremony were held after each set of grade levels, not just in this district but throughout the educational process. If so, would that mean that prior to high school graduation, students would “graduate” or participate in “graduation ceremonies” no fewer than four or five times? For example, a student in district X would graduate from PK, K, and Grades 3, 5, 8, 9, then Grade 12—six graduation ceremonies prior to the high school flagship ceremony. Does this have a social, economic, and psychological impact on the student, parents, and/or district?

11:15 a.m.

As the parents and quests filed out of the auditorium, I noticed several other items in the foyer that had been created by different grade levels. I noticed the 2007 Literary Project, the 2nd-grade chronicle, an anthology of poems, a poetry jam, book critiques, a segment entitled “Life as a Fourth Grader,” the poets’ society, and “Our Happy Gardener.” In the corridor next to the main office I noticed the “Twelfth Annual Artists Salute to Black History Month, Our Children Our Hope.” In the same vicinity I observed a display case containing a student’s self-portrait made of black-eyed peas. The last few parents exited the auditorium with white balloons as the parents of the autistic child reentered and went to the stage, where VL sang a verse of his solo again while his mother recorded the song. I left the auditorium and met the assistant teacher, whom I asked, “Is this going to be a half day because of graduation?” She responded, “No, students in Grades 1 through 4 have a regular day.” I walked to the main office and waited for GP12, who was outside talking with parents.
11:40 a.m.

At 11:40 a.m., GP12 entered the office for a few minutes, then returned outside. Finally, GP12 entered the office and asked me, “Do you want to go to lunch and return by 1:00 p.m.?” I responded, “Yes, I was thinking about visiting Whole Foods on Bloomfield Avenue for lunch.” GP12 replied, “Good, I like their salads.”

1:00 p.m.

At 1:00 p.m., I returned to the school to walk with GP12 to a meeting with 3rd- and 4th-grade teachers on NJPASS and NJASK test scores. During the meeting, GP12 commented,

Were you not proud of DV? We will not let the students know the scores until after lunch. Because all students will get a bunch of goodies, it is the last thing they will hear prior to going on summer vacation. Let’s look at the roster by subject to see scores in the advanced proficient category. More importantly, who did not make proficiency?

GP12 read the names of students by grade level in language arts and stated,

There are no surprises; these are the kids that we targeted. Okay, let’s take a look at mathematics, no surprises. Only two students did not meet proficiency and they were in special education. In September we will really crunch the numbers. In science, there were a few students that were surprises; one student made advanced proficiency in science.

GP12 then passed copies of the assessment to everyone in the group. A member of the group shared its information with me. After distributing the copies, GP12 stated, “Our students take ownership of their learning.” GP12 continued reviewing third and
fourth graders by subcategories in mathematics and language arts. GP12 explained that during their reading program, students are assessed every 8 weeks and “the kids want to know how they scored.” GP12 commented,

Standards are integrated in everything they do. Teachers collaborate on cooperative learning standards during a common planning period. We have a low mobility rate. Teachers learn how to score writing during meetings every 2 months. Teachers also help struggling students with tutoring after school.

GP12 expressed delight in the fact that the district has an excellent mathematics supervisor who provides much support by sending packets and writing samples from the state. The mathematics supervisor also plans and conducts a number of meetings with the staff. Students who are not proficient are placed in the APA assessment category. GP12 said, “We are above the district average on all sections of the language arts proficiency. These are excellent scores for the school.” GP12 also said that students are rewarded for their academic achievement. Students that place in the advanced proficient category get gift cards and go to sporting events, TGI Friday’s restaurant, and movies with free popcorn and snacks. Students who score in the proficient category get a free pancake breakfast. GP12 said, “There’s a lot of Red Lobster.”

2:15 p.m.

At 2:15 p.m., I conducted an open-ended interview with GP12.

Documents: GP12 provided the following materials:

1. A beginning reading program handout sponsored by Rutgers University.
2. A copy of the June 2007 monthly calendar with the last day for students marked June 25, 2007.
3. The summer reading skills program schedule sponsored by Rutgers University.

4. A copy of the town’s public library presentation of a program geared to the Haitian community entitled *Building a Strategic Partnership*.

5. A copy of the graduation program entitled *Let the Learning Continue... Today, Tomorrow and Forever*.

On my own, I obtained a copy of the school’s goals and a message about the school from the district Web site.

Participant 16: GP13  Date: September 18, 2007  Field time: 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

I arrived near the site at approximately 6:45 a.m. and had breakfast. I located the building around 7:15 a.m., parked, and entered through a side entrance. When I asked a group of students where the main office was located, one student responded, “Go down the hall through the double doors make a left and continue straight through the commons area. The office will be right in front of you.” I followed the directions, and as I entered the commons area, I observed a large glass enclosed office within which GP13 was sitting at her desk, typing on a computer.

I walked around the office to the door, where GP13 introduced herself and VP1. I gave them an overview of my research and proposed an approximate time after my shadowing/observation for conducting the open-ended interview. GP13 explained that her brother was getting married on Saturday and she had volunteered to sing at his wedding. I asked, “So do you sing professionally?” GP13 responded, “Not really only, in the choir at church, but I have taken voice lessons.” When I asked about the television monitor in the office, GP13 responded, “TV monitors are in each classroom; the ITV room broadcasts to the monitors in each classroom.”
After several students in the chorus sang a birthday shout-out, two or three other students gave the morning announcements. The office had a clear glass floor-to-ceiling wall, which provided GP13 with a direct view into the cafeteria. I wondered whether this was by design, based on the visibility. I asked GP13, “What is your daily routine like?” GP13 explained, “I am very visible around the building, usually problem solving. For example, the choir fundraiser was advertised without getting permission and because permission was not given, that fundraiser is now someone else’s fundraiser.” GP13 was in the process of typing a letter to the person in the choir to explain this situation.

At that point, the secretary entered the office for clarification on certain recently imposed responsibilities, and GP13 introduced me to her. GP13 received a phone call. While GP13 was on the phone, the secretary asked about my study. I provided a brief explanation and the reasons for the overall length of graduate work. GP13 and the secretary discussed the original issue dealing with specific responsibilities. After the phone call, GP13 talked with the secretary, and after she left the office, GP13 commented, “It is not the secretary’s responsibility to locate or retrieve textbooks and/or laboratory work. It should be done by the teacher and counselor.”

After this exchange, I inquired, “I just remembered; will my car be okay in the lot? GP13 asked, “Where did you park? I responded, “On the side of the building where the students were parking, closer to a row of handicapped parking signs.” GP13 responded,

That is the senior parking area which holds 316 cars but we have over 500 seniors. What is your plate number and what color is your vehicle? I will call security to alert them so you will not get a ticket.
I gave GP13 the information and asked, “Is that why when I first arrived earlier this morning and stopped to get coffee at Starbucks I observed several teenagers sitting in that parking lot?” GP13 replied, “Which Starbucks? I did not know there was a Starbucks around here. It must be the park-and-ride lot.” I responded, “It is on the main highway a block from RDR Boulevard.”

A counselor entered the office to talk with GP13 about a student’s birth certificate. I was not sure if this person was a teacher or a counselor, as counselors are more likely to discuss confidential issues, such as a student’s birth certificate. After the counselor exited the office, a second VP (VP2) entered and asked GP13, “Can you send a letter as an attachment to all staff that have homerooms?” GP13 acknowledged this request and introduced me to VP2. VP2 and I shared a brief conversation about a recent board of education meeting and BG, who told GP13 that he did not know all of the people at the meeting.

After this conversation VP2 exited the office. GP13 said,

That is the difference between high school and elementary school. Whenever there is a problem or issue at the high school level, the principal must meet with the board of education to explain what happened. At the elementary level seldom do you have the same scrutiny.

GP13 explained that two meetings were set up for this morning, one of which was a risk population overview of individual kids. Once the kids left the meeting, the key stakeholders would discuss their concerns. The second meeting, scheduled with representatives from the HH police department, would include VPs, counselors, the student assistance counselor or SAC, and GP13. The meeting would be on structural
organization and not student issues. GP13 left the office to talk with a staff member, then reentered and indicated that the 11:00 a.m. meeting was not an issue of confidentiality but more structural and organizational. GP13 then spoke on the phone with another staff member or district person for a short period.

After the phone call, GP13 explained,

We have a group of students that are looking to get out of an Algebra 2 class because the teacher’s delivery of the subject matter is boring, no bells and whistles. Students complained to their parents and now parents are trying to do whatever they can to help get their kids out of this particular teacher’s classes.

She then asked, “How is it at MR?” I responded, “Pretty much the same. Parents are very involved with their child’s educational process. Plus it is just about the same demographic or SES.”

The phone rang again and GP13 took the call. Evidently, Ms. LK was concerned about the same issue and GP13 explained how she wanted to be fair with all parties involved. Ms. LK suggested a change from Mrs. U’s class to Mrs. LP’s class. GP13 was trying to be equitable but was in a difficult situation. The parent of CW wanted to change the student’s Algebra 2 class and said that she had called and talked with someone during the summer as well as yesterday, which to her was the second call about this change.

GP13 was concerned with the change’s overall impact on the schedule and other classes, as well as other staff. Would this change be fair to other teachers or other students? GP13 would talk more extensively with Mrs. UY and Mrs. PK, but the parent of CW has called on other occasions during September.
GP13 explained that if a change were made, it would involve moving approximately 8 to 10 students out of one teacher’s class to another teacher’s class. That would leave the latter teacher with only 5 to 6 students and another teacher with over 30 students. I thought that this issue could become a larger concern with CW’s other teachers and then possibly a school-wide issue if it was not resolved. GP13 may run the risk of creating more anxiety than necessary simply by giving the perception of entertaining the possibility of changing the class.

GP13 and I walked over to the guidance area, where GP13 asked a counselor, “Do you recall talking with this parent during the summer?” Both counselors in guidance said, “No, unless she talked with MA, or she could have talked with PG or SI.” GP13 returned to the office and called MA to find out who had talked with CW’s parent regarding changing her Algebra 2 teacher. GP13 explained that CW had been working with a tutor since Grade 6 and that her parent had made a phone call during the summer, but no one seems to have noted her change request. MA thought it was MM but it was not, so GP13 explained the conversation she had just had with the parent. MA explained that if it were someone who taught an AP class, that teacher would walk kids to her class.

After that exchange, GP13 discussed this situation with me:

The current Algebra 2 teacher has been here for 36 years and he has not changed his presentation. His lesson and his presentation is dry and the kids do not want to be in his classroom, so they tell their parents.

I asked, “Is there a policy on class changes?” GP13 replied, “Yes, no teacher changes. What I am going to do is reach out to last year’s teacher to get some insight.” GP13 changed the conversation briefly back to her brother’s wedding: “I am singing an alleluia
hymn accompanied by an organ. For the wedding rehearsal, it is a gressorial or gregarious chant. I asked, “What is the makeup of your school?” GP13 responded, “We have 2,350 students that are grouped into three alphabetic houses.” We walked outside of the office and stood in the commons area, watching students gather during the changing of classes. GP13 said, “The commons is the hub of the school; the second floor, science, and applied arts empties into the commons when the bell rings.” I asked, “How much time is allowed between periods?” GP13 responded, “Five minutes passing between periods. Kids can stop for a soda or get something from the café. We have smaller learning communities centered on mathematics, social studies, and world language or science, language, and applied arts.” I asked, “So are you block scheduled?” GP13 replied, “No, we have seven and a half periods per day that are 48 minutes long and 52 minutes for lunch. Each of the three VPs was assigned to a house.”

9:00 a.m.

At 9:00 a.m., GP13 and I walked into the meeting on the structural organization of at-risk support for students. GP13 introduced me to the group. The lead counselor then addressed the group:

Now we have an issue with the IRS [Intervention and Referral Services] and academic problems; we don’t want those kids to fall through the cracks. We want to try to work together as a team, especially with all 504s it works very well.

What would you say if we had two different teams and spread social works and resources staff between the two teams? You are the people that are going to be involved in this.
GP13 stated,

You are the guys that are going to be the filter, but it will kill you if we continue in the way that we have as a core team. Because we do not have an at-risk counselor right now, we can balance this between academic and those emotionally challenged [students]. Now I want to open it up to you, what do you think?

This was a large group of social workers, counselors, supervisors, psychologists, and VPs, totaling 20 to 25 people. For the purposes of this exchange, I identified each staff member as “SF” and a number (SF1, SF2, SF3, etc.) because I was not able to associate a title with most individuals. I was able to identify the VP as such because I knew him from previous introductions and labeled the group leader as such only because she had initially started the meeting. The following is the exchange that occurred during the meeting:

SF1: To bring in another committee would be confusing.

SF2: I was on a committee in 1990 and there was no IRS; it would be confusing.

SF3: Sometimes you feel worn out with the daily issues, no homework, absences, discipline. Seeing more of a brain-storming, service-oriented committee would be good.

GL: How would we decide what the issues are and what to do?

SF3: Examples are how to deal with attendance and kids red-flagged from MS.

SF4: Envision, the only kids I lost were the 25 ninth graders. My goal was to go to each counselor and review with him or her on those kids. Maybe not a team approach, but we as guidance counselors are here to talk with each other. RB is right with keeping themes in mind. You can do only so much with behavior. The VPs can attest to that.

SF3: But with behavior we can take target. I just think it would be good to brainstorm.
SF5: Let us look at breaking it down from different perspectives.

SF6: Does anyone have a placement to discuss and remember, confidentiality stays in that room, it is also better when you have a colleague with you. There is a benefit with confidentiality; if a student says something that is off keel, I am going to let that guidance counselor know. It is important to stay in contact at the end of the day. Have you heard this name . . . just so there is open communication. I thought the kid was being seen last year but because of confidentiality I did not know. I know we are off topic but . . .

GL: But it is not, how can we help the kids that need help?

SF7: I had a kid in the office over an hour then found out that he was being seen by someone else. Last year the kid was having problems; we had DYFS and the police but it turned out to be nothing.

SF6: But it really is, the communication thing is very important. Yes, we need to communicate more with each other. The communicating piece we must talk about, you know, we have kids.

SF8: There are also issues with parents every year with kids who are seeing a variety of people.

VP: Is the meeting about the volume being sent to the IRS?

GP13: No, we have all of the pieces in place, some things worked well for a while. We were supposed to be meeting on at risk and its impact. Everyone is struggling, a, do not repeat work, b, make sure kids are seen, and c, make sure we see specific people. The IRS is great . . . but is there redundancy in positions. Now is our opportunity to make what is already good great.
SF9: The other thing is to look at kids that get information to teachers and make sure teachers get that information.

GP13: JM, I will use you for institutional memory. We sat down as an administrative group; everyone would listen them move to the next issue. I do not want to waste anyone’s time.

SF10: The times when we did get together we did talk about kids.

SF6: Although we did, we must understand the issue of communication.

SF10: That kind of meeting might be once in a while.

SF11: Why not separate by grade and get a pool of teachers that come in? Then you have two teams servicing the same amount of kids.

SF7: I do not think we are inundated.

GP13: What are we going to do differently and improve upon it?

GL: Let us figure out a way to service 2,400 kids out there, let us figure out a way to help the kids without reinventing the wheel. Duplication of services was an issue; we want to service the kids.

SF6: You do not ever see the kids that go on to college. As a learning consultant, you work with kids and you see different kids and you know where to refer that student. Does a counselor have a plan with at-risk kids?

VP: I had an at risk meeting last week. One person can take the point on a case and another person can take the next case.

SF10: I think we are doing that already, we do not need to reinvent another committee.

SF12: Let us get back to meeting together; it is still the alpha house. Let us meet; does anybody else have other suggestions? When we first started, we looked at the lists, and if
the kid was on all three lists, it was a no brainer. Maybe if we meet in smaller groups and keep the IRS as it is.

SF5: My thing with confidentiality, it must stay here in the room, it is a federal law.

SF6: But if I am seeing RN in rehabilitation and that mother is calling me, that mother already knows you are seeing RN. It is professionally embarrassing to find out that a kid’s parents are in Florida [S6 was emotionally passionate about this topic].

VP: You hit on something that KT said before about not knowing something. A simple communication glitch, KT said it, it is a big school.

SF6: It gets harder.

GI: We have to wrap it up. KT, why don’t you and I meet with the VP and have another session?

The meeting was an excellent intellectual exchange and the sharing of ideas and seemed fair and balanced. I thought that the larger issue was confidentiality among the group and communicating information or trying to determine what can be shared. After the meeting concluded at 9:30 a.m., the group dispersed as the VP and group leader talked about the federal guidelines for drugs and alcohol. I personally believe that confidentiality is trumped by incidents that are life threatening or of a crisis-management nature, such as bomb threats, weapons, and/or terrorist threats.

GP13 then held a private meeting with two IRS social workers to find out if any misunderstandings had resulted from this meeting.

SW1: We have two SACs [substance abuse coordinators] and two social workers; why not psychologists? Are they not specific to suicide?

GP13: I would like to get another teacher involved on the IRS team.
SW2: We had two or three teachers for a long time. We can reach out to another teacher; that way we can get the benefit of someone who was in mathematics or science.

SW1: Another male teacher would be nice.

GP13: I do not want to pull someone off a duty because it may not have been planned. I pulled you aside because I did not want it to be just the social workers. Guidance does not have to bring a kid if it is just academics. It is the kids with a long history of problems and at-risk behavior.

SW1: We went to the 3-day training and bonded even more. The meetings with the VPs were really great.

GP13: Now is the time that we should really do this.

SW1: Regarding my issue on confidentiality, when you close the door, it stays in here. But with parents you lose that [SW1 was in fact the “S6” during the group meeting who had become very passionate].

SW2: Is there a way to train the new teachers for the high school, maybe not with the whole district? What about the next faculty meeting?

GP13: The next faculty meeting will be devoted to confidentiality. Maybe a day when there is no department meeting. I hate to do it to the supervisors.

SW2: If you could get a list of the new teachers, I could give them the information.

GP13: That may be a better way, through information.

SW2: We could send an e-mail.

After this meeting, GP13 had a private meeting with SW2 as I waited outside of the conference room. After that meeting, GP13 and I returned to the office, where GP13 stated, “The reality is that we could have different people on the team, but rather than
impose my will . . . you do not want people who are working hard to be ignored.” I stated, “It was good that you called that meeting to clear up any misperceptions.” The phone rang and GP13 took the call. I assumed that this call was about the Algebra 2 situation regarding the tenured teacher who knows the content but his delivery thereof is questionable. On the phone GP13 stated, “I know your situation, there is no reason to cry. . . .” GP13 listened then stated,

Okay, so they did not classify her at all. . . . Okay, okay, okay, let me talk to Dr. C and see how she’s been leaning since you last talked with her. No, I know schedules are changing, but we cannot bring one teacher’s class down to 10 or less and put another’s up to 30 plus.

GP13 continued with this conversation for a short period, after which I asked, “Do you review your crisis-management plan?” GP13 responded, “Yes, we brought in the police department during the summer to practice crisis-management training with their officers. They were able to learn the floor plans of the building. That helped us out a lot with a number of bomb threats last year.” GP13 went on to explain that she was a fourth generation administrator at HH high school, before and after her predecessor, who had also been a VP prior to becoming principal. I stated, “So your district has a policy of hiring from within, which I think is good.” GP13 responded, “Yes, somewhat.”

Then GP13 asked me which other districts were involved in my research. At first, I was not able to respond because the question had caught me off guard. Finally, after some thought I was able to share with GP13 the other districts involved in my research. I asked, “Do you know what the current enrollment is for freshman?” GP13 responded,
We are asked at the beginning of the school year to give enrollment projections. Right now, we are trying to get things done with the new enrollment so we can get the numbers to the business administrator. The first few days of school we are on track with the numbers. I underestimate that number so I do not have to pay them back funding. You never overestimate. The business administrator provides a dollar amount per student based on cost. The administrative breakdown for each department is done by the department chairpersons who are both regular and special education leaders, they are continually figuring out what makes up their budget.

I asked, "What about the number of students that transfer in?" GP13 responded, "We are unlikely to have a high rate of transfers. The community is pretty stable. . . . We have a projected enrollment of 2,415 students; my estimate is 2,385, which is underestimated by 35 students. During the year, when my numbers reach 2,415 or above, the business administrator will transfer the difference in funding back to my budget base on my original underestimation, which in turn is divided among the DCs."

10:30 a.m.

GP13 told me that the meeting with the police department had been cancelled. As students entered the cafeteria, I asked, "Is this the lunch period?" GP13 responded, "Yes, we have five lunch periods that are mixed with the younger kids sitting at the long tables and the older kids at the short and round tables. We have four lunches that cover periods 4/5, 5/6, 6/7, 7/8 and 8/9, which are double periods." GP13 continued,
The most challenging thing without question was the series of bomb threats to our district. There were writings on the walls in the boys’ bathroom that gave specific information about a bomb in the gymnasium with a date and time. We were able to get police into the gym, and following more personal threats, for a whole day we involved our local police. What got to me was that we have a lot of great police officers and police department.

I asked, “Was there a reason for the rash of threats?” GP13 responded, “No, we have a short list of suspects. It may be possibly connected to one of our sports teams and parents who were upset at a board of education meeting.” I asked, “Do you have metal detectors?” GP13 responded, “There are no metal detectors, but we did sweep the grounds with hand-held detectors and found one buck knife and a kid turned in one dime bag of marijuana.” I asked, “Do you do a crisis-management lockdown?” GP13 responded, “Yes, it is required to do a crisis-management training and lockdown. We do four a year, which is one per marking period.” GP13 continued,

During second lunch I want to touch base with a student who was disqualified in soccer because she elbowed a member of the opposing team in the chest. I need to let her know that she represents the school at all times.

GP13 and I returned to the office, where first GP13 privately talked the student on the soccer team. After that meeting, GP13 and I sat in the office as GP13 stated,

Tomorrow night is Back-to-School Night and October 15 is Pride Day. Now I will try to catch up on some e-mails and I will brief you on a few things. By contacting teachers through e-mail, teachers become accustomed and are electronically hooked up in classrooms. It also helps the school to become more
paper free. Our Pride Day is for ninth graders, who will be broken into two
groups. Four inmates from New Jersey prisons will visit the school with prison
personnel. Two prisoners have been incarcerated for theft that is short term and
two other inmates are incarcerated long term. We will have a two-period
assembly where each inmate tells there story and kids get to ask questions.

Another group of at-risk kids will be with inmates and guards in a smaller group.
I asked, “Is this something similar to the old ‘‘scared straight?’” GP13 responded, “This
is a very different program from when we were in school. Then a lot of kids smoked pot
and other diddled and dabbled in other incidents.” GP13 asked if I could recommend a
good digital camera. I recommended the Olympus Ultra Zoom 765 10x.

11:10 a.m.

At 11:10 a.m., the bell rang and GP13 left the office to check with the secretary
for a few minutes. When GP13 returned, another staff member talked with her briefly.
The bell signaled the end of the second lunch period. I asked, “How are you with
NCLB?” GP13 responded, “NCLB AYP, we made it with three classes of resource and
three self-contained classes of moderate disability. What can you do, send the student to
another district or another . . . not likely.” The glass doors and windows in the office
made it very transparent. At that time, GP13 called to talk with the female soccer player
who had elbowed an opposing member in the chest. I asked, “Do you want me to sit in on
that?” GP13 responded, “No, I would not want the student to think that I was
reprimanding her with a stranger in the room.”

GP13 and the student had a private meeting behind closed doors. When they left
the office, both were smiling. Whatever was said seemed to be effective or have produced
a positive outcome. At that point, GP13 and I went on a tour of the building. The office of the director of guidance is on the first level and the offices of two VPs on the second level. The first level contains a large office complex with counseling and secretarial space. I made a mental note that at 1:00 p.m. I must conduct the open-ended interview with GP13. On the tour, GP13 explained how the school was constructed in sections; the main building was constructed in 1969, the next in 1987, the next in 1999, and the most recent in 2001. I asked about the banner hanging in the cafeteria that stated “Spirit Night.” GP13 responded,

It is an annual event which is the culmination of that year’s activities for each grade level. Grade 9 is represented by the color yellow, Grade 10 is represented by the color green, Grade 11 is represented by the color blue, and Grade 12 is the color red. Throughout the year, there are spirit activities. Usually the event is held in the café, as it was during 2005 and 2006. Each grade level creates different dances.

While on our tour, GP13 and I met with two VPs, one of whom explained that spirit day was the day that the school had no electrical power during exams. Period three lunch ended and lunch four began. As the tour continued on the second level, GP13 noted the science wing, the VPs’ offices, the library, the woodshop, and the graphic arts and chorus classrooms. GP13 and I went into the chorus room, where GP13 introduced me to the chorus teacher. The library is very large and outfitted with computer technology.

After speaking with the chorus teacher, GP13 and I met with a group of teachers who had something resembling a food cart with fruits and veggies. GP13 introduced me to three new teachers in charge of the foods program, who were helping get students
more involved in the program. After this meeting, GP13 and I went outside to see the football and track fields. While outside, I asked if he could return a call, and GP13 said I could do so. After the call GP13 stated, “We do not allow cells phones or any electronic device that might interfere with classroom instruction.”

Upon entering the building, I noticed several young men wearing hats and asked, “Do you have a hat policy?” GP13 responded, “No, except for hoods.” I replied, “Now, I knew why you said previously to that student take the hood off. The hood makes you look like a hood.” GP13 said, “No pun intended.” Earlier during the day, a student wearing a hood was asked by GP13 to remove it. Because the student was Black, GP13 may have thought that my question about the hat policy was in reference to this incident because other students had not been told to remove their hats. Hoods have a tendency to cover the entire face, which may be a security issue.

On the way to the cafeteria, GP13 met with a VP who shared a letter from a parent who wanted to get her regular education student an aide. I asked, “Would that create a precedent, essentially because the student would have her own private bodyguard? GP13 explained that situation and said she would probably need more information from the parent on her request. When I asked about GP13’s philosophy on leadership she responded, “Hire good people and get out of the way.” In the cafeteria, GP13 asked, “What would you like, Chicken Marcella with pasta or a sub?” I responded, “A sub sandwich.”

While in line, I noticed colorful student drawings on the cafeteria walls. During lunch in the teacher’s cafeteria, GP13 and I shared a table and discussed several topics. GP13 stated,
Hire good people and get out of the way. You have high expectations and people will know and understand that. If you were to ask teachers about this building, they would say we are all in it together. We fall into our own rhythms. Our new superintendent is someone in the district. We also have monthly meetings trying to understand where we are and improve upon it.

When we finished lunch at around 1:00 p.m., I wanted to start the interview. We had lunch in the mini break room. GP13 was very gracious an paid for lunch; I had a turkey and Swiss cheese sandwich on rye with a mango Snapple drink. Lunch was outstanding maybe because I was pretty hungry. GP13 and I returned to the office, where GP13 stated, “That is why I must see the letter from their attorney. Then our attorney will respond. I do not know if we have someone to escort her or how will it be paid for; what is the cost?” GP13 left the office briefly and I quietly waited in the office, observing the custodial staff cleaning the cafeteria floors and folding the tables. GP13 was responding to the issue of the parent of a regular education student requesting an aide for “protection” in school during the day.

1:30 p.m.

I conducted an open-ended interview with GP13 at 1:30 p.m.

Documents: GP13 provided the following materials:

The HH high school student-parent handbook for the 2007-08 school year, which had been authored by GP13.

Participant 17: GP14 Date: September 25, 2007 Field time: 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

I arrived near the site by 7:15 a.m. After having breakfast and coffee and reading the newspaper, I located the school, parked, and entered the building. In the main office I
met GP14, who asked, “Did you make it here okay?” I responded, “AL street and AL road threw me off so I drove around a bit.” I went on to explain my research purpose and its association with her work. At that point, a secretary entered the office to explain to GP14 several issues with a recent school report. After this brief exchange, GP14 made an announcement over the PA: “The faculty advisory meeting will be in room C1 at this time.” After the announcement GP14 said, “Let me make a copy of this and I will be right back.”

As GP14 and I were walking to the meeting, I stated, “This must be the hall of fame.” GP14 responded, “That’s right, we just added another plaque yesterday.” As we entered room C1, I observed a group of staff sitting around a conference table. GP14 said, “I see we have some new faces here.” Two or three staff members introduced themselves and GP14 said, “Let me introduce the researcher from the university.” I greeted everyone as the members of the group nodded good morning. GP14 continued with informal ice-breaking conversation then started the meeting: “On the agenda this morning is the opening of school and how things went. On a whole, I thought things opened pretty well. One thing is that our buses are getting here on time or even earlier.”

For the purposes of brevity, the members of this meeting are identified by “S” and a number (SF1, SF2, SF3, etc.). The following is a transcript of the meeting:

SF1: That brings me to one point, it may be too early and no one is on duty, it may be really dangerous. But no one is on duty 10 minutes to 8:00 a.m.

GP14: When buses came at 9:00 a.m., everything was okay, so I asked them to come at 8:50 a.m. By contract, teachers should be here 5 minutes before the students. The
question is, how dangerous is it? The hallways; teachers are not in the hallways, so is it dangerous? I do not think it is that big of a deal.

SF2: I do not think teachers know the times when they are supposed to be here.

GP14: Yeah, teachers are supposed to be here 5 minutes before the students arrive and 5 minutes after the buses leave.

SF2: Many people are complaining.

GP14: If we just shift a few minutes earlier, it is good to start the day earlier.

SF3: God forbid something should happen. Who was that boy that came in last year with his dirt bike? It was JCN.

SF4: There is a million high school kids in the hall kissing and hugging, they were running, it was crazy at the end of the day.

GP14: JCN came over to see me from the high school. At the end of the day the high school is wide open, the doors are open and in some instances, some high school kids have younger siblings that they pick up at this school.

SF5: JE [referring to GP14's first name], some of the drivers drop kids off toward the rear of the parking lot and sometimes they hold the kids until it is time to let them go.

GP14: Other drivers think 8:49 is 8:47 or it is 8:45, they have to get on the same page.

SF3: Can we ring the bell outside to signal it is time to enter?

GP14: The bell already rings, maybe too loud but it rings.

SF4: Another thing... can you just say something to the homeroom teachers to pat them on the back?
GP14: Okay, I will, let us talk about parent conferences. I know it is a long way off but it is good to do it now. The Friday before Thanksgiving and from Wednesday to Friday are half days.

SF5: The question is, do we want to have two evenings or two afternoons and one night? The thought was that two afternoons may be better. [The group continued discussing this topic for a brief time while GP14 listened.]

GP14: But now a lot of you are also parents, so I do think those of you who are parents should respond.

SF5: JE, I would try it.

GP14: Okay, are there any other thoughts or comments? All right, so we have a consensus, unless anybody has any other comments.

SF6: Can we get this done with teachers or can we log it on the server and let them look at it from there? So I will put it on the server and add a part for a confirmation and check for a receipt under options in the section for a new e-mail.

GP14: We have a new Director of Special Services, but her old position in special services is vacant. For those of you who are special education teachers, you will see a stronger presence with her on board. Okay, does anyone have any other comments? Energy for America is a company that was hired by the district to monitor the building temperature. An outside company monitors the temperature in various buildings. The air conditioning system was shut off at 4:00 p.m. a few days ago and I, as well as others, were still working, and it became very muggy, hot, and uncomfortable. I have had several conversations with this company about adjustments and continual monitoring. One thing EFA said was to put individual thermometers in the classrooms to monitor the actual
temperature. Teachers should let me know the actual temperature in the classroom, especially if they have a problem. There were a couple of problems, for example this hallway was a bit uncomfortable. The board of education wanted to know when it is too hot based on developing some type of a policy. The HVAC controller in the district wanted to make sure that the rooms were monitored in conjunction with the temperature and thermometers in the classrooms. If EFA indicates they will not lower the temperature, then I will take it up with them.

SF5: JE, is it the cost? Because we only need the air in September and maybe October.

GP14: That initial cost is hard to absorb without a referendum.

SF7: We were told it cost $1,500 dollars just to adjust the temperature in one little classroom.

SF6: There is air conditioning in science.

GP14: That is because it used to be the library and when they did the retrofit it was easier. I will talk with EFA. The other item is Back to School Night.

SF2: We had a problem with students finishing the test. We had problems with a kid finishing a test with no pass, he came to class 10 minutes late. RY was the kid.

SF3: Was it part of his 504 plan?

SF2: No, he insisted on finishing his test.

SF5: JE, another thing for the October faculty meeting; do we entertain having an athletic meeting after school? It was 80 students waiting to get their picture taken.

GP14: I talked with JN about that.

SF5: Does the athletic department come to talk to kids about sports?
[The group discussed this topic and GP14 laughed as S4 commented on the problem with sports. I was not sure what that problem was.]

GP14: JN teaches at the high school; he may be able to do that as a before-school meeting.

SF4: He could do it before school.

GP14: I do not know what he is covering with the kids. I think he is very sensitive with our kids balancing sports and academics.

SF1: Kids should know some issues with advanced proficiency before the test.

GP14: Are there any other suggestions?

SF1: In-service day could be used to address the skills for taking the test with our kids. It would be great for that. How do you teach someone how to write when he or she is not getting it?

SF4: The last in-service was on kickboxing and Pilates.

GP14: There are two issues that are pressing: the first one is team building and the second is how are we dealing with difficulties and are we sensitive to multicultural issues? Okay that is it, meeting adjourned.

As GP14 and I walked outside to observe students get off the buses, GP14 stated, “The faculty advisory committee meets once a month and this was our first meeting.” I asked, “How long have you been principal?” GP14 responded, “Three years a principal, 2 years as vice principal, and 5 years as the district science supervisor.” As staff and students entered the building, I asked, “Is there a reason why you wanted to be principal or what made you decide to become a building principal?” GP14 responded in between greeting staff and students:
That is a great question. As the science supervisor, I felt disconnected and on the fringe. I wanted to be more connected to a school rather than just visiting. The transition was somewhat easy because the staff saw me doing things in the school. The timing was right when I replaced my predecessor because of retirement. My predecessor walked on water. Eventually, I would like to move to the assistant superintendent position in charge of curriculum and instruction. For now I like being in a building. I am much more involved and it gives stability. The superintendent is very encouraging toward personal job advancement.

GP14 then commented, "It would be interesting to see the staff reactions to you; they think I am being monitored." At that point, a teacher wearing Bermuda shorts and a Hawaiian shirt asked with a big smile, "Are you being monitored?"

GP14 and I both laughed and returned to the main office, where GP14 sat at his computer and stated, "Let's figure out what I do today. Yesterday I was at Rutgers for a workshop, but when you are out for the day, you can get backed up." GP14 was at his computer when I asked, "Have you encountered difficulties as principal?" GP14 responded, "Not really. I was also a vice principal." I asked, "How long is your school day? GP14 responded, "School starts at 9:00 a.m. with homeroom and finishes at 3:30 p.m. In 1975 the middle concept involved Grades 6 through 8. In 1990 it was changed to Grades 7 and 8." At that time, morning announcements were being made. I asked, "Is that one of your VPs making the announcements?" GP14 responded, "No, it is our mathematics content specialist." I asked, "What size is your enrollment, how many staff and VPs do you have? These are standard questions." GP14 responded, "Enrollment stats are 1,200 students, 170 staff, and two VPs." I asked, "Do you think they changed the
middle grades so students could get a stronger association to the high school or as preparation for the transition to high school?” GP14 responded, “That is a good question. I think elementary schools that contain sixth grade gives a feeling of importance to the sixth graders.” GP14 received a phone call, gave the person on the phone his password and user identification, then told me, “That is my wife.” After talking with his wife, GP14 said,

A GEPA in-service day on literacy would help us try to identify kid scores just below proficiency. We need to review writing samples by conferencing kids and get them to write more. How well we maintain records was sketchy and we need to have regular meetings with the advisory team in November, January, and May 2008. What are we doing for the kids? One of the team members brought up and I agree, What are the strategies?

I asked, “How are you doing with NCLB and AYP?” GP14 replied, “We barely made it because of the challenge with subgroups that include social economic status and special education.” I responded, “A lot of suburban school districts are having the same problems with the same subgroups.” GP14 added, “The first district in-service was run by district supervisors, who used materials and topics from CFESP. We came away with questions.” I asked, “Is CFESP part of Coalition of Essential Schools?” GP14 responded, “No, I do not think so.” I asked, “Do you have a crisis management plan or a lockdown plan?” GP14 responded, “Every other month the crisis management team meets; we also have a fire drill twice a month. In the event of a lockdown, a code is used over the public announcement system. We are part of a larger township emergency management plan.” I asked, “Have you ever had an occasion to evacuate the school?” GP14 responded,
No, we have not. But for an extended evacuation during inclement weather and when in an actually emergency, we use the church as an alternate location behind the school. I also have to call the priest to let him know or reestablish our relationship and use of the church in case of an emergency. Principals also meet with the superintendent on a monthly basis to review crisis management plans. I asked, “What type of schedule do you follow?” GP14 responded, “We follow a regular 40-minute nine-period day.” GP14 called the priest of the alternate site used for emergency evacuations and provided me with a copy of the school’s bell schedule from 9:00 a.m. to 3:36 p.m.

A VP entered the office and GP14, while still on the phone, introduced me. I asked, “Do you need for me to leave?” GP14 said, “No.” I gestured to the VP and stated, “No, not because I thought you we in trouble or something, but I am sensitive to privacy and confidentiality concerns.” The VP smiled because of the timing of my comment, which made it seem as if the VP had been called to the principal’s office to be reprimanded, just as a student called to the principal’s office does not necessarily know what to expect. The VP and GP14 talked about an issue with students and a coach involved in field hockey.

After his phone call, I asked GP14, “Did your program of study prepare you for the job of principal?” GP14 responded,

Well, I received my master’s degree from a college in New Jersey and my doctorate from a university in Pennsylvania. I guess the training provided a little of both, especially with school law and observation techniques and providing good guidance for on the job. With discipline and leadership, I had to become
more active in those areas on the job because the doctoral program did not have a strong emphasis on those categories, things not covered in the preparation program; well, it does not help with handling bomb threats or companies like EFA or crisis-management situations. I better learned those things through the position of vice principal. I had a great principal when I was a vice principal.

I then asked, “Why did the board of education and superintendent choose you as principal?” I asked this question because of GP14’s earlier explanation that he and another candidate had been competing for the same position. GP14 responded,

We both started at the same time. With my background as the science supervisor, the board and superintendent looked at me because I was the VP already and as a way to line things up for the school. I grew up in south Jersey and as I was in the process of receiving my doctorate. The university provided strong training in the instructional area. I was also interested in being in the learning cohort associated with Philadelphia to get a more rounded multicultural perspective.

I asked, “What goals have you set this year and what are they based on?” At that point, GP14 was on the computer and replied, “The goals are automatically set by the building and the objectives are set by NCLB, we want to make AYP.” I responded, “Pretty much every participant had that response.”

GP14 called for CS, his VP, over the walkie-talkie. GP14 stated,

How do you go about those goals? You work in mathematics education and look at how is this new program going to affect kids? The focus on mathematics is as much also about what we are doing with teachers. Getting people to think more in the classroom, to think honestly about what they are doing and making more time
to be with those teachers in the classroom. . . . A subgoal is to create more of a professional dialogue about teaching and learning. Some departments are open and share others are not so open. This year’s literacy goal was 76% of all students.

I asked, “How will you monitor this?” GP14 responded,

If we meet the goal, informally it will be on how people relate to each other. When we first started, people just sat around. Now there is more sharing instead of gossip sessions. I watch how they interact with one another. Two mathematics teachers discussing a math test. They were having a heated debate on different approaches; it was two colleagues having a discussion.

I asked, “Is there common planning time for teachers? GP14 responded, “On the interdisciplinary team, but it is not scheduled exclusively with mathematics or language arts.” GP14 made another phone call to talk with a VP and another person about the third-period meeting on ESL. GP14 then walked outside of his office into the main office to talk with the secretaries about having a traditional birthday party at home vs. having the party at a waterpark. The secretary commented, “It is cheaper than throwing the party at home. We will have dinner when we get there.” GP14 continued to talk with the secretaries and another staff member who had entered the office. The group lowered their voices as I overheard the secretary say to GP14, “I went to my daughter’s birthday party, it was all night, tell me your gut feeling on staying at a party all night. . . .” I could not hear all of that conversation.

GP14 returned to the office to take a phone call: “Hey ED, this is JE, I just thought you should know that my VPs can go into the file on APPLATRACK and see
your comments, so can all other applicants.” After GP14’s conversation with the superintendent, I asked, “What was that Aqua track?” GP14 responded, “No, APPLATRACK is a computer system online that gives administrators the ability to make comments on different applications such as strong candidate or hold this one. I called the superintendent as a heads up.” I commented, “You never know in today’s society and the questions of legality.” GP14 received another phone call from the educational association at a local New Jersey college. GP14 commented, “They produce nice student teachers; they do not really have a teacher preparation program, for some it is almost the alternate route.” GP14 completed his call: “No, hi JN, where do things stand with MW? Okay, thanks so much, fantastic, fantastic, okay, bye.” GP14 continued to look at papers on his desk and review notes on the computer. I asked, “Is your current superintendent from the university?” GP14 responded, “Yes, EF did his doctorate on what principals look for in hiring new teachers.”

At that point a staff member entered his office and GP14 asked for some privacy. I sat in a chair next to the secretary’s desk. The secretary asked if I wanted some coffee, and I responded, “No, but if you have a bottle of cold water, that would be fine.” Another secretary asked, “Would you like to write in the conference room? You have a desk and it gives you more privacy.” I said, “Okay.” The secretary opened the door and said, “If it gets a little warm in here you can open the windows.” I replied, “I will take off my jacket.” The secretary walked over to the window and opened it, waited a second to feel the breeze, and left the room. I thanked the secretary as she exited the room.

I caught up on some of my note taking during my short break in the conference room. After his private meeting, GP14 invited me back into his office and then left for a
brief conference with someone in the main office. GP14 had several degrees on his wall; one from North Carolina, one from New Jersey, and one from Pennsylvania. GP14 returned to his office and I commented, “I noticed you have a degree from NC.” GP14 responded, “Yes, my wife and I moved to NC, where I got my master’s degree. We thought we were going to live there for a while but decided to move back to NJ.” I commented,

    I actually was looking for a VP position some years ago when I was still a teacher. I applied to a town in Virginia and received a call from the district. The person said they were interested then quoted the salary. At the time as a teacher I was making 50K to 60K; the person quoted 45K for a VP position.

**10:38 a.m.**

At 10:38 a.m., GP14 and I walked to the guidance office for the ESL meeting. The philosophy behind changing from grades 6 to 7 and then to grade 7 to 8 was explained by GP14, “The district understood that two middle schools would divide the community. During the meeting, GP14, the VP, and two ESL teachers discussed issues involving students and how their schedules interacted with literacy classes. GP14 introduced me to the group then said, “Well, what can we do with the kids? They are all over the place.” The following is a transcript of the group’s discussion:

**ESL1:** GS is a low intermediate kid. He has the ability to do something; the other three kids in social studies are not doing anything.

**GP14:** I guess the best thing would be to have them get instruction in their native language. I think that KY needs to have the conversation about what is her job. So I hear IA is leaving.
ESL1: She is leaving the system, moving to Manville.

ESL2: Part of the problem is the movement of classes and precompulsive education.

GP14: What was the issue with precompulsive education?

ESL2: When they did away with precompulsive education, they did the literacy program.

GP14: Well, ESL was thought about but because of so few students it went away. Now with so many new students it is coming back.

ESL1: I am thinking that instead of social studies and pullout, have a POE [port-of-entry class] class during that period.

GP14: CL, what is your schedule? [CL outlined her schedule for GP14.]

ESL2: My thoughts are, can we do this logically? Whatever it is we work it out, especially if a kid comes in and is not too bad. We can just plug it in. Right now we are going by the seat of our pants.

VP1: Is it that easy?

ESL2: Most of the kids that come in and are put in premathematics just sit there. Maybe those tests need to be revised. We get kids other than Spanish.

ESL1: It goes by the level of the students.

GP14: So it goes by the level of the kid. How do you differentiate their levels?

ESL1: I know their grade level.

ESL2: By the time they are in ESL 3, they should all be in regular English classes.

ESL1: So now you are putting them in a regular English class and they cannot keep up. My feeling is when they come in as POE, they should go into Grade 7. So we have them here for 2 years, because when they go to the high school they drown.

GP14: Who exactly is in the ESL class?
ESL1: All the wrong kids. [ESL1 went on to name the students in the class.]

GP14: It sounds like we have such a mishmash of overlapping.

ESL2: You would have to take all of their schedules and lay it all out.

ESL2: Do you have any level threes?

ESL1: I have high intensity but I need some time to teach POE. Now I have too many and not enough time. What happened in the beginning was they did their classes without doing science or social studies. Then higher-level kids were put in science because social studies was too much writing and reading.

GP14: We may have to put the kids in her class.

VP1: These classes should have been given in the beginning.

ESL2: GL is a good writer.

GP14: But can she write well in her native language?

ESL2: They sit and cannot read the directions.

GP14: This is why we need the supervisor; she needs to be in on this conversation. We can look at bringing in a new person, but that may be months from now. After advertising and interviewing it will take time. What other options do we have?

ESL1: Ideally, POE should be with me three times a day, ESL 1 two periods a day, ESL 2 one period, and two periods of high intensity, including one and a half classes of ESL 2 low intermediate.

GP14: What might happen is someone can come in and take some of the kids; we need help.

ESL2: We have so many classes because we do not have POE.

GP14: Is there anything else we can do for you guys?
ESL1: [With a Spanish accent] Now they are giving illegals a driver’s license, they can go everywhere. I will get a license and go everywhere. [The group laughed.]

The conversation continued about ESL issues and the best way to handle them. Some students need help and teachers need to understand what to do. GP14 would address the issue with teachers during the next faculty meeting. GP14 concluded, “We have a master list of where these students are. My next phone call will be to the supervisor because she has all of that information. Okay, I will get right back to you.”

At the conclusion of this meeting, ESL2 discussed an issue with GP14 and VP1 concerning letters from a father who is working with an attorney and asking for the release of school records. Evidently, this father has joint custody with the mother but the relationship is on rocky ground. When the father was initially told that the records would not be available, he stated, “Oh, so you do things differently from the high school.” ESL2 shared, “The student has threatened to run away,” leading VP1 to ask GP14, “Should we give a heads up to the police on a possible runner?”

On the way to lunch, GP14 and I talked about the increasing ESL numbers and explained that the POE “is a literacy class for kids with low reading comprehension and poor writing skills.” GP14 and I got lunch and returned to the office, where we ate and discussed the status of air conditioning in the building and the ESL population. Some parts of the building are air conditioned and other parts are not. I asked, “So what do you do with the POE?” GP14 responded, “It is crazy, we try everything but it will be very hard, the ESL population to date is only 10 or 12 students. We are less prepared or equipped because it is not a full-scale problem.” GP14 continued to describe subgroups and the overall impact of their success or failure on the entire school then stated, “During
the faculty meeting, we will talk about giving a possible pass/fail grade to this group of students. Also there is a possibility of hiring another teacher, but the difficulty in that is justifying the position because the ESL numbers are so low.” Our discussion continued on this topic until the phone rang. GP14 answered it and said, “Congratulations LG, and welcome back.” LG was a new principal of an elementary school within the district and he wanted to talk with a certain teacher at this school. GP14 tried to locate the teacher but indicated she did not have a phone in the classroom. GP14 then paged the teacher on the PA: “Mrs. BI, please call the main office.”

While he waited for the teacher to respond, I commented on two pictures in the office. One shows a group of polar bears hanging out on an ice cap, with one bear lying on his back with his legs spread apart and his neck cocked with a lot of attitude, or so it seemed. The caption on the picture states, “Bad boys of the Arctic.” The other picture is of a very majestic mountain range, of which I asked GP14, “Do you know where that is?” GP14 responded, “I did when I brought it.” I explained, “During the summer, I try to visit a national park, and that picture looks a lot like a place I would love to visit.”

12:00 p.m.

GP14 was not able to track down Mrs. BI, so he called the other principal and told him he was still trying to reach her. I gave my lunch tray to GP14, who walked outside of his office to place the trays on the counter for the cafeteria workers to pick up. Mrs. BI came into the office and GP14 explained why he wanted to talk with her. They talked briefly, then GP14 called the other principal: “Hi, it is JE again. MA is here, she just wants to talk to you to get an idea of what you want.” Mrs. BI and the principal talked.
After their talk, Mrs. BI said, “Thank you,” and gave the phone to GP14, who laughed and said, “Tell her I said thanks too.”

GP14 was reviewing his phone messages when the secretary came in and asked, “You want all of the originals back for the club?” GP14 responded, “Yes, you can just put that in there, that’s fine, thank you.” GP14 then made a call to a recently transferred student and her parent: “Congratulations, welcome to the middle school. The first thing to figure out is what we will do with your daughter.” GP14 explained the logistics of a transfer and the transition process then said,

I will let the main office know that you are coming in, but if you are free tomorrow we can do some housecleaning things . . . okay, if you are free in the morning . . . let’s say 9:00 a.m., if you get here earlier that is great. Okay then, I will see you tomorrow, bye.

GP14 made another call then continued at his computer. I asked, “Do you have any school documents that you can share, especially those that you authored?” GP14 responded, “Yes, if you go on to the Web site, most of the letters are from me.” I stated, “I will go on your Web site for that information; as a matter of fact, that may be a good way to get information from other participants who have not given written materials.” GP14 was on the phone again, this time with the teachers of the child of the parent he had just hired as a teacher: “At least she speaks English . . . well, I just looked at her period eight class.” GP14 continued to develop the child’s schedule as well as work in his office, typing several documents while I caught up on note taking. GP14 stated, “We got started a bit early.” I asked, “How is your relationship with the current superintendent?”
I wanted to give GP14 adequate time to complete some of his work on the
computer, so I was hesitant to ask another question while GP14 was typing. I began to
realize the balance that exists between unobtrusive and obtrusive fieldwork. Perhaps
much of my fieldwork to this point had been obtrusive, but participants graciously
declined to comment. I hoped that this was not the case. To this end, I asked GP14 if I
could use his cell phone in the conference room to contact a potential participant. He
granted permission and I made the phone call.

After I returned to his office, GP14 indicated that he wanted to take a walk
through the halls. In the hall, GP14 met a student standing by a locked classroom door.
GP14 walked the student to the resource office. I waited outside and observed a teacher
quickly follow GP14 and the student into the resource office. When GP14 exited the
resource office, I asked, “Are students allowed to take lunch out of the cafeteria?” GP14
responded, “Actually no, but maybe those students are having detention during lunch.
During lunch students are allowed to participate in sport activities, it is their recess time.”
I asked, “Do you have an athletic program?” GP14 responded, “Yes, interscholastic
sports like softball, field hockey, soccer, wrestling, and basketball.”

Still walking in the halls, GP14 and I went into the band room, where GP14
talked with a teacher about schedules and introduced me. I waited while GP14 talked
with the teacher and two other students. The teacher said, “We were talking about
Bloom’s Taxonomy and I said what Bloomsbury was, this stuff was not invented when I
went to college.” GP14 walked over to the teacher, they shared a private joke and both
laughed, and then GP14 and I left the room. On the way out the teacher said, “Nice
meeting you.” I responded, “You too.”
In the hall GP14 met a teacher and a student trying to finish his slushy. GP14 said, "Kids do not have enough time to finish their lunch and snack or dessert. In theory, it was a good thing to shorten the lunch period, but in reality it is not working so well. I found another slushy in the hall on the floor."

I added, "If you drink that slushy too fast, you get a cold headache." GP14 replied, "Yeah" and laughed." GP14 returned to his office talked with the secretary briefly then finished writing a document on the computer. GP14 asked, "Do you feel a little warm in here?" I responded, "Yes." GP14 replied, "It is actually 76 degrees." I replied, "It is amazing that a company in probably another state, in theory, can monitor the temperature in this building. You would think they would have the actual temperature readings."

GP14 responded, "They are supposed to have them." GP14 received a phone call and started a conversation about a new candidate from Piscataway and talked about the temperature in the building:

We changed the time in the offices from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. to 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; the classrooms still get pretty hot. What happens is when the system shuts off it draws on the hot air from outside, the system has had difficulties, so we need to have a meeting.

GP14 spoke with the superintendent on the phone. After this call, GP14 indicated that in-service training would be provided by the district on November 6, February 15, and May 30, 2008. I stated, "I guess the things that they do not teach you in graduate school would be handling bomb threats and parents or unexpected bereavement and death." GP14 responded, "That is true; we had a bomb threat and the big issue was why I did not call parents about that situation. My response was because I was outside with the
students trying to manage the bomb threat.” At that point, GP14 indicated that he needed privacy to have a postevaluation conference with a teacher. I left the room and returned to the conference room, where I finished writing field notes. When I stood up in the conference room to adjust my belt, I noticed the same two students still sitting on the front lawn, reading and enjoying the day. On closer visual examination, I noticed that neither student was moving. I remembered seeing the two students at 8:00 a.m. on the lawn and thinking they must be older students because of their size. The students were actually very lifelike sculptures, kudos HMS (his majesty’s ship).

2 p.m.

I conducted an open-ended interview with GP14 at 2:00 p.m.

Documents: GP14 provided no additional materials. I collected information from the district Web site.

Participant 18: SP4 Date: September 27, 2007 Field time: 7:50 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

I rang the buzzer before responding to a voice over the intercom to state that I had an appointment with SP4. I entered the building and walked to the main office, where I introduced myself to the secretary and SP4, who invited me into her office. I described my research and provided a signed copy of the informed consent agreement. I asked, “What is your daily routine like?” SP4 responded, “In the morning, I first do the buses.” SP4 said her routine for the day began by visiting the front of the building, where buses drop off students and staff enter, so that “if a student has a problem or any issues, it is very visible so I try to talk with that student.”

SP4 invited me to walk with her to the front of the building, where students exited their buses and entered the building. On the way to the front of the building, SP4 met
with a teacher in the main office and stopped to discuss an issue. After that encounter, SP4 talked with the secretary on another topic. Prior to leaving the office, SP4 paged another teacher over the PA to cover a classroom. Outside in the front of the building, SP4 greeted children and teachers as they entered the building. I asked, “How long is your school day?” SP4 responded, “From 7:50 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. We have great children here.” I inquired, “This is a very beautiful building; when was it constructed?” SP4 replied, “It was completed in 1990.”

After the bus check, SP4 and I returned to her office. I sat in another side chair as SP4 left the office for a short time. I noticed photographs and animated pictures of SP4 with her father or an older man, Cinderella, and Snow White, as well as a poster of 101 ways to praise a child. SP4 returned to the office with a female student. I asked, “Would you like to have privacy?” SP4 said, “No, it is okay.” The student and SP4 sat in the middle of the room in the two chairs facing each other. I sat relatively close to the student as SP4 explained to the student that I was just here to listen to her story. SP4 asked, “While on the bus, did you see who took your book bag?” The female student started to cry and SP4 reassured her that everything would be okay. The student replied, “RI took the book bag.” SP4 asked, “Did you see RI take your book bag?” The female student replied, “Yes.”

SP4 allowed the female student to return to her class and left the office to get RI. SP4 returned with RI, a male student, and they sat in the two chairs in the middle of the room. SP4 allowed me to sit in on disciplinary meetings with students. RI told me, “Another male student named CR took the book bag.” SP4 allowed RI to return to his class, then left the office to get CR. SP4 and CR returned to the office as the
announcement “Now let’s all stand for the pledge” was made. After the Pledge of Allegiance was performed, other announcements were made: “Who would you say is mighty? Who makes an enemy into a friend? That is right, you are the mighty one who can make an enemy into a friend.” After the announcements, SP4 asked CR, “Did you take the book bag?” CR responded, “Did I take the black book bag? Yes, I did.” SP4 listened as CR continued to talk and then said, “No, I did not take that book bag.”

SP4 allowed CR to return to his classroom and requested RI again. When RI sat down, SP4 asked again about the book bag and explained that others had indicated that he had been seen with the book bag. RI said, “I did not take the book bag; what happened was the bus stopped short and the backpack flew down the aisle.” SP4 asked, “Who else was near or around the same area?” RI identified two other students. SP4 asked RI to sit outside of the office and proceeded to get the other two students named by RI. I waited in the office as SP4 tried to resolve this issue. When the female student started to cry, I turned away because I worried that my presence was intimidating. I wanted to leave the room but instead decided not to look in the child’s direction. At that point, I became aware of the extreme sensitivity required to work with and/or resolve issues at this level. I was also not sure if I had read too much into the crying.

After speaking with the other students, SP4 returned to the office with RI and said to him,

I am having a little problem because other people have made comments and you seem to be still in the middle of this thing. We, you need to understand something; you cannot touch other people’s things. I am going to talk with some other people to find out what occurred.
She allowed to return to class. SP4 left the office for a brief time and I noticed SP4’s framed degrees from one college and one university, along with a certificate of recognition from the NJDOE. The office was quite peaceful. SP4 returned and received a phone call from an irate parent who, upset over a previous incident, threatened to call the police.

After the phone conversation, I asked SP4, “What is your enrollment and how many staff do you have?” SP4 replied, “Forty nine staff and over 500 students.” I asked, “Do you have an assistant principal?” SP4 responded, “No, assistants.” When SP4 left the office again, I noticed another poster that quotes Les Brown: “Shoot for the moon; even if you miss, you’ll land among the stars.” SP4 was in and out of the office, either checking on buses, staff absences, or classroom coverage. Evidently, the call SP4 had taken earlier from the irate parent, the mother of JB, had complained about JT, a male student who poked her son in the head near his eye with a lead pencil. SP4 returned to the office with JT and told him, “I need you to do me a huge favor when you are with JB; don’t say things that are not kind. Today you are going to stay inside for recess.”

After meeting with this student, SP4 called someone to complain about a parent, Mr. MY, who had gone into the classroom and grilled a new female teacher about his child’s performance. SP4 felt that this parent’s actions were inappropriate and wanted to report this to an outside source. After the call, I asked, “When does your day end? Is it possible to give you an interview at 2:00 p.m.?” SP4 responded, “At 3:25 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. for the interview is fine.” SP4 made another call to JM, stating, “We are having problems with our call-in system. This morning I did not know that a teacher needed coverage. We are an early morning school.” SP4 continued to explain her concerns with
the call-in system: “It is a bit antiquated, a person manually calls in and we are just breaking in a new person who takes care of this, so it is hard.”

9:05 a.m.

At 9:05 a.m., SP4 had to cover a classroom because of miscommunication due to problems with the system. I followed SP4 to the classroom and asked, “How do you do it without an assistant principal?” SP4 responded,

For many years, the superintendent thought administrative costs must be held down, so he put a cap on administrative salaries and positions. Therefore, as a district we are behind in administrative salaries and not very competitive with teacher salaries. In addition to that, our district has undergone redistricting.

We arrived at the classroom, where SP4 introduced me to the current teacher and the class. She said, “Good morning class,” and the class responded, “Good morning Mrs. MY.” SP4 replied, “Now say good morning to our guest, Mr. EY.” The class responded, “Good morning Mr. EY.” As students continued to work on a project, SP4 said, “I was a teacher for 32 years and still love teaching.” While SP4 talked with students, I discussed my research with the teacher, who said, “This is a beautiful school, a happy school.” The class was a bit noisy, so SP4 started to count down “Five, four, three, two, one. . . . It has been a very long time since I have been in the first grade; someone remind me of the rules.” The class responded, “Wash our hands, no sharing food and no running.” SP4 continued to get the class to calm down: “Boys and girls, I am looking for a table that is sitting quietly and it looks like it is the orange table. Orange table, you can go and wash your hands.” The students from the orange table walked over to the sink, washed their hands, and returned to their table. SP4 continued, “Okay, I am looking for another quiet
table; blue table, can wash their hands and get a snack?” The blue table went to the sink and washed their hands. SP4 continued, “NS, can you remember the rules? Thank you NS. It is a tie between the red and yellow tables. I think it is the red table.” The red table went to wash their hands.

SP4 was received well by both students and staff. Conversation at the table nearest to me centered on having babies by a certain age. There were five students at each table, the oldest student being no more than 10 or 11 years old. All the tables had washed their hands and were eating their snacks at five tables. The yellow table was still washing their hands when one student said, “Hey no cutting, he was cutting me.” Snack time was an array of voices and discussion mixed with laughing and a cough here or there. Several students asked SP4, “Are you going to Coney Island? Are you going to adopt a baby? Do you have children?” SP4 responded, “Yes, I have a son and a daughter and my daughter is already married.”

As the students finished their snacks, they placed their garbage in two receptacles near the sink. SP4 started to clap:

Okay, boys and girls, that is all cleaned up. I like the way the boys and girls at your tables are cleaning up. Okay, very nice job . . . excellent job. Mrs. WC is right, this is the best class in the world.

The room is decorated with colorful bulletin boards that contain student work in mathematics on place value, measurements, patterns, and geometric shapes. SP4 asked,

Do you know where to go for your spots on the rug? Okay, the orange table can go to your spots. I love the way you go to your spots. Scooby Dooby is the magic word; listen to directions and when you hear the magic word you can
move."

A teacher entered the room and replaced SP4, who asked NS, a special education student classified with ADHD, "Would like to give me and the researcher a tour of the building?" We took a tour of the building with NS as our tour guide. After the tour, NS returned to his class and SP4 and I returned to the office, where SP4 reviewed her e-mail. SP4 indicated that she was developing a survey for the teachers and staff to determine whether costumes for Halloween should be worn to school. I asked, "How long have you been at this school?" SP4 responded, "Three years at this site."

SP4 continued to review her e-mail and complete the Halloween survey when a student came in the office, said, "Happy birthday," and offered SP4 a rice cake. I noticed a chart outside of the office that said, "Soar," the principal's word for the week. Students had to think of a topic using the word. SP4 maintained a nonfiction notebook on subjects associated with the school's mascot, the eagle. Students had the opportunity to provide a trivia challenge topic for the journal next week that was in conjunction with the overall New Jersey Principal's trivia challenge.

10:08 a.m.

At 10:08 a.m., SP4 and I walked to the gymnasium to observe a 1st-grade physical education class. In the gym, we moved two folding chairs to the opposite end of the gym. The gym teacher (PE) asked students to form a circle, and once the students had completed the circle, they were asked to do a neck roll and rotate their arms in both directions. Several special-needs children joined the class as PE asked students to put their hands on their hips and move their hips forward and back, then side to side. After
this exercise, PE asked the children to stand straight up, extend their left leg and foot, and extend the right leg and foot.

After the extending exercise, PE asked the children to bend both knees slowly in a squatting position then return to a standing position several times. Next PE said, “Please sit on the red circle, let me check your grip, not a tight fist, let me see those fingers. Now put your arms in the shape of an L and move them back and forth as if you’re jogging.” PE jogged around the circle, demonstrating a side-view jogging technique and explaining,

We are going to jog today in this direction. My timer/clock will ring and we will jog for 1 minute and then walk for 1 minute. Now, find a spot on the circle with no more than two people per spot, find a spot.

The children paired in the circle and PE said, “Let’s walk a bit first, okay, jog not race.” The children jogged around the circle, alternating walking with jogging, for around 5 minutes.

PE then instructed,

Okay, today using the circle we want to expand; instead of the circle, we will use the square. I will pick three mice that will be inside of the square and a cat that will be outside of the square. The third mouse that gets caught will get to be the cat.

The children picked each other until everyone had a turn at being the cat and played cat and mouse for the remainder of the class. PE then said, “You have been running a lot. I am going to give you a break.” PE asked the children to line up on the side of the gym to get a drink of water. There were three girls sitting on the stage not participating. SP4
explained that the girls could not participate because they were wearing flip flops, which are inappropriate footwear. Having no air conditioning, the gym was a bit warm. I asked, “Why is there no air conditioning in the gym, especially on a warm day, for health reasons?” SP4 responded, “This building was built in 1990 and the air conditioning was intentionally not put in for reasons of equity. No other schools in the district have air conditioning.”

SP4 and I returned to the office, where SP4 talked with another teacher about the incident with JB and JT and how the parent wants to call the police if anything else happens. After this conversation, SP4 returned to her laptop computer in her office and stated, “The district encourages principals to do observations on the laptop.” SP4 left her office to continue a discussion with the secretary and another teacher. After a short time she returned to her office and closed the door, asking me, “What did you think about the observation?” I replied, “It seemed appropriate for that grade level, but the teacher could have paired slower children and faster children more evenly during the cat-and-mouse exercise.” SP4 thought the teacher was sensitive toward the children in that area, but could have been more complimentary. SP4 provided me with the Post Observation Reflection Form and said, “I give a copy to the teacher and the teacher provides me with a copy, then we generally share comments on the purpose of the lesson. It is a good way to stay on track during the postobservation conference.”

When SP4 left the office, I noticed another poster that states, “Fairy tales are more than true, not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten.” I asked, “Did your graduate training adequately prepare you to be a principal?” SP4 responded,
It did not prepare me for the practical application in certain situations or those situations that are possible. One day a baby hawk flew in the building and kept perch in the courtyard all day. Also, courses talked about the technical aspects of budgeting using a more global approach but do not give actual experiences.

SP4 spoke on the phone with the business administrator about budget concerns. SP4 then received a phone call from the superintendent on the incident with JB and JT; evidently, the parent had called him. SP4 explained that JT was a very angry child.

11:20 a.m.

At 11:20 a.m., SP4 and I walked to the lunchroom so that SP4 could check with students at their tables. The cafeteria was also warm. Students were sitting across from each other in several rows; approximately 100 students were having lunch with five aides or teachers overseeing the group. SP4 checked in the teacher’s cafeteria, where the room was actually cold and a number of staff wore sweaters. Toward the end of the lunch period, a teacher spoke on the microphone to the students: “Okay, clean up your tables and line up so you can leave the cafeteria.” The teacher on the microphone waited for the students to quiet down and become more orderly. I asked SP4, “How many lunch periods are there?” SP4 replied, “There are six lunch periods and we finish serving lunch by 1:00 p.m. We also have a kindergarten developmental class that spends the whole day and eats at 11:30 a.m. Our largest lunch period contains over 125 students.” SP4 walked past a table that had a colony of ants on it and asked, “How did that get in here?” SP4 called the custodian over, and the custodian said he would clean them up, and then gave me a tip: “When you become a principal, understand that the custodian and secretary are your
right-hand persons." SP4 walked over to the table where NS was eating and asked, "How are you doing NS?" NS nodded and continued to be a bit hyperactive.

After the student lunch period, SP4 and I got our lunch from the cafeteria and returned to the office. During our lunch, I confirmed that we would conduct the open-ended interview at 1:00 p.m. The phone rang and SP4 responded to a question from CK, then left the room and returned to finish her lunch. I asked, "How is your relationship with the superintendent?" SP4 responded,

Great, but the previous superintendent was here for 37 years and walked on water. Prior to him was Dr. LE, who came in for 3 years and did what she had to do. She made many budget cuts and was straightforward in her approach to people, including being brutally honest. The current superintendent is more willing to work with people and often known for being hands on, noting the positive things that are happening in the district. When I arrived at this school, I started doing little things. I wrote each teacher a note saying, you do a great job at what you do. Teachers were feeling neglected and abused, teacher morale was low, and we were not following the law. Teachers were not overseeing the lunchroom; by law, students must be supervised by a certified person. Therefore, certain teachers were assigned to lunch duty and rotated with other teachers every other month. I taught for 13 years and when teachers say they need something, I try to give it to them because I remember the experience. I am still being compared to my predecessor, as I started during a time of transition when the board of education took away mathematics specialists and vice principals, who were actually very good resources for teachers and the principal. This is the first year that I have
made a connection to the staff. We have raffles during faculty meetings and I always provide an agenda, something that my predecessor never did. We give pats on the back for accomplishments and whiteboard messages to each other. We also have a newsletter where teachers can correspond with each other.

I asked, “Why did you decide to become a principal?” SP4 replied,

I was teaching kindergarten and it was no longer a challenge. I had a student teacher and loved working with student teachers, so I wanted to know what I would need to become a student teacher supervisor. I found out that the courses needed for being a supervisor were the same courses needed to be a principal.

SP4 continued to explain how she got started. After lunch, SP4 and I walked back to the cafeteria for the largest student lunch, where she received a flower pot from a student. “Thank you,” responded SP4.” The noise level rose and a teacher got on the microphone to quiet the room down: “Everyone finish up eating and clean your tables.” The teacher attempted the “clap” method of getting their attention, without success. SP4 then stood in from of the cafeteria and clapped three times. The students quieted down and were dismissed from the cafeteria.

1:20 p.m.

SP4 and I returned to the office, where I conducted an open-ended interview with her at 1:20 p.m.

Documents: SP4 provided no additional materials. I collected information about this school from the district Web site.

Participant 19: GP15 Date: September 28, 2008    Field time: 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
I arrived early at this site, so decided to have breakfast before returning to the school. I introduced myself to GP15 as he was dealing with two issues of conflict that had started in the community. GP15 explained,

One student will take the afterschool bus, the other will walk home. During lunch we will talk about this situation. I will also contact the parent and the grandmother. If it is not resolved, I will contact the assistant superintendent. I will also try to find another student that she knows.

GP15 was looking at the list of students who had been absent from classes and was working on another list of student absences GP15 moved to his computer, checked his e-mail, and stated, “In a few minutes I will check grade books to find out which students are doing the poorest. There are two students that were recommended here and it is the wrong placement.” GP15 called someone on the phone and repeated that it was the wrong placement: “Both students failed bridge [summer school] in Grade 8 and were not age appropriated. If you stay in the Grade 8, you return to your home school; if age appropriated, you would move to Grade 9.”

After his call, I asked, “What is age appropriated?” GP15 explained,

Age appropriated is when a student is skipped to the next grade. The students should be sent to Dr. DLTO as age appropriated. If you failed bridge, that means you stayed back, failed summer school. If they are 2 years behind, they are moved to the appropriate grade. You must move on to the next grade. Adolescent development research indicated it is better to either move them on through home schooling or match the age with the grade. There is no lateral move for a student that was retained. Documents are mailed to the parents. It is data-driven decision
making based on the state test. We also have a district test and cycle tests that
come from book companies and can be harder than the state test. . . . These are all
middle grades. I think what I learned was to delegate; they marked me down on
that so I learned how to delegate.

GP15 received a package from the mail and said, “See this is for my technology
person, I will be right back.” GP15 delivered the package to the technology
person. When GP15 returned he stated,

This is the first year having special education students [inclusion students]. This is
a newly created program and we are expecting a total of eight students. The
special education students were in the eighth grade, brought back from out-of-
district placements, and were preparing to take the GEPA state test. The model is
an in-class support model to help the child to be productive in another setting and
is part of the inclusion program. The students will be tested at another site and,
through a 504 classification, be provided extra time for the test.

I asked, “Why would they bring back out-of-district placements? Aren’t they the more
difficult students?” GP15 responded, “Why? Because of the funding.” GP15 then
explained that his school was unique in that there are only a few in the state, and that
several teachers were permitted to visit another site in SO.

GP15 then talked briefly about the NCLB: “NCLB will change. Originally under
Rod Paige, who was a superintendent from Houston, the Bush administration wanted a
voucher system and they got it.” I asked, “Do you think there is a stigma attached to the
school or are you treated any differently as a principal?” GP15 responded, “We do not
care about the stigma; you have to have a certain swagger. Teachers volunteered to come
to this school and it does not matter what type of kid comes to us; we will handle it.”

GP15 continued,

This staff has a humanistic approach. There are two types of teachers, custodial and humanistic. Kids will close the social distance. They learn to be light with kids without sacrificing their authority. You learn how to delegate with your people and you do your paperwork. There are probably more dysfunctional kids in the regular program than are here. Fridays and Mondays are the worst days for conflict resolution. Our kids probably have too much conversation.

I asked, “Did you have some type of special training for this position?” GP15 responded, When I shadowed DFYS workers it taught me about student populations. I shadowed 15 cases over a wide range of grades; a, a father who killed his wife was trying to get his daughter back, or b, a mother scalded the child in a bathtub because she was high. I got permission to talk with DYFS workers as part of my doctoral studies, including student populations through social services. I interviewed those workers who dealt with head bangers [gangs] and substance abuse. We started the program 4 years ago because there was more and more concern about passing the test. We had problems with enough teachers advocating to send students to the program. Finally, as staff agreed with the principles of the program, principals could not stand under the pressure of the staff and had to capitulate. . . . A lot of these kids had referrals from their team of teachers. Most youngsters will have certain teachers all year; the principal can try to solve some problems by communicating with staff in an authority-driven situation. Every school in the district sends students to this location. When I am
talking with them I cannot bring it up because I do not know what any of these kids have done before they came here. Some kids may have impacted the entire school.

I asked, “Do you think schools send some kids here as a form of dumping?” GP15 replied,

Not dumping because some kids benefit. I truly think they send kids here because they think it will benefit them. What are the other 20 or so kids in the classroom going to do with that kid? What we have here is a more intensive small learning community, where kids get higher doses of teachers working with students to remediate their behavior: behavior modification. It is enough of a negative impact being taken out of their regular school.

I asked, “How does that work?” GP15 responded,

The sending school principal makes recommendations and I make recommendations back. Everyone should know that this is an alternative program. You only have a certain amount of time to get to kids. We had some kids yesterday and they apologized for their behavior yesterday, they said they should not have done that. That is a step in the right direction. Alternate programs reflect the beliefs of the staff that services them. It is about how staff present themselves to youngsters that are obviously hurting, using praise and rewards, teaching character, and not holding them accountable for what happened in the past. That is what will dictate the success of the program. Staff sometimes feel that a sending school could have done more with some of the students. Right now we are developing a schedule so the sending school staff and our staff can meet.
I asked, “Can a student stay for shorter periods of time?” GP15 responded,

Shorter stays were counterproductive and more disruptive to the student. You must be here for a calendar year with no interruption. Sending schools should understand that students are still their kids. What I think you should really highlight is that principals who send kids to the alternate program get a bad rap and they think they are doing the best thing. Alternate school initiatives will only get bigger. Beyond bureaucratic guidelines, an alternate program is the direct reflection of the beliefs of the staff with excellent support staff. Teachers must have humanistic and custodial classroom orientations. Parents must be involved more so with mentors and community involvement. Some of the students thought they were going back to a regular program. The first day of school there was a lot of anger but after they knew the staff... it is beautiful out there, you would think this was a gifted and talented school.

I asked, “Would it be okay if I gave you an interview at 2:00 p.m.?" GP15 agreed and left the office.

I noticed several posters on the walls in the main office, one stating, “Fifty ways to say no,” such as “no thanks,” “I am not into that,” or “Are you crazy?” Another poster states, “True friends encourage you to do things that are healthy for your body.” This facility consists of eight or ten large trailers connected and arranged in a straight line. Each trailer contains four classrooms. Four rooms are used for office space and another four for computers, storage, and guidance. Five classrooms are on each side of the main office, which in the middle of the complex. GP15 had stated earlier that the school’s
hours were from 8:45 a.m. to 3:45 p.m., with 60-minute periods that allow more time for students to settle down.

I decided to leave the office and walk around the facility. I noticed a number of other posters on both sides of the halls outside of guidance that state the following:

1. Drug use is like a downhill sled.

2. Sometimes you have to reject the ideas, things, or people that might mess up your life.

3. When you do not communicate well, it is like building a wall around ourselves.

4. Rules for making good decisions: know what you really want; brainstorm your options; weigh the risks; get more information; be clear that your decisions are what you want, not what someone else wants; and when in doubt, don’t.

5. Feelings are meant to be felt; it is the only way to know your one and only self.

6. POSSE (parenting our successors in society effectively).

7. Questions to expect during a job interview (e.g., “Relax, tell me a little about you”)

8. Think before you speak.

9. You can change the world.

10. You will never regret doing the right thing.

I made note of the posters in order to provide a description of what I observed during my self-generated tour while GP15 dealt with another issue. I met with GP15 in the hall as he was disciplining a student on doing his work in class based on what the teacher had reported about this student’s behavior. GP15 stated to the student, “We cannot have you being disruptive and taking time from other students.” Students were in class at the
beginning of the fourth period testing for 1 hour. While in the hall, a student passed by who had pulled the scab off a cut and was bleeding, GP15 assisted this student by applying gauze and bandages. I asked, “Do you have a nurse?” GP15 responded, “Yeah, over there in the next building.” GP15 was referring to a district elementary school. GP15’s facility is in the rear parking area of this building. Additionally, bandage dispensers are in the hall for students who have minor cuts or scratches. Two other students were in the hall and GP15 said to one, “Do what he said and do not talk back.” The student replied, “I am not talking back.” GP15 responded, “You are talking back right now.” Another teacher had given this student instructions and he was not following them. Another student said to GP15, “Hey Doc, what’s up?” GP15 responded, “Hey wait a minute. I am the principal, what is this, what’s up?”

GP15 moved from classroom to classroom, assisting different staff and students when necessary. I noticed pictures of Tyree, a wide receiver for the New York Giants, standing with students and GP15. I counted approximately 22 classrooms with 4 to 10 students in most rooms. Many of the classrooms were empty, perhaps because it was the beginning of the school year and other schools had not yet made student referrals. GP15 had played football for Cincinnati and bragged about the upcoming game between Cincinnati and Rutgers. He predicted that Rutgers would lose, and it did. Two weeks later Cincinnati lost to Louisville and Rutgers beat South Florida.

GP15 and I returned to the main office, where I discussed my research with a secretary and staff member. The secretary thought that I resembled someone from Montclair named EE. I said, “It might be an uncle on my father’s side.” After this
conversation, I asked GP15 if it was okay to take a break for lunch. GP15 agreed and I
left for lunch around noon. I said that I would return by 1:30 p.m.

1:30 p.m.

I returned to the site at 1:30 p.m. to find students and GP15 in a room in the other
building. GP15 was waiting for students to line up in the cafeteria to return to their
building, saying, “Eighth grade boys okay, 7th-grade girls okay.” Most students left the
cafeteria and returned to their site, but GP15 retained the 7th-grade boys. GP15 said, “I
should see one head lined up with my arm. MK, you need to see the nurse.” GP15
gestured to another staff member, “He pulled a scab off. He needs to see the nurse.”
Finally, the 7th-grade boys were allowed to leave the cafeteria, but GP15 reprimanded one
student for not following a single directive from an adult. The student that was
reprimanded was the last student in line and in front of me as we left the cafeteria. The
student held the door for me and I said, “Thank you.”

GP15 at one point commented about the students in trouble, “Flying by the seat of
our hip” this was in reference to the group of students involved in a possible altercation.
GP15 watched students as they engaged in different activities in the rear playground.
Some students played touch football while others played basketball. One student, VT,
was knocked over by AC, and two or three staff members addressed this action with AC
and the issue of bullying. I noticed that all the staff in the playground area were
consistent with follow-up on discipline. GP15 said, “We will deal with the issue of
bullying later on; those students are really not typical of alternative school students. They
may have a few problems but not like all other typical alternative school.” The staff
members talked with several male students while GP15 talked with VT about the incident
with AC: “Did AC hurt you when he pushed you down?” VT responded, “No,” shaking his head.” GP15 called another student over and asked, “Do you know who I am?” The student nodded, “Yes.” GP15 asked, “What did you mean by ‘Are you beefing with my set?’ Do you know what that means? Let me tell you something, when you are in this type of program, everyone in this program is stressed out. It only takes this much to push someone over the line.” GP15 explained, “‘Beefing with my set’ is gang-related slang and can be very dangerous, especially in this type of setting.”

Another assistant talked with several girls about their body language and the fact that one girl had lost her book. GP15 said, “That book is in the social studies class.” GP15 pulled another girl over to the side and talked about bringing false messages and being set up to fight with another female student: “You need to go home.” The student said, “No one is home.” GP15 replied, “I will put you on the bus; you can be bused only if you live in the third ward.” The female student agreed with GP15. The other male student that had talked about “my set” was still with GP15 when GP15 said, “My set, why are you challenging kids? What do you mean, are you doing something to my set? Does your mother want to know about this?” Other students were playing basketball and another staff member told GP15, “We have to have a reorientation on Monday.” GP15 agreed. The student that had commented on “his set” was told to enter the building and wait in the office. The student to whom he had made this comment came over to GP15, who commented, “You were ready weren’t you?” The student replied, “I was ready.” GP15 said, “You were ready to get put out of school.” GP15 gave this student an example of what would have happen if this comment were said on the street.
At that point, a male student sat next to me and asked, “What are you here for?” I responded, “How are you doing?” The student replied, “I am doing well, what about you?” I replied, “Why are you here?” The student replied, “I am the class clown.” Another male student passed quickly and said, “I want to fight” as he headed toward another student. Staff immediately pulled both students away from each other. Evidently, something was said during the football game that had caused a problem. One of the staff members was a juvenile police officer who knows the students from seeing them around town. GP15 said he would not get involved until the students settled down: “Hopefully, they will get to the bottom of it; if not there will be parent conferences. I will be on the bus this afternoon with LY.” GP15 continued, “I probably have one of the more interesting aspects of leadership because of the autonomy. I can have one-on-one conversations with kids. It is a hands-on impact with students.” I asked, “How can you measure the impact of your one-to-one conversations? What is your feedback?” GP15 replied,

We have a 5th-week assessment and 10th-week assessment. If the student does not have a discipline referral, then we can determine to some extent our success. We send letters to parents and I will have a progress report this afternoon. Parents are the key; we mail letters two or three times a week. The two male students about to fight, their parents will receive letters by next week. . . . We have no problems in class because of the structure, which is small groups. Problems arise in nonstructured settings.

Toward the end of the school day, GP15 invited me to ride with him while he drove home the student who had been pushed. GP15 met with that student’s grandmother
and introduced me to her. After dropping off this student, GP15 and I toured the
neighborhood, making sure all students from the school got home safely without incident.

After the tour, we returned to the site, where I conducted an open-ended interview with
GP15.

Documents: GP15 provided the following materials:

1. The daily bulletin and the principal’s agenda.

2. A two-page walkthrough informal observation checklist.

3. A document describing skills for school success, including school behaviors,
   organizational skills, and learning strategies.

4. A document describing the universal intellectual standards of clarity, accuracy,
   precision, relevance, depth, and breadth.

5. A letter authored by GP15 to staff on lesson plan feedback.

6. A copy of the district’s three-page tenured teacher evaluation/observation form.

7. A copy of the district’s one-page nontenured teacher evaluation form.
Appendix F

Field Experience Transcriptions

Interviews
Findings, Part 3: Open-Ended Interview Transcriptions

All subjects who participated in interviews were given a signed copy of the informed consent form for their records.

Participant 1: GP1 Date: May 7, 2007 Time: 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

1. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of discipline (protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus).

1.1. How have you been successful in eliminating interruptions and undue distractions to teaching and learning?

Yes, most of the time I try to eliminate interruptions by restructuring time. Instead of all-day guidance for fifth and sixth graders, we reduced guidance to two periods a day. We also minimize the number of assemblies, schedule meetings during lunch, make no announcements during instructional time, and make whatever changes we can to focus on instruction.

1.2. How is the instructional time of teachers protected?

This is similar to the first question: no meetings, no administrative announcements, and no assemblies. Teachers are very protective of their instructional time. Teachers set this as a priority.

1.3. How do you deal with external issues that may distract teachers from teaching?

Parental complaints are the biggest issue. We do not talk to parents negatively about teachers; parents are referred to the teacher by appointment. I will call parents for teachers, and counselors often call parents. I try to opt out of the stuff that is nonessential. Teachers can also opt out of nonessential trivia. Teachers set the priority. Teachers are also protected from the community’s biased perceptions of different neighborhoods in
this district. We have a situation where EN school is perceived to be academically inferior to RT school. Therefore, parents want to send their children to RT instead of EN. This perception is a false one because state assessments have shown both schools are at high achievement levels.

1.4. How are controversies or disagreements prevented from escalating into school-wide issues?

We talk about things; teachers make decisions about what is best for their classroom. We have leadership and liaison committees where issues are addressed and almost never result in conflicts between staff. We try to find the middle ground. For example, we created a balance with two periods of music a day.

2. **An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of flexibility (adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent).**

What is your comfort level with making changes in how things are done?

I am pretty comfortable at first, then after we find out who will be opposed and why, very comfortable. I would need to know prior to making a decision to change something who will be opposed to the change and why. Ultimately, I am responsible for the operation of the school, and if something needed to be changed to benefit students, it would be done.

2.2. How do you encourage people to express opinions that are contrary to your own?

I ask them and try to see teachers in informal settings. I often seek out teachers, asking what they think. For example, I learned a lot about block scheduling by asking. Veteran teachers do not have a problem with letting me know what they think. Sometimes they tell newer teachers not to talk. However, you have to get out there and listen. I also have
a good relationship with union representatives. I will pull them over to the side and ask, I am hearing this is an issue; what do you think? For example, when I first started here, I made the decision to select the teacher of the year without teacher input. The teachers who were not happy with this a started a letter-writing campaign during lunch. Now teachers select the teacher of the year.

2.3. How do you adapt your leadership style to the specific needs of a given situation?
You develop a repertoire of ways to talk to people. I am easy going, but everyone knows what is expected, and you make sure you know where to draw the line. We have good staff, but that is because I fire people who do not do their jobs. We had a dummy ass teacher who thought his job was a continual party. He is no longer with us. I protect teachers from outside people in order for them to do the job. It is about the kids.

2.4. Describe those situations where you can be either highly directive or nondirective.
The technology teacher did not like the new curriculum; he had a chance to express his concerns to the board of education through a committee. He was not satisfied and decided not to implement the curriculum. I put my concerns in writing twice. Another teacher denigrated kids in class by saying, “This kid cannot read,” and to another student who received a good test grade, “What did you do cheat?” I verbally addressed this issue with the teacher the first time; the second time it was addressed with a union representative and through the evaluation.

3. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of monitoring/evaluating (monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning).

3.1. How do you monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum?
Through standardized test scores, grades, public performance, and in-the-classroom listening.

3.2. How do you monitor the effectiveness of instructional practices in your school?

In the classroom, we talk about it all the time, informal and formal observations. I do a walk through and pre- and post-evaluation conferences. We also developed tools from a professional development text that identifies 10 principles for an effective classroom. I check off specific indicators, leave it with the teacher, and look for positive feedback then develop it. Everything is done in a nonthreatening manner. We also review with the liaison committee at a faculty meeting which principles teachers thought were most interesting.

3.3. How do you monitor assessment practices in your school?

This is similar to the previous question. It is often hard to do but you are in the classroom, you talk about it, you do pre- and post-evaluation conferences and a walkthrough.

3.4. How can you accurately determine how effective your school is in terms of enhancing student achievement?

We monitor student performance on standardized tests and check grades. From a computer printout we check to see and list those students whose grades average lower than a C. We check 6th-grade students’ previous 4th- and 5th-grade reports to see if there are any patterns or significant grade variations. I then create an at-risk list for students; it is an academic alert. We then call a core team meeting with counselors, the CST, the nurse, and the assistant principal to talk about each kid on academic alert. We take notes on kids and talk during a weekly meeting.
4. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of outreach (is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders).

4.1. How do you ensure that your school complies with all district and state mandates?

By reading and knowing the policies. This is a small district and it is fairly easy to know most of the regulations. We also have meetings with the superintendent on a monthly basis. If I have a question or I am not sure, I will call the assistant superintendent.

4.2. How do you advocate for your school to the community at large?

I am the biggest supporter EN school has ever had. I talk with parents, teachers, and the community as a cheerleader.

4.3. How do you advocate for your school to the parents of your students?

This is similar to the previous question. I talk with parents, teachers, and the community as a cheerleader.

4.4. How is the central office made aware of your school’s accomplishments?

I call all the time; they have a dedicated public relations officer. Good news at this school is sent to the board of education and it is published in the board of education minutes. I invite parents to the school, we have a newsletter, and we post information on the Web site.

5. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of situational awareness (is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems).

5.1. How do you become aware of the informal groups and relationships among teachers in your school?
I talk to teachers. I often hear from teachers because it is part of human nature to share
information. A certain percentage of teachers likes to talk, so they drop in my office and
talk. I am not as closely connected to the staff as I should be because of all of the
paperwork from central office. It is tough to pull away. The AP is more connected then I
am; he listens and shares information with me. I am aware of daily activities.

5.2. How do you become aware of issues that have not formally come to the surface but
might cause discord?

This is somewhat similar to the previous question. During the liaison meeting, issues can
be shared anonymously. I also listen around the school and talk with different teachers.

5.3. What details regarding the day-to-day running of the school are important to you?
Staff attendance, student attendance, announcements for kids, the daily words of wisdom
in the morning, and a clean and orderly building. Our school motto is “Attitude is
excellence.”

5.4. What things can you predict that may go wrong in your school on a day-to-day basis?
Ten to 15 kids will forget lunch and/or their homework assignments. Some teachers will
get sick and coverage will be required. The PA system and bell system will go down and
the Internet will go down.

5.5. How do you know what is running smoothly and what is not running smoothly in
your school?

I will hear from the teachers; people are not hesitant to let me know if something is not
running smoothly. Teachers will say, “I cannot have my kids in this situation.” Teachers
are very protective of their instructional time. Teachers hate to be pulled out of classes,
especially when a supervisor from central office comes and announces a pull out over the
PA system.

Participant 2: SP1  Date: May 10, 2007  Time: 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

1. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of discipline (protects
teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus).
1.1. How have you been successful in eliminating interruptions and undue distractions to
teaching and learning?
The block schedule has a lot to do with that; students go to class four times during the
day, 80 minutes per class. We have high expectations through teamwork and students are
held accountable.
1.2. How is the instructional time of teachers protected?
This is similar to the previous question. The block schedule allows teachers to do a
variety of activities. Students are engaged and interested.
1.3. How do you deal with external issues that may distract teachers from teaching?
It depends on the individual issues. I try to create and engender an environment that is
optimal for learning and deal with external detractions as they occur.
1.4. How are controversies or disagreements prevented from escalating into school-wide
issues?
Through conflict mediation and resolution and shared decision-making. Our faculty
council helps to ensure that this is a problem-solving place.

2. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of flexibility (adapts
his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with
dissent).
2.1. What is your comfort level with making changes in how things are done?
Change is good for the right reason and the status quo is not appropriate anymore. I am comfortable with change for the right reason. Colleges and employers are looking for the same skills set. The American Diploma Project has the same skills set that both colleges and employers are seeking.

2.2. How do you encourage people to express opinions that are contrary to your own?
Yes, I am open and allow it. Every group should have a dissenter; some obstacles may be seen that you could not see. Listening to diverse opinions is not the same as accepting those opinions.

2.3. How do you adapt your leadership style to the specific needs of a given situation?
Yes, just like a teacher that does differentiated instruction for the individual student.

2.4. Describe those situations where you can be either highly directive or nondirective.
You adapt to each situation; all together, let’s work through it. When it comes to safety issues, there is no discussion; get it done.

3. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of monitoring/evaluating (monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning).

3.1. How do you monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum?
Every day through classroom observations, reviewing test scores and grades, and by gathering data, such as HSPA assessments. We look at this data and analyze it. We also have diagnostic tests for students to find if there are any gaps in the curriculum and student learning.

3.2. How do you monitor the effectiveness of instructional practices in your school?
Through classroom observations and by implementing professional development to enhance instructional improvement.

3.3. How do you monitor assessment practices in your school?
This is a bit more difficult; we look at all midterm and final examinations to ensure they are at a higher level of thinking. We include open-ended questions on the exams and we teach students how to take the test.

3.4. How can you accurately determine how effective your school is in terms of enhancing student achievement?
By looking at the NCLB, the rate of senior admissions to colleges and universities, the student employment rate, and feedback from parents and the community.

4. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of outreach (is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders).

4.1. How do you ensure that your school complies with all district and state mandates?
I follow up on what they are and make sure that it gets done. It is the law.

4.2. How do you advocate for your school to the community at large?
Through a variety of events, newspapers, the TV, the parent’s council, 8th-grade orientation, Back-to-School Night twice during the year, and by being visible.

4.3. How do you advocate for your school to the parents of your students?
This is similar to the previous question. Through a variety of events, newspapers, the TV, the parent’s council, 8th-grade orientation, Back-to-School Night twice during the year, and by being visible.

4.4. How is the central office made aware of your school’s accomplishments?
I communicate with central office through interoffice mail; e-mail; the telephone; at board of education meetings, where students present different projects once a month; at the beginning of the year, when students present reports on their summer vacation; and through radio programs.

5. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of situational awareness (is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems).

5.1. How do you become aware of the informal groups and relationships among teachers in your school?

I listen to what people are saying; people have a tendency to talk. I also get out and about because it is about the people.

5.2. How do you become aware of issues that have not formally come to the surface but might cause discord?

This is the same as the last question. I listen to what people are saying; people have a tendency to talk. I also get out and about because it is about the people.

5.3. What details regarding the day-to-day running of the school are important to you?

The students, the people, the curriculum, the community, security of the building, a quality education, high expectations, academic excellence, and student and staff safety.

5.4. What things can you predict that may go wrong in your school on a day-to-day basis?

Anything and everything can go wrong. You must be able to see those things developing.

5.5. How do you know what is running smoothly and what is not running smoothly in your school?
By being aware of your surroundings and talking with the faculty and parent councils. Also by having an awareness of what is going on and being visible and listening.

Participant 3: GP2 Date: May 15, 2007 Time: 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

1. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of discipline (protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus).

1.1. How have you been successful in eliminating interruptions and undue distractions to teaching and learning?

By being a presence in the school, walking around in the classroom and in the halls. We have an a.m. and p.m. detention in the main office for students that are disruptive or not obeying their teachers. Prevention is important, so we try not to suspend students but rather try to change their behavior. We make parents part of the process. We try not to suspend students out of school.

1.2. How is the instructional time of teachers protected?

Protected in what sense? Each teacher turns in a plan on how he or she uses the day. I make sure the schedule meets the criteria of the school, not necessarily down to the second; there is flexibility. A walkthrough and curriculum mapping helps.

Note: GP3 briefly stopped the interview to answer a teacher’s question.

1.3. How do you deal with external issues that may distract teachers from teaching?

I want parents to be vocal but not overbearing. Parents are preapproved to see teachers if necessary during the teacher’s preparation period. I do not allow outsider interference, especially when a teacher is in the classroom teaching. One of the things we did to help kindergarten with more focus was move them from the first lunch to the middle lunch.
We also took away the snack time from third graders so they could spend that time on learning.

1.4. How are controversies or disagreements prevented from escalating into school-wide issues?

Most of the controversies are between parents and teachers, so teachers were told to have better and more appropriate communication with parents. If the controversy is between teachers, I will intervene, but for the most part I have not had any problems. I have good rapport with teachers because I am open and listen to their concerns.

2. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of flexibility (adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent).

2.1. What is your comfort level with making changes in how things are done?

My comfort level with change is high, although I would not make a change that was not appropriate. I have always done things that are research based and I know will work. I am flexible and talk with staff about the change, giving input and seeking collaboration. I do not have a problem relinquishing some of the power; I want others to step up and take some of the responsibility or become administrators. I think communication is important; our site-based teacher team meets once a month and gives ideas.

2.2. How do you encourage people to express opinions that are contrary to your own?

I have an open-door policy. People can come in any time; if you want to share, come and talk, you have a right to disagree. I have no problem with listening and making a determination, but I must look at what is good for the majority of the school. I let teachers voice their displeasure; hopefully, we will come to some type of consensus. It is
a collaborative approach where you are smart enough to know that everyone is not going to buy into what you want.

2.3. How do you adapt your leadership style to the specific needs of a given situation?
I take the always-listening approach; all stakeholders participate and whoever is involved contributes, then I make the decision by making them part of the solution. It is collaborative and based on what is best for all sides, including whatever legalities direct the best way to handle and deal with the situation.

2.4. Describe those situations where you can be either highly directive or nondirective.
Directive: It is difficult because in so many instances or things, it is where I am: just the building principal. I guess an example would be the dress code. Nondirective: If teachers have a problem, they go to the leadership team, then I will discuss it with each grade-level representative of each team. The team will contact me and we will have a meeting to discuss and resolve the issue with members of the team and teachers.

3. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of monitoring/evaluating (monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning).

3.1. How do you monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum?
Through board of education approval, we hope it is implemented. We look at what activities are done and see whether they are student-centered classes with hands-on activities. We look at classroom management and direct independent instruction.
Mastery is important as well as teacher flexibility. Movement, variety, and having fun is important, and students must like what they are doing. By observing and asking students, you can find out if kids are actually participating in class.
3.2. How do you monitor the effectiveness of instructional practices in your school?
We do mapping to assess student learning each month. Curriculum mapping caused an increase in student scores. We constantly ask, what we can do to make it better? It is hard to compare school organizations, but we do compare student grades by grade level.

3.3. How do you monitor assessment practices in your school?
Through assessment printouts, mapping scores, student grades per class, and our long-range goal to follow students by grade.

3.4. How can you accurately determine how effective your school is in terms of enhancing student achievement?
We can only compare to district assessments, national norms, state norms, and district demographics, or district factor grouping.

4. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of outreach (is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders).

4.1. How do you ensure that your school complies with all district and state mandates?
I am monitored by the assistant superintendent and superintendent through my evaluation and PIP. We plan for the year with our two site-based teams. We do monthly reports, we look at NJASK scores, and at assessment scores in conjunction with the district test coordinator.

4.2. How do you advocate for your school to the community at large?
We applied for technology grants and through guided reading, nature walks, PTA fundraising, Jump Rope For Hearts, community involvement activities, fun fairs, night activities with parents, NJCAP [a prevention of child abuse program], adult education
proportion of cyber-safety programs with MySpace on the Internet, prevention of bullying and aggressive behaviors, and the homework corner.

4.3. How do you advocate for your school to the parents of your students?

I think the first thing is we listen to the parents. At PTM meetings parents must have a direct line of communication. I think it is important to them.

Note: The secretary interrupted the interview to tell GP3 that parents were picking up their children and taking a pizza with them. GP3 left the office to take care of this and told the secretary that DE was here to take care of this and get in touch with TY.

4.4. How is the central office made aware of your school’s accomplishments?

Through bimonthly reports, word of the month, newspapers for publicity, board of education meetings, and TV channel 34.

5. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of situational awareness (is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems).

5.1. How do you become aware of the informal groups and relationships among teachers in your school?

That is easy; teachers can be best friends or worst enemies and through the grade-level coordinators. By being open with communication, I always listen to what teachers are saying. I always find out but usually do not get involved unless it affects the culture of the school.

5.2. How do you become aware of issues that have not formally come to the surface but might cause discord?
Through the advisory committee. We did have a problem with excessive bullying, so we
looked at handouts that contained mandates given by the state department of education.
Workshops were presented by teachers, who also implemented a consequences rubric on
bullying behaviors. We got parents involved and created a contract for students.
Everyone was open; it did not matter what the problem was, everyone had a right to
discuss it and agree or disagree. Ultimately, it was resolved through collaboration.
5.3. What details regarding the day-to-day running of the school are important to you?
To make sure teachers and students get here safely and the school is safe. To make sure
that the environment is conducive to learning and instruction is taking place. That we
have an optimum curriculum that is rigorous and parents are informed.
5.4. What things can you predict that may go wrong in your school on a day-to-day basis?
We will have no substitutes and coverage must be done in house. Some teachers will be
moved and some classes will be cancelled. Teachers will get sick. These are things that
you have no power to control, but nothing will interfere with instruction and the
environment will be conducive to learning. Highly qualified, certified instruction is
important.
5.5. How do you know what is running smoothly and what is not running smoothly in
your school?
I know that things are going the right way when I see learning occurring through a
walkthrough. Maybe I will see a teacher with Dr. Seuss' *I Cooked Green Eggs and Ham*
or other activities. As long as you are not sitting in the office and are out there. I want the
kids to respect and trust me. I want open communication; people can come and tell me
anything, especially new teachers. They know I will not hold it against them.
Participant 4 = SP2    Date: May 16, 2007    Time: 2:20 p.m. to 3:20 p.m.

1. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of discipline (protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus).

1.1. How have you been successful in eliminating interruptions and undue distractions to teaching and learning?

By instituting the morning routine—teachers greeting and organizing student classes outside minimizes interruptions—and through empowering teachers to instruct parents not to meet them at the classroom door but rather to make arrangements and meetings during their preparation period. By being more visible in classrooms and ensuring that teacher’s practice time on task enforces discipline.

1.2. How is the instructional time of teachers protected?

Because of scheduling, I was able to work with teachers for a half day on instructional time. We minimized the number of pull-outs and maximized student groups for pull-out services. We also held the line against the PTA, who wanted to become too invasive because of testing proficiency.

1.3. How do you deal with external issues that may detract teachers from teaching?

We work to keep morale high and by letting teachers know that they are valued because of their diversity, years of experience, and intellect.

1.4. How are controversies or disagreements prevented from escalating into school-wide issues?

I address the person head on and keep it personal to that individual. In our meetings everyone has an opportunity to be heard.
2. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of flexibility (adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent).

2.1. What is your comfort level with making changes in how things are done?
If the change needs to be done; you just do not change something for the sake of change.

2.2. How do you encourage people to express opinions that are contrary to your own?
I actively listen and will hear what people have to say; people like to feel that they are being heard.

2.3. How do you adapt your leadership style to the specific needs of a given situation?
It is based on the proper assessment of a situation.

2.4. Describe those situations where you can be either highly directive or nondirective.
Direct: With lesson plans and teacher observations. Nondirective: Teachers planning the lesson design, with fieldtrip experiences, but not directly with what they teach although directly with how they teach. I am not direct in the areas concerning where they take the lesson but rather how they execute.

3. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of monitoring/evaluating (monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning).

3.1. How do you monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum?
The curriculum is facilitated by the assistant superintendent, who forms teacher committees. The committees look at test scores, student work as a product, the number of referrals to basic skills, and the number of students exiting special education. We had a number of students referred to basic skills, so we brought in a phonics program.
3.2. How do you monitor the effectiveness of instructional practices in your school?

During our faculty meeting we have critical friend groups from the Coalition of Essential Schools, where teachers learn to talk with one another and share best practices and student work. Through classroom observations and a 3-minute walkthrough.

3.3. How do you monitor assessment practices in your school?

I review the data, discuss with teachers the trends, and monitor grade-level meeting minutes/notes.

3.4. How can you accurately determine how effective your school is in terms of enhancing student achievement?

Through parent satisfaction, student performance as evidenced on student work, writing samples, and the level of sophistication in the student work. By the level of teacher satisfaction and morale, including their interest in student work. By observing samples of student success and determining if there is growth throughout the year.

4. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of outreach (is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders).

4.1 How do you ensure that your school complies with all district and state mandates?

Through a self-monitoring practice, self-reflecting, encouragement of others, and through open dialogue.

4.2. How do you advocate for your school to the community at large?

We work through the PTA as the first line of advocacy. We partner with the block association, who are responsive to our needs. We partner with the police and fire departments. We make sure we follow all local ordinances, such as parking and alternate-side-of-the-street parking as directed.
4.3. How do you advocate for your school to the parents of your students?

By attending PTA meetings, building relationships with the PTA and special education staff, through various ad-hoc committees, and working with individual parents.

4.4. How is the central office made aware of your school’s accomplishments?

Through visitations to the school’s presentations, workshops and performance assessments, and through e-mail and student achievements.

5. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of situational awareness (is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems).

5.1 How do you become aware of the informal groups and relationships among teachers in your school?

Through the secretary, the custodian, and various relationships with other staff whom I trust and will not reveal the source. I allow people to dialogue at staff meetings. You can also get substitutes to tell you what is going on.

5.2. How do you become aware of issues that have not formally come to the surface but might cause discord?

Well, you do not comment on everything that you know and you keep confidences. Everyone does not need to know that you know what is going on; it helps you to make positive change.

5.3. What details regarding the day-to-day running of the school are important to you?

To ensure the safety of students and staff and that the building and grounds are clean and inviting, basic aesthetics. There must be a flow in the operation; the more consistency in the operation, the more it flows. When there is consistency, it helps people know when
things are occurring; more of a routine. It is described by a setup framework or sandbox metaphor. 5.4. What things can you predict that may go wrong in your school on a day-to-day basis?

Teachers will be late to work or someone will forget to call for a substitute. Buses will be late and a lunch aide will be out. A fire alarm will go off and an upset parent will demand to see me without first talking with the teacher. The computer will go down and there will be no attendance, no e-mail, and no work orders completed.

5.5. How do you know what is running smoothly and what is not running smoothly in your school?

Any deviation from our regular set of practices lets me know what is not running smoothly. You must have your ear to the ground; having open ears, people will voice their problems and concerns.

Note: SP2 had planned to report to a baseball game after school to throw out the ball, but the game cancelled due to rain.

Participant 5 = SP3 Date: May 22, 2007 Time: 4:15 p.m. to 5:15 p.m.

1. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of discipline (protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus).

1.1. How have you been successful in eliminating interruptions and undue distractions to teaching and learning?

I try to keep announcements to a minimum and they are made after 3:00 p.m. Parents are aware if they need to see the principal or a teacher that they need an appointment.

1.2. How is the instructional time of teachers protected?
This is the same as previous question. I try to keep announcements to a minimum and they are made after 3:00 p.m. Parents are aware if they need to see the principal or a teacher, they need to make an appointment.

1.3. How do you deal with external issues that may distract teachers from teaching?

Parents are able to see teachers through appointments. Teachers are aware it is their responsibility to get back to parents with a phone call during their lunch hour. Teachers also understand that they should follow up when they promise because it establishes trust.

1.4. How are controversies or disagreements prevented from escalating into school-wide issues?

Every issue is first prioritized and then dealt with; we have open lines of communication and bring in key people if we have a problematic child. We often bring in a staff member or teacher as a liaison for the child and parent. If there is a staff concern, the representative will relay that information back to them, but it is done with diplomacy. The worst thing you can do is shun an issue and think that it will go away.

2. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of flexibility (adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent).

2.1. What is your comfort level with making changes in how things are done?

My comfort level at this point is not what it is going to be down the road. I think change is good, but it must be valid change that is for the betterment of the school; if it is, it is a good change. You must always solicit staff input; other issues may be cut and dry.

Note: SP3 mentioned that she was a new principal.

2.2. How do you encourage people to express opinions that are contrary to your own?
It comes from your leadership style; if they perceive you as nonconfrontational but also not weak, it is good. No shooting from the hip; sometimes you need to agree to disagree, especially if you show them how it will be better.

2.3. How do you adapt your leadership style to the specific needs of a given situation?

Every situation is different and needs to be dealt with in that fashion. Everyone is treated in the same manner but not necessarily equal; some people are needier than others are.

You wear many hats and use different types of management styles to get things done.

2.4. Describe those situations where you can be either highly directive or nondirective.

Generally rules are set in an emergency. There are set directives provided, like during a lockdown. You expect that staff will believe you as an advocate of safety first.

3. **An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of monitoring/evaluating (monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning).**

3.1. How do you monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum?

Through ongoing informal and formal observations, I do my best to make a connection with every classroom every day. Grade-level meetings, monthly faculty meetings, and articulation meetings are also ongoing. We engage in professional development that looks at new trends in education. We can provide ample new programs to train teachers what they need to learn for today’s students.

3.2. How do you monitor the effectiveness of instructional practices in your school?

This question is similar to the previous one. Review student work samples with teachers and ask them to select projects which are outstanding. We talk when teachers come in for their PIP.
3.3. How do you monitor assessment practices in your school?
I am required to give a written assessment of the teacher's grade book per subject. We also assess grades, special projects, homework assignments, and book reports. We display student work on bulletin boards, display cases, and throughout our corridors.

3.4. How can you accurately determine how effective your school is in terms of enhancing student achievement?
When you compare standardized test scores from one year to the next. When new programs are implemented we look at the before and after results.

4. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of outreach (is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders).

4.1. How do you ensure that your school complies with all district and state mandates?
I am in constant communication with central office and the assistant superintendent. We also have a district-wide office of student services that monitors standardized testing.

4.2. How do you advocate for your school to the community at large?
Our home and school association hosts events and solicits parents. We have a Web page, monthly newsletter, volunteer reader program, fundraisers, and PBSIS positive behavior supports in school. PBSIS eliminates negative behavior, promotes and rewards positive behavior. We will also have a fundraiser to reward teachers next year who are within the in-network team.

4.3. How do you advocate for your school to the parents of your students?
This may be an overlap of the previous question. We teamed with the middle school and were sponsored by the parent company of Drug Free America. Parents are aware of substance abuse and they support positive behavior. This program will help. We have a
spring show, holiday concert, and a Fun Day. We incorporated a 15-minute child break
during the day. We also reward parents by allowing them to come in and have lunch with
their students who have done random acts of kindness.

4.4. How is the central office made aware of your school’s accomplishments?

I am in constant communication with the assistant superintendent on every event.

Through e-mail and a letter of recommendation acknowledging an outstanding school
project, central office was notified. During the fall and spring, students selected their own
stock for the stock market game.

5. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of situational
awareness (is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses
this information to address current and potential problems).

5.1. How do you become aware of the informal groups and relationships among teachers
in your school?

First is your own awareness as you make yourself available. I think one of the most
important things a principal can do is learn about your staff: What kind of people are
they, married, single do they have a large family. It is important to know personalities of
your staff. You will always have people that come to you and say things; if it is
information that is true, you have no choice to act on it. It is good to spend time with staff
outside of school.

5.2. How do you become aware of issues that have not formally come to the surface but
might cause discord?
If it is really an issue, the teachers will come to me with it or send a union representative.

If I am hearing drips and drabs then never hear it again, then it is not an issue and I will not seek it out. If it is really an issue, they will come to me.

5.3. What details regarding the day-to-day running of the school are important to you?

The safety and security of staff and students is important. Making sure children are safe, everyone in the school is aware of this concern. If something transpires at home, we are concerned and we are concerned with academic progress.

5.4. What things can you predict that may go wrong in your school on a day-to-day basis?

Each day is a new day; it is very hard to predict. You may stay up worrying about a situation and nothing happens. Then something else may occur, so it is very hard to predict.

5.5. How do you know what is running smoothly and what is not running smoothly in your school?

Visibility is everything; you need to be on the scene. If you have to leave, make sure you call and let them know where you are. You will begin to develop a sense of trust.

Participant 6 = GP3         Date: May 23, 2007       Time: 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

1. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of discipline (protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus).

1.1. How have you been successful in eliminating interruptions and undue distractions to teaching and learning?

We are not as successful as we need to be. The rats are outside of this building. One student, a young man, has to watch his younger brother, then he takes him to his father. He is failing because he is too tired to do school work. We have another student whose
mother is selling her body to get drugs. In another situation we have a parent who is 50 years old and has a very young child in addition to one in high school.

1.2. How is the instructional time of teachers protected?

It is not protected as much, there are no announcements but we use walkie-talkies. We need kids when we need them. It is difficult to protect teachers from distractions; if we have a unique situation like testing, then the awareness is heightened. We will look at this in the future, should we or can we?

1.3. How do you deal with external issues that may distract teachers from teaching?

It depends on what the issues are; if a teacher needs to leave or parents need to see a student for medical reasons, we have no choice but to interrupt the class. If teachers have problems, we will assist.

1.4. How are controversies or disagreements prevented from escalating into school-wide issues?

For students we have conflict mediation, SAC, the resource officer, the VP, and principal. We will also bring in a student’s favorite teacher and get parents involved. If the situation cannot be contained in school, then we will call the police. If the student continues to be out of control with the police, they will be arrested. We try to intercede before that point. We have a walk-away policy and anger management, with counseling, student discipline, and working with families.

2. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of flexibility (adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent).

2.1 What is your comfort level with making changes in how things are done?
When I have a good feeling that it is going to work, sometimes I will go it alone and sometimes not. You never have 100% consent; open dissent is better than concealed dissent. Each situation is different; for example, if there is a conflict during a faculty meeting, I will contact the president of the association. You have to pick your battles.

2.2. How do you encourage people to express opinions that are contrary to your own? You are open, you listen, and do not shut them down, or they may shut down. For example, the kids wanted to wear hats in the building, they got a petition together, but I said no.

2.3. How do you adapt your leadership style to the specific needs of a given situation? That is a foolish question; if you are successful, you will need the situation to determine your response.

2.4. Describe those situations where you can be either highly directive or nondirective. Directive: I had a meeting without a written agenda, now I have a written agenda. You need to listen and for people to give feedback. If there is no option in a situation, then it becomes directive. There is very little black and white in education; it is a rainbow of colors. The dress code, student behavior, and grading are situations where I am directive. Nondirective: One of our English teachers never had a party for students. I said if it is incorporated in a learning environment, it could be okay. Another French teacher asked if she could develop a shift in grading and wanted to you use Integrate Pro. This year she was not allowed to use it.

3. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of monitoring/evaluating (monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning).
3.1. How do you monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum?

Through supervisors, staff, a walkthrough, feedback, the HSPA, and PSAT. In addition, through discipline notices and the amount of graffiti found in the corridors. We take pictures of the graffiti for the gang identification program. All student are evaluated by an outside company.

3.2. How do you monitor the effectiveness of instructional practices in your school?

This question is the same thing as above. We evaluate curriculum; if it is not appropriate we modify it. When you do a lesson you work at both.

3.3. How do you monitor assessment practices in your school?

We give students past copies of standardized tests to review, we also look at all scores we get in. Every teacher will provide a list of assessment procedures for their classroom. Teachers should get to know the assessment; if a mistake is made, it should be made in favor of the kids.

3.4. How can you accurately determine how effective your school is in terms of enhancing student achievement?

Accurately, you cannot; short term, you can measure, but long term it is difficult. You must have an understanding that learning is a lifelong skill. Most kids that go to college change their majors in the first year. If kids have no goals, it is hard; then you must give kids opportunities to be successful. If you can see progress in general behavior, it is good; everybody will not be perfect.

4. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of outreach (is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders).

4.1. How do you ensure that your school complies with all district and state mandates?
First you must know what they are and the changes. We publish a manual with rules and regulations. I check e-mails for changes. Our curriculum is wrapped around the content standards. Understanding cross-content standards are not the only issue. Putting in JROTC and CLUBS, there have not been guidelines for this.

4.2. How do you advocate for your school to the community at large?

I attend all activities that I can. Supervisors are involved with this. We attend musicals, chorus, orchestra, dance, plays, shows, dinners, sports awards, and home and school association meetings. There is also the principal’s advisor committee, middle states, and the parent’s advisory council.

4.3. How do you advocate for your school to the parents of your students?

Parent sometimes come in hostile, and you need to turn that anger around. You find out what is in the best interest of the student. Sometimes I can make a change in the parent and student. I made a call to a parent at 5:30 a.m. because there was a strong concern over suicide and the use of drugs.

4.4. How is the central office made aware of your school’s accomplishments?

We have a board of education policy that every 2 months, principals must provide a report. Therefore, I keep a book on items that I want to review and a personal log in a notebook where I file important documents.

5. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of situational awareness (is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems).

5.1. How do you become aware of the informal groups and relationships among teachers in your school?
I keep my mouth shut and watch who is sitting with who. You build your confidence. Be
careful not to over empower a teacher; then you have to rein them in.

5.2. How do you become aware of issues that have not formally come to the surface but
might cause discord?

Through the rumors from teachers. You must make teachers aware of confidentiality.

5.3. What details regarding the day-to-day running of the school are important to you?

The safety of students and staff. Make sure teachers understand kids. Sometimes we have
trouble with teachers disrespecting kids. A lot of sitting goes into administration and
teaching. You prepare a statement with a blank sheet of paper in front of you, all it
would be is showmanship.

5.4. What things can you predict that may go wrong in your school on a day-to-day basis?

Anything and everything. One day I came in and found inches of water in the office from
the air conditioner. Another day the water main flooded. We had a power failure, bomb
threats, fights, and gangs. You cannot be shocked by what happens.

5.5. How do you know what is running smoothly and what is not running smoothly in
your school?

You do not know. Once you think everything is going great, that is when it goes wrong.
During the HSPA, everything was going great, except on Thursday we had a snowstorm.
The National Honor Society I can depend on, but parents came in and complained about
that. You do not assume that something is running smoothly. I thought we had a
microphone for a faculty meeting; I start the meeting and there is no microphone.
Participant 7 = GP4  

Date: May 25, 2007  Time: 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

1. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of discipline (protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus).

1.1. How have you been successful in eliminating interruptions and undue distractions to teaching and learning?

With technology and the use of two-way radios that help in the search for specific children. Through my visibility in the classroom and corridors when the period changes. The lunch periods are supervised by administrators; we have a clear and concise code of conduct, which we revise each year. We meet every Wednesday morning with team leaders and e-mail updated information to parent groups.

1.2. How is the instructional time of teachers protected?

This question is a carryover from the previous one. We have a stringent policy that enforces no disruptions to classroom instruction. Kids in instrumental music are pulled out once every 8 weeks. We also plan activities during different times.

1.3. How do you deal with external issues that may distract teachers from teaching?

Administrators are the shepherds of staff, parents, discipline, and the facility. You must be proactive and protective of the school. You determine which issues you will take head on; some teachers will not be engaged.

1.4. How are controversies or disagreements prevented from escalating into school-wide issues?

I maintain an open door policy with staff that can come in during early morning hours to see me. You mediate problems before they become problems by utilizing teachers and
union representatives who work among teachers on issues and concerns. Just as kids have cliques so do teachers, but I really have no problems with teachers.

2. **An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of flexibility (adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent).**

2.1. What is your comfort level with making changes in how things are done?
I think there is a point to which comfort and consistency on the status quo does not work.
I see myself as a resource; I am a teacher. You have to do things for people to make things happen. You listen to kids in the same manner and must be flexible; nothing is concrete. Expect the unexpected.

2.2. How do you encourage people to express opinions that are contrary to your own?
I think that comes during any time we have conversations about any issue in the school.
We had a workshop analyzing ourselves on things that are reflective of change. Most staff come in and say what they like. No grievance has been filed in this building in 4 years. I have worked in the district for 7.

2.3. How do you adapt your leadership style to the specific needs of a given situation?
Leadership is like instruction; you need to differentiate your approach, which may not fit every person. You must identify the appropriate way to apply it. You must find a unique way to apply your style.

2.4. Describe those situations where you can be either highly directive or nondirective.
Any critical situation is directive, such as bomb threats and weapons in a building.
Strong, consistent leaders make people feel secure. Issues like school culture and improving the workplace environment are nondirective. You want stakeholders to own it;
people involved must be engaged in development and assessment. Every person involved can figure out where something went wrong.

3. **An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of monitoring/evaluating (monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning).**

3.1. **How do you monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum?**

Through formal and informal observations and evaluations. I evaluate teaching through the observation on a consistent basis. I review student assessments and look at students throughout the year to see how proficient they are. Where is student mastery and the ability to function in an academic environment? We also look at standardized testing.

3.2. **How do you monitor the effectiveness of instructional practices in your school?**

I see the tone or climate of the classroom and whether students are engaged. Does the teacher have a good rapport with students? Parents will let you know. You look at what children are learning; is there a higher rate of attendance with no discipline problems?

3.3. **How do you monitor assessment practices in your school?**

By collecting lesson plans and looking at teacher assessments. By sitting in on student assessments and have teachers cograde assignments. I graded a final examination; my grade was significantly lower than the teacher’s grade. If I observe a teacher, I will ask how you are evaluating students, then I will come back on the day of that assessment. Our eighth graders were poorly prepared and/or poorly assessed.

3.4. **How can you accurately determine how effective your school is in terms of enhancing student achievement?**
That is something that is challenging. You have students for a short period and it is hard to look at longitudinal data. When leveling proficiency in standardized-based assessment, students will take a greater leadership role, and that is when we see success.

4. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of outreach (is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders).

4.1. How do you ensure that your school complies with all district and state mandates?

Certain elements are out of the individual leader’s hands. You get personally involved in everything significant. A safe facility, which has an impact on the school. You are always able to ensure this up to a point.

4.2. How do you advocate for your school to the community at large?

I have a big mouth. I am visible at community functions; during political actions, we invite the public in and you get a certain amount of PR. You invite the press in and advertise your accomplishments. You are visible during community service events at elementary schools and the high school. The key is visibility and how you make your school visible during meetings to get the support of community groups.

4.3. How do you advocate for your school to the parents of your students?

Through multiple forms. We invite parents in to see what is happening and what is successful. We have family counseling skills and provide Christmas gifts to homes that have been in fires and we bring them supplies. My office is a community center with a direct line to the community.

4.4. How is the central office made aware of your school’s accomplishments?

When I tell them, I think it is necessary to brag about ourselves. Our quiz bowl team came in eighth in New Jersey. I wrote a memo to the board of education and the local
newspaper. We have an open line to board members, who can come to the school and witness events.

5. **An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of situational awareness** (is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems).

5.1. How do you become aware of the informal groups and relationships among teachers in your school?

It helps when you maintain an open line of communication and provide opportunities for staff to socialize and let down their guard. Carpooling and sharing stories when traveling to workshops or when traveling to national conferences. Also, during a plane ride or at conferences, sitting in meetings and waiting in line, you learn about people. An example was an excellent teacher whose father died; we sent him cards and letters. We did what we could to retain this teacher.

5.2. How do you become aware of issues that have not formally come to the surface but might cause discord?

I maintain an open-door policy and people will come to you and trust you. They will volunteer information about relationships with cohorts. There are 6th- through 8th-grade teacher connections, and you can identify ways to make the link. You may hear something of the dynamics of a situation, and now your loyalty and passion is brought in context.

Note: I was not able to transcribe GP6’s complete thought on the last sentence.

5.3. What details regarding the day-to-day running of the school are important to you?
The key is visibility, which influences student behavior. Safety on the campus is enhanced just by being there.

5.4. What things can you predict that may go wrong in your school on a day-to-day basis?
Some types of major maintenance problems with the physical plant, like flooding, doors, the elevator, our computers, the heat, no water; a distraught, disruptive child, or an angered child. Teachers must redirect their focus and often times lose focus.

5.5. How do you know what is running smoothly and what is not running smoothly in your school?
I used to think that I needed to be in school every day. However, when I was out when my wife was ill about a week, everyone knew how to do their job. It is not Murphy's Law; when things go wrong, it means you have not planned. It is an excuse for the lack of preparedness. During my watch, we make sure all school openings are planned. There is thoroughness that you do which assigns attention to detail. You have people around you with skills. Someone around me will catch a mistake or enhance my own style.

Participant 8 = GP5  Date: May 30, 2007  Time: 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

1. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of discipline (protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus).

1.1. How have you been successful in eliminating interruptions and undue distractions to teaching and learning?
I think everyone is qualified by the fact that this is my first year. I try to interrupt classes as little as possible. We catch parents that may come in to ask teachers questions. We also worked out a contract with a student who was causing problems in class. It takes the guesswork from teachers, who agreed that he could not distract from the others. Different
teachers handle distractions in different ways. I also have weekly meetings with teachers and students.

1.2. How is the instructional time of teachers protected?
Whenever possible we try not to add on things. It is different from school to school and culture to culture. Parents wanted to visit cub scouts; being new to a culture, I said no. However, if I knew the culture, it would have been better to say yes because it is part of the community. Our walk-a-thon is a good example; it is part of our education. For example; we added our DARE program, then we agreed to take something away, the nurse now would do fewer health lessons. 1.3. How do you deal with external issues that may distract teachers from teaching?
Our cub scouts wanted to take time from class. Parents during the holiday wanted to come in and add to the program; we said only if it is balanced. Certain groups want to see teachers, but teachers are shielded by district policy guidelines. The superintendent screens some of the groups and principals screen other groups. Because we have healthy eating in other parts of the curriculum. Note: I was unsure what GP5 meant by the last sentence.

1.4. How are controversies or disagreements prevented from escalating into school-wide issues?
There are different forums to work things out, such as faculty meetings for issues from teachers and their representatives and the liaison committee, which meets 5 times a year with the principal. Teachers and the principal resolve issues before they become grievances. We have PTO meetings for parents, where we discuss how we deal with
discipline. What is the teacher's role and the principal's role? When a child becomes physical and hits others, then the principal becomes involved.

2. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of flexibility (adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent).

2.1. What is your comfort level with making changes in how things are done?
It depends. I am very confrontational if I think it is going to be better for kids, parents, and teachers. The time and process will vary from A to Z. For example; changing lunch periods and parking space arrangements, it is important that I am around long enough to know that I have some stakeholders to push for each change. Change takes time.

2.2. How do you encourage people to express opinions that are contrary to your own?
I tell you that it is fine, you leave issues open to attract as many avenues as possible. I try to allow an approach that is not condescending, such as saying, “You stupid jerk!” I try to model that just because we disagree it is not personal.

2.3. How do you adapt your leadership style to the specific needs of a given situation?
You have varied personalities and characters. There are times when what is called for is immediate autocratic direction. Where I simply need to take charge and give direction. Other times when things are moving slowly, I need to get people together. For example, it is like dealing with a nontenured teacher rather than a tenured teacher.

2.4. Describe those situations where you can be either highly directive or nondirective.
I try to stay out of things if it does not concern me. If it is an insurance representative to see teachers, I stay out of it. If someone says that the music teacher scheduled classes at a bad time, I will tell that person to see the music teacher and work it out with her or him.
3. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of monitoring/evaluating (monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning).

3.1. How do you monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum?
Certainly part of it would be knowledgeable teacher feedback from a teacher whose expertise I trust. Through observations that I do. Through parent feedback; say a kid is in the fifth grade and the parent complains about problems with proper reading. You cannot ignore test scores.

3.2. How do you monitor the effectiveness of instructional practices in your school?
Observations; when I am in a classroom, I can see firsthand what strategies they use for more than one kid at a time. Are teachers using the technology? You look at finished products and things on display, is it simple or is complex thinking involved?

3.3. How do you monitor assessment practices in your school?
I guess indirectly, where over time I get to see different tests and other assessments that teachers have done. One class did a work on the rain forest; is it just one modality. Through preobservation conferences; how will you know what you want them to learn?
In the classroom students will do something that gives feedback on whether they are learning or not.

3.4. How can you accurately determine how effective your school is in terms of enhancing student achievement?
One thing would be hearing feedback; our district is known for a wide range of abilities you need to challenge. During the preobservation conference you ask, how you know that
your kids already know what you are going to teach? We look at NJASK who is proficient and who is advanced proficient and compare kids.

4. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of outreach (is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders).

4.1. How do you ensure that your school complies with all district and state mandates?

Well, I want to say I comply with the ones that I like. Luckily, we have a bunch of support folks like counselors, CST members, and a special education director that knows special education law. Other requirements are enforced through the curriculum. Supervisors make sure we are teaching on the same page and pace. Fire drill forms are submitted to central office.

4.2. How do you advocate for your school to the community at large?

You know, I think it is especially true for this district, people who move did it so because they can go to a district school. Our reputation stays because we hire good teachers. You cannot ignore test scores. You make sure you watch people’s perceptions of what the community is at large. Read the papers and local articles.

4.3. How do you advocate for your school to the parents of your students?

Through a weekly newsletter, Web sites for the school, and through individual teacher Web sites. You try to make sure people hear about the good things that are happening. Parents hate in-service day but I try to tell them what we’re doing on that day. We also make it easy to assess school information.

4.4. How is the central office made aware of your school’s accomplishments?

I am not big on bragging, so probably they know it through lots of different ways. I would go out of my way to let them know if a teacher or student had a special honor.
5. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of situational awareness (is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems).

5.1. How do you become aware of the informal groups and relationships among teachers in your school?

Slowly; I think there are groups with problems. There may be faster ways to do it, but the only way I get to learn that is by time and trust. A teacher’s student died and I rescheduled the observation, diffusing a situation. Then people will start telling me different stuff. You get things by watching and listening. My secretary can hear things. The more I ask; if I just do my job, it comes.

5.2. How do you become aware of issues that have not formally come to the surface but might cause discord?

Through a trusted person saying something, a teacher rep talking about people being upset, parents, or someone saying something. I am usually the last person to think, if there is one complaint, there are 10 other behind it. Also, through the PTA president if you have a good relationship.

5.3. What details regarding the day-to-day running of the school are important to you?

Communication, phone calls, e-mails and notes. I make sure I get back to them the same day. Being friendly and cordial, giving a smile and how are you today. The PA system in classrooms sometimes burns out. I went out and picked up two bats for that teacher during my son’s orientation this morning. Being available as much as possible.
Note: In the office is a picture of a bunch of thumbs from students stating, “We think GP8 is thumb thing special” with student signatures under each thumb. Another picture is of the dirty dozen, which are images of the Little Rascals or something similar.

5.4. What things can you predict that may go wrong in your school on a day-to-day basis? Lousy substitutes, the heat not working in some classrooms, kids getting hurt, parents complaining about teachers, an interpersonal gaff with someone, something they take the wrong way.

5.5. How do you know what is running smoothly and what is not running smoothly in your school?

Well, I would like to say perception and observation that is backed up by feedback. Asking how is this thing working and finding other ways to ask people and through observations and feedback.

Participant 9 = GP6

Date: June 7, 2007
Time: 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

1. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of discipline (protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus).

1.1. How have you been successful in eliminating interruptions and undue distractions to teaching and learning?

If the distracting person were brought to me, I would talk with the child. I would talk to the teacher and we would agree what would happen to the child.

1.2. How is the instructional time of teachers protected?

By limiting interruptions and addressing or removing discipline problems. Making sure all supplies are available.

1.3. How do you deal with external issues that may distract teachers from teaching?
By having parental conferences, depending on the circumstances; primarily, parents come
during the teacher's preparation time. Encourage parents to sit in on classes to see what is
happening.

1.4. How are controversies or disagreements prevented from escalating into school-wide
issues?

Generally, getting parties involved is easy at the elementary level. The older the child,
you must talk with the child and parents to reason and resolve the issue.

2. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of flexibility (adapts
his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with
dissent).

2.1. What is your comfort level with making changes in how things are done?

It depends on the situation. I made some changes coming in and we have a progress
report every week. This past spring our NJASK scores were good so we are not looking
at a lot to change. We have a good rationale for looking at departmentalized instruction. I
am comfortable if the situation calls for it.

2.2. How do you encourage people to express opinions that are contrary to your own?

I ask people for their honest assessment. There are things I will not tolerate, like
insubordination. I am comfortable with different opinions.

2.3. How do you adapt your leadership style to the specific needs of a given situation?

That comes with experience, whatever the situation that presents itself. I treat adults and
children as I would want to be treated.

2.4. Describe those situations where you can be either highly directive or nondirective.
I am directive when I observe a situation that is quickly leading to an altercation, contact and/or violence, or if someone is in danger. I am nondirective when I am planning for the next school year, like during an SFA meeting. Usually during a meeting of this type it is not my feeling that affects decisions. I honor their wishes.

3. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of monitoring/evaluating (monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning).

3.1. How do you monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum?
Well I know essentially what is on the test [NJASK]. I try to see that the teachers are focused on what is on the test in the spring. We monitor what is being taught and how it is being taught.

3.2. How do you monitor the effectiveness of instructional practices in your school?
I visit classes frequently through formal and informal observations and evaluations. I also give written feedback.

3.3. How do you monitor assessment practices in your school?
We run, in addition to district assessments, practice NJASK assessments are timed with content to insure success.

3.4. How can you accurately determine how effective your school is in terms of enhancing student achievement?
It is terrible thing to say that you are what your test results say you are. If things are not going well, it does not mean we are not doing the job for the future.

4. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of outreach (is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders).
4.1. How do you ensure that your school complies with all district and state mandates?
Be aware of mandates to help the central office. Be diligent, follow deadlines, provide reports on reading, and follow up with exact numbers. Also by keeping fit, fired to meet and exceed.

4.2. How do you advocate for your school to the community at large?
Through a colorful newsletter to all parents, we promote what is occurring in the school. Included is the student of the week and upcoming events. The newsletter is the centerpiece of community relations. It was started back in September of 2005.

4.3. How do you advocate for your school to the parents of your students?
By sending letters home with the newsletter and through the student leadership council. Our monthly PTO meeting is lightly attended, and we encourage as much attendance as possible.

4.4. How is the central office made aware of your school’s accomplishments?
Through submitting the newsletter to them, VIP copies to central office are our lifeline. I am not one to blow my own horn. We also send the best attendance for the month.

5. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of situational awareness (is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems).

5.1. How do you become aware of the informal groups and relationships among teachers in your school?
People talk, it is gossip; you hear things from people who are loyal. You cultivate loyalty then listen.
5.2. How do you become aware of issues that have not formally come to the surface but might cause discord?

Well, you know who works with you; adults and students are the same. You know when it hits the surface.

5.3. What details regarding the day-to-day running of the school are important to you?

When teachers and teacher assistants are absent and when support staff are absent.

Attendance is a major concern. I need to know who is in the building. Also teachers who are not equipped for the grade assignment. You look at the personality of people and their experiences.

5.4. What things can you predict that may go wrong in your school on a day-to-day basis?

Students that will have difficulty, as in a physical altercation. Absences lead to chaos in the classroom. Too many teachers absent.

5.5. How do you know what is running smoothly and what is not running smoothly in your school?

Events that require my attention are not running smoothly. If things are running smoothly, there are not that many ripples in the ocean of life.

Participant 10 = GP7 Date: June 8, 2007 Time: 1:15 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.

1. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of discipline (protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus).

1.1. How have you been successful in eliminating interruptions and undue distractions to teaching and learning?
Well, no announcements over the PA, the pledge in the morning is done in class, not over the PA. Teachers use a whiteboard for providing information and upcoming events.

Quality time for teaching should be just that.

1.2. How is the instructional time of teachers protected?

Assemblies minimized to one per month. Scheduling is optimized. Basic skills is somewhat difficult. Spot-check visits to classrooms and observations in language arts, literature, and mathematics. Avoid the months and days during the NJASK. We look at resources.

1.3. How do you deal with external issues that may distract teachers from teaching?

It depends on the priority of it; if a report is needed, you do that. We monitor phone calls, both internal and external. The secretary calls for teachers or will take a message. Fire drills are done during the early morning or early afternoon. If I need something, I see teachers during their preparation time.

1.4. How are controversies or disagreements prevented from escalating into school-wide issues?

I do a lot during closed doors, within my office and confidential, often with a union representative. It really has not been an issue. Sometimes I use the faculty meeting. I will learn about a situation from the PTA or the secretary.

2. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of flexibility (adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent).

2.1. What is your comfort level with making changes in how things are done?

On a scale of 1 to 10, I am an 8 with adapting new things to the building.
2.2. How do you encourage people to express opinions that are contrary to your own?
Through verbalizing it or putting it in writing. My door is always open for teachers to stop in and speak with me. I do not know what things if voices do not let me know. Part of my site-based management is to hear voices of teachers. We had a box where teachers could put their concerns or issues and I would address those concerns.

2.3. How do you adapt your leadership style to the specific needs of a given situation?
I think you have to take every situation in consideration; just like children, you adapt. There is a framework, however; it is mainly based on prior experiences, background, time on the job, and other information you have gathered along the way.

2.4. Describe those situations where you can be either highly directive or nondirective.
I am highly directive on what I want to see when I walk into a classroom, what good teaching looks like. Also when data is collected from teachers. I am not highly directive when looking at the style of teaching. Teachers gravitate to different styles, they show a lot of whole group instruction and small group instruction or one-to-one instruction. They are different; one may be more focused on visual presentations while another on oral presentations. Teachers will differ based on drill and style. I want to see a framework but not one that has to be exact from teacher to teacher.

3. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of monitoring/evaluating (monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning).

3.1. How do you monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum?
Through lesson plans, informal and formal observations, testing information, reviewing records, and reading assessments. Asking students questions during observations to monitor the standard and indicator in which feedback were addressed.

3.2. How do you monitor the effectiveness of instructional practices in your school?

Walk-ins, teacher observations, note taking to look back and reflect and to see if each grade level is incorporated into the classroom.

3.3. How do you monitor assessment practices in your school?

By walking the building and checking in on the testing areas. After testing, looking at the data and providing copies to teachers. Submitting assessment results to teachers for each student the following year. First and second grades take the Terra Nova and third and fourth grades take NJASK.

3.4. How can you accurately determine how effective your school is in terms of enhancing student achievement?

Through test scores, student responses; I love to look at the literature center and student ideas. Teachers look at student responses on each question. Is there visual student engagement with instruction? Also literature and mathematics days and parents in the classroom.

4. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of outreach (is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders).

4.1. How do you ensure that your school complies with all district and state mandates?

Teachers put the core curriculum content standards in their plan books. Through discussions with teachers about effective practices and true exposure. Through faculty
meetings in which vehicles are provided for teaching and finding tools for teachers to become better teachers. We have grade-level as well as faculty meetings.

4.2 How do you advocate for your school to the community at large?

The principal’s newsletter every month. The PTA, special activities, mathematics day is videotaped for the local TV channel 34. We have a parent who works for commerce bank, we have two teachers that provide public relations by calling the news when we have programs and outstanding student performance. Parents can view the Web site for information and materials.

4.3. How do you advocate for your school to the parents of your students?

This is the same as the previous question. The newsletter, PTA, open house, fall and spring concerts, workshops for parents. Prior to the PTA, we meet to discuss goals and objectives for the year.

4.4 How is the central office made aware of your school’s accomplishments?

Through bimonthly reports to the assistant superintendent that cite progress and/or improvements.

5. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of situational awareness (is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems).

5.1. How do you become aware of the informal groups and relationships among teachers in your school?

By identifying those change agents in the school and the people who gravitate to them. People will inform me; however, I do not necessarily deal with those situations. Sometimes it depends on the situation. For example, if people who do not like changes I
want, then I do not deal with that. It depends on what it is, if it affects everyone. For example, we will change our school fair to an all-day event if changing it will affect the outcome, or if the school is negative I will get involved. If the outcome reflects on the building, I will deal with it. Before this would be done, I would go to the union representative. I would also contact the PTA and the superintendent.

5.2. How do you become aware of issues that have not formally come to the surface but might cause discord?

Through a site-based management committee, teacher concerns are placed in the concern box. I will also explain my rationale and invite open dialogue.

5.3. What details regarding the day-to-day running of the school are important to you?

Everything, like who will be in today, certain kids who need one-on-one instruction, substitutes, safety issues, students walking to the building in the morning, students outside in the mornings because if doors shut a kid can potentially be locked out, instruction, being available to speak with teachers, the lunch periods, walkthroughs, and the management of my desk with paperwork.

5.4. What things can you predict that may go wrong in your school on a day-to-day basis?

A student confrontation, an adult will get sick and leave early, an unannounced fire drill because of smoke in the cafeteria, buses will not be on time, having a parent in the office that has a problem, and not being able to follow the daily routine.

5.5. How do you know what is running smoothly and what is not running smoothly in your school?
I know if there are no complaints, by the tone of the building, and a feeling that I get. The number of students who come to see me before and after hours and the flow of students in the nurse’s office.

Participant 11 = GP8      Date: June 11, 2007      Time: 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

1. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of discipline (protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus).

1.1. How have you been successful in eliminating interruptions and undue distractions to teaching and learning?

At the opening of school, teachers are given instructions on how to handle problems and to report them to the main office in order to get back on task. Our interventionist does a large part of the discipline. The principal also handles the discipline.

1.2. How is the instructional time of teachers protected?

Not a lot of announcements, on Fridays we outline and plan for the next week, parent visitations are limited to 10 to 15 minutes toward the end of the day. Assemblies have been reduced to three programs to introduce the curriculum, science and mathematics, language arts and literature, and character education. No movies or videos except those approved by the board of education and part of the curriculum.

1.3. How do you deal with external issues that may distract teachers from teaching?

Through parent workshops, a school-based planning team which is an outside community resource, and staff professional development on current social issues including domestic violence.

1.4. How are controversies or disagreements prevented from escalating into school-wide issues?
Through information given first on upcoming issues related to goals and objectives, goals are given in September, everything is previously laid out. Change is hard, it can cause people to collapse.

2. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of flexibility (adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent).

2.1. What is your comfort level with making changes in how things are done?

Very comfortable for the benefit of child achievement; if children require different ways of teaching, then we must make that change. We give teachers information, statistics, different articles all in an effort to create an educational database. We do not make changes just to make changes; teachers must feel and experience it as long as it is possible with results.

2.2. How do you encourage people to express opinions that are contrary to your own?

I like them to express themselves. They are allowed to speak out at staff meetings; we also have common preparation times so teachers can collaborate. I thank them and encourage them to contribute. Nine out of 10 teachers look at it and respect that process. Teachers connect the dots; if they buy into it, then they will get something out of it.

2.3. How do you adapt your leadership style to the specific needs of a given situation?

It depends on the situation; sometimes I am a counselor, a teacher, and a manager of buildings and grounds and crisis management. Whatever is needed to move the school forward. I am attentive, listening without reacting. I let people finish what they want to say.

2.4. Describe those situations where you can be either highly directive or nondirective.
Directive during a lockdown, the implementation of curriculum, during scheduling, and in my expectations of professional behavior. Nondirective during PTA conferences, classroom management, social events, and staff and parent picnics.

3. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of monitoring/evaluating (monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning).

3.1. How do you monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum?
Through lesson plans, informal and formal observations, conversations with students, looking at homework assignments and progress reports where we sign off on each student. We also have monthly assessment sheets, summative and cumulative evaluation test assessments reviewing state and district results.

3.2. How do you monitor the effectiveness of instructional practices in your school?
Through cooperative teaching with regular education and special education teachers. By inspecting the effectiveness of the delivery of the lesson. Through observations, I see the specialty of each teacher. During common preparation periods we ask teachers to use their expertise in leading common preparation time. Each month teachers that are doing well bring strategies for discussion. I challenge teachers to challenge their perceptions. During afternoon staff development we review assessments scores and results.

3.3. How do you monitor assessment practices in your school?
We do district benchmarking for Grades 2, 3, and 4 four in language arts, mathematics, and science. Every teacher gets an individual benchmark. District assessment sheets are reviewed and passed on to the next teacher. We identify student needs based on their
assessment results and focus on differentiated instruction. The classroom setting must fit
the instruction of the student.

3.4. How can you accurately determine how effective your school is in terms of
enhancing student achievement?

We have made AYP as a Title 1 school for the last 4 years; we are consistently moving
up and trying to stay there. We focus on advanced proficiency and look at students that
are close to proficient. We entice students with enrichment for those who are below
proficiency. Every subgroup is focused on and we aggressively work with Black students
and their achievement gap.

4. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of outreach (is an
advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders).

4.1. How do you ensure that your school complies with all district and state mandates?

We make sure that we monitor and review district policies. Teachers are on different
committees around the district, including the alternate assessment. Coordinators attend
every grade-level meeting.

4.2. How do you advocate for your school to the community at large?

Through the PTA, school teams, the town manager, DARE, the city council, Clean Up

4.3. How do you advocate for your school to the parents of your students?

Through the winter and spring concerts, Title 1 parental involvement, and extended
summer school.

4.4. How is the central office made aware of your school’s accomplishments?
Through principal meetings, test assessments from the state and district, and parents will call the central office for the good and the bad.

5. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of situational awareness (is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems).

5.1. How do you become aware of the informal groups and relationships among teachers in your school?

Walking in the corridors, I have an open-door policy, visibility throughout the building, and during meetings.

5.2. How do you become aware of issues that have not formally come to the surface but might cause discord?

Through the interventionist, the PTA, the CST may report a teacher’s stress level, sometimes from teachers, the secretary, and custodial staff.

5.3. What details regarding the day-to-day running of the school are important to you?

Safety and the school climate, teacher involvement, and parent awareness.

5.4. What things can you predict that may go wrong in your school on a day-to-day basis?

Student behavior, staff and their social deposit with personal issues, maintenance issues, and the boiler in the winter.

5.5. How do you know what is running smoothly and what is not running smoothly in your school?

Quietness—you can feel it—students are walking with a focus and a calmness, the climate of the school and the kids know it. If I allow teachers to express and vent, they can carry more during the day. I have noticed that if I have had a rough start, it is noticed
and may have some impact on the school. If a teacher comes in and is upset and I stay calm, they will get calm.

Participant 12 = GP9  Date: June 12, 2007  Time: 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

1. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of discipline (protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus).

1.1. How have you been successful in eliminating interruptions and undue distractions to teaching and learning?

No PA system and we focus on teachers teaching during a 40-minute period.

Announcements are not allowed during instructional time. Teachers are in teams discussing issues that are germane to kids’ learning. After the information goes through, the core team teachers get what they need to know. Information is processed at all times through guidelines to ensure that it is correct.

1.2. How is the instructional time of teachers protected?

Nothing is scheduled during the day that would interrupt instructional time, especially academic instruction. During nonacademic time, we have other activities; we never do anything during instructional time.

1.3. How do you deal with external issues that may distract teachers from teaching?

If there are external issues creeping in, I will meet with teachers and the superintendent. The SAC advisor will meet with the employees’ association. If it is physical in or out of school, I will bring in short-term substitutes. If I cannot resolve it, I will bring it to the superintendent with recommendations.

1.4. How are controversies or disagreements prevented from escalating into school-wide issues?
My door is always open; any problems with teachers, they have a right to come to my office. We have a liaison committee the meets monthly to resolve issues. Teachers can file a grievance to the association and board of education.

2. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of flexibility (adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent).

2.1. What is your comfort level with making changes in how things are done?
I am very comfortable in the beginning to make changes. However, I think things through before beginning the implementation. I am reluctant to change in midstream. Change for change’s sake is not good. I go through a process with the leadership committee that resolves concerns or discusses issues twice a month. The teachers can feel they are part of the process. You get them involved when pouring the cement. It is good not to have top-down management.

2.2. How do you encourage people to express opinions that are contrary to your own?
I realize saying to my staff my door is open does not endear them to come in. One thing I do is encourage them to take issues to their supervisor or the assistant principal. For example, the teacher who was on the computer during the grade-level meeting will be able to meet with the supervisor and assistant principal as well as the principal. I clear the air with no grudges. The leadership committee can discuss with the liaison committee or any member of the leadership committee and get the ground-level leader involved.

2.3. How do you adapt your leadership style to the specific needs of a given situation?
You want to make sure that you come to any situation without any preconceived ideas. You put yourself in the shoes of both sides. You look at the issues and weigh them. The
bottom line is that students are my paramount concern; you always do what is best for kids. That is where it stops.

2.4. Describe those situations where you can be either highly directive or nondirective.
I am directive during an assembly when the performing company cannot be here until 9:00 a.m. I have already looked at it to see the impact. Some decisions are administrative by nature. This year I changed some team members based on teaching styles and for balance. I have looked at this for 3 years and I am saying to them to respect what I have done. I know the reasons why I have made them, now you need to adapt to the change.

3. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of monitoring/evaluating (monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning).

3.1. How do you monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum?
I am in classrooms on a daily basis making sure content, scope, and sequence are properly implemented. I serve on the curriculum committee and read everything in respect to change.

3.2. How do you monitor the effectiveness of instructional practices in your school?
I go into classrooms on a daily basis, supervisors are in the classrooms, and we discuss issues regarding learning and nonlearning. We have a monthly meetings and leave teachers with that feedback. Also through formal observations.

3.3. How do you monitor assessment practices in your school?
We have had workshops in the district on formative and summative assessments. We look at lesson plans, teachers submit lesson plans every 2 months, unit plans are also submitted on activities, objectives, and the types of student assessment. Tenured teachers
do not have to write lessons; they can sit with me and tell me what is going to occur.

Nontenured teachers must write lesson plans out.

3.4. How can you accurately determine how effective your school is in terms of
enhancing student achievement?

I think one of the things I do is attend conferences on instruction; next month I will be at
Princeton. The assistant principal goes to conferences and we both take advantage of
learning opportunities at national and local conferences. We are involved in best practices
in the classroom. We have set up a network where teachers read books on professional
development and give feedback on the Web.

4. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of outreach (is an
advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders).

4.1. How do you ensure that your school complies with all district and state mandates?

Simply, we have a system here in the district where mandates go to the board of
education and to various schools. I meet with anyone involved on a regular basis to
ensure compliance and access, including parent groups and civic groups.

4.2. How do you advocate for your school to the community at large?

We resolved the issue of traffic flow outside by making it one-way traffic. I meet with
groups and get involved with anything that has to do with the school. Through the board
of education meetings and the teacher of the year.

4.3. How do you advocate for your school to the parents of your students?

Through monthly meetings with the PTSO and three times a year—October, January, and
March—with an executive board roundtable to discuss issues.

4.4. How is the central office made aware of your school’s accomplishments?
We do a monthly newsletter, teachers write articles and do public relations, at board of education meetings we take pictures to submit to the news, we made a commercial for a drug-free New Jersey, which was selected as the best DVD. A professional company came and spent the day doing the commercial in the computer room. We have a partnership with Drug Free America and Friday we are having a school-wide assembly.

5. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of situational awareness (is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems).

5.1. How do you become aware of the informal groups and relationships among teachers in your school?

I am a hands-on person; I am out in the halls in the classrooms and in the cafeteria, which is important. Sometimes I go out with the teachers for a drink and something to eat. You must be a people person; teachers come in and tell me things that they want me to know. You must be approachable and comfortable.

5.2. How do you become aware of issues that have not formally come to the surface but might cause discord?

I have a comfort level with the staff; they come to the assistant principal, the supervisor, or me. They can also go to the liaison committee anonymously.

5.3. What details regarding the day-to-day running of the school are important to you?

In the morning, I go over everything for that day with the secretary. We look at those things that need to be done immediately. I am always where I am supposed to be. The secretary makes it happen.

5.4. What things can you predict that may go wrong in your school on a day-to-day basis?
I will always be sure that there will be a need to cover a classroom, a teacher will have an emergency, a student will have a medical emergency, and certain staff that react negatively with what is going on. You must not be too high or too low, always staying grounded. You cannot be an effective leader when you are always putting out fires.

5.5. How do you know what is running smoothly and what is not running smoothly in your school?

You have to have your finger on the pulse of the school. You cannot assume things are running right or wrong. Good leaders are out among teachers, they are at functions to see things for themselves. You should always know what is going on; if not you should not be principal.

Participant 13 = GP10 Date: June 13, 2007 Time: 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

1. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of discipline (protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus).

1.1. How have you been successful in eliminating interruptions and undue distractions to teaching and learning?

By implementing a student code of conduct along with several classroom management policies and procedures. We have staff development to incorporate policies and procedures to help during the course of the school day and to run more proficiently.

Students are made aware of these policies and take ownership in a learning environment.

1.2. How is the instructional time of teachers protected?

This morning instruction starts at 8:10 a.m.; if you are not in the building, the doors close. Hall sweeps take place after the late bell rings, we gather and move students to process them with several consequences, they also depend on how many violations a student has.
We secure the rest rooms when the bell rings, no passes are allowed the first 10 minutes and the last 10 minutes of class. We process things that help to increase student achievement.

1.3. How do you deal with external issues that may distract teachers from teaching?

By being honest with teachers and through keeping in the loop, with no sugar coating. It is in a book I read called, “Good to Great.” We meet external factors head on.

1.4. How are controversies or disagreements prevented from escalating into school-wide issues?

You know that personally I cannot afford those things to become a school-wide issue. You find a happy medium but you do not scoot it under the rug. Some people let it fester. Being honest depends on the respect you have for each other and the profession. I have to do what is in the best interest of the students and the high school. It is what it is, you learn to agree to disagree.

2. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of flexibility (adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent).

2.1. What is your comfort level with making changes in how things are done?

Extremely high; if you do not change, you get the same results. You do not what to shock the system, so you must go through a reevaluation and change what you put in. When you look at educational trends, you change when you and I were in school to increase student achievement and teaching and learning. People cannot change their minds without change.

2.2. How do you encourage people to express opinions that are contrary to your own?
You set the tone and for that tone not to be adversarial. In my upper cabinet, I do not want bobble-head dolls. Conflict is healthy in any organization. I use the crash dummy if I am going 100 miles an hour; why would you watch me hit that wall? You build a wall of trust as an educational leader. In a smile you might let down your guard by setting the tone; you are playing the field.

2.3. How do you adapt your leadership style to the specific needs of a given situation?
By assessing, evaluating, and understanding that it is not one size fits all. With the experience you have you learn to be flexible and consistent. You let people know you are in charge, you have to make a decision, it is not easy. You never let them see you sweat, they want to see you react and get the situation under control. When I first came here they hated me, but now they love me. Being responsible for 2,500 people, you adapt to what occurs but do something. You think in practice but you react in the game. You react and quickly, especially in a crisis.

2.4. Describe those situations where you can be either highly directive or nondirective.
Directive, pizza today, no negotiations; it is nonnegotiable. If you cannot do the job I move you. Nondirective, I was able to rely on two department chairpersons and the vice principal to assist with the interviews. Also preliminarily before the interview they do a demonstration lesson.

3. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of monitoring/evaluating (monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning).

3.1. How do you monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum?
By chairing a department chairperson meeting, we are working on an instructional vision for the school. I have to reserve time to get involved in instruction. Teaching and learning is the bottom line and improving the process. A departmental vision where the rubber meets the road, model classrooms that are big on differentiated instruction through cooperative learning data. Ways we monitor the curriculum through staff development, constant reading, the level of rigor, looking at rigor, we are big on communication, we look at how we evaluate good teaching and we must look at it thoroughly and efficiently through the same lens.

3.2. How do you monitor the effectiveness of instructional practices in your school?

Through evaluations, observations, the DCs, the VPs, consistent communication, administrative walkthrough three times per week to get snapshots for 15 to 20 minutes on student engagement. It was proposed to give feedback that was nonevaluative.

Experienced teachers meet with novice teachers.

3.3. How do you monitor assessment practices in your school?

Through pie charts on the HSPA, we look at the percentage of advanced proficient, proficient, and partially proficient. We look at grades A to D, mathematics scores, instructional practices, and 9th-grade assessments. Teachers and the AP find out who has these kids.

3.4. How can you accurately determine how effective your school is in terms of enhancing student achievement?

Through test scores, comparing similar DFGs, report card analysis, constantly looking at data, and you get a feel for where you are. We also look at suburban school assessments.
4. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of outreach (is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders).

4.1. How do you ensure that your school complies with all district and state mandates?

Through district mandates and personal meetings, correspondence from the superintendent, the office of compliance, and district monitors.

4.2. How do you advocate for your school to the community at large?

Through town hall meetings, newsletters, open house, the district Web site, and through an automatic voice system that calls out to every parent.

4.3. How do you advocate for your school to the parents of your students?

Through the public access channel 34, local cable, our TV production studio, various events and presentations to the board of education make people more and more aware of where we are.

4.4. How is the central office made aware of your school’s accomplishments?

This is the same as the previous question. Through the public access channel 34, local cable, our TV production studio, various events and presentations to the board of education make people more and more aware of where we are.

5. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of situational awareness (is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems).

5.1. How do you become aware of the informal groups and relationships among teachers in your school?
Through shop stewards and union representatives, my door is always open, being accessible and available, and trying to resolve issues before it gets to the union. For 2 years we have had no grievances.

5.2. How do you become aware of issues that have not formally come to the surface but might cause discord?

Through students, staff that come and talk. It all goes back to setting the tone; even with staff you must have a relationship with kids.

5.3 What details regarding the day-to-day running of the school are important to you?
By knowing who is absent, what substitutes are in the building, what security is in the building, and appropriate class coverage.

5.4. What things can you predict that may go wrong in your school on a day-to-day basis?
Nothing; on any given day something can happen. There is an energy. If anything it tells you that they cannot predict it because it is an imperfect job.

5.5. How do you know what is running smoothly and what is not running smoothly in your school?
Through the data, discipline reports once a week, the attendance report, grade sheets that monitor the number of Ds and Fs students receive during the marking cycle, and the process of evaluating every program.

Participant 14 = GP11       Date: June 14, 2007       Time: 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

1. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of discipline (protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus).

1.1. How have you been successful in eliminating interruptions and undue distractions to teaching and learning?
Teachers really spend a lot of time developing a relationship with the child; it is the hallmark of the school, they say they feel the difference. We are very free, students come to me or teachers handle it. There are systems in place that handle it. Instead of giving students consequences, we call the parents and ask them to take care of it. The high school and middle school use school suspensions, but they do not work. We try to keep punishment close to the school. Are larger issues allowed to spill over? We focus more on personalities and developing relationships. The other day there were towels on the floor in the boys’ bathroom. I brought each child into the bathroom and talked with them. That is my style, I try to educate. Teachers know I will act on it. Calls are returned that day from parents.

1.2. How is the instructional time of teachers protected?

I do not know if it is ever threatened. I do not believe in having pizzas parties and we have valuable assemblies. The time is not compromised because we replace it with something valuable. So we have extra time to put in because of a water main break, we will make most of time up on the last day of school. We may have a couple of classes during an assembly, maybe a fieldtrip to the Museum of Natural History or a visit from Sparky.

1.3. How do you deal with external issues that may distract teachers from teaching?

I work with teachers within the system but I am not surprised when this happens. I work with teachers and disgruntled parents on being respectful of each other’s boundaries and respectful of each other. We have too much of each other in everyone else’s business. Things like that would distract if not dealt with on the cultural and political level. Define the boundaries to persevere confidence. We have come a long way from when I first
came here. Calls would come from parents for the child to be brought to the office by an aide. You trust very few or no one in confidential matters because the word spreads like wildfire. The nurse’s office door used to be open but it is not allowed any more. People would move through her office, but it is no longer a hub for social life.

1.4. How are controversies or disagreements prevented from escalating into school-wide issues?

Because information is provided and approached head on through faculty meetings, we send a weekly memo for clarification. If you do not provide information, they will make it up. They were nervous about the NJASK scores and how they were handled. I spoke with a few people this weekend on the analysis of the scores.

2. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of flexibility (adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent).

2.1. What is your comfort level with making changes in how things are done?

I am very comfortable with change, I have been a change agent most of my life. I have been a principal for 20 years and have always received tenure. I like a challenge and try overly hard not to have dissent. In a culture it is perfectly all right to be nice and chummy up to a point.

2.2. How do you encourage people to express opinions that are contrary to your own?

I go right up and ask for information. A teacher asked to read my monthly report; one section is always filled in under complaint because she is nasty to children. I refused to put her back in a classroom. I always allow room for conversation, so I asked the teacher, please send me an e-mail so we could talk, I would like to know her thoughts. I never
received an e-mail from her. Other people have come to speak on her behalf, but they do not know the situation, I do.

2.3. How do you adapt your leadership style to the specific needs of a given situation?
Sometimes I am direct and honest and you know what I am thinking; maybe that is a flaw because some teachers have me at my wits end. I try to make decisions over a period and that is how I know to adjust my leadership style.

2.4. Describe those situations where you can be either highly directive or nondirective.
I am not comfortable with a direct style and I tend to use it only when my back is up against the wall. To act from a position of power and authority when it is needed, but naturally I am not that way. When you are in a meeting or session, what is a most difficult situation is when you are forced into a situation where teachers feel that it is inappropriate and everyone sees this. Teachers can put you in that situation. Nondirective is when I provide access to testing materials and tools for review. Also when I walk around the building observing teachers that have flexibility.

3. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of monitoring/evaluating (monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning).

3.1. How do you monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum?
Through reports, but I try not to spend a lot of time on them, through checking lesson plans, through professional development at faculty meetings and the dialogue that takes place, through the opportunity to share best practices, through teacher planning with one another, and through the evaluation of test scores where teachers look a spreadsheets with student names. This year we will focus on the fourth grade.
3.2. How do you monitor the effectiveness of instructional practices in your school?

By walking in classrooms, formal observations, dialogue at postevaluation conferences, through lesson plans, and collecting lesson plans to look at objectives. The objectives really drive the plan so we focus on teachers and find where they have the most difficulty. Also to see where students are not being engaged or challenged at high academic levels.

3.3. How do you monitor assessment practices in your school?

Certain things must be uniform across grade levels, we look at benchmarks, the mathematics supervisor was brought in as part of the school plan and she wrote the mathematics test this year for teachers. Colleagues began to criticize the tests with teachers. As far as I cared, she was the mathematics supervisor, not me; frankly, she did a great job. I go with the district policy for assessment through the observation where I look at formative assessment in the classroom. We talk during the postevaluation conference if something is not right and look for evidence of teaching and learning.

3.4. How can you accurately determine how effective your school is in terms of enhancing student achievement?

Things that I look for start with classes in the fourth grade. We look at test scores, but they are only a brief snapshot. We talk to the kids after each grade level at the end of the year and at the beginning of the year. What do the kids think about our preparation after they have left us? We also look at programs. I can tell you when in the classroom you pass kids that had behavior issues and I see them performing with the other kids. When I see those kids responding to questions in science better than regular education kids, it is cut and dry and not funny.
4. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of outreach (is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders).

4.1. How do you ensure that your school complies with all district and state mandates?
You just do it. If you do not agree with it, you still need to get it.

4.2. How do you advocate for your school to the community at large?
Well, in relationships built with parents, you take every opportunity to connect; there is always a chance to talk about the school and what is going on. I am not big on getting the media in the school. Also through H and A functions, district functions, and through teaching graduate school and through various partnerships. Only five principals I feel are not able to do it, usually I am the only ES principal that can.

4.3. How do you advocate for your school to the parents of your students?
Through HAS primarily; conversations on the street; our handbook; letters sent home, and being visible, positive, upbeat and friendly.

4.4. How is the central office made aware of your school’s accomplishments?
Through monthly reports, the superintendent report, which contains five to six pages compiled by the principal with the teachers’ help. Through feedback from teachers from their own perspective. Special conferences and workshops and faculty meetings. When I first came here I would share reports as a way or opportunity to communicate with the superintendent.

5. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of situational awareness (is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems).
5.1. How do you become aware of the informal groups and relationships among teachers in your school?

Some schools are easier than others are. Through the association representatives sharing information. If something is not right, I have an open door. I am not trusted in this district; it is very hard. There is a difficulty in fixing things, but they need to be fixed. Being around the school, you see groups talking. Who is it at the faculty meeting? At a party at a house for welcome back in August, sometimes politicians show up.

5.2. How do you become aware of issues that have not formally come to the surface but might cause discord?

Through e-mails, I get questions from people. I am willing to go personally to handle it. You can get a feeling from being intuitive, extremely intuitive. Certain things change voluntarily and then other things do not. Teachers usually share things or something that ticks me off.

5.3. What details regarding the day-to-day running of the school are important to you?

Making sure everything is in place for student safety. Communication; if the system is broken it cripples the school. We have an opening in our fourth grade special education class, and I primarily know who wants the job. Making the connections, keeping confidences, I will not betray confidences, I know many health issues that the nurse does not. When the teachers have good communication they feel better among themselves. A school who has a history that values longevity can be a very cold place. On one hand it is friendly, on the other hand it is tough, cutthroat. Long-term substitutes have problems.

5.4. What things can you predict that may go wrong in your school on a day-to-day basis?
Self-contained kids get out of control and unable to bring back. A person who feels inappropriately empowered could send the wrong message. Messages sent in huge letters and e-mail from special education teachers to the CST. The CST wrote a message wanting representatives and returned the message to the special education teachers.

Special education teachers do not like inclusion and do not want inclusion and are very dug in.

5.5. How do you know what is running smoothly and what is not running smoothly in your school?

By having people in touch with me on a regular basis. High communications with the head custodian, who will call me at home. It is really a lot of constant communication with people. I may have parents that tip me off. I am not a micromanager. I am on top of everything. Nothing goes out unless I see it first. HAS is constantly on top of things with me. A very tight network with an agenda. That is how I predict; of course, you always have things that can happen that will get you off guard. Sometimes other principals will communicate but usually it is more district wide. Sometimes it can be difficult as an elementary principal meeting once a month. I just put in a call to another colleague who is very willing to give advice. I suppose the principals also; if I need advice, I could call any one of them.

Participant 15 = P12 Date: June 15, 2007 Time: 2:15 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.

1. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of discipline (protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus).

1.1. How have you been successful in eliminating interruptions and undue distractions to teaching and learning?
A real critical piece in the beginning was that it never looked like a decision coming from me. I did not like the way the chairs were lined up. I would ask, why are children acting like this? We brought in a reading program from SFA that focused on student instruction. Now they are reading at grade level and beyond. They are instructed at their own comfort level. We let parents know exactly what the punishment guidelines are. If a student has a problem or issue, the parent gets the letter home the next day; it cuts down on many problems. We have no discipline problems; everyone is changing. We send home biweekly reports to parents and a calendar. I do not believe in out-of-school suspensions. So parents know when they receive a phone call or when they call in to the school.

1.2. How is the instructional time of teachers protected?

Teachers make up their schedule, reading is savored with 90-minute blocks of uninterrupted time. Assemblies are in the afternoon and teachers have 40-minute classes with a preparation.

1.3. How do you deal with external issues that may distract teachers from teaching?

I try to shield teachers from outside issues. Issues like money for supplies and teacher supply orders are dealt with. All teachers, if it is outside of the district, I will take it for them. The only thing I could not shield them from was the layoffs.

1.4. How are controversies or disagreements prevented from escalating into school-wide issues?

As for parent complaints against teachers, I will not meet with the parent before meeting with teachers. There is always three sides to a story, you bring in a thing and resolve it. There are no sides, you stay neutral and in the best interest of the child. Sometimes the teacher may be wrong; just admit you made a mistake, I should not have said that.
Parents wanted uniforms, so I gave a survey and parents overwhelmingly wanted uniforms that they would purchase. The majority of parents work, so what about other people in the community? We approached the YMCA and they agreed to run the afterschool program, which helps business for the YMCA during the summer. We use the school leadership council for controversies, we let teachers and parents work it out or I will join in and suggest a compromise by bringing the kids into the decision.

2. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of flexibility (adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent).

2.1. What is your comfort level with making changes in how things are done?

Very comfortable, we are here to meet the needs of kids, we have no problems making changes, it is very flexible staff who do not have an issue saying how something can be done. I provide enough flexibility to teachers so they can work for kids; if it is not working, we will change back to the other plan. Kids do not mind voicing their opinions, we always question; what worked last year was not done and may not work this year.

2.2. How do you encourage people to express opinions that are contrary to your own?

We have that climate where they know that I do not have all the answers. That is because I never worked for a male principal. They asked me what I thought; if valued, they will go the extra mile.

2.3. How do you adapt your leadership style to the specific needs of a given situation?

Know when to be a leader and when to follow. It is instinct; you listen and look, some solutions require listening and some solutions require acting. It has to do with honesty
and I will get back to you. Know when you need to be strong and know when you need to sit back and listen. How are we going to make this work?

2.4. Describe those situations where you can be either highly directive or nondirective. Directive, if during the course of an observation I see teachers not meeting the needs of the student, I have a very direct course of action and a timeline. It is very formal and supportive, this is what we have. Nondirective, during ceremonies, graduation and the schedule. If I observe that someone needs assistance I will help, but you cannot stand over everyone all the time. The kids would say you are not like a real principal. We can come to see you in your office. For a number of years we did not have a PTA. I said that I would not run it, let the parents run it. Parents should run the PTA and we will support it. Parent now run the local PTA.

3. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of monitoring/evaluating (monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning).

3.1. How do you monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum?

Through daily observations, input conversation with teachers about students, grade-level meetings, staff meetings, weekly testing data, report cards, lesson plans, quality grade books, assist teachers, observing other teachers; with support people, if I see weak areas, I send in the support people first. My formal observations are unannounced, so we can be on top of what everyone is doing. Through open, honest communication with everyone. Our custodian is a caregiver. Everyone plays a part, from parents, kids, and visitors. We also have a handbook of procedures.

3.2. How do you monitor the effectiveness of instructional practices in your school?
This is similar to the previous question. We look at data every 8 weeks; twice a month we look at kids in classes to see who is struggling and who needs tutoring. You are not in this by yourself. Really, it is all about the data.

3.3. How do you monitor assessment practices in your school?

Guidelines are computerized and monitored, we monitor teacher grade books, we take them home over the weekend. We monitor report cards; if looking at large numbers, then we do a full test. You walk into classrooms and pick up folders; every lesson starts out with objectives and when students go home they talk with their parents on learning.

3.4. How can you accurately determine how effective your school is in terms of enhancing student achievement?

Through data, what parents say, listening to teachers, what is happening throughout the school, what is lacking, what is successful, what is not successful, and how can we change it. One of our goals for the last year was more kids in advanced proficiency; we made that a goal. Always make new goals that are realistic.

4. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of outreach (is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders).

4.1. How do you ensure that your school complies with all district and state mandates?

You just do it. You know what they are and share them with others.

4.2. How do you advocate for your school to the community at large?

We are good with community outreach. Each year we come up with a community outreach program, such as a homeless outreach, a neighborhood heart program, an elderly program; you go to the store for canned foods, you provide glasses, and you make sure the community knows we are here for them. You must give back to the community. We
also collaborated with Washington Mutual, who gives money to reach out to the community. We have teacher appreciation luncheons.

4.3. How do you advocate for your school to the parents of your students?
With a good group of parents, the PTA, the leadership council, you let parents know what is going on, parents come out full force. You let them know the budget, about fieldtrips and salaries.

4.4. How is the central office made aware of your school’s accomplishments?
Our newsletter is shared with the superintendent and board of education. At the end of the year accomplishments are shared with the superintendent and the district.

5. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of situational awareness (is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems).

5.1. How do you become aware of the informal groups and relationships among teachers in your school?
I try not to get involved in that and focus on kids. I do not know but we try to make decisions together. We had a conversation about that, if you live in the neighborhood when you go to the supermarket, you need to monitor what you say in public. For the most part if it exists, I do not care because my focus is on teaching and learning.

5.2. How do you become aware of issues that have not formally come to the surface but might cause discord?
The hardest part of the district was the layoff process. I will keep staff informed about everything except if it is confidential. We keep each other informed about what is going on.
5.3. What details regarding the day-to-day running of the school are important to you?
Visibility with teachers and students, organization, structure, the leadership energy, cooperative learning, and happy people.

5.4. What things can you predict that may go wrong in your school on a day-to-day basis?
Some types of student problems and interactions that require adult mediation.

5.5. How do you know what is running smoothly and what is not running smoothly in your school?
It is all about teaching and learning and that engaged learning takes place. As long as I see that every kid is involved in teaching and learning, then everything is running smoothly. All problems have solutions.

Participant 16 = GP13 Date: September 18, 2007 Time: 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

1. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of discipline (protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus).

1.1. How have you been successful in eliminating interruptions and undue distractions to teaching and learning?
Well, I certainly have been around for a long time and part of the creation of district policy. Most notably the three-strikes rule, where teachers are expected to manage classroom discipline themselves. In extreme cases if the vice principal is involved, the student could get either a, Saturday detention or b, a 3-day suspension with the teacher in school. If the student receives three offenses, they can be removed from class and lose credit. Disruptive students do not have the right to detract from other students.

1.2. How is the instructional time of teachers protected?
No announcements until 2:25 p.m. I decided the principal should be the one to give both good and bad news. Field trip requests are kept to a minimum and require advanced notice. Assemblies that are not entertainment but substance.

1.3. How do you deal with external issues that may distract teachers from teaching?

I do not think any teacher goes into teaching except for the love. Those that come in as a fallback will not make it if it is not love. I really cannot see the intrinsic value in falling behind then trying to achieve.

1.4. How are controversies or disagreements prevented from escalating into school-wide issues?

Fortunately, our student body, parental community, and business community have a good expectation of appropriate behavior. When we notice difficulties, the VPs and counselors meet with students in a proactive manner.

2. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of flexibility (adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent).

2.1. What is your comfort level with making changes in how things are done?

I think I am pretty comfortable it; my approach to making change is to see where change is needed. If there is a partnership they take ownership, then sometimes it goes horribly wrong. For example; special education teachers did not have a duty prior to this year. The previous organization of things was different; this year we gave them duties and we explained to special education teachers who preferred to do it sooner.

2.2. How do you encourage people to express opinions that are contrary to your own?
Just put it out there, I am a complete open-door person. Get it out, let’s get it resolved and patch things up. From the same example from above, a handful of special education teachers came to see me and understood why three teachers got duties; the other two teachers wished there was more notice.

2.3. How do you adapt your leadership style to the specific needs of a given situation? I do not know there is an easy way to answer that; when something is put in writing, it should be considerate and communicate. Solving the problem in a way that will sometimes make everyone happy. Conciliatory or firm, you cannot always give everyone what he or she wants. The use of humor gets me through the day.

2.4. Describe those situations where you can be either highly directive or nondirective. Directive would be bomb threats from last year and crisis management. It is not often when I do not have a sense of humor. Nondirective would be when you hire good people and get out of the way.

3. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of monitoring/evaluating (monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning).

3.1. How do you monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum?
Well, NCLB forces you to monitor many things. Most curriculum decisions and development are done with district supervisors and we do it together. Pre- and posttest statistical analysis of the HSPA and SRA.

3.2. How do you monitor the effectiveness of instructional practices in your school? Through an evaluative presence with staff and the building advisory and with district supervisors observing staff. I do not believe that the old style of supervision was
successful. If I want to see, I go to the room and get feedback from teachers, supervisors, and the kids. You get to know the people you work with.

3.3. How do you monitor assessment practices in your school?

This is similar to the previous question. The faculty is good about inviting and informing administrators on what kids do. Also through formal and informal observations, we stop to talk with students finding out what they like and what they dislike.

3.4. How can you accurately determine how effective your school is in terms of enhancing student achievement?

Through annual progress reports, goals, and expectations. Quantitative information about students on standardized test and advanced placement exams; there is constant data pouring into the school on students.

4. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of outreach (is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders).

4.1. How do you ensure that your school complies with all district and state mandates?

You do it.

4.2. How do you advocate for your school to the community at large?

By using communication skills, the Web site, the alert system, list services, e-mail, and a new instant alert phone system that automatically calls each parent.

4.3. How do you advocate for your school to the parents of your students?

This is similar to the previous question. In general, all tools mentioned reassure high expectations with compassion, and without question we are here for the kids.

4.4. How is the central office made aware of your school’s accomplishments?
Certainly, on list services and through constant dialogue, the central office is informed about issues and concerns. We are all rowers in the same big boat. We meet regularly and talk.

5. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of situational awareness (is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems).

5.1. How do you become aware of the informal groups and relationships among teachers in your school?

First off it helps to know everybody; because we are large, teachers may not know each other in their department, but it is good for the principal to know everybody. You communicate with everybody and see who is supportive or unsupportive. Being personable is important.

5.2. How do you become aware of issues that have not formally come to the surface but might cause discord?

Someone tells you something. Sometimes you get it in a conversation when you see a person’s response. Parents call or the superintendent may call. I try to keep an open-door policy, and usually people come in and ask, Are you aware of this or that?

5.3. What details regarding the day-to-day running of the school are important to you?

All of them, each detail is important to someone. You must get them done through e-mail, phone messages, and communication. Just get it done, answer the question, do whatever you can.

5.4. What things can you predict that may go wrong in your school on a day-to-day basis?
The social stuff, like things with kids, a break up or disagreements. Almost always the heat or air conditioning goes on the blink, usually on the hottest or coldest day of the year.

5.5. How do you know what is running smoothly and what is not running smoothly in your school?

Through what you observe yourself and what feedback you get from the people you work with. Your willingness to have your eyes opened. When you logistically do monthly reports and get recommendations for improvements from supervisors and the advisory council. The recommendations are included in my report to the superintendent, who in turn reports to the board of education every month. The board of education looks at feedback and recognizes common themes. Certainly through the open-door policy, and for example when I pulled those people aside in that meeting today. I also put out a survey to staff to evaluate me. It goes to everyone, all teachers and support staff, and usually I get around 75% returned.

Participant 17 = GP14       Date: September 25, 2007       Time: 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

1. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of discipline (protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus).

1.1. How have you been successful in eliminating interruptions and undue distractions to teaching and learning?

Well, I think we have been somewhat successful, but it is an area where I need improvement. We have two VPs that stay with students for 2 years; the advantage is that they know the kids and can respond more effectively. The climate is very positive and kids, the community, and families are very well behaved. There are not a lot of
distractions in the classrooms. We are very positive with students; the first 2 days of school we have an assembly where a lot of communication is exchanged between teams of teachers, counselors, and students. With a team structure we tackle the problem collectively.

1.2. How is the instructional time of teachers protected?

If I interpret the question correctly, we limit assemblies and watch very carefully about how we pull kids out of class. We limit announcements and you think twice before you do something. The more mandated interruptions like fire drills are unavoidable but there is a balance with all issues.

1.3. How do you deal with external issues that may distract teachers from teaching?

I try to get involved with things; perhaps others say well you should be involved, but as the principal I like calling parents rather than having teachers call. My counseling staff is excellent with that. In addition, I will come to you; my secretary sometimes balances the ebb and flow of traffic in my office by calling on the PA. Often there is communication from central office. My day is spent doing things.

1.4. How are controversies or disagreements prevented from escalating into school-wide issues?

Well, I try to have in place a communication valve; the faculty advisory council tries to resolve issues before the faculty meeting, which is one of the tools, as well as the crisis-management team. In school committees, we talk about issues openly. I try to establish good relationships with the association membership, we meet very informally. Sometimes they come in and we talk about it. Teachers submit monthly reports and weekly logs, and then I read them and give a report to the faculty.
2. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of flexibility (adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent).

2.1. What is your comfort level with making changes in how things are done?

Very comfortable; I like to hear from people, I am comfortable with dissent when we honestly talk about debating an issue. I am very comfortable with change; mathematics and science have changed and many things have changed over the years. Previously I never showed emotion, my position would be I really do not know what the solution is . . . good staff helped, they become the people you trust.

2.2. How do you encourage people to express opinions that are contrary to your own?

In two ways. First, have a well thought-out idea with alternate ways; it might encourage people in building relationships and having positive interactions as well as negative ones. A network will build quickly. Next, by being open and sharing with staff, spending time with staff, and having intimate conversations, then more people are willing to open up.

2.3. How do you adapt your leadership style to the specific needs of a given situation?

You must get to know the situation and the people. I find out which people want dialogue and the others that get confused. Others want to know why and others want the father figure so I tell them. Then there is the situation when you do what needs to be done and make the decision. For example, I did a postevaluation conference with a first-year teacher who was very nervous and I did not put in any negatives.

2.4. Describe those situations where you can be either highly directive or nondirective.

Directive, the crisis-management team, where you just do it in a crisis with a close team. There was another situation where the counselors mentioned that the Spanish teachers
were not responding to a request from an ESL teacher. At first I was indirect with my approach, but now I must be directive . . . this is what you need to do. Nondirective, I did not know the answer so I got input from all the stakeholders around this situation.

3. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of monitoring/evaluating (monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning).

3.1. How do you monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum?

Student performance on state assessments, resource teachers that break down the data with a fine-tooth comb looking for strengths and weaknesses. Classroom observations give some sense of effectiveness. Monitoring through informal visits to classrooms with supervisors asking teachers, When did you do that? We work with the support staff such as the computer teacher, the resource teachers, and the librarian.

3.2. How do you monitor the effectiveness of instructional practices in your school?

Classroom observations are predominantly the way, with prior notice and just popping in. Also through formal and informal evaluations. There is an informal network of social workers working with teachers, also students give indicators of their enlightenment and quality of learning in the class.

3.3. How do you monitor assessment practices in your school?

It is similar to the previous question, but there is a distinction, frankly, I see the distinction. I do not monitor it very well at all. The resource teachers monitor it more closely, especially in literacy and mathematics. Science and social studies, I do not know what their assessment practices are. I do get a copy of the assessment from the teacher; supervisors are not much involved at my level.
3.4. How can you accurately determine how effective your school is in terms of enhancing student achievement?

The state assessments provide valid indicators but also watching what goes on in the classroom; it is qualitative. Through classroom observations, I am more adept at literacy and mathematics because of my doctoral work. I always asking, Is that a good product for kids? We also look at other schools through academic competition, and some of our parents who are teachers in other districts provide feedback.

4. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of outreach (is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders).

4.1. How do you ensure that your school complies with all district and state mandates?

Well, understanding what they are is important. Credit goes to central office and the superintendent and assistant superintendent, who have regular meetings and discussions; we are good at communicating with each other. I deliberate these mandates to certain reliable staff in the building; they in turn distribute the information out so that the communication works both ways and all understand what we are doing.

4.2. How do you advocate for your school to the community at large?

All the time; I live in the community and we are constantly posting information on our Web site. Public relations about the building is based on a positive relationship with the local reports and newspaper. I feed them positive information, more and more people see my name in the paper for positive things. Living in town, I am an icon for people, they see me shopping at the food market or at a baseball game. It gives me time to talk with one parent at a time. A lot of it is perception and I am very conscious of that.

4.3. How do you advocate for your school to the parents of your students?
This is similar to the previous question. I live in the community and we are constantly posting information on our Web site. Public relations about the building is based on a positive relationship with the local reports and newspaper. I feed them positive information, more and more people see my name in the paper for positive things. Living in town, I am an icon for people, they see me shopping at the food market or at a baseball game. It gives me time to talk with one parent at a time. A lot of it is perception and I am very conscious of that.

4.4. How is the central office made aware of your school’s accomplishments?

Through monthly reports to the superintendent, which in turn go to the board of education. The board of education has a practice of looking for the principal to bring them information. Through the press, if something is going on in the school, I invite the press. The Web site also makes board members watch for updates. It makes board members thrilled.

5. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of situational awareness (is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems).

5.1. How do you become aware of the informal groups and relationships among teachers in your school?

Well, my first response is I wish I could stop some of that. The secretaries feed me information about things they hear from staff and from teachers sharing thoughts and concerns. The faculty advisory council, usually they are the informed leaders in the school. Students themselves come and share as well as other staff members that live in the community.
5.2. How do you become aware of issues that have not formally come to the surface but might cause discord?

I like to put out little trail balloons with people. You go to certain staff and ask, What do you think about this? You test certain groups to get a gauge on what I am going to do. You must be careful about that because it can move from just thinking about to the gospel, but it is important to test it out before. Having resource people at my disposal helps. Also as information comes from central office, I have to manage what is percolating out there.

5.3. What details regarding the day-to-day running of the school are important to you?

Everyone is in classes and teachers have what they need. When everything is running smoothly and everything is working properly. Are teachers doing their jobs well and are there sufficient resources for teachers? When quality instruction is taking place.

5.4. What things can you predict that may go wrong in your school on a day-to-day basis?

Temperature problems, a toilet will overflow, graffiti on the wall, some students with no lunch money, buses will be late, and there will be no substitutes.

5.5. How do you know what is running smoothly and what is not running smoothly in your school?

People do not hesitate to tell me what is going wrong. They also report directly to the VPs. If the counselors seemed relaxed, I know everything is okay, like the ESL situation; maybe it is a problem or maybe not. People come to me pretty quickly and confer at the front office to see if it is an issue or not.
1. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of discipline (protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus).

1.1. How have you been successful in eliminating interruptions and undue distractions to teaching and learning?

No, because of the growing population of children with ADHD and autism, in many instances regular education and special education students get distracted from their work. The biggest problem is their [ADHD/autistic students’] unpredictability and distraction during the day.

1.2. How is the instructional time of teachers protected?

I try to protect it with support staff and to ensure that we follow the New Jersey core curriculum content standards. We make sure teachers have materials to teach and they receive a preparation time. We balance children’s needs and the teacher’s needs.

1.3. How do you deal with external issues that may distract teachers from teaching?

This is the same as the previous question. With external issues that are beyond our control, we have as much communication as possible with the community. With teachers, I cannot tell them what to do or not because that is their prerogative. I do try to have conferences with parents to make sure we are doing everything possible.

1.4. How are controversies or disagreements prevented from escalating into school-wide issues?

One of the things that I try to do is to stop the massive e-mail attacks from parents. For example, e-mails constantly repeat, Did you hear this or did you hear that? What I will
say to the contact persons involved is please call me to give you the correct information. Since then parents call me and the e-mails have stopped. I also go out and make myself accessible and teachers come to me first, which prevents a lot of the gossip.

2. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of flexibility (adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent).

2.1. What is your comfort level with making changes in how things are done?
I have learned very much that in order to make change, you must understand and know the culture and gain the trust of people around you. Now I am comfortable with change as I go to parents and teachers to explain the changes. The trust issue is the biggest thing to make change; without that I am not very comfortable.

2.2. How do you encourage people to express opinions that are contrary to your own?
Now, the main thing that I do, that is well I think it is, I always listen and listen with an open mind, even if the idea is way off. I still listen and show the person that I am giving some thought to what they want to do. I am a firm believer if I need help, go and ask for it.

2.3. How do you adapt your leadership style to the specific needs of a given situation?
There are times when everyone thinks leadership is the primary thing and it is not. When you are faced with an emergency, it is not the time to get everyone over and discuss it. If you need to get the community involved, you do it. There are teachers within the building that are extremely needy. There are times when you have to hold teachers’ hands because they need it at that time. They come in and have huge problems, but when you listen you know they already have the answer. You say yes, you are doing the right thing.
2.4. Describe those situations where you can be either highly directive or nondirective.

Directive: Things mandated from the state where there is no leeway and you follow through. NCLB where you must make changes because of its mandate and because your superintendent took away needed resources. Now you need to do it, I gave a directive and they need to do it. Also during emergencies and in dealing with parents . . . it is this way for everyone. For example, no cell phones are allowed in the building. Nondirective:

Most of the time I am nondirective while including others in my decisions and encouraging teachers to do the same.

3. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of monitoring/evaluating (monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning).

3.1. How do you monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum?

Well, we do that by state testing, classroom testing, teacher input, and portfolio and rubric assessments. That is how we monitor effectively; we analyze data, which is the biggest thing. It is okay to give all of these tests but if you do not look at them, what difference does it make?

3.2. How do you monitor the effectiveness of instructional practices in your school?

Through classroom observations and some things we are working on for more effective formal observations. We read the plan books and use our reading and writing specialists to work with all teachers in the classroom, we use our foundation’s specialist. I go through the building to make sure teachers are comfortable. I make sure the common planning time for teachers and specialists are the same within the schedule.

3.3. How do you monitor assessment practices in your school?
We keep data as well as the content specialist in reading within the school through a
district-wide template of services. This replaces the quantity of guidelines and helps to
include more assessments like in mathematics and literature, where a certain amount of
assessments must be given. We are starting to move on that.

3.4. How can you accurately determine how effective your school is in terms of
enhancing student achievement?

Well, we do a few things; we are looking at the NJASK scores and ways to reach the
second grade. We look at our 3rd- and 4th-grade gifted and talented program and those
students scoring advanced proficient. We have quality learning assemblies for children
and hands-on programs, such as the Chick-Hatching Program and Dinosaur Dig. There is
the Fun With Science Program, where parents come in and do great science activities
with kids. We also have our science fair.

4. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of outreach (is an
advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders).

4.1. How do you ensure that your school complies with all district and state mandates?

We give mandates to teachers that are given by the assistant superintendent, who also
gives deadlines and monitors those deadlines. The AS makes sure the mandates are
aligned with plans to meet the curriculum. The biggest concern is special education and
trying to keep abreast of the laws and their application.

4.2. How do you advocate for your school to the community at large?

You are positive about your school and show that positive interest. I make sure it is an
open environment to people and good instruction takes place. By presenting a positive
image, you are being a good advocate for your school. A major role of the principal is
public relations; you must get out there and sell the school and help pass the budget.

4.3. How do you advocate for your school to the parents of your students?

By making them a stakeholder, they have a stake.

4.4. How is the central office made aware of your school’s accomplishments?

We have a monthly report given by the superintendent. We make it a practice of inviting
guests, who love seeing what we do during different events. The superintendent and
assistant superintendent visit at that time or are invited. Our Web site is updated all the
time and teachers put projects on the site all the time, such as art or a team project or
general interests.

5. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of situational
awareness (is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses
this information to address current and potential problems).

5.1. How do you become aware of the informal groups and relationships among teachers
in your school?

Well, I have to watch what teachers do as they come in and out during the day. Seeing
what they do during team meetings is a good method. The way teachers respond . . . you
have to know your staff and what different teachers say to you. You can tell who
influenced their conversation. Observation and listening is the key. The secretary gives a
lot of information. One of the things that I have different from the other buildings is that
my closest friend is the reading content specialist, but sometimes they do not go to her at
all.
5.2. How do you become aware of issues that have not formally come to the surface but might cause discord?

Well, I think reading in between the lines in a teacher’s monthly report in the section for concerns. If I see more on one topic, I address it before it grows to a boiling point; you get it beforehand. It is really important to be out in the building, it is important for teachers to see you, especially during 2nd-grade lunch.

5.3. What details regarding the day-to-day running of the school are important to you?

Delivery of instruction must be the first priority. A safe environment for children and adults, a visible presence, and open communication with teachers regarding instruction.

5.4. What things can you predict that may go wrong in your school on a day-to-day basis?

Morning concerns with the buses such as discipline problems, a child missing, or an accident. Things that you would never want to happen. Children are especially vulnerable before and after school. Also, teacher coverage when there are no substitutes and when there is no lunch aide coverage.

5.5. How do you know what is running smoothly and what is not running smoothly in your school?

The climate tells you without a doubt, when you walk in and see your teachers; you can tell the same with students. When you do not hear from the parents, when parents are quiet. When teachers are visible in the office, if not they will not be in milling around at the end of the day, they get their mail and back to the classroom. In the morning when you walk to the door, people’s attitudes tell you.
1. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of discipline (protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus).

1.1. How have you been successful in eliminating interruptions and undue distractions to teaching and learning?

On a one-to-one hands-on conversation, get them back into the setting as soon as possible. Punishment should not achieve longevity. It can be delegated by getting students back in the classroom.

1.2. How is the instructional time of teachers protected?

By minimizing interruptions in classes. Most interruptions are made by the principal, and it occurred to me that I must stop addressing issues during class time. Also, through small learning communities.

1.3. How do you deal with external issues that may distract teachers from teaching?

I handle them; they never leave my office except in cases of training, institutional improvements, the district requests it, and policies dealing with discrimination. For example, our achievement scores, teachers will not see that I do it and the suspension report. I do all of that here in my office. I will share bullying information and personal requirements.

1.4. How are controversies or disagreements prevented from escalating into school-wide issues?

You do not wait until there is an issue to establish prevention. You build the framework to anticipate the events and possible variations. The framework is already in place. In
some cases, all frameworks do not have to be written, but I have a support services
department that assists with graffiti, etc.

2. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of flexibility (adapts
his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with
dissent).

2.1. What is your comfort level with making changes in how things are done?

Daily, I have no problem in dealing with changes. You organize the program to be able to
absorb changes and still keep its organizational framework. For example, a kid in the
classroom does not get along with his peers . . . so he will not be with those youngsters.
Staff members must be part of a kid’s house and the kid has input on how things are run.
We have team teaching, and differentiated instruction can be reorganized. Staff can
suggest change but it had better work; otherwise, we go back to the original way. More
change comes from staff.

2.2. How do you encourage people to express opinions that are contrary to your own?

Design flexible staff meetings with an open-ended agenda based on two-way
communication; my opinion on one end and teacher’s on the other end. There are times
when there is anarchy because the problem is so complex. You must allow for staff input.
You know what it will be and how I could be wrong.

2.3. How do you adapt your leadership style to the specific needs of a given situation?

My clients are teachers; my situation is adapting to my clients, and teachers must have
the ability to adapt to their clients, the students. It is multifaceted, but you must be
supportive of the faculty. For example, I was in a classroom the other day where a teacher
was conducting the lesson at three different levels of differentiated instruction. She had three different lesson plans going on in the classroom.

2.4. Describe those situations where you can be either highly directive or nondirective.

Directive: The relationships between teachers and students or the school and community is directive. Also the student-teacher relationship among different stakeholders is directive. You must be in constant communication with parents and the community at all times and your biggest public relations are the kids. Nondirective: During instruction and pointing them in a direction and letting them teach. They must be able to buy into the vision, and once they comprehend the vision, more and more of their colleagues with buy into it. You also allow them to develop their own vision.

3. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of monitoring/evaluating (monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning).

3.1. How do you monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum?

When you enter the classroom you need to have an instrument, a checklist, you need to have a valid instrument. Looking at time on task, implementation of the curriculum guide, instructional strategies, teacher feedback, student feedback, and curriculum feedback. I do unannounced observations that are laid out.

3.2. How do you monitor the effectiveness of instructional practices in your school?

When you enter the classroom you need to have an instrument, a checklist, you need to have a valid instrument. Looking at time on task, implementation of the curriculum guide, instructional strategies, teacher feedback, student feedback, and curriculum feedback. I do unannounced observations that are laid out.
3.3. How do you monitor assessment practices in your school?

Collect your grade books every 2 weeks and see how students are doing. The district gives cycle tests and we review those grades.

3.4. How can you accurately determine how effective your school is in terms of enhancing student achievement?

This is the same as the previous question. Collect your grade books every 2 weeks and see how students are doing. The district gives cycle tests and we review those grades. Homework is always an issue; is there someone home to do that? A parent should check the homework. Teacher observations and evaluations, alignment of the curriculum, staying on pace, quizzes, tests, projects, and homework.

4. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of outreach (is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders).

4.1. How do you ensure that your school complies with all district and state mandates?

We rely on the district to give academic accountability. I attend all meetings and take notes. I respond to e-mails and deliver all reports on time. I use my PDA to do walkthroughs and keep an accurate schedule.

4.2. How do you advocate for your school to the community at large?

Call everyone on a continual basis. Have meetings, an open house, and professional development that provides a mentorship program for the kids. Have nondenominational clergy, retired teachers and administrators, cops, and doctors as mentors. We also have service agencies, representatives from major elected offices, professional athletes, parents, the superintendent, the fire department, and the local library involved in mentorship programs.
4.3. How do you advocate for your school to the parents of your students?

Tell them they are not going to have the same problems that they had in a traditional setting. Students willing to meet expectations and talk about solutions.

4.4. How is the central office made aware of your school’s accomplishments?

My boss, the assistant superintendent, is outstanding at measuring incremental improvements and programming and projects of that nature. She sets up different systems and venues. There will be setbacks, but we will face them with a positive attitude. A parent newsletter goes out that explains just because their students are in an alternative program, success will not come overnight.

5. An interview question pertaining to the leadership responsibility of situational awareness (is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems).

5.1. How do you become aware of the informal groups and relationships among teachers in your school?

Self-reporting on behalf of staff. Staff again have a trust level where they feel they can share with the principal without retaliatory sanctions. I know everything that is happening; who would not want to work here. It is a very rewarding job.

5.2. How do you become aware of issues that have not formally come to the surface but might cause discord?

Again, an open-door policy, with a teacher-administrator liaison committee and staff meetings. Tell me what it is before it becomes a problem. Do not wait until it becomes a large issue.

5.3. What details regarding the day-to-day running of the school are important to you?
The daily bulletin is done and I know what is happening when I walk through the door.
The night before I do a checklist and let it stay on there until it is done.

5.4. What things can you predict that may go wrong in your school on a day-to-day basis?
Events that occur in the community spill over into the building. That is why in the morning we have an advisory where students can talk about anything at breakfast. We also tell parents to inform us if something occurs over the weekend.

5.5. How do you know what is running smoothly and what is not running smoothly in your school?
The only way to know is to be visible with hands on and involved through observations, communication, other departments, by interviewing students and staff using a set language. Have conversations with students, especially by asking, Do you have any problems? Stand at the door in the morning and watch and listen.
Appendix G

Demographic Data
Participant Demographics

Table G1

*Participant Gender*

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<th>Number of participants</th>
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Table G2

*Participant Race/Ethnicity*

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*Participant Age*

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Table G5

Total Years at Present School

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Table G6

Highest Degree Completed

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<td>Lehigh University</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of North Carolina</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hofstra University</td>
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Table G8

*Observation/Interview Dates*

May 7, 10, 15, 16, 21, 23, 25, and 29, 2007

June 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15, 2007

September 18, 26, 27, and 28, 2007
Appendix H

Approval to Conduct Research Letters
January 24, 2007

Mr. P. Christopher Embrey
1282 Fairview Circle
Stewartsville, NJ 08880-0016

Dear Mr. Embrey,

After reviewing all materials with regard to the research you are conducting as a graduate student at Seton Hall University, be advised I have approved your request to have Hillsborough Township Public Schools participate in this research.

Sincerely,

Karen A. Lake, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

KAL/kbs
TO: Pierre Christopher Embrey
FROM: Dr. Clarence C. Hoover, III
DATE: January 29, 2007
RE: Permission to Conduct Research

You are hereby granted permission to conduct research in the East Orange School District as a doctoral student.

CCH:jh
December 6, 2006

Mr. Pierre Christopher Embrey
1282 Fairview Circle
Stewartsville, NJ 08886

Dear Mr. Embrey:

I have received the information regarding your proposed research project. I will make

time available, approximately 15 minutes, for you to speak with the Principals on
Tuesday, January 23, 2007. The meeting starts at 9:00 A.M. and I will put you on in the
beginning of the meeting.

Sincerely,

H. Gordon Perthick, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools
December 20, 2006

Pierre Christopher Embrey
1282 Fairview Circle
Stewartsville, NJ 08886

Dear Mr. Embry,

Please allow this correspondence to serve as acknowledgement that [redacted] has permission to participate in the study you are conducting to support your doctoral dissertation at Seton Hall University.

Feel free to contact me if you need any additional information regarding this approval of your request.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Robert K. Gratz
Superintendent of Schools

RKG/ckd

Children are half of our population and all of our future.
Township of Union Public Schools
The Presidential Model School District

Theodore A. Jakubowski, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

December 4, 2006

Mr. Pierre Christopher Embrey
1282 Fairview Circle
Stewartsville, New Jersey 08886

Dear Mr. Embrey:

As per our conversation, I am approving the Township of Union Board of Education’s participation in your research for your doctoral dissertation. I have read your outline, and your study looks interesting.

Please feel free to reach out to me should you need any assistance in contacting the principals in my district.

Once again, good luck.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

THEODORE A. JAKUBOWSKI, Ed.D.
Superintendent

TAJ:ps
Dear Mr. Embrey:

I am in receipt of your request for approval for our principals to participate in the study you are conducting for your doctoral dissertation.

Your request is approved. Please contact Mrs. Marilyn Davenport, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary and Middle School Education, to discuss your study and/or to schedule any meetings with elementary and middle school principals. Please feel free to contact Dr. Lovie Lilly, Acting Principal of Columbia High School, directly at 973-762-5600, x1014.

If I can be of further assistance, feel free to contact me. Good luck with your study.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Peter P. Horoshak

cc: Mrs. Marilyn Davenport
    Dr. Lovie Lilly
Pierre Christopher Embrey  
Doctoral Student  
Seton Hall University

Attention Mr. Embrey:

Concerning your correspondence (fax) of December 20, 2006, please be advised that you have permission to conduct research in the Belleville Township School District. This letter of permission is limited to the conditions as set forth in your request letter, which is the collection of pertinent data solely related to your proposed dissertation topic, "A Comparative Study On Graduates From An Educational Leadership, Management And Policy Program At A Local Catholic University And How Selected Leadership Responsibilities Influence Their Perceptions In Daily Practice." If for any reason the need arises for you to amend your research agenda, please notify my office.

I look forward to assisting you with your doctoral project and I hope that the information you collect from the participants within our school district will be helpful. At this time, I am requesting that you consider sharing your findings with all participants upon request when you have successfully completed the thesis.

Respectfully,

Gerard Babo, Ed.D.  
Assistant Superintendent of Schools

cc: Dr. Edward Kizlaus, Superintendent of School
December 20, 2006

Mr. Pierre Christopher Embrey
zeus357@verizon.net

Dear Mr. Embrey:

You are welcome to conduct your study in Westfield assuming the principals you select want to participate. You can attend our principals/supervisors meeting on Wednesday, January 10 at 9:30 am.

Please contact me at 908-789-4420 to confirm your attendance at the January 10 meeting.

Sincerely yours,

William J. Foley

WJF:

http://us.f841.mail.yahoo.com/ym/ShowLetter?box=Inbox&MsgId=3188_7140187_2513... 12/21/2006
Appendix I

Graphs

Tables 2 through 31

Participant Ratings for Behavior Indicators from the Leadership Profile 360 for each of the Selected Leadership Responsibilities
Table 2  Comparison of SP and GP Participant Behaviors - Category Flexibility

![Graph 1: Flexibility - Graph 1](image)

Table 3  Comparison of SP and GP Participant Behaviors – Category Flexibility

![Graph 2: Flexibility - Graph 2](image)
Table 4  Comparison of GP Participant Behaviors – Category Flexibility

Flexibility - Graph 3
Behaviors A - P

Table 5  Comparison of GP Participant Behaviors – Category Flexibility

Flexibility - Graph 4
Behaviors A - P
Table 6  Comparison of SP and GP Participant Behaviors – Category Flexibility

Flexibility - Graph 5
Behaviors A - P

Table 7  Comparison of SP and GP Participant Behaviors – Category Outreach

Outreach - Graph 1
Behaviors A - P
Table 8  
Comparison of SP and GP Participant Behaviors – Category Outreach

Outreach Graph 2
Behaviors A - P

<table>
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<td>GP 4</td>
</tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>GP 7</td>
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Table 9  
Comparison of GP Participant Behaviors – Category Outreach

Outreach - Graph 3
Behaviors A-P

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>GP 9</td>
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Table 10  Comparison of GP Participant Behaviors - Category Outreach

Outreach - Graph 4
Behaviors A-P

Rating

Participants
- GP 10  - GP 11
- GP 12  - GP 13

Table 11  Comparison of SP and GP Participant Behaviors - Category Outreach

Outreach - Graph 5
Behaviors A-P

Rating

Participants
- GP 14  - SP 4  - GP 15
Table 12  Comparison of SP and GP Participant Behaviors - Category Discipline

![Graph 1](image)

Table 13  Comparison of SP and GP Participant Behaviors – Category Discipline

![Graph 2](image)
Table 14  
Comparison of GP Participant Behaviors – Category Discipline

**Discipline - Graph 3**  
Behaviors A-P

Table 15  
Comparison of GP Participant Behaviors – Category Discipline

**Discipline - Graph 4**  
Behaviors A-P
Table 16  Comparison of SP and GP Participant Behaviors – Category Discipline

![Graph 5](#)

Table 17  Comparison of SP and GP Participant Behaviors – Category Monitoring and Evaluating

![Graph 1](#)
Table 18  Comparisons of SP and GP Participant Behaviors – Category

Monitoring and Evaluating

**Monitoring/Evaluating - Graph 2**
Behaviors A-P

Table 19  Comparisons of GP Participant Behaviors – Category

Monitoring and Evaluating

**Monitoring/Evaluating - Graph 3**
Behaviors A-P
Table 20  Comparisons of GP Participant Behaviors – Category Monitoring and Evaluating

Monitoring/Evaluating - Graph 4
Behaviors A-P

Table 21  Comparisons of SP and GP Participant Behaviors – Category Monitoring and Evaluating

Monitoring/Evaluating - Graph 5
Behaviors A-P
Table 22  Comparisons of SP and GP Participant Behaviors – Category Situational Awareness

**Situational Awareness - Graph 1**
Behaviors A-L

![Graph 1](image-url)

- GP 1
- SP 1
- GP 2
- SP 2

Table 23  Comparisons of SP and GP Individual Participant Behaviors by the Leadership Responsibility of Situational Awareness

**Situational Awareness - Graph 2**
Behaviors A-L

![Graph 2](image-url)

- GP 3
- SP 3
- GP 4
- GP 5
Table 24  Comparisons of GP Individual Participant Behaviors by the Leadership Responsibility of Situational Awareness

**Situational Awareness - Graph 3**
Behaviors A-L

![Graph 3](image)

Table 25  Comparisons of GP Individual Participant Behaviors by the Responsibility of Situational Awareness

**Situational Awareness - Graph 4**
Behaviors A-L

![Graph 4](image)
Table 26  Comparisons of SP and GP Individual Participant Behaviors by the Responsibility of Situational Awareness

Situational Awareness - Graph 5
Behaviors A-L

Table 27  Comparison of Participant Groups SP1-4 and GP1-15 for the Responsibility of Flexibility

Flexibility
Comparison by Category
Table 28  Comparison of Participant Groups SP1-4 and GP1-15 for the Responsibility of Outreach

Outreach
Comparison by Category

Table 29  Comparison of Participant Groups SP1-4 and GP1-15 for the Responsibility of Discipline

Discipline
Comparison by Category
Table 30  Comparison of Participant Groups SP1-4 and GP1-15 for the Responsibility of Monitoring and Evaluating

Monitoring and Evaluating
Comparison by Category

Table 31  Comparison of Participant Groups SP1-4 and GP1-15 for the Responsibility of Situational Awareness

Situational Awareness
Comparison by Category
Appendix J

Figures 1 – 38

Collective Network of Coded Behaviors and Associated Relationships

Figures 1-10 Codes Derived from Field Observations

Figures 11- 33 Codes Derived from Comparison of Observational Data and Interview Responses

Figures 34-38 Codes Derived from Open-Ended Interview Questions
FIGURE III  Codes Derived from Field Observations [Secondary Factors]

FIGURE IV  Codes Derived from Field Observations [Primary Factors]
FIGURE V  Codes Derived from Field Observations [Primary Factors]

FIGURE VI  Codes Derived from Field Observations [Secondary Factors]
FIGURE VII  Codes Derived from Field Observations [Primary Factors]

FIGURE VIII  Codes Derived from Field Observations [Primary Factors]
FIGURE IX  Codes Derived from Field Observations [Primary Factors]

FIGURE X  Codes Derived from Field Observations [Primary Factors]
FIGURE XI  Codes Derived from Comparison of Observational Data and Interview Responses [Secondary Factors]

FIGURE XII  Codes Derived from Comparison of Observational Data and Interview Responses [Primary Factors]
FIGURE XIII  Codes Derived from Comparison of Observational Data and Interview Responses [Primary Factors]

FIGURE XIV  Codes Derived from Comparison of Observational Data and Interview Responses [Secondary Factors]
FIGURE XV
Codes Derived from Comparison of Observational Data and Interview Responses [Secondary Factors]

FIGURE XVI
Codes Derived from the Comparison of Observational Data and Interview Responses [Quaternary Factors]
FIGURE XVII  Codes Derived from the Comparison of Observational Data and Interview Responses [Secondary Factors]

FIGURE XVIII  Codes Derived from the Comparison of Observational Data and Interview Responses [Secondary Factors]
FIGURE XIX  Codes Derived from the Comparison of Observational Data and Interview Responses [Primary Factors]

FIGURE XX  Codes Derived from the Comparison of Observational Data and Interview Responses [Tertiary Factors]
FIGURE XXI  Codes Derived from the Comparison of Observational Data and Interview Responses [Primary Factors]

FIGURE XXII  Codes Derived from the Comparison of Observational Data and Interview Responses [Tertiary Factors]
FIGURE XXIII  Codes Derived from the Comparison of Observational Data and Interview Responses [Secondary Factors]

FIGURE XXIV  Codes Derived from the Comparison of Observational Data and Interview Responses [Secondary Factors]
FIGURE XXV  Codes Derived from the Comparison of Observational Data and Interview Responses [Secondary Factors]

FIGURE XXVI  Codes Derived from the Comparison of Observational Data and Interview Responses [Secondary Factors]
FIGURE XXVII  Codes Derived from the Comparison of Observational Data and Interview Responses [Quaternary-Tertiary Factors]

FIGURE XXVIII  Codes Derived from the Comparison of Observational Data and Interview Responses [Quaternary-Tertiary Factors]
FIGURE XXIX  Codes Derived from the Comparison of Observational Data and Interview Responses [Quaternary-Tertiary Factors]

FIGURE XXX  Codes Derived from the Comparison of Observational Data and Interview Responses [Primary Factors]
FIGURE XXXI  Codes Derived from the Comparison of Observational Data and Interview Responses [Tertiary Factors]

FIGURE XXXII  Codes Derived from the Comparison of Observational Data and Interview Responses [Secondary Factors]
FIGURE XXXIII  Codes Derived from the Comparison of Observational Data and Interview Responses [Primary Factors]

FIGURE XXXIV  Codes Derived Open-Ended Interview Questions [Secondary Factors]
FIGURE XXXV  Codes Derived from Open-Ended Interview Questions [Secondary Factors]

FIGURE XXXVI  Codes Derived from Open-Ended Interview Questions [Tertiary Factors]
FIGURE XXXVII  Codes Derived from Open-Ended Interview Questions [Tertiary Factors]

FIGURE XXXVIII  Codes Derived from Open-Ended Interview Questions [Primary Factors]