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# Changes in African American Urban High School Principals' Leadership Behaviors in an Era of No Child Left Behind

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CHANGES IN AFRICAN AMERICAN URBAN HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS'  
LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS IN AN ERA OF NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

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## ABSTRACT

### CHANGES IN AFRICAN AMERICAN URBAN HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS IN AN ERA OF NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

This study focused on changes in distributed and transitional leadership behaviors of 6 African American principals due to NCLB. The perceptions of these principals regarding the positive and negative impacts of NCLB and alternatives to meeting high academic achievement standards were investigated. This qualitative research consisted of in-depth open-ended interviews matched with each school's respective demographic information and analyzed using grounded theory.

Core categories that emerged from the grounded theory analysis included: Distributed Leadership, Transitional Leadership, NCLB, Controls, Autonomy, and Instruction. Findings were reported within the context of each principal's professional background. No change in leadership behaviors was reported due to NCLB. Each of the principals reported distributed leadership behaviors, and 5 of the principals reported being sensitive to the process of involving all stakeholders during times of transition. The concept behind NCLB (accountability, high standards, & focusing on all sub-groups of students) was well received, but the legislation was not owing to disorganization, under-funding, and possible penalties. The principals suggested school autonomy and a focus on instruction as keys to achieving high academic standards.

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## Acknowledgements

First, and foremost, I recognize the efforts of my parents who stressed the importance of education; not by mere words, but by example. Never a day went by during my childhood where one of my parents was not reading for information and/or pleasure. I was raised in a home inundated with literature. Furthermore, I thank my siblings for inspiring me with their pure praise. To my brother Darryl and good friend Travis Lee, thank you for the backup.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables .....	vi
List of Figures .....	vii
I Introduction .....	1
Statement of the Problem .....	1
Research Questions .....	3
Significance of the Study .....	4
Limitations .....	5
Delimitations .....	6
Definitions of Terms .....	6
Conceptual Framework .....	7
II Review of Related Literature .....	9
Introduction .....	9
Challenges Facing High School Principals .....	10
Grounded Theory & Leadership Behaviors .....	11
Distributed Leadership .....	13
Transitional Leadership .....	16
Passive-Avoidant Behaviors .....	17
Transformational and Transactional Leadership .....	19
Conclusion .....	24
III Methodology of the Study .....	26
Introduction .....	26
Population and Sample .....	27
Data Collection .....	28
Instrumentation .....	29
Interview Protocol .....	29
Qualitative Data Analysis .....	30
IV The Findings .....	32
Introduction .....	32
Demographics .....	33
Grounded Theory Process .....	38
Findings Regarding the Research Questions .....	45
Research Question 1 .....	45
Research Question 2 .....	49
Research Question 3 .....	51
Impact of Context .....	53

Summary .....	59
V Summary, Conclusions, Recommendations for Further Study .....	61
Summary .....	61
Conclusions .....	63
Recommendations for Further Study .....	67
References .....	69
Appendix A: Interview Protocol .....	78
Appendix B: Recruitment Letter .....	81
Appendix C: Informed Consent Form .....	83

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Schedule of Interviews with Subjects.....	28
Table 2: School Student Demographic Statistics.....	34
Table 3: School Organizational Structure.....	35
Table 4: Selective Coding of Axial Coded Data.....	45



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Open Coding of Interview Transcripts .....	40
Figure 2: Axial Coding of Open Coded Data .....	43

## Chapter I

### Introduction

#### *Statement of the Problem*

Fratt (2005) reported that the National Education Association claims that it will cost \$44.37 billion to fully fund No Child Left Behind (NCLB). For 2005, \$19.61 billion has been budgeted for NCLB. William J. Mathis, superintendent of the Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union in Brandon, Vermont stated, “Even if schools were to receive the authorized level of Title 1 money... the amount would be billions less than what is needed to comply with the law [NCLB]” (Hardy, 2004, p. 8). Hardy reported that the New Hampshire School Administrators Association figured it would need \$575 per student in order to meet NCLB requirements. New Hampshire is only receiving \$77 per student. NCLB appears to be an unfunded mandate. School administrators are being required to meet high accountability standards with inadequate fiscal support.

Principals, as lead instructors in schools, are faced with increasing measures of accountability by local, state, and federal governing bodies. NCLB, an update of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 is the federal government’s attempt to assure that all students attain high academic achievement standards. NCLB requires that well-qualified teachers teach all students by the 2005-2006 school year. By the 2013-2014 school year, all students must be able to reach proficiency or higher levels in reading and mathematics, and acquire proficiency in reading at the conclusion of the third grade. NCLB requires that students who are not fluent in English attain fluency,

that all students learn in a safe and healthy environment, and that all students graduate from high school.

States accepting federal funds (Title 1) are accountable for assessing how school districts and schools are progressing toward NCLB goals. States, school districts, and schools face government sanctions (loss of Title 1 funds) if they do not achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP) as determined by each state. In New York State, the education department assesses schools on the performance of students on the English Language Arts (ELA) state assessment tests and the Mathematics state assessment tests; high schools are measured based on the percentage of students graduating on time (within 4 years of their entry into ninth grade). New York schools not meeting state standards are identified as Schools In Need of Improvement (SINI). SINI schools are given 2 years to meet the state standards. SINI schools not meeting state standards after 2 years are placed under Registration Review. The New York State Education Department's website describes the Registration Review Process as follows:

The primary method by which the State Board of Regents holds schools accountable for educational performance. Registration Review is intended to help school districts correct situations that impede quality education. Through Registration Review, low-performing schools are identified, and schools and districts are assisted to devise and implement strategies designed to produce measurable improvements in the academic performance of their students.

In addition to the heavy mandates for accountability, school principals are faced with fiscal constraints. The task of meeting local, state, and federal government mandates when faced with inadequate budgets compounds the challenges that face lead instructors. Challenges to academic achievement grow exponentially in urban communities with a large population of students from low-socioeconomic households. Beveridge (2005) found that approximately 35% of New York City residents are White,

25% Black, 26% Hispanic, and 14% from other racial and ethnic backgrounds. This provides for a diverse racial and ethnic student body in the public schools.

The United States Department of Education distributes Title 1 funds based on the number of poor children attending schools in public school districts. The Center on Education Policy (2004) reported that the United States Department of Education would be providing over 83 million dollars to the New York City school district for the 2004-2005 school year. This funding amount places New York City at the top of the government's Title 1 funding list, which is more than 36 million dollars ahead of the second school district on the list, Los Angeles.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (1996), 50.4 % of African American principals work in urban school districts. The research question that this study seeks to explore is how, under NCLB pressure, the leadership styles of African American principals in New York City contribute to their abilities to overcome fiscal constraints while addressing the mandates.

### *Research Questions*

1. Looking through the lens of distributed and transitional leadership styles, what specific types of changes in leadership behaviors are demonstrated by African American public high school principals in New York City as they seek to meet the mandates imbedded in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation given the documented constraints that state and local school districts face?
2. What positive and negative impacts do African American high school principals in New York City perceive as resulting from NCLB legislation?

3. Based on the perceptions African American high school principals in New York City report regarding NCLB, how do they pursue meeting high academic standards?

This study is exploratory rather than confirmatory. Using grounded theory as the method of data analysis will allow for the derivation of patterns and themes that will be coded by categories related to leadership, management, and policy. The significance of this study will be explored in the following section. Previous research will be viewed with the goal of expanding on similar areas of study.

### *Significance of the Study*

The results of this study will help educational leaders working in diversified urban public schools choose proven approaches to meet NCLB requirements and avoid unsuccessful methodology. This study will also provide insight into ways educational leaders can efficiently manage limited resources. Responses to questions specific to effective decisions made to address NCLB requirements, and efficient use of funds, will be contributed by this research. Weaknesses that may be inherent in NCLB legislation might be revealed through this research. These weaknesses can be addressed by a call for changes in the legislation and/or the implementation of new policies. This study will inquire about perceived positive and negative impacts attributed to NCLB.

Jones (2002) reported that African American principals might have crucial roles in helping schools attain their academic goals in ethnically diverse urban schools. Jones researched teachers' perceptions of African American principals' leadership in urban schools. Findings in this study included the result that African American principals

helped to ensure that European American teachers were culturally sensitive to students from diverse racial backgrounds. This is an important attribute to have in an era of high accountability standards with Title 1 funding at stake. This study expands on the work by Jones. In addition to perceptions of teachers that African American principals keep European American teachers tuned in to the needs of diverse students, this study will investigate further the contributions African American principals make in similar environments.

Clear distinctions between leadership theories are often absent. A behavior of transition leadership is evident in transactional leadership. Passive-avoidant behaviors may also mirror transactional. A leader can simultaneously exhibit transactional behaviors with subordinates while behaving in a distributed manner with other leaders. Transformational leaders can be classified as both distributed and transitional in their behaviors. The leadership behaviors that are revealed in this study may clarify specific leadership theories, and/or confirm the diverse applications of leadership behaviors. These competing notions are reviewed in more depth in chapter 2.

In this study, the leadership behaviors of African American principals in New York City will be surveyed with regard to how these principals deal with unfunded NCLB requirements. Limits to this study are detailed in the following paragraph. The limitations clarify the extent to which findings can be generalized.

### *Limitations*

This study will be limited to the expressed perceptions of those African American principals in New York City who volunteered to participate in the study. This study is

limited by the inability to manipulate demographic variables of each principal such as the gender, age, marital status, years of teaching experience prior to administration, other administrative positions previously held, years in current position, socioeconomic status of their school, and the achievement level of their students. Furthermore, this study will only focus on high school principals working in the New York City public schools. No elementary, intermediate, private or parochial school principals will be interviewed. Results cannot be generalized to African American principals in suburban or rural settings, or to urban settings not in compliance with NCLB legislation. The next section explains how this study controls for race, leadership styles, and policies being investigated.

### *Delimitations*

Principals who are United States citizens of African descent presently employed in New York City high schools will be the focus of this study. Distributed and transitional leadership will be the leadership styles studied. Leadership behaviors evident during the process of responding to unfunded NCLB requirements will be investigated. Terms have been defined in the following section to provide readers of this study with a frame of reference aligned to that of the researcher. With a uniform understanding of the key definitions, the conceptual framework is made clearer.

### *Definitions of Terms*

Accountability standards: State or federal government established academic norms for students.

African American: United States citizens of African descent.

Distributed leadership: Direction consisting of a division of labor, interdependence and coordination.

Fiscal constraints: Limits placed on public revenue.

Passive avoidant: Direction avoiding decision making until serious corrective action is needed.

Principals: New York State School Administrative Supervisors (SAS) who have ultimate authority within the schools where they are employed.

Transactional leadership: Direction involving an exchange between leader and follower.

Transformational leadership: Direction guided by personal morals and values, changing behaviors, and common goals.

Transitional leadership: Direction given during the early stages of change when old policies are being replaced by new policies.

### *Conceptual Framework*

Many studies have been conducted in recent years on the impact of principals' leadership styles on various aspects of school organizations (Amoroso, 2002; Conners, 2003; Dono-Koulouris, 2003; Evans, 1996; Garrett-Booker, 2003). Three leadership theories that are most prevalent in educational research are as follows: passive-avoidant, transactional, and transformational. Passive-avoidant leadership is evidenced by a lack of decision-making until absolutely necessary. Transactional leadership involves an exchange between leader and follower. Transformational leadership is guided by



personal morals and values, changing behaviors, and common goals. Results from research on these theories are often anecdotal, and very few studies focus on African American leaders specifically.

Distributed and transitional leadership theories are the most recent in the educational field and are not presently heavily evident in educational research. This study of African American principals' leadership behaviors is guided by these two theories of leadership. Distributed leadership consists of a division of labor, interdependence, and coordination. Transitional leadership occurs during the early stages of change when old policies are being replaced by new policies. These two leadership behaviors are reviewed in more depth in chapter 2.

The two leadership theories identified form the framework from which behavior of African American principals will be studied. The goal is to identify the leadership behaviors of the principals as they address unfunded NCLB requirements. It is the researcher's intent to identify common practices and unique approaches used to deal with NCLB.

## Chapter II

### Review of Related Literature

#### *Introduction*

This literature review will focus on challenges that high school principals face, grounded theory in studying leadership behaviors, and five theories of leadership. Research and peer-reviewed publications on distributed, passive avoidant, transactional, transformational, and transitional leadership behaviors will be dissected. Particular interest will be given to the relationship between the leadership theories and administrative behavior. Other contexts in which these leadership behaviors are evident will be discussed briefly to bring clarity to the characteristics of the leadership styles. Each leadership theory will also be compared to others where appropriate.

Leaders in education have many titles and include: master teachers, department chairs, assistant principals, supervisors, principals, directors, assistant superintendents, and superintendents. Principals are the most recognized position among educational leaders in the views of students, parents of students, and the communities in which their schools reside. In this era of high accountability standards for student achievement and fiscal constraints, a principal's ability to lead those in their direct daily contact, students and teachers, is crucial.

### *Challenges Facing High School Principals*

Principals must deal with daily management issues such as supervision of staff, organization of professional growth activities, safety, busing, discipline, staff relations, and central office requests. Added to their daily tasks were increased public involvement, analyzing data, politics, special education regulations, and teachers' grievances. McGhee and Nelson (2005) stated that the effect of high accountability standards on school leaders has not been subjected to in-depth study. Principals were increasingly being evaluated based on their students' test scores.

In a study by Koop (2004), the relationship between public high school principals and their accountability for student achievement was investigated. Among the obstacles principals faced were moving forward with educational change initiatives and adhering to mandates. Koop found that principals were not confident with state and federal requirements. The principals in this study reported a lack of guidance from the state level, unrealistic expectations, high job stress levels, lack of money, unreasonable high stakes testing, a greater need for intervention services for students, more teaching toward tests, and inadequate parental support. Similar findings were evident throughout the literature. The following reports are examples of this trend.

Johnson (2002) reported that principals dealt with regular interruptions from their staff and parents alike. Principals often work very long hours without the benefit of a lunch break. The principals in this report echoed the need for more money to meet mandates. There was also a cry for more principal autonomy to direct their schools in a manner they believed appropriate to reach high academic achievement standards. This

call for autonomy is in direct opposition to the increased oversight that policy makers are implementing.

Only 15 years ago the average principal worked 40 hours a week (Pierce, 2000). According to Pierce, principals work much longer hours today, are not recognized for their efforts, and have little time to reflect on how to best lead. In addition to the common challenges already stated, corporate demands and technology have contributed to the difficulties of the job (Pierce, 2000).

High school principals today have daunting obstacles to face in striving toward student achievement goals. To truly identify the perceptions of high school principals working in challenging environments, open-ended inquiries need to be conducted. One respected approach to analyzing the expressed feelings of educational leaders is grounded theory. The next section of this review of literature will focus on grounded theory in studying leadership behaviors.

### *Grounded Theory & Leadership Behaviors*

DeRuyver (2001) explained grounded theory as follows:

Devised in the 1960s by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, grounded theory is designed to inductively generate theories about social processes through the qualitative analysis of qualitative data. Data is generated through intensive interviews whose questions attempt to allow the emergence of implicitly held theories but may also involve observation and the collection of various texts like journals, diaries, census statistics, etc. Researchers maintain careful field notes and transcriptions of interviews and concurrently work to integrate the processes of data gathering, data analysis, and theory generation. Termed the “constant comparative method of analysis,” this process is central to grounded theory as a methodology and to its claims of scientific rigor. (p. 7)

In the study by Todd (2004), grounded theory was applied to analyze the leadership behaviors of Jesus Christ as they appear in the Four Gospels of the King James Version

of the New Testament. The researcher's goal was to identify leadership behaviors to use as a model for administrators and teachers. As more literature is presented on grounded theory, possibilities for applying this qualitative methodology to many forms of textual materials will become apparent.

An analysis was conducted on the administrative behavior of three female high school principals (Walker, 2000). Grounded theory was used to analyze observations, interviews, and conversations. The researcher found that each principal's leadership style was tailored to fit their unique environment; each of the principals worked collegially with their staffs, and the researcher formed the theory that female principals work with "effective agency" rather than "command and control." Here it was evident that grounded theory cannot only help in the formulation of new theories, it can also open the door for more research on that theory. In this instance, further research can be conducted on gender differences regarding the use of "effective agency" versus "command and control."

Grounded theory allows for flexibility in data analysis. In a study by Hackney and Hogard (1999), the Strauss and Corbin (1998) three-step process of coding data was used. In this process, open coding (giving data themes) is applied to the data first without regard for accuracy. The next step has the researcher creating categories and subcategories from the coded data (axial coding). In the final step, core categories are formed merging categories and subcategories with common themes (selective coding). Hackney and Hogard used their research questions as a guide during the open coding process. Researchers could choose not to focus on their research questions until the selective coding process.

Simmons and Gregory (2003) described grounded theory as a thorough, inductive method to theory formulation that offers a manageable theoretical grip and truly identifies what is occurring in observed actions and events. Grounded theory is an important tool for creating useful, sustainable answers to community and structural problems (Simmons & Gregory, 2003). In a study by Berg (2003), the perceptions of leaders, educators, and students regarding leadership development in higher education was investigated using grounded theory. The researcher was able to determine that leadership was believed to occur within a collaborative team working toward common goals, as opposed to one person giving direction to others. This finding will be explored further in the literature review on distributed leadership.

### *Distributed Leadership*

Since 1999, distributed leadership has been a heavily studied topic among researchers, educators, and policymakers in the United States and other nations (Spillane & Zoltners-Sherer, 2004). Spillane (2003) stated that there is “a limited empirical knowledge base on distributed leadership” (p. 344). The very definition of distributed leadership is still in the developmental stage. Elmore (2000) saw distributed leadership as a means to share authority in the educational setting to collectively make sound decisions for the improvement of instruction and student learning. Goldstein (2003) proposed a dichotomy consisting of divided responsibility and shared responsibility between leaders to accomplish assignments. Goldstein’s theory pointed to a need to study leadership behaviors when tasks are shared or divided. Johnson (1997) stated that

modern school leadership is “not in the individual agency of one, but in the collaborative efforts of many” (p.2).

The Distributed Leadership Study (Spillane, Diamond, & Jita, 2000) recommended three aspects of distributed leadership. Collaborated distribution suggests that leaders work synergistically together toward a common goal. Collective distribution suggests that at least two leaders are working independently but are dependent on each other to accomplish a common goal. Coordinated distribution suggests particular sequential completion of leadership assignments to obtain an overall leadership goal. Harris (2002) defined distributed leadership as “multiple sources of guidance and direction, following the contours of expertise in an organization” (Online). In other words, maximizing the use of human resources through skill specific tasks. According to Harris (2003), effective distributive leaders would communicate openly and extensively.

Spillane (2003) stated that educational leadership is systemic and distributed vertically and horizontally throughout organizations. Spillane wrote the following:

The challenge in understanding educational leadership is developing rich and robust understandings of the phenomena at one or more levels of the system while simultaneously attending to the policies, programs, and structures at various levels of the system that enable and constrain that practice. (p. 345)

Barth et al. (1999) found that applying distributed leadership vertically to teachers can lead to hostility between teaching colleagues. These hostilities were brought on by apathy and lack of confidence.

Camburn, Rowan, and Taylor (2003) studied distributive leadership in elementary schools that adopted comprehensive school reforms (CSR) and compared them to non-CSR schools. Inherent in CSR schools was the professional development of school leaders with clearly defined roles. Results indicated that CSR school leaders contributed

considerable amounts of instructional leadership. This study supports a strong correlation between the professional development of school leaders and their inclination toward instructional leadership.

Instructional leadership shares similarities with the theme of leadership for teaching and learning. Many administrators were teachers who specialized in one subject area. Stein and Nelson (2003) warned that it is not appropriate for methods of instruction used in one subject area to be generalized to all subject areas; however, distributing leadership over subject areas to administrators most knowledgeable of the subjects' content may be most effective. In his study of two elementary schools, each run by co-principals, Chirichello (2003) found that this method of distributing administrative responsibilities provided each principal with more time for instructional issues.

James P. Spillane is the Director of the Multidisciplinary Program in Education Sciences at Northwestern University, Professor of Education and Social Policy, and Faculty Fellow for the Institute for Policy Research. Spillane has conducted extensive research for The Distributed Leadership Study and is author of the forthcoming book titled *Distributed Leadership*.

A key goal of The Distributed Leadership Study is to comprehend the connections among the large-scale organizational functions and the day-to-day work of school leadership and to investigate their association to teaching and changes in teaching (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001). This depth of knowledge can help leaders better understand the intricacies of their practice in order to make beneficial changes. Spillane et al. (2001) stated that organizational structures establish leadership behaviors.



This statement makes sense when consideration is given to complex organizations where its very structure may impede fluid communication necessary for distributed practices.

Spillane, Diamond, & Jita (2003) wrote:

This distributed perspective is also essential as a practical matter because educational leaders who cannot engage others in leading will not be very successful. They will not be able to spread and mobilize the expertise necessary for instructional improvement in their organizations and thus are unlikely to be very effective. It is highly unlikely that a principal practicing solo can improve instruction in his or her school. To improve educational leadership, then, it is essential to understand how the practice of leadership is stretched over the work of multiple leaders in an organization. (p. 12-13)

This statement holds true for a few reasons. Teachers are leaders in their classrooms. Principals need to be able to cultivate their leadership attributes in order to help them succeed. Unless a principal is operating in an exceptionally small and specialized school, improving instruction single-handedly would be very difficult. In most public school settings, effective leaders stretch responsibilities over many actors within their school.

Taking all of the above studies into account allowed for the development of a common definition for distributed leadership. Distributed leadership consists of a division of labor, interdependence and coordination. Initial research limited this theory to the distribution of tasks to leaders within an organization, not to subordinates. More recent research accounts for all members within an organization.

### *Transitional Leadership*

Distributed leadership practices may be applied during times of organizational transition. To help maintain balance during organizational chaos, leaders within an organization may divide responsibilities. One leader may take responsibility for phasing out old policies, while another leader takes on the responsibility of phasing in new

policies. Ultimately, each leader would help the organization transition to stable ground under a new policy or policies.

Transition is the period of time early on in the process of change within an organization. Within this process of change an organization leaves old policies behind while adopting new ones. The old policies being left behind can be described as a loss (Goldring, Crowson, Laird, & Berk, 2003). Fullan (2001) stated that “failure to recognize this phenomenon as natural and inevitable has meant that we tend to ignore important aspects of change and misinterpret others” (p. 30). This is an important statement to keep in mind when analyzing the leadership behaviors of leaders during a time of transition.

Goldring et al. (2003) suggested the following as present during transition: First, balance must be maintained while change is undertaken. Second, the demography of the organization has new definitions; the use of assets is altered. Sarason and Lorentz (1998) described this as a “period of messiness and disorder” (p. 28). Third, “new policy and its implementation usually offer direction, often in the form of expectations and accountability” (Goldring et al., 2003, p. 474). This was evident with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) federal legislation signed by President George W. Bush. NCLB accountability expectations are defined along with target dates for meeting those expectations.

### *Passive-Avoidant Behaviors*

During times of organizational transition, when a new policy is replacing an old one (e.g., NCLB), passive-avoidant leadership behaviors can have devastating

consequences. Not making decisions to address loss that occurs during change may allow destructive feelings to fester. Distributed leadership behaviors would also be absent in a passive-avoidant leadership environment.

Bass and Avolio (2000) divided passive-avoidant behaviors into two categories. Passive management-by-exception is descriptive of leaders who react to problems only when corrective action is needed. Avoidant laissez faire is descriptive of leaders who avoid making decisions altogether.

Fisher (2003) researched the relationships between principal leadership style, climate, and student achievement. There was a negative correlation between laissez-faire leadership and principal and teacher openness. These results are not surprising. Leaders who establish patterns of not making decisions would eventually not be approached regarding issues, thereby closing the doors of communication. Wanstreet (2003) found that female career and technical education administrators were perceived as slightly more laissez-faire than male administrators. It would be helpful to know what stereotypes the surveyors believed regarding their perceived differences between male and female leaders.

Passive-avoidant behaviors tended to be examined alongside transformational and transactional behaviors due to the inclusion of the theory on the widely used Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire instrument. More empirical studies in education that focus primarily on the behaviors associated with this theory might provide more insight. Are there times when no decision is preferable? Philosophically, is no decision actually a passive decision? Overwhelmingly, passive-avoidant leadership has been shown to be ineffective.

### *Transformational and Transactional Leadership*

At the conclusion of this section, the interrelationships between leadership theories will be examined. Transactional leadership will be compared to transitional, passive-avoidant and distributed. Transformational leadership will be compared to distributed and transactional.

First developed in 1978 by James MacGregor Burns, transformational leadership has become linked to researcher Bernard M. Bass and his colleague Bruce J. Avolio. Burns (1978) created a distinction between transformational and transactional leadership. Burns stated that the two leadership styles were opposite. Transformational leadership is guided by morals and values, and transactional leadership is void of morals and values. Transactional leadership involves an exchange between leader and follower. Bass (1985) determined that transformational leadership was separate from transactional leadership, but not opposite. Bass made this determination after synthesizing the results of a survey instrument he developed called the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ).

Bernard M. Bass and Bruce J. Avolio are renowned researchers in the area of leadership styles. Bass and Avolio (2000) described transformational leadership as consisting of the following: idealized attributes, idealized behaviors, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Bass and Avolio described transactional leadership as two-pronged: constructive, consisting of contingent reward; and corrective, consisting of active management-by-exception.

Arnold (2004) researched transformational leadership among African Americans. Arnold wrote, "Transformational leadership is necessary to galvanize constituencies to implement change initiatives and to subordinate followers' self-interest to organization

objectives” (p. iv). This statement can be paraphrased to mean that change can only occur under transformational leadership and that subordinates must put the organizational goals ahead of their personal goals. Thus far, this literature review has shown that other leadership behaviors (transitional and distributed) also evoke change. Indeed, the overriding characteristic of transitional leadership is change. Arnold found that African American leaders were reported to be more transformational than European American leaders by both African American and European American subordinates. This study also suggested that African American leaders may experience success because of their flexibility and responsiveness to feedback which enabled them to change organizational behaviors.

Amoroso (2002) researched the impact of principals’ transformational leadership behaviors on teacher commitment and teacher job satisfaction. Three aspects of administrators’ transformational leadership in relation to teacher job satisfaction were compared: whether principals were challenging staff, actively leading staff, and supporting staff. Amoroso found positive statistically significant relationships between all three factors and teacher job satisfaction. It should be noted that the relationship between supporting staff and teacher job satisfaction was a low positive correlation. This might be the result of the test instrument since teachers who do not feel supported would probably not rate their job satisfaction positively.

Evans (1996) stated, “Transformational leadership is more likely to emerge during times of social trouble, rapid change, discontinuity, and unstable economic market places...” (p. 18). This statement aligns with the premise forwarded in the Statement of the Problem. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation is rapidly forcing schools to

reach higher standards during times of fiscal constraints. As a result of his research, Cheng (1997) suggested the following contributions of transformational leaders:

They can build up a new school vision, mission and goals in a challenging and uncertain environment. They can help their schools to develop continuously in the structural, human, political, cultural, and educational aspects. They can facilitate students to develop and learn more effectively in the new century. (p. 21)

Dono-Koulouris (2003) researched the relationship between transformational leadership style and six levels of empowerment (decision making, autonomy, impact, status, self efficacy, and professional growth) and transformational leadership style and job satisfaction. The researcher found no statistically significant relationship between transformational leadership and the six levels of empowerment, but she found a significant positive correlation between transformational leadership style and job satisfaction. Martino (2003) found the same results in a similar study. No significant positive relationship was found between transformational leadership and any of the six levels of empowerment. It would be expected that a significant positive relationship between transformational leadership and professional growth would exist. One of the tenets of transformational leadership styles is to involve subordinates in the process of change. This involvement (empowerment) was a means to professional growth (Taylor & Angelle, 2000).

Garrett-Booker (2003) researched the relationship between teachers' perceptions of their respective principals' transformational leadership styles and the principals' self-perceptions of their transformational leadership styles. The researcher found no correlation between the variables. This is surprising since it would be expected that there would be a low negative correlation between the variables. Palczewski (1999) found no

positive correlation between how principals reported their transformational leadership styles and the five dependent variables (motivation, satisfaction with administration, identification with work, willingness to disagree with administration, and attitudes toward change) reported by teachers.

Hoernemann (1998) and Small (2003) researched the relationship between elementary principals' transformational leadership and teacher satisfaction. Also researched was the relationship between transformational leadership and teachers' willingness to give extra effort. These results are important to know due to the fact that fiscal constraints may not allow for the payment of teachers who do extra work. Principals will need extra effort from staff in order to meet the increasing student achievement requirements. Hoernemann and Small both found that transformational leadership led to an increase in teacher satisfaction, and teacher willingness to give extra effort. Similar results were found in a study of middle school principals (Layton, 2003). "The transformational leader typically inspires followers to do more than originally expected" (Hartog, Van Muijen, & Koopman, 1997, p. 20).

Research to date has found significant positive relationships between transformational leadership behaviors and job satisfaction, willingness to give extra effort, and the effectiveness of leaders. The willingness to give extra effort is important since fiscal constraints may limit a principal's ability to offer a paid stipend for additional work. Consequently, extra effort by teachers may also help students achieve high academic standards.

Burns (1978) viewed transactional leadership as bartering. Transactional leaders respond to the followers' basic needs (e.g., food, shelter, and belonging). This type of

leadership can be viewed as leadership by responding to the followers' hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1954). Bass (1985) viewed transactional leaders as the distributors of rewards. Behaving according to the leaders' wishes rewards followers. This type of transactional leadership is also described as proactive (Conners, 2003). Active transactional leadership is subject to agreement on rewards prior to a specific behavior being acted out (Conners, 2003).

In her research, Garrett-Booker (2003) correctly hypothesized that there would be no relationship between principals' perceptions of their transactional leadership styles and the perceptions of their teachers. The relationship between the variables might have proven significant if principals strongly identified themselves as transactional leaders. Layton (2003) reported that transformational principals were apt to provide rewards to help make their teachers open to change. This response is in contrast to the commonly held definitions of transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, 2000). What Layton (2003) reports is more in line with the behaviors of transactional leaders.

Cheng (1997) suggested the following as a result of his research: "Traditional transactional leadership based on the exchange theory is clearly not sufficient to lead our schools to pursue school effectiveness and educational quality, particularly in the coming new century" (p. 21). Cheng referenced Bass (1985) as stating that schools have no chance at excellence under transactional leadership. Transactional leadership research has not shown significant relationships with job satisfaction and willingness to give extra effort. Active transactional leadership behaviors can accomplish specific goals (e.g., high academic achievement). The incentives agreed upon must be substantial enough from the



point of view of the followers who will carry out the tasks. However, fiscal constraints may make offering substantial incentives difficult, if not impossible.

One element of transition leadership may correlate with the tenets of transactional leadership. Goldring et al. (2003) stated that the use of fiscal and physical resources might be altered during a time of transition. Transactional leaders may allocate assets in exchange for the performance of specific tasks. Passive-avoidant leaders may indirectly exhibit transactional leadership behaviors. By agreeing with a subordinate not to take action when a specific act occurs, the leader is simultaneously agreeing to be passive while establishing the transaction. Transactional leadership behaviors occur between leaders and their subordinates. Note that a leader may be transactional with subordinates while working in a distributed manner with other leaders.

Transformational and transactional leadership behaviors differ in that a transactional leader does not rely on his subordinates to adopt the leader's philosophy and put their own goals aside. Transformational leaders inspire followers to put the goals and philosophy of the organization, as the leader views it, ahead of their personal goals. Followers of transformational leaders are willing to give extra effort for the good of the organization. Transformational leaders can act in a distributed manner when working with other leaders, and apply their known behaviors during times of transition.

### *Conclusion*

High school principals are faced with ever-increasing challenges to helping students reach academic achievement standards. The obstacles faced may be considerably more stressing in diverse schools with limited fiscal resources. To glean

the deep social and structural concerns high school principals harbor, intense qualitative inquiries can be conducted. Grounded theory can be an effective method to use to analyze perceived leadership behaviors stemming from such inquiries.

Educational leadership is a broad area of study that is ever evolving in terminology and practice. Distributed leadership is a relatively recent theory being presented for further empirical research. Generally, distributed leadership refers to shared leadership responsibilities aimed at common goals. Further research may prove that distributing subject area responsibilities based on the content knowledge of leaders may be most effective. Transition leadership takes place during the early stages of organizational change. Understanding the process of loss during transitioning from old policies to new policies is essential for transition leaders to be successful. Judging the effectiveness of leaders during transition periods must include an exploration into the directions inherent within the new policies.

Transactional leadership styles may be able to gain positive results when the leader is able to offer what the follower wants in exchange. This leadership behavior has not been proven effective at times of fiscal limitations. Transformational leadership behaviors have been proven to garnish extra effort from followers. This is an important result of this leadership behavior as evidenced in educational settings. At a time when fiscal constraints limit the ability of schools to pay for the additional instructional time many students may need to help meet state performance standards, having teachers willing to volunteer the extra time is beneficial.

## Chapter III

### Methodology of the Study

#### *Introduction*

African American principals have worked primarily in urban communities (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1996). The largest urban school district in the United States is New York City, with over one million students. The New York City public schools received 83 million dollars to assist with poor students for the school year 2004-2005. This amount was more than any other school district in the nation (The Center on Education Policy, 2004).

This study attempted to identify the changes, if any, in African American principals' leadership behaviors in an era of fiscal constraints and high accountability standards. Seventeen African American principals working in high schools were invited to take part in two one-on-one interviews. The interview protocol (see Appendix A) addressed the methods principals used to strive toward meeting No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements while facing increasing fiscal constraints. The interview protocol also focused on their individual leadership behaviors. The interviews provided in-depth portraits of leadership behaviors. Leadership behaviors were matched against methods used to meet mandates.

### *Population and Sample*

There were approximately 1,164 schools in the New York City (NYC) public school district, serving over one million students in Grades pre-kindergarten to 12 at the time of this study. Over 80,000 teachers taught in NYC during the 2005-2006 school year. To be included in this study, volunteers had to be American citizens of African descent.

African American principals who led a New York City high school since the 2001–2002 school year were identified. Seventeen African American high school principals were identified for this study. The researcher was provided their names and schools by regional and assistant chairs of the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators.

Eight principals returned their informed consent forms agreeing to take part in two one-hour interviews. The second interview with each volunteer would be conducted only if all areas of inquiry were not addressed during the first interview. One principal opted not to participate, one did not meet the criteria outlined in this methodology, and the remaining six were interviewed. For this text-rich qualitative research, the researcher deemed the sample to be appropriate.

*Data Collection*

Table 1

*Schedule of Interviews with Subjects*

<u>Principal</u>	<u>Date of Interview</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Length of Interview</u>
1. Turner	August 31, 2005	12:00 pm	32:28
2. Tubman	August 31, 2005	2:00 pm	45:23
3. Douglas	October 6, 2005	10:00 am	27:50
4. King	October 17, 2005	1:00 pm	21:01
5. Malcolm	October 17, 2005	3:30 pm	29:34
6. Mandela	October 25, 2005	4:45 pm	54:26

Interviews were conducted in the offices of each respective principal. Each interview was recorded on a digital voice recorder. Digital recordings were transcribed for analysis within 2 days of the completion of each interview. The time spent with each principal did not impact the weight given to responses.

The first interview was conducted on August 31, 2005, at 12:00 noon and lasted 32 minutes and 28 seconds. The second interview was conducted on August 31, 2005 at 2:00 pm and lasted 45 minutes and 23 seconds. The third, lasting 27 minutes and 50 seconds, was conducted on October 6, 2005, at 10:00 am. The fourth interview was conducted on October 17, 2005, at 1:00 pm and lasted 21 minutes and 1 second. The fifth, lasting 29 minutes and 34 seconds, was conducted on October 17, 2005, at 3:30 pm.

The sixth and final interview was conducted on October 25, 2005, at 4:45 pm and lasted 54 minutes and 26 seconds.

### *Instrumentation*

*Interview Protocol.* The interview protocol (see Appendix A) was divided into four sections with a total of 21 questions. There were 11 questions focused on No Child Left Behind, five on distributed leadership behaviors, three on transitional leadership, and two on perceptions of leadership style.

To acquire a general perspective of each principal's thoughts regarding NCLB, the first question asked was, "What pros and cons do you believe come with NCLB?" To gain more in-depth insight into their actual practices around meeting NCLB requirements, questions such as the following were asked:

1. What have you done to meet the NCLB requirement of having all of your subject area teachers "highly qualified" at the end of this school year (2005-2006)?
2. Prior to NCLB legislation, which educational practices based on scientifically based research did you apply in your school?

To glean transitional leadership behaviors attributed to NCLB the question asked was, "Prior to NCLB legislation, how did you use Title 1 (federal) money?" To help determine if there was a transition to distributed leadership practices the question asked was, "How, if at all, has the organizational structure of your school changed due to NCLB legislation?"

Key terms evident in distributed leadership theory are “shared” and “divided.” To garner the extent of each principal’s use, and changes in use, of distributed leadership behaviors, questions such as the following were asked:

1. What responsibilities do you routinely share with other administrators? How, if at all, has this changed since the advent of NCLB?
2. How, if at all, do you divide responsibilities for a task with other administrators? How, if at all, has this changed since the advent of NCLB?

Introducing new policies and a change in the use of assets is evident in transitional leadership theory. To gather each principal’s use, and changes in use, of transitional leadership behaviors, questions such as the following were asked:

1. How do you introduce new policies in your school? How, if at all, has this changed since the advent of NCLB?
2. How do you use assets when changing to a new policy? How, if at all, has this changed since the advent of NCLB?

To gain more of each principal’s perspective regarding leadership, questions asked were, “How would you describe your leadership style?” and “How would other administrators perceive your leadership style?” Depending on how each principal responded to questions presented in the interview protocol, additional probing questions were asked for clarification.

### *Qualitative Data Analysis*

A grounded theory method of deriving patterns and themes from the transcripts of the in-depth interviews was applied. The researcher read the transcripts of each interview

several times. Initial thoughts and ideas regarding the data were written without regard for accuracy. During this open coding process, common themes became evident in the transcripts including occasional outliers. Themes discovered included pros and cons of NCLB, highly qualified teachers, leadership style, Title 1 funds, and scientifically based research. Outliers included hiring committee, solutions, and budgeting.

The researcher took findings identified during the open coding process and formed categories and subcategories. The researcher identified the categories by themes that arose from a majority of the transcripts, but could not be placed under a different thematic category. Subcategories were identified as commonly occurring themes that could be placed under another thematic category. For example, NCLB was identified as a category with pros, cons, and neutral responses to NCLB identified as subcategories. Leadership style was identified as a category with others' view of leadership style and shared leadership as subcategories. This process is known as axial coding.

The researcher next looked for thematic concepts that could be merged into core categories related to the research questions. This process is known as selective coding. Six core categories became evident, two per research question. The core categories of distributed leadership and transitional leadership respond to the research inquiry into leadership styles. The core categories of NCLB and controls respond to the research inquiry into perceptions of the merits of NCLB. The core categories of autonomy and instruction respond to the research inquiry into possible alternatives to meeting higher academic standards. Core categories were summarized to respond to each research question in this study using quotes directly from the volunteer principals.



## Chapter IV

### The Findings

#### *Introduction*

The purpose of this study was to assist educational leaders working in diversified urban public schools with approaches to meeting NCLB requirements. This study also provides insight into ways educational leaders can efficiently manage limited resources. Challenges that are inherent in NCLB legislation were analyzed through this research.

Principals are held responsible for the academic achievement of their students despite limited funding to achieve ever-higher requirements. Title 1 funds help to support programs for America's students in poverty. With a large population of poor students, New York City's public schools cannot afford to have funds withheld. This study proposes to examine how African American principals, more prevalent in urban areas, reflect and respond to mandates with limited funding support.

Distributed and transitional leadership behaviors were chosen as focal points for this research. A sharing of tasks in order to reach common goals evidences distributed leadership. Goldring et al. (2003) suggested the following as present during transition: First, balance must be maintained while change is undertaken. Second, the demography of the organization has new definitions; the use of assets is altered.

Specific changes in leadership behaviors demonstrated by African American public high school principals in New York City, as they sought to meet the mandates imbedded in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, were investigated. The

perceived positive and negative impacts of NCLB legislation as reported by African American high school principals in New York City will be presented in this chapter. Based on the negative perceptions African American high school principals in New York City reported regarding NCLB, suggestions for meeting high academic standards were presented.

### *Demographics*

The New York City public school system is the largest single school district in the United States, consisting of over one thousand schools and one million students. It is important to note that the public school budgeting process is centralized. Each school receives an equal per pupil allotment of funds based on special needs and socioeconomic status (below poverty level equals additional Title 1 funds); therefore, the socioeconomic status of the community in which the school resides does not contribute to the amount of money allotted.

New York City public school students are not bound to attend the nearest school to their home; therefore, students living in low socioeconomic communities may well attend a school in a wealthier community and vice versa. For example: the public schools are divided into 10 regions. One of the regions from which subjects for this study volunteered consisted of no less than 68 high schools. In an effort to protect the identity of volunteers and provide ease of reading, pseudonyms have been given to the schools of the volunteers.

Table 2

*School Student Demographic Statistics*

<u>School</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Gender</u>
Turner	180	85%	Single
Tubman	400	52%	Coed
Douglas	500	73%	Coed
King	220	55%	Coed
Malcolm	775	47%	Coed
<u>Mandela</u>	<u>700</u>	<u>50%</u>	<u>Coed</u>

In Table 3, Autonomy refers to the Autonomy Zone school district created by New York City's school Chancellor Joel Klein in 2004. Witenko and Hemphill (2005) stated that schools in the Autonomy Zone are required to adhere to the same laws and regulations as non-Autonomy Zone public schools, but these schools do not report to a local superintendent and they have greater control over their budgets. In addition, Autonomy Zone schools must average 90% attendance over 5 years with an 80% graduation rate or they will be closed (Witenko & Hemphill, 2005). According to Witenko and Hemphill, "Autonomy Zone principals also have greater freedom to assign staff and to design a schedule and a curriculum than their counterparts in regular schools" (p. 2).

School based option (SBO) in Table 3 refers to a school whose teachers' union has approved the selection of new teachers based on an in-house selection process rather than seniority as prescribed in their contract. Startup on Table 3 refers to schools in their

first 4 years of operation that receive an additional \$100,000 per year for operating expenses. Auditions refer to schools that require students to either interview or perform a specific talent in order to be considered for admission. In Table 3, the Turner school requires interviews, and the Mandela school requires a performance.

Table 3

*School Organizational Structure*

<u>School</u>	<u>Autonomy</u>	<u>SBO</u>	<u>Startup</u>	<u>Auditions</u>
Turner	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Tubman	No	No	Yes	No
Douglas	No	No	No	No
King	No	No	Yes	No
Malcolm	No	No	No	No
<u>Mandela</u>	No	Yes	No	Yes

The Turner school principal has 8 years of experience, but he started this particular school 1 year prior to this interview. The Turner school serves 180 students. Due to the recent start-up of this school, school report card data is not available. The mission of the single-gender Turner school is to strive toward academic excellence, teach leadership, develop good character, provide mentors, teach integrity, and facilitate community service.

The Tubman school principal is in her fourth year as a principal. The Tubman school serves 377 students. As of 2004, there were 33 special education students, 7

English Language Learners (ELL), and an equal distribution of males and females. The ethnicity of this school was in line with the city's average of 15% White, 35% Black, 36% Latin, and 14% Asian and others. Fifty-two percent of the student body qualified for free lunch. There were 16 teachers, 5 administrators and other professionals, and 1 educational paraprofessional. The mission of the Tubman school is to challenge the students with a standards-driven curriculum while providing collaborative experiences with specific community professionals.

The Douglas school principal has worked as principal for 4 years. The Douglas school serves 523 students. As of 2004, the school served 72 special education students, 34 ELL, and had an equal distribution of males and females. The ethnicity of this school was in line with the city's average of 15% White, 35% Black, 36% Latin, and 14% Asian or others. Seventy-three percent of the students were eligible for free lunch. There were 34 teachers, 12 administrators or other professionals, and no educational paraprofessionals. The mission of the Douglas school is to nurture personal excellence and to teach students to contribute to the improved quality of life within their communities and the world at large.

The King school principal has served as principal for 4 years. The King school has the capacity to serve 300 students, but presently serves 220 students. As of 2004, there were 3 special education students, 2 ELL students, and an equal distribution of males and females. The ethnicity of the school is in line with the city's average of 15% White, 35% Black, 36% Latin, and 14% Asian and others. Fifty-five percent of the students in this school were eligible for free lunch. There were 5 teachers, 3

administrators or other professionals, and no educational paraprofessionals. The King school did not state its mission.

The Malcolm school principal has worked in this school for 7 years. The Malcolm school serves 775 students. As of 2004, the school served 21 special education students, 6 ELL students, and had an equal distribution of males and females. The ethnicity of the student body was in line with the city's average of 15% White, 35% Black, 36% Latin, and 14% Asian or others. Forty-seven percent of the students were eligible for school lunch. There were 37 teachers, 8 administrators or other professionals, and no educational paraprofessionals. The mission of the Malcolm school is to provide students with the knowledge and skill required to adapt to a multicultural, scientific, and technological world while being socially responsible.

The Mandela school principal is in his seventh year as principal in this building. The Mandela school serves 715 students. As of 2004, there were 18 special education students, no ELL students, and an equal distribution of male and female students. The ethnicity of the student body was in line with the city's average of 15% White, 35% Black, 36% Latin, and 14% Asian or others. Fifty percent of the students were eligible for free lunch. There were 31 teachers, 9 administrators or other professionals, and 1 educational paraprofessional. The mission of the Mandela school is to garner the support of the entire school community to assist students in meeting state and city standards while fully expressing themselves through rhythms and sounds, impressions and designs, and movements and actions. Much of the school statistics provided were taken from school report cards made publicly available on the New York City Department of Education website through the Division of Assessment and Accountability.

*Grounded Theory Process*

Strauss and Corbin (1998) described open coding, the first step in the grounded theory method of analyzing qualitative data, as the time when the researcher writes down initial thoughts and ideas regarding the data without concern for correctness. In Figure 1, my thoughts and ideas are listed beneath the respective principal from whom the data originated.

Common language used by principals in their responses to interview questions leads the researcher to use certain code words. In Figure 1 under NCLB, three of the school principals' responses were given the code of "Pros." Their responses to the question, what pros and/or cons do you believe come with NCLB? included: "I view No Child Left Behind purely as a mantra of high expectations. I believe in the concept that all kids can learn" (Source: Turner school principal); "The good thing about the program [NCLB] is that every kid has the right to go get a decent education, so they have a right to go to what they think is a good school" (Source: Malcolm school principal); and, "The pro is that in theory it offers an opportunity for all students to receive the kind of support and opportunity for a full and comprehensive education that otherwise would be absent from their lives" (Source: Mandela school principal).

Negative responses to this question were coded as "Cons" and included: "An unfortunate aspect in terms of the time on No Child Left Behind is that a lot of districts claim that they're not getting the funding that they need to actually make No Child Left Behind a reality" (Source: Turner school principal); "Ultimately it's [NCLB] not organized and it's not funded right. If those kids are going to come to another school,

there needs to be money in place to be able to help those kids” (Source: Malcolm school principal); and the Mandela school principal stated the following:

Some of the solutions in terms of penalties to schools that for some reason may not be able to sort of raise the bar of the students, I think some of those penalties probably are a little harsh and unreasonable and may not result in the improvements that the legislation [NCLB] was initially designed to provide. I don't think you should need to legislate improving education.

Neutral responses were coded as “Neutral” such as, “You can say all you want, you can change and not leave anybody behind, but all of us have to flow behind it to make it a reality as well” (Source: Turner school principal). The King school principal made the following statement:

It's only smart and strategic to do what is going to be important to make you a strong nation based on your educational programs that will allow the citizens to become productive in all phases, and in no matter what the culture is, so that you remain strong, you remain confident, and that will be something that will perpetuate from generation to generation, creating citizens who are academically sound, socially normative, and have pride in their country and what they have to do.

“Highly Qualified Teachers,” as coded in Figure 1, arose from the question, “What have you done to meet the NCLB requirement of having all of your subject area teachers ‘highly qualified’ at the end of this school year (2005-2006)?” A couple of the principals responded with verbiage that resulted in this coding. The Turner school principal stated the following:

New York City now has regulations that teachers have to be certified before they can actually come onboard, into the schools. And so in the past they gave you a certain amount of time before you actually had to complete your process of recertification. Now they're not even bringing in teachers unless you're certified.

The Douglas school principal responded similarly. He stated:

The New York City Department of Ed is kind of taking care of that in that everybody has to have a certain certification. So without a minimum certificate



Turner	Tubman	Douglas	King	Malcolm	Mandela
NCLB Pros Cons Neutral	NCLB Cons Solutions	Highly Qualified Teachers	NCLB Neutral Solutions	NCLB Pros Cons	NCLB Pros Cons Neutral
Highly Qualified Teachers	School Based Option	Scientifically Based Research	Better Methodology	Highly Qualified Teachers	School Based Option
Standards	Hiring Committee	Title 1 Funds	Changed Since NCLB	Scientifically Based Research	Hiring Procedure
Curriculum Freedom	Professional Development	Leadership Style	Shared Leadership	Curriculum Freedom	Scientifically Based Research
Autonomy	Standards	Shared Leadership	Introduce New Policies	Title 1 Funds	Standards
Leadership Style	Not Effected By NCLB	Introduce New Policies	Use of Assets	Introduce New Policies	Uniformity
Others View Leadership Style	Title 1 Funds	Mandate		Leadership Style	Shared Leadership
Shared Leadership	Leadership Style			Shared Leadership	Teacher Impact
Introduce New Policies	Introduce New Policies			Use of Assets	Leadership Style
Additional	Changed Since NCLB				Use of Assets
	Changed Use Of Assets				Principal Autonomy
	District Directives				Policy Makers
					School Autonomy

Figure 1. Open coding of interview transcripts.

of qualification you can't teach so there is nothing that the school has any particular say in.

“Standards,” as coded in Figure 1, arose from the question, “Prior to NCLB legislation, which educational practices based on scientifically based research did you apply in your school?” Three of the principals responded with language that resulted in this coding. “We do look at the state standards very closely, but we believe very much in allowing teachers to be creative in terms of how, and what, they need to do to help get students to those standards” (Source: Turner school principal). The Tubman school principal offered this information:

We obviously make sure that when we write our curricula that it is in line with state standards, that we are teaching those standards, the goals that they have outlined for us as per the state, and then obviously as per the city. We outline those specifically.

“The curriculum should be aligned in theory to what we practice with the New York City and state standards” (Source: Mandela school principal).

All but one principal received the coding of “Leadership Style” based on their responses to the question, “How would you describe your leadership style?”

“Management by walking around. I spend a lot of time out of this office, very rarely am I in the office” (Source: Turner school principal). “In my mind the principal’s job is one of a conductor. I have always felt that way and our job is to get everyone to places, to harmonize, to get that [music] going and to keep that tune as mellow as possible” (Source: Tubman school principal). “If I had to describe it [leadership style] though, I’m very laid back” (Source: Malcolm school principal).

On occasion principals would contribute information not specific to the question asked. In Figure 1 under Turner the code “Additional” is an example of this. The Turner

school principal stated: “I get more ideas, I think, from the people around me than I can generate on my own.” Another example of an off-topic coded response can be found in Figure 1 under Tubman. The code is “Budgeting.” The Tubman school principal stated that “based on the fact that we have x amount of numbers [students] generates the number of staff, generates the number [amount] of funds that come into the school and how we spend.”

The next step in the grounded theory process is axial coding. This is when the researcher takes findings that were identified during open coding and forms categories and subcategories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In Figure 2, categories and subcategories have been identified.

The researcher identified categories as coded concepts that encompass a broad array of topics and/or stand alone in their relationship to other coded concepts. Subcategories were identified as topics that fit into broader categories. Outliers were identified as open coded topics that do not fit any category directly.

In Figure 2, the categories identified that encompass a broad array of topics include NCLB that has the subcategories of Pros, Cons, Neutral, and Not Affected By NCLB. Autonomy has the subcategories of Curriculum Freedom, School Based Option, Principal Autonomy, and School Autonomy. Leadership Style has the subcategories of Others View Leadership Style, Shared Leadership, Introduce New Policies, Changed Since NCLB, and Changed Use Of Assets. Title 1 Funds has the subcategory of Use of Assets. The categories in Figure 2 that stand-alone include Highly Qualified Teachers, Standards, Professional Development, District Directives, Scientifically Based Research, Mandate, Better Methodology, Uniformity, Teacher Impact, and Policy Makers. Outliers

Turner	Tubman	Douglas	King	Malcolm	Mandela
NCLB	NCLB	Highly Qualified Teachers	NCLB	NCLB	NCLB
<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>		<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>
<u>Cons</u>	Solutions		Solutions	<u>Cons</u>	<u>Neutral</u>
<u>Neutral</u>					
Highly Qualified Teachers	School Based Option	Scientifically Based Research	Better Methodology	Highly Qualified Teachers	School Based Option
	Hiring Committee	Title 1 Funds	Changed Since NCLB	Scientifically Based Research	Hiring Procedure
Standards	Professional Development	Leadership Style	Shared Leadership		Scientifically Based Research
Curriculum Freedom	Standards	Shared Leadership	Introduce New Policies	Curriculum Freedom	Standards
Autonomy	Not Effected By NCLB	Introduce New Policies	Use of Assets	Title 1 Funds	Uniformity
Leadership Style	Title 1 Funds	Mandate		Introduce New Policies	
Others View Leadership Style	Budgeting			Leadership Style	Shared Leadership
Shared Leadership	Leadership Style			Shared Leadership	Teacher Impact
Introduce New Policies	Introduce New Policies			Use of Assets	Leadership Style
Additional	Changed Since NCLB				Use of Assets
	Changed Use Of Assets				Principal Autonomy
	District Directives				Policy Makers
					School Autonomy

Figure 2. Axial coding of open coded data:

Boxed items are categories.

Underlined items are subcategories.

in Figure 2 include Additional, Solutions, Hiring Committee, Budgeting, and Hiring Procedure.

The final step in the grounded theory process is selective coding. At this time concepts are formed into a core category, or categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In Table 4, core categories that have been identified are presented.

During selective coding, core categories that link directly to the research questions were formed (see Table 4). Research question one inquired specifically about distributed and transitional leadership behaviors and how those behaviors may have changed since the advent of NCLB. The Distributed core category includes attributes of shared leadership, and the Transitional core category includes attributes evident during times of transition.

Research question two specifically inquired about the pros and cons perceived attributed to NCLB legislation. The core category of NCLB includes all responses to aspects of the legislation while the core category Controls touches on stated constraints other than NCLB placed on school principals. Controls such as state mandates, local boards of education, and central office directives fall in this core category.

Research question three was linked to the principals' suggestions on how to meet high academic standards without the threats inherent with NCLB. The core category of Autonomy outlines suggestions such as curriculum freedom, principal and school autonomy. The core category of Instruction focuses on suggestions specific to classroom instruction.

Table 4

*Selective Coding of Axial Coded Data*

NCLB	Controls	Autonomy	Instruction	Distributed	Transitional
Pros, Cons Neutral	District Directives	Curriculum Freedom	Professional Development	Shared Leadership	Introduce New Policies
Highly Qualified Teachers	Mandates	Principal Autonomy	Better Methodology		Changed Since NCLB
Standards	Policy Makers	School Autonomy	Uniformity		Changed Use of Assets
Not Affected By NCLB			Teacher Impact		
Title 1 Funds					
Scientifically Based Research					

*Findings Regarding the Research Questions*

*Research Question 1.* Looking through the lens of distributed and transitional leadership styles, what specific types of changes in leadership behaviors are demonstrated by African American public high school principals in New York City as they seek to meet the mandates imbedded in No Child Left Behind legislation given the documented constraints that state and local school districts face?

In chapter 2, research on distributed leadership was analyzed resulting in a variety of definitions. One common theme in the definitions presented was the idea of shared leadership responsibilities. Elmore (2000) defined it, in part, as sharing authority in the educational setting. Goldstein (2003) proposed a dichotomy consisting of divided responsibility and shared responsibility between leaders to accomplish tasks.

The concept of shared leadership responsibilities was evident from the principals interviewed.

In fact I've had five [assistant principals] that have wanted to become principals, and I think a lot in part because I share everything. We have family cabinet meetings. We talk about everything-what's happening, what's coming up, what went down yesterday, how do we handle this, how do we handle that, what do we need to do here better? (Source: Turner school principal).

If you want people to really feel that they are part of the school they have to be involved in it. If there is something that has to be done I am going to consult with my administrative team and we will decide who is going to do what part of it (Source: Douglas school principal).

The King school principal said, "We get together and we brainstorm over differing strategies to become better administrators; we share that. We share the pain of being a principal in New York City, which has so many things working against you." The Malcolm school principal said, "I let them [department chairs] make decisions about issues that go on in school." In line with Goldstein's definition:

I'll kind of divvy it up because at the remarkable schools the principal can walk out of the door and nobody even notices. They just keep going. If the system is in place, people know what they're supposed to do. You can walk in, you can walk out, and it doesn't miss a beat (Source: Turner school principal).

Transitional leadership occurs when an organization is shifting away from an old policy, or policies, to new ones. Goldring et al. (2003) stated that during times of transition the use of assets (primarily money) is altered. The principals in this study made changes to address new policies.

If you're not going to be a policy changer as the culture changes, then you will never be able to keep up with the changing breed of students and the challenges that they're going to face because of those changes (Source: King school principal).

Regarding the changing use of assets during a policy (NCLB) shift, the King school principal stated, "You've got to be prepared to have money to compensate for the

deficiencies and have a strong enrichment that's going to run after school and on the weekend, or else you're fooling yourself."

With those limited [tax levy] dollars we need to provide strong instruction and the necessary instructional staff to support the academic core. So that would put us and it does and it has put us at a really very precarious position in terms of spending our dollars effectively (Source: Mandela school principal).

The principals interviewed did not report a difference in their distributed or transitional leadership behaviors from before NCLB to the present. In fact, the Tubman school principal said, "I'm not really totally affected by No Child Left behind right now." Although their overall leadership behaviors may not have changed there was some evidence of NCLB impact. The King school principal said, "Yes, my methodology has changed because of No Child Left Behind because now we are taking students that we don't screen." Previously, students for this school had to be accepted through a rigorous selection process. Now students from local failing schools can request a transfer to this school, and the school must take them if space is available.

We are oftentimes given students that we do not screen and we have to prepare to see students of different personalities and backgrounds that we may not be privy to and we have to make adjustments on how we deal with them as far as their instructional modality. So we have to cover all areas. So our methodology has been one that has been more widespread, predicting the students that we may encounter because of NCLB (Source: King school principal).

In chapter 1, Statement of the Problem, Hardy (2004) stated that Title 1 funding for NCLB is billions of dollars less than what is needed to comply. In this research, inquiries were made concerning the mandates set forth by policy makers, Title 1 funds, and issues involving NCLB. The Douglas school principal reported that he implements mandates "with a degree of difficulty and pain." Here is one example why:

We had worked for 3 years prior with defining, perfecting our block schedule so that it exactly met the needs of the school and the students and we had to



completely abandon it because this is a mandate from downtown. Now they want continuity of instruction, so we had no choice. So that was not easy (Source: Douglas school principal).

A former district level administrator herself, the Tubman school principal said, “Whatever they [policy makers] say, I’ve got to do, it’s a part of the job, and I try my best not to be a problem.” Regarding policy makers, the principal of the Mandela school made the following statement:

They have people that may not necessarily have a full knowledge of what the high schools or the elementary schools or the junior high schools are like, yet they are establishing policies at almost every level that ultimately trickle down to us, and then we have to implement those policies [while] making modifications to meet the needs of our various schools and the populations, or the population, that they serve.

One example of the modifications principals need to make can be found in the manner in which the Malcolm school principal uses Title 1 money.

I really do whatever I wanted with that money. You know they [central office] ask me to write things up and you put down what you really do, but eventually you give it to where I think it needs to go. So, you know they want a certain percentage to go here and there and we write that up that way; but the reality, it goes where we think we need it (Source: Malcolm school principal).

The Douglas school principal echoed this in the following remarks:

Basically almost the entire school is Title 1 so we co-mingle the funds. That means we just take the money that we get from Title 1 and just mix it in with the school budget and just help run the school.

The principals’ remarks concerning the lack of funding for NCLB support the findings by Hardy (2004). The Turner school principal stated, “A lot of districts claim that they’re not getting the kind of funding that they need to actually make No Child Left Behind a reality.”

Ultimately, it’s not organized and it’s not funded right. If those kids are going to come to another school, there needs to be money in place to be able to help those

kids. Just want to send them to the school and hope they do well, not going to work (Source: Malcolm school principal).

The Mandela school principal sums up the voices of discord with the following statement:

Some of the solutions in terms of penalties to schools that for some reason may not be able to sort of raise the bar of the students, I think some of those penalties are a little harsh and unreasonable and may not result in the improvements that the legislation was initially designed to provide.

*Research Question 2.* What positive and negative impacts do African American high school principals in New York City perceive as resulting from NCLB legislation?

The principals interviewed had a favorable impression of the concept of NCLB. The Malcolm school principal stated, “The good thing about the program [NCLB] is that every kid has a right to go get a decent education, so they have a right to go to what they think is a good school.” Regarding the NCLB focus on subgroups:

You can see how they do with special ed kids, you can see how they did with African American kids, you can see how they do with poor students, and it’s a better judge of what kind of school you have (Source: Malcolm school principal).

“The pro is that in theory it [NCLB] offers an opportunity for all students to receive the kind of support and opportunity for a full and comprehensive education that otherwise would be absent from their lives” (Source: Mandela school principal).

The principals made comments that were neutral regarding NCLB, but they were points deserving consideration. Regarding the need to involve all stakeholders in policy decisions, the Turner principal stated, “You can say all you want, you can change and not have anybody behind, but all of us have to flow behind it to make that a reality as well.” He was most concerned with the requirement of having all teachers meet NCLB requirements for being highly qualified. He stated:

What we are most impacted by is how prepared are they, really, for the kids? So you could have all the degrees in the world and all this appreciation, but if you're not prepared to deal with these young people when they come in there, we still have a problem (Source: Turner school principal).

The Malcolm principal expressed similar concerns about teacher qualifications. He believes that, "If someone has a college degree and they're able to talk to the kids, relate to them, have a strong presence, they can learn any content." He further stated:

The guidelines they use for qualifications of teachers is not the guidelines that I use. Having a teacher take a certain number of courses is not the primary thing that I use to determine whether somebody is a good teacher or not (Source: Malcolm school principal).

The principals felt that they were striving to meet city and state standards before the advent of NCLB, and NCLB did not change their pursuit of high standards. The Tubman school principal stated, "At the beginning of the year, we go over the standards and every lesson should be standard-based." She additionally stated the following:

We obviously make sure that when we write our curricula that it is in line with the state standards, the goals that they have outlined for us as per the state, and then obviously as per the city. We outline those specifically (Source: Tubman school principal).

The Mandela school principal voiced the same city and state standard focus:

The curriculum should be aligned in theory to what we practice with in New York City and the state standards. So most of that is kind of pre-packaged and provided to the various schools so that there is a uniformity throughout the system (Source: Mandela school principal).

None of the principals interviewed actively sought scientifically based, research-proven curriculum as per NCLB. One principal reported being data-driven and adjusting his school's methods based on their own students' academic performance. The Douglas school principal stated, "We are always looking to try to improve and to build on things

that have worked and to explore new ideas. But I wouldn't say we have actively sought research-based curriculum.”

*Research Question 3.* Based on negative perceptions African American high school principals in New York City may report regarding NCLB, how do they suggest meeting high academic standards?

A theme that emerged from this research was the expressed belief that, if left to their methods, schools, principals, and teachers would perform better. This is contrary to the higher accountability and increased constraints that educators now face. The Turner school principal said, “We believe very much in allowing teachers to be creative in terms of how, and what, they need to do to help get students to those standards.” The New York City Board of Education has recognized the fact that many educators believe in the need for independence to achieve greater success; therefore, schools have been allowed to apply for what is called the Autonomy Zone.

They're given the opportunity to essentially say we've got some benchmarks everyone should hit by the end of the year and by the end of four years. How you get there is strictly up to you. You can use whatever curriculum you want, make whatever decisions you want (Source: Turner school principal).

The Mandela school principal mentioned that he would be applying for this designation.

As reported previously, principals admitted to using curriculums handed down to them from the city or state in an effort to provide uniformity. However, a reported theme was that the pre-packaged curriculums were not the keys to meeting high standards. A belief was expressed that the keys to success depended on those delivering the instruction, the teachers. “It [academic achievement] probably comes down to, more importantly, the teacher and how they present that subject matter to the young people”

(Source: Mandela school principal). At the Tubman school, the principal reported a heavy focus on in-house professional development.

I do not have all the answers. So what I try to do is to let my staff know-that a lot of our resources are right in this room, and you can tap them and I allow my teachers to be able to be involved in doing presentations (Source: Tubman school principal).

According to the Tubman school principal, all educators in her building are invited to teach professional development activities to their colleagues. The King school principal reported taking an all-inclusive approach to improving instruction.

We also have our own set-up that we do that is a little bit more on the grassroots level based on community, where they live, the culture that they come from and the ethnicity component that we factor in makes it actually much more effective (Source: King school principal).

The school choice component of NCLB elicited negative responses from the principals. A few of them offered suggestions for better approaches.

It would be nicer if we can do a different type of a student selection, but the system is so big, it's very hard to do it. I think if we can be obviously in favor of the youngsters and at the same time be more specific when we sit down and have conversations about "Do you want to be here?" then it probably would work (Source: Tubman school principal).

A lot of times kids have the option to go to schools where they really have no interest in, as opposed to really matching them with a school that is tailored to whatever their particular disability may be (Source: Douglas school principal).

The King school principal suggested that a uniform curriculum that accounts for culturally diverse backgrounds needs to be in place citywide in order for the NCLB school choice provision to be effective. He believes that students who leave failing schools may find themselves ill-prepared for schools that require high competency levels for admittance.

Singular ideas were expressed by a couple of principals regarding how they felt they could best meet high academic achievement standards. The Malcolm school principal was at odds with the highly qualified teacher requirement of NCLB. He believes he can cultivate highly competent teachers who are not yet certified via in-house training, and stated the following:

I like to be able to take people into work that didn't really have education courses, because we'll work with them. And if they don't work out they go someplace else. But a lot of them turn out to be great teachers.

The King school principal does not believe the Federal Government has done enough, even with NCLB, to close the gaps that exist between minority, inner-city, students and suburban students. This section is concluded with the following statement:

I feel that the United States needs to do more in having programs in place with minority students to be successful as everybody else. They have failed. They have fallen short in having real educational programs in place in areas like Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Lower Manhattan, and Queens-I guess all the boroughs- so that they can compete with the students in the suburbs, who have financial bases in their schools in the millions. You know our financial base is in the thousands. I mean with that kind of inequity, there is no way that you're going to have a minority-a pool of students that are going to be ready for the job market and as the minorities increase in this country, the workforce is going to be filled with minorities that are going to be incompetent and not able to deal with places like NASA, the Federal Government, the medical field, the law schools, engineering, where technology is key now. (Source: King school principal).

### *Impact of Context*

The Turner school is a small new school with less than 200 students. New public schools in New York City receive additional start-up money for their first 4 years in the amount of \$100,000 per year. As a pioneer member school of New York City's new Autonomy Zone school district, the principal is free from close central office supervision.

The Turner school principal is regarded as a renowned success for the school he previously led for several years.

The Turner school principal admitted to being unaware of much of the requirements of NCLB. In addition, he expressed no concern for whether or not he was in compliance with NCLB requirements. His recognized success in his previous school, the fact that report card data is not yet available on his present school, and the autonomy granted him may contribute to his cavalier responses to NCLB inquiries. The start-up funding his school is guaranteed for the next couple of years may account for his seeming lack of concern over losing Title 1 funding at present.

The Turner school principal stated that he tries to find “good” people to help carry out his vision. In doing so, he has surrounded himself with people whom he feels comfortable with sharing responsibility. His expressed behaviors are strong evidence of distributed leadership. In fact, he stated that he has had a couple of assistant principals get “quite exhausted” by the amount of responsibility he shares with them. It was not possible to ascertain how he leads during times of transition from old policies to new policies (e.g., NCLB) due to his stated ambivalence toward the new policy in question.

Prior to her 4 years as a high school principal, the Tubman school principal was a central office administrator. The professions taught in her school relate directly to legal matters and public service. These facts may contribute to her close adherence to city and state requirements. The Tubman school principal stated that she has a photographic memory when it comes to remembering the details written in policies. She applies differentiated instruction when teaching her staff about the requirements of a new policy. She reported giving new policy information in writing and verbally as needed. The

Tubman school principal reviews state and city standards with her staff annually and requires all lessons to be in line with those standards.

On more than one occasion, the Tubman school principal spoke of empowering her staff to work independently. She views herself as a musical and locomotive conductor. She believes that she is someone who may not be able to play the instruments, or build the cars to a train, but she can orchestrate a fluid delivery of information. She accepts that she is not expert in every area, but with her coordination, student academic success could be achieved. One description of distributed leadership is individuals working together toward a common goal. This is evident in her stated leadership behaviors.

The Tubman school principal's recent experience working with policy implementation at the district level contributes to her stated democratic approach to introducing new policies. She indicated that she garners the opinions of key staff members prior to introducing school-based policies. She does this in an attempt to be sensitive to the concerns that others may hold with relation to current modes of operating. This caring leadership behavior is necessary for the successful transition from old policies to new policies.

The Douglas school principal experienced much success as measured by graduation rates and regents results in starting and leading his school for 4 years. In that short period, four principals and six assistant principals were groomed from his teaching staff. In addition to his school's success, a second school was opened modeled after his. With this level of success on his resume, it is no wonder that he responds to mandates



“with a degree of difficulty and pain.” To his credit he has been able to adhere to the mandates and remain successful.

Similar to the Turner school principal, the Douglas school principal reported many distributed leadership behaviors. Both principals can boast of having produced more than a few principals from their tutelage. They both attribute this to their sharing of tasks with assistants to accomplish common goals. Unlike the Turner school principal, the Douglas school principal reported having to rearrange his resources (teachers and schedules) in response to central office directives. He also recognized the loss inherent in transitioning from old policies to new policies [“With a degree of difficulty and pain”].

The King school principal was a renowned teacher and tutor prior to assisting in the development of one large successful city high school and now is leading his own extraordinarily successful new small high school. The King school principal created a teaching methodology that proved successful at teaching high school level science and math to elementary school students. Most of his school’s present teachers were his former students, and approximately 8,000 students have applied for admittance to his school, although only 75 spaces are available.

The King school principal repeatedly expressed the need for appropriate funding to go along with NCLB. A former tutor himself, he believes strongly in after-school and weekend tutoring. Having succeeded dramatically with his teaching methodologies, he supports the NCLB tenet that all students can achieve at high levels; however, the money must accompany the legislation.

At this point, all of the principals have reported that they demonstrate distributed leadership behaviors. The expressed behaviors of the Turner, Douglas, and now King

school principals were evident through the many decisions they made. The King school principal reported having a philosophy that speaks to the ever-changing educational environment. The King school principal has adopted a constant-state-of-transition approach to meeting ever evolving student needs. He spoke clearly of his creative use of teachers and funding to meet NCLB requirements. The King school principal demonstrated detailed transitional leadership behaviors.

A rarity in the New York City public school system is the Malcolm school principal. He has been principal of the same school for 7 years. He has been in position long enough to force out poor teachers and to groom new teachers in alignment with his philosophies.

With long-standing tenure in his present position, the Malcolm school principal does not hesitate to adjust policies to fit his school's needs. He reported that he uses Title I funding any way he sees fit, and he administers new policies with autocratic leadership. The Malcolm school principal reported being influential with board of education members, and this may contribute to his lack of concern for how supervisors may evaluate him.

The Malcolm school principal reported that he is primarily an authoritative and autocratic leader. On occasion, he allows department chairpersons to make decisions, but beyond the department level all decisions are his. His long standing in this school may contribute to his lack of distributive leadership behaviors. His creative use of budgeted funds, and angst toward the centralized teacher hiring process, are hints to his need for greater control and autonomy. Unlike the Turner school, the Malcolm school is not in the

Autonomy Zone; however, like the Mandela school, applying for the Autonomy Zone may fit the Malcolm principal's leadership style best.

Another rarity in the New York City public schools is the Mandela school principal. In his seventh year as principal of the same school, he ranks among the most influential of the city's educational leaders. Recognized for having changed a failing school into a successful specialized school, he has galvanized the new schools movement in New York City.

Presently, the Mandela school principal's school is one of the few that hire teachers through what is called the School Based Option (SBO). Teachers agree to allow the school's faculty to choose from a list of qualified applicants in opposition to contractual seniority requirements. This principal reported SBO and shared leadership responsibilities, but he made it clear that the final word on decisions rests with him. The Mandela school is a specialized performing arts school. Therefore, students cannot simply transfer in from another regional school that is failing. Although not pressed by hiring and student transfer concerns, the Mandela school principal has admitted to feeling pressured by curriculum demands; therefore, he will apply to become a member of the Autonomy Zone school district.

Both the Malcolm and Mandela principals have been serving in their respective buildings for a long period of time in relation to other high school principals. Each principal reported granting only marginal decision-making responsibility to other staff in their buildings, therefore, not displaying significant distributive leadership behaviors. Due to the specialized nature of the Mandela school and SBO, the staffing constraints felt by the Malcolm school principal do not apply to the Mandela school principal. Both of

their leadership styles lend to a need for greater autonomy. The Mandela school principal exposed an autocratic leadership style during times of transition due to budgeting constraints.

### *Summary*

After applying the grounded theory process to analyze the transcripts of the interviews with the six principals who volunteered for this research, six core categories became evident from the common themes found: NCLB, Autonomy, Distributed, Transitional, Instruction, and Controls. Each core area had distinct category and subcategory themes.

NCLB was formed from elements arising from the mandate such as, highly qualified teachers, standards, Title 1 funds, and scientifically based research. Autonomy was the common thread running through curricular freedom, principal independence, and school independence. The distributed core category refers to distributed leadership, and shared leadership was a category that was most prevalent during the coding process. Transition relates to change and the introduction of new ways of doing things; therefore, changes since the enactment of NCLB and changes in the use of assets round out this core category. Instruction revolves around curriculum uniformity, professional development, methodology, and teacher impact. Policy makers, mandates, and district directives are all forms of controls placed on principals. The controls core category is the direct opposite of the autonomy core category.

The research question led to some clear findings. Distributed leadership behaviors were evident with the principals interviewed. In addition, the principals also

took liberties to address new policies. Their approaches proved to be both transitional and distributed. The principals reported that their leadership behaviors have not changed due to NCLB. Although leadership behaviors were not reported to have changed, NCLB was reported to have impacted the principals in similar ways.

The principals reported being compliant to mandates, but not enamored of them. There was also evidence that principals believed policymakers were out of touch with what schools really needed. The principals reported being creative in their use of Title 1 funds to best meet their students' needs. There was also an overwhelming belief that NCLB is an under-funded mandate.

Additional findings came from the core categories of NCLB, autonomy, and instruction. There was a consensus that the concept behind NCLB was a noble one. None of the principals found fault with being held to high standards, accountability, and a focus on all groups, and subgroups, of children. Unexpectedly, creative freedom for teachers, and independence for principals and their schools was a recurrent theme. In fact, the New York City Board of Education has been responsive to this cry for independence by creating an Autonomy Zone for principals to apply for considerably diminished oversight from central administration. Finally, principals reported that teachers, not curriculum, were the key determinant of student achievement.

The following chapter will include a summary of this entire study. In-depth conclusions will be drawn stemming from this research. Recommendations for further study will be made to assist in expanding our knowledge base.

## Chapter V

### Summary, Conclusions, Recommendations for Further Study

#### *Summary*

The National Education Association claimed that it would cost \$44.37 billion to fully fund NCLB for 2005, but only \$19.61 billion was budgeted (Fratt, 2005). School administrators are being held accountable for reaching higher standards for what appears to be an unfunded mandate. States accepting federal funds (Title 1) are required to assess how school districts are progressing toward NCLB goals. States and school districts risk losing Title 1 funds if their schools are not making adequate yearly progress as determined by the state. The Center on Education Policy (2004) reported that the New York City public schools would be receiving \$83 million in Title 1 funding during the 2004 - 2005 school year. This places the New York City public schools first in federal funding received nationwide.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (1996), 50.4 % of African American principals work in urban school districts. Jones (2002) reported that African American principals have crucial roles to helping schools attain their academic goals in ethnically diverse urban schools. Additionally, African American principals helped to ensure that European American teachers were culturally sensitive to children from diverse racial backgrounds (Jones, 2002). This study seeks to address how, under NCLB requirements, the leadership behaviors of African American principals in New

York City contribute to their abilities to overcome fiscal constraints while addressing the mandates.

Many studies have been conducted in recent years on the impact of principals' leadership styles on various aspects of school organizations (Amoroso, 2002; Connors, 2003; Dono-Koulouris, 2003; Evans, 1996; Garrett-Booker, 2003). Research on five leadership theories was reviewed in chapter 2. The most heavily studied leadership theories during the past 20 years were transformational, transactional, and passive-avoidant. This was due in part to the study of these theories using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire developed by Bernard M. Bass. Distributed and transitional leadership theories are the most recent in the education field and are only recently becoming heavily evident in education research. Furthermore, very few studies focus on African American leaders specifically.

The Distributed Leadership Study (Spillane et al., 2000) suggested three aspects of distributed leadership. Collaborated distribution suggests that leaders work synergistically together toward a common goal. Collective distribution suggests that at least two leaders are working independently but are dependent on each other to accomplish a goal. Coordinated distribution suggests particular sequential completion of leadership assignments to obtain an overall goal. The Distributed Leadership study also focuses on the micro and macro leadership tasks that impact changes in teaching (Spillane et al., 2001).

Goldring et al. (2003) suggested that during transition, balance must be maintained; organizational demography has new definitions. The use of assets are altered, and guidance is given in the form of standards and accountability. Sarason and

Lorentz (1998) described the time of transition as an unorganized mess. These descriptions of distributed leadership and transition were used as a guide to formulate questions for this study.

Principals who are United States citizens of African descent employed in New York City public high schools were the focus of this study. Each principal had to have at least 4 years of experience as a New York City public high school principal in order to ascertain changes in their leadership behaviors from before NCLB legislation to the present. Subjects for this study were identified with the assistance of regional chairs and assistant chairs for the Council of School Supervisors and Administrators. This is the bargaining unit for New York City's public school administrators. Of the 17 principals identified, eight responded, one withdrew, one did not meet the requirements for this study, and the remaining six were interviewed.

### *Conclusions*

Overall, it is this researcher's conclusion that the principals in this study were not concerned about losing Title 1 funding owing to their adherence to NCLB requirements. The centralized nature of the nation's largest school district apparently placed the responsibility for adherence at a distance. The NCLB requirements of having teachers and paraeducators highly qualified by the conclusion of this school year (2005 – 2006) are handled by central administration. When vacancies arise at a school, central administration is notified, and a list of certified candidates is available to fill vacancies. Any errors in certification would be the responsibility of central administration.



This researcher observed no active pursuit of scientifically based research curriculums on the part of any of the principals in this study. Once again, this NCLB requirement appears to fall in the corner of central administration. All of the principals interviewed stated that they simply follow the curriculum provided to them by the city or the state.

The same pattern of central control taking the responsibility of NCLB adherence out of the hands of principals is apparent in the allocation of Title 1 funds as well. This researcher believes that because funds are distributed on per pupil allotment from central administration, the principals interviewed assume that what they do in the confines of their schools will not effect their schools fiscally.

District or state directives, more so than NCLB requirements, have been found to change the organizational structure within some schools. One principal stated that he had to drop block scheduling due to the district's desire to have uniformity of instruction across the district. Another principal stated that he had to cut back on key programs due to the state requirement of having all low performing students (scoring at levels 1 & 2 of 4) receive double periods of math and English instruction.

The lack of concern for NCLB penalties did not equal a lack of understanding of the legislation by these principals. All of the principals interviewed voiced approval of the concepts behind NCLB, but they also expressed concern about the lack of funding and general disorganization by the Federal government concerning NCLB. These expressed concerns confirm the messiness and disorder evident during the transition to new policies reported by Sarason and Lorentz (1998).

All of the principals interviewed reported routinely sharing and dividing tasks with other administrators to accomplish common goals. These distributed leadership approaches match with the collaborated distribution approach and collective distribution approach defined in *The Distributed Leadership Study* (Spillane et al., 2000). The principals interviewed did not report being dependent on others completing their tasks, or vice versa, in order to meet their common goals. Therefore, the coordinated distribution approach as defined in chapter 2 was not evident. Important to understanding distributed leadership behaviors is the understanding that shared responsibilities and tasks are not simply delegated assignments. To qualify as distributed behaviors, the shared responsibilities need to be a segment of what is necessary to complete common goals.

The principals reported using their distributed leadership methods when transitioning to new policies. Here the researcher observed a merging of distributed leadership behaviors with transitional leadership behaviors. Only one principal did not take into account that leaving old policies behind and introducing new ones needed to be handled like a loss (Goldring et al., 2003). This one principal admitted to not involving all stakeholders in the decision process while transitioning to new policies. According to Fullan (2001), this principal is missing an important aspect of successful change. This researcher believes that when pressed, this principal will exhibit behaviors more in line with the others, but that can only be proven through further research.

The principals in this study differed with regard to having to change the manner in which they allocate assets within their schools during a transition period. One of them reported that they would state one rationale to central administration while actually using their allotted money for purposes they felt were more appropriate. In this researcher's

opinion, this practice of circumventing authority is the direct result of not including all stakeholders in the policy making process on the part of elected officials. Three of the principals reported no change in how they use their money due to policy changes.

Central administration takes on most of the responsibilities for adhering to NCLB requirements. This researcher believes that this is the main reason why principals did not report a change in their leadership behaviors due to NCLB. Furthermore, only one principal reported changing a methodology due to NCLB. He now has to anticipate receiving students with special needs, and he readies his fiscal resources appropriately to prepare for this. In this researcher's opinion, this is a change in management function, as opposed to a leadership behavior change.

Additional findings of this study, as described in chapter 4, include a desire for greater autonomy by teachers and principals, and a focus on quality of instruction as the key to achieving higher academic standards. The Johnson (2002) study also found a desire for more autonomy on the part of school administrators. As a result of this researcher's inquiries regarding scientifically based research, two of the principals mentioned the need for teachers to have the freedom to choose what they believe would work for their students. In other words, they did not accept being limited to a list of scientifically based research curriculums. Principals also reported a degree of discomfort at being given mandates without their input, and one of them expressed a desire to apply for the city's new Autonomy Zone. This researcher believes that this zone gives city educators the freedom to prove that their approaches work. Two of the principals echoed the belief that the quality of instruction is more important than the actual curriculum

being used. This researcher believes that there is a feeling of misdirection toward content when the focus should be on delivery.

What are the implications of these findings for understanding leadership behaviors? There are some important implications this study suggests. When policies are externally developed, and mediating behaviors to address the policies occur at higher levels within an organization, more micro distributed leadership behaviors occur at lower levels within an organization. Furthermore, not involving all stakeholders in the development of policies that impact them by federal, state, and local governing bodies motivates a call for more autonomy by those impacted.

#### *Recommendations for Further Study*

The findings from this study indicate that there is disconnect between the New York City public schools and central administration regarding adherence to NCLB requirements. In a school district with over 1,000 schools, with central administration taking on federal mandates, principals can feel isolated from the mandates. This sense of isolation contributes to the consistency of their leadership behaviors despite NCLB. That being stated, I recommend the following areas for further study:

1. Replicate this study in suburban or rural areas where the connection between central administration and individual schools is much closer.
2. Replicate this study in New York City using elementary and/or intermediate schools where the emphases on statewide testing results (Grades 3–8) are much higher.
3. Change the delimitations of this study to include only female principals, and/or

change the methodology to include a comparison of the findings separated by gender.

4. Exclude race as a factor in the delimitations and increase the number of subjects interviewed in the methodology, including the addition of focus groups.
5. Change the delimitations to only include first-year administrators who may be more sensitive to central administration directives, and focus on the impact of distributed and transitional leadership behaviors instead of changes.
6. Delimit this study to district level administrators without regard to race. They are directly responsible for adhering to NCLB requirements and may have changed their leadership behaviors significantly.
7. Conduct a study comparing the academic achievement of schools in New York City's Autonomy Zone to public schools in the city with similar demographics not in the Autonomy Zone.
8. Replicate this study in other major city school districts (e.g., Los Angeles, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, etc.) to investigate whether the disconnect between central administration and the schools is a common pattern.

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Appendix A  
Interview Protocol

## Interview Protocol

*No Child Left Behind (NCLB)*

1. What pros and cons do you believe come with NCLB?
2. What have you done to meet the NCLB requirement of having all of your subject area teachers “highly qualified” at the end of this school year (2005-2006)?
3. What have you done to meet the NCLB requirement of having paraeducators meet minimum qualification standards?
4. Prior to NCLB legislation which educational practices based on scientifically based research (SBR) did you apply in your school?
5. Which procedures do you use to select SBR to apply in your school?
6. Which educational practices that are based on SBR are applied in your school?
7. Prior to NCLB legislation, how did you acquire the resources needed to replicate educational practices based on SBR?
8. How have the methods you used to acquire resources needed to replicate SBR changed since the advent of NCLB?
9. Prior to NCLB legislation, how did you use Title 1 (federal) money?
10. How has your use of Title 1 money changed since the advent of NCLB?
11. How, if at all, has the organizational structure of your school changed due to NCLB legislation?



*Distributed Leadership*

1. What responsibilities do you routinely share with other administrators?

How, if at all, has this changed since the advent of NCLB?

2. How, if at all, do you divide responsibilities for a task with other administrators? How, if at all, has this changed since the advent of NCLB?

3. How do you work with other administrators to achieve common goals? How, if at all, has this changed since the advent of NCLB?

4. In what ways, if at all, do you depend on other administrators to complete their tasks in order for you to complete your tasks? How, if at all, has this changed since the advent of NCLB?

5. How, if at all, are other administrators dependent on you completing specific tasks before they can move on to accomplish a school or district goal? How, if at all, has this changed since the advent of NCLB?

*Transitional Leadership*

1. How do you introduce new policies in your school? How, if at all, has this changed since the advent of NCLB?

2. How do you use assets when changing to a new policy? How, if at all, has this changed since the advent of NCLB?

3. How do you determine the course of actions needed when implementing new policies? How, if at all, has this changed since the advent of NCLB?

*Perceptions of Leadership*

1. How would you describe your leadership style?
2. How would other administrators perceive your leadership style?

Appendix B  
Recruitment Letter

## Recruitment Letter

Dear Principal:

I am a doctoral student in the Department of Education Leadership, Management and Policy at Seton Hall University. I am asking for your participation in research that examines the leadership styles of African American principals in New York City while addressing the requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

Six principals are being asked to volunteer to participate in two one-on-one interviews. Interview questions will be related to individual leadership styles while meeting NCLB requirements. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed for data analysis.

Interviews should take approximately sixty minutes each. Participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide not to participate, that fact will not be divulged to anyone. Audiotapes and transcribed data will be held in confidence and placed in a safe by the researcher.

Results are for research purposes, and only a summary of results will be published. The researcher and his dissertation committee are the only people who will have access to the data. The data will be analyzed using qualitative methods.

There are no risks or personal benefits to the volunteers associated with this research. If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at the phone number provided.

Thank you, in advance, for your participation.

Sincerely,

Jonathan T. Jefferson

Department of Education Leadership, Management, and Policy

Seton Hall University

Appendix C  
Informed Consent Form

## Informed Consent Form

### Researcher's Affiliation

The researcher is a doctoral student in the Department of Education Leadership, Management and Policy at Seton Hall University.

### Purpose and Duration

This research will examine the leadership styles of African American principals in New York City while addressing the requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Participation in this research will require approximately two hours.

### Procedures

This research will consist of answering questions during two interviews, each lasting approximately one hour.

### Instrument

Open-ended interview questions will focus on three areas as follows: NCLB, distributed leadership, and transitional leadership. A sample of questions to be asked includes the following: "Prior to NCLB legislation, how did you use Title 1 money?" "Do you routinely share responsibilities with other administrators?" "How do you introduce new policies in your school?"

### Voluntary

Participation in this study is voluntary. Participants may opt out before, and during, interviews. If an individual decides not to participate, that fact will not be divulged to anyone.

### Anonymity

Each participant will be identified with a code. Only their codes, not their names, will be placed on transcripts and recordings of interviews.

### Confidentiality

Recordings and transcripts will be kept in a locked safe at the researcher's place of residence. The data will remain in the locked safe for a period of no less than three years after the study is completed before being destroyed.

### Research Records

Only the researcher and his dissertation committee will have access to the research data.

### Risks

There are no risks associated with this research.

### Benefits

There are no personal benefits to the volunteer associated with this research. The results of this study may help educational leaders working in diversified urban public schools to choose proven approaches to meet NCLB mandates and avoid unsuccessful methodology. This study may also provide insight into ways educational leaders can efficiently manage limited resources. Weaknesses that may be inherent in NCLB legislation might be revealed through this research.

### Compensation

No compensation is offered with this research.

### Alternative Procedures

Alternative procedures do not apply with this research.

### Contact Information

The following should be contacted for answers to pertinent questions about this research:

Jonathan T. Jefferson, Researcher (973) 275-2728

Elaine Walker, Ph.D., Faculty Advisor (973) 275-2307

Department of Education Leadership, Management, and Policy

Seton Hall University

400 South Orange Avenue  
South Orange, NJ 07079-2685

Mary F. Ruzicka, Ph.D., IRB Director (973) 275-2723  
Office of the Institutional Review Board  
Presidents Hall – 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Seton Hall University  
400 South Orange Avenue  
South Orange, NJ 07079

Participants may view a copy the researcher's dissertation upon completion. The dissertation will be available in the Walsh Library at the Seton Hall University main campus. The researcher will mail a copy of the dissertation abstract to each participant upon completion.

#### Audio-tapes

Participants who sign this Informed Consent Form are giving permission for their interview sessions to be audiotaped. Participants have the right to review all or any portion of the audiotapes of their interview sessions and may request that the audiotapes be destroyed. Upon completion of this research, the audiotapes will be stored in a safe at the researcher's place of residence of which only the researcher has access. The audiotapes will remain in this safe for a period of no less than three years after this study is completed before being destroyed.

#### Informed Consent Form

Participants will receive a signed and dated copy of the Informed Consent Form.

\_\_\_\_\_

Participant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date