A Study Of Principals' Leadership Behaviors And Practices In New Jersey Charter Schools

Estee Mailot

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarship.shu.edu/dissertations

Part of the Educational Administration and Supervision Commons

Recommended Citation
http://scholarship.shu.edu/dissertations/139
A STUDY OF PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS AND PRACTICES IN NEW JERSEY CHARTER SCHOOLS

BY

ESTEE MAILOT

Dissertation Committee

Charles Achilles Ed. D., Advisor
Anthony Colella Ph. D., Reader
Nancy Gerry Ed. D., Committee Member
John Holloway Ed. D., Committee Member

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

2005
ABSTRACT

A Study of Principals' Leadership Behaviors and Practices in New Jersey Charter Schools

Few studies have been done specifically with charter school leadership and the congruence between the leadership behaviors and practices of the principal and the body of literature concerning effective leadership. This study focused on the connection between the research on behaviors and practices of effective principals and how charter school principals behave and practice at their jobs.

The researcher used a descriptive, qualitative design to explore if the behaviors and practices of the charter school principals aligned with the emerging research on effective education leadership practices and behaviors. Information gathered for this study came from archival data furnished by the New Jersey Department of Education, 10 tape-recorded interviews conducted with voluntary participants, a literature review of charter schools and effective leadership, and informal on-site observations conducted by the researcher.

Through a content analysis, the findings of this study revealed that the voluntary principals exhibited behaviors and practices that are congruent with the research and literature on effective leadership.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Dr. Charles Achilles, thank you for your guidance, patience and sense of humor throughout this endeavor. I am proud to call you my mentor.

To Dr. Anthony Colella, thank you for your kind advice, support and easy going manner throughout this journey.

To Dr. Nancy Gerry, thank you for your encouraging words, support, and serving as a committee member.

To Dr. John Holloway, thank you for your expedient turnaround time, your positive comments, and serving as a committee member.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES ........................................................................................................ viii
LIST OF FIGURES .................................................................................................... x

I  INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................. 1
   Statement of the Problem .................................................................................... 7
   Statement of the Purpose .................................................................................... 7
   Theoretical Framework ......................................................................................... 8
   Research Questions .............................................................................................. 12
   Delimitations of the Study .................................................................................. 12
   Limitations of the Study ...................................................................................... 13
   Significance of the Study ...................................................................................... 13
   Definition of Terms .............................................................................................. 14
   Organization of the Study ..................................................................................... 15

II  LITERATURE REVIEW ....................................................................................... 16
   Charter School Movement ................................................................................... 16
   New Jersey Charter School Movement ............................................................... 19
   Effective Schools .................................................................................................. 25
   Leadership ............................................................................................................. 27
   Leadership and Management .............................................................................. 33
   Behaviors and Practices of Effective Leaders .................................................... 32
   Summary ............................................................................................................... 44

III DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY ...................................................................... 45
   Design .................................................................................................................. 45
Research Procedures .............................................. 46
Selection of Participants ..................................... 46
Techniques for Collection of Data ......................... 47
Development of the Interview Instrument .............. 47
Validity ........................................................... 51
Reliability ....................................................... 52
Treatment of the Data ....................................... 53
Summary ........................................................ 54

IV PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA ............. 56
Summary of the Study ......................................... 56
Nature of the Study .......................................... 57
Presentation of the Data ..................................... 58

Background Information .................................... 60

Reason(s) for entering the field of education ....... 61
Years in education .............................................. 62
Years in current assignment ............................. 62
Prior assignments ............................................ 62

Categorical Information ................................... 64
Values ........................................................... 64
Vision .......................................................... 68
Change .......................................................... 71
Climate ......................................................... 75
Culture ........................................................ 76
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List of Tables</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Where the Charter Schools Are</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Comparison of Effective Schools Correlates and Charters for New Jersey</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter Schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Some Selected Definitions of Leadership</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Principal Leadership Responsibilities</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Principal Leadership Practices</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Categorized Comparison of Effective Principals’ Behaviors and Practices</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. New Jersey Charter School Demographics for Schools is the Study of</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals’ Leadership Behaviors and Practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Background Information for New Jersey Charter School Principals Participating in this Study</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Frequency of Patterns/Themes/Exceptions to the Principals’ Responses – Values</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Frequency of Patterns/Themes/Exceptions to the Principals’ Responses – Vision</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Frequency of Patterns/Themes/Exceptions to the Principals’ Responses – Change</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Frequency of Patterns/Themes/Exceptions to the Principals’ Responses – Culture</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Frequency of Patterns/Themes/Exceptions to the Principals’ Responses – Organization</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Frequency of Patterns/Themes/Exceptions to the Principals’ Responses – Instruction/Curriculum</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Frequency of Patterns/Themes/Exceptions to the Principals’ Responses – Instruction/Curriculum</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


19. 2002-2003 NJASK Scores for Charter School Students in this Study .... 96

20. 2002-2003 GEPA Scores for Charter School Students in this Study ..... 97


22. New Jersey Statewide Benchmark for Proficiency in Grades 4, 8, and 11 ........................................................................................................ 99
LIST OF FIGURES

1. An Overview of the Theoretical Framework used for this Study ............11
Chapter I

Introduction

Leadership is much more of an art, a belief, a condition of the heart, than a set of things to do. The visible signs of artful leadership are expressed ultimately in its practice.


In our fast-paced world, educators in general, and principals specifically, are being challenged in ways inconceivable to their predecessors. The demands on principals are far greater and more complex today than in the past. “With increasing demands upon education and the rising education levels of education’s clients come requirements not only for well trained administrators, but for well-educated and intellectually strong leaders” (Keedy & Achilles, 2001, p. 89). For our schools to be effective, a strong leader is necessary. “One rarely finds an effective school without an effective principal” (Sergiovanni, 1987, p. 7).

Schools are at the center of educational reform because of public pressure. This pressure has forced society to expect more from principals than ever before.

At the dawn of this millennium, the challenges for schools and principals in the United States include changing demographics, schools, and curricula that are inappropriately designed for today’s adolescents, principals trained to be managers rather than instructional leaders, and a dramatic shortage of qualified candidates willing to take on the principalship. (Tirozzi, 2001, pp. 434-435)
Social changes in the United States over the past several decades have affected the role of education, its leadership, and the way the public views it. In fact, the sky's the limit for what schools - and their leaders - are expected to do. Today schools feed, counsel, provide health care for body and mind, and protect students while they educate and instruct. And they do this before and after school, as well. Furthermore, the principal must be a legal expert, health and social services coordinator, fundraiser, public relations consultant, security officer, who is technologically savvy, diplomatic, with top-notch managerial skills, whose most important duty is the implementation of instructional programs, curricula, pedagogical practice, and assessment models. (Tirozzi & Ferrandino, 2001)

With such demands being placed on our principals and the growing concerns from the public in regard to the educational system in the United States, school choice legislation has entered onto the scene over the past decade. By 1990, this growing trend of legislation for school choice had the support of President George W. Bush and the U. S. Department of Education (Elam & Rose, 1995).

Taken at face value, school choice is a pretty simple idea. Take the control of education away from school boards and state legislatures and replace it with the freedom of the market. Schools will supply the educational product, and parents and students will act as customers, choosing the school that best fits their educational desires and needs. (Smith & Meier, 1995)
In 2002, 40% of the public was “somewhat dissatisfied” while 21% were “completely dissatisfied” with the quality of education received in grades K – 12 of public schools in the United States today. Yet, when parents were asked to grade the public schools in their community, 58% responded favorably, and 71% were satisfied with the school their oldest child attended (Gallup, 2002).

According to the 2003 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll, 48% of parents responded favorably when asked to grade the schools in their community, 55% were satisfied with the school their oldest child attended, and 38% of parents have embraced the choice movement (Rose & Gallup, 2003). “Creating different school programs and offering parents a choice among them makes sense because there is no one best school for every child” (O’Neil, 1996, p. 7).

In 2004, 26% of the public favored schools nationally. However, 61% of parents responded favorably to public schools in their community, and 70% were satisfied with the school attended by their oldest child (Rose, Gallup, Traiman & Houlihan, 2004).

Concern about public education on the national level and the growing political interests in education have led many persons to make a case for choice. Various school choice alternatives are being offered to our nation’s parents and concerned citizens, including vouchers and charters.

The charter school reform movement has flourished and moved to the forefront of the school choice issue. Nationally, the charter school reform is one of the fastest growing of reforms. In 1991, Minnesota became the first state to award a charter. By 2003, over 2700 charter schools operated in 36 states and the District of Columbia (Coeyman, 2003). (See Table 1)
### Where the Charter Schools Are

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States with the Most Charter Schools</th>
<th>Total in 2002-03</th>
<th>Approved to open 2003-04</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Coeyman, 2003

Since the publication in 1983 of *A Nation at Risk*, a report produced by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, questions have been raised about the value of a public school education in the United States. The charter school movement is a response to the public’s growing concerns with its educational system. “As constituents and politicians demand more accountability from schools, and dissatisfied parents seek more education options for their children, charter schools have become the most
identifiable and popular effort for school reform and improvement” (Kennedy, 2002, p. 19).

The charter school movement began with the idea in mind to provide a different educational approach for a comprehensive education from traditional public schools to assist parents, students and teachers with educational choices and accountability issues.

Charter schools hold forth a variety of different possibilities with the greatest promise being that of the creation of a new kind of publicly funded school, one that breaks the traditional mold in an effort to help children achieve at higher levels. The introduction of charter schools is not just part of an isolated reform effort, but is one promising strategy in the broader effort to bring significant improvements in student achievement. (Klagholz, 1997)

As with any school setting - public or private - in order to obtain established goals for student achievement and progress, a main component is an effective leader. According to O’Neill, Executive Director of the Charter School Resource Center of Texas, successful charters require a “strong governance structure” (as cited in Kennedy, 2002, p. 20). The governance structure for a charter school is its Board of Trustees. It’s the responsibility of the Board to hire effective leadership necessary to run its school.

One component of leadership for a school to be effective is a strong and effective principal. A study conducted by Austin in 1978 using high and low-achieving schools in the state of Maryland revealed “that one difference between high and low achieving schools was the impact of the principal... that quality of schooling is greatly influenced by the leadership of the principal” (Sergiovanni, 2001, p. 162).
Principals should play an essential role in establishing educational reform efforts, affecting change, and nurturing the culture of a school. After surveying several national reports from various commissions and politicians, Miller (1987) concluded that these groups all concentrated on the school principal’s leadership as the key to excellence in education.

According to Berry and Ginsberg (1990, p. 164), there is a set of common characteristics from the research findings for effective schools:

1. Clear goals and high expectations
2. Strong leadership of the principal
3. Emphasis on basic skills
4. An orderly school environment
5. Increased time on task
6. Positive home-school relations
7. Frequent monitoring of student progress

Keller (1998) observed, “some 20 years of research strongly suggests that [principal] make a big difference in shaping education that goes on in a school. If a school is going to succeed academically, it needs someone whose potential can’t be summed up on a scoreboard... Strong leadership from the principal is the single most important factor in schools that work” (p. 25).

Danielson (2002) explained, “practices of a school provide the backdrop for everything that goes on there” (p. 20). Part of what goes on there is the learning, instruction, and achievement of the students. A principal who possesses strong leadership qualities and whose practices enhance the learning environment is essential in the daily
interactions and activities of the school and therefore has an impact on student learning and achievement.

Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003) found a significant positive correlation between effective school leadership and student achievement. Their findings were concluded from 70 studies that included a sample of 2,804 schools, 14,000 teachers, and more than 1.1 million students.

Statement of the Problem

Various researchers have studied effective leadership (e.g., Kouzes & Posner, 2002; McEwan, 1998; Rutherford, 1985; Waters et al., 2003), however, few studies have been done specifically with charter school leadership and the congruence between the leadership behaviors and practices of the principal and the body of literature concerning effective leadership.

With the increase of charter schools in the state of New Jersey and the lack of research related to leadership behaviors and practices of principals, including charter school principals, there is a gap in the information about school principals. Therefore, it is appropriate to focus this study on the leadership behaviors and practices of the charter school principal.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the connection between the research on behaviors and practices of effective principals in general, and how charter school principals behave and practice at their jobs.
Theoretical Framework

Concepts that charter schools are founded on seem to relate to the correlates for effective schools. These correlates provide a framework for increased student performance, teacher effectiveness, and effective leadership. In viewing some cases, the correlates can be found written directly into the charter for a charter school. The words used may be different; however, the basic premise exists. Some examples for comparison of the correlates and charter schools are (a) a school’s mission is clearly stated, (b) all stakeholders move the school toward the mission, (c) expectations for student outcomes are defined, (d) parental involvement is addressed, and (e) instructional leadership is asserted. (See Table 2)

At the base of the charter school concept is the issue of autonomy. By design, charter school principals are granted the freedom to lead their schools with fewer restrictions than traditional public school principals. As such, charter school principals may serve as visionary instructional leaders to their schools. “Charter school leaders have the freedom to hire qualified teachers, reduce class sizes, to lengthen the school year and day, to control their budget, and to build a community of accountability” (Martinez, 2001, p. 7). The autonomy is granted in exchange for accountability.

Charter schools located in New Jersey are held accountable for student achievement and must report their test scores and other educational outcomes annually to the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE). Measurable student learning outcomes must be written into each school’s charter. A school failing to meet these outcomes can lose its charter and can be closed by the NJDOE.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlates (Berry &amp; Ginsberg, 1990)</th>
<th>Charter (NJDOE, 2003a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A safe and orderly environment conducive to learning</td>
<td>Policies, practices that promote safe and orderly learning environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan for monitoring policies and practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plans for discipline, suspension, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A clearly stated and focused mission</td>
<td>Description of mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How mission provides a clearly articulated vision to promote student achievement, make a difference in the community, and enhance educational options for all students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional leadership</td>
<td>Strong leadership capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffing plan and hiring criteria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment and retention plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High expectations for all students and personnel in the school</td>
<td>Description of academic and non-academic goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alignment to mission and curriculum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurable indicators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan for achieving goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum that challenges students to perform at high levels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent monitoring of student progress</td>
<td>Alignment to NJCCCS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective teaching strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to serving needs of special populations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Using this autonomy and producing results determined by standardized tests, a challenging curriculum, and measurable student outcomes, accountability lies within the areas of practice. How a principal practices leadership defines a principal’s leadership. That leadership should result in an effective school that exhibits student achievement and progress.

A body of research has already been established for effective leadership practices and behaviors as they pertain to a principal in a traditional public school. Studies conducted by Waters et al. (2003) have examined research from the past 30 years and have identified leadership practices and behaviors that have an impact on student achievement. However, very little research has been conducted on the practices and behaviors of charter school principals.

The underlying rationale for this study is schools that have a principal who practices and exhibits effective leadership behaviors should have a positive influence on student achievement and progress as measured by improved test scores and student
accomplishments. In turn, many other areas of the school will be affected. For example, high quality teachers will be attracted to the institution, community and parental involvement may increase, and a positive school culture can be recognized.

(See Figure 1).

Figure 1: An overview of the theoretical framework used for this study.

This study established a research base for effective leadership practices in relationship to what charter school principals in New Jersey are practicing at their jobs. The data discovered by this study enabled the researcher to determine if the charter school principals’ practices align with the research base of effective leadership practices as they currently exist, as well as the behaviors of effective principals.

The behaviors of the charter school principal should provide clues about how he/she will perform on the job. The practices of the principal, in turn, will create a learning environment that should determine levels of student achievement and
performance. These practices should also align with the leadership of the charter school principal with the research and theory on effective leadership practices.

Research Questions

The researcher investigated charter school principals with regards to their leadership practices and behaviors. Specifically, the research intended to address the following questions:

1. What behaviors of charter school principals are congruent with the behaviors of effective leadership?
2. How do charter school principals’ leadership practices align with the research related to effective leadership practices?

Delimitations of the Study

1. The study included only New Jersey charter schools that have been in operation since 1997 and/or 1998.
2. The participants for this study were principals currently employed in charter schools in the state of New Jersey.
3. This study did not focus on other theories that could influence educational outcomes (e.g., parental involvement, school size, etc.)
4. This study did not address the issue of the non-responsive charter school principals who were invited to participate.
Limitations of the Study

1. The data analysis was descriptive of the respondents only and should not be generalized to the hypothetical population of all charter school principals, or even to other charter schools in New Jersey.

2. The use of an interview instrument relied on the principals answering questions honestly, accurately, and to the best of their knowledge.

3. The participating principals in this study may be at different levels in their careers.

4. The respondents will have come from a variety of educational backgrounds.

5. A potential limitation may be that enrollment of the charter school students may not be from the local sending district and the same District Factor Group (DFG) of that district.

6. Findings do not imply causation.

Significance of the Study

Research on the leadership practices and behaviors of charter school principals is sparse. In this study, the researcher explored and described practices and behaviors of charter school principals. Results of this study should serve as a source of information to assist in professional development for charter school principals with regard to leadership practices and behaviors. This study's results should also serve to enhance the literature base on effective leadership research, with an emphasis on principals as effective leaders.
Definition of Terms

Definitions are provided to clarify the meaning of specific terms for this study.

Behaviors

A person’s action as the person responds to external or internal motivation.

Charter School

In New Jersey, a charter school is a public school operated under a charter granted by the Commissioner of Education and is independent of the local district board of education. The schools are accessible to all students with first choice given to those living within the district or regional vicinity of the school (Charter School Program Act, 1995).

Effective Leadership

"Leadership is about articulating visions, embodying values, and creating the environment within which things can be accomplished" (Richards & Engle, as cited in Yuki, 2002, p. 3).

Effective Schools

Schools that exhibit the characteristics as defined by the research and the correlates for effective schools (e.g., Berry & Ginsberg, 1990).

Principal

Certified person hired by a Board of Trustees to lead the charter school effectively toward the school’s mission and goals, oversee daily operations, and assist with parental and community relations.

School Choice

Legislation which grants parents the right to choose a school that best fits their child’s needs.
Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 presented an overview of the problem to be studied. Included in this chapter is an introduction of the related literature, purpose of the study, theoretical framework, research questions, delimitations and limitations of the study, significance of the study, definition of terms, and a description of the organization of the study.

Chapter 2 consists of a review of the related research and literature. The review begins with a brief summary of the charter school concept and its growing popularity as a reform movement. Specifically, the charter school movement in New Jersey is addressed. Next, a brief description of effective schools research is highlighted. An overview of leadership definitions, styles, and management are summarized. Lastly behaviors and practices associated with effective leaders are discussed.

Chapter 3 discusses the design and methodology for this study. Included is a discussion of research procedures, participant selection, development of the interview instrument, validity and reliability, techniques for data collection, and the treatment of the data.

Chapter 4 presents a summary of the study, the nature of the study, and a presentation and analysis of the data.

Chapter 5 presents the findings and details the conclusions formed based on the analysis of the data. It also serves to add to the general knowledge base and suggest directions for further research.
Chapter II

Literature Review

The review of literature begins with a brief summary of the charter school concept and its growing popularity as a reform movement. Next, the charter school movement in New Jersey is discussed. A brief overview of effective schools research is highlighted. An overview of leadership definitions, styles, and management are summarized. Lastly, behaviors and practices associated with effective leaders is discussed.

Charter School Movement

Prior to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (NCLB), much of the current research on school choice focused on the use of school vouchers. According to Walberg (2003) voucher advocates saw parental choice as a means to an end that would eventually improve public education through enhanced competition. In a review of the literature around school choice, Echols and Wilsn, and Lee, Croninger, and Smith, (as cited in Holme, 2002) contended that earlier research was focused around large-scale surveys that asked parents to rank factors that were important to them in selecting schools. Gewirtz, Bow and Ball (as cited in Holme, 2002) concluded that such studies suggested that school choice must be a rational process that included an examination of objective data and criteria where parents matched such factors and criteria when exercising their right to choose schools.

"Among the many claims made by those who advocate one or more choice programs for the reform of educational systems is that giving students and parents a choice of school will drive improvement as they seek higher quality educational
experiences” (Teacher’s College Record, 2006, p. 264). Metcalf, Theobald, and González (2003) stated, “The charter school movement in the U.S. has grown with astounding speed. This growth results from a number of factors, not the least of which is the more general national interest in the issue of providing parents with greater choice in their children’s education.”

The root of the charter school movement can be traced back to the late 1960s. It was during this time that educators and parents began to look at options for educating children. The 1970s continued this journey by producing alternative schools and the introduction of choice into the public education arena. Choice in public education became a reality for Minnesota in the middle of the 1980s when the state legislature adapted public school choice programs (Stewart, 2002). This opened the doors for the charter school movement that prevailed in the following decade.

The charter school movement is one such reform that has given parents the right to choose an educational experience for their children based on their specific needs and beliefs. The movement is a reaction to the public’s mounting concerns with the educational system in our country.

“Charter schools are redefining public education in the United States. As a widely popular reform movement, charter schools focus on student achievement and curricular innovation as driven by the choices of parents, rather than the directives of bureaucratic governance” (Lubiniski, 2001, p. 634). Legislation that has been passed concerning charter schools was done to assist parents with a choice for their child’s education.

According to the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) (2003b), the purpose of such legislation is to (a) foster the improvement of student learning and
achievement, (b) boost the availability of choice to parents and students when selecting a learning environment, (c) promote the use of different and innovative learning methods, (d) to create a new system of accountability for schools, (e) make the school the unit for educational improvement, and (f) establish new professional opportunities for teachers.

The movement has gained momentum since its inception beginning with Minnesota legislation in 1981. "The nation's first charter school -- a public school that accepts greater freedom from bureaucracy in exchange for a promise to perform at or above local standards -- opened its doors in Minnesota in 1992. By the fall of 2002, there were 2700 charter schools in 36 states and Washington, DC serving more than 575,000 students" (Coeyman, 2003). (See Table 1)

The popularity of the charter school movement is an affect of its early reform efforts in the areas of choice, autonomy, achievement, access, and accountability.

"Charter schools focus on what children learn and how well they learn it, not on compliance with rules and procedures. This accountability for results requires that charter schools set clear academic standards for what they expect students to know and be able to do, as well as explicit performance standards that define acceptable levels of mastery." (Manno, Finn, Bierlein, & Vangourek, 1998a, p. 491).

As Manno, Finn, Bierlein, and Vangourek (1998b) stated:

Charter schools are a new breed of public school -- an independent public school of choice. It is generally freed from bureaucratic control imposed by the superintendent's office and the local board, free to decide what to teach and how to teach it, whom to hire and how to deploy its resources, what hours to operate and how best to meet students needs. (p. 539)
The charter school movement has received political support from the left, center and right. Charter schools address growing political interests and concerns in education. This could very well be the reason why the movement has progressed so rapidly in little more than a decade. Part of this rapid progression is due to the support of the federal government in the area of funding. In 2002, charters received $200 million in funding and expect to receive an additional $100 million from the Bush Administration for 2003 (Harrington-Lacker, 2002).

"Charter schools are not a panacea; nor are they for everyone. But it is clear that they do represent a serious challenge to many long held truths regarding instructional practices, governance, regulation, and accountability" (Pipher, 1995, p. 743). According to Perkins-Gough (2002) in December 2001, RAND analysts Gill, Timpone, Ross, and Brewer concluded that charters are still too new to provide conclusive findings; however, they are worth continuing and studying more closely.

**New Jersey Charter School Movement**

With the passage of charter school legislation in Minnesota in 1991, New Jersey joined the national movement in 1995. "The concept of educational options and choices is very much at home in New Jersey where there are over 600 communities that run their public schools with a great degree of local autonomy" (Liibresq, 2003, p. 20).

nation's 20th state to enact legislation enabling the existence of charter schools
(See Appendix A).

By enacting the Charter School Program Act of 1995, the Governor authorized
the Commissioner of Education to establish a charter school program. The New Jersey
Administrative Code, Charter Schools (2000) contains the specific provisions necessary
to apply for a charter (See Appendix B).

In New Jersey, charter schools are independent public schools that operate under
a charter granted by the Commissioner of Education. Parents, teachers, and community
members may be the parties involved in starting a charter school in their area. Charter
schools operate separately from the district Board of Education in the community in
which they are located. However, they are evaluated by the New Jersey Department of
Education (NJDOE) to ensure effectiveness and a thorough education for the students
involved in the charter school.

New Jersey charter schools are required to implement the New Jersey Core
Content Curriculum Standards (NJCCCS) to all areas of their curriculum, as well as
participate in the state assessment tests that examine students in Grades 4, 8, and 11. In
addition, all teachers, principals, and support staff are required to possess appropriate
New Jersey licenses and certifications in their areas of expertise.

Despite opposition from local school boards and the state's teachers association
(NJEA), "New Jersey is home for one of the nation's strongest charter laws" (Nathan,
1996, p. 200). In 2003, the Center for Education Reform noted that New Jersey has a
strong to medium strength charter law.
In the first year that New Jersey enacted the charter school law, 37 applications were received, 16 charters were granted, and 13 began operations in September 1997. In 2004, 58 charter schools were operating in New Jersey, and one is scheduled to open in September 2005. These schools are located in rural, suburban and urban areas in 14 counties across the state (New Jersey Department of Education, 2004c).

The overall student population in New Jersey for the school year 2003-04 was approximately 1,380,883. As of September 2004, charter schools are serving approximately 14,560 Pre K - 12th grade students with an average enrollment of 193 students and class size estimated at 17 students. The following are characteristic of charter schools in New Jersey:

1. Average school year is 186 days
2. Average length of a school day is slightly over 7 hours
3. Average instruction time is slightly over 6 hours
4. Tuition cannot be charged
5. Schools are open to all students from the district of residence

(New Jersey Department of Education, 2004c).

On average, African Americans comprise almost 68% of charter school enrollment compared to 50% for their districts of residence and 43% of the school age community surrounding charter schools. Charter schools serve a lower percentage of White, Hispanic and Asian students than the districts of residence and compared to their school age community. Like their respective district of residence and school age communities, charter schools enroll fairly equal numbers of male and female students.
Student enrollment figures by grade level in the charter schools were similar to those in the districts of residence. However, the charter schools served significantly higher percentages of students in grades K-2, 6, and 9 and lower percentages of students in grades PK, 3-5, 8 and 11 than their districts of residence.

The percentage of students receiving free and reduced price lunch in charter schools was 63% compared to 70% in the districts of residence. Charter schools enrolled fewer students with educational disabilities than the districts of residence, 7.7% compared to 15.6% (New Jersey Department of Education, 2003a).

Two former Commissioners of Education have commented on the success and impact charter schools have had in the state. In February 2001, former Commissioner of Education David Hespe stated after renewing charters for 10 schools that were among the original group, “I congratulate these 10 schools for having successfully pioneered the charter school movement in New Jersey...these schools are models for innovative programs and practices that have served students and their families well” (New Jersey Department of Education, 2003a).

Additionally, former Commissioner of Education Vito A. Gagliardi, Sr., in October 2001, announced, “Our charter school program has been successful and has produced many schools of high quality...I am pleased that since the first charter school opened in 1997 we have been able to provide the educational choices that many parents desire for their children” (New Jersey Department of Education, 2003b).

On October 1, 2001, a report was submitted by the Commission of Education evaluating the charter school program in New Jersey. The conclusions were based on public hearings, a study conducted by KPMG International (an audit and advisory firm),
and 4 years of experience the NJDOE has had with implementing the Charter School Program Act. The following was concluded:

1. Charter schools are making progress with achieving the Core Content Curriculum Standards in most areas of the statewide assessments of Elementary School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA) and Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA).

2. Charter schools are outperforming traditional public school students in their districts in math on the ESPA and language arts on the GEPA.

3. Charter schools have smaller class size, lower student/faculty ratios, lower mobility rates, extended school day and academic year, higher faculty attendance, and greater instructional time than their districts of residence.

4. Parental satisfaction and involvement is very high.

(New Jersey Department of Education, 2003a)

New Jersey charter schools are demonstrating their success and continued achievement in reaching their goals because they share several common characteristics (a) public education, (b) independence, (c) accountability, (d) innovation, (e) small in size, and (f) efficiency (Charter School Program Act, 1995). Among the successes and achievements are scores on standardized tests. Of the students enrolled in charter schools for school year 2002 in 8th grade, 81% scored proficient or advanced in Language Arts; 62% scored proficient or advanced in Math on the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA). The students in the charter schools scored 12% higher in Language Arts and 10% higher in Math than their counterparts in traditional public schools (Center for Education Reform, 2003).
A specific example of student achievement for New Jersey charter schools is reported by one located in an urban community. For school year 2003-04, this school reported students in Grade 4 taking the New Jersey Assessment and Skill Knowledge (NJ ASK) test scored in the top 1% of all schools in New Jersey. They also reported students in Grade 7 achieved 11.6 grade level in Reading, 12.7 grade level in Language Arts, and the 12.5 grade level in Mathematics on the nationally recognized Stanford Achievement Test (Robert Treat Academy, 2004).

Part of New Jersey’s success with the charter school movement is the continued support for charter school legislation among the state’s leaders. The movement has bipartisan support in the state government. This goes along with the nation’s trend of support from both parties on the federal level as well.

Charter schools in New Jersey are continually making progress and reaching their goals because they encourage and accept participation from parents and the surrounding community. The schools offer many families a choice in public education for their children. This choice allows for creative and innovative pathways for children to be successful in school. Many of New Jersey’s charters have shown measurable student achievement, school accomplishments, sound teaching practices, a solid governance structure, and effective leadership. Because of the vision, dedication, and effort of all stakeholders, the charter school movement in New Jersey is strong and continues to flourish.

As of May 2003, 36 of the charter schools that opened in September 1997, 1998, and 1999 were granted renewals for 5 year periods. This accounts for 95% of the charter schools that opened during this time period.
Effective Schools

Our nation’s parents and leaders demand from educators that they “prepare young people for the future; teach children the skills they need to be successful in life; and motivate our youth to read, write, and think creatively. Many schools accomplish these goals irrespective of their location or the demographics of the students they serve. These schools can be characterized by any number of adjectives—including effective, excellent, and outstanding” (McEwan, 1998, pp. 1-2).

For several decades, educational critics around the country have been calling out for education reform. In 1966, Coleman and colleagues helped to shape educational policy with a milestone publication of a report entitled the “Equal Educational Opportunity Survey.” This report was presented to the United States Congress and was the set off point for the overwhelming response over the next several decades on effective schools research (Rahm, 2001).

Along with the research came the publication of A Nation at Risk (1983), the Educational Summit (1989), the passage of charter school legislation in 1991, and most recently the No Child Left Behind Act (2002). The nation has been looking for answers to education reform for many years, and each decade brings about new research that continues to look for them. This concern has had an impact on both the political arena and parents. As a response to the education reform effort, research has given way to define and establish characteristics for effective schools.

Bullard and Taylor (as cited by the Ohio Center for Effective Schools, 2003) defined effective schools as the following:
Effective schools are those who have been successful in teaching the adopted curriculum to all students. These schools have adopted both quality and equity standards. The quality standard expects the highest level of performance of every student, and the equity standard assures that a student's achievement is not a function of his or her gender, economic status, or ethnicity. Effective schools involve all staff in planning, decision making, and monitoring the continuous improvement efforts in each building, and every teacher is expected to demonstrate leadership in providing each student the maximum opportunity to succeed. (pp. 369, 400, 421)

Effective schools research from the 1980s established the five correlates for effective schools, and later added two more. These correlates are a set of common characteristics that schools, defined as effective, possess. The correlates are as follows:

1. Clear school mission
2. High expectations for success
3. Instructional leadership
4. Frequent monitoring of student progress
5. Opportunity to learn and student time on task
6. Safe and orderly environment
7. Home and school relations (The Ohio Center for Effective Schools)

The National Society for the Study of Education released a set of common characteristics for effective schools: clear goals and high expectations, strong leadership of the principal, emphasis on basic skills, an orderly school environment, increased time on task, positive home-school relations, and frequent monitoring of student progress.
(Mitchell & Cunningham, 1990). These conclusions a decade later echo the previous findings and are consistent with achieving and improving student learning. They also establish the base that principals are an important element in the development and maintenance of effective schools.

Leadership

The word leadership has different meanings to different organizations and people. Stogdill (as cited in Yukl, 2002) concluded that “there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who attempted to define the concept” (p. 2). There is no one definition that best fits all scenarios all the time. Heifetz (1994) defined leadership as “an activity” (p. 20). Northouse (2001) stated, “Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 3). Over the past 50 years many definitions of leadership have emerged, most “share the assumption that it involves an influence process concerned with facilitating the performance of a collective task” (Yukl, 2002, p. 19). (See Table 3)

There are as many types of leadership styles as there are definitions of leadership. The way a person chooses to practice his/her leadership is a pivotal choice for the school and its community. Covey (1991) argued that leadership should be principle centered and developed by two levels: personal and interpersonal. Personal, defined as my relationship with myself, deals with identifying characteristics of leaders, habits of highly effective people, resolutions and goals to assist in changing our negative habits, and primary vs. secondary greatness. Interpersonal, my relationships and interactions with others, begins with being able to communicate with the people around me.
Table 3

**Some Selected Definitions of Leadership**

Leadership is "the behavior of an individual... directing the activities of a group toward a shared goal" (Henphill & Coons, 1957, p. 7).

Leadership is "the influential increment over and above mechanical compliance with the routine directives of the organization" (O. Katz & Kahn, 1978, p. 528).

"Leadership is exercised when persons... mobilize... institutional, political, psychological, and other resources so as to arouse, engage and satisfy the motives of followers" (Burns, 1978, p. 18).

Leadership is "the process of influencing the activities of an organized group toward goal achievement" (Rauch & Behling, 1984, p. 46).

"Leadership is a process of giving purpose (meaningful direction) to collective effort, and causing willing effort to be expended to achieve purpose" (Jacob & Jaques, 1990, p. 281).

Leadership is "the ability to step outside the culture... to start evolutionary change processes that are more adaptive" (E.H. Schein, 1992, p. 2).

"Leadership is the process of making sense of what people are doing together so that people will understand and be committed" (Drath & Palus, 1994, p. 4).

"Leadership is about articulating visions, embodying values, and creating the environment within which things can be accomplished" (Richards & Engle, 1986, p. 206).

Leadership is "the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organization..." (House et al., 1999, p. 184).

*Note:* as cited in Yukl, 2002, p. 3

Heifetz (1994) introduced leadership as being viewed in two images: influencing a community to follow a vision or influencing a community to face its problems. The criterion for leadership as defined by this author is values based. Heifetz told us that getting people to clarify what matters most is the central task of the leadership activity.
In *Frames of Leadership*, Sergiovanni (1993) stated:

Today’s leadership is based on certain values of management that lead us to believe leaders should be stand up characters who single-handedly pull and push organizational members forward by the force of their personality, bureaucratic clout and political know-how. Leaders must be decisive. Leaders must be forceful. Leaders must have a vision. Leaders must successfully manipulate events and people so that their vision becomes a reality. Leaders, in other words, must lead! Granted this kind of direct leadership may be appropriate from time to time. But it is only part of the story. I believe the leadership that counts in the end touches people differently. It taps their emotions, appeals to their values and responds to their connections with other people. It is morally based leadership—leadership that represents a form of stewardship, a commitment to serve others and to serve ideals. (p. 21)

Moral based leadership directly aligns with the theory of transformational leadership. A transformational leader “not only meets the socially useful goals of the followers, but also elevates the followers to a higher moral ground” (Heifetz, 1994, p. 21). Northouse (2001) stated that with transformational leadership “an individual engages others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower” (p. 132). A transformational leader places strong emphasis on the followers’ needs, values, and morals.

Sergiovanni (1990) explained transformational leadership is first concerned with higher order psychological needs for esteem, autonomy, and self-actualization; and, then
with moral questions of goodness, righteousness, duty, and obligation. Amitai Etzioni (as cited in Sergiovanni, 1990), ultimately contended, "What counts most to people is what they believe, how they feel, and the shared norms and cultural messages that emerge from the groups and communities with which they identify" (p. 23). In transformational leadership, leaders and followers are united in pursuit of higher-level goals common to both. Success arrives when purposes that might have started out as separate become fused.

Placing the people for whom you serve at the center and building a shared sense of community, goals, and vision is the key to practicing leadership today. Sergiovanni (1993) believed:

> When one places her or his leadership practices in service to ideas and to others who also seek to serve these ideas, issues of leadership role and of leadership style become far less important. It matters less who is providing the leadership. And it matters even less whether the style of leadership is directive or not or participatory or not. These are issues of process. What matters instead are issues of substance. What are we about? Why? Are students being served? Is the school as a learning community being served? What are our obligations to this community? With these in mind, how can we best get the job done? (p. 23)

**Leadership and Management**

A dichotomy exists concerning leadership and management. "A good manager does things right. A leader does the right things" (Bennis & Goldsmith, 1997, p. 4).
Kotter (as cited in Northouse, 2001) explained “The overriding function of management is to produce order and consistency to organizations, whereas the primary function of leadership is to produce change and movement” (p. 9). Zaleznik (as cited in Northouse, 2001) contended “Managers are reactive and prefer to work with people to solve problems... leaders... seek to shape ideas... and act to expand the available options to long standing problems... leaders change the way people think about what is possible” (p.10).

According to Stronge (1993) “the dichotomized viewpoint of instructional leadership versus middle management tends to support the premise that instructional leadership is more worthy of the time and attention of the principal, and that managerial responsibilities are relatively unimportant, demeaning and generally to be avoided” (p. 4). It is this type of viewpoint that presents a challenging role for the principal to strike and maintain a balance as both a leader and a manager. In striving to attain this balance of effective leadership and efficient management, many principals believe their practice falls short of one over the other.

Management and instructional leadership need not be construed as competing interests for the principal. Rather, a unifying view of the principal’s primary role as one of educational leadership—a role that can be characterized by the salient features of both managerial and instructional leadership responsibilities provides a much healthier paradigm for understanding the principalship. (Stronge, 1993, p. 5)

Achilles, Reynolds, and Achilles (1997) contended that management and leadership should not be on opposite sides of the same continuum. “Principals perform
both leadership...and management...activities, and that management and leadership activities can each be evaluated as important or good, and as less important or less good” (p. 4). Effective schools research certainly suggests both managerial and leadership skills are necessary to be an effective principal. Integration of these domains constitutes effective leadership.

**Behaviors and Practices of Effective Leaders**

Sweeney (1982) professed that effective schools have effective leaders. Many researchers have agreed “one rarely finds an effective school without an effective principal” (Sergiovanni, 1987, p. 7). McEwan (1998) stated, “One variable always emerges as critically important: the leadership ability of the building principal” (p. 2). “A good principal is the keystone of a good school” (Educational Research Service, 2000, p. 76).

What constitutes effective leadership has been a concern for researchers in the 20th century. Most of the research has focused on what determines effectiveness. Researchers have attempted to find how well a leader is able to influence followers and accomplish goals by looking at the themes of behaviors, practices, and abilities. (Yukl, 2002, p. 2).

Over three decades of research has made way for findings that describe behaviors and practices of an effective leader. A study conducted by Rutherford (1985) of elementary and secondary principals generated five essential qualities of effective principals:
1. A clear vision
2. Ability to translate the vision
3. Establish supportive environments
4. Continuously monitor progress
5. Intervene when needed

Participants in a study conducted by Wondel, Hoke, and Joekel (1996) entitled "Project Success" found:

Successful administrators put the needs of students first, believe all children can learn . . . create a positive school climate, work collaboratively with others . . . engage all members of their administrative units to work toward a common goal . . . have honesty and integrity . . . commitment to their profession, and serve as role models. (pp. 43-44)

After reviewing numerous studies, McEwan (1998, p. 13) presented conclusions on recurring behaviors as the "seven steps to effective instructional leadership."

1. Establish clear instructional goals
2. Be there for your staff
3. Create a school culture and climate conducive to learning
4. Communicate the vision and mission of the school
5. Set high expectations for staff
6. Develop teacher leaders
7. Maintain positive attitudes toward students, staff, and parents

Perrell and Cookson (as cited in McEwan, 1998, p. 8) reviewed more than 75 studies to compile the following nine behaviors that identify a "strong principal":

1. Commitment to academic goals
2. Create a climate of high expectations
3. Instructional leadership
4. Forceful and dynamic leader
5. Effectively consult with others
6. Create order and discipline
7. Marshal resources
8. Use time well
9. Evaluate their results

The National Association of State Boards of Education in 1999 (as cited in Educational Research Service, 2000) characterized effective principals as the "lynchpins of school improvement...gatekeepers of change...and impacting both the implementation and sustainability of reforms focused on student achievement" (p. 2).

Stogdill's research (as cited in Northouse, 2001) found intelligence, determination, integrity, sociability, and self-confidence to be the most cited leadership traits. When developed and nurtured, these traits encourage and assist the leader in maintaining the systems of organization toward effectiveness (pp. 17-19).

After conducting 43 interviews since 1989, Goldberg (2001) stated:

Leadership can take more than one form and has many characteristics, but throughout the 43 interviews, five qualities stood out. These leaders held a bedrock belief in what they were doing; they had the courage to swim upstream on behalf of their beliefs; they possessed a social conscience...they maintained a seriousness of purpose...and they exemplified situational mastery. (p. 757)
In summarizing findings on research associated with effective leadership, Yukl (2002) described the following behaviors for leaders to be effective: develop long and short term objectives and strategies; identify and take responsibility for problems; deal with the problems in a systematic and timely way; utilize people, resources, information, and equipment in a useful way; use a variety of relationship-oriented behaviors to deal with people; develop relationships with the community; prepare staff for change; and empower followers.

In “Leading with Soul and Spirit,” focus, wisdom, passion, courage, and integrity are five qualities Bolman and Deal (2002) discussed that are “consistent across effective leaders” (p. 22).

In their discussion of leadership practices to find out how the perceptions of those practices aligned themselves between leader and follower, Kouzes and Posner (2002) developed a theoretic model of effective leadership practices. After 20 years of research, the model consists of five practices common to “personal best leadership experiences.”

The practices are challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart (p. 13):

1. Leaders challenge the process by searching for opportunities and by experimenting, taking risks, and learning from mistakes.
2. Leaders inspire a shared vision by envisioning the future and enlisting others in a common vision.
3. Leaders enable others to act by fostering collaboration and strengthening others.
4. Leaders model the way by finding their voice and setting an example.
5. Leaders encourage the heart by recognizing contributions and celebrating values and victories (pp. 14 - 19).

According to the authors, these five practices serve as the basis for becoming an effective leader and define behaviors of leaders as the "ten commitments of leadership" (p. 21) (See Table 4). This model also provides a venue whereby leadership practices can be assessed. As a result of their research, Kouzes & Posner (2002) developed the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) as a quantitative assessment tool that measures leadership behaviors identified by respondents.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model the Way</td>
<td>Find your voice by clarifying your personal values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Set the example by aligning actions with shared values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspire a Shared Vision</td>
<td>Envision the future by imagining exciting and enabling possibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enlist others in a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge the Process</td>
<td>Search for opportunities by seeking innovative ways to change, grow, and improve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experiment and take risks by constantly generating small wins and learning from mistakes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enable Others to Act</td>
<td>Foster collaboration by promoting cooperative goals and building trust. Strengthen others by sharing power and discretion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage the Heart</td>
<td>Recognize contributions by showing appreciation for individual excellence. Celebrate the values and victories by creating a spirit of community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Kouzes & Posner, 2002, p. 22

After reviewing and compiling a meta-analysis of research studies from the previous 30 years conducted by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), Waters et al. (2003) concluded that a significant, positive correlation exists between effective leadership and student achievement. This study identified 21 key leadership responsibilities that are significantly correlated with higher student achievement (See Table 5). These 21 leadership responsibilities make up the “balanced leadership framework which describes the knowledge, skills, strategies, and tools leaders need to positively impact student achievement” (p. 2).

The behaviors of the charter school principal should provide clues about how he/she will perform on the job. The practices of the principal, in turn, will create a learning environment that should determine levels of student achievement and performance. These practices should also align the leadership of the charter school principal with the research and theory on effective leadership practices.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
<th>The extent to which the principal...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order</td>
<td>Establishes a set of standard operating procedures and routines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>Protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Provides teachers with materials and professional development necessary for the successful execution of their jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum, instruction, assessment</td>
<td>Is directly involved in the design and implementation of curricula, instruction, and assessment practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Establishes clear goals and keeps those goals in the forefront of the school’s attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of curriculum, instruction, assessment</td>
<td>Fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visibility</td>
<td>Has quality contact and interactions with teachers and students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingent rewards</td>
<td>Recognizes and rewards individual accomplishments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Establishes strong lines of communication with teachers and students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>Is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Input</td>
<td>Involves teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affirmation</td>
<td>Recognizes and celebrates school accomplishments and acknowledges failures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
<th>The extent to which the principal...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>Demonstrates an awareness of the personal aspects of teachers and staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change agent</td>
<td>Is willing to and actively challenges the status quo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimizer</td>
<td>Inspires and leads new and challenging innovations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideas/Beliefs</td>
<td>Communicates and operates from strong ideals and beliefs about schooling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitors/evaluates</td>
<td>Monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situational Awareness</td>
<td>Is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual stimulation</td>
<td>Ensures that faculty and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Makes the discussion of these a regular aspect of the school’s culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Waters et al., 2003, p. 4

Effective principals not only know what to do, but, when, how, and why to do it. This is the essence of the “balanced leadership framework” (p. 3) (See Table 6). The way a principal behaves is determined by his/her practice. It is the practice of the principal that will be one factor in determining the effectiveness of a school in areas such as student achievement, performance, and progress.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
<th>Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Promotes cooperation among staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotes a sense of well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotes cohesion among staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develops shared understanding of purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develops a shared vision of what the school could be like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Order</td>
<td>Provides and enforces clear structures, rules and procedures for students and staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establishes routines regarding the running of the school that staff understand and follow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td>Protects instructional time from interruptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Protects/relieves teachers from distractions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Ensures that teachers have necessary materials and equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ensures that teachers have necessary staff development opportunities that directly enhance their teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum, instruction, assessment</td>
<td>Ensures that teachers have necessary materials and equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is involved with teachers to address instructional issues in their classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is involved with teachers to address assessment issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of curriculum, instruction, assessment</td>
<td>Is knowledgeable about instructional and assessment practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provides conceptual guidance for teachers regarding effective classroom practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
<td>Practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visibility</td>
<td>Maintains high visibility around the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Makes systematic and frequent visits to classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Has frequent contact with students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingent rewards</td>
<td>Recognizes individuals who excel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses performance vs. seniority as the primary criterion for reward and advancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses hard work and results as the basis for reward and recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focuses</td>
<td>Establishes concrete goals for all curriculum, instruction, and assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establishes concrete goals for the general functioning of the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continually keeps attention on established goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establishes high, concrete goals and expectations that all students meet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Is easily accessible to teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develops effective means for teachers to communicate with one another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maintains open and effective lines of communication with staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>Assures that the school is in compliance with district and state mandates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advocates on behalf of the school in the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advocates for the school with parents of the students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ensures that the central office is aware of the school's accomplishments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
<td>Practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Input</td>
<td>Provides opportunities for staff to be involved in developing school policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provides opportunity for input on all important decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses a leadership team in decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affirmation</td>
<td>Systematically and fairly recognizes and celebrates accomplishments of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Systematically and fairly recognizes and celebrates accomplishments of teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Systematically acknowledges failures and celebrates accomplishments of the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Remains aware of personal needs of teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maintains personal relationships with teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is informed about significant personal issues within lives of staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acknowledges significant events in the lives of staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change agent</td>
<td>Consciously challenges the status quo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is comfortable leading change initiatives with uncertain outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Systematically considers new and better ways of doing things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimizer</td>
<td>Inspires teachers to accomplish things that might seem beyond their grasp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Portrays a positive attitude about the ability of the staff to accomplish substantial things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is a driving force behind major initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
<td>Practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideals/beliefs</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrates behaviors that are consistent with beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shares beliefs about schooling, teachers, and learning with staff and parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holds professional belief with schools, teaching and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monitors/evaluates</strong></td>
<td>Monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of curriculum, instruction, and assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flexibility</strong></td>
<td>Is comfortable with major changes in how things are done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encourages people to express opinions contrary to those of authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adapts leadership style to needs of specific situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can be directive or non-directive as the situation warrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Situational awareness</strong></td>
<td>Is aware of informal groups and relationships among staff of the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is aware of issues in the school that have not surfaced but could create discord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can predict what could go wrong from day to day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intellectual stimulation</strong></td>
<td>Keeps informed about current research and theory regarding effective schooling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continuously involves staff in reading articles and books about effective practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Continuously exposes staff to cutting edge ideas about how to be effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Systematically engages staff in discussions about current research and theory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Waters et al., (2003), pp. 9 – 12*
Summary

Since charter schools entered onto the scene of the education reform movement in 1991, they have been controversial and welcomed at the same time. Charter schools take the form of an alternative form of education and can offer a choice to parents to consider when deciding about the educational environment best suited for their children. They allow parents to take an active role in their child’s education while fostering community involvement and a shared vision by all stakeholders.

Charter school principals enjoy more autonomy than do traditional public school principals. This autonomy is in exchange for accountability with regard to student achievement and performance.

Good principals are the foundation of effective schools and thus indirectly impact higher student achievement and performance. “No single individual is more important to initiating and sustaining improvement in students’ performance than the school principal . . . one of the most consistent findings in educational research is that high achieving schools have strong, competent leaders” (Jackson & Davis, 2000, p. 156-157).

Decades of research have shown that there are common behaviors that identify effective leaders. However, it is not these daily behaviors that establish effectiveness. The determination of effectiveness lies “ultimately in its practice” (DeFree, 1989, p. 130).

Chapter 3 presents the design and methodology for this study.
Chapter III

Design and Methodology

In this chapter, the researcher describes the design and methodology for this study. Included is a discussion of research procedures, participant selection, development of the interview instrument, validity and reliability, techniques for data collection, treatment of the data, and a summary.

Design

For this study, the researcher used a descriptive, qualitative design to explore if the behaviors and practices of charter school principals align with the emerging research on effective education leadership practices and behaviors. "Qualitative approaches are characterized by an inductive approach, beginning without structure but structuring the study as it proceeds, by exploring to find what is significant in the situation, by trying to understand and explain it, by working in a natural situation, and by description in words" (Krauthweil, 1998, p. 27).

Research conducted in a qualitative vein is not intended to identify cause and effect relationships. It is designed to capture the depth and detail in a study. "To answer some research questions, we cannot skim across the surface. We must dig deep to get a complete understanding of the phenomenon we are studying" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001, p. 147). To gain this understanding, qualitative researchers must immerse themselves in their research so they can truly understand the subjects' perspectives. The researcher must become personally involved in the method in order to seek out the subjects' viewpoints.
Data produced by qualitative methods can be potent and have some distinct advantages. Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 10) cited several strengths:

1. It focuses on naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings so that we have a strong handle on what "real life" is like.
2. It is rich and holistic, with strong potential for revealing complexity.
3. It emphasizes people's "lived experience" which makes it well suited for locating meanings people place on events, processes, and structures of their lives.

Research Procedures

A letter of invitation (See Appendix C) was sent to principals in 27 New Jersey charter schools that opened their doors in 1997 and/or 1998. The letter invited the principals to participate in this study. Ten principal participants were chosen for interviews from the responses received from the 27 letters of invitation simply because they were the only 10 respondents. Following the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, letters of solicitation (See Appendix D) and informed consent forms (See Appendix E) were sent to the principals who volunteered to participate.

Selection of Participants

Charter school principals were selected to participate in this study. Principals are directly responsible for leading their schools. As such, what occurs at the school is influenced by a principal's behaviors. These behaviors either restrict or enable the principal to lead a school effectively through everyday practices.
When the charter school movement began in New Jersey in 1997, 13 charters were granted, and, to date, 50 charters are operating. This study focused on principals from charter schools that opened their doors in 1997 and/or 1998. These charter schools were chosen because they possess the longest history of any in New Jersey.

Techniques for Collection of Data

Information gathered for this study came from archival data furnished by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and 10 tape-recorded interviews conducted with voluntary participants who were currently employed as principals in New Jersey charter schools.

An interview has the advantage over other methodologies such as questionnaires, “because researchers guide the revelation of information: through elicitation and personal interaction, the investigator is better able to elicit data addressing the questions asked in the study” (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p. 166). The researcher decided to tape-record the interviews so more attention could be given to other areas of the conversation. By proceeding in this manner, the researcher was able to listen carefully to the principal, gain insight into the situation, and better analyze facial and body expressions.

Development of the Interview Instrument

The interview instrument used in this study was developed by the researcher after careful review of the research and literature on effective leadership practices and behaviors, informal field research through the use of informants, alignment with the
theoretical framework (See Figure 1), a pilot test with practicing principals, and review by a committee of experts.

Interview questions were developed for the purpose of gaining insight into the behaviors the charter school principal says he/she possesses. In relation to the behaviors, to what degree does the principal state that he/she performs effective leadership practices as established by research and theory?

The instrument consisted of a scripted description of what will occur during the interview, background information, and seven categories of behaviors and practices. (See Appendix F). The background questions provided information on each charter school principal interviewed. The leadership behaviors and practices identified from the literature were classified by the researcher into seven categories for study. Research distilled from Waters et al. (2003), Kouzes and Posner (2002), McEwan (1998), and Rutherford (1985), led to development of the seven categories identified in Table 7.

The 21 leadership traits established by Waters et al. (2003), the five categories of the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) developed by Kouzes and Posner (2002), the seven steps of effective leadership behavior from McEwan (1998), and the five qualities of leaders generated by Rutherford (1985) make up each of the four columns in Table 7. All were identified within seven categories: values, vision, change, climate, culture, organization, and instruction/curriculum.

The 21 leadership traits outlined in the Waters et al. (2003) balanced framework were developed from "a comprehensive analysis of research on school leadership and student achievement ... and grounded in evidence" (p. 2). The Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) was created as a quantitative instrument for measuring respondents’
perceptions of leadership behaviors that they identified and has an established reliability and validity because of subsequent research. After reviewing numerous studies, McEwan (1998) presented conclusions on recurring behaviors of effective leaders. Ruthersford (1985) established five qualities after conducting a study of elementary and secondary school principals.

Each cell formed within Table 7 led to the development of categorical questions making up the interview instrument. Questions within each of the seven categories were developed to capture the essence of each cell within a category.

Questions were tested by informants and a committee of experts. In addition, a series of pilot interviews were conducted with a group of practicing principals. Revisions were made to the questions until the interview instrument was finally developed.

Three questions addressed each of four separate categories: values, vision, climate, and instruction/curriculum. Two questions addressed the categories labeled culture and organization, and four questions were included in the category identified as change. Pilot tests were conducted, and a question was rewritten until reliability was gained.

These major questions focused the interview and assisted the researcher to set the boundaries of the study. The questions determined the territory that the interview would and would not enter. Miles and Huberman (1994) stated, “there is a focus, or ‘heart’ of the study, and a somewhat indeterminate boundary defines the edge of the case: what will not be studied” (p. 15).

The underlying rationale for this study is that schools where the principal practices and exhibits effective leadership behaviors will have a positive influence on the school’s student achievement and progress. The questions and responses provided a
database so the researcher could compare these results with the research and literature congruent with the behaviors of effective leaders and the alignment of charter school principals’ leadership practices with effective leadership practices.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Kouzes &amp; Posner (LPI), 2002</th>
<th>Warsen, Marraro &amp; McNally, 2003</th>
<th>McEwan, 1998</th>
<th>Rutherford, 1985</th>
<th>Model the Way</th>
<th>Inspire a Shared Vision</th>
<th>Challenge the Process</th>
<th>Enable Others to Act</th>
<th>Encourage the Heart</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Idols/beliefs Focus</td>
<td>Set high expectations for staff</td>
<td>Ability to translate the vision</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Change agent Optimizer Flexibility</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>Culture Communication</td>
<td>Communicate the vision and mission</td>
<td>A clear vision</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Contingent rewards Affirmation Outreach Relationships</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td>Change agent Optimizer Flexibility</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Order Discipline Situational Awareness Visibility</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate</td>
<td>Input Intellectual stimulation</td>
<td>Develop teacher leaders</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Maintain positive attitudes</td>
<td>Establish supportive environment</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Be there for you staff when needed</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 7 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Curriculum, instruction, assessment</td>
<td>Establish clear instructional goals</td>
<td>Continuous monitoring of progress</td>
<td>Instruction/ Curriculum</td>
<td>Monitors/evaluates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of curriculum, instruction, assessment</td>
<td>Create a school environment conducive to learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Validity

A study’s measurement should be both valid and reliable. “In general, the validity of a measurement instrument is the extent to which the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001, p. 98).

There are several forms validity can take depending on the situation. These forms are face validity, content validity, criterion validity, and construct validity. This study mainly utilized the concepts of face validity and construct validity.

At a minimum, an instrument should have face validity to insure that it measures what it is supposed to measure. Informants are important to researchers wanting to know about informal social networks. “When field research involves the researcher’s attempt to understand some social setting...much of that understanding will come from a collaboration with some members of the group being studied” (Babbie, 2002, p. 444). The use of informants and a committee of experts assisted the researcher in establishing validity for the instrument.
Construct validity is the extent to which an instrument measures a characteristic that cannot be directly observed but must instead be inferred from patterns in people's behavior. When researchers ask questions as a way of assessing an underlying construct, they should obtain some kind of evidence that their approach does, in fact, measure the construct in question. (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001, pp. 98-99)

This study used the ideas of various researchers, aligned their findings into categories and from that generated the instrument used (See Table 7). By insuring validity through a construct design, the researcher can predict if the instrument measures the established theory he/she is discussing in the study.

Reliability

Reliability refers to an instrument or question providing consistency in its results or answers. "Reliability is a matter of whether a particular technique, applied repeatedly to the same object, yields the same result each time" (Babbie, 2002, p. 136).

With qualitative studies, the issue of reliability becomes a concern, because research is performed in a natural setting and deals with humans as part of the measurement procedure. Leedy and Ormrod (2001, p. 106) explained several steps to be taken to ensure reliability:

1. The instrument should always be administered in a consistent fashion.
2. Criteria should be established to assist the researcher in formulating judgments.
3. Research assistants who are using the instrument should be well trained to administer it.

The replicability of a study’s findings enables other researchers to conduct similar studies to determine whether the procedures used in the original study will yield the same results. Yin (as cited in gall, Borg & gall, 1996) explained:

Repetition logic is a strategy that uses theory to determine other cases to which the findings of one case can be generalized. The validity of the theory is tested through a series of empirical replications, each involving one or more case studies. If the theory is well supported by the replications, the theory will identify the population of individuals to whom a particular set of generalizations will apply. (p. 219)

Treatment of the Data

“Data analysis involves organizing what you have seen, heard, and read so that you can make sense of what you have learned. Working with the data, you create explanations, pose hypotheses, develop theories, and link your story to other stories” (Glesne & Glesne, 1992, p. 127).

Transcribed responses of the tape-recorded interviews provided the data for this study. Each subject was randomly assigned a letter code to ensure accurate data recording and subject anonymity.

Coding was used as a method to compile and analyze the data. Miles and Huberman (1994) described the method of coding as “tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study” (p. 56).
The researcher assigned codes to each a priori category. This assisted in identifying and organizing the data for analysis.

A content analysis was used to examine the data for this study. "Content analysis is a detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of material for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes, or biases" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001, p. 155). Each response was examined for patterns, common ideas, consistencies, inconsistencies and exceptions.

For this study, the data were analyzed to search and identify patterns, consistencies and inconsistencies in the actual words recorded from the interviews. Other archival data served to reinforce this analysis. The frequency of each category being studied was tabulated and reported in a table. The expectation was the analysis of the data would provide answers to the research questions, as well as lead toward recommendations for further study.

**Summary**

The procedures followed in this study were conducted according to the literature governing interviews and descriptive research methods. The purpose of descriptive research is to "describe systematically the facts and characteristics of a given population or area of interest, factually and accurately" (Isaac and Michael, 1995, p. 50).

The procedures followed in descriptive research are:

1. Define the objectives in clear specific terms
2. Design the approach
3. Collect the data
4. Report the results

This chapter presented the design and methodology used to gather data. It discussed the research procedures, selection of the participants, development of the interview instrument, validity and reliability, techniques for the collection of data, and treatment of the data. Chapter 4 presents an analysis of the findings.
Chapter IV

Presentation and Analysis of Data

The purpose of this study was to investigate the connection between the research on behaviors and practices of effective principals in general, and how charter school principals behave and practice at their jobs. This chapter includes a summary of the study, the nature of the study, presentation and analysis of the data.

Summary of the Study

Many decades have come and gone with school reform as a topic for discussion. Notably, the start of the current-day reform movement was in 1956 with the US-USSR space race. Along with the passing of the decades came research, studies, and ideology papers such as A Nation at Risk (1983), the Educational Summit (1989), the passage of charter school legislation in 1991, and most recently, the No Child Left Behind Act (2002). The nation as a whole, and parents specifically, continue to search for answers to education issues that will provide them with a quality education for their children.

This study focused on the leadership behaviors and practices of charter school principals in New Jersey. Charter school legislation was passed in New Jersey in 1995, making it the 20th state to enact legislation enabling the existence of charter schools. As of September 2004, 50 charter schools are in operation in New Jersey. Of these 50 schools, 27 opened their doors in 1997 and/or 1998. From these 27 schools, principals were selected to participate in this study.

Since their inception, charter schools have been at the center of controversy with regard to education reform and student achievement. These schools offer a choice for
parents to consider when deciding about an education for their children. In New Jersey, charter school principals are held more accountable than their traditional public school counterparts in the areas of student achievement and performance.

As with all public schools in New Jersey, charter schools must align their curriculum to the New Jersey Core Content Curriculum Standards (NJCCCS), meet NCLB requirements, and test students in Grades 4, 8, and 11. They must report their student achievement and performance on a yearly basis to the NJDOE. If they are not meeting the guidelines set forth in their charter, they will be closed.

The charter school principal’s leadership behaviors and practices were the heart of this study. Research conducted by Waters et al. (2003), Kouzes and Posner (2002), McEwan (1998), and Rutherford (1985) have assisted the researcher in establishing common behaviors and practices that identify effective leaders.

Through careful analysis using these research studies, the researcher determined seven a priori categories for the conceptual base for this study (See Table 7) and the guiding theoretical framework (See Figure 1). The categories were developed for this study to help the researcher gain insights into the behaviors of effective leaders and as a basis to assess the behaviors the charter school principals said they possessed. In relation to the behaviors, the researcher sought to determine to what degree did the charter school principals perform effective leadership practices as established by research and theory.

Nature of the Study

 Principals from the 27 charter schools that opened their doors in 1997 and/or 1998 were sent a letter inviting them to participate in this study. Ten principals volunteered to
participate; 5 were male and 5 were female. The 10 principals interviewed represented 37% of the population for charter schools that began in 1997 and/or 1998 and were still in operation at the time of this study.

All participants were asked a series of questions which included background information and seven categories related to behaviors and practices of effective principals. The background questions provided information on each charter school principal's personal history. The categorical questions sought to discover the principals' self-reported behaviors and practices in the areas of values, vision, change, climate, culture, organization, and instruction/curriculum (See Table 7).

Presentation of the Data

All 10 interviews were conducted in the office of the principal at his or her respective charter school. At the start of each interview, the researcher read from a scripted explaining in detail the process of the discussion. In addition, the interviews followed a structured question route (See Appendix F).

In presenting the data gathered from the interviews, care was taken to protect each charter school and principal's anonymity. Each participant was randomly assigned a letter code to ensure accurate data recording and anonymity. To maintain anonymity of the charter schools and their principals, a very general description of the schools' location, total enrollment, grade levels, average instructional class size, student/faculty ratio, length of day, and days in school year is provided from data gathered from the principal participants and the NJDOE for school year 2004-2005 (See Table 8).
Table 8

New Jersey Charter School Demographics for Schools in the Study of Principals’ Leadership Behaviors and Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Designation</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Total (n)</th>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Average Instructional Class Size</th>
<th>Student/Faculty Ratio</th>
<th>Length of Day (instructional)</th>
<th>Days in School Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>K-8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11:1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>K-8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12:1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>K-12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8:1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>K-8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22:1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15:1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18:1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>K-8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10:1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>K-8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11:1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>K-8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11:1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*State Avg

Note: Information obtained from the 10 voluntary participants in this study

*New Jersey Department of Education, 2004
The 10 schools where the principals were interviewed were located in rural, suburban, and urban communities. The total enrollment for these charter schools ranged between 76 and 280 students. Grade levels served ranged between Kindergarten and 12. The average instructional class size was between 14 and 25 students. Student/faculty ratio ranged from 8:1 to 22:1. The length of the instructional school day ranged between 5 hours 35 minutes and 8 hours. Days in the school year were reported between 180 and 191 days.

In the area of average instructional class size, 3 schools were under the state average, and 5 were over the state average. For student/faculty ratio, 6 schools were under the state average, and 4 schools were above it. For length of instructional school day, 5 schools were under and 5 schools were over the state average. For days in school year, all 10 schools were at or over the 180 day requirement set forth by the state of New Jersey. As reported by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE, 2004a) the state averages were as follows:

- Average instructional class size: 19.3
- Student/faculty ratio: 11.5
- Average Length of school day: 6 hours 34 minutes

*Background Information*

The first series of questions to which the principals responded sought to provide personal information on each principal. The participants were asked questions referencing the reason(s) for entering the field of education, years in education, years in their current assignment, and information on prior assignments.
In the following sections, the interview data are presented, categorized to the extent possible using content analysis related to the theoretical framework (see chapter 1), and selected quotes from respondents are used to support the findings and analysis of the data.

Reason(s) for entering the field of education. From an analysis of the principals' responses to this question, in which principals could provide several answers, the researcher classified the comments into 4 areas:

1. An interest in working with and making a difference in a child’s life
2. Family or parental influences
3. Knowing from an early age
4. Midlife career change

Seven principals cited having an interest in working with children and making a difference in a child’s life. One in particular stated, “...to make a difference in the lives of children...I want to really make a difference in the lives of children of color, disadvantaged children, children who are at risk, children who were often pushed to the side and not cared for...really make a positive impact on the lives of those children.”

Five principals stated that family or parental influences encouraged them to become educators. One principal told the researcher, “I come from a long line of educators. My mother taught for 40 years. My father was an elementary principal. My sister is a retired elementary teacher. My sister-in-law is an elementary principal. I have three aunts who are teachers. My daughter has taught. What can I say?”
Three principals discussed always knowing they would be educators from a very early age. "... at age 7, playing school, I was always the teacher. I knew then that I wanted to a teacher."

Three principals noted that they became educators when they embarked on a career change later in life. One principal stated, "... it was the most important thing I could be doing, and it was something that I had a lot of interest in. ... This was part of a midlife career change that led me down this path."

*Years in education.* Responses ranged from 3 to 42 years working in education. Five principals had 20 years or more experience and 5 fell within the range of 3 to 19 years of experience. The average number of years in education for the 10 principals studied was 22 years.

*Years in current assignment.* The principals' responses ranged from less than 1 year to 8 years in their current assignment. Five principals have been with the charter school from its inception. Five principals had 3 or fewer years in their current assignment. The average length of time in the principal's current assignment was 3.5 years.

*Prior assignments.* Principals were asked if their prior assignments had been in a public or private school setting, in a business environment, or something else. Nine of the principals had prior experience in a school setting; only one had experience in a business environment (See Table 9).
Table 9

Background Information for New Jersey Charter School Principals Participating in this Study

Reasons for Entering the Field of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>An interest in working with and making a difference in a child's life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Family or parental influences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Knowing from an early age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mid-life career change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Present and Prior Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Designation</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>J</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years in Education</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years/mos in Current Assign.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 mos</td>
<td>4 mos</td>
<td>3 mos</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Assignment</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Information obtained from the 10 voluntary participants in this study
Categorical Information

Through the categorical questions, the researcher sought to discover each principal's self-reported behaviors and practices in the areas of values, vision, change, climate, culture, organization, and instruction/curriculum. These a priori categories were developed by the researcher from a careful review of the research and literature on effective education leadership practices and behaviors. The responses are summarized and presented in tabular form later in this chapter.

A content analysis was performed to organize the data and identify patterns, consistencies, and inconsistencies with the behaviors and practices of the charter school principals studied. This approach provided a systematic way of classifying the data. The analysis assisted the researcher in categorizing the principals' responses, as not all principals used the exact wording. It also contributed by providing answers to the research questions for this study:

1. What behaviors of charter school principals are congruent with the behaviors of effective leadership?
2. How do charter school principals' leadership practices align with the research related to effective leadership practices?

Values. This section contains principals' responses to questions in relation to values, which are summarized in Table 10. The 10 charter school principals described the core values they held and/or their schools were guided by. From an analysis of their responses, the researcher classified the responses into eight areas of commonality:

1. Assist students in striving for excellence and success
2. Instruction and learning
3. Celebrate the differences in every child
4. Participate in community and an attitude of contribution and sharing
5. Respect for self and others
6. Trustworthiness
7. Cooperative environment
8. Character

Six principals cited that assisting students to strive for excellence and to be successful is a core value of their school. One in particular stated, “...to be able to enhance every young person’s life with an atmosphere of education that strives for excellence.”

Six principals stated instruction and learning is a guiding principle in their school. One principal told the researcher, “...we value teacher development, best practice, and making sure that our teachers are well equipped to teach all children using differentiated instruction.”

Five principals discussed celebrating the differences in every child as a value of a school. “Crafting the school to meet the different learning styles of the children rather than trying to get the children to conform to the learning style of the school...understand children as individuals, respect that individuality...that is probably our most important idea.”

Five principals noted participation in the community and an attitude of contribution and sharing were components of their value systems. One principal stated,
"...to develop an area of community service...there are many service projects that we do and model. ...to have the students model that is integral to their development and a lesson in giving back to the community."

Five principals cited respect for self and others as a core value in their school. As one principal told the researcher, "...a deep respect for people...respect for individuals...for all children to care about themselves."

Five principals stated that trustworthiness was a guiding value in the school. One in particular shared, "...believing and trusting each other is an important component in our school...without trust, honesty, and consistency our parents and community would not believe in our mission, and we would not be able to exist."

Four principals discussed having a cooperative environment as a principle of their school. One principal told the researcher, "...we have built a community of learners which include our faculty, our families, and our students...this cooperative model enables us all to work together for the good of our students."

Four principals noted character as a core value for their school. One principal informed the researcher, "...we believe in character, we believe in establishing good character...making sure that children believe in who they are."

The principals were asked to describe how they were proactive in communicating the core values they had just spoken about. From their responses, the researcher determined that four patterns emerged:

1. Formal meetings and committees
2. Informal conversations
3. Professional development and retreats
4. Recognize and reward exemplary/appropriate behaviors

Seven principals cited formal meetings and committees were a means of communicating the core values of their schools to students, parents, faculty, and the community. One in particular stated, "...we have faculty meetings at least twice a week. During that process, I take a lot of information about how they feel, what they think, and I guide the ship...We also have monthly meetings with our children-grade-level meetings; they have the opportunity to share how they feel about what our school is doing for them."

Seven principals stated that informal conversations with all stakeholders helped them to communicate the school's values. One principal told the researcher, "...we have many interactions, conversations we engage in on a regular basis with staff and students...we talk about what it is that makes a good school."

Five principals discussed professional development opportunities and retreats geared toward the core values of their school as a way to build consensus around them. "We go on retreats for goal setting to make a major comprehensive plan to keep us focused on where we are headed."

Four principals noted that they recognized and rewarded behaviors that reflect the values of the school. One principal stated, "...being ever aware of behavior...supporting appropriate behavior...rewarding behavior that you see, that you value."

One principal provided a comment that stood out from the others. "You have to hire people who share those values. So, it starts out with the employment process, picking the right people."
The principals were asked to explain if and how they model behavior that communicates their expectations. From the researcher’s analysis of their responses, two themes were identified:

1. Lead by example
2. Visibility

All 10 principals responded that leading by example with their own behaviors was a key in communicating their expectations to the school community. One principal stated, “I don’t think you can lead without being an example… it’s not do as I say, but do as you see me do… I treat my teachers with respect; I treat the children and parents with respect… the children see it and in turn they will emulate our value system through their own behaviors.”

Five principals discussed visibility as a component to communicating their expectations. One principal told the researcher, “… to be in the classroom as much as I can… rolling up my sleeves and sitting down with a group or individual… when the students come into school, I’m there; when they leave school, I’m there; when they have lunch, I’m there.”

Vision. This section contains principals’ responses to questions in relation to vision, which are summarized in Table 11. The principals were asked to explain the importance of vision in building a school’s future. All 10 principals responded that a clear vision was imperative for guiding their schools in a particular direction and, to be realistic and have buy in from all stakeholders. One principal stated, “… vision has to be clear, it has to be one that all stakeholders can embrace and feel that they can take part in, and that it is obtainable.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 1:</th>
<th>Patterns/Themes/Exceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6  Assist students in striving for excellence and success</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9  Instruction and learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Celebrate the differences in every child</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Participate in community and an attitude of contribution and sharing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Respect for self and others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Trustworthiness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Cooperative environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Character</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 2:</th>
<th>Patterns/Themes/Exceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7  Formal meetings and committees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7  Informal conversations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Professional development and retreats</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  Recognize behaviours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1  Employment process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 3:</th>
<th>Patterns/Themes/Exceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19  Lead by example</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5  Visibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Another principal told the researcher, "...vision is critical. You have to have a sense of understanding what it is you are trying to accomplish, and be very realistic about it...you need to articulate it in a clear manner so that the staff can believe in it and work towards the common goal."

The principals each described the vision for their charter school. From their responses, 100% of the principals cited academic success as the "core" vision for their schools. One principal discussed, "...recognizing the uniqueness and multiple intelligences that we have with our community of learners and to provide an opportunity for each student to achieve."

Another principal stated, "...to take away the obstacles that one has so that young people can pursue excellence." While another told the researcher, "...to ensure that student achievement is number one...that it is a safe haven for everyone so that learning can take place."

The principals were asked to discuss how they go about communicating the school's vision. Eight principals cited that they communicated the vision through formal meetings, informal conversations, and written documents. One principal responded, "...every chance we get. We do it in the enrollment process, at the new parent orientation, back-to-school night, assemblies, and faculty meetings...we do it in all of our publications."

Another common response came from three principals. Living and modeling the vision everyday was a role they saw for themselves. One principal said, "...it's what I live, it's what I do, it's what I've always done...I communicate it every day by the way I treat people and by the things I do."
Table 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency (n)</th>
<th>Patterns/Themes/Exceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 1:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Clear vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 2:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Formal meetings, informal conversations, written documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Living the vision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Change. This section contains principals’ responses to questions in relation to change, which are summarized in Table 12. A common response by the 10 principals throughout this category reflected the importance of communication within all phases of identifying, initiating, planning, carrying out, and measuring change. One principal stated, “Change is brought on by peers and colleagues within the community pointing out a need. Change can be brought on by students coming to me and feeling free enough to say, ‘these things aren’t working, why not try something else’... the ability to converse freely and exchange ideas about what is happening in our school.”

Another principal told the researcher, “...the way we try to manage change is by having a collaborative effort to identify what the needs are and getting some kind of consensus around that... defining a process that’s acceptable to all... communicating what the implications of the change are and preparing the way for the changes to occur.”
When asked to explain how they identified the need for change, six principals cited by examining current practices and methods as their way to identify the need for change. One in particular stated, "...by looking at practice, by looking at what is happening in the classrooms, by looking at results."

Five principals stated that examination of data is a guiding element for identifying the need for change. One principal told the researcher, "...we have a very systematic approach to change through our professional development, curriculum, and management process...and then, in order to make sure we are constantly looking at it, not assuming it works...we collect data and review it constantly."

Principals were asked to describe how they initiate changes within their schools. From their responses, seven principals discussed initiating change in small steps is important and necessary to the process. One in particular stated, "...you don't change everything—you change one piece at a time."

Six principals noted that buy-in/consensus is a driving factor in initiating change. "It's important to get buy-in by all stakeholders...back to communication, of informing everybody...the problems aren't coming from the top down, people are identifying the problems...change handed down to a staff that hasn't bought into it, you might as well just throw it in the trash."

The principals were asked to explain how planning achievable goals is a part of the change process. All 10 principals responded in terms to express that planning goals that were attainable is a key factor for change. One principal stated, "...we look at things that are tangible, things that you can actually reach...we try not to make unrealistic goals...we try to make sure the goals are attainable."
Three principals provided a response that referenced the hiring of an outside consultant to assist in planning goals once a change had been identified. As one principal told the researcher, "...we use a lot of consultant-based people to come in and give us advice, to give us direction before we commit to any new directions...we research."

The 10 charter school principals explained how they carry out change in their building. Eight principals described that providing the necessary resources and time to staff was important in carrying out change. One principal discussed, "...you have to give [teachers] the time and resources and the information that they need...it could be training...you need to give them the tools necessary to achieve the change."

Six principals told the researcher that empowering or involving the staff was key in the change process. One principal noted, "...allow people to feel part of the process...do not have that top-down command that prevents people from using their own experiences and ideas...it's empowering the people."

The principals were asked to describe any measurements in place to determine if the change was successful. All ten principals explained that the use of data was important in analyzing a change initiative. As an example, one principal noted, "...we start by organizing numbers and compiling statistics so we could look and see where we are going and if it's working or not."

Nine principals simply stated that they derived a sense of the change by talking with the teachers to see if the change is effecting instruction through student portfolios and work, or a social behavior was an element of measurement.

Two principals told the researcher that using pre-determined indicators was another way to measure change. One principal discussed, "if you set a goal, you should
determine what outcome you want before you impose the goal. . . we decide what will constitute success and then we measure it according to those indicators."

Table 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency (n)</th>
<th>Patterns/Themes/Exceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*10</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 1:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Examination of data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 2:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Small steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Buy-in/consensus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Attainable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Outside consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Resources and time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Empowering staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 4:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Use of data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Talk with staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pre-determined indicators</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Commonality throughout all questions in the change category"
Climate. This section contains principals’ responses to questions in relation to climate, which are summarized in Table 13. The principals were asked to describe the features that create a school climate. Eight principals stated a trusting environment, five principals cited an open door policy, and four principals described a consistent environment as features for cultivating a school climate.

Three principals discussed empowering teachers to be leaders, one principal said, “In a school, everybody is a leader, I mean, teachers are leaders of their classrooms... you need to develop that belief in them and allow them to take more responsibility in other areas as well.”

The principals were asked to explain how decisions are made in their school. All 10 principals spoke about a collaborative effort in the decision-making process. One principal noted, “...we have a committee...we come together to solve the problems with a solution that everyone can live with. ...we work as a group, a unit, a family.”

Although most decisions were made with a collaborative approach, the principals all acknowledged to the researcher that there were times when they needed to make decisions themselves. Most of these decisions were about personnel issues or student privacy.

Principals were asked to describe how diverse points of view were handled in their school. From analyzing their responses, the researcher developed three themes:

1. Open-mindedness
2. Welcomed/appreciated
3. Brainstorming/consensus
Eight principals acknowledged they had open-mindedness to diverse points of view. One principal stated, "I see things in what the person is saying that are good...taking it as constructive criticism."

Six principals expressed that they welcomed and appreciated a different point of view. One told the researcher, "it's encouraged in this school...our expectations are we will appreciate one another's differences, and not just tolerate them, but celebrate them. This means cultivating an attitude of respect for a different point of view...a different look at the world...the uniqueness of the difference of ideas is so much what we are built on that it's not an issue for us...it's a strength."

Six principals discussed brainstorming and consensuses as a way of handling different points of view. One principal said, "It's really important to take the time that's needed for open discussion, giving everyone ample opportunity to provide input...I call these sessions 'brainstorming' because we put all ideas on the board; no one can comment about anyone else's idea...we build consensus and there is respect for all ideas, even if you do not agree with them."

Culture: This section contains principals' responses to questions in relation to culture, which are summarized in Table 14. The principals were asked to describe how accomplishments and successes in their school were recognized. All 10 principals in one form or another answered this question with responses that could be categorized as:

1. On a daily basis
2. Through award ceremonies
3. Meetings and assemblies
4. Public announcements and newsletters
5. Personal notes

Table 13
Frequency of Patterns/Themes/Exceptions to the Principals’ Responses – Climate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency (n)</th>
<th>Patterns/Themes/Exceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 1:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Trusting environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Open door policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Consistent environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Empowering staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 2:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Collaborative effort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Non-collaborative (personnel/student privacy issues)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Open-mindedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Welcomed/appreciated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Brainstorming/consensus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The principals explained to the researcher how they let people know they are valued and have confidence in their abilities. Ten principals stated supporting and listening to their staff were ways to show confidence in the staff and that they and their ideas are valued. One principal told the researcher, “…listening and being their support factor is important.”
Seven principals cited empowering the staff and providing the opportunity for
them to be creative. One principal stated, "When we are planning different projects, I
assign them to a specific staff member and remove myself completely. . .this shows them
I have confidence in their abilities and that I appreciate their ideas and input." Five
principals commented that a simple note to someone praising them for a job well done or
hosting a small celebration to let them know they are valued and appreciated are other
ways they show their staff how they feel about them.

Table 14

Frequency of Patterns/Themes/Exceptions to the Principals' Responses – Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency (n)</th>
<th>Pattern/Themes/Exceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 1:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>On a daily basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Through award ceremonies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Meetings and assemblies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Public announcements and newsletters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Personal notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 2:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Supporting and listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Empowering staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Personal notes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organization. This section contains principals' responses to questions in relation to organization, which are summarized in Table 15. When asked to explain how routines and procedures assist in preventing distractions, the 10 principals responded that when they can give notice of an interruption in the school day, this assists with keeping the status quo. One principal said, "I try to give them as much warning ahead of time because if they know it's coming up, they can plan for it and it helps to keep with a normal flow."

Three principals pointed out that by eliminating the use of the PA system, this helped lessen distractions as well. One principal told the researcher, "The most important thing as an administrator is not to interrupt the flow of instruction, we don't have announcements, we don't use the PA system during the school day."

When asked how do you guide your staff back after a distraction has occurred, all principals agreed that getting back on task was the priority of the moment. "You have to stay focused. Even though there was a distraction, you have to be able to come right back." Another principal said, "...you come back...let's get right back to where we were."

Four principals noted showing their presence was a way to guide people back. One principal responded, "...just walking around fast...making sure teachers and students see me and hear me praising their efforts."

The principals were asked to describe how they informed people of the routines and procedures. The 10 charter school principals all responded to the question with the following: orientation meeting, handbooks, newsletters and bulletins.
Table 15

Frequency of Patterns/Themes/Exceptions to the Principals' Responses – Organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency (n)</th>
<th>Patterns/Themes/Exceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 1:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Prior notice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Eliminate PA system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-question 1(a):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Get back on task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Visibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 2:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Orientation meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Handbooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Newsletters and bulletins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instruction/Curriculum. This section contains principals’ responses to questions in relation to instruction/curriculum, which are summarized in Table 16. The principals were asked to describe how they stay current with instructional practices. The 10 principals all responded with attending professional development workshops, reading professional journals, and being a member of professional organizations. Two principals cited visiting other schools. And, one principal told the researcher by attending formal classes at a college/university.

The principals were asked to explain how they provided guidance to their staff with regard to effective classroom practices. Again, all 10 principals cited encouraging
their staff to attend professional development workshops, read professional journals, and become a member of a professional organization. Two principals stated sending staff to visit other schools. One principal discussed providing stipends or compensation for formal studies toward an advanced degree at a college or university.

The principals were asked about their role in planning, choosing and implementing curriculum. All 10 principals responded that their schools had curriculum committees in which they were a member. Their roles were more visible in the planning and choosing stage. The implementation stage mainly rested on the teaching staff. The principals described themselves as monitors and providers to the teaching staff during the implementation stage. One principal told the researcher, “My input is to monitor, to go in and see where they are... give them some direction when needed... and provide the necessary resources and tools for successful implementation.”

Table 16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency (n)</th>
<th>Patterns/Themes/Exceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 1:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Member of professional organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Visit other schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Formal studies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 16 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency (n)</th>
<th>Patterns/Themes/Exceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 2:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Member of professional organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Visit other schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Compensation for formal studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Curriculum committee member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Monitor and provider</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

This chapter discussed the nature of the study and presented the data gathered by the researcher. The information was obtained from archival data furnished by the NJDOE and 10 tape-recorded interviews conducted by the researcher with voluntary participants. The structured interview followed a planned question route and consisted of background information and categorical questions that related to behaviors and practices of effective principals.

Limitations for this study included that the analysis should not be generalized to the hypothetical population of all charter school principals or even to other charter schools in New Jersey, the use of the interview instrument relied on the principals
answering the questions honestly, the principals that participated in this study were at
different levels in their careers and came from a variety of backgrounds.

The data gathered and presented in this chapter assisted the researcher in finding
patterns, consistencies, and inconsistencies with the charter school principals’ responses.
After careful review using a content analysis, the researcher reported the analysis in
tabular form for each category and its questions. In chapter 5 the researcher presents the
findings, determines conclusions, and identifies implications for further study.
Chapter V

Summary, Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Chapter 1 of this study stated its purpose which was to investigate the connection between the research on behaviors and practices of effective principals in general and how charter school principals behave and practice at their jobs.

Chapter 2 provided a literature review which included a brief summary of the charter school movement, New Jersey charter schools, effective schools research, leadership definitions, styles and management, and research on behaviors and practices of effective leaders.

Chapter 3 described the design and methodology for this study. Included was a discussion of research procedures, participant selection, development of the interview instrument, validity and reliability, techniques for data collection, and the treatment of the data.

Chapter 4 presented a summary of the study, nature of the study, as well as the presentation and analysis of the data.

This chapter includes a summary of the study, findings, conclusions, and recommendations

Summary of the Study

The selection of schools and principals studied was based upon the charter schools in existence the longest in New Jersey. These charter schools opened their doors in 1997 and/or 1998. From these schools, 10 principals volunteered to participate in this study.
The principals who participated in this study had been in their current assignments for an average of 3.5 years. The average length of time in education for these principals was 22 years.

The charter schools were located in rural, suburban, and urban communities. The enrollment for these schools ranged between 76 and 280 students and served grades K–12. The average instructional class size was 14–25 students. The student/faculty ratio ranged from 8:1 to 22:1.

Data on the charter schools and their principals was gathered from archival data furnished by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), a literature review of charter schools and effective leadership, informal on-site observations conducted by the researcher, and 16 tape-recorded interviews conducted with the voluntary participants. After performing a content analysis, data from these sources provided the information necessary for the researcher to analyze and answer the research questions posed by this study:

1. What behaviors of charter school principals are congruent with the behaviors of effective leadership?

2. How do charter school principals' leadership practices align with the research related to effective leadership practices?
Findings

Effective Leadership Behaviors

Research studies by Rutherford (1985), McEwan (1998), and Periell and Cookson (as cited in McEwan, 1998) have compiled the following behaviors that assist in identifying effective leadership behaviors:

1. Communicate a clear vision
2. Establish supportive environments
3. Continually monitor progress and evaluate results
4. Provide instructional leadership
5. Create order and discipline
6. Develop teacher leaders
7. Set high expectations
8. Maintain positive attitudes with others
9. Create a culture and climate conducive to learning
10. Establish and commit to clear academic goals

Through informal observation by the researcher and the self-reported behaviors of the charter school principals studied, this study revealed that in general, these charter school principals engaged in these leadership behaviors:

1. Display a strong belief/value system
2. Communicate and model the school's vision
3. Use data to monitor progress
4. Is proactive and receptive to change
5. Establish collaborative work environments
6. Empower staff
7. Maintain environments conducive to learning
8. Provide and support professional development for themselves and staff

These findings with regards to behaviors of effective leaders are consistent with the leading research covered in chapter 2 and the theoretical framework (See Figure 1) for this study. To compare the research and findings further, Table 17 establishes the basis for the researcher's conclusions:

Table 17

A Summary Comparison of Effective Leadership Behaviors and Those
Self-Reported by the Principals (2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective Leadership Behaviors</th>
<th>Self-Reported Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicate a clear vision</td>
<td>Communicate/model the school's vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish supportive environments</td>
<td>Establish collaborative work environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centrally monitor progress/evaluate results</td>
<td>Use data to monitor progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is proactive and receptive to change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide instructional leadership</td>
<td>Provide and support professional development for themselves and staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create order and discipline</td>
<td>Maintain environments conducive to learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develp teacher leaders</td>
<td>Empower staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set high expectations</td>
<td>Display a strong belief/value system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain positive attitudes with others</td>
<td>Establish collaborative work environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a culture/climate conducive to learning</td>
<td>Maintain environments conducive to learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish/commit to clear academic goals</td>
<td>Display a strong belief/value system</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Effective Leadership Practices

In exploring the alignment of charter school principals’ leadership practices and those established by research related to effective leadership practices, the researcher developed a theoretical framework combining results from studies by Kouzes and Posner (2002) and Waters et al. (2003), who had produced a listing of practices that assist in identifying effective leadership practices. After 20 years of research, Kouzes and Posner (2002) developed a theoretical model of effective leadership practices. The model consists of five practices common to the leadership experience. The practices are challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart. These authors advised that these five practices serve as the basis for becoming an effective leader.

Upon reviewing a meta-analysis of research studies from the past 30 years, Waters et al. (2003) identified 21 key leadership practices that make up the “balanced leadership framework” (p. 2). This framework, although a “work in progress” in 2004, describes what effective leaders practice to impact student achievement.

Through informal observation by the researcher and the self-reported practices of the charter school principals studied, this study revealed the practices of the principals in the categories expressed in the theoretical framework (See Table 7): values, vision, change, climate, culture, organization, and instruction/curriculum.

Values. Sergiovanni (1996) stated, “The symbolic and cultural forces derive from the instructional leader’s ability to become the symbol of what is important and purposeful about the school as well as to articulate the values and beliefs of the organization over time” (p. 5). The 10 principals responded that leading by example was
a key in communicating the value system of the school to the community. One principal stated, "I don’t think you can lead without being an example. . .the children see it and in turn they will emulate our value system."

Vision. Keller (1998) said that principals needed to "communicate the school's mission clearly and consistently to staff, parents, and students" (p. 26). All 10 principals acknowledged that communicating and promoting a clear vision were essential for guiding their school to success. One principal told the researcher, "Vision has to be clear, it has to be one that all stakeholders can embrace. . .it has to be obtainable."

Change. Barth (1980) addressed change: "If we have learned anything about educational change over the past twenty years, it is that change imposed upon schools from without does not work. . .change emerges from within the school, especially from individuals" (p. 146). A common response by the 10 principals reflected the importance of communication. One principal stated, "Change is brought on by peers and colleagues within the community pointing out a need. . .the ability to converse freely and exchange ideas about what is happening in our school."

Evaluating the data’s potential to assist in organizing a school improvement plan is a key practice for principals to initiate and implement a change within their community (McEwan, 1998, p. 14). The principals studied acknowledged the use of reviewing data as a part of their change initiatives and process. One principal told the researcher, "We collect data and review it constantly. . .we look to see where we are going, and if its working or not."

Climate. Rutherford’s (1985) research supported the need for a leader’s attention to climate. Effective leaders establish supportive environments within their school
community. All 16 principals spoke about a collaborative effort with regard to decision making; eight discussed keeping an open mind and creating a trusting environment as key elements in establishing a climate for their schools. One principal noted, "We come together to solve problems with a solution that everyone can live with. . . we work as a group, a unit, a family." Another stated, "We appreciate one another's differences. . . respect a different point of view. . . a different look at the world."

Culture. Block (1987) explained that, "cultures can be changed in a thousand small ways, not by dramatic announcements emanating from the boardroom" (p. 97). The principals revealed that attention to the everyday nuances and acknowledgements helped to create a positive culture within their schools. All 10 discussed recognizing and celebrating student and staff accomplishment on a daily basis.

They also revealed that supporting and listening to their staff was essential in establishing a good culture. One principal explained, "Listening and being their support factor is important." Seven principals cited empowering the staff assisted them in establishing a professional culture for their school community. One principal noted, "allow people to feel part of the process. . . do not have that top-down command that prevents people from using their own experience and ideas."

Organization. Sweeney (1982) reported that effective leaders "do what is necessary to ensure that the school's climate is conducive to learning; it is quiet, pleasant, and well maintained" (p.348). The 10 principals studied acknowledged that giving staff prior notice of a distraction that may be occurring assisted in keeping the day running smoothly. One principal said, "give them as much warning ahead of time because if they know it is coming, they can plan for it. . . helps to keep with a normal flow."
Also, the 10 principals revealed that getting back on task as soon as possible after a distraction was vital in maintaining the organizational structure and flow of the school day. One principal remarked, “You have to stay focused...you have to be able to come right back.”

When asked how to guide staff and students back after a distraction, nine principals explained that being visible and out in the hallways assisted them in this endeavor. “Making sure teachers and students see me and hear me praising their efforts.”

The principals explained that having literature such as handbooks and daily bulletins assisted in maintaining the organization as well. Policies, procedures, and detailed explanations that are made readily available help to keep the understanding of the organization of the school clear for all stakeholders.

Instructio/ Curriculum. Keller (1998) stated, “A good principal builds a good staff and makes professional development a top concern” (p. 25). All 10 principals acknowledged for both themselves and their staffs, attending professional development workshops, reading professional journals, and being active members in professional organizations was important in maintaining instruction and curriculum that may continue to improve student achievement and progress.

Sweeteney (1982) explained that an effective principal monitors and evaluates student progress on a regular basis giving priority to activities that foster academic success and supporting the resources necessary so students can achieve academic success. The 10 principals described themselves as monitors and providers to the teaching staff with regard to instruction and curriculum. One principal told the researcher, “My input is
to monitor... give them some direction when needed... and provide the necessary resources and tools for success."

These findings with regard to practices of effective leaders are consistent with the leading research covered in chapter 2. Table 18 provides a summary of the findings that establish the basis for the researcher’s conclusions.

**Table 18**

*Comparison of Effective Leadership Practices as Derived from the Research and Literature Review and those Self-Reported by the Principals of Selected New Jersey Charter Schools (2004)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KOUZES &amp; POSNER, 2002</th>
<th>WATERS, MARZANO &amp; McNULTY, 2003</th>
<th>Category*</th>
<th>Self-Reported practice</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model the Way</td>
<td>Ideals/Beliefs</td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Lead by example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspire a</td>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>Communicate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Vision</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provide clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge the</td>
<td>Change agent</td>
<td>Change</td>
<td>Change</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Optimizes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluating data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enable Others to Act</td>
<td>Input</td>
<td>Climate</td>
<td></td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intellectual stimulation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Open mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trusting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage the Heart</td>
<td>Contingent rewards</td>
<td>Culture</td>
<td></td>
<td>Recognize staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Affirmation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Support, listen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Empower staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Order</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Prior notice</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Get back on task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Situational awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Documentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Visibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Categories from Kouzes, Posner, Waters, Marzano & McNulty*
Table 18 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Self-Reported Practice</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kouzes &amp; Posner, 2002</td>
<td>Curriculum (C&amp;E)</td>
<td>Instruction/ Curricular</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>Professional development and organizations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledge of C&amp;E Assessment</td>
<td>Monitor/provide resources</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monitor/Evaluate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *The categories represent a content analysis synthesis of the various effective practices from the different researchers and serve as a theoretic framework for this study.

Conclusions

Charter schools are public schools of choice. In New Jersey, charter schools are independent public schools that operate under a charter granted by the Commissioner of Education. Despite opposition from local school boards and the state’s teachers association (NIEA), New Jersey has one of the strongest charter laws in the nation.

Many New Jersey charter schools are performing well and competing with their traditional public school counterparts in a variety of ways. As of May 2003, 36 of the charter schools that opened in September 1997, 1998, and 1999, were granted renewals for 5-year periods. This accounts for 95% of the charter schools that opened during this time period.

Concepts that charter schools are founded on seem to relate to the correlates for effective schools. These correlates provide a framework for increased student performance, teacher effectiveness, effective leadership, and could serve as another referent for this study’s theoretical base. The charter school movement is also based upon the notion that the schools be freed from bureaucratic regulations and operates with a great deal of autonomy. In exchange for this autonomy, charter schools are held...
accountable for student achievement. This issue was not specifically addressed in the present study. However, the study does include tangential evidence on student achievement.

To obtain established goals for student achievement and progress, a main component is an effective leader. A principal who possesses strong leadership behaviors and whose practices enhance the learning environment is essential in the daily interactions and activities of a school, and therefore should have an impact on student learning and achievement. Thus a brief comparison of the outcomes from students in the charter schools studied can provide an estimate of the success of the schools. [Note that this comparison is limited because there was no thorough comparison of the many potential variables such as like student demographics, teacher qualification, etc.]

The findings for this study revealed that the behaviors and practices of the New Jersey charter school principals studied are consistent with the leading research and literature covered in chapter 2 and Tables 17 and Table 18. The theoretical framework for this study expanded the idea that schools with a principal who practices and exhibits effective leadership behaviors should have a positive influence on student achievement and progress as measured by improved test scores and student accomplishments.

Charter schools in New Jersey are held to the same standards for testing and curriculum as their traditional public school counterparts. Their curriculum must align with the New Jersey Core Content Curriculum Standards (NJCCCS) and test their students in Grade 4, New Jersey Assessment of Knowledge (NJASK); Grade 8, Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA); and Grade 11, High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA).
When test scores are reported by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), the school/district score is compared to the District Factor Group (DFG) score and a State score. The DFG was developed in 1975 for the purpose of comparing students' performance on statewide assessments across demographically similar school districts. The DFG represents an approximate measure of a community's relative socioeconomic status (SES). The classification provides a useful tool for examining student achievement and comparing similar school districts.

From an analysis of the test scores provided by the NJDOE for the school year 2002 – 2003 of the 10 charter schools studied, the researcher compared the charter school scores on the NJASK, GEPA, and HSPA to the DFG. The following results are reported:

**NJASK**

The NJASK is administered to students in Grade 4. Seven of the 10 charter schools studied administer this test because they serve students in the fourth grade. The NJASK measures language arts and mathematics competencies.

Seven charter schools, 100% who administered the NJASK, performed above the DFG in language arts. Two schools report advanced proficient levels for students in language arts above the DFG by 7.6%.

Seven charter schools, 100% who administered the NJASK, performed above the DFG in mathematics. Six schools reported advanced proficient levels for students in mathematics above the DFG by .3, 5.3, 9.1, 21.9, 25.1, and 64.2% (See Table 19).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Code</th>
<th>Language Arts</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>Language Arts DFG</th>
<th>Mathematics DFG</th>
<th>Advanced L/A DFG*</th>
<th>Advanced Math DFG*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td>96.3</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>72.9</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>95.6</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>64.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: *Denotes percentage above the DFG reported level


**GEPA**

The GEPA is administered to students in Grade 8. Seven of the 10 charter schools studied administer this test because they serve students in the eighth grade. The GEPA measures language arts, mathematics, and science competencies.

Seventeen charter schools, 100% who administered the GEPA, performed above the DFG in language arts. Two schools reported advanced proficient levels for students in language arts above the DFG by 1.4 and 41.4%.
Seven charter schools, 100% who administered the GEPA, performed above the DFG in mathematics. Two schools reported advanced proficient levels for students in mathematics above the DFG by 19.6 and 58.7%.

Seven charter schools, 100% who administered the GEPA, performed above the DFG in science. Three schools reported advanced proficient levels for students in science above the DFG by 63.1, 18, and 65.9% (See Table 20).

Table 20

2002-2003 GEPA Scores for Charter School Students in this Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>88.2</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>58.2</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>55.9</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>90.2</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>95.3</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>95.2</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>65.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: *Denotes percentage above the DFG reported level

The HSPA is administered to students in Grade 11. Two of the 10 charter schools
studied administer this test because they serve students in the eleventh grade. The HSPA
measures language arts and mathematics competencies.

One school, 50% of the schools that administered the HSPA, performed above the
DFG in language arts, and also reported advanced proficient levels in language arts above
the DFG by 5%.

Both schools, 100% of the schools that administered the HSPA, performed above
the DFG in mathematics. One school reported advanced proficient levels for students in
mathematics above the DFG by 1.2% (See Table 21).

### Table 21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>L/Arts</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>L/Arts DFG</th>
<th>Math DFG</th>
<th>Adv L/A DFG*</th>
<th>Adv Math DFG*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Denotes percentage above the DFG reported level.

Discussion

NCLB (2002) is a federal act that establishes guidelines for all children in our nation to be 100% proficient in language arts, mathematics, and science by the year 2014.

The act contains four basic education reform principles:

1. Increased focus on accountability
2. Increased flexibility and local control
3. Expanded educational options for parents
4. A focus on research-based methods and practices

Each state must establish a minimum standard for percentage of students proficient for each year. In New Jersey, starting points were established for language arts and mathematics for Grades 4, 8, and 11 (See Table 22).

Table 22

New Jersey Statewide Benchmark for Proficiency in Grades 4, 8 and 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>NJASK</th>
<th>GEPA</th>
<th>HSPE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: New Jersey Department of Education, 2004, NCLB

When compared to the state benchmarks, the 10 charter schools studied fare well.

Seven of the 10 schools, in varied combinations, are at or above the established benchmarks. Thus, the researcher concluded that the charter schools studied are exhibiting effective school qualities and student achievement on standardized tests administered in Grades 4, 8, and 11. The basis for this conclusion is in the findings of the data analysis for this study, from the informal observations by the researcher, the self-
reported behaviors and practices of the principals studied, the analysis of statewide
assessment data, and from the match between the data from this study with prior research
and the theoretical framework.

Research for effective schools establishes the leadership practices of the principal
as a pivotal element with the reaching of goals for improved student learning and
achievement within a school. The research provides a base that establishes the principal
as an important figure in the development and maintenance of an effective school.

The findings of this study revealed that these 10 principals from longest
established charter schools exhibit behaviors and practices that are congruent with the
research and literature on effective leaders. Regardless of the charter school principals’
experience and background, these principals may be considered one of the factors as to
why their schools are demonstrating levels of student achievement and progress as
reported by the test scores for Grades 4, 8, and 11.

Recommendations

Studies have been conducted over the past decade reporting on the achievement or
lack of achievement with the nation’s charter schools. Many times these studies leave the
reader with a mixed picture. One reason for this may be that studies were conducted too
early on; the charter schools may have been too young to be studied at the time. Another
reason is that many times studies are conducted comparing dissimilar variables. For
example, studies conducted comparing state to state are likely to produce results that are
skewed and unreliable.
Not all states follow the same testing mandates or charter law approvals. This holds true for our nation’s traditional public schools as well. Until our nation decides to create a national standard for schools to adhere to, comparing schools – traditional, charter, private – to one another will never portray an accurate picture to the reader.

The following are the researcher’s recommendations for policy, practice, and further study:

**Policy**

1. Conduct a study that focuses on failing/failed charters schools to establish guidelines that would assist charter schools in achieving success.

2. Perform a thorough analysis of the practices in place that determine District Factor Group (DFG), Special Education populations, and other enrollment processes of charter schools.


**Practice**

1. Replication of this study using students, teachers, and parents to discuss the principal’s leadership and behaviors with regard to satisfaction and accountability.

2. Conduct a study using other student demographics and student outcomes such as attendance rates, graduation rates, student suspension/expulsions,
to assist in establishing the effectiveness of the principal's behaviors and practices.

3. Conduct a longitudinal study with observations as the method to determine charter school principals' behaviors and practices.

4. Conduct a similar study using a quantitative design, or a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Further Study

1. Conduct a study comparing charter schools and traditional public schools on student achievement and progress in similar DFGs using a qualitative and/or quantitative design.

2. Break the charter schools into groups reflective of elementary, middle, and secondary school and conduct a similar study with each group's principal to determine similarities or dissimilarities across the different grade levels.

Final Note

Principals must continually reflect on their behaviors and practices to better serve their students and school community.

They must be willing and able to assess the degree of progress that has been made to provide equitable educational opportunities for all students...they must be willing to look at current educational practices and procedures...they must be willing to assess how effective their own leadership has been in promoting and attaining an environment of achievement for students. (Foster, 2004, p. 45)
References


Author.


Appendix A

Charter School Program Act of 1995
CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM ACT OF 1995
N.J.S.A. 18A:36A
Effective January 1996 – AMENDED November 2000

18A:36A-1 Short Title

This Act shall be known and may be cited as the “Charter School Program Act of 1995.”

L.1995,c426,s.1.

18A:36A-2 Findings, declarations relative to establishment of charter schools

The Legislature finds and declares that the establishment of charter schools as part of this State’s program of public education can assist in promoting comprehensive educational reform by providing a mechanism for the implementation of a variety of educational approaches which may not be available in the traditional public school classroom. Specifically, charter schools offer the potential to improve pupil learning; increase for students and parents the educational choices available when selecting the learning environment which they feel may be the most appropriate; encourage the use of different and innovative learning methods; establish a new form of accountability for schools; require the measurement of learning outcomes; make the school the unit for educational improvement; and establish new professional opportunities for teachers.

The Legislature further finds that the establishment of a charter school program is in the best interests of the students of the State and it is therefore the public policy of the State to encourage and facilitate the development of charter schools.

L.1995,c426,s.2.
18A:36A-3 Charter school program established

2. The Commissioner of Education shall establish a charter school program which shall provide for the approval and granting of charters to charter schools pursuant to the provisions of this act. A charter school shall be a public school operated under a charter granted by the commissioner, which is operated independently of a local board of education and is managed by a board of trustees. The board of trustees, upon receiving a charter from the commissioner, shall be deemed to be public agent authorized by the State Board of Education to supervise and control the charter school.

b. The program shall authorize the establishment of not more than 135 charter schools during the 48 months following the effective date of this act. A minimum of three charter schools shall be allocated to each county. The commissioner shall actively encourage the establishment of charter schools in urban school districts with the participation of institutions of higher education.

L.1995,c426,s.3.

18A:36A-4 Establishment of charter school

a. A charter school may be established by teaching staff members, parents with children attending the schools of the district, or a combination of teaching staff members and parents. A charter school may also be established by an institution of higher education or a private entity located within the State in conjunction with teaching staff members and parents of children attending the schools of the district. If the charter school is established by a private entity, representatives of the private entity shall not constitute a majority of the
trustees of the school, and the charter shall specify the extent to which the private entity shall be involved in the operation of the school. The name of the charter school shall not include the name or identification of the private entity, and the private entity shall not realize a net profit from its operation of a charter school. A private or parochial school shall not be eligible for charter school status.

b. A currently existing public school is eligible to become a charter school if the following criteria are met:

1. At least 51% of the teaching staff in the school shall have signed a petition in support of the school becoming a charter school; and

2. At least 51% of the parents or guardians of pupils attending the public school shall have signed a petition in support of the school becoming a charter school.

c. An application to establish a charter school shall be submitted to the commissioner and the local board of education or state superintendent, in the case of a State-operated school district, in the school year preceding the school year in which the charter school will be established. The board of education or state superintendent shall review the application and forward a recommendation to the commissioner with 60 days of receipt of the application. The commissioner shall have final authority to grant or reject a charter application.

d. The local board of education or a charter school applicant may appeal the decision of the commissioner to the State Board of Education. The State board
shall render a decision within 30 days of the date of the receipt of the appeal. If the State board does not render a decision within 30 days, the decision of the commissioner shall be deemed final.

e. A charter school established during the 48 months following the effective date of this act, other than a currently existing public school which becomes a charter school pursuant to the provisions of subsection b, of section 4 of this act, shall not have an enrollment in excess of 500 students or greater than 25% of the student body of the school district in which the charter school is established, whichever is less.

Any two charter schools within the same public school district that are not operating the same grade levels may petition the commissioner to amend their charters and consolidate into one school. The commissioner may approve an amendment to consolidate, provided that the basis for consolidation is to accommodate the transfer of students who would otherwise be subject to the random selection process pursuant to section 8 of P.L.1995, c.426 (C.18A:36A-8).

L.1995,c.426,s.4; amended 2000,c.142,s.1.

18A:36A-5 Application for charter school

The application for a charter school shall include the following information:

a. The identification of the charter applicant;

b. The name of the proposed charter school;

c. The proposed governance structure of the charter school including a list of the proposed members of the board of trustees of the charter school or a
description of the qualifications and method for the appointment or
election of members of the board of trustees;

d. The educational goals of the charter school, the curriculum to be offered,
and the methods of assessing whether students are meeting educational
goals. Charter school students shall be required to meet the same testing
and academic performance standards as established by law and regulation
for public school students. Charter school students shall also meet any
additional assessment indicators which are included within the charter
approved by the commissioner;

e. The admission policy and criteria for evaluating the admission of students
which shall comply with the requirements of section 8 of this act;

f. The age or grade range of students to be enrolled;

g. The school calendar and school day schedule;

h. A description of the charter school staff responsibilities and the proposed
qualifications of teaching staff;

i. A description of the procedures to be implemented to ensure significant
parental involvement in the operation of the school;

j. A description of, and address of, the physical facility in which the charter
school will be located;

k. Information on the manner in which community groups will be involved
in the charter school planning process;

l. The financial plan for the charter school and the provisions which will be
made for auditing the school pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.13A:23-1;
m. A description of and justification for any waivers of regulations which the charter school will request; and

n. Such information as the commissioner may require.

L.1995,c.426,s.5.

18A:36A-6 Powers of charter school

A charter school established pursuant to the provisions of this act shall be a body corporate and politic with all powers necessary or desirable for carrying out its charter program, including, but not limited to, the power to:

a. Adopt a name and corporate seal; however, any name selected shall include the words “charter school;”

b. Sue and be sued, but only to the same extent and upon the same conditions that a public entity can be sued;

c. Acquire real property from public or private sources, by purchase, lease, lease with the option to purchase, or by gift, for use as a facility;

d. Receive and disburse funds for school purposes;

e. Make contracts and leases for the procurement of services, equipment and supplies;

f. Incur temporary debts in anticipation of the receipt of funds;

g. Solicit and accept any gifts or grants for school purposes; and

h. Have such other powers as are necessary to fulfill its charter and which are not inconsistent with this act or the requirements of the commissioner.
The board of trustees of a charter school shall comply with the provisions of the
"Open Public Meeting Act," P.L. 1975, c. 231 (C. 10:4-6 et seq.).
L. 1995, c. 426, s. 6.

18A:36A-7 Student admissions to charter school

A charter school shall be open to all students on a space available basis and shall
not discriminate in its admission policies or practices on the basis of intellectual or
athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, status as a handicapped person,
proficiency in the English language, or any other basis that would be illegal if used by a
school district; however, a charter school may limit admission to a particular grade level
or to areas of concentration of the school such as mathematics, science, or the arts. A
charter school may establish reasonable criteria to evaluate prospective students which
shall be outlined in the school's charter.
L. 1995, c. 426, s. 7.

18A:36A-8 Enrollment preference

a. Preference for enrollment in a charter school shall be given to students
   who reside in the school district in which the charter school is located. If
   there are more applications to enroll in the charter school than there are
   spaces available, the charter school shall select students to attend using a
   random selection process. A charter school shall not charge tuition to
   students who reside in the district.

b. A charter school shall allow any student who was enrolled in the school in
   the immediately preceding school year to enroll in the charter school in the
appropriate grade unless the appropriate grade is not offered at the charter
school.

c. A charter school may give enrollment priority to a sibling of a student
enrolled in the charter school.

d. If available space permits, a charter school may enroll non-resident
students. The terms and condition of the enrollment shall be outlined in
the school's charter and approved by the commissioner.

e. The admission policy of the charter school shall, to the maximum extent
practicable, seek the enrollment of a cross section of the community's
school age population including racial and academic factors.

L.1995,c.426,s.8.

18A:36A-9 Withdrawal, expulsion from charter school

A student may withdraw from a charter school at any time. A student may be
expelled from a charter school based on criteria determined by the board of trustees,
which are consistent with the provisions of N.J.S.18A:37-2, and approved by the
commissioner as part of the school's charter. Any expulsion shall be made upon the
recommendation of the charter school principal, in consultation with the student's
teachers.

L.1995,c.426,s.9.

18A:36A-10 Location of a charter school

A charter school may be located in part of an existing public school building, in
space provided on a public work site, in a public building, or any other suitable location.
The facility shall be exempt from public school facility regulations except those
pertaining to the health or safety of the pupils. A charter school shall not construct a
facility with public funds.
L.1995.c.426,s10.

18A:36A-11 Operation of charter school

a. A charter school shall operate in accordance with its charter and the
provisions of law and regulation which govern other public schools;
except that, upon request of the board of trustees of a charter school, the
commissioner may exempt the school from State regulations concerning
public schools, except those pertaining to assessment, testing, civil rights
and student health and safety, if the board of trustees satisfactorily
demonstrates to the commissioner that the exemption will advance the
educational goals and objectives of the school.

b. A charter school shall comply with the provisions of chapter 46 of Title
18A of the New Jersey Statutes concerning the provision of services to
handicapped students; except that the fiscal responsibility for any student
currently enrolled in or determined to require a private day or residential
school shall remain with the district of residence.

c. A charter school shall comply with applicable State and federal anti-
discrimination statutes.

L.1995.c.426,s.11.

18A:36A-12 Definitions; per pupil payments to charter school

a. As used in this section: "Maximum T & E amount" means the T & E
flexible amount for the budget year weighted for kindergarten, elementary,
middle school and high school respectively as set forth in section 12 of
P.L. 1996, c. 138 (C.18A:7F-12);

"Program budget" means the sum in the pre-budget year inflated by the
CPI rate published most recent to the budget calculation of core
curriculum standards aid; supplemental core curriculum standards aid;
stabilization aid, including supplemental stabilization aid and
supplemental school tax reduction aid; designated general fund balance;
miscellaneous local general fund revenue; and the district general fund tax
levy.

b. The school district of residence shall pay directly to the charter school for
each student enrolled in the charter school who resides in the district an
amount equal to the lower of either 90% of the program budget per pupil
for the specific grade level in the district or 90% of the maximum T & E
amount. The per pupil amount paid to the charter school shall not exceed
the program budget per pupil for the specific grade level in the district in
which the charter school is located. The district of residence shall also pay
directly to the charter school any categorical aid attributable to the student,
provided the student is receiving appropriate categorical services, and any
federal funds attributable to the student.

c. For any student enrolled in a charter school in which 90% of the
program budget per pupil for the specific grade level is greater
than 90% of the maximum T & E amount, the State shall pay the
difference between the two amounts.
d. Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection b. of this section, in the case of a student who was not included in the district’s projected resident enrollment for the school year, the State shall pay 100% of the amount required pursuant to subsection b. of this section for the first year of the student’s enrollment in the charter school.

e. The State shall make payments required pursuant to subsections c. and d. of this section directly to the charter school.

L.1995,c.426,s.12; amended 2000,c.142,s.2.

18A:36A-13 Transportation for students

The students who reside in the school district in which the charter school is located shall be provided transportation to the charter school on the same terms and conditions as transportation is provided to students attending the schools of the district. Non-resident students shall receive transportation services pursuant to regulations established by the State board.

L.1995,c.426,s.13.

18A:36A-14 Authority of board of trustees; employees

a. The board of trustees of a charter school shall have the authority to decide matters related to the operations of the school including budgeting, curriculum, and operating procedures, subject to the school’s charter. The board shall provide for appropriate insurance against any loss or damage to its property or any liability resulting from the use of its property or from the acts of omissions of its offices and employees.
b. In the case of a currently existing public school which becomes a charter school pursuant to the provisions of subsection b of section 4 of this act, all school employees of the charter school shall be deemed to be members of the bargaining unit defined in the applicable agreement and shall be represented by the same majority representative organizations as the employees covered by that agreement. In the case of other charter schools, the board of trustees of a charter school shall have the authority to employ, discharge and contract with necessary teachers and non-licensed employees subject to the school's charter. The board of trustees may choose whether or not to offer the terms of any collective bargaining agreement already established by the school district for its employees, but the board shall adopt any health and safety provisions of the agreement. The charter school and its employees shall be subject to the provisions of the "New Jersey Employer-Employee Relations Act," P.L.1941,c.106 (C.34:13A-1 et seq.). A charter school shall not set a teacher salary lower than the minimum teacher salary specified pursuant to section 7 of P.L.1985,c.321 (C.18A:39-5.6) nor higher than the highest step in the salary guide in the collective bargaining agreement which is in effect in the district in which the charter school is located.

c. All classroom teachers and professional support staff shall hold appropriate New Jersey certification. The commissioner shall make appropriate adjustments in the alternate route program in order to expedite the certification of persons who are qualified by education and experience.
d. A public school employee, tenured or non-tenured, may request a leave of absence of up to three years from the local board of education or State district superintendent in order to work in a charter school. Approval for a leave of absence shall not be unreasonably withheld. Employees on a leave of absence as provided herein shall remain in, and continue to make contributions to their retirement plan during the time of the leave and shall be enrolled in the health benefits plan of the district in which the charter school is located. The charter school shall make any required employer's contributions to the district's health benefits plan.

e. Public school employees on a leave shall not accrue tenure in the public school system but shall retain tenure, if so applicable, and shall continue to accrue seniority, if so applicable, in the public school system if they return to their non-charter school when the leave ends. An employee of a charter school shall not accrue tenure pursuant to N.J.S.18A:17-2, N.J.S.18A:17-3, or N.J.S.18A:28-5, but shall acquire streamlined tenure pursuant to guidelines promulgated by the commissioner, and the charter shall specify the security and protection to be afforded to the employee in accordance with the guidelines.

f. Any public school employee who leaves or is dismissed from employment at a charter school within three years shall have the right to return to the employee's former position in the public school district which granted the leave of absence, provided the employee is otherwise eligible for employment in the public school.
18A:36A-15 Complaints to the board of trustees

Any individual or group may bring a complaint to the board of trustees of a charter school alleging a violation of the provisions of this act. If, after presenting the complaint to the board of trustees, the individual or group determines that the board of trustees has not adequately addressed the complaint, they may present that complaint to the commissioner who shall investigate and respond to the complaint. The board shall establish an advisory grievance committee consisting of both parents and teachers who are selected by the parents and teachers of the school to make non-binding recommendations to the board concerning the disposition of a complaint.

L.1995,c.426,s.15.

18A:36A-16 Annual assessment, review of charter schools, independent study, report, recommendations

a. The commissioner shall annually assess whether each charter school is meeting the goals of its charter, and shall conduct a comprehensive review prior to granting a renewal of the charter. The county superintendent of schools of the county in which the charter school is located shall have on-going access to the records and facilities of the charter school to ensure that the charter school is in compliance with its charter and that State board regulations concerning assessment, testing, civil rights, and student health and safety are being met.

b. In order to facilitate the commissioner's review, each charter school shall submit an annual report to the local board of education, the county
superintendent of schools, and the commissioner in the form prescribed by the commissioner. The report shall be received annually by the local board, the county superintendent, and the commissioner no later than August 1. The report shall also be made available to the parent or guardian of a student enrolled in the charter school.

c. By April 1, 2001, the commissioner shall hold public hearings in the north, central, and southern regions of the State to receive input from members of the educational community and the public on the charter school program.

d. The commissioner shall commission an independent study of the charter school program. The study shall be conducted by an individual entity identified with expertise in the field of education and the selection shall be approved by the Joint Committee of the Public Schools. The individual or entity shall design a comprehensive study of the charter school program.

e. The commissioner shall submit to the Governor, the Legislature, and the State Board of Education by October 1, 2001 an evaluation of the charter school program based upon the public input required pursuant to subsection c. of this section and the independent study required pursuant to subsection d. of this section. The evaluation shall include, but not be limited to, consideration of the following elements:

1. the impact of the charter school program on resident districts’ students, staff, parents, educational programs, and finances;

2. the impact of the charter school program and the increased number of schools on the economics of educational services on a statewide basis;
3. the fairness of the impact of the reduction of available resources on the ability of resident districts to promote competitive educational offerings;

4. the impact of the shift of pupils from non-public schools to charter schools;

5. the comparative demographics of student enrollments in school districts of residence and the charter schools located within those districts. The comparison shall include, but not be limited to, race, gender, socioeconomic status, enrollment of special education students, enrollment of students of limited English proficiency, and student progress towards meeting the core curriculum content standards as measured by student results on statewide assessment tests;

6. the degree of involvement of private entities in the operation and financial support of charter schools, and their participation as members of charter school boards of trustees;

7. verification of the compliance of charter schools with applicable laws and regulations;

8. student progress toward meeting the goals of the charter schools;

9. parent, community and student satisfaction with charter schools;

10. the extent to which waiting lists exist for admission to charter schools and the length of those lists;

11. the extent of any attrition among student and faculty members in charter schools; and
the results of the independent study required pursuant to subsection d. of this section.

The evaluation shall include a recommendation on the advisability of the continuation, modification, expansion, or termination of the program. If the evaluation does not recommend termination, then it shall include recommendations for changes in the structure of the program which the commissioner deems advisable. The commissioner may not implement any recommended expansion, modification, or termination of the program until the Legislature acts on that recommendation.

L.1995,c.426,s.16; amended 2000,c.142,s.3.

18A:36A-17 Granting, renewal of charter

A charter granted by the commissioner pursuant to the provision of this act shall be granted for a four-year period and may be renewed for a five-year period. The commissioner may revoke a school's charter if the school has not fulfilled any condition imposed by the commissioner in connection with the granting of the charter or if the school has violated any provision of its charter. The commissioner may place the charter school on probationary status to allow the implementation of a remedial plan after which, if the plan is unsuccessful, the charter may be summarily revoked. The commissioner shall develop procedures and guidelines for the revocation and renewal of a school's charter.

18A:36A-17.1 Commissioner's actions relative to possible loss, not granting of charter

If at any time the commissioner determines that a board of trustees is in jeopardy of losing its charter or an applicant is in jeopardy of not being granted a charter, the commissioner shall so notify the board of trustees or the applicant. The board of trustees
or the applicant shall, within 48 hours of receipt of such notification, provide to the commissioner, in writing, a complete list of the names and addresses of all students and staff currently enrolled and working in the school, or in the case of an applicant, a complete list of the names and addresses of all students and staff intending to enroll or work at the school, so the commissioner may send the appropriate notice to the parents or guardians and staff.

L.2000,c.142,s.4

18A:26A-18 Rules, regulations

The State Board of Education shall adopt rules and regulations pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968,c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), necessary to effectuate the provisions of this act.
Appendix B

New Jersey Administrative Code, Charter Schools
NEW JERSEY ADMINISTRATIVE CODE, CHARTER SCHOOLS
N.J.A.C. 6A:11
(Amended October 2000)

SUBCHAPTER 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

6A:11-1.1 Purpose

a. The purpose of this chapter is to provide the rules to govern the implementation of the Charter School Program Act, N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-1 et seq. The rules define the processes for establishing and operating charter schools; complying with the School Ethics Act N.J.S.A. 18A:12.21 et seq.; implementing programs; certifying classroom teachers, principals and professional support staff; applying streamline tenure for teaching staff members, janitors and secretaries; and conducting the financial operations of the charter schools.

b. The new rules set out the requirements for applying for a charter and operating a school when a charter is awarded by the Commissioner of Education. In addition, these rules affect students who attend the charter schools, the parents and legal guardians of these students, the district boards of education where these students reside, the district boards of education in which the charter schools are physically located and the people who will serve on the boards of trustees and the staffs of the charter schools.
6A:11:1.2 Definition

The following words and terms, as used in this chapter, shall have the following meaning, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

"Administrator" means an employee of a charter school who:

a. Holds a position which requires a certificate that authorizes the holder to serve as school administrator, principal or school business administrator;

b. Holds a position which requires a certificate that authorizes the holder to serve as supervisor and who is responsible for making recommendations regarding hiring or the purchase or acquisition of any property or services by a charter school; and

c. Holds a position which does not require that the person hold any type of certificate but is responsible for making recommendations regarding hiring or the purchase or acquisition of any property or services by a charter school.

"Annual review" means the yearly assessment by the Commissioner as to whether the charter school is meeting the goals of its charter.

"Application" means the New Jersey Charter School Application which includes, but is not limited to, a description of the areas listed in N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-5 and N.J.A.C. 6A:11-21(b).

"Approval of charter" means an endorsement by the Commissioner following the review of an eligible application by the Department of Education and contingent upon the receipt of necessary documentation in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:11-21(b).

"Average daily enrollment" for the purpose of determining the adjusted State, local and federal aid means the sum of the days present and absent of all students enrolled in the
register or registers of the program for which the aid is being determined divided by the
number of days school was actually in session.

"Board of trustees" means the public agents authorized by the State Board of Education
to supervise and control a charter school.
Appendix C

Letter of Invitation
January 2004

Dear Lead Person:

Currently, I am preparing to present my dissertation proposal to Swain Hall University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for a final approval in September, 2004. As part of the IRB process I am requesting your permission to complete the necessary research.

In A Study of Principals' Leadership Practices in New Jersey Charter Schools I plan to investigate the connection between research on behaviors of effective principals and what charter school principals are practicing at their jobs. This investigation will add to the knowledge base for both effective principals research as well as for charter school research.

I anticipate that participation in this study would involve approximately 60 minutes of your principal's time. I will meet with the principal for an interview at his/her convenience in the principal's office or location of choice.

Please indicate approval to have your principal participate in this study by signing below and returning this form in the enclosed self-addressed/stamped envelope by February 15, 2004. I look forward to your response.

Cordially,

Ester Matlot

Signature ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Name of Principal (if different than Lead Person) ___________________________

Name of School ___________________________

Address ___________________________
February 2004

Dear Lead Person:

In a previous correspondence I requested your approval to have the principal of your school participate in my study. I am following up to that letter because I have not heard from you. I know these are busy times for us and I appreciate that time is a precious commodity. If you would like to reconsider your participation, the following is information from the previous letter.

Currently, I am preparing to present my dissertation proposal to Seton Hall University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) for a final approval in September, 2004. As part of the IRB process I am requesting your permission to complete the necessary research.

In A Study of Principals’ Leadership Practices in New Jersey Charter Schools I plan to investigate the connection between research on behaviors of effective principals and what charter school principals are practicing at their jobs. This investigation will add to the knowledge base for both effective principals research as well as for charter school research.

I anticipate that participation in this study would involve approximately 60 minutes of your principal’s time. I will meet with the principal for an interview at his/her convenience in the principal’s office or location of choice.

Please indicate approval to have your principal participate in this study by signing below and returning this form in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope by March 5, 2004. I look forward to your response.

Cordially,

Estee Mailot

__________________________  ______________________
Signature                        Date

Name of Principal (if different than Lead Person)  Name of School

__________________________
Address
Appendix D

Letter of Solicitation
Date

Name/Address of Charter School

Dear Principal's name:

My name is Estee Marlot and I am a doctoral candidate in the Executive Ed.D. Program at Seton Hall University, College of Education and Human Services, working on my dissertation, "A Study of Principals' Leadership Practices in New Jersey Charter Schools."

The purpose of this study is to determine if there is a connection between research on behaviors of effective principals and what charter school principals are practicing at their jobs. An analysis of information gathered in this study will provide information that will add to the knowledge base for both effective principals research as well as for charter school research. I anticipate that participation in this study will involve approximately sixty minutes of your time.

I am inviting you, a charter school principal, to participate in this worthwhile study. I will be using an interview process that will involve answering approximately twenty-five predetermined questions, along with some other questions that may flow out of our discussion. Categories for the discussion include values, vision, change, climate, culture, organization, and instruction/curriculum. The interview will take place in the following way:

- The researcher will act as the moderator, leading the discussion and asking the questions.
- The discussion will be audio-taped.

Your participation is obviously voluntary, but would be most appreciated. Any and all participants may withdraw from the research study without prejudice at any time. The identity of each participant and their school will be held in confidence. The results of this study will be reported in aggregate form only.

The data will be transcribed by me, the researcher. I will be the only person with a copy of the transcription. The data, when reviewed by anyone else, will be reported without any identifying codes, names, or characteristics. The data and materials used will remain with me and stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home office. The data will be destroyed three years after the completion of the study.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached at (973) 313-6314.
I have enclosed an Informed Consent Form for your signature and a self-addressed, stamped envelope for its return. Upon receipt of the Informed Consent Form, I will contact you to arrange a mutually convenient time to conduct the interview.

Upon completion of the research, results of the project will be willingly shared if desired. Please indicate your approval by signing the enclosed Informed Consent Form and returning it in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope by October 15, 2006.

I look forward to your response.

Cordially,

Estee Mullot
Appendix E

Informed Consent Form
Informed Consent

Affiliation:

My name is Estee Mailot and I am a doctoral candidate in the Executive EdD Program at Seton Hall University, Department of Education Leadership, Management and Policy, College of Education and Human Services, working on my dissertation: "A Study of Principals' Leadership Practices in New Jersey Charter Schools."

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this study is to investigate the connection between the research on behaviors of effective principals and what charter school principals are practicing at their jobs. The study provides an overview of charter schools, effective schools, and effective leadership research. An interview will be conducted using predetermined questions to guide the discussion. The interview will take no longer than one hour to complete.

Procedures:

The principal will participate in a discussion that will revolve around predetermined questions. The discussion will be recorded using two tape recorders. The use of the tape recording devices is so vital comments, ideas, and opinions throughout the discussion are not lost.

No names or other measures will be used to identify participants. Please be informed that the researcher is fully informed of the confidentiality and anonymity rules regarding participants' rights.

Voluntary Nature of the Project:

By signing the Informed Consent Form and attending the discussion, you are consenting to participate in the study and are fully aware that your responses will be tape
recorded and transcribed into written format. Prior to completion of the discussion or the completion of the research, if at any time you wish to end your participation, you may do so without any resulting penalty or loss of any kind.

**Anonymity:**

Your responses will be kept completely confidential. No names will be included in any forms or transcripts. Only the researcher will analyze the data. Any results will be included in the dissertation without reference to your school's name or your name.

**Security of the Stored Data:**

The taped recordings will remain in the possession of the researcher after they have been transcribed. The data on the taped recordings and the data in written format from the transcriptions will remain secure in a locked cabinet with the researcher, and will be destroyed after three years. No one else will have access to the data. All responses and information will be kept totally confidential.

**Confidentiality of the Records:**

No one will have access to the list of subjects used for this research. No one will have access to the names of the charter schools or the names of the principals used. The analysis of the data will be used in the researcher's dissertation. No mention of any subject's name or charter school name will be included in the researcher's dissertation.

The researcher will be the only person who will have access to any data. This data will be securely locked in a cabinet for three years and will then be destroyed.

**Risks:**

There are no risks in this research.
Benefits:

There are no benefits in this study, monetary or of any other nature to the participants.

Alternatives to Research Study:

If any participants are unavailable to attend the discussion, they will have the opportunity to respond in written format to the research questions and return them to the researcher in a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The same holds true for this disclosure of information as all confidentiality and anonymity will be respected of the participant.

Acquisition of Further Information:

The researcher may be contacted for further information, answers to pertinent questions, and for information about research subject’s rights by writing the researcher at Toms River High School East, 1225 Raider Way, Toms River, New Jersey 08753; or by telephoning the researcher at the above mentioned school (732-505-5678); or emailing the researcher at emojis@trschools.com.

Permission to use Tape Recorders:

Be informed that tape recording equipment will be utilized so as not to miss a vital comment, opinion, or idea that may add to the breadth and substance of the data. Participants have the right to review all or any portion of the taped recording and transcriptions and request that at any time these materials may be destroyed.

Acknowledgement of Informed Consent Form:

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the
research procedures adequately safeguard the subject’s privacy, welfare, civil liberties and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached at (973) 313-6314.

I have read the material above, and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realizing that I may withdraw without prejudice at any time.

I am aware that I will be given a copy of this Informed Consent Form for my files.

Name ___________________________________________ Date __________
Appendix F

Interview Instrument
Introductory Script

Good morning/afternoon/evening. Thanks for taking the time to partake in a discussion concerning your leadership practices and behaviors. My name is Estee Mailot, and I am a doctoral student at Seton Hall University.

As you know, I am here today conducting research for my dissertation. My work seeks to discover if there is alignment with your leadership practices, and behaviors to those of the effective leadership research. You were invited because you are a principal of a charter school.

There is no right or wrong answer. I expect you will answer to the best of your ability and knowledge the questions posed.

I will be tape recording the session because I don’t want to miss any of your comments. No names will be included in any reports. Your comments are confidential. Keep in mind that I am just as interested in negative comments as positive comments and, at times, the negative comments are the most helpful.

If you want to follow up on something or give an example, feel free to do so. I am here to ask questions and listen. I am very interested in hearing what you have to say.

Let’s begin.
Interview Questions

Background Information:

This series of questions serves to provide background information on each charter school and principal interviewed.

1. Why did you enter the field of education?
2. How many years have you worked as an educator?
3. How long have you been in your current assignment?
4. Were your prior assignments in a public, private school setting or business?

The categorical questions are designed to provide data on the principal’s practices.

Category 1: Values

1. Using the metaphor of a sailor using the North Star to guide him at night, what values do you consider to be your school’s North Star? In other words, what are your school’s core values?
2. How are you proactive in building consensus around these core values?
3. Much has been said about a leader being a role model. How do you model behaviors that communicate your expectations for others?

Category 2: Vision

1. Explain the importance of vision in building a school’s future.
2. What is your vision for this school?
3. What means do you use to communicate this vision to your staff?

Category 3: Change

1. How do you identify the need for change?
2. How do you initiate change within your school?
3. How do you plan goals that are achievable?
   a. What do you do that causes or permits people to carry out those goals?

4. How do you measure the outcomes of the goals?

Category 4: Climate

1. What is the most important feature(s) in your mind when creating a school climate?

2. Describe to me how decisions are made in your school?

3. Explain how diverse points of view are handled in your school?

Category 5: Culture

1. How are accomplishments and successes in your school recognized for students and staff?

2. What do you do to let others know you value them and have confidence in their abilities?

Category 6: Organization

1. Explain how established routines and procedures prevent distractions and interruptions in the school day?
   a. Occasionally there are distractions that occur that cannot be foreseen, (eg. pelled fire alarm), how do you guide your staff to regroup after such distractions?

2. How are staff and students informed of these routines and procedures?
Category 7: Instruction/Curriculum

1. As an educator, how do you stay current with instructional practices?

2. What guidance do you provide for teachers regarding effective classroom practices?

3. What is your role in the planning, choosing, and implementation of curriculum in your school?