The Principal's Role in Affecting Student Reading Achievement

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THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL'S ROLE
IN AFFECTING
STUDENT READING ACHIEVEMENT

BY

KATHLEEN J. BEECHER

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APPROVAL FOR SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE

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Abstract

School leaders have been challenged by the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The requirement that at least 95% of all the students of every public school in the United States of America will meet rigorous standards in the subject areas of reading, mathematics, and science by the year 2014 has school leaders searching for ways to increase student achievement. The purpose of this study is to determine if the establishment of an Enabling School Structure by the principal positively affects the reading achievement of fourth grade students. This study focuses on elementary schools in the State of Maine. Demographic and state assessment data were obtained from the Maine State Department of Education. The decision to limit the sample to schools that have shown student improvement in reading over a three-year period was to ensure that schools included in the study were truly improving and not simply the result of a single year anomaly.

ANCOVA analyses found a significant relationship between the teachers’ perceptions of the extent of an Enabling School Structure as the independent variable and Year 3 student reading achievement as the dependent variable at $p \leq .050$. However, ANCOVA analyses found no significant relationship between the years of teacher experience as the independent variable and Year 3 student reading achievement as the dependent variable at $p > .050$. ANCOVA analyses found a significant relationship between the interaction of the teachers’ perceptions of the level of Enabling School Structure and years of teacher experience as the independent variables and Year 3 student reading achievement as the dependent variable at $p \leq .050$. In all of these results, Year 1
student reading achievement scores were controlled for as the covariate.

Recommendations to school leaders include (a) work to ensure that the most experienced and qualified teachers work with the students who are struggling the most and be hired for open teaching positions, (b) consider offering incentives to experienced teachers in order to attempt to entice them to work in the districts that have the students who are struggling the most in the schools with the lowest student reading achievement scores, and (c) use their influence with the Federal Department of Education to allow the No Child Left Behind requirements to recognize improvement and growth in student reading achievement in the nation’s schools so that these school’s teachers can continue with the practices that are resulting in the achievement gains.

Recommendations for district, state, and school leaders include (a) investigate the level of teacher’s beliefs about whether they have the materials they need to teach reading, and establish a funding source and grant cycle to get materials to those who do not have what they need, and (b) investigate the level of principal’s beliefs about whether they have the resources to hire experts in the field to train teachers when new programs are being adopted, and establish a funding source and grant cycle to obtain the funding to ensure that new programs will be delivered to students consistently.
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One of my favorite quotes is, “It is good to have an end to journey towards, but it is the journey that matters in the end” (Ursula Le Guin). Thank you to the members of Cohort IX for your knowledge, caring, camaraderie, and laughter. I appreciate all of your special gifts, and I am so honored to have shared this journey with each of you. I especially appreciate the encouragement and assistance I received throughout this experience from my roommate and travel companion to and from Seton Hall from Maine, Dr. Beverly Coursey. I will also be forever grateful for the informative, positive, and caring e-mails from Dr. Elizabeth Frangella along the way.
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to two very special people. The first is my father, Robert Beecher, who has always encouraged and supported me through any endeavor I have ever decided to take on. The second is my partner in life, John Tingley, who has given me encouragement and motivation through the end of the research and writing of the final chapters of this dissertation more than he knows. I love you both.
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Chapter I

Introduction

Background of the Problem

Decades of school reform, the "reading wars" between phonics and whole language, and the move toward standards-based education have left educators searching for strategies to improve students' reading achievement, and there is considerable debate across America about how to best achieve this goal. To add to this dilemma, since the early 1990s we have experienced a period of unprecedented educational accountability from the federal and state levels, and intense scrutiny at the local level. Education officials in states across the country have established standards or benchmarks that students are required to be proficient, and many states have implemented high-stakes testing with the test results possibly affecting promotion to the next grade or graduation from high school. The Federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires schools to show "Adequate Yearly Progress" (AYP) in the areas of reading and mathematics with increasing expectations, and the ultimate goal of having all students proficient in these subjects by 2014. Biancarosa and Snow (2004) found that "the disparity between the demands of modern life and the inadequate literacy achievement of eight million struggling readers and writers has therefore given a new urgency to the need for reform" (p.31). Increased literacy needs as a result of changes in society and the world of work in the United States of America have resulted in an era of unprecedented accountability. In this age of increased accountability and focus on test results, school leaders are very concerned about the essential components of effective reading instruction and how to positively affect students' reading achievement in their schools.
According to Leithwood and Riehl (2003), teachers, school administrators and school system administration are under increasing pressure to perform academically. State and national achievement standards focused on ambitious learning for all children have changed the landscape of educational accountability. Considering that the process of reading is fundamental to a child’s achievement in all other subject areas, the reading achievement of school children has become an even more important issue for teachers and principals.

Fullan, Hill and Crevola (2006) determined that “within the current paradigm, even with all the best decisions and considerable resources for education, only partial, non-sustainable gains are being made” (p. 2). A review, completed by the researcher, of the 2005 Grade 4 reading results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reveals very little gain in student’s scores. Fourth grader’s average scores were one point higher in 2005 than in 2003, and two points higher in 2005 than in 1992 (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005). The National Assessment of Educational Progress (The Nation’s Report Card) is given in schools across the United States to selected or sampled students in grades 4, 8 and 12. Given the Adequate Yearly Progress requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act, these are sobering results.

Statement of the Problem

In this era of increased requirements and accountability, school leaders are looking to find ways to increase the reading achievement of the students in their charge. Leithwood and Riehl (2003) found that in public education across the country, the goals being focused on are increasingly centered on student learning. Administrators are exploring opportunities to provide teachers with professional development and support in
order to increase student achievement. Biancarosa and Snow (2004) found that, "today, young people who leave high school without excellent and flexible reading and writing skills stand at a great disadvantage" (p. 31). Many schools and school districts are not making gains or "Adequate Yearly Progress" in reading. However, steady, consistent gains in students' reading achievement are being realized in some schools and school districts across the country. If students' reading achievement rises, this may positively affect the school's progress toward making Adequate Yearly Progress under NCLB and, ultimately, allow more students to successfully exit our public schools ready for college or today's careers with their higher literacy demands. According to the National Commission on Writing (2004) the majority of both private and public employers report that writing proficiency has become very critical in the workplace. In addition, the National Commission on Writing determined that applicant's literacy skills directly affect hiring and promotion decisions (National Commission on Writing, 2004).

Fullan, Hill and Crevola (2006) found that, external accountability systems "do not influence classroom practice effectively because they do not take into account the need to develop internal accountability in the school and the district" (pp. 7-8). As researchers examine the critical role the principal plays, along with the teachers, to affect student reading achievement, the question arises as to what actions a principal can and should take to affect the reading achievement of the students in his or her school. In what areas will the principal be the most effective in order to reach this goal?

Liethwood and Riehl (2003) determined the following:

Leaders sometimes do things through words or actions that have a direct effect on the primary goals of the group or organization. However, more often, they
influence the thoughts and actions of other persons and establish the conditions that enable others to be effective. As a result, leadership effects on school goals tend to be mostly indirect. (p.3)

Hallinger & Heck (1996) reviewed each major study conducted in the area of principal effectiveness between the years of 1980 and 1995. They determined, although it is possible that principals exert some direct effect on students' learning as measured by school outcomes, the linkage is consistently tied to the actions of others in the school. Every member of the organization needs to work toward the agreed upon mission and goals of the school for the organization to reach its intended outcomes. This finding would suggest that a team approach is effective when attempting to increase students' achievement levels. Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) found that the contribution of purposes and goals to school effectiveness depends upon the extent to which such purposes are believed to be compelling and challenging targets for staff member's personal practices as well as the collective school improvement efforts of the staff. The principal does have a direct effect on the instructional organization of the school along with school climate, school norms and policies, mission and goals, and school culture (see Figure 1). Through these means, school leaders may have an indirect effect on student achievement and, as a result, it would be important to explore how principals set the conditions for success.

Dwyer (1986) studied the principal's contribution to instruction and found that, "principals directed their attention and actions at elements of their schools' instructional organization, climate, and external environment as they attempted to shape the day-to-day operations of their organizations in the pursuit of their intended outcomes" (p. 10).
Figure 1. Theoretical framework map.

Principals have the unique opportunity to influence the structure of the buildings in which they are instructional leaders. Bolman and Deal (2003) determined that more effective supervisors tend to be high on both consideration and structure. If principals establish an Enabling School Structure that is responsive to the needs of the staff and students, those with the actual direct influence on the students’ achievement may work harder to meet individual and school goals. If the instructional organization the principal establishes encourages commitment from the teachers and all those who work directly with the students, learning may occur at a deeper level.
This study will determine if there is a relationship between principals establishing an Enabling School Structure and increased reading achievement of the students in their buildings. This study also will add to the body of research in the area of leadership of the elementary level principal. It will contribute to the literature on affecting school change for the purpose of increasing students' achievement levels.

Since the principal's beliefs and actions affect the structure of the building and teacher's beliefs about their skills, this research will answer the following questions. The Main Questions are:

1. Will there be any significant differences in student reading achievement based upon the principal's behavior?

2. Will there be any significant differences in student reading achievement based upon the establishment of an Enabling School Structure?

The Subsidiary Questions are:

1. What is the effect of principal's behaviors on student achievement?

2. Is the effect of the principal's behaviors direct or indirect?

3. How long has the principal's behaviors been sustained?

4. Do staff members believe that the student's reading assessment scores are a result of the establishment of an Enabling School Structure or other factors?

Significance of the Study

While there is a large body of research that discusses school change and the components of effective schools, there has been little research relating the elements of Enabling School Structures with student achievement. Hoy and Sweetland (2001) found that, "administrators use their power to buffer teachers and design structures that
facilitate teaching and learning” (p. 300). The role of the principal in establishing an effective school structure and working with staff members to develop and sustain their individual and collective goals and mission could be important and lead to increased student achievement. Leithwood and Riehl (2003) concluded that leadership effects are primarily indirect, and they appear most often to be related to the school mission or goals of the organization and to variables related to classroom instruction and curriculum. Possibly, some of the structures currently in place in schools could be positively affecting student achievement and others may have a negative effect (Hoy and Miskel, 1978).

According to Weber (1947) all modern organizations are bureaucracies. As mentioned above, the studies regarding the leadership effects of the principal determined that their effect is primarily indirect. This means that the structural components of the organization which are administratively mutable are an area that school leaders can influence those with direct effect on student achievement. Leithwood and Riehl (2003) found that leaders redesign organizational structures by changing the nature of task assignments; organizing time and space differently; reviewing routine operating procedures to best meet student and staff needs; and disbursing material resources; all of which can hinder or enable individual performance and accomplishment of the school or organizational goals. If a school leader is especially adept at procuring resources and skillfully managing the organizational structure of the building, teachers, and staff members are able to focus on the most important aspect of schooling, the children, with a primary focus on their needs and their achievement. Hoy and Sweetland (2000b) studied several elementary schools in Ohio and found that two of the pivotal characteristics of bureaucratic organization are formalization (formal rules and procedures) and
centralization (hierarchy of authority). Mintzberg (1979) determined that, "the two most effective means to control an organization from the outside are to hold its most powerful decision maker responsible for its actions, and to impose clearly defined standards on it" (p. 289). The first statement is an example of centralization; the second statement is an example of formalization.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether a school staff's increased individual and collective commitment within an Enabling School Structure positively affects student reading achievement. Sinden, Hoy, and Sweetland (2004) determined that the structure of schools may be related to student achievement. Leithwood and Reihl (2003) found that leaders redesigning organizational structures can enable individuals to increase their performance which can lead to accomplishment of the organization's goals.

An additional purpose of this study is to determine if 6 Maine schools improving in the area of reading achievement are improving as a result of an Enabling School Structure. This study will attempt to determine what the conditions are for the increased success of the fourth grade students of these Maine schools. Hallinger and Heck (1996) determined that the impact of principal leadership is achieved through indirect means and accomplished by his or her influence over the school climate, school culture, and the instructional organization.

Definition of Terms

Agency: intentional acts (Bandura, 1989).

Coercive School Structure: a structure that is controlling and rigid (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000b).
Centralization: the participation of employees in decision making (Adler & Borys, 1996).

Collective-efficacy: perceived beliefs about a group's ability to complete tasks (Hoy, Smith & Sweetland, 2000).

Enabling School Structure: a structure that is flexible and leads to problem solving (Hoy & Sweetland, 2000b).

Formalization: the rules, policies and procedures of the organization (Adler & Borys, 1996).

Fountas and Pinnell: Irene Fountas is a professor at Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts and Gay Su Pinnell is Professor Emeritus, The Ohio State University.

Grounded Theory Model: The basic idea of the grounded theory approach is to read (and re-read) a text (such as field notes) and "discover" or label variables (called categories, concepts and properties) and their interrelationships (Borgatti, 2008).

Institutional Review Board (IRB): The IRB reviews all proposed research involving human subjects in order to ensure that subjects' rights and welfare are adequately protected at colleges and universities with doctoral programs.

IOWAs: (Iowa Test of Basic Skills) an achievement test published by Riverside Publishing (a Houghton Mifflin Company) which is a group administered test.

Looping teacher: a teacher who teaches the same group of children for more than one year.

Low Centralization: authority is spread across many participants (Adler & Borys, 1996).
Maine Educational Assessment (MEA): this assessment measures Maine grade level and grade span expectations in grades 3 through 8 in the subject areas of reading, mathematics, science, and writing.

Maine Learning Results: "The Learning Results identify the knowledge and skills essential to prepare Maine students for work, for higher education, for citizenship, and for personal fulfillment." (Maine Department of Education, 2005a).

Norms: unwritten and informal expectations that affect behavior.


Organizational Climate: the informal characteristics that distinguish one organization from another and influence the behavior of its members (Hoy, Tarter & Kottkamp, 1990).

Purpose and goals: what members believe is the explicit and implicit direction of the organization.

Reading First: a federal program in which states and school districts receive support to apply scientifically based reading research and the proven instructional and assessment tools consistent with this research to ensure that all children learn to read by the end of third grade (United States Department of Education, 2008).

Reading Recovery: Short-term intervention of one-to-one reading tutoring for low-achieving first graders (Reading Recovery Council of North America, 2008).

Scientifically Based Reading Research: Reading instruction that includes five essential components of reading: comprehension, fluency, phonemic awareness, phonics, and vocabulary (United States Department of Education, 2000).
Self-efficacy: an individual's beliefs about his or her ability to complete tasks (Bandura, 1997).

Step Up to Writing: a K-12 grade level research-based writing program published by Sopris West (Sopris West Educational Services, 2008).

Limitations of the Study

For this study of the effects of an Enabling School Structure on student reading achievement, the researcher delimited the study to elementary schools in the state of Maine. It will be further delimited to six schools, determined by the researcher, to be improving schools in the area of reading over a three-year period. This is not a limitation because the researcher is interested only in the effects of an Enabling School Structure on improving, high-performing schools. This study is limited to improving schools in Maine, and focuses on students from the same general geographic area, but does not allow for extensive comparison or generalizing beyond the State of Maine. This study is also limited to the time period of 3 years, which was determined because research suggested this was the minimum time period to be considered valid and reliable. The time frame of the test results was from 2003-2005 to ensure that findings and data are current and applicable. Test results from the Maine Educational Assessment (MEA), which has been in existence since 1985 and is not a standardized testing instrument, are examined in this study. The assessment results from the 2006 MEA administration were not used because the MEA went through a revision with different benchmarks for that version of the assessment. The scores of fourth-grade students were chosen because student achievement could be compared for several years; and until 2005, this was the single elementary grade tested with the same assessment yearly in the State of Maine.
Theoretical Framework: Enabling School Structure

Hoy and Sweetland (2001) found that, "schools are bureaucracies" (p. 296). They are organizations with specific roles for their staff members and a hierarchy of power and control (Weber, 1947). Many people have a negative view of bureaucracies, but having an established and agreed upon set of rules, procedures, and division of labor can actually be positive for an organization. Weber (1947) believed that bureaucracy was very efficient and positive for administration. Formalization refers to the extent of written rules, instructions, and procedures (Adler and Borys, 1996). Formalization within bureaucracies can be enabling or coercive. Walsh and Ungson (1991) determined that, "in what we call the enabling type of formalization, procedures provide organizational memory that captures lessons learned from experience" (as cited in Adler and Borys, 1996, p. 69). Enabling procedures often explain the theory behind the rule or instructions so that workers can see the rationale of the procedures. Adler and Borys (1996) found that, "the enabling approach requires and encourages a reduction in disparities of power, knowledge, skills, and rewards between managers and subordinates" (p. 81). An enabling formalization allows employees to learn from the accumulated institutional knowledge of the organization (DiPaola and Hoy, 2001).

Within an enabling bureaucracy, conflict can be used in constructive ways. If an organization has very little conflict, it may become stagnant with staff members not willing to change. DiPaola and Hoy (2001) found that "conflicts handled in a cooperative, problem-solving manner are more likely to promote positive outcomes, because they generate solutions, promote insight, and help individuals grow and strengthen emotionally" (p. 239). Within an enabling formalization, cognitive conflict is
welcomed and consists of conflict regarding roles, goals, resources, policies, and issues relating to tasks and enhancing performance and satisfaction (DiPaola and Hoy, 2001). These issues of conflict are used as a catalyst for institutional change and improvement (DiPaola and Hoy, 2001).

DiPaola and Hoy (2001) found that “in schools that have an enabling formalization, administrators utilizing a problem-solving strategy attempt to manage effectively the affective conflict issues that emerge, and encourage content conflict” (p. 241). These school administrators establish an Enabling School Structure. Enabling structures have flexible guidelines for rules and procedures. Staff members in these organizations are encouraged to use their professional judgment when they are problem solving rather than follow strict guidelines. Enabling structures promote trust among the staff members and the unexpected is welcomed. Differences are encouraged and two-way communication is practiced between the administration and the staff members.

In their analysis of Enabling School Structures, Sinden et al. (2004) found that flexibility was the principal behavior mentioned most often as an example of enabling. There is a high degree of collegial trust among the teachers working in schools with enabling structures. The basic theme of establishing an Enabling School Structure is that it helps participants solve problems. In the field of education, teachers working within an enabling bureaucracy feel empowered to exercise their professional judgment and have the ability to make meaningful decisions. According to DiPaola and Hoy (2001) one of the basic challenges in schools is finding the balance between enabling the professionals to perform their assigned tasks and administrative scrutiny and control. When teachers and the school administration come together to make decisions in the best interests of the
children they are charged with educating, paradigm shifts can occur. Fullan (1993) found that, "it is much more powerful and meaningful when teachers and administration begin working in new ways only to discover that school structures must be altered than the reverse situation in which rapidly implemented new structures create confusion, ambiguity and conflict ultimately leading to retrenchment" (p.162).

Rationale and Significance

Studying improving high-performing schools as opposed to all high-performing schools in the State of Maine may allow this research to contribute to the body of literature to help other schools in need of improvement. This study's results could positively contribute to administrative and staff knowledge of possible ways to improve their students' reading achievement. Many schools are in need of improvement as they look toward the NCLB goal of all students achieving at grade level in reading and mathematics by 2014. Eventually, even the high-performing elementary schools in Maine will be interested in how other schools are achieving improvement, because the Federal No Child Left Behind Act requires disaggregated subgroups of students and the whole group to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), and these expectations are increasing in Maine every 2 years. Additionally, many school leaders are searching for strategies to personally impact their students' reading achievement. One reason for comparing 3 years of Grade 4 MEA scores is to confirm that the sample population reflects schools that are improving using quantitative methods.

The demand for increased accountability and the requirements for schools to show Adequate Yearly Progress are issues all public schools across the country are experiencing. This study will contribute to the available professional literature on
improving schools and offer insight to other schools of ways to increase their students' achievement in reading. Secondly, it will serve as an example for school principals of an established structural component for their schools that could lead to optimal staff collegiality, trust, and feelings of empowerment that could positively impact issues in their schools including, but not limited to, student’s low achievement.
Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This review of related sources is intended to identify the progression of leadership, structural, and reading research in order to determine the extent to which elementary school principals may affect student reading achievement. This chapter will contain an overview of the literature in the fields that this study was based on and also highlight some areas for further research.

Leadership behaviors, styles, and types have been researched in numerous studies for countless reasons. For the purpose of this study, the literature on leadership in relation to the possible effects of school principals on student achievement was specifically reviewed. This literature review will focus on these particular studies to determine if school principals have been determined to have any effect on the reading achievement of the students in their buildings.

This literature review will highlight the existing research on Enabling School Structures, including the characteristics of these structures within schools, and other pertinent research on the effects of structure on school employees. The Structural Frame, one of the four frames first described by Bolman and Deal in the 1980s and commonly used by those working in universities and schools today, will be reviewed. Selected literature on the effects of structure on school organizations and their staff members will be highlighted.

Current literature pertaining to improving student reading achievement will be reviewed. Those studies pertaining to leadership effects on student reading achievement
will be a focus of the review. The purpose of this literature review will be to develop enough background information to justify the purpose and methodology of this study.

Leadership Research

As this literature review was completed, there were many labels used to describe specific aspects and styles of leadership such as facilitative, situational, transformational, participative, distributed, and instructional leadership. In their review of the evidence for the Wallace Foundation, Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004) recommend that researchers be cautious of “leadership by adjective” (p. 6). They determined that there are two essential components of effective leadership; providing direction for the school and influencing the various members and stakeholders of the organization to move in that direction (Leithwood, Louis et al., 2004). Another way to word this advice could be getting the right people on the bus and making sure that the bus is moving in the right direction (Fullan, 2001).

A review of leadership research found that leadership effects (both direct and indirect) on student learning account for approximately one quarter of the total effects (Leithwood, Louis et al., 2004). Other studies in the field corroborated this finding (Leithwood, Leonard & Sharratt, 1998; Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005). On average, the school leader’s effect is greater in the schools that needed improvement the most (Hallinger & Heck, 1996, Leithwood et al, 2004). In some instances, indirect leadership can have a longer lasting and stronger influence than direct leadership (Yukl, 2006). Leithwood, Louis et al. (2004) found that, “there are virtually no documented instances of troubled schools being turned around without intervention by a powerful leader” (p. 5).
Once the leader has established the need for change and provided direction, he or she needs to monitor the organization in order to determine if they are moving in the desired direction. One way to accomplish this is to “get to the balcony” (Heifetz, 1994). Heifetz compares leadership to a dance and recommends that leaders not only dance, but also get up to the balcony periodically to observe how the activity on the dance floor is going, who is dancing with whom, and the flow of the dance. Another recommendation is that the leader should notice if certain people are sitting out the dance, what groups have formed on the dance floor, and where on the floor most of the dancing is taking place (Heifetz, 1994).

Many researchers have determined that leaders will find it productive to monitor the progress of staff toward the achievement of professional goals and standards and monitoring student performance (e.g. Cotton, 2000; Leithwood and Richl, 2003). Reeves (2006) determined that there are “significant associations between student achievement and monitoring, implementation, and execution of school reform initiatives” (p. 65). Marzano, et al. (2005) also advocate for monitoring, based on their review of 69 studies related to the correlation between the leadership behavior of the school principal and their students’ average academic achievement. One of the leadership characteristics they included in their 21 recommended leadership characteristics associated with student achievement is “monitoring and evaluation.”

As this literature review was being completed, the researcher found evidence stating that leadership effects ranged in effect from none to significant in relation to increasing student achievement. In their review of the evidence, Leithwood, Louis, et al. (2004) found a range of evidence on this subject and ultimately determined that
leadership does have a direct and profound impact on student achievement. Some of the differences in research findings were explained by the varied ways in which researchers surveyed their respondents. The types of survey questions asked and the exact population and methods of administering surveys were compared. Studies that were conducted outside of the United States did not necessarily have the same goals or research design as studies conducted inside the United States. Some survey methods were not considered valid or reliable (Leithwood, Louis et al. 2004).

For Hallinger and Heck's review of leadership literature from 1980-1995 to determine the relationship of principal's leadership behaviors and school effectiveness, they reviewed 40 studies. There were three elements that established the criteria for the selection of the studies. The studies had to be designed to examine the principal's leadership beliefs and behavior, include a measure of school performance, and they could be from inside or outside of the United States (Hallinger and Heck, 1996).

School principals and superintendents count on the leadership contributions of many members of the school organization for the school to be successful in raising student achievement (Leithwood, Louis et al. 2004). Many leadership studies find that the effect of school leaders on student learning and achievement is indirect through their influence on teachers and other members of the organization who have a more direct, day-to-day effect on students' learning. By influencing the school's mission and goals and focusing their energy on curriculum and instruction, school principals indirectly affect student learning in classrooms. School leaders establish and maintain many of the conditions that allow teachers to be most effective. Their effects are intricately tied to the actions and effects of others (Cotton, 2003; Dwyer, 1986; Hallinger and Heck, 1996;
Hallinger, Leithwood and Riehl, 2003). Hallinger and Heck (1996) determined that, “our own perspective is that the principal’s role is best conceived as part of a web of environmental, personal, and in-school relationships that combine to influence organizational outcomes” (p. 6). Fullan et al. (2006) determined that “to progress, especially in the early stages, the principal is key, along with at least one other internal change agent” (p. 95).

Chrisman (2005) compared 83 low-performing California Schools that made 2 consecutive years of improvement in student achievement to 273 schools that made just 1-year of improvement and found several differences. Some of the differences attributed to the consistently improving schools were continuous and sustained principal leadership, structured support for teachers with time for them to meet together and plan lessons collaboratively, and the strongest teachers working with the neediest students (Chrisman, 2005).

Both instructional coherence and the relationship between teachers and students can affect student learning. As school leaders plan for school improvement initiatives and professional development opportunities, it is important to be sure there is coherence and connection to those activities. When student’s experiences in school are connected and built over time, there are greater opportunities for retention of the subject material and long-lasting, deeper learning. Students are engaged and motivated by teachers with whom they share a bond and a sense of community. Teacher’s professional learning communities within the school organization and shared commitment to the goals and spiraling structure to connected learning experiences for children will, ultimately, affect student achievement (Blum, 2003; Dufour, Dufour, Eaker, and Karhanek, 2004).
Teachers and school personnel need to understand both the explicit and implicit goals and direction for the school organization. School leaders have many opportunities to focus the direction of school improvement and the professional development of teachers on activities and experiences that are connected, sustainable, and related to issues of teaching and learning (e.g. Dufour et al., 2004; Fullan, 2001; Leithwood and Jantzi, 1999; Leithwood, Louis et al., 2004).

As school administration and personnel begin to reorganize and establish a plan for school improvement, it is very important to have the support of the district superintendent and the local school board. School personnel and community members (including the school board) take their lead from the superintendent, so it is important that this individual is present at pivotal meetings when decisions are made and that he or she shows visible support for the improvement efforts as they go forward (Murphy and Hallinger, 1993).

Structure and Organizational Research

Hallinger and Heck (1996) suggest four school conditions that lead to successful leadership influence. These include: school structure, school goals and purpose, organizational culture, and people. Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002) found that, in leaders, "relationship skills account for almost three times as much impact on organizational performance as analytical skills do" (as cited in Reeves, 2006, p. 39).

Decisions and school reform initiatives are much more successfully implemented through collaboration of the school leader and the teachers. If the direction comes only from the leader, "islands of excellence" may occur, but long-term systemic, sustained improvement may not (Reeves, 2006). Collins (2001) determined that, "good-to-great
leaders never wanted to become larger-than-life heroes” (p. 28). Teamwork truly does seem to make a difference when planning for long-lasting improvement.

Three separate samples were studied by Hoy and Sweetland (2001) to determine the extent to which Enabling School Structures (bureaucracy) lead to faculty trust in the principal and reduce role conflicts within the school. In each of the three samples, Enabling School Structures were positively linked to trust between teachers and between the teachers and the principal (Hoy and Sweetland, 2001). Organizational trust has been linked to facilitating increased student achievement (Tschanen-Moran and Hoy, 1998; Tschanen-Moran and Hoy, 2000). The findings of these studies suggest that the establishment of an Enabling School Structure could lead to increased student achievement. Fullan et al. (2006) found that “to maximize engaged learning time and to facilitate teaching that is responsive to student needs, interests and current readiness to learn, organizational structures and processes within the school must be aligned” (p. 93).

Schools are examples of bureaucracies in action. Bureaucracies are structures with commonly known procedures and rules, and they contain a chain-of-command with a hierarchy of leadership (Weber, 1947). The basic features of an Enabling School Structure are made up of formalization and centralization (Hoy and Sweetland, 2001).

Formalization includes the written rules, procedures and policies of the organization. Within an Enabling Formalization; rules are interpreted in a flexible way, trust among the members and differences are valued, and innovation is celebrated (Hoy and Sweetland, 2001). Within a Coercive Formalization; rules are followed rigidly, restrictive procedures are in place, and decisions are made in an unyielding way (Hoy and Sweetland, 2001).
Centralization refers to the extent to which employees of the organization are included in decision making. When centralization is high, decisions are made by the leader and employees are informed of decisions (Hoy and Sweetland, 2001). This is an example of top-down leadership. When centralization is low, decision making is shared and many employees are included in determining the outcome of decisions that will affect the organization (Hoy and Sweetland, 2001). Hargreaves (2006b) found that "sustainable leadership is distributed leadership, which is both an accurate description of how much leadership is already exercised across a classroom, school, or school system and an ambition that encompasses what leadership can, more deliberately, become" (p. 19).

When an organization is determined to be operating under an enabling formalization along with low centralization; its bureaucracy, or structure, is considered enabling (Hoy and Sweetland, 2000b; Sinden et al., 2004). The key component of schools with Enabling Structures seems to be flexibility (Sinden et al., 2004). Administrators and teachers using their own judgment and common sense when making decisions, and involving those with expertise to help solve problems are qualities that set schools with Enabling School Structures apart from other structures.

It may be easier to implement an Enabling School Structure in elementary schools, because they contain relatively small numbers of staff members whose professional knowledge and responsibilities are quite similar. Elementary schools often have a lower student population than secondary schools and small schools may have the ability to implement changes to their school structure faster than larger schools. School personnel may have more influence on the school's social structure in small schools,
which typically can have more focused academic programs (Leithwood et al., 2004). Administrators of small rural schools are often seen as accessible and open to informal communication with individual teachers, students and parents (Sinden et al., 2004). Schmuck (1980) found that features of schools such as their “size, neighborhood, and structure influence students’ motivation and achievement by affecting their expectations for success, self-esteem, and performance” (as cited in Mosenthal, Lipson, Meekelsen, Russ & Sortino, 2001, p. 1).

Leithwood and Riehl (2003) found that, “leaders influence organizational culture through practices aimed at developing shared norms, values, beliefs, and attitudes among staff, and promoting mutual caring and trust among staff” (p. 20). Teachers trusting their colleagues and trusting the principal are key elements of an Enabling School Structure (Hoy and Sweetland, 2000b). Faculty trust allows for increased two-way communication and decision making that honors varied viewpoints.

Bolman and Deal (2003) have determined that if the Structural Frame is overlooked, the organization may waste or misdirect many of its resources and the energy of its workers. Achilles and Tienken (2005) found that, “many scientifically-based research supported innovations consistently show teacher change and student improvement are well within the sphere of the administrator’s control— they are administratively mutable factors such as scheduling, program design, coordination, school size, organization for instruction, and other elements” (p. 315). The administrator’s structuring of schools can enhance student achievement. It is important to have the right structure to accomplish the tasks of the organization and match the changing needs of the school’s improvement goals. A structure that is too loose does not
encourage effective collaboration and continuity. Workers can get lost with little sense of direction. On the other hand, a structure that is too tight can cause people to attempt to sabotage the goals set out by the leadership and can stifle the creativity and flexibility of the staff members (Bolman and Deal, 2003; Leithwood, Louis et al., 2004).

Structure is critical to successful team functioning (Bolman and Deal, 2003). Some key ingredients of top-performing teams are functioning within an effective pattern of roles and relationships, and focusing the team on attaining common goals (Bolman and Deal, 2003; Katzenbach and Smith, 1993, as cited in Bolman and Deal). Leithwood, Louis et al. (2004) determined that, “three sets of practices make up this basic core of successful leadership practices; setting directions, developing people and redesigning the organization” (p. 8). Attending literacy professional development opportunities with their teachers allows principals to truly understand the issues that are most important to positively affecting student achievement. Biancarosa and Snow (2004) found that this experience and knowledge will “give a principal the proper foundation for making the necessary decisions to alter structural elements, such as class schedules, to ensure optimal programming for student learning” (p. 21).

Spillane and Miele (2007) recommend that school leaders study the interactions between staff members of the school to study work practice as opposed to studying individuals. The organizational routines structure much of what goes on in schools, and the interactions of the school’s staff members within those routines can actually increase the flexibility and efficiency of the organization (Spillane and Miele, 2007).

As the culture of schools changes, teachers and school personnel often find that they can no longer continue to operate as they have in the past. As a result of conceptual
and normative changes, teacher’s beliefs about the school organization may also be transformed. Changes in beliefs about educating today’s children may drive structural changes that are needed to allow for new ways of working to best meet students’ individual and collective needs (Fullan, 1993). Biancarosa and Snow (2004) found that “Structure and infrastructure changes should be determined by curricular and instructional considerations” (p. 13).

Reading Research

Numerous studies have been conducted to determine what schools do differently that are effective in increasing student achievement in the area of reading. In their study of elementary schools where students succeed in reading, Mosenthal, Lipson, Mekkelsen, Russ, and Sortino (2001) found that there were major differences between the effective schools and those where students were not achieving as highly. Some qualities of the high achieving schools include teacher autonomy in decision-making about literacy programs, ongoing professional development, supportive and consistent leadership, collaboration among faculty, and a strong sense of community in the school (Mosenthal et al., 2001). When speaking about the strong sense of community, teachers in the schools with high student achievement in the area of reading mentioned that their shared vision and respect for each other as professionals is obvious (Mosenthal et al., 2001).

In a study to determine the nature of principal effects on student outcomes in the area of reading achievement, no direct effects of principal leadership on student achievement in reading were found (Hallinger, Bickman, and Davis, 1996). This study found a strong direct effect on teachers as a result of the principal setting a clear mission for the school and exhibiting strong educational leadership. These principal qualities
increased teacher’s expectations for student achievement, which resulted in a positive effect on student reading achievement (Hallinger, Bickman et al., 1996).

According to the National Reading Panel, student achievement can be increased as a result of professional development. They also report that research suggests that teachers may revert to former methods of teaching over time (United States Department of Education, 2000). Based on these findings, it is imperative that school leaders monitor teacher and student actions in classrooms to determine whether there is classroom evidence that school-wide initiatives continue once they are in place.

According to The National Commission on Writing (2003), there is a much greater need today, than ever before, for schools to assure that students graduating from high schools are highly educated individuals who are able to communicate. There is a much higher premium being placed today upon the average American’s abilities to communicate and rely on their education than previous expectations in our society (The National Commission on Writing, 2003). Little learning of substance can occur without a solid foundation in reading and writing (Hargreaves, 2006). Biancarosa and Snow (2004) determined that, “educators must thus figure out how to ensure that every student gets beyond the basic literacy skills of the early elementary grades” (p. 1).

Conclusion

The literature found linked three areas of research; leadership, structure and organization, and reading in the education field and reviewed the progression of findings in these areas over several years. Next, this review was split into the three areas and research in each area was reviewed. The researcher reviewed the leadership traits that have been determined to result (directly and indirectly) in increased student achievement.
This review examined the structural research in the field with an emphasis on Enabling School Structures. The reading research was current, and established the qualities of high-achieving, improving schools. Biancarosa and Snow (2004) determined that, "improving school infrastructure to better support literacy teachers and students in addition to infrastructure improvement will reap the biggest rewards" (p. 13). In addition, Biancarosa and Snow (2004) found that one of the fifteen essential elements for an effective literacy program, a comprehensive and coordinated literacy program, "is not attainable without the other infrastructural improvements and is especially closely aligned to leadership and the establishment of teacher teams" (p. 22). Educational improvements in the area of literacy are most effective when implemented along with infrastructure improvements such as scheduling changes (Biancarosa and Snow, 2004). Factors that school leaders can manipulate; such as organization for instruction, scheduling, program design, and coordination, set the conditions for enhanced student achievement (Achilles & Tienken, 2005).
Chapter III
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study attempts to determine if there is a relationship between the elements of an Enabling School Structure being present in a building and increased reading achievement of the students of that school. Today's students must be ready to meet the challenges they will face in the future and be prepared to achieve at a high level in middle school and high school. If students do achieve at high levels, they will have a higher chance to exit the public school system either college, career or technical school ready. It has been determined in the literature that leadership does have an effect on student achievement. Most researchers found the effect of leadership on student achievement to be indirect by their influence over many aspects of the school experience for teachers and students. Some of the areas determined to be directly influenced by the building principal are the mission and goals of the organization, structure and organization of the building, direction, and monitoring of the results.

Now that this determination has been made, it is up to the researcher to find specific examples where the indirect influence of the building principal leads to increased student achievement. Since one of the areas researchers found that principals had direct influence on was the school structure, the establishment of an Enabling School Structure could, directly or indirectly, possibly lead to increased student reading achievement. This chapter is organized as follows: hypotheses, population and sample, instrumentation, rationale, collection of data, statistical procedures, and summary.
Hypotheses

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of the establishment of an Enabling School Structure on student reading achievement. In order to make this determination, the following hypotheses have been formed:

1. There will be a positive and significant relationship between student reading achievement and the principal’s behavior. The null hypothesis related to this is: \( H_01: \) There is no significant relationship between student reading achievement and the principal’s behavior.

2. There will be a positive and significant relationship between student MEA reading achievement and the extent of an Enabling School Structure in the school. The null hypothesis related to this is: \( H_02: \) There is no significant relationship between student MEA reading achievement and the extent of an Enabling School Structure in the school.

Population and Sample

To select high-performing elementary schools, the researcher reviewed data from the reading portion of the Maine Educational Assessment (MEA) reading test administered in Grade 4. The researcher compared results from the tests administered in the spring of 2003, 2004, and 2005. The MEA data was used to ensure a selection of schools with strong literacy performance. Based on the test results, the researcher selected schools that tested a minimum of 50 students in Grade 4 and had scaled scores of at least 540 in reading, which was the state average score for the 2005 testing. Of the 795 schools in the state of Maine, 545 are elementary schools. Of the 545 elementary schools in the state of Maine, 351 have Grade 4 students, and assess those students using the
Table 1

*Three Years of M. E. A. Average Test Scores for Years 2002 - 2005*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>% Meets and Exceeds the Standard</th>
<th>Average Scaled Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002- 2003</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003- 2004</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004- 2005</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>540</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

*Three Years of M. E. A. Test Scores for School 1*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>% Meets and Exceeds the Standard</th>
<th>Students Tested</th>
<th>Scaled Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002- 2003</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003- 2004</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004- 2005</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>542</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

*Three Years of M. E. A. Test Scores for School 2*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>% Meets and Exceeds the Standard</th>
<th>Students Tested</th>
<th>Scaled Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002- 2003</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003- 2004</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Year</td>
<td>% Meets and Exceeds the Standard</td>
<td>Students Tested</td>
<td>Scaled Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>544</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4

*Three Years of M. E. A. Test Scores for School 3*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>% Meets and Exceeds the Standard</th>
<th>Students Tested</th>
<th>Scaled Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>542</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

*Three Years of M. E. A. Test Scores for School 4*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>% Meets and Exceeds the Standard</th>
<th>Students Tested</th>
<th>Scaled Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>540</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6

*Three Years of M. E. A. Test Scores for School 5*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>% Meets and Exceeds the Standard</th>
<th>Students Tested</th>
<th>Scaled Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>549</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7

*Three Years of M. E. A. Test Scores for School 6*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>% Meets and Exceeds the Standard</th>
<th>Students Tested</th>
<th>Scaled Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002-2003</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>541</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each of the six schools who had teachers that participated in the study had at least a 540 scaled score in the area of reading in 2005. That was the average scaled score for that year of testing. One of the schools who had teachers participate in the study had a 2005 average scaled score of 540 and one had an average scaled score of 549. The range of students meeting and exceeding the standard in reading for these participating schools in 2005 was from 50% to 88%. The range of students meeting and exceeding the
standard in reading for these participating schools at the beginning of the study in 2003 was from 25% to 67%.

The researcher also solicited permission from the principals of the 6 elementary schools listed above to survey the staff members of these schools at a regularly scheduled staff meeting. School principals were also asked if the researcher could meet with a sample of teachers to conduct focus group interviews at each of the schools. All 6 principals agreed to have their teachers fill out surveys, and 3 of the principals also allowed focus group interviews to be held with the researcher. A total of 93 teachers actually took the survey and a total of 25 teachers actually participated in focus groups.

The six schools that had superintendents and principals that gave permission for their school to be included in the study are quite representative of the population not included in the study. Maine as a state contains a very homogeneous population in regard to race, socio-economic levels, and the level of educational attainment. Many teachers in Maine have graduated from a University of Maine Campus, and those that pursue masters degrees also often attend one of the University of Maine Campuses. Charter schools are not allowed by law in Maine, and there is only one state-run magnet school and it is a high school. The majority of Maine students in grade 4 attend a public school in their town or another nearby town in their school district. Public schools in the state are required to follow a system of standards for each grade level cluster called the Learning Results. As a result of these similar demographics; public schools in Maine are very similar in regards to curriculum, teaching methods, intervention available to students who are struggling, and school leadership.
Instrumentation

The researcher administered the 12-item Enabling Bureaucracy Scale, developed by Hoy and Sweetland in 2001, to staff members of the six schools. This instrument was developed following Hoy and Sweetland's revision of the 24-item instrument given by these same researchers in 2000 to school staff members of 61 schools in the state of Ohio. The first sample, which included 24 items, was limited to only one state, and a relatively small number of schools. For the second sample, schools in five states: Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, and Virginia, and a total of 116 schools were represented (Hoy and Sweetland, 2001). In terms of validity, the range for the second sample was .53 to .81 and consistent with the first sample, dependence on rules and dependence on hierarchy were negatively related (Hoy and Sweetland, 2001). The more enabling the school structure, teachers felt less constrained by the rules or the hierarchy. The alpha coefficient of reliability for the second sample was .96 (Hoy and Sweetland, 2001). As with the samples, all items in the Enabling School Structure Scale (ESS) used a 5-point Likert-type structure, with 1 being "always" and 5 being "never". The questions allowed respondents to choose from 1 to 5 on a scale, with 1 representing "strongly disagree", 2 representing "disagree", 3 representing "neutral", 4 representing "agree", and 5 representing "strongly agree". Staff members were asked to record the extent to which their school structure leans toward an enabling or coercive bureaucracy. The researcher asked permission of Dr. Wayne Hoy to use the ESS Scale and was granted permission. The Enabling Bureaucracy Scale is presented in Appendix A. The letter from Dr. Hoy is presented in Appendix B.
Rationale

The need for this study is timely and of critical importance. Over the last decade, we have experienced a period of unprecedented educational accountability from federal and state levels and intense scrutiny at the local level. Education officials in states across the country have established standards and benchmarks that students are required to achieve, and many states have implemented high-stakes testing with the test results possibly affecting promotion to the next grade or graduation from high school. The Federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires schools to show Adequate Yearly Progress in the areas of reading and mathematics with increasing expectations, and the ultimate goal of having all students proficient in these subjects by 2014. In this age of increased accountability and focus on test results, school leaders are extremely concerned about the essential components of effective reading instruction and how to positively affect students' reading achievement in their schools. As the expectations of the No Child Left Behind legislation increase, even schools that have been consistently making Adequate Yearly Progress will need to improve. The results of this study, using schools whose students are achieving at high levels and also improving over a 3-year period, could be very important in the future.

Many schools are not yet affected by the No Child Left Behind requirements because their students are consistently high achieving. However, many of these schools have test scores that are at approximately the same levels each year and they are not improving. As the NCLB expectations increase, many more schools will be affected, and even those who have many students who are high achieving will need to improve.
Hoy, Tarter and Hoy (2006) found that, researchers have also “been challenged to go beyond SES in the search for school-level properties that make a difference in student achievement” (pp. 2). Secondly, there has been little research relating the elements of Enabling School Structures with student achievement. The role of the principal in establishing an effective school structure and working with staff members to develop and sustain shared governance for the school could be important and lead to increased student achievement. The establishment of an Enabling School Structure helps participants solve problems. Teachers feel empowered to exercise their professional judgment, and have the ability to make meaningful decisions. When teachers and school administrators come together in the best interests of their students, many student needs can be met, and this may lead to increased student achievement.

Data Collection

All 373 Maine elementary schools that have fourth grade were considered for this study. Schools were selected based on their students’ status on the 2005 Maine Educational Assessment. Of the 48 schools that met the selection criteria for this study, 13 schools had statistically significant improvement for 2 consecutive years from school year 2003 through to school year 2005. Of these 13 schools, six district superintendents agreed to allow the schools under their direct supervision participate in the study.

Information and data about the selected schools was found on the Maine Department of Education website. The superintendents of each of the school districts with one of the selected schools were contacted. Each superintendent received a preliminary letter explaining the purpose of the study and need to survey the staff of the qualifying schools. The letter presented an overview and outlined the details of the study.
Superintendents were invited to include the school in their district in the study, and were assured that the participation would be voluntary and anonymous (see Appendix D). The survey instrument, Enabling Bureaucracy Scale, was explained and superintendents were notified that the researcher is interested in interviewing staff members about the potential reasons for the school’s reading results consistently improving. Each packet contained a form to return and a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Statistical Procedures

This study used a mixed method design for research and data collection. The reasons for using a mixed method design are linked to better understanding what is truly going on in the Maine schools that are improving and high-performing. If the researcher relied only on quantitative methods, assumptions could be made based simply on the numerical results. Possibly, there is more going on in these schools, and these actions are also contributing to the sustained improvement. By using both quantitative and qualitative methods, the researcher had a much greater chance to accurately determine what was truly contributing to the students’ success.

Quantitative Methods

The high performing, improving schools were compared using a paired samples test. The improvement in achievement for the schools from 2002 to 2005 was found to be statistically significant. The researcher was planning to use an ANOVA to determine the main effect of three independent variables on the student reading performance (dependent variable) of the schools that have superintendents and principals that have agreed to participate in this study. Once the data was run in SPSS, it was advised by one
of the dissertation advisors, that the data be rerun using ANCOVA with the Year 1 student achievement scores as the covariate. The three independent variables were the number of years of teaching experience; the extent of the Enabling School Structure in the building; and the interaction of the number of years of teaching experience and the extent of the Enabling School Structure in the building. The dependent variable was Year 3 student achievement scores.

**Qualitative Methods**

The researcher used a Grounded Theory Model to determine patterns, themes and trends that are possibly influencing the continuing improvement in reading achievement in each of the six schools participating in the study that have shown consistent improvement. Formal Grounded Theory is based on the research of Glaser and Strauss (1967). Use of the Grounded Theory Model assures that the researcher will build evidence to prove or disprove a hypothesis from the bottom up. Pieces of evidence that are seemingly unconnected may actually be interconnected (Bogman and Bilken, 1982). Romo and Rosen (2005) found that, “Qualitative methodology tends to be better for generating understanding, description, discovery, and hypothesis generating” (p. 40). Small groups of teachers were asked open-ended questions from an interview guide in order to better determine factors leading to the sustained improvement in reading achievement of the fourth graders in the schools included in this study. The interview guide is presented in Appendix C.
Summary

Increased expectations from the federal level through the requirements of The No Child Left Behind Act require the administration and teaching staff of public schools to be focused on improving student achievement in the subject areas of reading and mathematics. This chapter included information relative to the participants of the study. The mixed method research design to be used was outlined. The procedures for data collection and the process for data analysis were highlighted. The instrument to be used for gathering quantitative data, The Enabling School Structure Scale (ESS Form), was introduced. The instrument to be used for gathering qualitative data, the interview guide, was also introduced. This study is designed to determine what may be contributing to the improvement in Grade 4 reading achievement in six public elementary schools in the state of Maine that have shown consistent improvement. This study may lead to the staff members of other schools learning strategies for their own school improvement. It will also determine if there is a need for further study as to factors that may be contributing to increased student reading achievement and what, if any, affect principals have on the sustained improvement.
Chapter IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to determine whether a school staff's increased individual and collective commitment within an Enabling School Structure positively affects student reading achievement. Sinden, Hoy, and Sweetland (2004) determined that the structure of schools may be related to student achievement. Leithwood and Reihl (2003) found that leader's redesigned organizational structures can enable individuals to increase their performance, which can lead to accomplishment of the organization's goals.

An additional purpose of this study is to determine if the six Maine schools, found by the researcher to be improving schools in the area of reading achievement, are improving as a result of an Enabling School Structure. The results of this study are an attempt to determine what the conditions are for the increased success of the Grade 4 students of these Maine schools.

Nature of the Study

The population of schools chosen for this study was determined by analysis of the Maine Educational Assessment (MEA) data from the years 2003 through 2005. The researcher selected schools that tested a minimum of 50 students in grade four and had scaled scores of at least 540 in reading, which was the state average score for the 2005 testing. Of the 795 schools in the State of Maine, 545 are elementary schools. Of the 545 elementary schools in the State of Maine, 351 have Grade 4 students, and assess
those students using the MEA. Of the 351 schools tested, 48 schools (13.7%) met the selection criteria. Within this group, the researcher further disaggregated the testing results to determine the number of students who had performed at or above the state standard in reading. For the 2005 test results, 50% of the students met or exceeded the standard in reading at the 540 scaled score level.

Of the 48 schools that met the selection criteria, the 2005 test results were compared to the 2 previous years' test results for those schools. Of the 48 high performing schools, 13 schools (20%) met the selection criteria, reflecting improvement over a 3-year period. Of the 13 schools that met the final selection criteria, six superintendents (46%) agreed to have their schools participate in the study after an initial letter requesting permission to conduct the study was sent in August 2006. Superintendents of the other seven school districts declined the invitation to participate in the study.

Once permission was granted by the superintendents, school principals of the specific schools were solicited for their permission to have the teachers of the schools participate in the survey and possibly the focus group interviews. Of the six consistently improving schools whose superintendents had given permission for the school to be part of the study, all six school principals agreed to allow their teachers to participate, and three of those principals also agreed to allow their teachers the choice of participating in a focus group interview. Because the sample size was relatively small, the researcher attempted to set up a comparison study in which the six schools in the sample that had shown consistent improvement would be compared to six schools with similar demographics that had shown relatively no improvement over the 3-year period on fourth
grade test scores. In the end, only one school’s superintendent, principal, and teachers agreed to participate in the study. There were not enough schools showing relatively no improvement to allow for a comparison to the six schools that had shown consistent improvement. As a result, the school that had shown relatively no improvement, and had staff members willing to participate, was dropped from the study. The final sample represents six schools that have shown consistent improvement in their students' reading achievement over a 3-year period. The schools are drawn from Cumberland, Kennebec, Penobscot, and York Counties in Maine.

Once the researcher received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval in March 2007, surveys were given at the six participating schools, and focus group interviews were scheduled with teachers willing to meet with the researcher at schools whose principals had given permission for the focus groups to be conducted. At the six schools, 93 teachers actually took the survey. Three of the six schools that had teachers willing to complete surveys also had teachers willing to participate in focus group interviews. At the three schools, 25 teachers actually participated in a focus group. Focus group participants were asked open ended questions from a pre-established interview guide, and were allowed a wide degree of freedom in their responses (see Appendix C). The teachers who completed surveys were asked five demographic questions and 12 survey questions related to the structure of their school buildings (see Appendix A). The questions probed the range of enabling or hindering school structure evident in each school. The focus groups were asked two demographic questions and nine questions related to the possible reasons for the reading achievement results of the fourth grade students in their schools. School information gathered during these interviews was
analyzed to determine the characteristics of the school. Coding of answers assured participant confidentiality in both the surveys and interviews. Data collected revealed patterns and themes about the schools and also demographic information.

Presentation and Analysis of Findings

The focus group interviews took place in classrooms or conference rooms that were convenient for the school staff to meet. One interview took place during the school day; teachers were provided release time by the school principal. One interview took place after school. The final interview took place in the summer when students were no longer attending school. All interviews were recorded on audiotapes and each of the audiotapes was transcribed by the researcher. Occasionally, the researcher clarified the question or requested follow-up in order to better understand an answer.

Analysis of Research Questions

How long have you been teaching?

The results of the question, how long have you been teaching are as follows. The focus group of School 2 consisted of a group of five teachers. Their grades and the number of years they have been teaching are: a kindergarten teacher who has been teaching 11 years; a kindergarten teacher who has been teaching 30 years; one fifth grade teacher who has taught 12 years, and one who has taught 13 years; and a Reading Recovery Teacher who has taught 25 years.

The focus group of School 3 consisted of a group of eight teachers. Their grades and the number of years they have been teaching are: a fourth grade teacher who has been teaching 28 years; a kindergarten teacher who has been teaching 19 years; two first grade
teachers, one who has taught four years and one who has taught six years; one third grade
teacher who has taught 27 years; one fourth grade teacher who has taught 18 years; one
second grade teacher who has taught 16 years; and a literacy coach who has taught 29
years.

The focus group of School 5 consisted of a group of 12 teachers. Their grades
and the number of years they have been teaching are: five fourth grade teachers who have
been teaching 13 years, 20 years, 29 years, 30 years, and 30 years; five fifth grade
teachers who have been teaching 2 years, 12 years, 22 years, 28 years, and 30 years; and
one looping grade 4/5 teacher who has taught 13 years.

How long have you been teaching in this school?

The results of the question, how long have you been teaching in this school are as
follows: School 2 had been open for only 4 years at the time of the focus group interview,
and all of the teachers participating in the focus group have been working at the school
since it opened. Several small schools were closed and the students and staff were all
reassigned to this new building, which is now the only elementary school in this town and
school district. Many of the teachers had been working in this school district for many
years before this school was built.

The focus group of School 3 was made up of teachers who have taught in this
school from 2 to 28 years. Here is the breakdown of years these individuals have taught
in this school: 2 years, 6 years, 6 years, 16 years, 18 years, 18 years, 20 years, and 28
years.

The focus group of School 5 was made up of teachers who have taught in this
school from 1 to 14 years. This school was built 14 years ago, so many of the
experienced teachers have taught in the school for the entire 14 years. Here is the breakdown of years these individuals have taught in this school: 1 year, 6 years, 8 years, and eight teachers who have taught at the school for 14 years.

What components of the school's literacy program do you think have contributed to the consistent gains in reading scores on the MEA each year?

The results of the question, what components of the school's literacy program do you think have contributed to the consistent gains in reading scores on the MEA each year are as follows: The teachers of School 2 felt that consistency, common language, and working on lessons together were important. They mentioned having the materials to work with, the availability of leveled books in their bookroom, and the use of the Developmental Reading Assessment as contributing factors. Professional development that is useful to teachers and not "top-down" was important to this group. These teachers state that they have a supportive and knowledgeable administrative team in the area of literacy, and parents who understand the reading continuum. The writing program being consistently used in this school, and the connections between the teaching of reading and writing were thought to be significant factors. The staff of this school did some grouping or "mixing kids up" according to their individual needs. Some focus group members believed this was important. The teachers and students in this school have been consolidated from several small schools into one school. Teachers feel that this consolidation has led to more communication between and among teachers and a greater knowledge of responsibility for each grade level. The group mentioned that having teachers open to change was also important.
The teachers of School 3 felt that consistency throughout the school, sharing across the grade levels, and "knowing what direction to take our kids" were important. Their prior professional development around standards, work with standards, and alignment to the Maine Learning Results have led to the instruction being aligned with the State Learning Results Standards and the Maine Educational Assessment (Maine Department of Education, 2005) in this school. The teachers felt that they are better preparing their students to take the tests. The establishment of uninterrupted reading blocks; and the specific teaching of comprehension activities and phonics were also thought to be contributing factors.

The teachers of School 3 felt that the new writing program they had adopted and how this has helped them to teach students to plan their writing and their answers on assessments have been important. Many teachers mentioned regular practice with the students practicing how to analyze and then structure their answers to test questions, and also regular practice in constructing and editing sentences using the Daily Oral Language program. There were several responses related to their increased focus on writing and teachers receiving professional development on how to best teach writing, including having lessons modeled and teachers being freed up from other responsibilities to observe writing instruction. Writing instruction became pervasive in their school, including their math periods through the introduction of the Everyday Mathematics program, has contributed to the increase in reading achievement in this school.

These teachers felt that "Everyone having access to the same materials," and the sharing of resources including through a leveled library of trade books that they have established, were contributing factors. Using the literature circle model of teaching
reading was mentioned, and also the importance of students taking ownership of their reading responsibilities through the books they chose to read, and involving the students in asking questions, as well as answering them. The support of the building principal, especially pertaining to the establishment of uninterrupted literacy blocks, the availability of educational technicians to work in the classrooms during these literacy blocks, and the belief that teachers should be teaching their students in their classrooms, were important to this group of teachers.

What are the school’s goals in the area of reading?

The results of the question, what are the school’s goals in the area of reading are as follows: The teachers of School 2 felt that their main goal is, “children will comprehend what they read.” There are specific goals for every grade level in the area of reading, and the teachers also use the goals of the NWEA in some grade levels. The teachers of School 3 use the benchmarks within the assessments they give throughout the school year as their goals. Some of the assessments that are administered in this school have mid-year goals, and some have end-of-year goals.

The teachers of School 5 followed the curriculum goals of the district. There is a yearly focus in this school on specific curriculum areas such as the focus on writing instruction. The building principal met with each teacher to set individual goals for the upcoming school year using the established yearly curriculum focus area, and the results of the previous year’s state assessments for the students in that teacher’s class.

What strategies has the district adopted to improve student achievement in elementary level reading?
The result of the answers to the question, what strategies has the district adopted to improve student achievement in elementary level reading are as follows. The teachers of School 2 mentioned early intervention, including the use of the Response to Intervention (R.T.I.) Model, as important (United States Department of Education, 2006). At this school, they have three reading teachers to assist in the instruction of reading, and all three are certified literacy specialists. Some strategies used in this district were: Reading Recovery, Title I, a Title I summer school, and a computer based program called Lexia (Lexia Learning Systems, Inc., 2008) for practice in phonemic awareness. In this school there are educational technicians, both embedded in the classrooms and those working with literacy groups, and those giving individual instruction in a pull-out model. This group of teachers also felt that the writing program that has been adopted, 6 + 1 Traits (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2007) has been a contributing factor.

The teachers of School 3 mentioned that using assessment to inform instruction is much more consistent in their school than it was years ago when it was much more classroom driven. The teachers of School 5 have experienced smaller class sizes over the last few years. They also have had educational technicians working in their classrooms for certain periods of the day in order “to meet all students needs.” The teachers in this group felt that the consistency of the writing instruction, and the adoption of the math program were important strategies for improving student achievement. The math program includes a great deal of writing and reading.

What literacy initiatives has the school adopted to improve student achievement in reading?
The result of the answers to the question, what literacy initiatives has the school adopted to improve student achievement in reading are as follows: School 2 is the only elementary school in their district so their answers are the same as for the question above. In addition, the teachers mentioned that there has been a greater focus on looking at the elements of reading, specifically phonological awareness with kindergarten students, than there had been in the past. The Rigby Paw Pilot Program (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2008) is also a choice for teachers to use in grade 1. School 3 is the only elementary school in their district so their answers are the same as for the question above. In addition, the teachers mentioned that the teachers all took a graduate literacy course as part of the requirements of the Reading First Grant.

The teachers of School 5 felt that their scheduled day was important, especially their blocks of uninterrupted time for literacy. They also mentioned consistency, including the core literature lists for each grade level. At this school, the Developmental Reading Assessment (Pearson Education, Inc., 2008a) and the Measures of Academic Progress of the Northwest Evaluation Association (Northwest Evaluation Association, 2008) are given at specific grade levels as assessments to track reading performance and growth. Locally developed phonics and vocabulary development programs are used consistently throughout the school’s grades.

What school-district or school based strategies have been adopted to assist the students who do not meet the state requirements or district benchmarks in reading?

The result of the answers to the question, what school-district or school based strategies have been adopted to assist the students who do not meet the state requirements
or district benchmarks in reading are as follows: The teachers of School 2 felt that the additional support provided by the three reading teachers and many educational technicians working in the building specifically to provide individualized instruction and help with literacy groups were important. Specific strategies available in this school include: Title I, a Title I funded summer school for students in grades 1-5, Reading Recovery for students in grade 1, and Lexia, a computer based program (Lexia Learning Systems, Inc., 2008) which provides students practice with phonemic and phonological awareness.

The teachers of School 3 felt that the educational technicians providing informal pull-out groups for additional instruction were important. At this school, some of the strategies available to struggling students are: Title I, a Title I summer school, and Reading First. Prior to the Reading First Grant, Reading Recovery was offered at this school. The teachers of School 5 felt that educational technicians, both those that provide extra support in the classrooms and those that provide extra instruction through pull-out classes, were key strategies. At this school, Title I is offered through grade 4.

Have there been changes in the curriculum, instruction and/or evaluation in the area of reading in the last 3-5 years in the district?

The results of the answers to the question, have there been changes in the curriculum, instruction and/or evaluation in the area of reading in the last 3-5 years in the district are as follows: There have been some assessment changes at School 2 including adding the Developmental Reading Assessment to additional grades. It is now also given to students in grades 4-6. This school is now also using the Developmental Writing Assessment (Pearson Education, Inc. 2008b). When these assessments began to be given,
the Gates MacGinitie and IOWA Test of Basic Skills (Riverside Publishing Co., 2008) were dropped. There is also now a bookroom with leveled books available to all teachers at this school. The teachers did the leveling of the books using the recommendations in *Leveled Books* by Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell, (2008).

At School 3, applying for and being awarded a Reading First Grant has been a major change. The teachers feel that they are now more aware of teaching the components of reading, especially in the area of fluency. One requirement of the grant is that teachers take a graduate course in the area of literacy. Since the grant started, the students seem to be receiving more consistent reading instruction. There has also been much more data produced as a result of the school administering more varied assessments to the students. There has been an assessment change in School 5 with the NWEA replacing the Developmental Reading Assessment in some grades. Also, there are smaller class sizes in this school on a more consistent basis over the last few years.

How are curriculum initiatives in reading connected to other curriculum areas in this school?

The result of the answers to the question, how are curriculum initiatives in reading connected to other curriculum areas in this school are as follows: At School 2, instruction in literacy and mathematics is the main theme, and creating a strong foundation in these subjects is the academic focus. Curriculum initiatives are connected to other curriculum areas at this school through non-fiction texts. This school has an extensive library collection and a certified librarian with much expertise in children’s literature.

At School 3, if there is a connection in the reading to another curriculum area, the teachers try to mention it to the students. As a result of the adoption of the Reading First
Grant and the requirement that a specific reading program is followed, the teachers that participated in this focus group felt that there is no longer enough time to integrate subjects like they were able to do in the past. At School 5, social studies and science instruction is part of the literacy block. Many of the books in the school's leveled library have a science or social studies theme.

Are teachers able to observe other teachers while they are teaching reading? Do teachers take the option to do this?

The result of the answers to the question, are teachers able to observe other teachers while they are teaching reading are as follows: Do teachers take the option to do this At School 2, the opportunity to observe other teachers is available to staff members, but teachers do not take advantage of this opportunity. At School 3, one of the requirements of the graduate literacy class all staff members took as part of the Reading First Grant required teachers to observe each other's teaching in the area of literacy. No release time was provided before the staff's participation in the grant. At School 5, observation of other teachers is part of the evaluation cycle and the master teacher requirements for the teachers. In addition to that, new teachers are encouraged to observe their colleague's teaching, and release time is provided for them to take advantage of this opportunity.

What would you like me to know about the reading instruction at this school?

The results of the answers to the question, what would you like me to know about the reading instruction at this school are as follows: The focus group members at School 2 discussed the importance of having informed administrators, including the literacy specialists and curriculum coordinator as key to positively affecting the students' reading
achievement. These teachers feel that they have high but attainable expectations. The day of the interview, the teachers were revising the language arts curriculum to better meet all students' needs. The group felt that this involvement of so many teachers was important to note.

The members of the focus group of School 3 discussed their principal and felt that she truly values literacy and has promoted the Reading First Grant initiative. Evidence of this includes the establishment of literacy blocks as part of the daily schedule. The teachers devote a great deal of time in the school day to the area of literacy. The focus group members also mentioned the availability of materials and resources for reading in this school compared to other schools in the area. One of the focus group members of School 5 mentioned that there is no time for reflection. A co-worker quickly added, "but we're given the time to focus on kids and their needs."

Summary

The patterns and themes that emerged throughout the three focus group interviews are presented in this section. In some manner, the teachers at all three schools highlighted the consistency and common language of the staff members that exists in their buildings. Educational technicians are embedded in the classrooms and also available for extra individualized or small group targeted instruction in a pull-out model at all three schools. The teachers felt that the additional educational technicians allow them to best meet their student's individual needs. This practice is supported and coordinated by the building principals, and the teachers in all three schools were clear that the principal or their leadership team were knowledgeable about reading and supportive of their efforts.
The teachers of all three of the focus groups mentioned that having the materials they need to work with is important. In some manner, it was mentioned in each focus group that the teachers feel that they have more materials available to them than other schools in their area. Literacy is taught in uninterrupted literacy blocks at all the schools with teachers interviewed. The Developmental Reading Assessment is administered to assess reading levels, and Title I is available for children who qualify at the three schools. The MAP tests of the NWEA are being given to students in some grades in all three schools’ districts. The teachers of all three schools feel that they are better preparing their students to take the required assessments than they did as a staff in the past.

At two of the schools, the teachers have established a leveled library of trade books that are available to all staff members to use. The new writing programs in place and their connection to reading was mentioned extensively as a contributing factor at two of the schools. A Title I funded summer school is offered to qualifying students at two of the school's. Teaching the components of reading was mentioned extensively at two of the schools. The National Reading Panel has determined that these components are: phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary.

Analysis of the Survey Results

The Enabling School Structure Scale (ESS Form) was given to the teachers who volunteered to take it at the six schools where the superintendents and principals gave their permission for their teachers to participate in the study (Hoy and Sweetland, 2000a). Each of the six schools was given a code number to protect the confidentiality of the school and the teachers filling out forms. These teacher's surveys were analyzed and scored according to the instructions in the scoring guide provided on Dr. Wayne Hoy's
website. Each teacher’s individual score was compiled together with the other teachers of their school who also completed a form. The cumulative ESS score for each building was then determined. Each school’s cumulative score was then converted to a standardized score. Table 8 shows the interpretation for the possible scores that resulted from the school’s average score as an Enabling School Structure. The school is considered to be more enabling the higher the standard score. Table 9 shows the relative cumulative scores for each school in relation to the other five schools that were included in the study. Using each teacher’s ESS survey score, linear scaling was used to obtain each school’s scaled ESS score.

Table 8

Scoring Guide for the ESS Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>lower than 99% of schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>lower than 97% of schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400</td>
<td>lower than 84% of schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600</td>
<td>higher than 84% of schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>700</td>
<td>higher than 97% of schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800</td>
<td>higher than 99% of schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9

Relative Cumulative School ESS Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>ESS Score</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>628.6</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>712.6</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>673</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>717.85</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School structure trends were analyzed to determine if an Enabling School Structure influenced students' reading achievement over a 3-year period. All variables were coded to assure for a normal distribution of the data. The year 3 reading scores for each of the schools in the study consistently was the dependent variable. The year 1 reading scores for each of the schools in the study was the consistent covariate. The level of Enabling School Structure in the school, teacher's years of teaching experience, and the interaction of the level of ESS and years of teaching experience were the independent variables in this study. Inferential statistics employing an analysis of co-variance (ANCOVA) using the SPSS statistics software were used in this study to compare sample means in order to determine the significance of the impact of an Enabling School Structure on student reading performance.

Inferential Statistics Results

This study conducted an ANCOVA to draw conclusions based on the effect of the extent of an Enabling School Structure on Student Reading Performance in the 6 schools that participated in the study. These schools were found to have improvement on their fourth grade MEA scores over a 3-year period. Table 10 shows the descriptive information for the ANCOVA results with the teachers' perception of the extent of an Enabling School Structure as the independent variable (main effect) and Year 3 Student Reading Performance as the dependent variable. Year 1 Student Reading Performance scores were controlled for, using them as a covariate. These results use the coded scores for all variables.
Table 10

*Enabling School Structure Means and Standard Deviations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESS</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean to -1 SD</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean +1 SD to 2 SD</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>.454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean +2 SD to 3 SD</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 10, the coding for the number of participants who chose each score, the mean, and the standard deviation for each level are depicted. To allow for a normal distribution, the number of years of teaching experience were collapsed and coded so there would be a total of no more than five levels. The mean for ESS school scores was 500. Each standard deviation for this variable was 100 points.

Table 11

*ANCOVA Results for ESS on Year 3 Student Reading Performance*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enabling School Structure</td>
<td>2, 89</td>
<td>364.828</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Table 11, the ANCOVA results with the teachers' perception of the extent of an Enabling School Structure as the independent variable (main effect) and Year 3 Student Reading Performance as the dependent variable are depicted. Year 1 Student Reading Performance was the covariate. The analysis indicated that the impact of the main effect of the teachers' perceptions of the impact of Enabling School Structure on Year 3 Student Reading Performance when we control for the covariate Year 1 Student Reading Performance \((F = 364.828; \text{df at 2, 89; } p = .000)\) was significant at \(p \leq .050\).

When the Enabling School Structures Scale (ESS form) was given to teachers who volunteered to take it at the 6 schools, some demographic information was also asked of the participants. Table 12 shows the descriptive information for the ANCOVA results with the number of years participating teachers have been teaching as the independent variable (main effect) and Year 3 Student Reading Performance as the dependent variable. Year 1 Student Reading Performance was the covariate.

Table 12

*Teaching Experience Means and Standard Deviations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Experience</th>
<th>(N)</th>
<th>(M)</th>
<th>(SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-2 SD Teaching Experience</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1 SD Teaching Experience</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>.402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Teaching Experience</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ 1 SD Teaching Experience</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ 2 SD Teaching Experience</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.674</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Table 12, the coding for the number of years each participant has been teaching, the mean, and the standard deviation for each level that was determined are depicted. The mean for Years of Teaching Experience was 19 years. To allow for a normal distribution, the number of years of teaching experience were collapsed and coded so there would be a total of no more than five levels.
Table 13

*ANCOVA Results for Years of Teaching Experience and Student Reading Performance*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Experience</td>
<td>4, 87</td>
<td>1.182</td>
<td>.324</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 13, the ANCOVA results with the Years of Teaching Experience as the independent variable (main effect) and Year 3 Student Reading Performance as the dependent variable are depicted. Year 1 Student Reading Performance was the covariate. The analysis indicated that the impact of the independent variable (main effect) of Years of Teaching Experience on Year 3 Student Reading Performance when we control for the covariate Year 1 Student Reading Performance \( (F = 1.182; \text{df at 4, 87; } p = .324) \) was not significant at \( p > .050 \).

Table 14 shows the descriptive information for the ANCOVA results with the interaction of the teachers' perception of the extent of ESS and the number of years participating teachers have been teaching as the independent variable (main effect) and Year 3 Student Reading Performance as the dependent variable. Year 1 Student Reading Performance was the covariate.
Table 14

*Teaching Experience and Extent of ESS and Standard Deviations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experience * ESS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-2 SD</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean to -1 SD</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean +1 SD to 2 SD</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>.408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean +2 SD to 3 SD</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1 SD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean to -1 SD</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean +1 SD to 2 SD</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>.458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>.402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean to -1 SD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean +1 SD to 2 SD</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>.467</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean +2 SD to 3 SD</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>1.00</td>
<td>.655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+1 SD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean to -1 SD</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean +1 SD to 2 SD</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>.378</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean +2 SD to 3 SD</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+2 SD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean to -1 SD</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
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<td>Mean +1 SD to 2 SD</td>
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<td>1.45</td>
<td>.522</td>
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<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
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<td>----</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience*ESS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean +2 SD to 3 SD</td>
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<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.674</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 14, the interaction of the participants in each level of teacher experience, the teachers’ perception of the extent of Enabling School Structure in those teachers’ schools, the mean, and the standard deviation for each coded level are depicted. To allow for a normal distribution, the number of years of teaching experience and the level of ESS were collapsed and coded so there would be a total of no more than five levels. Figure 2 shows the mean plot for these descriptive statistics.
Figure 2. Profile plot for teacher experience and ESS on student reading performance

Table 15

ANCOVA Results for the Interaction of Years Teaching & Reading Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Experience</td>
<td>4, 78</td>
<td>2.024</td>
<td>.099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESS</td>
<td>2, 78</td>
<td>270.320</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Experience*ESS</td>
<td>7, 78</td>
<td>2.750</td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Table 15, the ANCOVA results with the Years of Teaching Experience as the independent variable (main effect) and Year 3 Student Reading Performance as the dependent variable are depicted. Also, the ANCOVA results with the teachers' perception of the Extent of ESS as the independent variable (main effect) and Year 3 Student Reading Performance as the dependent variable are depicted. The ANCOVA results with the interaction of the Years of Teaching Experience and the teachers' perception of the Extent of ESS as the independent variables (main effect) and Year 3 Student Reading Performance as the dependent variable are also depicted. For all these results, Year 1 Student Reading Performance was the covariate. The analysis indicated that the impact of the main effect of Years of Teaching Experience on Year 3 Student Reading Performance when we control for the covariate Year 1 Student Reading Performance \( (F = 2.024; \text{df at } 4, 78; p = .099) \) was not significant at \( p > .050 \). The analysis also indicated that the impact of the main effect of the teachers' perception of the Extent of ESS on Year 3 Student Reading Performance when we control for the covariate Year 1 Student Reading Performance \( (F = 270.320; \text{df at } 2, 78; p = .000) \) was significant at \( p \leq .050 \). The analysis also indicated that the impact of the main effect of the interaction of Years of Teaching Experience and the teachers' perception of the Extent of ESS on Year 3 Student Reading Performance when we control for the covariate Year 1 Student Reading Performance \( (F = 2.750; \text{df at } 7, 78; p = .013) \) was significant at \( p \leq .050 \).
Summary of Analysis and Results

Research Question 1

To address the first research question, will there be any significant differences in student reading achievement based on the principal’s behavior, teachers’ responses to questions 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11 in the interview guide yielded patterns and themes common to the 3 schools that took part in the focus group interviews. Some teacher’s answers could be considered administratively mutable, and other answers could be considered indirectly influenced by the principal. Results from focus groups cannot determine significance. To determine whether any differences in student reading achievement can be based upon the principal’s behavior, the focus group teacher’s answers that could be considered administratively mutable can be grouped into three categories: supportive and knowledgeable principal behavior, structural, and professional development.

Building level administrators are able to directly affect the day-to-day literacy experiences for students and teachers in their schools through their knowledge and their supportive behaviors. Some of the responses from teachers in the focus group interviews that fall into this category were: finding the funds to purchase what teachers need, vocalizing that instruction is important, being supportive of teachers staying in their classrooms and teaching as opposed to attending meetings, goal setting discussions with teachers to help them establish an individual focus, and directly encouraging new teachers to visit other classrooms in order to observe the teaching going on from more experienced educators.

School principals are able to directly influence the structural aspects of the buildings they lead. Some of the responses from teachers in the focus group interviews
that fall into this category were: analyzing classroom needs and placing educational technicians in classrooms for small group and additional individualized instruction; scheduling the school day, including establishing literacy blocks within the schedule for each grade level; and establishing self-contained classrooms. Teachers also mentioned cutting class sizes down by a few students, rearranging the educational technician schedule to allow teachers to observe their peers teaching during the school day, and establishing groups of students not meeting standards so they are able to receive extra instructional support from an educational technician.

Principals also have the ability to directly influence the professional development of the teachers and support staff in the buildings they lead. Some of the responses from teachers in the focus group interviews that fall into this category were: talking directly to teachers and asking what they are struggling with so that the professional development offered can be directly related to the teacher and student needs in their schools; assuring that professional development opportunities are connected to the current curriculum and ongoing; and being sure that professional development is consistently being delivered to allow for common experiences, language, and focus; and is being delivered by individuals very knowledgeable in the content.

To determine whether any differences in student reading achievement can be based upon the principal’s behavior, the focus group teacher’s answers that could be considered indirectly influenced by the principal can be grouped into three categories: availability of materials, consistency, and programming. In each of the focus group interviews, teachers felt that the availability of materials for teaching reading made a difference in their ability to meet students’ needs. Teachers mentioned having a
bookroom, establishing a leveled library, everyone having access to the same materials, and having the materials and reading resources they need as indicators to why the students in their schools are consistently improving and achieving at high levels. The teachers in the three focus groups consistently mentioned that they have more materials available to them than teachers in other schools. Since the school principal budgets for and approves all school purchases, the increased availability of materials for the teaching of reading could be considered indirectly affected by the building leader.

Consistency, not just of materials, but also of programming and instruction, was discussed throughout the focus group interviews. Teachers mentioned knowing what each grade is responsible for, talking the same language, consistent use of materials, and using the same writing program as indicators to why the students in their schools are improving. The feeling that the teachers worked as a team in their delivery of instruction was evident in all the interviews. The expertise of literacy specialists and curriculum coordinators could be a reason the teachers of these schools mention these factors, but in most cases, these specialists work as a team with building principals, so consistency could be considered as a factor indirectly influenced by the school principal.

In each of the focus group interviews, teachers highlighted practices taking place within their schools that could be considered programming decisions. Teachers mentioned the grouping of children based on their individual needs by way of groups in the classrooms; educational technicians embedded in the classrooms, and also pulling out small groups and individual children for additional instruction; and grouping students according to their needs. Teachers also mentioned workshops on new programs presented by people who are experts in their subject; support people coming in to the
school, and supporting teachers through the learning process when new curriculum materials are being adopted; teachers taking a graduate course together; and teachers being encouraged to observe their peers as they teach. These programming opportunities could be considered indirectly influenced by the building leader.

The first null hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between student reading achievement and the principal’s behavior. Focus group interviews were held at schools found to have Grade 4 students who are achieving at a high level on the MEA. The reading achievement scores at these schools have improved over a 3-year period at the fourth grade level. The teachers interviewed believe there are many factors related to why these schools are showing this improvement and their students are achieving at high levels in reading. Some of these reasons could be considered administratively mutable and may have been caused by the direct involvement of the principal. Other reasons are most likely a result of the indirect involvement of the principal. At all of these schools, there are other individuals that are considered part of the leadership team of the building with the principals, especially in the area of literacy. Some of the people in leadership roles mentioned were literacy specialists, a literacy coach, and a curriculum director. The results of focus groups cannot determine significance. In addition, the factors that the teachers believe are the reasons for the high achievement and consistent improvement of the students in their schools could be a result of the leadership team of a building and also directly related to other factors. Because of these reasons, the first null hypothesis was accepted.
Research Question 2

To address the second research question, will there be any significant differences in student reading achievement based upon the establishment of an Enabling School Structure, Table 16 shows the descriptive information for the ANCOVA results with the extent of an Enabling School Structure as the independent variable (main effect) and Year 3 Student Reading Performance an as the dependent variable. Year 1 Student Reading Performance scores were controlled for, using them as a covariate. These results use the coded scores for all variables.

Table 16

ESS Means and Standard Deviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESS</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean to -1 SD</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean +1 SD to 2 SD</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>.454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean +2 SD to 3 SD</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 16, the coding for the number of participants who chose each score, the mean, and the standard deviation for each level are depicted. To allow for a normal distribution, the teachers' perception of the extent of ESS was collapsed and coded so there would be a total of no more than five levels. The mean for ESS school scores was 500.
Table 17

The ANCOVA Results for ESS on Year 3 Student Reading Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enabling School Structure</td>
<td>2, 89</td>
<td>.364.828</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 17, the ANCOVA results with the teachers’ perception of the extent of an Enabling School Structure as the independent variable (main effect) and Year 3 Student Reading Performance as the dependent variable are depicted. Year 1 Student Reading Performance was the covariate. The analysis indicated that the impact of the main effect of the teachers’ perception of the Enabling School Structure on Year 3 Student Reading Performance ($F = 364.828; \text{df at 2, 89; } p = .000$) was significant at $p \leq .050$.

The second null hypothesis stated that there will be no significant relationship between student MEA reading achievement and the extent of an Enabling School Structure in the school. Because the teacher’s perceptions of the impact of an Enabling School Structure was found to be significant ($F = 364.828; \text{df at 2, 89; } p = .000$) the second null hypothesis was rejected (see Table 17).

Subsidiary Questions 1 and 2

To address subsidiary question 1, what is the effect of principal’s behaviors on student achievement, and subsidiary question 2, is the effect of the principal’s behaviors
direct or indirect; teachers’ responses to several questions in the interview guide were used. Teacher responses to the interview questions yielded patterns and themes common to the three schools that took part in the focus group interviews. Some teacher’s answers could be considered administratively mutable, and other answers could be considered indirectly influenced by the principal. The results of focus groups cannot determine significance. To determine whether any differences in student reading achievement could be a result of the effect of principal’s behaviors, the focus group teacher’s answers that could be considered administratively mutable can be grouped into three categories: supportive and knowledgeable principal behavior, structural, and professional development. Building level administrators are able to directly affect the day-to-day literacy experiences for students and teachers in their schools through their knowledge and supportive behaviors. School principals directly influence the structural aspects of the buildings they lead and are also are able to directly influence the professional development of the teachers and support staff in their schools. The focus group teacher’s answers that could be considered indirectly influenced by the principal can be grouped into 3 categories: availability of materials, consistency, and programming. The effect of the principal’s behaviors appears to be both direct and indirect based on the examples cited by the teachers who participated in the focus group interviews.

Subsidiary Question 3

To address subsidiary question 3, how long have the principal’s behaviors been sustained, focus group participants were asked open ended questions from a pre-established interview guide, and were allowed a wide degree of freedom in their responses. The length of time principal behaviors have been sustained was not the focus
with teachers interviewed. The Developmental Reading Assessment is administered to
assess reading levels, and Title I is available for children who qualify at the three schools.
The MAP tests of the NWEA are being given to students in some grades at all three
schools’ districts. The teachers of all three schools feel that they are better preparing
their students to take the required assessments than they did as a staff in the past.

At two of the schools, the teachers have established a leveled library of trade
books that are available for all staff members to use. The new writing programs in place
and their connection to reading was mentioned extensively as a contributing factor at two
of the schools. A Title I funded summer school is offered to qualifying students at two of
the schools. Teaching the components of reading was mentioned extensively at two of
the schools. The National Reading Panel has determined that these components are:
phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary.

Table 18 shows the descriptive information for the ANCOVA results with the
number of years participating teachers have been teaching as the independent variable
(main effect) and Year 3 Student Reading Performance as the dependent variable. Year 1
Student Reading Performance was the covariate.

Table 18

*Years of Teaching Experience Means and Standard Deviations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Experience</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-2 SD Teaching Experience</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1 SD Teaching Experience</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>.402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Experience</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Teaching Experience</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ 1 SD Teaching Experience</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ 2 SD Teaching Experience</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.674</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 18, the coding for the number of years each participant has been teaching, the mean, and the standard deviation for each level that was determined are depicted. The mean for Years of Teaching Experience was 19 years. To allow for a normal distribution, the number of years of teaching experience was collapsed and coded so there would be a total of no more than five levels.

Table 19

**ANCOVA Results for Years of Teaching Experience and Year 3 Student Reading Performance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Experience</td>
<td>4, 87</td>
<td>1.182</td>
<td>.324</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 19, the ANCOVA results with the Years of Teaching Experience as the independent variable (main effect) and Year 3 Student Reading Performance as the dependent variable are depicted. Year 1 Student Reading Performance was the covariate.
The analysis indicated that the impact of the independent variable (main effect) of Years of Teaching Experience on Year 3 Student Reading Performance when we control for the covariate Year 1 Student Reading Performance ($F = 1.182; \text{df at 4, 87; } p = .324$) was not significant at $p > .050$.

Table 19 shows the descriptive information for the ANCOVA results with the interaction of the teachers’ perception of the extent of ESS and the number of years participating teachers have been teaching as the independent variable (main effect) and Year 3 Student Reading Performance as the dependent variable. Year 1 Student Reading Performance was the covariate.

Table 20

*Interaction of Teaching Experience and Extent of ESS and Standard Deviations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience*ESS</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-2 SD</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean to -1 SD</td>
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<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean +1 SD to 2 SD</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>.408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean +2 SD to 3 SD</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1 SD</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean to -1 SD</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean +1 SD to 2 SD</td>
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<td>.458</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>.402</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Variable</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
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<tr>
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<td>----</td>
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<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experience*ESS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean +1 SD to 2 SD</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>.467</td>
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<td>Mean +2 SD to 3 SD</td>
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<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>+1 SD</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean to -1 SD</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean +1 SD to 2 SD</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>.378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean +2 SD to 3 SD</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>+2 SD</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean to -1 SD</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean +1 SD to 2 SD</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>.522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean +2 SD to 3 SD</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.674</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 20, the interaction of the participants in each level of teacher experience, the teachers' perception of the extent of Enabling School Structure in those teachers' schools, the mean, and the standard deviation for each coded level are depicted. To allow for a normal distribution, the number of years of teaching experience and the teachers' perception of the extent of ESS were collapsed and coded so there would be a total of no more than 5 levels.
Table 21

ANCOVA Results for Years of Teaching Experience, ESS, and Interaction of Teaching Experience and ESS on Year 3 Student Reading Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Experience</td>
<td>4, 78</td>
<td>2.024</td>
<td>.099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESS</td>
<td>2, 78</td>
<td>270.320</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Experience*ESS</td>
<td>7, 78</td>
<td>2.750</td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 21, the ANCOVA results with the Years of Teaching Experience as the independent variable (main effect) and Year 3 Student Reading Performance as the dependent variable are depicted. Also, the ANCOVA results with the teachers’ perception of the teachers’ perception of the Extent of ESS as the independent variable (main effect) and Year 3 Student Reading Performance as the dependent variable are depicted. Also, the ANCOVA results with the interaction of the Years of Teaching Experience and the teachers’ perception of the Extent of ESS as the independent variables (main effect) and Year 3 Student Reading Performance as the dependent variable are depicted. In all results, Year 1 Student Reading Performance was the covariate. The analysis indicated that the impact of the main effect of Years of Teaching Experience on Year 3 Student Reading Performance when we control for the covariate Year 1 Student Reading Performance ($F = 2.024$; df at 4, 78; $p = .099$) was not significant at $p > .050$. The analysis also indicated that that the impact of the main effect
of the teachers' perception of the Extent of ESS on Year 3 Student Reading Performance when we control for the covariate Year 1 Student Reading Performance ($F = 270.320; \text{df at } 2, 78; p = .000$) was significant at $p \leq .050$. The analysis also indicated that the impact of the main effect of the interaction of Years of Teaching Experience and the teachers' perception of the Extent of ESS on Year 3 Student Reading Performance when we control for the covariate Year 1 Student Reading Performance ($F = 2.750; \text{df at } 7, 78; p = .013$) was significant at $p \leq .050$.

The quantitative (ANCOVA) results evident in the data collected for this study show that the Year 3 student's reading assessment scores do appear to possibly be the result of the Extent of Enabling School Structure in the schools that had teachers who participated in this study based on those participating teachers' perceptions. The results from running the ANCOVA while controlling for Year 1 reading assessment scores as the covariate are significant. Also, the ANCOVA results evident in the data collected for this study show that the Year 3 student's reading assessment scores do appear to possibly be the result of the Interaction of the Extent of Enabling School Structure in the schools and the Years of Teaching Experience of the schools that had teachers who participated in this study based on those participating teachers' perceptions. The results including the teachers' perception of the level of ESS as an independent variable when running the ANCOVA, while controlling for Year 1 reading assessment scores as the covariate, are significant. The qualitative results evident in the data collected for this study determined that students' reading performance in the schools that were part of this study also appear to be a result of other factors such as consistency, using a common language, and teachers having the reading materials they need. There were many other possible factors
mentioned in the focus group interviews. The combined results indicate that the schools' staff members believe that the student's reading assessment scores are a result of the establishment of an Enabling School Structure and other factors.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of an Enabling School Structure on student reading achievement. In order to make this determination, the following hypotheses were formed:

1. There will be a positive and significant relationship between student reading achievement and the principal's behavior. The null hypothesis related to this is: Ho1: There is no significant relationship between student reading achievement and the principal's behavior.

2. There will be a positive and significant relationship between student MEA reading achievement and the extent of an Enabling School Structure in the school. The null hypothesis related to this is: Ho2: There is no significant relationship between student MEA reading achievement and the extent of an Enabling School Structure in the school.

The first null hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between student reading achievement and the principal's behavior. Focus group interviews were held at schools found to have Grade 4 students who are achieving at a high level on the MEA. The reading achievement scores at these schools have improved over a 3-year period at the fourth grade level. The teachers interviewed believe there are many factors related to why these schools are showing this improvement and their students are achieving at high levels. Some of these reasons could be considered administratively
mutable and may have been caused by the direct involvement of the principal. Other reasons are most likely a result of the indirect involvement of the principal. At all of these schools, there are other individuals that are considered part of the leadership team of the building with the principals, especially in the area of literacy. Some of the people in leadership roles mentioned were literacy specialists, a literacy coach, and a curriculum director. The results of focus groups cannot determine significance. In addition, the factors that the teachers believe are the reasons for the high achievement and consistent improvement of the students in their schools could be a result of the leadership team of a building or factors not related to the principal. Because of these reasons, the first null hypothesis was accepted.

The second null hypothesis stated that there will be no significant relationship between student MEA reading achievement and the extent of an Enabling School Structure in the school. Because the impact of teachers’ perception of the extent of an Enabling School Structure on student reading performance ($F = 364.828; \text{df} at 2, 89; p = .000$) was found to be significant at $p \leq .050$ the second null hypothesis was rejected (see Table 11).

Chapter IV reported the interview findings of three focus groups, which consisted of a total of 24 classroom teachers and 1 literacy coach from the three schools whose principals agreed to have a focus group held at their school. The teachers of these schools also filled out surveys and the Enabling School Structure Scale. The inferential statistics results determined from the survey results were also presented in this chapter.

The patterns and themes that emerged throughout the three focus group interviews resulted from open-ended questions from a pre-established interview guide, and
participants were allowed a wide degree of freedom in their responses. In some manner, the teachers who participated in the focus groups at all three schools highlighted the consistency and common language of the staff members that exists in their buildings. Educational technicians are embedded in the classrooms and also available for extra individualized or small group targeted instruction in a pull-out model at all three schools. The teachers felt that the additional educational technicians allow them to best meet their student's individual needs. This practice was supported and coordinated by the building principals, and the teachers in all three schools were clear that the principal or their leadership team were knowledgeable about reading and supportive of their efforts.

The teachers of all three of the focus groups mentioned that having the materials they need to work with was important. In some manner, it was mentioned in each focus group that the teachers felt they have more materials available to them than other schools in their area. Literacy is taught in uninterrupted literacy blocks at all the schools with teachers interviewed. The Developmental Reading Assessment is administered to assess reading levels, and Title I is available for children who qualify at the three schools. The MAP tests of the NWEA are being given to students in some grades at all three schools' districts. The teachers of all three schools felt that they are better preparing their students to take the required assessments than they did as a staff in the past.

Many of the consistent findings among the three schools where teachers were interviewed could be considered management behaviors, such as making sure teachers have materials they need and scheduling. Many of the consistent findings among the three schools where teachers were interviewed could also be considered leadership behaviors, such as involving the teachers in choosing professional development and
assuring that the professional development is consistent and ongoing. Determining whether schools where teachers’ perception of the impact of Enabling School Structure is high have principals who are more of a leader or manager was not a purpose of this study. However, informally, it seems that the schools in this study have principals that are high in both leadership and management.

The analysis of the ANCOVA results with the Years of Teaching Experience as the independent variable (main effect) and Year 3 Student Reading Performance as the dependent variable indicated that the impact of the main effect of Years of Teaching Experience on Year 3 Student Reading Performance when we control for the covariate Year 1 Student Reading Performance ($F = 1.182; \text{df at } 4, 87; p = .324$) was not significant at $p > .050$.

However, the analysis indicated that the impact of the main effect of the interaction of Years of Teaching Experience and the teachers’ perception of the Extent of ESS on Year 3 Student Reading Performance when we control for the covariate Year 1 Student Reading Performance ($F = 2.750; \text{df at } 7, 78; p = .013$) was significant at $p \leq .050$. Since this finding was significant, the level of teacher experience could be considered to be one of the factors impacting student reading achievement when it exists along with a significant finding in the ESS results, as it does in the schools that were surveyed in this study.

This study used a mixed method design for research and data collection. Because the six schools that had superintendents and principals that gave permission for their school to be included in the study are quite representative of the population not included in the study, similar results could most likely be obtained from other schools in Maine.
The majority of Maine students in grade 4 attend a public school in their town or another nearby town in their school district. Public schools in the state are required to follow a system of standards for each grade level cluster called the Maine Learning Results. As a result of these similar demographics, public schools in Maine are very similar in regard to curriculum, teaching methods, intervention available to students who are struggling, and school leadership. Because of Maine's similar demographics and the use of a mixed method design, these results should be able to be replicated in the population of Maine schools not included in the study.

Chapter IV presented the descriptive and inferential statistical analyses conducted in the quantitative portion of this study. The answers to the interview questions from the focus groups were presented in the qualitative portion of this study. The two research questions and the four subsidiary questions and their corresponding null hypotheses were presented, tested, analyzed, and discussed. Chapter V will include a summary of the focus group responses and an analysis of those responses. The findings of both the focus groups and the statistical analyses will be discussed in relation to the theoretical framework, contribution to the literature on student reading achievement, future areas of study, and the implications for future research.
Chapter V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine whether a school staff's increased individual and collective commitment within an Enabling School Structure positively affects student reading achievement. Sinden, Hoy, and Sweetland (2004) determined that the structure of schools may be related to student achievement. Leithwood and Reihl (2003) found that leaders redesigning organizational structures can enable individuals to increase their performance which can lead to accomplishment of the organization's goals.

An additional purpose of this study was to determine if the six Maine schools found by the researcher to be improving schools in the area of reading achievement are improving as a result of an Enabling School Structure. The results of this study were an attempt to determine what the conditions are for the increased success of the fourth grade students of these Maine schools.

Summary of the Study

Decades of school reform, the "reading wars" between phonics and whole language and the move toward standards-based education have left educators searching for strategies to improve students' reading achievement, and there is considerable debate across America about how to best achieve this goal. To add to this dilemma, since the early 1990s, we have experienced a period of unprecedented educational accountability from the federal and state levels, and intense scrutiny at the local level. Education officials in states across the country have established standards or benchmarks that students are required to be proficient, and many states have implemented high-stakes
testing with the test results possibly affecting promotion to the next grade or graduation from high school. The Federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires schools to show Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in the areas of reading and mathematics with increasing expectations, and the ultimate goal of having all students proficient in these subjects by 2014. Biancarosa and Snow (2004) found that "the disparity between the demands of modern life and the inadequate literacy achievement of eight million struggling readers and writers has therefore given a new urgency to the need for reform" (p. 31). Increased literacy needs, as a result of changes in society and the world of work in the United States of America, have resulted in an era of unprecedented accountability. In this age of increased accountability and focus on test results, school leaders are very concerned about the essential components of effective reading instruction, and how to positively affect students' reading achievement in their schools.

According to Leithwood and Riehl (2003), teachers, school administrators, and school systems administrators are under increasing pressure to assure that their students perform academically. State and national achievement standards focused on ambitious learning for all children have changed the landscape of educational accountability. Considering that the process of reading is fundamental to a child's achievement in all other subject areas, the reading achievement of school children has become an even more important issue for teachers and principals.

As researchers examine the critical role the principal plays, along with the teachers, to affect student reading achievement, the question arises as to what actions a principal can and should take to affect the reading achievement of the students in his or
her school. In what areas will the principal be the most effective in order to reach this goal?

Liethwood and Riehl (2003) found that "leaders sometimes do things through words or actions that have a direct effect on the primary goals of the group or organization. However, more often, they influence the thoughts and actions of other persons and establish the conditions that enable others to be effective. As a result, leadership effects on school goals tend to be mostly indirect" (p. 3).

Hallinger and Heck (1996) reviewed each major study conducted in the area of principal effectiveness between the years of 1980 and 1995. They determined, although it is possible that principals exert some direct effect on students' learning as measured by school outcomes, the linkage is consistently tied to the actions of others in the school. Every member of the organization needs to work toward the agreed upon mission and goals of the school for the organization to reach its intended outcomes. This finding would suggest that a team approach is effective when attempting to increase students' achievement levels. Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) found that the contribution of purposes and goals to school effectiveness depends upon the extent to which such purposes are believed to be compelling and challenging targets for staff member's personal practices; as well as, the collective school improvement efforts of the staff. The principal does have a direct effect on the instructional organization of the school along with school climate, school norms and policies, mission and goals, and school culture (see Figure 1). Through these means, school leaders may have an indirect effect on student achievement and, as a result, it would be important to explore how principals set the conditions for success.

Dwyer (1986) studied the principal's contribution to instruction and found that, principals
directed their attention and actions "at elements of their schools' instructional
organization, climate, and external environment as they attempted to shape the day-to-
day operations of their organizations in the pursuit of their intended outcomes" (p. 10).

Principals have the unique opportunity to influence the structure of the buildings
in which they are instructional leaders. Bolman and Deal (2003) determined that more
effective supervisors tend to be high on both consideration and structure. If principals
establish an Enabling School Structure that is responsive to the needs of the staff and
students, those with the actual direct influence on the students' achievement may work
harder to meet individual and school goals. If the instructional organization the principal
establishes encourages commitment from the teachers and all those who work directly
with the students, learning may occur at a deeper level.

This study was an attempt to determine if there is a relationship between the
extent of an Enabling School Structure in a school and increased reading achievement of
the students in that school. It was hoped that this study would shed light on Enabling
School Structure as one strategy to affect student's reading achievement. Since the
structure of the building and teacher beliefs about their skills are very affected by the
principal's beliefs and actions, this study asked the following research questions:

1. Will there be a positive and significant relationship between student reading
achievement and the principal's behavior?

2. Will there be a positive and significant relationship between student MEA
reading achievement and the extent of an Enabling School Structure in the school?
The subsidiary questions were:

1. What is the effect of principal's behaviors on student achievement?
2. Is the effect of the principal’s behaviors direct or indirect?

3. How long have the principal’s behaviors been sustained?

4. Do staff members believe that the student’s reading assessment scores are a result of the establishment of an Enabling School Structure or other factors?

Related to these research questions, the following hypotheses were formed:

1. There will be a positive and significant relationship between student reading achievement and the principal’s behavior. The null hypothesis related to this is: Ho1: There is no significant relationship between student reading achievement and the principal’s behavior.

2. There will be a positive and significant relationship between student MEA reading achievement and the extent of an Enabling School Structure in the school. The null hypothesis related to this is: Ho2: There is no significant relationship between student MEA reading achievement and the extent of an Enabling School Structure in the school.

Findings and Implications

The relationship between an Enabling School Structure operating in a school and the reading achievement of the students in that school provided the framework for this study. A review of the literature determined the value of focusing on the Structural Frame. The relationship to school leaders working within the structural frame and this focus possibly being related to higher student achievement was also explored. Schmuck (1980) as cited in Mosenthal, Lipson, Mekkelsen, Russ and Sortino (2001) found that features of schools such as their “size, neighborhood, and structure influence students'
motivation and achievement by affecting their expectations for success, self-esteem, and performance” (p. 1).

Leithwood and Riehl (2003) found that, “leaders influence organizational culture through practices aimed at developing shared norms, values, beliefs, and attitudes among staff, and promoting mutual caring and trust among staff” (p. 20). Teachers trusting their colleagues and trusting the principal are key elements of an Enabling School Structure (Hoy and Sweetland, 2000b). Faculty trust allows for increased two-way communication and decision making that honors varied viewpoints.

Bolman and Deal (2003) have determined that if the Structural Frame is overlooked, the organization may waste or misdirect many of its resources and the energy of its workers. Achilles and Tienken (2005) found that “many scientifically-based research supported innovations consistently show teacher change and student improvement are well within the sphere of the administrator’s control - they are administratively mutable factors such as scheduling, program design, coordination, school size, organization for instruction, and other elements” (p. 315). The administrator’s structuring of schools can enhance student achievement. It is important to have the right structure to accomplish the tasks of the organization and match the changing needs of the school’s improvement goals. A structure that is too loose does not encourage effective collaboration and continuity. Workers can get lost with little sense of direction. On the other hand, a structure that is too tight can cause people to attempt to sabotage the goals set out by the leadership and can stifle the creativity and flexibility of the staff members (Bolman and Deal, 2003; Leithwood, Louis, et al., 2004).
Structure is critical to successful team functioning (Bolman and Deal, 2003). Some key ingredients of top-performing teams are functioning within an effective pattern of roles and relationships and focusing the team on attaining common goals (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Katzenbach and Smith, 1993, as cited in Bolman and Deal, 2003). Leithwood, Louis et al. (2004) determined that “three sets of practices make up this basic core of successful leadership practices; setting directions, developing people, and redesigning the organization” (p. 8). Attending literacy professional development opportunities with their teachers allows principals to truly understand the issues that are most important to positively affecting student achievement. Biancarosa and Snow (2004) found that this experience and knowledge will “give a principal the proper foundation for making the necessary decisions to alter structural elements, such as class schedules, to ensure optimal programming for student learning” (p. 21).

In regards to the first research question about whether there will be a positive and significant relationship between student reading achievement based upon the principal’s behavior, there are many factors determined by the teachers who participated in the focus group interviews that could be possible reasons for the students’ improved reading scores. The results of focus groups cannot determine significance. The first null hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between student reading achievement and the principal’s behavior. Focus group interviews were held at schools found to have Grade 4 students who are achieving at a high level on the MEA. The reading achievement scores at these schools have improved over a 3-year period at the fourth grade level. The teachers interviewed believe there are many factors related to why these schools’ students are showing consistent improvement and are achieving at high
levels. Some of these reasons could be considered administratively mutable and may have been caused by the direct involvement of the principal. Other reasons are most likely a result of the indirect involvement of the principal. At all of these schools, there are other individuals that are considered part of the leadership team of the building with the principals, especially in the area of literacy. Some of the people in leadership roles mentioned were literacy specialists, a literacy coach, and a curriculum director. Because the reasons for the increased student achievement could be attributed to many factors and the fact that the results of focus groups cannot determine significance, the first null hypothesis was accepted.

In general, the research findings stayed true to previous research which found that school principals and superintendents count on the leadership contributions of many members of the school organization for the school to be successful in raising student achievement (Leithwood, Louis et al., 2004). Many leadership studies find that the effect of school leaders on student learning and achievement is indirect through their influence on teachers and other members of the organization who have a more direct, day-to-day effect on students’ learning. By influencing the school’s mission and goals and focusing their energy on curriculum and instruction, school principals indirectly affect student learning in classrooms. School leaders establish and maintain many of the conditions that allow teachers to be most effective. Their effects are intricately tied to the actions and effects of others (Cotton, 2003; Dwyer, 1986; Hallinger, Bickman & Davis, 1996; Hallinger and Heck, 1996; Leithwood and Riehl, 2003). Hallinger and Heck (1996) determined that, “our own perspective is that the principal’s role is best conceived as part of a web of environmental, personal, and in-school relationships that combine to
influence organizational outcomes" (p. 6). Fullan et al. (2006) determined that "to progress, especially in the early stages, the principal is key, along with at least one other internal change agent" (p. 95).

In regard to the second research question about whether there will be any significant differences in student reading achievement based upon the establishment of an Enabling School Structure, the ANCOVA results with the teachers' perception of the extent of an Enabling School Structure as the independent variable (main effect) and Year 3 Student Reading Performance as the dependent variable are depicted. Year 1 Student Reading Performance was the covariate. The analysis indicated that the impact of the main effect of the teachers' perception of the Enabling School Structure on Year 3 Student Reading Performance when we control for the covariate Year 1 Student Reading Performance \((F = 364.828; \text{df at } 2, 89; p = .000)\) was significant at \(p \leq .050\) (see Table 11). The second null hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between student MEA reading achievement and the extent of an Enabling School Structure in the school. Because the ANCOVA results were determined to be significant, the second null hypothesis was rejected. It is interesting that the ANCOVA results were significant. Some possible reasons for these findings could be: the sample size is relatively small, the study was conducted in one state which has a relatively homogeneous population, the criteria for schools to be part of this study was quite tight and may have allowed only certain types of communities to be considered.

All of the schools in the study had a relatively high level of Enabling School Structure. The collective school scores rate the six schools in this study quite high based on the chart available on Wayne Hoy's website (see Tables 8 & 9). Three of the school's
scores were “higher than 97% of schools.” One school was “higher than 84% of schools,” one school was “average,” and one school was “lower than 84% of schools.” Enabling structures have flexible guidelines for rules and procedures. Staff members in these organizations are encouraged to use their professional judgment when they are problem solving rather than follow strict guidelines. Enabling structures promote trust among the staff members and the unexpected is welcomed. Differences are encouraged and two-way communication is practiced between the administration and the staff members.

In their analysis of Enabling School Structures, Sinden et al. (2004) found that flexibility was the principal behavior mentioned most often as an example of enabling. There is a high degree of collegial trust among the teachers working in schools with enabling structures. The basic theme of establishing an Enabling School Structure is that it helps participants solve problems. In the field of education, teachers working within an enabling bureaucracy feel empowered to exercise their professional judgment and have the ability to make meaningful decisions. The second null hypothesis stated that there will be no significant relationship between student MEA reading achievement and the extent of an Enabling School Structure in the school. Because the impact of the teachers’ perception of the impact of an Enabling School Structure ($F = 364.828; \text{df at 2, 89; } p = .000$) was found to be significant at $p \leq .050$ the second null hypothesis was rejected (see Table 11).

In regard to the subsidiary questions, teachers’ responses to questions in the interview guide yielded patterns and themes common to the three schools that took part in the focus group interviews. Some teacher’s answers could be considered administratively
mutable, and other answers could be considered indirectly influenced by the principal.

To determine whether any differences in student reading achievement could be a result of the effect of principal’s behaviors, the focus group teacher’s answers that could be considered administratively mutable can be grouped into three categories: supportive and knowledgeable principal behavior, structural, and professional development. Building level administrators are able to directly affect the day-to-day literacy experiences for students and teachers in their schools through their knowledge and supportive behaviors. School principals directly influence the structural aspects of the buildings they lead and are also are able to directly influence the professional development of the teachers and support staff in their schools. The focus group teacher’s answers that could be considered indirectly influenced by the principal can be grouped into three categories: availability of materials, consistency, and programming. The effect of the principal’s behaviors appears to be both direct and indirect based on the examples cited by the teachers who participated in the focus group interviews.

Focus group participants were asked open ended questions from a pre-established interview guide, and were allowed a wide degree of freedom in their responses. The length of time principal behaviors have been sustained was not the focus of any of the participant’s answers. As a result, subsidiary question 3 cannot be answered.

Teacher’s responses to the interview questions attribute the student’s reading scores to several factors. The patterns and themes that emerged throughout the three focus group interviews can be considered factors that the teachers believe are contributing to their students’ reading scores. In some way, the teachers at all three schools highlighted the consistency and common language of the staff members that
exists in their buildings. Educational technicians are embedded in the classrooms and also available for extra individualized or small group targeted instruction in a pull-out model at all three schools. The teachers felt that the additional educational technicians allow them to best meet their student’s individual needs. This practice is supported and coordinated by the building principals, and the teachers in all three schools were clear that the principal or their leadership team were knowledgeable about reading and supportive of their efforts.

The teachers of all three of the focus groups mentioned that having the materials they need to work with is important. In some way, it was mentioned in each focus group that the teachers feel that they have more materials available to them than other schools in their area. Literacy is taught in uninterrupted literacy blocks at all the schools with teachers interviewed. The Developmental Reading Assessment is administered to assess reading levels, and Title I is available for children who qualify at the three schools. The MAP tests of the NWEA are being given to students in some grades at all three schools’ districts. The teachers of all three schools feel that they are better preparing their students to take the required assessments than they did as a staff in the past.

At two of the schools, the teachers have established a leveled library of trade books that are available for all staff members to use. The new writing programs in place and their connection to reading was mentioned extensively as a contributing factor at two of the schools. A Title I funded summer school was offered to qualifying students at two of the schools. Teaching the components of reading was mentioned extensively at two of the schools. The National Reading Panel has determined that these components are: phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary.
When the Enabling School Structures Scale (ESS form) was given to teachers who volunteered to take it at the six schools, some demographic information was also asked of the participants. The ANCOVA results with the Years of Teaching Experience as the independent variable (main effect) and Year 3 Student Reading Performance as the dependent variable are depicted in Tables 12 and 13. Year 1 Student Reading Performance was the covariate. The analysis indicated that the impact of the independent variable (main effect) of Years of Teaching Experience on Year 3 Student Reading Performance when we control for the covariate Year 1 Student Reading Performance \( (F = 1.182; \text{df at 4, 87}; p = .324) \) was not significant at \( p > .050 \).

The ANCOVA results with the interaction of the Years of Teaching Experience and the teachers' perception of the Extent of ESS as the independent variables (main effect) and Year 3 Student Reading Performance as the dependent variable are depicted in Tables 12 and 13. Year 1 Student Reading Performance was the covariate. The analysis indicated that the impact of the independent variable (main effect) of the interaction of Years of Teaching Experience and the teachers' perception of the Extent of ESS on Year 3 Student Reading Performance when we control for the covariate Year 1 Student Reading Performance \( (F = 2.750; \text{df at 7, 78}; p = .013) \) was significant at \( p \leq .050 \).

Both the qualitative and quantitative results evident in the data collected show that the student's reading assessment scores appear to be the result of several factors. The extent of Enabling School Structure in the schools that had teachers who participated in this study was found to be a significant factor. The interaction of the teachers' perception of the extent of Enabling School Structure and the years of teacher's experience also was
found to be a significant factor. The students' reading performance in the schools that were part of this study also appears to be a result of other factors. Some of the additional factors found were consistency and teachers having the reading materials they need.

Recommendations

Policy Recommendations

Those in a position of leadership in school systems must work to ensure that experienced teachers are able to work with the children with the most needs in the area of reading. Since the years of teacher's experience was found to have a significant relationship to student reading achievement in this study when it was interacting with the extent of ESS in the school; superintendents, principals, school board members, and others in a leadership capacity in schools would be advised to have policies in place that allow the most experienced and qualified teachers to be hired.

School leaders in areas where there is low overall student reading achievement may want to consider offering incentives to experienced teachers in order to attempt to entice them to work with the students who are struggling the most. School leaders would be advised to hire special education, Title I, and Reading Recovery teachers who are experienced teachers since they will be working with students who are not reading at grade level. School leaders also are advised to explore ways to encourage experienced teachers to stay in the profession and not leave for early retirement or other reasons.

Another policy recommendation is for school leaders to use their influence with the United States Department of Education to attempt to have the "No Child Left Behind Act" (NCLB) requirements recognize improvement in schools. If schools have historically had low reading achievement scores, but now they are improving in their
whole group and disaggregated sub-group scores, the NCLB requirements could recognize and encourage this improvement and not continue to label these schools, "failing schools." Possibly school and district leaders could lobby state educational leaders to take into account this recommendation when they are working with national educational leaders.

Future Research

It is recommended that research continue in the state of Maine. Since this study uses data from student testing given to different groups of students each year, it could be that the scores simply reflect different students' results, not necessarily improvement. The study could be expanded to all high-performing schools in the State of Maine for three consecutive years as opposed to those showing improvement over a three-year period.

It is recommended that research continue in the state of Maine. Since this study uses data from student testing given to different groups of students each year, it could be that the scores simply reflect different students' results, not necessarily improvement. The study could be expanded to include students' MEA results over a period of several years now that the MEA reading tests are administered to grades 3 through 8. Class or school growth could be studied using the same student's scores each year.

It is recommended that research continue in the state of Maine. Maine school districts will become consolidated regional school units over the next few years in Maine. Many small schools will probably be closed in this process, and many factors related to the education of students will probably change. Since one of the schools in this study was formed when a district closed all of its small schools and the teachers were very
positive about the results on student's achievement, using this same research design in Maine's consolidated districts would be recommended.

It is recommended that research continue in other parts of the United States to determine the effect of an Enabling School Structure on student reading achievement. Since many other states have a much larger number of elementary schools and student count, there would potentially be many more schools in which to conduct this study, even using the same criteria for inclusion in the study.

It is recommended that research continue in other parts of the United States to determine the effect of an Enabling School Structure on student reading achievement in schools that are high achieving in the area of reading. Because it is imperative that all schools improve their test scores under NCLB, it would be important to determine if this study's results can be replicated in other states with varied demographics from Maine.

A study of schools that have had low reading achievement scores, but have been consistently improving, is recommended using this research design. If the improvement could be found to be impacted by an Enabling School Structure, that finding would add to the body of research about why some schools that have had low reading achievement scores are showing improvement.

A study of principal's behaviors that can be considered management versus those behaviors that can be considered leadership in relation to the extent of an Enabling School Structure in a school is recommended. Also, a study of principal's behaviors that can be considered management versus those behaviors that can be considered leadership in relation to schools where students are high achieving and improving is recommended.
A study is recommended to determine the level of Enabling School Structure and its possible effect on student reading or mathematics achievement in economically disadvantaged schools or districts. It is also recommended that research continue using this same research design, but also include principals, parents, district administration, and possibly students in the focus groups or conduct the research at other levels such as at middle schools or high schools. It is further recommended that research continue using this same research design, but conduct the research at other types of schools, such as private, parochial, or charter schools.

A study is recommended to determine the affect of district level administrative leadership on student achievement. Another related area possibly in need of further study is a comparison of student reading achievement over a multi-year period previous to a school’s teachers accepting a Reading First Grant to the years after the grant is accepted. An additional related area possibly in need of further study is a comparison of student reading achievement over a multi-year period while the students are being taught within the requirements of a Reading First Grant to the period following the end of the grant.

Practice Research

A study is recommended in which state or district leaders investigate the level of teacher’s beliefs about whether they have the materials they need for teaching reading. This group could possibly identify or establish a funding source for those schools where teachers consistently state that they do not have the materials and resources they need. Possibly this could be set up as a competitive grant with donations from charitable trusts and foundations.
A study is recommended in which state or district leaders investigate the level of principal's beliefs about whether they have the resources to hire experts in the field to train teachers when new programs are being adopted. This group could possibly identify or establish a funding source for those schools where principals state that they do not have the funding to hire consultants to ensure that the new program will be delivered to students consistently. Possibly this could be set up as a competitive grant with donations from charitable trusts and foundations.
References


Appendix
Appendix A

Teacher Survey
The following two pages show both sides of the survey given to staff members willing to take it in the 7 schools.

**Staff Member Survey:**

How many years have you been a teacher? ____

How many years have you taught at this school? ____

Were you teaching at this school between the years 2002 - 2005? Yes or No

Gender: Male or Female

Highest Level of Educational Attainment:

- Bachelors Degree
- Masters Degree
- Post Masters Degree
## Form ESS

The following statements are descriptions of the way your school is structured. Please indicate the extent to which each statement characterizes behavior in your school.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Once in a While</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Fairly</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
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<td>2</td>
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Record your response by circling the appropriate number beside the statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Never</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Administrative rules in this school enable authentic communication between teachers and administrators.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. In this school red tape is a problem.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. The administrative hierarchy of this school enables teachers to do their job.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The administrative hierarchy obstructs student achievement.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Administrative rules help rather than hinder.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. The administrative hierarchy of this school facilitates the mission of this school.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Administrative rules in this school are used to punish teachers.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. The administrative hierarchy of this school obstructs innovation.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Administrative rules in this school are substitutes for professional judgement.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Administrative rules in this school are guides to solutions rather than rigid procedures.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. In this school the authority of the principal is used to undermine teachers.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. The administrators in this school use their authority to enable teachers to do their job.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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The ESS Scale above can be divided into enabling and coercive formalization items and enabling and hindering centralization items. The questions from the scale are organized below by question type.

**Items to Measure Enabling School Structure**

**Enabling formalization items**

Administrative rules in this school enable authentic communication between teachers and administrators

Administrative rules help rather than hinder

Administrative rules in this school are guides to solutions rather than rigid problems

**Coercive formalization items**

Administrative rules in this school are used to punish teachers

In this school red tape is a problem

Administrative rules in this school are substitutes for professional judgment

**Enabling centralization items**

The administrative hierarchy of this school enables teachers to do their job

The administrative hierarchy of this school facilitates the mission of the school

The administrators in this school use their authority to enable teachers to do their job

**Hindering centralization items**

The administrative hierarchy obstructs student achievement

The administrative hierarchy of this school obstructs innovation

In this school the authority of the principal is used to undermine teachers
Appendix B

Permission to use ESS Form
Re: ESS Form for research + Academic Optimism

From: Wayne Hoy (whoy@mac.com)
Sent: Tue 2/25/08 10:45 AM
To: Kathleen Beecher (kbeecher@hotmail.com)

Dear Kathleen:

You have my permission to use the ESS Form in your research.

The paper in question has been published (see attached). Please quote the published version.

Good luck in your research.

Wayne

Wayne K. Hoy
Fawcett Professor of Education Administration
http://www.coe.ohio-state.edu/whoy

7687 Pebble Creek Circle, #102
Naples, FL 34108
239-514-3907
Appendix C

Interview Guide
1. How long have you been teaching?

2. How long have you been teaching in this school?

3. What components of the school’s literacy program do you think have contributed to the consistent gains in reading scores on the MEA each year?

   OR

4. What components of the school’s literacy program do you think have contributed to the relatively flat reading scores on the MEA between the years of 2003-2005?

5. What are the school’s goals in the area of reading?

6. What strategies has the district adopted to improve student achievement in elementary level reading?

7. What literacy initiatives has the school adopted to improve student achievement in reading?

8. What school-district or school-based strategies have been adopted to assist the students who do not meet the state requirements or district benchmarks in reading?

9. Have there been changes in the curriculum, instruction and/or evaluation in the area of reading in the last 3-5 years in the district?

10. How are curriculum initiatives in reading connected to other curriculum areas in this school?

11. Are teachers able to observe other teachers while they are teaching reading? Do teachers take the option to do this?

12. What would you like me to know about the reading instruction at this school?
Appendix D

Letters of Consent and Permission
Dear (Superintendent),

I am a doctoral student at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey. I am conducting a study titled, “The Elementary Principal’s Role in Affecting Student Reading Achievement.” This study will focus on elementary schools in the state of Maine, which have been determined to be improving schools in the area of reading based on the last three years of MEA fourth grade results. A school in your district, (name of school), has been identified as meeting that description.

The study will use the Enabling Bureaucracy Scale, to be completed by teachers. The questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. If the principal or some of the teachers are willing, I would also like to conduct some short interviews with staff members. I believe that this study will add to the research about improving schools, specifically improving schools in the State of Maine.

This is a preliminary inquiry to get a sense of superintendents’ interest in participating in this study. I am asking your permission for the school in your district, (name of school) to be part of the study. If permission is granted, I will contact the school principal directly in the fall to obtain his or her permission to distribute the questionnaires to the principal and teachers of the school.

The information obtained from teachers will remain strictly confidential and the reporting of the results will be by group analysis only. No names will be used in any reporting of results. The participation on the part of the school and the teachers will be voluntary. Teachers not willing to participate will not complete the questionnaires. Questionnaires will be secured, and only the researcher will have access to them.

If the minimum number of school superintendents with improving schools in their districts agrees to participate in this study, I will soon be seeking approval from the Institutional Review Board of Seton Hall University. The Institutional Review Board protects the rights of human participants in research. Once this proposal is approved by the Institutional Review Board, I will contact the school principals about further details.

Please use the enclosed form to notify me of your decision to participate in this study. I have enclosed a self-addressed, stamped envelope for your convenience. Please accept my sincere appreciation for your professional assistance with this research. If you would like a copy of the dissertation abstract mailed to you after completion or if you have any questions about the study, please contact me at (207) 647-3048 ext. 529.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Beecher
_____ I have read the material in the letter dated July 22, 2006, about the study titled, “The Elementary Principal’s Role in Affecting Student Reading Achievement.”

I agree to have my school district participate in this activity, realizing that I may withdraw without prejudice at any time.

_____ I do not wish to participate

Superintendent’s Signature: __________________________

Date: _____________________
Dear (Superintendent),

I am a doctoral student at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey. I am conducting a study titled, "The Elementary Principal’s Role in Affecting Student Reading Achievement." This study will focus on comparing elementary schools in the state of Maine, which have been determined to be consistently improving on their grade four reading scores based on the 2003-2005 MEA fourth grade results, with schools whose scores have stayed relatively the same. A school in your district, (name of school), has been identified as meeting the description of a school whose grade four MEA reading scores are relatively the same when comparing the '02-'03 scores to the '04-'05 scores.

The study will use the Enabling Bureaucracy Scale, to be completed by teachers. The questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. If the principal or some of the teachers are willing, I would also like to conduct some short interviews with staff members. I believe that this study will add to the research about improving schools, specifically improving schools in the State of Maine.

This is a preliminary inquiry to get a sense of superintendents’ interest in participating in this study. I am asking your permission for the school in your district, (name of school) to be part of the study. If permission is granted, I will contact the school principal directly in approximately one month to obtain his or her permission to distribute the questionnaires to the principal and teachers of the school.

The information obtained from teachers will remain strictly confidential and the reporting of the results will be by group analysis only. No names will be used in any reporting of results. The participation on the part of the school and the teachers will be voluntary. Teachers not willing to participate will not complete the questionnaires. Questionnaires will be secured, and only the researcher will have access to them.

I will soon be seeking approval from the Institutional Review Board of Seton Hall University. The Institutional Review Board protects the rights of human participants in research. Once this proposal is approved by the Institutional Review Board, I will contact the school principals about further details.

Please use the enclosed form to notify me of your decision to participate in this study. I have enclosed a self-addressed, stamped envelope for your convenience. Please accept my sincere appreciation for your professional assistance with this research. If you would like a copy of the dissertation abstract mailed to you after completion or if you have any questions about the study, please contact me at (207) 647-3048 ext. 529.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Beecher
I have read the material in the letter dated November 19, 2006, about the study titled, "The Elementary Principal's Role in Affecting Student Reading Achievement."

I agree to have my school district participate in this activity, realizing that I may withdraw without prejudice at any time.

____ I do not wish to participate

Superintendent's Signature: _______________________________

Date: __________________
March 22, 2007

Dear (School Principal),

I am a doctoral student at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey. I am conducting a study titled, "The Elementary Principal’s Role in Affecting Student Reading Achievement." This study will focus on comparing elementary schools in the state of Maine, which have been determined to be consistently improving on their grade four reading scores based on the 2003-2005 MEA fourth grade results, with schools whose scores have stayed relatively the same. Crooked River Elementary School has been identified as meeting the description of a school whose grade four MEA reading scores have improved consistently when comparing the '02-'03 scores to the '04-'05 scores.

The study will use the Enabling Bureaucracy Scale, to be completed by teachers. The questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. I believe that this study will add to the research about improving schools, specifically improving schools in the State of Maine.

I have received permission from the (District Name) Superintendent, (Superintendent’s Name), to conduct this study with (Name of School) staff. I now am asking for your permission for the school you lead to be part of this study. If you agree to participate, please copy the attached reply form on school letterhead, sign it, and return it to me in the envelope provided.

The information obtained from teachers will remain strictly confidential and the reporting of the results will be by group analysis only. No names will be used in any reporting of results. The participation on the part of the teachers will be voluntary. Teachers not willing to participate will not complete the questionnaires. Questionnaires will be secured, and only the researcher and her dissertation committee will have access to them.

Please accept my sincere appreciation for your professional assistance with this research. If you have any questions about the study, please contact me at (207) 647-3048 ext. 529.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Beecher
Principal’s Name: ________________________________

School District: ________________________________

School Name: ________________________________

I have read the material in the letter dated March 22, 2007, about the study titled, "The Elementary Principal’s Role in Affecting Student Reading Achievement.” I agree to have my school participate in this activity, realizing that I may withdraw without prejudice at any time.

I do not wish to participate.

Principal’s Signature: ________________________________

Date: __________________
Oral Script to Solicit Teachers for Completion of Survey:

I am a doctoral student at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey and will be receiving my degree in Education Leadership, Management and Policy. I am conducting a survey at predetermined schools based on their MEA grade 4 reading achievement scores. This information will add to the knowledge base of information that I am collecting about student reading achievement. This anonymous survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. Surveys will be available at the end of this meeting and can be mailed to me in these stamped, self-addressed envelopes. Please be assured that all information will be held in the strictest confidence and that your participation is voluntary. Thank you for considering participating in this portion of the research project.

Oral Script to Solicit Teachers for Focus Groups:

I would like to meet with a focus group of teachers to better determine factors influencing student reading achievement in this school. This interview will add to the knowledge base of information that I am collecting about student reading achievement. This interview should last no more than 30 minutes and all information will be held in strict confidence. I would like to audiotape our conversation in order to ensure the accuracy of my notes. As part of the protocol, I have a release for you to sign. I will also be following an interview guide with pre-selected questions. Please be assured that all information will be held in the strictest confidence and that your participation is voluntary. Immediately following this staff meeting, I will be in the (name of room) and would be happy to meet with a group of teachers today, or I can give you my contact
information so we could arrange for a mutually agreeable day and time to meet on another date. Thank you for considering participating in this portion of the research project.
Appendix E

Informed Consent Form
Researcher’s Affiliation:

The researcher is a doctoral student in the department of Education Leadership, Policy and Management at Seton Hall University in South Orange, New Jersey.

Purpose and Duration:

This study seeks to determine if a school staff’s increased individual and collective commitment within an enabling school structure positively affects student reading achievement. Participation in the survey will take approximately 10 minutes. Participation in an interview will take approximately 30 minutes.

Procedures:

The research will call for teachers to complete a survey which includes five questions and The Enabling Bureaucracy Scale. In addition, small groups of teachers will be asked questions from an interview guide in at least four of the schools in order to better determine factors leading to the sustained improvement in reading achievement of the fourth graders in the schools included in this study.

Instrumentation:

Teachers will be asked to complete the 12-item Enabling Bureaucracy Scale developed by Hoy and Sweetland in 2001. This instrument is available in the public domain on Dr. Wayne Hoy’s website, and educators are encouraged to download and use it.
Voluntary Notice:

Participation in this study is voluntary and permission may be withdrawn at any time. Participants may opt out before and during both the surveys and interviews.

Anonymity:

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

Confidentiality:

All information will be stored in the researcher's home in a locked fireproof file cabinet. Only the researcher and her dissertation committee will have access to the data. All data will be destroyed three years after the study is completed. Data will be stored electronically on a USB memory key and will be kept in a locked, secure fireproof file cabinet.

Research Records:

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

Risks:

There are no risks associated with this research.

Benefits:

There are no personal benefits to the volunteers associated with this research. The results of this study may help educational leaders in their efforts to approve student achievement in the area of reading.

Compensation:

No compensation is offered with this research.
Alternative Procedures:

Alternative procedures do not apply with this research.

Contact Information:

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

Kathleen Beecher, Researcher
Assistant Superintendent
Lake Region School District
900 Portland Rd.
Bridgton, ME 04009
(207) 647-3048

Dr. Daniel Gutmore, Ph.D. (Researcher's Mentor)
Department of Education Leadership, Policy and Management
Seton Hall University
Jubilee Hall, 4th Floor
400 South Orange Ave.
South Orange, NJ 07079-9389
(973) 275-2853

Dr. Mary F. Ruzieka, Ph.D, Director
Institutional Review Board
Presidents Hall- 3rd Floor
Seton Hall University
400 South Orange Ave.
South Orange, NJ 07079-9389
(973) 313-6314

Audiotapes:

A tape recorder will be used during the interview only with the participant's permission. If one or more focus group participants decline to give permission for the use of the tape recorder, the researcher will take hand-written notes. Participants are asked to indicate on this Informed Consent Form whether they give permission for their interview session to be audio taped by initialing their choice. Participants have the right to review all, or any portion, of the audiotapes of their interview sessions and may request that the
audiotape be destroyed. The audiotapes will be held in a locked file cabinet in the researcher’s home for a period of three years.

Informed Consent Form:

Participants will receive a signed and dated copy of the informed consent form.

_____ I give permission for the interview session to be audio taped. (Please initial)

_________________________ __________________________
Participant’s Signature Date
Appendix F

Transcript of Focus Group Interviews
The questions in the Interview Guide are as follows:

1. How long have you been teaching?

2. How long have you been teaching in this school?

3. What components of the school's literacy program do you think have contributed to the consistent gains in reading scores on the MEA each year?

   OR

   What components of the school's literacy program do you think have contributed to the relatively flat reading scores on the MEA between the years of 2003-2005?

4. What are the school's goals in the area of reading?

5. What strategies has the district adopted to improve student achievement in elementary level reading?

6. What literacy initiatives has the school adopted to improve student achievement in reading?

7. What school-district or school-based strategies have been adopted to assist the students who do not meet the state requirements or district benchmarks in reading?

8. Have there been changes in the curriculum, instruction and/or evaluation in the area of reading in the last 3-5 years in the district?

9. How are curriculum initiatives in reading connected to other curriculum areas in this school?

10. Are teachers able to observe other teachers while they are teaching reading? Do teachers take the option to do this?

11. What would you like me to know about the reading instruction at this school?
Transcript of Focus Group Interview- School # 1

1. How long have you been teaching?

This focus group consisted of a group of five teachers. Their grades and the number of years they have been teaching are: a Kindergarten teacher who has been teaching 11 years, a Kindergarten teacher who has been teaching 30 years, one fifth grade teacher who has taught twelve years and one who has taught thirteen years, and a Reading Recovery Teacher who has taught 25 years.

2. How long have you been teaching in this school?

This school has been open for four years, and all of the teachers participating in this focus group have been working at the school since it opened.

3. What components of the school’s literacy program do you think have contributed to the consistent gains in reading scores on the MEA each year?

Being part of the literacy collaborative, all talking the same language, our administrative team, (names of three leaders), having those three leaders has been important I think.

The consistency and knowing what each grade level is responsible for helps and again, we’re gathering today to go over that. Five to six years ago we did this, we did what we’re doing today, looking at our language arts program and redid our curriculum. Having the materials to work with is another important; we have a bookroom now here that we never really had before, consistent use of materials.
The availability of it. Whatever we need, we've been able to get. They've been very helpful in that, asking what we need and they've found the funds and been able to get it.

And, there's a lot of support from the administration for professional development and really thinking about what kind of professional development do we want to offer that's useful for teachers? It's not top down. It's bringing, not just bringing in someone and saying, "here's the best and the greatest." It's talking to teachers and asking, "What are you struggling with? You know, if a teacher said, "Comprehension's a problem", we'd get a reflective practices group. We spent two years talking about comprehension and really helped teachers to implement it instead of just saying, "Well, here you go, you're on your own."

And then, a consistent writing program has helped. We went to 6+1 Traits for writing and we're all trying to get on the same page, use the same language, and have the same developmental assessment of our writing.

And our reading too. We have the Developmental Reading Assessment so, um, I think our parents know what our continuum looks like. They see it on the report card; talk about it at parent conferences. It has the letter system that we use to level books, but also has the grade levels underneath right on the report card so that parents can see where their children are on the continuum.

And I have to say, as a teacher leader I'm out and about in a lot of schools. We have a lot of good, strong teachers who are very open to changing and doing, really looking at what's best for their kids and we have a higher percentage, I think, than other
schools. I may be biased, but I am in a lot of schools and I talk to a lot of teachers and I think our percentage is a lot higher.

The staff is invested in the children of (this town), plus many staff have children in the system and have a big need to have it be a top notch system.

Since we’ve all been together at this new school, I think that’s helped us because we can all work together. We’re not all spread out.

It’s easier to communicate, especially among the grade levels. It’s easier to work together.

It’s much more effective than when we were all separate schools and we saw each other maybe twice a year. Much better this way.

And ‘teaming, there’s a lot more informal conversations, a lot more informal conversations than taking an in-service day and you have to get it all out there and organize stuff.

And working on lessons together and sometimes presenting it together or you know, mixing kids up and grouping according to their needs.

When there were separate schools, there were distinct geographical regions and some children got more of the difficult children to teach. And, now it’s more on an even keel for everybody.

Literacy Collaborative- we’re not part now. We took it on, we trained our trainer and she worked with teachers and then, because of money, we had to let that position go. But it did get the information out, that kind of thing, so we’re using the same kind of literacy structure. Again, I think the common language has made a huge difference.

When we talk about guided reading, everybody knows what we’re talking about.
4. What are the school’s goals in the area of reading?

There are specific goals for every grade level, but they, all your students will attain a certain level, and we had as (name of staff member) mentioned, we all worked on comprehension. That is our #1 goal for all-children will comprehend what they read.

To understand what they’re reading.

5. What strategies has the district adopted to improve student achievement in elementary level reading?

I think, the N.W.E. A. Assessment that we do online has helped students. It helps them choose a goal. It helps see where they’re weakest or where their work areas are in their reading and writing. That helps with our instruction.

We just did it in fifth grade this year, but it’s going to be 3 through 5 next year right?

It started as a middle school and high school initiative because they had so many sending schools. They felt like they needed baseline information. They really liked it so now we’re moving it down.

It’s great information and it’s readable for the students. They can look at their printout and see you know, “I’m weak right there, I need to work on that.”

6. What literacy initiatives has the school adopted to improve student achievement in reading?

Didn’t the lower grades start the Rigby Paw Pilot Program?
That’s just first grade.

That was a recent initiative.

That was recent. They adopted that and they’re using it, but I don’t think it’s required.

We have through PREP, the Penobscot Regional Educational Partnership, we’ve been working on R.T.I. which is kind of coming up through K and 1 and how can we help our kids with literacy? That’s been, we’ve kind of been ironing out the bugs of the earlier grades. That has been really good because it’s helped us assess kids and really work as a team instead of letting kids fall between the cracks. That’s our goal with that. We started the planning on this three years ago. We put some stuff into first grade last year and we’ve been pulling in Kindergarten this year.

We went to trainings, K and first grade teachers, last summer and it makes a huge difference keeping record of those kids and saying, looking at all of them compared and who needs a little more help and the reading teachers took our kindergarten kids the third trimester and worked on the ones that were weak in phonological awareness and skills and it makes a huge difference – early intervention is the answer.

We have three reading teachers in the building. I believe one is paid for through Title I funds, and the others are all locally paid.

It was better last year when we had four.

But three is better than two.

Three is better than two. There’s never enough time to get everybody, but they’re, they’re doing what they can.
Our writing, it's been in the last three years, 6+1, adoption of that writing program.

At this point, we use the DWA except in Kindergarten because we felt it really wasn't appropriate.

7. What school district or school-based strategies have been adopted to assist the students who do not meet the state requirements or district benchmarks in reading?

For those, we offer Title I, Reading Recovery in first grade, and Title I summer school for grades 1-5.

The two other reading teachers do the bulk of the work. All of our three reading teachers are certified literacy specialists so that helps too. The two who do Reading Recovery work with K and 2 as well, and then we have one who works with grades 3-5. That's probably where we need the most additional support, is 3-5.

Special Education is a big intervention. We have four or five? Including the composites? One, two, three, four, five.

And many ed. techs. Our population of Autism Spectrum Disorders has risen dramatically in the last few years. We have a very large special education population and staff.

For the non-special ed. population, our ed. techs. really help a lot with the literacy groups and some individualized instruction. They are embedded in the classroom whenever possible.

There's another intervention we have; the Lexia Program.
It is a computer based program, um, for phonemic awareness, phonological awareness, and we have somebody who gives it. You can just go and work on the computer alone. You just need somebody to supervise. So that’s a nice way to get that practice in, and it doesn’t take the teacher’s time or specialist’s time. It’s getting a lot of use in this area. You could Google it.

8. Have there been changes in the curriculum, instruction and/or evaluation in the area of reading in the last 3-5 years in the district?

The DWA evaluation was adopted just before we moved wasn’t it? And the DRA was put into grades 4-6 about that time too.

We were giving the Gates Mac-Ginie and the IOWAs previous to that.

It was mentioned before, the bookroom made just a huge difference. Having all the variety of the leveled books available to everyone. We use Fountas and Pinnell’s Leveled Books to do the leveling.

9. How are curriculum initiatives in reading connected to other curriculum areas in this school?

Through non-fiction texts. We have a marvelous library.

And, as part of the new school we have a certified librarian that brings a certain expertise about choice.

We have the opportunity to use picture books a lot more because of our library and to introduce them into science and social studies.
And, don't you kind of feel K-5, I mean, that our main theme is literacy and it does, everything else is kind of secondary? Literacy and math.

Literacy and math, right?

This creates a really strong foundation. That's what's important.

10. Are teachers able to observe other teachers while they are teaching reading? Do teachers take the option to do this?

We have the opportunity. If we were to ask for that to be able to go in and observe another, we would not have a problem with that, but I don't think it's really taken advantage of. We could if we wanted to.

11. What would you like me to know about the reading instruction at this school?

And, the fact that we are redoing the curriculum as we speak, trying to make it more teacher friendly and making sure the kids are getting what they need.

High expectations, but attainable

Yes

The goals

And, I think from being around a long time and working for different administrators; having informed administrators. Um, (name of reading teacher) is a trained Reading Recovery Teacher. Our curriculum director, (name of Director), taught in the classroom and knows that having knowledgeable administrators to help guide you through and be your leaders and having (name of Curriculum Director) is so important when you're working on curriculum.
We wouldn’t be where we are right now without our curriculum coordinator.

She’s incredible.

She really is.

But, she’s ours!

Don’t you feel that’s when (name of school) turned a corner?

Absolutely.

When (name of Curriculum Director) came.

I look around and see where some of these other districts are and I thank God that we have her because we would be so far behind.

You need to know that those other curriculum, those other districts are calling (name of Curriculum Director). That’s what I hear.

Researcher: She’s K-12?

Yes, she’s K-12.
Transcript of Focus Group Interview- School # 2

1. How long have you been teaching?

   This focus group consisted of a group of twelve teachers. Their grades and the number of years they have been teaching are: five fourth grade teachers who have been teaching 13 years, 20 years, 29 years, 30 years, and 30 years; five fifth grade teachers who have been teaching 2 years, 12 years, 22 years, 28 years, and 30 years; and one looping grade 4/5 teacher who has taught 13 years.

2. How long have you been teaching in this school?

   This focus group was made up of teachers who have taught in this school from one to 14 years. This school was built 14 years ago so many of the experienced teachers have taught in the school for the entire 14 years. Here is the breakdown of years these individuals have taught in this school: one year, six years, eight years, and eight teachers who have taught at the school for fourteen years.

3. What components of the school’s literacy program do you think have contributed to the consistent gains in reading scores on the MEA each year?

   I think a lot of practice in how to answer the questions. Um, we use a lot of samples from the past MEAs to kind of get them to understand our writing program. I think it’s helped because, um, it is a way for them to organize their responses. And so, I think the new writing program we have put in place the last couple of years. Our answers have been better because they know how to structure their answers and what to look for in the underlying parts of the question, to star them so they know exactly what they’re
looking for and how to organize their response. So, I think the writing part has added a lot to the reading part because they know how to answer the questions.

Researcher: So, is there a name for that or is it one you made up?

It's "Step Up to Writing."

Researcher: Does anyone know the company?

Write Right

We all do something called "Daily Oral Language" every single day and every single morning.

I think that helps with the grammar and the handwriting— the mechanics of writing.

It helps with the writing and the reading because we usually do it out loud and we talk about it.

The other thing that's just happened in the last few years is that we all have self-contained classrooms. Prior to this we would, um, switch for reading and math, so I think by us having our own kids all day more is possible.

The other thing we did at that point, ah, when we went to that new format is that we, um, combined our trade books and did a leveled library. So, we shared all our resources and everyone has, um, access to all of the materials in there so you can do small groups, you can do whole class, you can do comparisons of authors, that sort of thing.
I think also, just to reiterate about the writing program, the MEAs are really pretty much a writing test so I think we have just focused more on everyone writing. Spending more time writing in the classrooms. In general, doing more writing. (Name of principal) does writing samples with the kids that he looks at and school wide and gives feedback too so there's overall a whole culture of writing and the way it is emphasized and the way that more time is spent on that.

The support that we're getting to do that kind of writing.

Right, the workshops that we've had on "Step Up To Writing" um, have made a big difference.

The other thing too is, correct me if I'm wrong, but don't we test, we typically don't test on Mondays anymore. We only test in the mornings and I think it used to be the whole week so I think the scheduling times- it's broken up more.

Researcher: When you said you had presenters coming from the "Step Up To Writing" Program, is that come from another state or are they people locally?

Out of state

One woman consistently. And she'll do a lesson in the classroom for the writing part and we all, we come in and watch and we'll use it in our classrooms.

In the resource room too, when the kids take the testing now down in the resource room, they all write a plan before they write their response and we all check the plan to make sure they're going in the right direction before they actually write it so, you know, we can tell if someone's been rushing through it or if they, or if they've understood what the question was asking.
That's the biggest point I think right there is that we're, we're spending more time making sure that the students understand what it is they are having to answer. What questions are being asked and how then are they going to plan a response to those and any writing even if it's just a short one, even if it's just a constructed response kind of thing it's a little bit of a plan. Put together so that the kids know what they're going to say and what direction they're going rather than winging it. Because of these plans, because of the way we've taught the kids to analyze what is being asked in the questions, I think, ah, that's a break into it, they're focusing on the correct answers instead of just going off onto something else.

This year too, we asked the kids to read the questions first before they read the selections to give them a sense of what to look for and I think that this was the first year we did that. I don't know if this applies, but...

We also have Everyday Math which is much more writing than it used to be so the writing doesn't stop with the reading or the writing block, it's really, it's pervasive.

Researcher: So, it's throughout the kids' day?

Right, and in science and social studies.

And, again, without the support people coming in with presenters who are experts in it coming in and supporting us through the learning process of starting this new program as well.

It's just that, I think another thing is that we're giving the kids more opportunities to talk about and take ownership of the stories, books that they're reading like with literature circles so that we're not just giving them questions that they have to answer and
pass in. You know, the kids are trying to make a connection to their lives with it. They’re trying to make it more meaningful. They need to come up with their own questions that are thought provoking, not just direct retell questions and then there’s pretty good discussions that revolve around it’s just that the kids are basically tearing into a piece of literature themselves.

It’s a very cooperative staff and a very sharing staff as well as experienced so, um, (name of teacher) can tell you that she came in with one year’s experience and she’s got so many materials that she can access and not have to reinvent the wheel.

And just run across the hall and anyone I’ve asked, whether they be fourth grade or fifth grade, and ask, “What do I need here?” “Oh, well, this is the folder I’ve put together. Take what you like and leave what you don’t.” So, that’s been wonderful for me.

As far as our literacy block, all of our, as (name of teacher) said, when we were switching classes for reading and math and we had maybe a fifty minute period for reading and spelling and English and grammar and writing and all of that was in our home rooms so it was kind of broken up. Now that we have our kids all day long, we have a literacy block, that’s a good long one, and a math block, and it’s a good long one. So, we’re talking at least seventy minutes if not an hour and a half or more. It’s the entire morning, literacy first, math second, and (the principal) is, um, very supportive of his teachers being in their classrooms and teaching rather than having a, a sub in the classroom so if there’s something going on that, for instance there’s a meeting, a district meeting coming up that I’m supposed to go to. It’s an all-day meeting. I’ll be going at 11:30 when math is over simply because it’s better for me to be here in the morning than
to have somebody come in and not be the consistency for the kids. So, those are the kinds of things we can work out. If it's essential that we're gone, we can go, that's not an issue. But, if it's not, it's better for us to be here in the classroom with the kids - bottom line.

One more thing, about adding to the first question about um, why our scores have gone up also, is (school principal) putting ed. techs. within the classroom much more. They can help you get to those that really need the extra help that may be special ed. or may not be special ed. So we have more help within the classroom which helps to get to those kids. It's people we have in the building already. He just kind of restructured what they're doing and where they are because we all do reading at a certain time and all do math at a certain time, so he can split up those people from where they're not needed to wherever they were.

4. What are the school's goals in the area of reading?

Improve your scores! (Laughter)

Well, there's the curriculum

And the mission and the vision and all that.

The focus in the beginning was math and once that was established, it was "Step Up to Writing" and then, next year, they're going to focus on science.

When we set our goals, when we have our meeting with the principal and we set our goals for the coming year, we set our goals based on the priorities right now in the district and right now in this building and so if it was math, then it was math and when it was writing it was writing and if it's reading it's reading. So, we've all been consistent
in, in looking at what the district goals were- what people were focusing on because they needed improvement and then putting our goals toward that.

But, (the school principal) will also take us, when we sit down with him, he'll also show us our M. E. A. scores and say, "This is the area you look weak in. You may want to focus on that this year."

So, we're using it analytically too I think- the test results.

But, there aren't any school-wide specific goals- it's just whatever the district wants to work on.

Well, the report card, I kind of look at as the goals.

Right, but they're always the same. It's not like this, you're working on- we want you to get to this point.

It's much more generalized.

5. What strategies has the district adopted to improve student achievement in elementary level reading?

There are two other elementary schools in our district, so I think that the consistency of the math program and the writing program have gone district-wide at grades four and five.

Can I speak to smaller class size? One of the things we've been very fortunate in is to be able to cut even our class sizes down in the last few years by a few students and that is a huge difference when you have heterogeneously grouped classrooms, along with having the um, ed. techs. in for certain periods of the day for an hour here or 45 minutes there during one of your ah, blocks so you can have their help and meet all of the kid's
needs so final class size, I think is the key anywhere for student achievement. The average class size is 18, 19, or 20.

The policy is 25.

But, we used to consistently have 24 or 25, 26 and then maybe go down to 23 or 21 or something. Now, we seem to consistently try to keep it, and we have the administrator support to keep it lower.

6. What literacy initiatives has the school adopted to improve student achievement in reading?

We use the D. R. A.

And the N. W. E. A.

We just started end of last year. This is the first year we’ve been able to see both fall and spring scores and see how they’ve improved.

The D. R. A. comes to the end of the fourth grade.

We actually start in kindergarten.

But, in our grade we give it once a year.

We gave up the D. R. A. for the N. W. E. A. after fourth grade.

The elementary third grade does the N. W. E. A., but the fourth grade doesn’t do it yet.

I was under the impression it was done in the transition school years so third grade would do it and fifth grade will do it.

We have a whole word study program that has been developed by our psychological evaluator, our special ed. evaluator, has developed this whole word study program based on, like, the Wilson Program.
It's phonics.

Going by the rules rather than a list.

We have "Word Masters" too.

And that is vocabulary development, that's ah, analogies and entomologies and getting into the background of words.

High level.

"Word Masters" was specifically for gifted and talented students, but we've incorporated it within all classrooms.

The consistency has helped with that; having our scheduled day so that we're not interrupted for that block of time for both math and reading has been very helpful to all of us.

We have a core literature where every grade level has certain books that need to be covered by all students. That's district-wide.

7. What school district or school-based strategies have been adopted to assist the students who do not meet the state requirements or district benchmarks in reading?

(The school principal) has a group that he gets together with one of our ed. techs. He focuses on those kids who didn't meet the standard to bring them up. I think an extra block a week or something like that?

Well, for the math in fourth grade, they go almost every day for a half hour to 45 minutes to work on math facts.

Now, do they do that with reading?

Title I perhaps to grade 4, but again, that's why (the school principal) has the ed. techs. in the classrooms.
But again, they have the groups in the classrooms.

It’s the analysis. Everyone has an ed. tech. There is a random class design. (The school principal) builds the ed. tech. schedule around the classes, not the classes around the schedule. They don’t cluster, like the lower kids who didn’t meet the standard into one classroom.

They’re spread all through, through our classrooms.

And G/T as well. The other thing too, is that there’s two versions of the ed. tech. in here. The ones that come into our classroom, so for math time, I get an ed. tech. for 40 minutes. You may not during math, but that’s because I have kids who needed it at math and you probably didn’t at that time but you get someone at literacy block and I don’t have someone for literacy. (The school principal) would analyze their scores and decide that the person needed to be in your room for literacy and my room for math, but there is the other piece of the extra ed. tech. who takes a group to work on real solid skills not just a lesson of the day and that’s a separate pull-out program one of our ed. techs. who’s a qualified special education teacher does.

8. Have there been changes in the curriculum, instruction and/or evaluation in the area of reading in the last 3-5 years in the district?

Already answered

9. How are curriculum initiatives in reading connected to other curriculum areas in this school?

Oh yes.
That's one of the advantages to that literacy block is that we spread a social studies or science lesson in for our reading lesson that morning because it's comprehension.

The writing started off as, teaching kids to do expository writing so that type of writing just lends itself to the science and social studies.

And it focused on a lot of our books in our leveled library have to do with our science and social studies units.

We choose the books in our leveled libraries.

10. Are teachers able to observe other teachers while they are teaching reading? Do teachers take the option to do this?

   Yup, (name of teacher) is coming down tomorrow!

   It's part of our evaluation cycle.

   And structure.

   It depends on which year you are in.

   But, not completely. If, say (name of teacher) wanted to go and observe (name of teacher's) class for something it would be done like that.

   It's there if you want it.

   I've been into a couple of classrooms because (the school principal) said at the beginning of the year, anytime you hear about anyone doing something that you want to go see, just let me know and we'll rearrange the ed. tech. schedule and someone will cover you so you can go.

   It's there if you want it and built into the assessments, the evaluation structure because you don't always take time to go into other people's classrooms so it's kind of
like this is important to see how other teachers teach so you, it's an opportunity for you. Like, this year I had to go sit in on a class.

It's required in a certain year of your evaluation cycle and then it's available if you want to do it at other times. Then there's a piece of the master teacher which has observations built into that too, our career ladder system to support teachers. And we observe one another all the time in our recertification goals. We'll set up three goals and we'll have other teachers come and observe that we have, um, finished those goals. So we do that all the time as a district.

11. What would you like me to know about the reading instruction at this school?

There's no time for reflection.

But, we're given the time to focus on kids and their needs.
Transcript of Interview- School # 3

1. How long have you been teaching?

This focus group consisted of a group of eight teachers. Their grades and the number of years they have been teaching are: a fourth grade teacher who has been teaching 28 years, a Kindergarten teacher who has been teaching 19 years, two first grade teachers, one who has taught four years and one who has taught six years, one third grade teacher who has taught 27 years, one fourth grade teacher who has taught 18 years, one grade two teacher who has taught 16 years and a Literacy Coach who has taught 29 years.

2. How long have you been teaching in this school?

This focus group was made up of teachers who have taught in this school from two to twenty eight years. Here is the breakdown of years these individuals have taught in this school: two years, six years, six years, sixteen years, eighteen years, eighteen years, twenty years, and twenty eight years.

3. What components of the school’s literacy program do you think have contributed to the consistent gains in reading scores on the MEA each year?

Any kind of consistency in the teaching the different components to reading? If it was consistent throughout the school? I think some things have been consistent throughout the school like comprehension activities; phonics.

We’ve had a program, ah, Houghton Mifflin and then we’ve just adopted a new one we’re in the second year of, Scott Foresman, The Reading Street. That was adopted and changed because of our Reading First Grant.
I tend to think more so than that, a lot of the previous work that we’ve done on standards and aligning with Maine State Learning Results have contributed to the teachers becoming more aware of the standards and kind of directions that we need to take our kids. While the learning results are set in bands, at one time we did quite a bit of work looking at what we need to do at individual grade levels in order to move kids along in sort of a linear direction and also a developmental direction in reading as well as in other areas.

And, I also think the upper grades have done, have actually looked at M.E.A. questions, released items. Haven’t you focused on that? And actually worked with your students in the area to help them become better prepared for actually taking the test so it’s not the test itself that drives their scores, but their, it’s actual knowledge of it?

I think, over a period of time our instruction has actually aligned more with what the M. E. A. and standards were doing, constructed response, you know, summaries, that kind of thing. Not your fill in the blank kind of thing so, so it’s been a struggle. We’ve had to work really hard to get where we are with them, but I think that the test did drive good instruction or if you want to call it a test, the assessment did drive good instruction and we did work a lot with other tests so it was embedded until recently. We worked hard until it stopped- until the moratorium.

Fourth grade works hard with that and we’ve moved it down to third grade. We’ve shared with them the kinds of things that are on the test and what we’re looking for. This was done before the M. E. A. s were done starting in third grade. That was just last year that it started.

Before last year.
I think it started at a small point. It started to branch out more across the grade levels and more people became aware and there was more like, professional development going on and through our group meetings that we had when we were doing all that standard work there was much more sharing across grade levels and so, so it could branch out more.

And then, as it's always been considered a fourth grade test. Always. I mean I've always felt as a fourth grade teacher when I was taught third grade it was looked at as a fourth grade test. We'd go over it, maybe, in staff meetings, but still...

They had no connection. I mean, other teachers didn't need to feel the impact and the plan.

It couldn't just start in fourth grade. It had to start in the beginning.

When we started working with standards I think it made more people aware.

But we still didn't own the test. When I taught second grade I didn't own that test. When I taught third grade I felt a responsibility to that.

There was still good instruction going on.

I think we all taught reading. I mean, we all had a reading block. I'm not sure about the writing piece, but we all had a reading, good reading block. I think I'm talking for everyone, but...

We all did.

4. What are the school's goals in the area of reading?

I think there are various assessments set up with various benchmarks in those assessments to kind of help us in, and not just end of year things, but like the DIBELS, for instance, and DRAs at the beginning or middle of the year just to kind of...
And we have goals of those assessments of what the students are gonna meet so...

I think that came more with the Reading First Grant.

5. What strategies has the district adopted to improve student achievement in elementary level reading? (there is only 1 elementary school in this district)

Across all grade levels I think there was still a lot of that going on, just not consistently because there have been lots of teachers that used different forms of assessment to inform instruction. Throughout the school year, not just end of the year, but I think now it’s...

More school wide,

(continued from above) It’s school wide.

We have the end of the year DRA expectations that go along with Pearson goals have been, in the past, I have to go prior to Reading First, but they’re pretty much classroom driven and many of us were using Fountas and Pinnell for example and using some of those reading behaviors that they espouse based on the research as some of our goals like, for example, “readers read for different purposes” and so we taught our instruction with, around that.

Oh yea!

But, it was pretty much, correct me if I’m wrong, but pretty much classroom driven until recently.

Until recently.

Local assessment driven- a little of that.

But that started after.
6. What literacy initiatives has the school adopted to improve student achievement in reading? (there is only 1 elementary school in this district)

   How about the Literacy course?

   What she's referring to is that there's a graduate course that's taught based on the MLP Framework and so kindergarten and grade 1 teachers participated in that last year and then teachers in grades two, three, and grade four are going to be participating in that so that has driven the reading writing framework.

   The course is after school on a bi-weekly basis. It's a 45 hour graduate course.

7. What school district or school-based strategies have been adopted to assist the students who do not meet the state requirements or district benchmarks in reading?

   There's a summer school that's offered.

   Title I.

   Title I during the year. We've been doing that for 7 years.

   We also have, some kids are picked up under Reading First, but not necessarily under Title I since we've had the Reading First Program.

   And, even before that we, we had the Reading Recovery for kids. Before we started Reading First, we had the Reading Recovery Program.

   I was going to say, also, some more informal pulling small groups with additional staff people outside the classroom.

   I'm thinking of like ed. techs. taking kids and you know, getting instruction from classroom teachers or from the Title I people and working with a pair of kids from a classroom.
We’ve clustered groups of kids for higher level readers this year. We just started that, but not for our lower level kids.

We cluster kids for G/T, but we don’t in K, 1, and next year it will be two.

8. Have there been changes in the curriculum, instruction and/or evaluation in the area of reading in the last 3-5 years in the district?

I think its (Reading First) has made us more aware of components of reading instruction that we focus on.

Phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary.

And, speaking for myself, previous to Reading First, I didn’t do a lot with fluency and I have done more with it the last couple of years.

I think the course has made a big difference. I haven’t been here for very long, but it doesn’t seem like a graduate course has been taught to all the staff.

Not since I’ve been here, we haven’t taken a graduate course.

But, didn’t we? We went to the university for one.

Oh, it was K-2 though, it was K-2 that did it.

That early literacy conference. That was a long time ago.

It was, but, it was only K-2 and special ed. then.

Title I people have shared with us too that they noticed since the Reading First that the, um, that the children that they see, you know, they’re coming knowing things more consistently across the grade levels and they’re noticing a difference since we’ve started with it.

I think it’s OK to say that...a positive difference.
In terms of data, we have more data than we ever had, and now do we know what to do with it all?

That’s our quagmire right now, but we do have a lot of data and a variety of data from formative to informal, summative to informal. That part’s good.

9. How are curriculum initiatives in reading connected to other curriculum areas in this school?

There’s not in first grade.

Its (Reading First) done away with a lot of it in my opinion because we used to be able to integrate more and now it seems, you know, like a particular reading program has sort of taken over that aspect of it so there’s not as much time. That’s been an alteration in some, some ways.

Literally, we don’t have enough time. I mean when we’re being asked for a certain block of time for literacy it takes away from, you know, so we do what we can, but there isn’t really enough time for all of it, but…

They get exposed to the fundamentals I think, you know, through literature.

True, through the literature.

But, there’s nothing, no time to do that type of units and have any real assessments.

In third and fourth grade we spend time, a small amount of time for some science and social studies. And in the third grade there’s another teacher and I switch. I do the science and she does the social studies, but there’re only getting that science 2 days a week for 45 minutes and social studies 2 days a week for 45 minutes.
Was that observing (name of teacher)?

Yes.

11. What would you like me to know about the reading instruction at this school?

(The principal) definitely vocalizes that instruction is paramount and values literacy and we have these two hour blocks of literacy that we didn’t have before. As you can tell, it’s give and take. But, we do devote a lot of time to our literacy.

She’s promoted Reading First.

She has promoted all it all.

In terms of reading instruction, we have, I feel fortunate in this building, that we do have quite a few materials. Sometimes you have to visit another school to realize how lucky you are and I’ve had the good fortune of being able to and I’ve come back here and I always feel so thankful and grateful for all we do have for reading resources so, so that part has been, I think, instrumental in helping us along our way.