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# The Presence of Correlates of Effective Schools in Select Minnesota Charter Schools with Longevity

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**The Presence of Correlates of Effective Schools in Select  
Minnesota Charter Schools with Longevity**

by

Frank E. Herman

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

St. Cloud State University

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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## **Abstract**

Minnesota enacted the nation's first charter public school law in 1991. Since that time, the charter school movement has grown in Minnesota and across the United States. In Minnesota alone there are 165 charter schools operating according to the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools in the school year 2016-2017. The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (NAPCS) reported that there were more than 6,700 public charter schools enrolling about 2.9 million student nationally in the 2015-16 school year.

Since state statute defines charter schools as public schools funded by the state of Minnesota, and represent taxpayer investment, there is interest among advocates and governmental officials that these schools continue to operate. That is, not fail. Toward that end, it is valuable to increase the body of knowledge about organizational characteristics displayed by a sampling of Minnesota charter schools, which have been in operation for ten or more years. Between 1992 and 2015, 268 Minnesota charter schools were created while 83 such schools closed. Of particular interest to the researcher were the underlying reasons for such closures. According to a 2014 Minnesota legislative auditor's report, the majority of closed charter schools had experienced financial concerns including low student enrollment that resulted in insufficient revenue to support the schools.

With continued investment of public funding in the creation of new charter schools in response to increased parental demand, it would seem prudent for charter school planners to examine characteristics that are consistent with those found in charter schools that have demonstrated operational longevity. Such data may provide start-up charter school planners with insights that are beneficial in averting future school failures.

The purpose of the study is to examine a select sample of veteran Minnesota charter schools, educational organizations that have been in existence for ten or more years, to ascertain the presence and importance of effective schools' characteristics in their organizational operations. Through surveying charter school administrators, school board members, and teachers, the researcher intended to identify the presence and extent to which the respondents believe their organization displays all or some of the Correlates of Effective Schools (Lezotte, 1991).

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To my parents, Jim and Carol Flaming, they showed the true meaning of unconditional love, compassion, kindness and perseverance.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **Introduction to the Study**

Minnesota was the first state to legislate the creation of a charter school when the Minnesota State Legislature enacted M.S.124D.10 in 1991. Subsequently, in 1992, the City Academy in St. Paul opened its doors as the first approved Minnesota charter school serving 30 students between the ages of 13 to 19 who were at risk of dropping out of school (Horn, 2011).

Minnesota charter school legislation continued to evolve over the course of the next 25 years. The initial limitation on the annual creation of charter schools in Minnesota was set at eight in 1991. That number was increased to 30 charter schools in 1993, and in 1997 all limitations on new charter school creations were removed (Schroeder, 2004).

In January of 2017, the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools reported that 165 charter schools were operating in Minnesota with a combined enrollment of approximately 50,800 students. Similar charter school growth occurred nationally. By 2016, there were only six states that did not have charter school legislation in place and according to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (NAPCS), by 2015-2016 there were “more than 6,700 public charter school enrolling about 2.9 million students throughout the country. (NAPCS, February 2016, Estimated Number of Public Charter School and Students, 2015-2016).

As specified in M.S. 124D.10, the purpose of Minnesota charter schools was stated as follows:

### Subdivision 1.Purposes.

(a) The primary purpose of this section is to improve pupil learning and student achievement. Additional purposes include to:

- (1) increase learning opportunities for pupils;
- (2) encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods;
- (3) measure learning outcomes and create different and innovative forms of measuring outcomes;
- (4) establish new forms of accountability for schools; or
- (5) create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school site.

The impetus for the establishment of charter schools was derived from the beliefs that Minnesota parents had the right to make choices for their children on the public schools they would attend, and public schools did not need to be limited to the traditional school district format (Schroeder, 2004). Thus, charter schools were one additional choice option provided to Minnesota families in addition to the Minnesota's Open Enrollment Options (M.S. 124D.10 in 1991), which permitted public school students elect to take college courses at postsecondary institutions.

Between 1992 and 2015, 268 Minnesota charter schools were created, while 83 such schools closed. Of particular interest to the researcher were the underlying reasons for such closures. According to a 2014 Minnesota legislative auditor's report, 53 of the 83 closed charter schools had experienced financial concerns including low student enrollment which resulted in insufficient revenue to support the schools. Examples of such closures were the Great River Education Center, a charter school

in Waite Park, Minnesota, which closed in 2011 as a result of financial issues and low student enrollment, the Minnesota School of Science which was unable to make rent payments on their facility and meet enrollment goals in 2010, and the Odyssey Academy which failed to meet state academic benchmarks closed in 2017.

The Center for Media and Democracy's PRWATCH in 2015 confirmed that, nationally, charter schools have closed and continue to close when it reported "while the public charter school movement saw many new schools open, there were also more than 2000 charter schools that ceased operations. These schools closed for a variety of reasons, including low enrollment, financial concerns, and low academic performance. The NAPCS report further observed that charter schools that do not meet the needs of its students should be closed.

Regarding charter school failures in Florida, the president of the Broward Teachers Union wrote that the boom in privately run charter schools is a growing drain on the public education system. It is public dollars, taxpayers' dollars, coming out of the public school system (Gary Nelson, FCAT Results). Nonetheless, as the Broward Teachers Union president was commenting negatively on the performance of charter schools, Florida's governor was "signing a host of bills that will allow the expansion of the schools in the state and vouchers for some students to attend private schools." (FCAT Results). Despite closures, there are trend data that reveal the number of charter schools will continue to increase in the future.

Schroeder's report (2004 *Ripples of Innovation*) recommended the creation of more public school choice options, the expanded use of charter schools to address achievement gaps, and more precise documentation of the success of individual



charter schools. He recommended strengthening the capacities of charter school authorizers and pursuing more private sector financing. His report is one of several in recent years that promoted the expansion of charter schools (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2015; Lake & Hill, 2015). As these educational options for parents to decide which school program would best fit their child continues to grow, what variables are in place to help in determining the longevity of a school?

With continued investment of public funding in the creation of new charter schools in response to increased parental demand, it would seem prudent for charter school planners to examine characteristics that are consistent with those found in charter schools that have demonstrated operational longevity. Such data may provide start-up charter school planners with insights that are beneficial in averting future school failures.

Chester Barnard (Barnard, 1948) asserted that the primary goals of formal organizations were achieving effectiveness and efficiency, resulting in the over-arching goal of all organizations - survival.

The study proposes to examine the presence of a series of effectiveness principals, the Correlates of Effective Schools, in select Minnesota charter schools with a minimum of ten years longevity to provide design assistance to start-up charter school planners.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Since the passage of Minnesota charter school legislation in 1991, 268 charter schools have been instituted. Between 2008 and 2015 twenty six charter schools closed which is a 3.5% annual closure rate (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools 2016).

According to the Minnesota Department of Education, the failure rate of charter schools far exceeds the rate of closure of traditional k-12 school districts during a comparable time span. The closures of charter schools have occurred primarily as a result of low academic achievement, low enrollment and financial insufficiency.

Since residents of the state define charter schools as public schools funded by the state of Minnesota, and represent taxpayer investment, there is interest among advocates and governmental officials that these schools continue to operate. That is, not fail. Toward that end, it is valuable to increase the body of knowledge about organizational characteristics displayed by a sampling of Minnesota charter schools that have been in operation for ten or more years.

Findings gathered from a study which investigates the presence of characteristics of effective schools in select, veteran charter school may well be valuable to those organizations and/or individuals intending to organize and operate a Minnesota charter school in the future.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to examine a select sample of veteran Minnesota charter schools, educational organizations that have been in existence for ten or more years, to ascertain the presence and importance of effective schools' characteristics in their organizational operations. Through surveying charter school administrators, school board members, and teachers, the researcher intended to identify the presence and extent to which the respondents believe their organization displays all or some of the Correlates of Effective Schools.

Respondents will be asked to rate their perceptions of the importance of the Effective School Correlates to their charter school's longevity.

### **Questions of the Study**

These following questions were established to guide the conduct of this study:

1. How did a select sample of charter school administrators rate the presence of Effective School Correlates in their schools?
2. How did a select sample of charter school board members rate the presence of Effective School Correlates in their schools?
3. How did a select sample of charter schoolteachers rate the presence of Effective School Correlates in their schools?
4. How did a select sample of charter school administrators rate the importance of Effective School Correlates in their schools?
5. How did a select sample of charter school board members rate the importance of Effective School Correlates in their schools?
6. How did a select sample of charter schoolteachers rate the importance of Effective School Correlates in their schools?
7. What advice on organizational sustainability did a select sample of charter school board members, teachers and administrators offer to organizational representatives planning the creation of new charter schools?

### **Assumptions of the Study**

The researcher identified the following assumptions for the study.

- Participants would complete study surveys' questions honestly.

- The sample of charter schools studied is not representative of all Minnesota charter schools and staff.

### **Delimitations of the Study**

1. This study was limited to select Minnesota charter schools which have been in operation for ten or more years.
2. This study was not designed to assess the financial condition of participating charter schools.
3. This study was not designed to assess the academic condition of participating charter schools.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Academic systems:* For the purposes of the study, are the curriculum and academic accountability structures created for charter schools.

*Correlates of Effective Schools:* For the purposes of the study, Correlates of Effective schools provide a framework for reform based on seven guiding principles which are Instructional Leadership, Clear and Focused Mission, Safe and Orderly Environment, Climate of High Expectations, Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress, Positive Home-School Relations, Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task.

*Charter schools:* For the purposes of the study, are independent public schools of choice designed and run by teachers, parents, community members, and others. They are sponsored by designated state or educational organizations, exchanging accountability for autonomy.

*Executive director:* For the purposes of the study, is the title most often given to charter school leaders responsible for running the school. The executive director is accountable to the school board.

*Founder:* For the purposes of the study, is a single individual responsible for having an idea for a charter school and acting upon that idea to make it a reality.

*Founding board:* For the purposes of the study, is the governance group granted the charter and legally responsible for the school, but not elected.

*Founding group:* For the purposes of the study, is the original group of people who came together when a school was just an idea and helped create all or many parts of the new school, including applying for the charter.

*Founding teacher:* For the purposes of the study, is a licensed teacher who became involved during the idea and/or creation phases of the school, and was involved in planning many aspects of the school (not just the academic program).

*First school board:* For the purposes of the study, is the group of people initially elected to serve on the charter school's school board. Minnesota law requires that teachers in the school make up a majority of the board members.

*General Education Revenue:* "A charter school earns general education revenue on a per pupil unit basis just as though it were a school district. The general education revenue paid to a charter school is paid entirely through state aid. Operating capital revenue received by the charter school may be used for any purpose" (Strom, 2013, p. 74).

*Licensed/certified teacher:* For the purposes of the study, is an individual who holds a state-issued license to teach a specified content and/or grade level area. The rules for licensing vary from state to state.

*Local Education Agency (LEA):* For the purposes of the study, is a legal identity establishing a place within the public education system. School districts are LEAs and the schools within the district are part of that LEA. The original Minnesota charter school law established that each charter school is an LEA itself, and this legal identity carries with it certain rights and responsibilities as determined by the state education agency and federal law.

*Operational systems:* For the purposes of the study, has to do with the administrative structure and daily workings of charter schools.

*Organizational systems:* For the purposes of the study, are the governance structures of charter schools. They are concerned with designating roles and responsibilities for oversight and accountability in all areas of charter schools. Legal authority and ultimate financial responsibility resides in the organizational system.

*Preoperational teacher:* For the purposes of the study, is a licensed teacher who was hired as one of the first teachers before the school opened; planned and prepared for their own class but may have helped plan the school's academic program.

*Sponsor/Authorizer:* For the purposes of the study, is an entity that grants the charter, or performance contract, to a charter school and holds the school accountable for upholding its mission, meeting its academic performance goals and fiscal responsibilities. In Minnesota, sponsoring entities include school districts, the

Minnesota Department of Education, post-secondary institutions, and large non-profit organizations.

### **Organization of the Study**

The study was designed in a five-chapter format. Chapter One includes an introduction, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, questions of the study, assumptions of the study, delimitations of the study, definition of terms, and organization of the study. Chapter Two provides literature related to the study questions. Chapter Three furnishes the study methodology, including an introduction, participants, human subject approval, research design, instrument, procedures, limitations, and summary. Chapter Five presents the findings of the study. Chapter five includes conclusions of the study, recommendations for the field and recommendations for further research.

## **Chapter 2: Review of the Literature**

### **Introduction**

American education has dramatically changed over the centuries since the founding of institutions as the Boston Latin School in 1635, the oldest public school in existence in the United States (Block, 2004) and The Roxbury Latin School founded in 1645, the oldest school in continuous existence in the United States (Carpenter, 2005). Likewise, multiple educational philosophies have existed within schools nationwide, resulting in a range of achievement and success for students.

Approximately forty-five million young people attend America's public schools at a cost of nearly one quarter of a trillion dollars per year (Finn, 2000). Educational expectations from school to school, state to state, and region to region, may vary. However, some students and families will expect their local school system to prepare young people for the workforce and to be economically productive (Lazerson, McLaughlin, Mc Pherson, & Bailey, 1985). Other students expect to be prepared for a college education. Other constituents have seen the purpose of education as the preparation of individuals for civic responsibility and to promote a national identity (Glenn, 2006). Over the years, there is a growing perception that school systems have been asked to provide more than what was initially intended (Fuller, 2000).

This chapter examines aspects American educational systems beginning with an overview of several educational choices have existed since the beginning of settlement times of the mid to late 1600's. This chapter will also provide an overview of charter schools and continuing to look at the Correlates of Effective Schools of existing charter schools.



## **Overview of American Educational Systems**

The call to excellence resulted in the dramatic growth of alternative educational options in the United States. Glenn (2006) suggested the public school has continued their lack of distinctiveness and has resulted in parents and students becoming "aggressive consumers" (p. 4) in the search to find a school that would meet their academic and social needs.

Faith-based private schools, according to Glenn, shared an advantage over public schools. Within the majority of faith-based schools, a clear structure and set of common goals for all students existed. In fact, Glenn stated the teachers often felt the clarity of goals was beneficial within their educational environment. Over Seventy-one percent of all teachers surveyed in private schools agreed that their colleagues share the same beliefs and values regarding the central mission of the school. Bryk, Lee, and Holland (1993) suggested Catholic schools had been successful in educating a very diverse cross-section of students because they were committed to academic programs for all students, regardless of backgrounds or life expectations, and an academic organization designed to promote this aim; a pervasive sense, shared by both teachers and students, of the school as a caring environment and social organization deliberately structured to advance this; and an inspirational ideology that directs institutional action toward social justice in an ecumenical and multicultural world.

American education in the past three decades saw an immense growth in both charter schools (Glenn, 2006) and independent private schools. Fellows (2002) stated that the educational upheavals begun in the 1970s had resulted in many public school children leaving their local district and choosing a private school alternative.

Due to the perceived growing concern of the quality of education and lack of character developed within public schools (Carper & Hunt, 2014), a variety of school programs from evangelical Christian to Jewish to non-sectarian independent schools had arisen.

Most western societies provide religious schools with financial support equal to government schools (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993). In the United States, many felt that this was in direct opposition to the First Amendment of the Constitution (Glenn, 2006). In 2013, approximately 16,000 students in the United States were attending private schools with money granted through the government (Richard, 2013). Colorado, Ohio, and Wisconsin had voucher programs that supported families who wanted a private education for their children. In Washington D.C. (Richard, 2013) and Vermont (Hassel, 2005), voucher programs and initiatives were in the developmental stages. Former Secretary of Education, Rod Paige called upon other states to consider programs that would allow low-income families to receive vouchers to attend the private school of their choice (Binger, 2003).

Charles Glenn (2006), professor of education policy at Boston University wrote at length about how the voucher has become a code word in educational policy debates, capable without further explanation of rousing into fury the defenders of the present system under which each local school system enjoys a monopoly on the right to provide publicly funded schooling within its geographical boundaries. (p. 116).

Despite a lack of unity of support for vouchers from state to state and from one independent school to the next, the number of students educated in independent private schools continued to grow as new schools were born. Likewise, charter schools

continued to see growth as families sought public school alternatives. Glenn stated, "Support for charter schools — independent public schools — reflects a growing awareness that conflict over the content of schooling is inevitable..." (p. 20). Haq (2014) concurred that vouchers and the growth of charter schools are just two examples of society telling our public schools there is a need for change.

Some who were opposed to private schooling argued that private school's success was a trick of selection and that they were successful because they only chose the top students (Haq, 2014). Roberts (2010) suggested that a majority of private schools studied would not take public school transfer students who did not meet their admission requirements.Sizer (1996) stated that historically, school choice had been an option primarily for families with financial stability and the "ability to move into a community where there are 'desirable schools' or to pay tuition for their child's enrollment at a private school" (p. 38).

Statistics showed private schools were educating a wide variety and diverse group of students (Harvey, 2006).Sizer (1996) agreed that today, some private schools were serving a more diverse group of students than the public schools in their region. Minority representation in the past decade at private schools had been growing (Shapely, 2012).

According to the statistics reviewed it showed private schools were successful due to effective leadership, higher parent involvement, and size (Shapely, Vicknair and Sheenan, 2005). As a result, school size had been investigated at length and many schools and districts were moving to implement smaller schools, where personalization was ensured (Toch, 1991). The industrial model of education that produced "factory-

like" (p. 268) conditions had been changing in many of the urban centers of the United States.

New York City (Hendrie, 2004), Boston (Poppano, 2004), Philadelphia, and Minneapolis (Toch, 1991) had all implemented smaller high school programs that would aim to ensure a more intimate atmosphere, higher teacher morale, higher staff participation, better student behavior, and higher graduation rates. One study found that the smaller high schools also have better success with at-risk students (Toch, 1991). Another study in Philadelphia (Raywid, 2010) found that students in the smaller high schools were more likely to pass their major subjects and progress toward graduation.

Currently, United States school systems have invested \$575 million to create smaller schools (Cornell-Feist, 2007). The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation had given \$52 million to the New York City public schools to fund the development of smaller schools as well as over \$700 million nationwide for smaller school programs (Loch, 2013). The U.S. Department of Education, many colleges and universities, and several large foundations had begun the push for smaller schools (Pappano, 2004). The city of Chicago was in the process of implementing "Renaissance 2010," an educational reform program that will close up to twenty high schools and forty to fifty elementary schools, with the plan of reopening them as over one hundred significantly smaller schools (Gewertz, 2014).

Craig Howley (2001), professor at Ohio University, stated that students in poor districts performed better in smaller schools. Toch (1991) had similar findings, "Small schools... are more likely to create the conditions that make learning possible" (p. 44).

In smaller schools, teachers and families knew one another, creating a better environment for learning (Sizer, 1996). Because of stronger community links, depersonalization was much less likely to occur within small schools. Wayson, Mitchell, Pinnell, and Landis (1998) stated, "Depersonalization undermines motivation, loyalty, commitment, and learning" (p. 107).

While public schools were working to implement smaller schools, most private schools had held to such a philosophy since origination. The Roxbury Latin School (2013) had "resisted the strong pressure to grow larger...Roxbury Latin's size helps to foster an atmosphere of trust and understanding in which faculty and students can know one another well, and in which each individual's needs can be identified and his abilities developed" (p. 14).

According to Vryhof (2014), within Christian Reformed schools a strong education culture was developed. What results is an educational structure unique on the American scene: a school formed and operated by parents united by more than simply a demand for 'excellence,' though they certainly do prize academic achievement. They have something more: a common religious purpose to preserve memory and cultivate vision. This controlling purpose, based in the idea of covenant, suggests why the public school is such an unsatisfactory option for Reformed Christian parents. (p. 65).

Christian schools were intent on educating the spirit and the mind. As a result, the family and community were served through the educational process. Vryhof (2004) understood, "Christian personalism calls for humaneness in the myriad of mundane social interactions that make up daily life. Crucial to advancing personalism is an

extended role for teachers that encourages staff to care about the kind of people students become as well as the facts, skills, and knowledge they acquire" (p. 301).

### **Charter Schools**

The number of charter school across the United States has been growing steadily since the first one was founded in Minnesota in 1992 (Nathan, 1996). The Center for Education Reform reports that as of October 2014 there are chartering laws in forty-three states and the District of Columbia. There were more than 3,600 charter schools enrolling slightly over a million students in thirty-seven states (National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, 2015).

The most common type of charter school is the independent one founded by teachers, parents, and/or community members. It tends to be mission-driven, focusing on a particular vision of education. Another type of charter school is founded by "for profit" companies such as the Edison Corporation. The company may create a school on its own or be hired by the board of an independent charter to run the school. The conversion of a district school to a charter school is a third type of charter school, but not all states allow conversions.

Charter schools provide families with an innovative public school choice that is accountable for results, according to US Charter Schools, a website originated by the federal government but now maintained by a consortium of charter advocacy groups. A charter to operate is granted by a state-approved authorizer or sponsor who holds the school accountable for meeting its goals. What prompts a person or group of people to create a charter school? Several reasons are offered by the National Study of Charter Schools (RPPI & CAREI,

2007) including opportunities to: focus on an educational vision; be innovative and gain autonomy over all aspects of schooling (finance, governance, programming, etc.); serve a targeted student population; and promote teacher and parent ownership.

The progress and success of charter schools has been scrutinized closely since their inception. Student-achievement results have been the focus of many studies and articles in the last five years. Bryan Hassel (2005), a researcher for the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools (NAPCS) completed a meta-analysis of 38 comparative analyses of charter performance versus district performance (NAPCS website). Based on his research, he concluded “Charter schooling represents an experiment worth continuing – and refining to improve quality further over time (p. ii).”

Minnesota statute allows charter schools to operate as independent Local Education Agencies (LEAs), permitting them to hire their own teachers and receive and control public funds directly from the state. Initially, they are exempt from many of the state laws and regulations governing public schools. MN Statute requires that licensed teachers employed by a charter school must comprise a majority of the membership of the organization's governing board. Initially, the statute limited the number of charter schools, statewide, to eight each year (Schroeder, 2004). From the onset, charter schools could only be sponsored by public school districts. Thus, a school district was authorized to grant a charter to a group of people interested in creating a charter school. The school district would proceed in developing a contract for a specified period of time and include the proposed school's mission, academic

goals and means of measuring the goals. The charter school governing board and staff were then accountable for meeting these goals. Sponsorship of the school could be withdrawn by the school district, and the charter school closed if terms of the contract were not met (Schroeder, 2004).

Since the first charter school law was enacted, charter school advocates have continually lobbied the Minnesota Legislature to secure improvements to the charter school law. Charter school sponsors (now called authorizers) have been expanded to include public and private post-secondary institutions, intermediate school districts, and large nonprofit organizations. In 1997, the Legislature removed the limit on the number of charter schools that can be opened in the state, and the funding of charter schools has also evolved to include other streams of possible revenue such as providing transportation and lease funds for buildings.

In Minnesota, funding for charter schools consists of the basic state aid or General Education Revenue which follows students as they have transitioned from the school districts to the charter school. Charter schools were (and continue to be) prohibited from issuing building bonds, using state money to directly buy a building, and from raising taxes through levies (Horn, 2011). Efforts to improve funding over the years have resulted in the provision of revenue for student transportation, low-income students, per-pupil facilities funding and start-up aid. In 1995, the U.S. Department of Education for the first time provided \$6 million to states to support charter schools. That amount has increased steadily since the charter school movement began (Schroeder, 2004). By 2012, there were only 9 states that did not have charter school legislation in place.



## Effective Schools

In the early years of American education, both private and public schools existed. The Boston Latin School, established in 1635, the oldest public school in the United States (Mulvoy, 2004), was the only tax-supported school in Massachusetts until the 1680s, yet its teachings and beliefs were quite similar to those of the local religious private schools. Likewise, Samuel and John Phillips began the Phillips Academy in order to impress upon students the importance of piety and virtue and to train young men academically, morally, and spiritually (Jarvis, 1995). The roots of American education were grounded in the idea of expressing and promoting protestant morality (Schlechty, 1990). At a minimum, nearly all schools before 1900 were founded with the idea of teaching virtue as a primary objective (Jarvis, 1995).

Horace Mann, the Massachusetts Secretary of Education in the mid-1800s, believed that two separate school systems, public and private, would lead to social and national disunity. As a result, he was at the forefront of the movement to create a common school, responsible for shaping the culture of the United States. The common school movement had a clear goal that was developed with a non-sectarian ideal. "Prior to the Civil War, the agenda of the common school was to shape a national identity. This was considered to be more important than teaching basic skills" (Glenn, 2006, p. 4).

As much of American revolutionary ideals had been formed by French and English revolutionary thought, educational ideals were also impacted by French Enlightenment philosophers. Jean Jacques Rousseau was opposed to the combination of religion and education and the integration of religious thought into societal ideals. He

believed that Christianity was raising people to be focused on issues that were not related to earthly concerns. He proposed a "civil religion" (Glenn, p. 10) that would teach people to love their duties and their fellow citizens and focus on the world at hand. Mann embraced these ideals and made it his goal to promote them within the public schools of Massachusetts.

Following the Civil War, demographic changes resulting from greater integration of the African American population and the influx of the immigrant population created a need for educational reform (Schlechty, 1990) geared to create a common school experience for all children and to promote learning despite social class (Wayson, Mitchell, Pinnell, & Landis, 1998). Such a need for reform can be understood through the testimony of one Mississippi freedman. "If I... do nothing more while I live, I shall give my children a chance to go to school, for I consider education next best thing to liberty" (Lazerson, McLaughlin, McPherson, & Bailey, 1985, p. 5).

American educational reform was born and the emphasis of education and the ideals taught therein changed. As a result of educational reform, many changes occurred within both public and independent schools. Today, religious education, in many respects, is non-existent within the American public schools. The belief that the First Amendment forbids the governmental embrace of religion has been reflected in the nonexistence of virtually all religious ideology within the public school systems (Glenn, 2006). However, in the United States, many schools were founded with the intention of teaching religious ideology and embracing pedagogy that reflected such religious ideals. For example, in the American colonies, religion was a large part of the curriculum of the local schools. Schools were often thought to provide the basis for reading and

understanding scripture. Such literacy was intended to protect society from barbarism (Glenn, 2006). Today, there is, among some educators and scholars, a perception that the removal of such ideology has harmed both public and independent schools that taught from such perspectives (Casey, Anderson, Yelverton and Wedeen 2010).

A growing group of educational scholars have suggested that the removal of all aspects of religion from American schools has damaged the value of the educational system (Casey, Anderson, Yelverton and Wedeen 2002). Casey, Anderson, Yelverton and Wedeen (2002) stated, "Studying religion helps achieve the goal of public schooling: students will learn a more accurate picture of the world around them. In a culture that is anything but secular, religion belongs in the curriculum" (p. 64). Noll (1997) states that in almost all countries, the teaching of morals, often from particular religious interpretations, is central to the process of schooling. Likewise, mandatory religious education may serve to help students become aware of that which is positive and negative about religion. Glenn (2006) stated that in Germany, religious ideology was so highly valued that "the government collects church taxes and gives preference to church-sponsored social welfare activities over its own" (p.77).

One of the goals President Ronald Reagan shared with the commission responsible for compiling *A Nation at Risk* (1983) was to find a way to bring God back into the classroom (Holton, 2003). Some educational scholars believed that schooling without religious ideals simply served to promote selfishness and individuality. Bryk, Lee, and Holland (1993) have stated, "The vision conveyed in the public school is one of homo economicus: rational men and women pursuing their self-interest, seeking material pleasures, guided toward individual success" (p. 319).

As a result of the perceived decline of religious ideology and a belief that moral teaching had eroded within the public-school system, many private, religious, and nonsectarian schools that promote morality and character education were created. As early as the 1800s, Calvinist Christians began schools in the Midwest to provide their children with the schooling they felt was necessary to promote the religious ideals that were foundational for life as a productive Christian. Catholic schools were also started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to counteract what Catholics felt were discriminatory protestant practices within the public schools (Carper & Hunt, 1984).

Evangelical Christian education also saw a rapid growth in the past three decades, with evangelical educators and families citing particular concerns regarding the teaching of science (Marty, 2000), disciplinary problems, rising drug problems, and unresponsive educators within the public school system (Carper & Hunt, 1984). The rise of the evangelical Christian school movement in the 1960s represented the first widespread secession from public schools since the Catholic movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, continually growing throughout all fifty states and internationally.

Former Secretary of Education, Rodney Paige stated, "The reason Christian schools and Christian universities are growing is a result of a strong value system. That's not the case in a public school where there are so many different kinds of values" (p.21). Such ideology was consistent with the growth of upstart schools across the nation.

Jewish day schools have also experienced rapid growth since the 1970s (Carper & Hunt, 1984). Where, once, Jewish families felt the public school system best met their educational needs, today many Jewish leaders and families "are opting for Jewish

schools where, they believe, children are given a strong foundation in Judaism as a way to strengthen their sense of identity..." (Vryhof, 2004, p. 9). Some believed that the failure of the public schools had greatly contributed to the growth in Jewish day schools. For many Jewish families, the importance of the Jewish religion and culture being stressed within the school curriculum and within the school day was reflected by the increasing number opting to leave public schools for Jewish schools.

Many independent schools have historically had religious foundations and were primarily built upon religious, often Christian ideals. The Roxbury Latin School was originally founded in 1645 by John Eliot, a missionary to the American Indians of Massachusetts. Preparing students "in all scholastic, moral, and theological disciplines" were the overriding goals of a Roxbury Latin education. Likewise, Phillips Academy had a goal of meeting first the spiritual needs of its student body and then teaching virtue (Jarvis, 1995).

Many of the independent schools that were originally founded as Christian schools, with the intent of preparing students to live lives of piety and Christian morality (Jarvis, 1995), had become schools who may or may not teach religion, and often many independent schools even shied away from the teaching of anything that may be construed as religious. Levinson (2014) contended that independent schools should be places where students were free to wrestle with issues of religion and be given the opportunity to learn that, in fact, religion may play a significant role in the life of the individual. He wrote that:

Independent schools appear, on the one hand, uniquely suited to explore these big questions through the study of religion. Many are currently, or were at the time of their founding, religiously affiliated. All remain relatively free from the First Amendment constraints that hinder conversation about religion in America's

public schools; and most articulate, as part of their educational mission, a desire to transmit knowledge *and* values, to foster an intellectual curiosity anchored in a moral sensibility. Yet, at the same time, independent schools display a deep skittishness on the subject of religion. (p. 78)

Other negative perceptions regarding school systems have also led to the growth of the independent school movement. The perception that disciplinary issues were increasing, classroom management was ineffective (Barth 1990, Lightfoot, 1983), and that other student-related issues such as drug and alcohol use were increasing problems had created a desire for many families to explore and choose educational options for their children. Many also shared the perception that the education children were receiving in many public school systems was mediocre and that the need for high quality private, often religious schools, would alleviate this issue. (Vryhof, 2004).

In Massachusetts, both independent and public schools played an integral role in the education of its citizenry. The Association of Independent Schools of New England had 68 member high schools in Massachusetts and nine affiliate members (Association of Independent Schools in New England, 2004) during the 2013-14 school year. However, evangelical Christian schools, historically, had not flourished in Massachusetts. The Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), the largest Christian school association in the United States, had 57 member schools in Massachusetts, only 16 of which are evangelical Christian high schools, ranging in size from 4 to 365 students (Association of Christian Schools International, 2014). The second largest evangelical Christian school association, Christian Schools International (CSI) had 5 member high schools in Massachusetts (Christian Schools International, 2014).

E.D. Hirsh, Jr. (1996) asserted that much of the American school curriculum was

not designed to meet the needs of today's learner and produced an ill-prepared citizenry. He instead promoted a curriculum of core knowledge that all children should be taught and then must grasp (p. 62) before going to the next level. It was his belief that many students were simply passed on to the next grade level without an understanding and retention of what was necessary to be a productive citizen. He stated:

Just as it takes money to make money, it takes knowledge to make knowledge. The paradox holds more inexorable for intellectual than for money capital. Those who are well educated can make money without inherited wealth, but those who lack intellectual capital are left poor indeed. (p. 20)

The National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983), the group responsible for *A Nation at Risk*, also stated that in general, the curriculum in the public schools in 1983 was lacking in rigor and needed to be adjusted to promote the skills necessary for students to achieve a proper education and for the nation to continue to lead the world in productivity. Hirsch agreed and added that schools must produce students who display "civic duty, honesty, diligence, perseverance, respect, and independent mindedness" (p. 236).

Historically, studies have shown that students in private high schools had higher educational aspirations and expectations than their public school peers (Coleman & Hoffer, (1987). In Massachusetts, the Center for Educational Research and Policy at MassINC (2013) studied many urban schools that served the educational needs of a large population of low-income and minority students. They found that the urban schools that were succeeding at providing their students with a quality education had higher expectations for their students than those who lacked the higher standards. Paul Reville, Executive Director of the Center for Education

Research and Policy at Mass1NC, believed, that thousands of students were under-educated in Massachusetts alone, partially due to low expectations.

Equality for all students had been an issue of contention for decades. The Center for Educational Research and Policy at Mass1NC (2013) found that schools serving a large population of low-income and minority students were generally failing to meet the academic needs of their students.

For decades, even centuries, socioeconomic status had been recognized as a factor leading to school success (Leal, 2001; Ley, 2011). As a result, students coming to school from low-income families may come to education in a different manner (Rainey, 2013) than their middle and higher income classmates. Urban schools have notoriously had lower scores on a variety of academic tests. For example, students in urban schools, on average, scored lower on Advanced Placement exams and had average SAT scores of 460 on the verbal (out of a possible 800) and 468 on the math (out of a possible 800), while the nationwide average is 506 on the verbal and 512 on the math sections of the exam.

Harvey (2013) suggested that many of the nation's best schools were in suburban areas. Likewise, white students in urban schools, on average, outperformed their black classmates (Ley, 2011). Strom (2005) confirmed that statistics showed black students from every social class performed at a lower level than their white peers, including immigrant blacks. Again, expectation may be linked to performance and equity. Strom found that black students often felt that whites did not believe that they, the black students, were "as smart" (p.79) as whites.

Lazerson, McLaughlin, McPherson, and Bailey (1985) stated that excellence



and equity were linked and asserted, "We need to see excellence in terms of developing the skills and capacities of all students and achieving all too rarely attained by any students" (p. 114). Hartell (2013) concurred, but stated, "promoting excellence and pursuing equity are expensive undertakings" (p. 35).

As American ideology changed and ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity impacted the make-up of American societal norms, the reform movement began to challenge the educational status quo. Thus, the reform movement had impacted American education dramatically. In 1985, Minnesota's governor, Rudy Perpich, introduced his "Access to Excellence" plan (Loch, 2001, p. 250). According to this initiative, students and parents were free to enroll in any school district throughout the state of Minnesota, including schools outside of their home district. A belief was held that schools would then be forced to improve the quality of education being offered in order to keep the quality students. Since its inception during the 1990-1991 school year, Minnesota officials reported that many schools had taken significant steps to make schools more attractive by providing different curricular offerings such as The College Board's Advanced Placement courses and post-secondary education options that allowed students to earn college credit while still in high school.

President Ronald Reagan, in 1983, called upon education and civic leaders to investigate the state of American education. The commission then produced the now famous document, *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Included in the findings were arguments that American students lacked many basic skills in such areas as math and science and recommendations to improve the state of American education followed. It was felt that, at the high school level, in order

to continue to compete with the educated populations of the world, American students must take four years of English, three years of math, science, and social studies, and two years of a foreign language. *A Nation at Risk* also claimed that American schools were providing poor training in the area of study skills. Overall, the report painted the picture of American education as less than average. The commission's report stated,

Our Nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world...the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people...If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen to ourselves. (p.5)

Since the release of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), educational reformers have led efforts to rethink the foundation and practices of education resulting in many educational changes nationwide (Toch, 1991). Reform, however, has been slow and difficult in many respects. Barth (1990) stated, "Schools are among the most studied, least understood, most critical, and most criticized institutions in American society" (p. xv). Educational reform, according toSizer (1996), had been difficult and standards had risen more slowly than originally expected. Likewise, many reform efforts, while stated emphatically, are implemented weakly and with little effect.

Educators, regardless of private or public school affiliation had been searching for ways in which to improve their schools and systems. Since the beginning of the reform effort, a desire to enhance school productivity had existed. Glenn (2006) said that effective schools would give their students more than simply "good instructional practices and a solid curriculum; it requires a school that is internally coherent, based

upon a clear and shared understanding of what the school is seeking to do, and why" (p. 11).

In 1982, Ron Edmonds published a paper entitled "Programs of School Improvement: An Overview," in which he states "while schools may be primarily responsible for whether or not students function adequately in school, the family is probably critical in determining whether or not students flourish in school."

The first task of the effective schools researchers was to identify existing effective schools – schools that were successful in educating all students regardless of their socioeconomic status or family background. Examples of these especially effective schools were found repeatedly, in varying locations and in both large and small communities. After identifying these schools, the task remained to identify the common characteristics among these effective schools. In other words, what philosophies, policies, and practices did these schools have in common?

Upon closer inspection, the researchers found that all of these especially effective schools had strong instructional leadership, a strong sense of mission, demonstrated effective instructional behaviors, held high expectations for all students, practiced frequent monitoring of student achievement, and operated in a safe and orderly manner. These attributes eventually became known as the Correlates of Effective Schools. Lezotte first formally identified the Correlates of Effective Schools in the 1991 publication noted above. In this paper, Lezotte stated that all effective schools had:

- Safe and Orderly Environment
- Climate of High Expectations for Success

- Instructional Leadership
- Clear and Focus Mission
- Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task
- \* Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress
- \* Home-School Relations

According to research, many schools lacked the necessary sense of purpose to be effective (Wayson, Mitchell, Pinnell, & Landis, 1998). DeKuyper (2003) believed that to achieve excellence, schools needed a clear sense of mission that all within the community would understand. According to the *New England Association of Schools and Colleges* (NEASC) (2014), as institutions seek accreditation, meant to foster educational excellence and institutional improvement, they were to conduct an intensive self-study, looking at the broad scope of the school. Throughout the process, the institution was to demonstrate this clear sense of purpose through its mission statement. As a result, the stated mission should both guide the school and explain to its constituents why the school existed.

A school's sense of purpose was readily understood and permeated every aspect of the school with strong leadership (Mulvoy, 2004). Barth (1990) recommended that schools put into place extraordinary leaders who would guide the school toward excellence. The leader must "aspire to a noble ideal of education" (p.10) and ensure widespread participation (Wayson, Mitchell, Pinnell, & Landis, 1998).

Ensuring that a broad base of the constituency was involved would allow the mission and purpose to be shared and would create the sense of community

necessary for a school to grow from simply good to excellent. The NEASC's *Manual for School Evaluation* (2014) stated, "school's climate and culture should support an effective educational program consistent with its stated mission" (p. 32), a direct responsibility of the head of school, as staff and community were elicited in the decision making process (Wayson, Mitchell, Pinnell, & Landis, 1998).

The long-range strategic planning of the school was the primary responsibility of the school board (DeKuyper, 2003 & Levinson, 2014) along with the financial stability (Levinson, 2014) and future of the school (DeKuyper, 2003). These responsibilities were shared with the head of the school and through proper communication and a strong working relationship; the school board and the administration ensured effective educational policies for the entire school community.

The school board, to ensure the strength of an excellent school, did not confuse the roles of board members and those of school administrators (Levinson, 2014). Effective board members worked through established channels and communicated and fostered unity within a school system, through the support of the school's head and administrative team and the understanding that it was the role of the head of school to act as superintendent and CEO of the school.

Mediocrity had been, for too long, a word associated with American schools. Lightfoot (1983) wrote, "Mediocrity rules the classrooms of today's middle schools" (p. 116). Too often, expectations for students were too low (Ogbu, 2003), teachers often struggled with the idea that every student could learn, and disciplinary issues were of primary concern in the classroom (Lazerson, McLaughlin, McPherson, & Bailey, 1985). The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Program (2000), established to help

schools evaluate leadership, achievement, and overall quality, called for high expectations and standards within its schools. Schools of excellence also held students accountable for high standards of work (Wayson, Mitchell, Pinnell, & Landis, 1998), and taught students that being smart was okay (Monroe, 2007). Too often, in urban cultures, students believed that getting good grades and being smart were negative. Mulvoy (2004) stated:

The fact is that we tell our kids, 'You have been specially chosen to attend this special school, and we expect you to be special in every way.' The kids believe us, and we proceed to make them gifted and talented — the job of any school worth its salt. (p. 27)

Schools of excellence fostered a sense of caring, a personal climate, and motivated children, even those who may have been difficult to motivate (Towns, Cole-Henderson, Serpell, 2001). Good schools were conscious of their culture (Poppano, 2004), seeking to create a structured community that developed creative and imaginative minds, analytical thinking abilities (Lazerson, McLaughlin, McPherson, & Bailey, 1985), and a belief in the importance of hard work (Poppano, 2004). Loch (2013) asserted that through effective effort people attained intelligence and that it was not only a matter of quality genes.

Within schools of excellence, teachers believed that all students could learn regardless of race, gender, or socio-economic status. Historically, many school practices had been constructed around the idea that children from lower socioeconomic homes could not learn as well as their peers. However, the emerging idea in many upstart institutions was to serve all students (Wayson, Mitchell, Pinnell, & Landis, 1998) and to instill discipline within the student body through hard work and the acquisition of knowledge and skills (Lazerson, McLaughlin, McPherson, & Bailey, 1985), with the

belief that all students could succeed.

The expectation that a school will be a place of order, respect, and discipline had been missing in many schools (Hendrie, 2014). According to one poll, discipline was the most important standard lacking in today's schools (Lazerson, McLaughlin, McPherson, and Bailey, 1985). Barth (1990) researched that enforcing rules may have been the most difficult problem encountered in schools. However, when consistent, uniform rules were enforced and became a part of the school culture, respectability was a natural by-product.

Parents wanted to know that teachers had high expectations for their children (Hendrie, 2004). Therefore, schools of excellence demonstrated order, structure, and predictability (Lightfoot, 1983) and as a result, Hartell (2013) suggested student achievement would be a result.

Schools of excellence promoted collaboration between the family and the school. Building a positive home-school relationship translated into trust and created a sense of community (Levinson, 2014). In order to begin the community building process, parents and students stated that they felt their input was welcomed, and that their opinions were represented in the decisions that were being made (Leal, 2001; Wayson, Mitchell, Pinnell, & Landis, 1998). As this occurred, parental involvement increased (Wayson, Mitchell, Pinnell, & Landis, 1998), thus creating a greater sense of community among more families within the school.

One of the essential ingredients of a strong school community was communication. Both formal and informal communication strategies needed to be employed (Leal, 2001) as the parental community within excellent schools often

expected multiple methods of home-school communication (Wayson, Mitchell, Pinnell, & Landis, 1998). Likewise, teachers also expect effective and collaborative communication throughout the school community (New England Association of Schools and Colleges, 2014).

As familial involvement increased, so would school spirit, which in turn, would create a greater sense of community (Wayson, Mitchell, Pinnell, & Landis, 1998). Likewise, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (2011) stated, a "...school's climate and culture should support an effective educational program consistent with its stated mission" (p. 32).

Lightfoot (1983) suggested that parental involvement within the school community would impact the ideas and attitudes formed within their children, thus impacting the child's future success in life. Urban leader Jesse Jackson concurred and had publicly urged parents to monitor their children's homework and to pay attention to test scores (Barth, 1990). While the idea of parental involvement was being advocated for, poor, urban school districts were more likely than suburban and private schools to report less family communication (Howley, 2001). Loch (2013) stated that parental involvement within the black community had been inadequate. It was therefore essential for schools to make greater efforts to connect with the home in as many ways as possible (Hendrie, 2004).

In order for schools to make an impact and build community within urban schools, it was essential to acknowledge the importance of minority and local cultures (Hirsch, 1996). Schools then preserved and passed on the memories of the community and its vision for the future (Vryhof, 2004).



Much the same was true within private schools. At many private schools, parental involvement was not only desired, it was expected (Vryhof, 2004). Bryk, Lee, & Holland (1993) believed that as strong school communities were fostered, they created the engagement of many school members in the school's mission. As people accepted and pursued the mission of the school, it was then strengthened both internally and externally, and created a legacy of success through community engagement.

The essential first element of an excellent academic program was a high quality teaching staff. Within excellent schools there was a high regard for the educator (Lightfoot, 1983) and teaching and learning was honored (Mulvoy, 2004). Likewise, the teacher was seen as the "critical educational authority" (Lightfoot, 1983, p.333).

Within schools of excellence, teachers were engaged in the work that they did (Barth, 1990) and had a strong regard for the students and families with whom they were working (Lightfoot, 1983). As these relationships between teacher and student and teacher and family were created, students gained an understanding that they were appreciated and growth was often the result of the efforts made by the teacher (Leal, 2001), along with a deeper understanding of who students were as individuals, thus impacting the quality of work done within the classroom (Lightfoot, 1983).

Teachers in schools of excellence provided their students with an opportunity to learn; provided active teaching; used a coordinated curriculum (Wayson, Mitchell, Pinnell, & Landis, 1998); and provided a structured classroom setting (Leal, 2001). However, Monroe (2007) stated the three nemeses of all new teachers are closely related and included controlling kids, controlling material, and controlling time. Therefore, excellent schools took the time to develop teachers and allowed them to

grow as leaders (Schlechty, 1998).

However, within schools of excellence, teachers worked together, learned together, and shared together as professionals. When they did not participate in professionally enriching activities, teachers tended to burn out quickly and a school's ability to replenish itself was diminished (Barth, 1990). Therefore, teacher interdependence was essential for the well-being of an excellent school (Barth, 1990).

Schools of excellence also took professional development seriously. Wayson, Mitchell, Pinnell, and Landis (1998) suggested that professional development was an essential part of the mission of a school and that within excellent schools all staff participated. A significant component of a beneficial professional development program was a quality supervision and evaluation process. Within such programs, teachers learned how to handle disruptive students by getting them involved in quality work (Glasser, 1998); teachers learned the importance of engagement outside of the classroom (Wayson, Mitchell, Pinnell, and Landis, 1998); teachers developed an understanding that there is no prototype teacher, but that each "survives and flourishes in distinct ways" (Lazerson, McLaughlin, McPherson, & Bailey, 1985, p. 95); and teachers learned the basic frameworks for the development of quality classroom instruction (Danielson, 1996).

Schools of excellence were committed to the finest academic programs. Therefore, curriculum development was a number one priority (Association of Christian Schools International, 2012). One poll (Lazerson, McLaughlin, McPherson, & Bailey, 1985) had shown that the public's number two priority was a coherent curriculum that stressed the basics, including higher standards and more homework.

This study suggested, however, that the public believed that, "Science should not displace the arts or the humanities from the curriculum. All are necessary" (p. 76).

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (2011) mandated that schools were to have adequate financial resources in order to meet the requirements of accreditation. Likewise, appropriate budgetary and accounting measures were to be followed. Another accrediting agency, the Association of Christian Schools International (2012), states, "The community will judge the school by the way you maintain your credit and the manner in which you pay your bills" (p. 92).

Independent schools had high standards for the achievement of their students, high standards for their teachers, wanted quality facilities and technology, and desired providing the students with the best faculty and staff available (Daignault, 2003). Such quality programming was expensive. However, many excellent independent schools found creative ways in which to raise money without placing the burden upon families, raising class size, or cutting back on quality programs (Foster, 2003). This became increasingly important as it was realized that, "all aspects of independent schooling is inextricably tied to money" (Daignault, 2003, p. 20).

Resources within independent and public schools were often scarce. Within many of the urban school districts in the United States, cuts had been enacted recently in order to meet the demands of budgets where enrollment was decreasing, thus decreasing the state and local revenues the school district received. In order to maintain quality educational standards, schools were to provide for their students and teachers. Berliner (1993) understood the current financial concerns, but maintained that "...higher salaries attract teaching candidates with higher academic ability and keep

teachers in the profession longer" (p. 636). Berliner also contended that better teachers would attract quality students and families to schools and produced higher achievement and more motivated students.

Financial concerns were nothing new to either independent or public schools. Excellent schools however, found ways to raise the needed funds to fulfill their mission and vision (DeKuyper, 2003) and provided a quality instructional and co-curricular program to those attending.

### **Conclusion and Summary**

This chapter presented a review of the historical foundations and development of education in the United States and outlined the perceived decline of moral and religious standards that led to the school choice movement. It emphasized factors leading to a perception of mediocrity within schools and the subsequent call for educational excellence. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the Correlates of Effective Schools.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **Introduction**

The impetus for the creation of Minnesota charter schools was derived from the belief that parents had the right to make choices on the public schools their children could attend, and public schools did not need to be limited to the traditional school district format (Schroeder, 2004). Between 1991 and 2014, 173 Minnesota charter schools were created, while 26 such schools closed (MACS, 2015).

Schroeder's report (2004 *Ripples of Innovation*) recommended the creation of more public-school choice options, the expanded use of charter schools to address achievement gaps, and more precise documentation on the successes of individual charter schools.

There is reason to believe that the number of Minnesota charter schools will continue to increase in the future (Nathan, 1996). There is also reason to believe there will be failures among those schools. Thus, it was of particular interest to the researcher to gather information from select charter schools with longevity to assist those educators in their planning by providing data on effective characteristics that are present in charter schools with longevity.

The study focuses on an examination of the perceived presence and importance of Effective School Correlates in charter schools with longevity to assist educators in their design and development of new future charter schools.

### **Questions of the Study**

The following questions were established to guide the conduct of the study:

1. How did a select sample of charter school administrators rate the presence of Effective School Correlates in their schools?
2. How did a select sample of charter school board members rate the presence of Effective School Correlates in their school?
3. How did a select sample of charter school teachers rate the presence of Effective School Correlates in their schools?
4. How did a select sample of charter school administrators rate the importance of Effective School Correlates to the longevity of their schools?
5. How did a select sample of charter school board members rate the importance of Effective School Correlates to the longevity of their schools?
6. How did a select sample of charter school teachers rate the importance of Effective School Correlates to the longevity of their schools?
7. What advice on organizational sustainability does a select sample of charter school board members, teachers and administrators offer to organizational representatives planning the creation of new charter schools?

### **Procedures and Timelines**

Following approval by the St. Cloud State University Institutional Review Board for the researcher to proceed in data collection, the data collection process for the study was initiated in mid-May and concluded in mid-July of 2017. Executive Directors of the five charter schools were contacted in early May and agreed to furnish permission to contact teachers and charter school board members about completing the surveys.

With the assistance of the Executive Directors of the five charter schools, the researcher secured the email addresses of potential respondents to complete the study survey.

In mid-May, the researcher electronically mailed (emailed) potential study respondents a brief description of the study's purpose and an invitation for participation in the study. (See Appendix A.) Following agreement to participate by study respondents (Appendix B), the researcher then distributed the SurveyMonkey instrument (see Appendix C), requesting respondents to complete their surveys and, additionally if interested, asked their willingness to participate in a second facet of the study, which is the free response question at the end of the survey.

One week following the distribution of the Survey Monkey instrument, the researcher distributed a first reminder email to study respondents, encouraging them to complete and transmit their survey instruments. A second reminder email was distributed to all study respondents one week after the first reminder email as final encouragement to respondents to complete and transmit their survey instruments prior to the close of the survey window at the end of June 2017 or at the point in time that the determined number of participants had been reached.

## **Participants**

The participants in the study were select charter school, school board members, Executive Directors, and teachers. Five Minnesota charter schools were chosen from among schools located in the metropolitan area of Minneapolis/St. Paul and greater Minnesota. Those charter schools were sponsored by either a school district, non-profit organization, or a higher education institution.

The criteria for selecting the study's participating charter schools were as follows:

- 1) The charter schools operate secondary school programs encompassing grades 9-12
- 2) The charter schools had been in operation for a minimum ten years
- 3) The representatives of the charter schools expressed a willingness to participate in the study

A list of prospective charter schools was identified from those Minnesota charter schools published on the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools' (MACS) website. There were 58 charter schools with ten or more years of longevity in Minnesota as of the spring of 2016.

### **Human Subject Approval**

Following completion of the preliminary examination and authorization by the doctoral committee, the researcher submitted a protocol application to St. Cloud State University's Institutional Review Board to secure authorization for conducting research involving human subjects. Following authorization from the IRB, the researcher undertook the surveying of study participants.

### **Instrumentation and Data Collection**

The study employed an electronic survey for the purpose of gathering quantitative data. The instrument questions collected information on the respondents' roles within the charter school system and the lengths of time the respondents were involved in or employed by the participating charter schools. The questions were focused on gathering quantitative data on the respondents' perceptions of the



presence and importance of the Correlates of Effective Schools in the participating charter schools. Qualitative data were collected through interviews of a select group of charter school Executive Directors to a question designed to elicit responses from the respondents on advice they would offer to organizational representatives who were planning the creation of new charter schools.

It was estimated that the respondents' completion of the online data collection instrument would require 10 to 15 minutes. Quantitative data were obtained from the internet-based Survey Monkey program and compiled by the Center for Statistics at St. Cloud State University.

### **Research Design**

The research methodology employed in the study was a mixed method design. According to Roberts (2010), "qualitative and quantitative approaches in a single study complement each other by providing results with greater breadth and depth. Combining what with possible why adds power and richness to your explanation of the data" (p. 145).

The researcher gathered quantitative data from all responding members of the sample group, employing a Survey Monkey-based instrument. As stated by Haq (2014), "quantitative social research is about collecting numerical data and analyzing it using statistical methods to explain a phenomenon" (p. 5).

Further, the researcher gathered qualitative data from five respondents who expressed a willingness to be interviewed during the process of completing their surveys. Interview questions were employed to gather information which would provide depth of understanding about the quantitative responses, consistent with Slavin's

(2006) observation that “qualitative research seeks primarily to describe a situation,” yielding a “thick description of social settings...” (p. 10)

### **Data Analysis**

Following closure of the survey window, responses from the Survey Money instrument were downloaded and the survey data analyzed employing the Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistical analyses were conducted. According to Knupfer and McLellan (1996), such statistics are important in educational studies in that they reveal the human nature of the research. Frequency data were analyzed and compared to determine the perceived presence and importance of the Correlates of Effective Schools in the sample charter schools by study respondents. The respondents’ responses to the open-ended questions were analyzed and sorted according to themes that emerged.

### **Chapter Summary**

Chapter three provides the research methodology employed in the mixed method study, including an introduction, research questions, research design, participants, human subject approval, instrumentation and data collection, procedures and timeline, and data analysis.

Chapter three described the research methodology employed to gather data from respondents in five Minnesota charter schools which had operated for a minimum of ten years.

The design selected for the study was mixed methods.

Chapter four furnishes the study’s findings, including data gathered through both quantitative and qualitative means.

Chapter five provides an introduction, discussion and conclusions, limitations of the study, recommendations for professional practice, and recommendations for future research.

## Chapter 4: Results

### Introduction

The impetus for the creation of Minnesota charter schools was derived from the belief that parents had the right to make choices on the public schools their children could attend, and public schools did not need to be limited to the traditional school district format (Schroeder, 2004). Between 1991 and 2015, 268 Minnesota charter schools were created, while 83 such schools closed. Schroeder's report (2004 *Ripples of Innovation*) recommended the creation of more public-school choice options, the expanded use of charter schools to address achievement gaps, and more precise documentation on the successes of individual charter schools.

There is reason to believe that the number of Minnesota charter schools will continue to increase in the future. There is also reason to believe there will be failures among those schools. Thus, it was of particular interest to the researcher to gather information from select charter schools with longevity to assist educators in their planning by providing data on effective characteristics that are present in charter schools with longevity.

The study focused on an examination of the perceived presence and importance of Effective School Correlates in charter schools with longevity to assist educators in their design and development of future charter schools. The study employed an electronic survey for the purpose of gathering quantitative data. The instrument questions were designed to collect information on the respondents' roles within the charter school system and the lengths of time the respondents were involved in or employed by the participating charter schools. The questions were

focused on gathering quantitative data on the respondents' perceptions of the presence and importance of the Correlates of Effective Schools in the participating charter schools. Qualitative data were collected through an open-ended question to elicit responses from the respondents on advice they would offer to organizational representatives who were planning the creation of new charter schools.

Survey respondents rated each of the seven Correlates of Effective Schools on a four-point Likert scale. The descriptor choices for the first three questions were not at all present, somewhat present, mostly present, and continuously present based on the respondents' perspectives or beliefs. The descriptor choices for questions four through six were not at all important, somewhat important, important and very important.

There were 82 respondents to the electronic survey including nineteen administrators, 23 board members, and 51 teachers. There were eleven respondents who selected multiple roles such as they were both a teacher and a school board member. Respondents cited the number of years they had been affiliated with their current charter school as follows: 26 of 82 or 34.2% reported 0-2 years, 13 of 82 or 17.1% responded 3-4 years, ten of 82 or 13.2% answered 5-6 years, and 27 of 82 or 35.5% chose 7+ years.

It was estimated that the respondents' completion of the online data collection instrument would require 10 to 15 minutes. Quantitative data were obtained from the internet-based Survey Monkey program and compiled by the Center for Statistics at St. Cloud State University. In this chapter, the results of the survey are aligned with each of the research questions.

## **Research Questions**

These following questions were established to guide the conduct of the study:

1. How did a select sample of charter school administrators rate the presence of Effective School Correlates in their schools?
2. How did a select sample of charter school board members rate the presence of Effective School Correlates in their schools?
3. How did a select sample of charter school teachers rate the presence of Effective School Correlates in their schools?
4. How did a select sample of charter school administrators rate the importance of Effective School Correlates in their schools?
5. How did a select sample of charter school board members rate the importance of Effective School Correlates in their schools?
6. How did a select sample of charter school teachers rate the importance of Effective School Correlates in their schools?
7. What advice on organizational sustainability did a select sample of charter school board members, teachers and administrators offer to organizational representatives planning the creation of new charter schools?

### **Research Question One**

How did a select sample of charter school administrators rate the presence of Effective School Correlates in their schools?

Table 1 depicts the administrative respondents' perception of the presence of the correlate of Safe and Orderly Environment in their charter schools.

In regard to the correlate of Safe and Orderly Environment, eight of 19 respondents or 42.1% perceived the correlate as continuously present, 10 of 19 respondents or 52.6% perceived the correlate as mostly present, one of 19 or 5.3% respondents perceived the correlate as somewhat present.

**Table 1.** *The Frequencies of Administrative Respondents' Assessments of the Presence of the Safe and Orderly Environment Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Continuously present	8	42.1%
Mostly present	10	52.6%
Somewhat present	1	5.3%
Not at all present	0	0.0%
Total responses	19	100.0%

Table 2 illustrates the administrative respondents' perceptions of the presence of the correlate of Climate of High Expectations.

For the correlate of Climate of High Expectations for Success, 10 of 19 respondents or 52.6% perceived the correlate as continuously present, eight of 19 respondents or 42.1% perceived the correlate as mostly present, and one of 19 or 5.3% respondents perceived the correlate as somewhat present.

**Table 2.** *The Frequencies of Administrative Respondents' Assessments of the Presence of the Climate of High Expectations for Success Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Continuously present	10	52.6%
Mostly present	8	42.1%
Somewhat present	1	5.3%
Not at all present	0	0.0%
Total responses	19	100.0%

Table 3 reports the administrative respondents' perceptions of the presence of the Instructional Leadership correlate in their charter schools.

The Instructional Leadership correlate responses were 10 of 18 respondents or 55.6% perceived the correlate as continuously present, five of 18 respondents or 27.8% perceived the correlate as mostly present, and two of 18 respondents or 10.5% perceived the correlate as somewhat present.



**Table 3.** *The Frequencies of Administrative Respondents' Assessments of the Presence of the Instructional Leadership Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Continuously present	10	55.6%
Mostly present	5	27.8%
Somewhat present	2	10.5%
Not at all present	1	5.6%
Total responses	18	100%
Missing responses	1	0.0%

Table 4 depicts the administrative respondents' perceptions of the presence of the Clear and Focused Mission correlate in their charter schools.

The responses to the correlate of Clear and Focused Mission were nine of nineteen respondents or 47.4% perceived the correlate as continuously present, nine of 19 respondents or 47.4% perceived the correlate as mostly present, and one of 19 respondents or 5.3% perceived the correlate as somewhat present.

**Table 4.** *The Frequencies of Administrative Respondents' Assessments of the Presence of the Clear and Focused Mission Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Continuously present	9	47.4%
Mostly present	9	47.4%
Somewhat present	1	5.3%
Not at all present	0	0.0%
Total responses	19	100.0%

Table 5 illustrates the administrative respondents' perceptions of the presence of the correlate of Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task.

In regards to the correlate of Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task, 10 of 19 respondents or 52.6% perceived the correlate as being continuously present, and nine of 19 respondents or 47.4% perceived the correlate as mostly present.

**Table 5.** *The Frequencies of Administrative Respondents' Assessments of the Presence of the Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Continuously present	10	52.6%
Mostly present	9	47.4%
Somewhat present	0	0.0%
Not at all present	0	0.0%
Total responses	19	100.0%

Table 6 illustrates the administrative respondents' perceptions of the presence of the Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress at their charter schools.

For the correlate of Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress, six of 18 respondents or 33.3% perceived the correlate as mostly present and 10 of 18 respondents or 55.6% perceived the correlate as continuously present.

**Table 6.** *The Frequencies of Administrative Respondents' Assessments of the Presence of the Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Continuously present	10	55.6%
Mostly present	6	33.3%
Somewhat present	2	11.1%
Not at all present	0	0.0%
Total responses	18	100.0%
Missing responses	1	0.0%

Table 7 shows the administrative respondents' perception of the presence of the correlate of Home-School Relations in their charter schools.

For the correlate Home-School Relations, nine of 19 respondents or 47.5% perceived the correlate as continuously present, and 10 of 19 respondents or 52.6% perceived the correlate as mostly present.

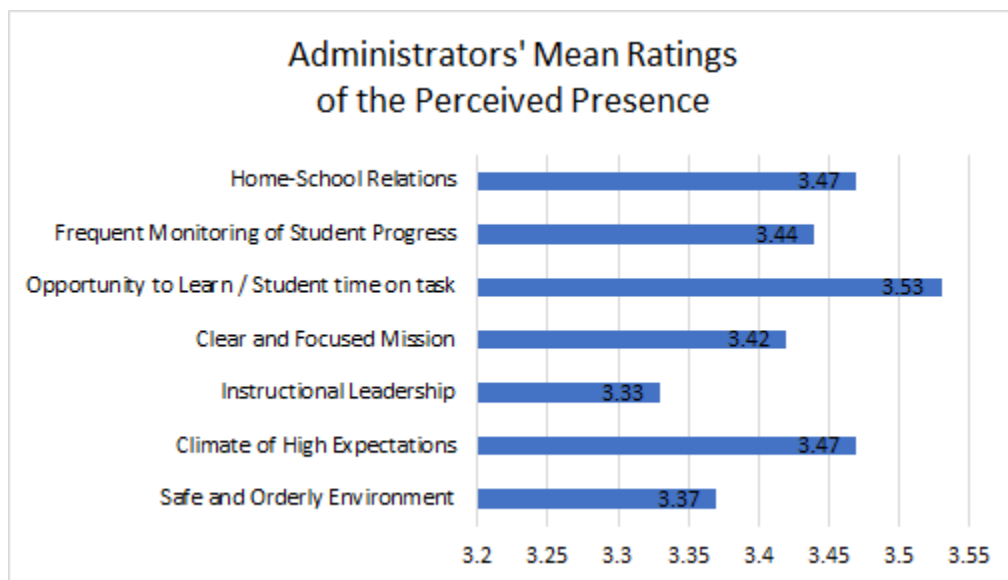
**Table 7.** *The Frequencies of Administrative Respondents' Assessments of the Presence of the Home-School Relations Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Continuously present	9	47.4%
Mostly present	10	52.6%
Somewhat present	0	0.0%
Not at all present	0	0.0%
Total responses	19	100.0%

Table 8 depicts the administrators' mean ratings of the perception of the presence of the Effective School Correlates in their schools.

In an analysis of the administrators' responses, the mean rating for each correlate was calculated. The correlate with the highest mean rating (3.53) was Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task. Home School Relations and Climate of High Expectations both attained mean ratings of 3.47. Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress received a mean rating of 3.44, and Clear and Focused Mission recorded a mean rating of 3.42. Safe and Orderly Environment achieved a mean rating of 3.37. The correlate with the lowest mean rating (3.33) was Instructional Leadership.

**Table 8.** *Administrators' mean ratings of perceived presence of the Effective School Correlates*



## Research Question Two

How did a select sample of charter school board members rate the presence of Effective School Correlates in their schools?

Table 9 depicts the board member respondents' perception of the presence of the correlate of Safe and Orderly Environment in their charter schools.

In regard to the correlate of Safe and Orderly Environment, 12 of 22 respondents or 54.5% perceived the correlate as continuously present, and nine of 22 respondents or 40.9% perceived the correlate as mostly present.

**Table 9.** *The Frequencies of Board Member Respondents' Assessments of the Presence of the Safe and Orderly Environment Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Continuously present	12	54.5%
Mostly present	9	40.9%
Somewhat present	1	4.5%
Not at all present	0	0.0%
Total responses	22	100.0%
Missing responses	1	0.0%

Table 10 illustrates the board member respondents' perceived presence of the correlate of Climate of High Expectations for Success in their charter schools.

For the correlate of Climate of High Expectations for Success, seven of 22 respondents or 31.8% perceived the correlate as continuously present, 12 of 22 respondents or 54.5% perceived the correlate as mostly present, and three of 22 respondents or 13.6% perceived the correlate as somewhat present.

**Table 10.** *The Frequencies of Board Member Respondents' Assessments of the Presence of the Climate of High Expectations for Success Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Continuously present	7	31.8%
Mostly present	12	54.5%
Somewhat present	3	13.7%
Not at all present	0	0.0%
Total responses	22	100.0%
Missing responses	1	0.0%

Table 11 reports the board member respondents' perceptions of the presence of the Instructional Leadership correlate in their charter schools.

For the Instructional Leadership correlate, responses revealed that eight of 21 respondents or 38.1% perceived the correlate as continuously present, 10 of 21 respondents or 47.6% perceived the correlate as mostly present, and two of 21 respondents or 9.5% perceived the correlate as somewhat present.



**Table 11.** *The Frequencies of Board Member Respondents' Assessments of the Presence of the Instructional Leadership Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Continuously present	8	38.1%
Mostly present	10	47.6%
Somewhat present	2	9.5%
Not at all present	1	4.8%
Total responses	21	100%
Missing responses	2	0.0%

Table 12 depicts the board member respondents' perceptions of the presence of the correlate of a Clear and Focused Mission in their charter schools.

Responses to the correlate, Clear and Focused Mission, revealed that eight of 22 respondents or 36.4% perceived the correlate as continuously present, seven of 22 respondents or 31.8% perceived the correlate as mostly present, and six of 22 respondents or 27.3% perceived the correlate as somewhat present.

**Table 12.** *The Frequencies of Board Member Respondents' Assessments of the Presence of the Clear and Focused Mission Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Continuously present	8	36.4%
Mostly present	7	31.8%
Somewhat present	6	27.3%
Not at all present	1	4.5%
Total responses	22	100.0%
Missing responses	1	

Table 13 illustrates board member respondents' perceptions of the presence of the correlate, Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task.

In regard to the correlate of Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task, 10 of 21 respondents or 47.6% perceived the correlate as being continuously present, eight of 21 or 38.1% perceived the correlate as mostly present and two of 21 respondents or 9.5% perceived the correlate as somewhat present. Only one respondent perceived the correlate as not at all present.

**Table 13.** *The Frequencies of Board Member Respondents' Assessments of the Presence of the Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Continuously present	10	47.6%
Mostly present	8	38.1%
Somewhat present	2	9.5%
Not at all present	1	4.8%
Total responses	21	100.0%
Missing	2	

Table 14 illustrates board member respondents' perceptions of the Presence of the Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress at their charter schools.

For the correlate, Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress, nine of 21 respondents or 42.9% perceived the correlate as continuously present, seven of 21 respondents or 33.3% perceived the correlate as mostly present and four of 21 respondents or 19.0% perceived the correlate as somewhat present. Only one respondent perceived the correlate not present at all.

**Table 14.** *The Frequencies of Board Member Respondents' Assessments of the Presence of the Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Continuously present	9	42.9%
Mostly present	7	33.3%
Somewhat present	4	19.0%
Not at all present	1	4.8%
Total responses	21	100.0%
Missing responses	2	0.0%

Table 15 represents board member respondents' perceptions of the presence of the correlate, Home-School Relations, in their charter schools.

For the Home-School Relations correlate, six of 21 respondents or 28.6% perceived the correlate as continuously present, 10 of 21 respondents or 47.6% perceived the correlate as mostly present, and five of 21 respondents or 23.8% perceived the correlate as somewhat present.

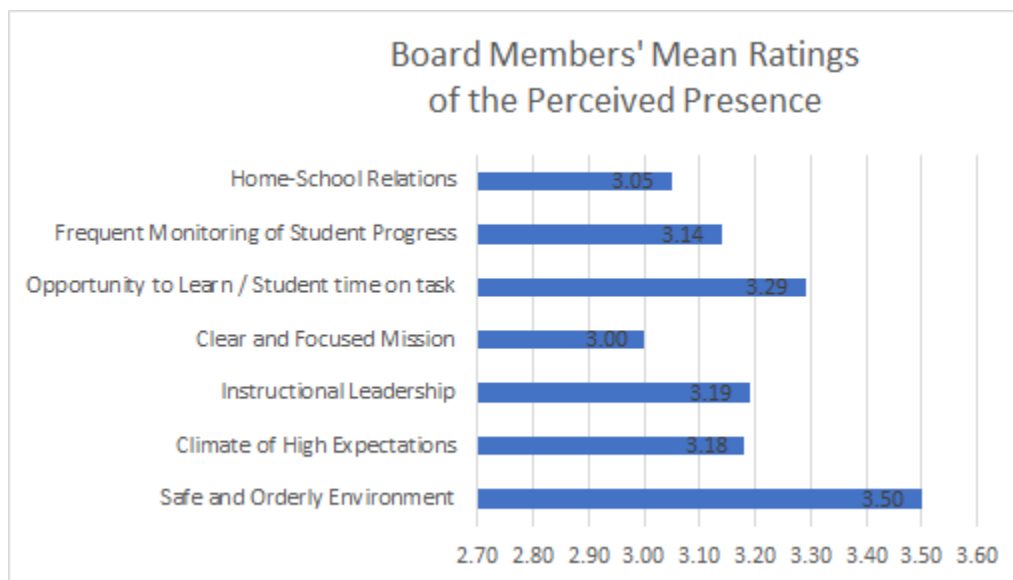
**Table 15.** *The Frequencies of Board Member Respondents' Assessments of the Presence of the Home-School Relations Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Continuously present	6	28.6%
Mostly present	10	47.6%
Somewhat present	5	23.8%
Not at all present	0	0.0%
Total responses	21	100.0%
Missing responses	2	0.0%

Table 16 depicts board members' mean ratings of their perceptions of the presence of the seven Effective School Correlates in their schools

As part of the analysis, charter school board members' responses were calculated to determine the mean ratings for each of the correlates. The correlate with the highest mean rating (3.5) was Safe and Orderly Environment. Opportunity to Learn and Time on Task was the next highest rated correlate with a mean rating of 3.29. Instructional leadership was rated at 3.19, while Climate of High Expectations for Success and Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress both received mean ratings of at 3.19 and 3.14, respectively. The two correlates with the lowest mean ratings were Home School Relations (3.05) and Clear and Focused Mission (3.00).

**Table 16.** *Board Members' Mean Ratings of Perceived Presence of the Effective School Correlates*



### Research Question Three

How did a select sample of charter school teachers rate the presence of Effective School Correlates in their schools?

Table 17 depicts the teacher respondents' perceptions of the presence of the correlate, Safe and Orderly Environment, in their charter schools.

In regard to a Safe and Orderly Environment, 20 of 50 respondents or 40.0% perceived the correlate as continuously present, 25 of 50 respondents or 50.0% perceived the correlate as mostly present, and five of 50 respondents or 10.0% perceived the correlate as somewhat present.

**Table 17.** *The Frequencies of Teacher Respondents Assessments' of the Presence of the Safe and Orderly Environment Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Continuously present	20	40.0%
Mostly present	25	50.0%
Somewhat present	5	10.0%
Not at all present	0	0.0%
Total responses	50	100.0%
Missing responses	1	0.0%

Table 18 illustrates the teacher respondents' perceptions of the presence of the correlate, Climate of High Expectations, in their charter schools.

For the correlate of Climate of High Expectations for Success, 19 of 51 respondents or 37.3% perceived the correlate as continuously present, 25 of 51 respondents or 49.0% perceived the correlate as mostly present, and seven of 51 respondents or 13.7% perceived the correlate as somewhat present.

**Table 18.** *The Frequencies of Teacher Respondents' Assessments of the Presence of the Climate of High Expectations for Success Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Continuously present	19	37.3%
Mostly present	25	49.0%
Somewhat present	7	13.7%
Not at all present	0	0.0%
Total responses	51	100.0%

Table 19 reports the teacher respondents' perceptions of the presence of the Instructional Leadership correlate in their charter schools.

Responses o charter schools' Instructional Leadership revealed that 18 of 50 respondents or 36.0% perceived the correlate as continuously present, 23 of 50 respondents or 46.0% perceived the correlate as mostly present, and eight of 50 respondents or 16.0% perceived the correlate as somewhat present.



**Table 19.** *The Frequencies of Teacher Respondents' Assessments of the Presence of the Instructional Leadership Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Continuously present	18	36.0%
Mostly present	23	46.0%
Somewhat present	8	16.0%
Not at all present	0	0.0%
Total responses	50	100%
Missing responses	1	0.0%

Table 20 depicts the teacher respondents' perceptions of the presence of the correlate, Clear and Focused Mission, in their charter schools.

The responses to the correlate of Clear and Focused Mission established that 19 of 50 respondents or 38.0% perceived the correlate as continuously present, 16 of 50 respondents or 32.0% perceived the correlate as mostly present, and 15 of 50 respondents or 30.0% perceived the correlate as somewhat present.

**Table 20.** *The Frequencies of Teacher Respondents' Assessments of the Presence of the Clear and Focused Mission Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Continuously present	19	38.0%
Mostly present	16	32.0%
Somewhat present	15	30.0%
Not at all present	0	0.0%
Total responses	50	100.0%
Missing responses	1	0.0%

Table 21 illustrates the teacher respondents' perceptions of the presence of the correlate, Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task, in their charter schools.

In regard to the correlate, Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task, 22 of 50 respondents or 44.0% perceived the correlate as being continuously present, 21 of 50 respondents or 42.0% perceived the correlate as mostly present, and seven of 50 respondents or 14.0% perceived the correlate as somewhat present.

**Table 21.** *The Frequencies of Teacher Respondents' Assessments of the Presence of the Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Continuously present	22	44.0%
Mostly present	21	42.0%
Somewhat present	7	14.0%
Not at all present	0	0.0%
Total responses	50	100.0%
Missing	1	0.0%

Table 22 illustrates the teacher respondents' perceptions of the presence of the Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress Correlate at their charter schools.

For the correlate, Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress, 25 of 50 respondents or 50.0% perceived the correlates as continuously present, 16 of 50 respondents or 32.0% perceived the correlates as mostly present, and nine of 50 respondents or 18.0% perceived the correlate as somewhat present.

**Table 22.** *The Frequencies of Teacher Respondents' Assessments of the Presence of the Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Continuously present	25	50.0%
Mostly present	16	32.0%
Somewhat present	9	18.0%
Not at all present	0	0.0%
Total responses	50	100.0%
Missing responses	1	0.0%

Table 23 shows the teacher respondents' perceptions of the presence of the correlate, Home-School Relations, in their charter schools.

The Home-School Relations correlate responses delineated that 21 of 51 respondents or 41.2% perceived it as continuously present, 18 of 51 respondents or 35.3% perceived the correlate as mostly present, and 12 of 51 respondents or 23.5% perceived the correlate as somewhat present.

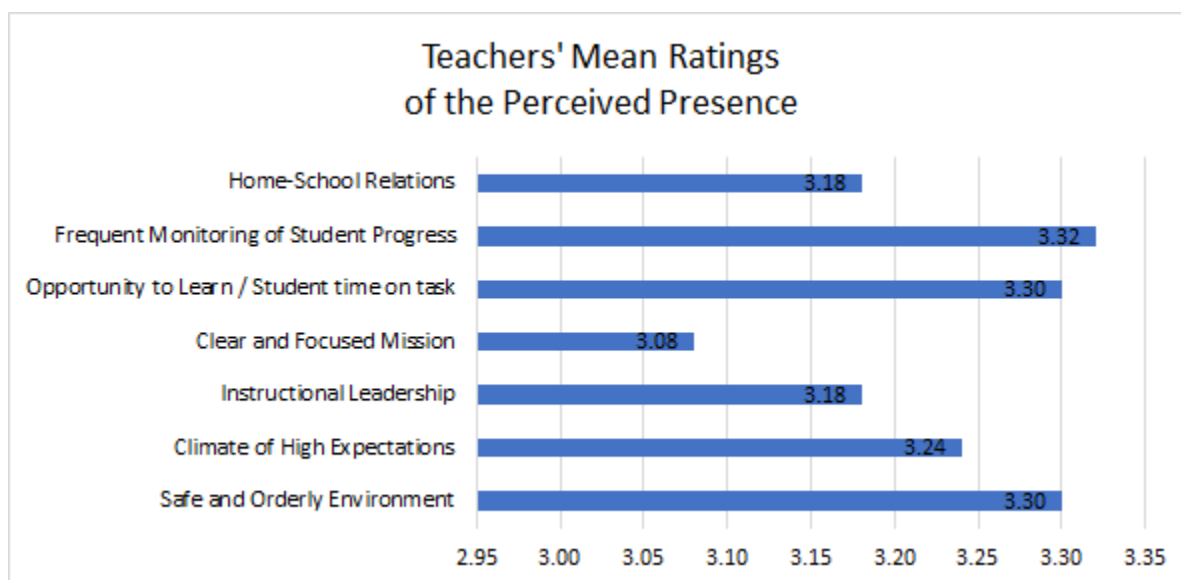
**Table 23.** *The Frequencies of Teacher Respondents' Assessments of the Presence of the Home-School Relations Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Continuously present	21	41.2%
Mostly present	18	35.3%
Somewhat present	12	23.5%
Not at all present	0	0.0%
Total responses	51	100.0%

Table 24 depicts the teachers' mean ratings of their perceptions of the presence of the Effective School Correlates in their schools.

The mean ratings of the perceived presence of the Effective School Correlates were calculated from the tabulation of all charter school teacher respondents. When averaged, the correlate with the highest mean rating (3.32) was Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress. The correlates, Safe and Orderly Environment and Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task, both had mean ratings of 3.30. A Climate of High Expectations received a mean rating of 3.24, while Home School Relations had a mean rating of 3.18 and Instructional Leadership had a mean rating of 3.16. The correlate that displayed the lowest mean rating (3.08) by teachers was Clear and Focused Mission.

**Table 24.** *Teachers' Mean Ratings of Perceived Presence of the Effective School Correlates in their charter schools*



#### Research Question Four

How did a select sample of charter school administrators rate the importance of Effective School Correlates in their schools?

Table 25 depicts the administrative respondents' perceptions of the importance of the correlate, Safe and Orderly Environment, in their charter schools.

In regard to the correlate of Safe and Orderly Environment, 15 of 18 or 83.3% of respondents rated the correlate as very important, two of 18 respondents or 11.1% rated the correlate as important, and one of 18 respondents or 5.6% rated the correlate as somewhat important.

**Table 25.** *The Frequencies of Administrative Respondents' Assessments of the Importance of the Safe and Orderly Environment Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Important	15	83.3%
Important	2	11.1%
Somewhat important	1	5.6%
Not at all important	0	0.0%
Total responses	18	100.0%
Missing responses	1	0.0%

Table 26 illustrates the administrative respondents' perceptions of the importance of the correlate, Climate of High Expectations, in their charter schools.

For the correlate Climate of High Expectations for Success, 14 of 18 or 77.8% of respondents rated the correlate as very important, and four of 18 respondents or 22.2% rated the correlate as important.

**Table 26.** *The Frequencies of Administrative Respondents' Assessments of the Importance of the Climate of High Expectations for Success Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Important	14	77.8%
Important	4	22.2%
Somewhat important	0	0.0%
Not at all important	0	0.0%
Total responses	18	100.0%
Missing responses	1	0.0%

Table 27 reports the administrative respondents' perception of the importance of the Instructional Leadership correlate in their charter schools.

The Instructional Leadership correlate responses depicted that 12 of 17 or 70.6% of respondents rated the correlate as very important, four of 17 respondents or 23.5% rated the correlate as important, and one of 17 or 5.9% rated the correlate as not at all important.



**Table 27.** *The Frequencies of Administrative Respondents' Assessments of the Importance of the Instructional Leadership Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Important	12	70.6%
Important	4	23.5%
Somewhat important	0	0.0%
Not at all important	1	5.9
Total responses	17	100%
Missing responses	2	0.0%

Table 28 depicts the administrative respondents' perceptions of the importance of the correlate, Clear and Focused Mission, in their charter schools.

The responses to the correlate, Clear and Focused Mission, revealed that 16 of 18 respondents or 88.9% rated the correlate as very important, and two of 18 respondents or 11.1% rated the correlate as important.

**Table 28.** *The Frequencies of Administrative Respondents' Assessments of the Importance of the Clear and Focused Mission Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Important	16	88.9%
Important	2	11.1%
Somewhat important	0	0.0%
Not at all important	0	0.0%
Total responses	18	100.0%
Missing responses	1	0.0%

Table 29 illustrates the administrative respondents' perceptions of the importance of the correlate, Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task, in their charter schools.

In regard to the Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task correlate, 13 of 18 respondents or 72.2% rated the correlate as very important, and five of 18 respondents or 27.8% rated the correlates as important.

**Table 29.** *The Frequencies of Administrative Respondents' Assessments of the Importance of the Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Important	13	72.2%
Important	5	27.8%
Somewhat important	0	0.0%
Not at all important	0	0.0%
Total responses	18	100.0%
Missing responses	1	0.0%

Table 30 illustrates the administrative respondents' perceptions of the importance of the Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress at their charter schools.

For the Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress correlate, the responses established that 12 of eighteen respondents or 66.7% rated the correlate as very important, two of 18 respondents or 11.1% rated the correlate as important, and four of 18 respondents or 22.2% rated the correlate as somewhat important.

**Table 30.** *The Frequencies of Administrative Respondents' Assessments of the Importance of the Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Important	12	66.7%
Important	2	11.1%
Somewhat important	4	22.2%
Not at all important	0	0.0%
Total responses	18	100.0%
Missing responses	1	0.0%

Table 31 reports the administrative respondents' perceptions of the importance of the, Home-School Relations correlate in their charter schools.

The Home-School Relations' responses revealed that 14 of 18 respondents or 77.8% rated the correlate as very important, three of 18 respondents or 16.7% rated the correlate as important, and one of 18 respondents or 5.6% rated the correlate as somewhat important.

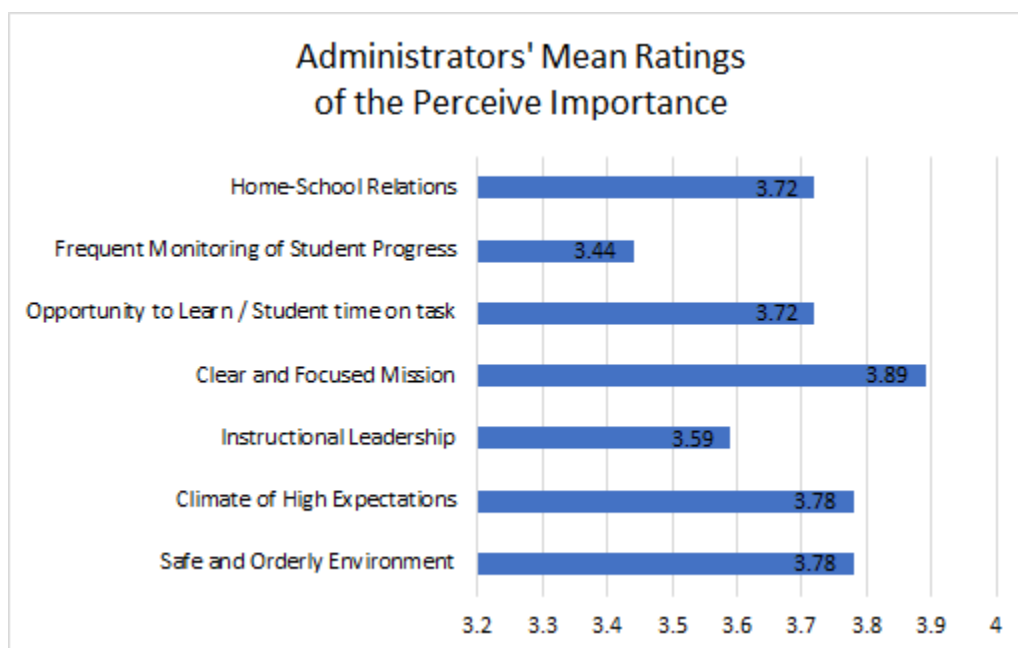
**Table 31.** *The Frequencies of Administrative Respondents' Assessments of the Importance of the Home-School Relations Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Important	14	77.8%
Important	3	16.7%
Somewhat Important	1	5.6%
Not at all important	0	0.0%
Total responses	18	100.0%
Missing responses	1	0.0%

Table 32 depicts the administrators' mean ratings of their perceptions of the importance of the Effective School Correlates in their schools

In the analysis of the administrators' responses regarding the perceived importance of each of the seven Effective School Correlates, a mean rating was calculated for each correlate. Clear and Focused Mission was the correlate perceived as most important by administrators with the highest mean rating (3.89). Safe and Orderly Environment and Climate of High Expectations both had mean ratings of 3.78. Both Home School Relations and Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task were rated at 3.72. Rated at 3.59 was Instructional Leadership. The correlate with the lowest mean rating (3.44) was Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress.

**Table 32.** *Administrators' Mean Ratings of Perceived Importance of the Effective School Correlates*



### Research Question Five

How did a select sample of charter school board members rate the importance of Effective School Correlates in their schools?

Table 33 depicts the board member respondents' perceptions of the importance of the correlate Safe and Orderly Environment in their charter schools.

In regard to the correlate of Safe and Orderly Environment, 16 of 20 respondents or 80.0% rated the correlate as very important, and four of 20 respondents or 20.0% rated the correlate as important.

**Table 33.** *The Frequencies of Board Member Respondents' Assessments of the Importance of the Safe and Orderly Environment Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Important	16	80.0%
Important	4	20.0%
Somewhat important	0	0.0%
Not at all important	0	0.0%
Total responses	20	100.0%
Missing responses	3	0.0%

Table 34 illustrates the board member respondents' perceptions of the importance of the correlate Climate of High Expectations in their charter schools.

For the correlate Climate of High Expectations for Success, 19 of 20 respondents or 95.0% rated the correlate as very important, and one of 20 respondents rated the correlate as important.

**Table 34.** *The Frequencies of Board Member Respondents' Assessments of the Importance of the Climate of High Expectations for Success Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Important	19	95.0%
Important	1	5.0%
Somewhat important	0	0.0%
Not at all important	0	0.0%
Total responses	20	100.0%
Missing responses	3	0.0%

Table 35 reports the board member respondents' perceptions of the importance of the Instructional Leadership correlate in their charter schools.

The Instructional Leadership correlate responses revealed that 14 of 19 respondents or 73.7% rated the correlate as very important, and five of 19 respondents or 26.3% rated the correlate as important.



**Table 35.** *The Frequencies of Board Member Respondents' Assessments of the Importance of the Instructional Leadership Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Important	14	73.7%
Important	5	26.3%
Total responses	19	100%
Missing responses	4	

Table 36 depicts the board member respondents' perceptions of the importance of the Clear and Focused Mission correlate in their charter schools.

Responses to the Clear and Focused Mission correlate established that 16 of 18 respondents or 88.9% viewed it as very important, and two of 18 respondents or 11.1% rated the correlate as important.

**Table 36.** *The Frequencies of Board Member Respondents' Assessments of the Importance of the Clear and Focused Mission Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Important	16	88.9%
Important	2	11.1%
Somewhat important	0	0.0%
Not at all important	0	0.0%
Total responses	18	100.0%
Missing responses	1	0.0%

Table 37 illustrates the board member respondents' perceptions of the importance of the Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task correlate in their charter schools.

In regard to the correlate, Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task, 14 of 20 respondents or 70.0% rated the correlate as being very important, five of 20 respondents or 25.0% rated the correlate as important, and one of 20 respondents or 5.0% rated the correlate as somewhat important.

**Table 37.** *The Frequencies of Board Member Respondents' Assessments of the Importance of the Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Important	14	70.0%
Important	5	25.0%
Somewhat important	1	5.0%
Not at all important	0	0.0%
Total responses	20	100.0%
Missing responses	3	0.0%

Table 38 illustrates the board member respondents' perception of the importance of the Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress at their charter schools.

For the Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress correlate, 10 of 20 respondents or 50.0% rated the correlate as very important, five of 20 respondents or 25.0% rated the correlate as important, and five of 20 respondents or 25.0% rated the correlate as somewhat important.

**Table 38.** *The Frequencies of Board Member Respondents' Assessments of the Importance of the Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Important	10	50.0%
Important	5	25.0%
Somewhat important	5	25.0%
Not at all important	0	0.0%
Total responses	20	100.0%
Missing responses	3	0.0%

Table 39 shows the board member respondents' perceptions of the importance of the Home-School Relations' correlate to their charter schools.

For the Home-School Relations correlate, 12 of 20 respondents or 60.0% rated the correlate as very important, and eight of 20 respondents or 40.0% rated the correlate as important.

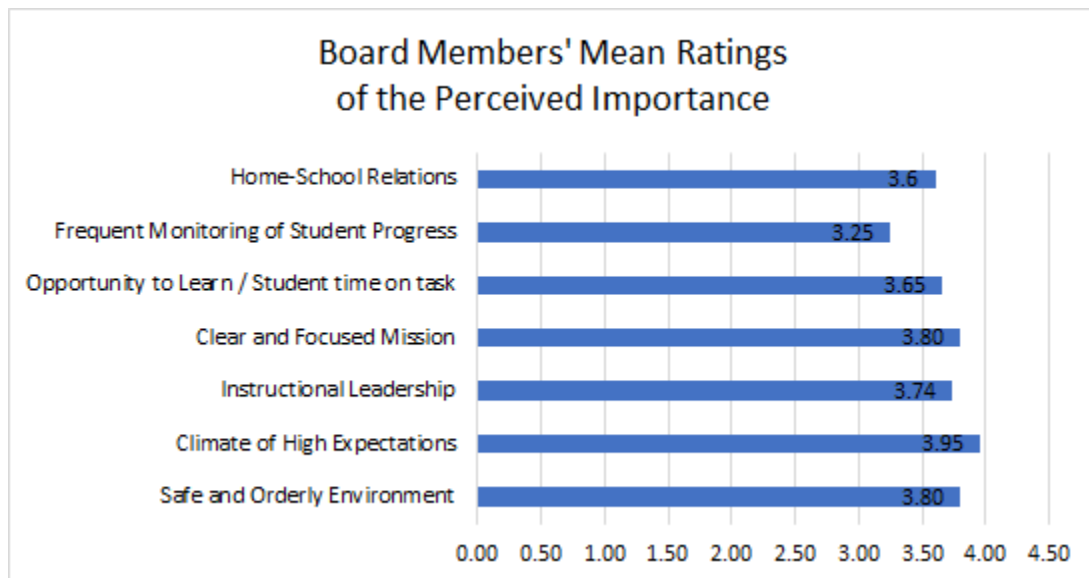
**Table 39.** *The Frequencies of Board Member Respondents' Assessments of the Importance of the Home-School Relations Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Important	12	60.0%
Important	8	40.0%
Somewhat important	0	0.0%
Not at all important	0	0.0%
Total responses	20	100.0%
Missing responses	3	0.0%

Table 40 depicts school board members' mean ratings of their perceptions of the importance of the presence of the Effective School Correlates in their schools.

The mean ratings were calculated from charter school board members' responses on the perceived importance of the seven Effective School Correlates. The correlate with the highest mean rating (3.89) was Clear and Focused Mission. Both a Safe and Orderly Environment and Climate of High Expectations for Success were rated 3.78. The Home School Relations and Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task correlates both received a mean rating of 3.72. Instructional leadership had a mean rating of 3.59, while the lowest mean rating (3.44) was achieved by Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress.

**Table 40.** *Board Members' Mean Ratings of Perceived Importance of the Effective School Correlates in their Charter Schools*



### Research Question Six

How did a select sample of charter school teachers rate the importance of Effective School Correlates in their schools?

Table 41 depicts the teacher respondents' perceptions of the importance of the Safe and Orderly Environment correlate in their charter schools.

In regard to a Safe and Orderly Environment, 36 of 45 respondents or 80.0% rated the correlate as very important, eight of 45 respondents or 17.8% rated the correlate as important, and one of 45 respondents or 2.2% rated the correlate as not at all important.

**Table 41.** *The Frequencies of Teacher Respondents' Assessments of the Importance of the Safe and Orderly Environment Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Important	36	80.0%
Important	8	17.8%
Somewhat important	0	0.0%
Not at all important	1	2.2%
Total responses	45	100.0%
Missing responses	6	0.0%

Table 42 illustrates the teacher respondents' perceptions of the importance of the Climate of High Expectations correlate in their charter schools.

For the Climate of High Expectations for Success correlate, 33 of 46 respondents or 71.7% rated the correlate as very important, 10 of 46 respondents or 21.7% rated the correlate as important, and three of 46 respondents or 6.5% rated the correlate as somewhat important.

**Table 42.** *The Frequencies of Teacher Respondents' Assessments of the Importance of the Climate of High Expectations for Success Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Important	33	71.7%
Important	10	21.7%
Somewhat important	3	6.5%
Not at all important	0	0.0%
Total responses	46	100.0%
Missing responses	5	0.0%

Table 43 reports the teacher respondents' perceptions of the importance of the Instructional Leadership correlate in their charter schools.

The Instructional Leadership correlate responses revealed that 28 of 45 respondents or 62.2% viewed the correlate as very important, 14 of 45 respondents or 31.1% rated the correlate as important, two of 45 respondents or 4.4% rated the correlate as somewhat important, and one of 45 respondents or 2.2% rated the correlate as not at all important.



**Table 43.** *The Frequencies of Teacher Respondents' Assessments of the Importance of the Instructional Leadership Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Important	28	62.2%
Important	14	31.1%
Somewhat important	2	4.4%
Not at all important	1	2.2%
Total responses	45	100%
Missing responses	6	0.0%

Table 44 depicts the teacher respondents' perceptions of the importance of the Clear and Focused Mission correlate in their charter schools.

The responses to the Clear and Focused Mission correlate established that 32 of 46 respondents or 69.6% rated the correlate as very important, 12 of 46 respondents or 26.1% rated the correlate as important and one each of 46 respondents or 2.2% rated the correlate as somewhat important, and not at all important.

**Table 44.** *The Frequencies of Teacher Respondents' Assessments of the Importance of the Clear and Focused Mission Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Important	32	69.6%
Important	12	26.1%
Somewhat important	1	2.2%
Not at all important	1	2.2%
Total responses	46	100.0%
Missing responses	5	0.0%

Table 45 illustrates the teacher respondents' perceptions of the importance of the correlate, Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task, in their charter schools.

In regard to Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task correlate, 23 of 45 respondents or 51.1% rated the correlate as very important, 18 of 45 respondents or 40.0% rated the correlate as important, and four of 45 respondents or 8.9% rated the correlate as somewhat important.

**Table 45.** *The Frequencies of Teacher Respondents' Assessments of the Importance of the Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Important	23	51.1%
Important	18	40.0%
Somewhat important	4	8.9%%
Total responses	45	100.0%
Missing responses	6	0.0%

Table 46 illustrates the teacher respondents' perceptions of the importance of the Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress correlate in their charter schools.

For the correlate Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress, the responses established that 24 of 46 respondents or 52.2% rated the correlate as very important, 16 of 46 respondents or 34.8% rated the correlate as important, and six of 46 respondents or 13.0% rated the correlate as somewhat important

**Table 46.** *The Frequencies of Teacher Respondents' Assessments of the Importance of the Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Important	24	52.2%
Important	16	34.8%
Somewhat important	6	13.0%
Not at all important	0	0.0%
Total responses	46	100.0%
Missing responses	5	0.0%

Table 47 shows the teacher respondents' perceptions of the importance of the Home-School Relations correlate in their charter schools.

Responses on the Home-School Relations correlate delineated that 26 of 46 respondents or 56.5% rated the correlate as very important, 16 of 46 respondents or 34.8% rated the correlate as important, and four of 46 respondents or 8.7% rated the correlate as somewhat important.

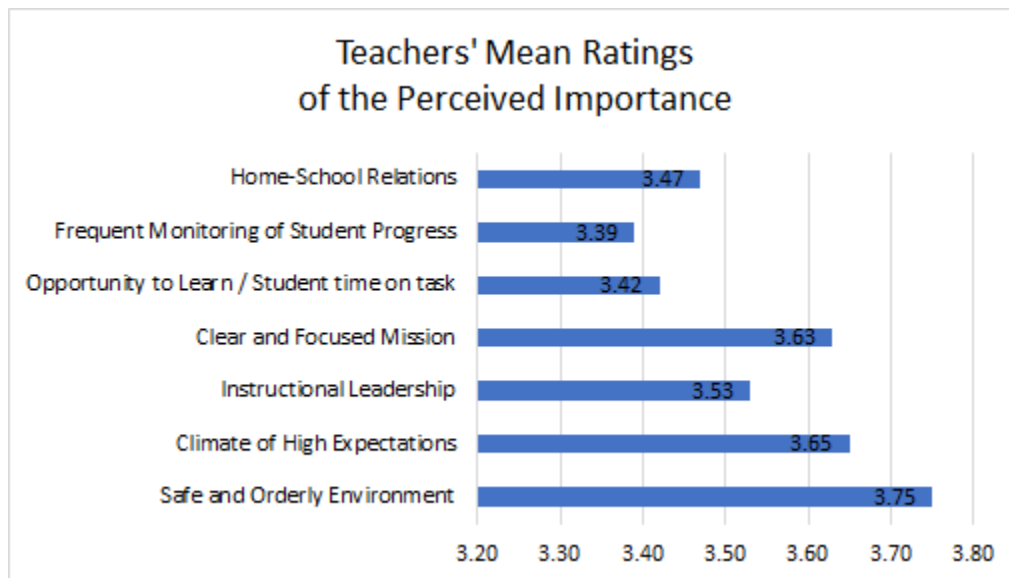
**Table 47.** *The Frequencies of Teacher Respondents' Assessments of the Importance of the Home-School Relations Correlate in their Charter Schools*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Important	26	56.5%
Important	16	34.8%
Somewhat important	4	8.7%
Not at all important	0	0.0%
Total responses	46	100.0%
Missing responses	5	0.0%

Table 48 depicts the teachers' mean ratings of their perceptions of the importance of the Effective School Correlates in their schools.

In the analysis of the teachers' responses regarding the perceived importance of each of the seven Effective School Correlates, a mean rating was calculated for each correlate. Safe and Orderly Environment was the correlate with the highest mean rating (3.76). Climate of High Expectations received the second highest mean rating (3.65), and Clear and Focused Mission was rated third (3.63. Instructional Leadership was rated at 3.53, and Home School Relations was rated at 3.48. Opportunity to Learn and Time on Task was rated at 3.42. The lowest teacher mean rating (3.39) was the Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress correlate.

**Table 48.** *Teachers' Mean Ratings of Perceived Importance of the Effective School Correlates*



### Research Question Seven

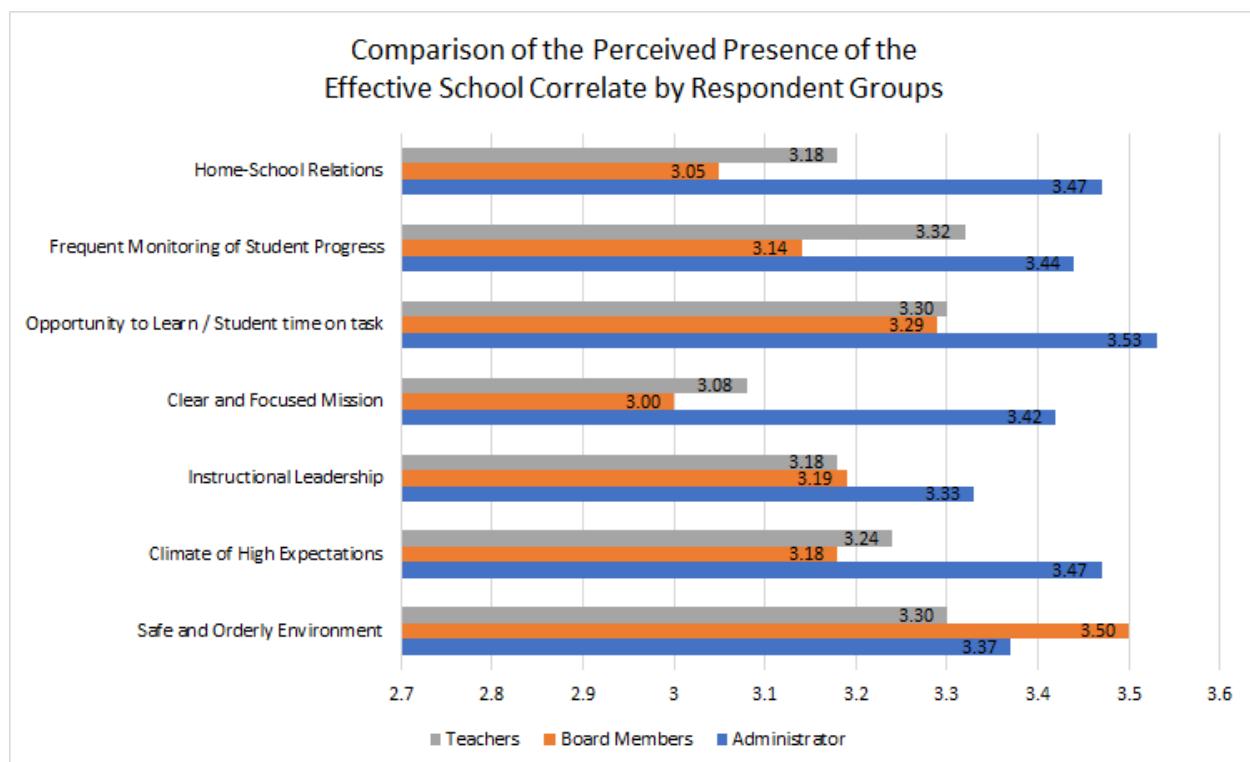
What advice on organizational sustainability did a select sample of charter school board members, teachers and administrators offer to organizational representatives planning the creation of new charter schools?

Of the 82 respondents who completed the study survey, 19 respondents or 23.2% chose to submit advice. The advice provided was analyzed and classified by their alignments with the Effective School Correlates. The most frequently identified correlates on which advice was offered was an organization's Clear and Focused Mission, with 15 of 19 respondents or 78.9% offering advice on that correlate. The Home-School Relations correlate received advice from two of 19 respondents or 10.5%. The Climate of High Expectations and Instructional Leadership correlates were each mentioned by one of 19 respondents or 5.2% respectively.

## Summary

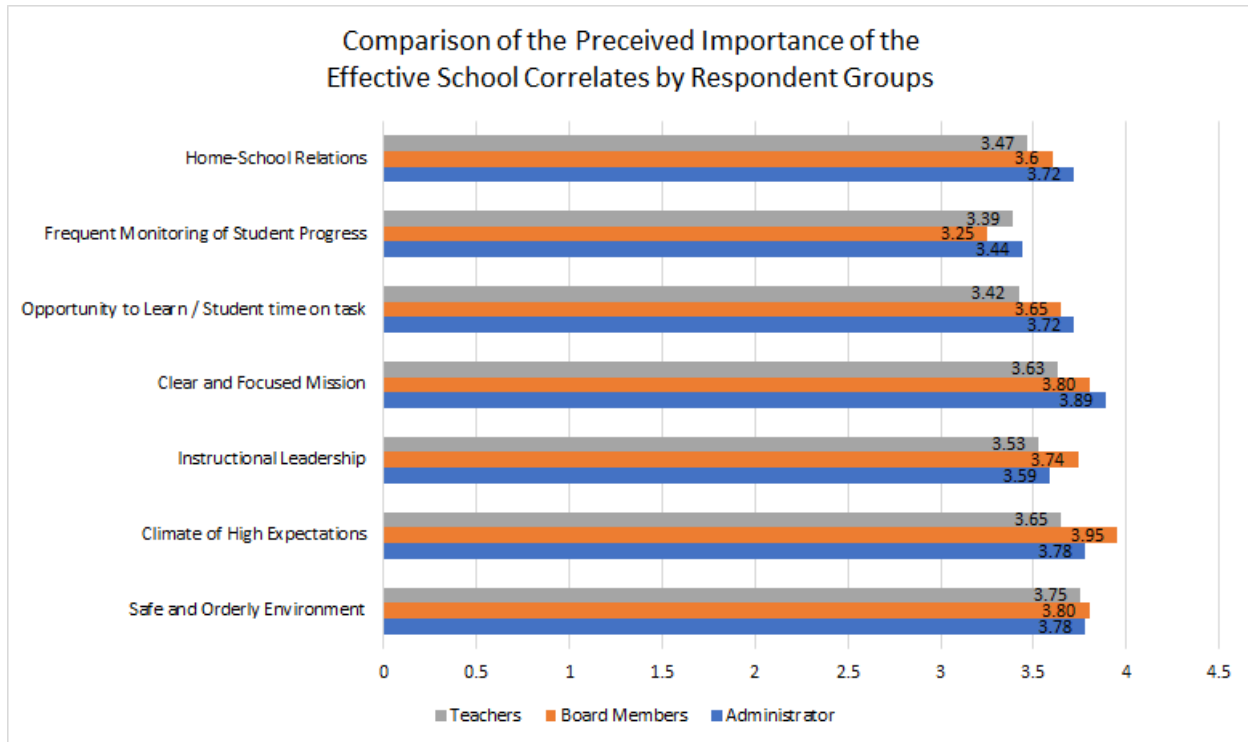
In table 49, the analysis of the data collected in the study revealed that select charter school administrators, board members and teachers responded quite differently in their responses regarding the perceived presence.

**Table 49.** *Teachers', Board Members' and Administrators' Mean Ratings of Perceived Presence of the Effective School Correlates*



Responses were similar in regard to the perceived importance of the Effective School Correlates in charter schools as shown in table 50.

**Table 50.** *Teachers', Board Members' and Administrators' Mean Ratings of Perceived Importance of the Effective School Correlates*



The implication of these results for the creation of future charter schools will be discussed in Chapter Five. Also, recommendations from the analysis of the data will be provided to future charter school founders.



## **Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations**

The purpose of the study was to examine a select sample of Minnesota charter schools that have been in operation for ten or more years to ascertain the presence and importance of effective schools' characteristics of their organizations. Through surveying charter school administrators, school board members, and teachers, the study intended to identify the presence and the importance to which the respondents believed their organizations displayed all or some of the Correlates of Effective Schools.

The participants in the study were select charter school, school board members, administrators, and teachers. Five Minnesota charter schools were chosen to participate in the study from among schools located in the metropolitan area of Minneapolis/St. Paul and greater Minnesota. Those charter schools were sponsored by either a school district, non-profit organization, or a higher education institution.

Chapter five presents the conclusions of the study as they relate to the research literature on the Effective Schools Correlates. Limitations of the study, recommendations for professional practice, and recommendations for future research studies are also presented.

### **Discussions and Conclusions**

These following questions were established to guide the conduct of this study:

1. How did a select sample of charter school administrators rate the presence of Effective School Correlates in their schools?
2. How did a select sample of charter school board members rate the presence of Effective School Correlates in their schools?

3. How did a select sample of charter schoolteachers rate the presence of Effective School Correlates in their schools?
4. How did a select sample of charter school administrators rate the importance of Effective School Correlates in their schools?
5. How did a select sample of charter school board members rate the importance of Effective School Correlates in their schools?
6. How did a select sample of charter schoolteachers rate the importance of Effective School Correlates in their schools?
7. What advice on organizational sustainability did a select sample of charter school board members, teachers and administrators offer to organizational representatives planning the creation of new charter schools?

### **Research Question One**

How did a select sample of charter school administrators rate the presence of Effective School Correlates in their schools?

- Charter school administrators rated six of the seven correlates higher than both charter teachers and charter school board members.
- The correlate, Opportunity to Learn/Student Time on Task, was rated the highest among all seven correlates by charter school administrators.
- The Instructional Leadership correlate was rated lowest among all seven correlates by charter administrators.

### **Research Question Two**

How did a select sample of charter school board members rate the presence of Effective School Correlates in their schools?

- Charter school board members rated five of the seven correlates lower than both charter school teachers and administrators.
- Charter school board members rated Safe and Orderly Environment correlate the highest among all seven correlates.
- The correlate, Clear and Focused Mission, was rated the lowest among all seven correlates by charter school board members.

### **Research Question Three**

How did a select sample of charter school teachers rate the presence of Effective School Correlates in their schools?

- Charter school teachers rated five of the seven correlates higher than charter school board members but lower than charter school administrators.
- The correlate, Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress, was rated highest among all seven correlates by charter school teachers.
- Charter school teachers rated the correlate, Clear and Focused Mission the lowest among all seven correlates.

### **Research Question Four**

How did a select sample of charter school administrators rate the importance of Effective School Correlates in their schools?

- Clear and Focused Mission was rated the highest among all seven correlates by charter school administrators.
- Charter school administrators rated the correlate, Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress, lowest among all seven correlates.

- The remainder of the correlates were rated within a few points of each other by charter school administrators, though all were rated above a 3.5 mean score.

### **Research Question Five**

How did a select sample of charter school board members rate the importance of Effective School Correlates in their schools?

- Climate of High Expectations were rated the highest of the seven school correlates by charter school board members.
- Charter school board members rated the correlate, Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress, as the lowest among all seven correlates.
- The remainder of the correlates were rated within a few points of each other by charter school board members.

### **Research Question Six**

How did a select sample of charter school teachers rate the importance of Effective School Correlates in their schools?

- Safe and Orderly Environment was rated among all seven correlates the highest by charter school teachers.
- Charter school teachers rated the correlate, Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress, as the lowest among all seven correlates.
- Six of seven correlates were rated by charter school teachers lower than both the charter school administrators and charter school board members.

## Research Question Seven

What advice on organizational sustainability did a select sample of charter school board members, teachers and administrators offer to organizational representatives planning the creation of new charter schools?

- Respondents identified the need for establishing a Clear and Focused Mission on 78.9% of occasions when starting a charter school.
- The Home-School correlate was cited on multiple occasions as an important factor in creating/initiating a new charter school.
- Creating and communicating a well-developed vision and mission was rated as important by all surveyed charter school members and in the advice offered by the respondents during interviews.

## Limitations

According to Roberts (2010), limitations of the study are aspects affecting the results or the interpretations of the results. Generally, these are factors over which the researcher has no control. The study's limitations are as follows:

- This study's response rate to the survey was 82/192 (42.7%) participants.
- Some of the respondents performed dual roles in their charter schools. Their responses on this study survey did not delineate between the dual roles or the manner in which the dual roles influenced respondents' answers.
- This study was conducted only with Minneapolis and St. Paul metropolitan area charter schools. The findings and conclusions may not be generalizable to charter schools operating in non-metropolitan charter schools in Minnesota areas or in other states.

- This study was limited to the extent that it sought only to study five charter schools that have been in operation for at least ten years. A greater number of schools and participants would have resulted in gathering a greater body of data for deeper analysis.

### **Recommendations for Current Practice**

After analysis of the quantitative data and the qualitative free response data, the researcher offers the following recommendations:

- The Minnesota Department of Education can use the study as a guide to assist charter school authorizers to view the Correlates of Effective Schools from charter schools that have been in existence for a longer period of time.
- The Minnesota Association of Charter Schools and the Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs are encouraged to explore offering workshops that would bring together members of new charter schools with charter school administrators, school board members and teachers to provide insights as they begin creating new charter schools.
- Charter school foundation members are advised to include community stakeholders in the process of developing the vision and mission of their schools.
- The data suggest that the roles within a charter school influence the perceptions of both the importance and presence of the Effective School Correlates in that school. Charter school members are encouraged to design and implement a communication cycle to ensure the establishment of the correlates that is inclusive for all stakeholder roles.

- Charter school foundation members are encouraged to review the Effective School Correlates data and research to develop a framework that encompasses the correlates in creating a new charter school.
- Charter school boards are advised to review policies and practices that negate or prohibit the perception of the importance and the presence of the Effective Correlates throughout the schools.
- Based on the data and the differences with which charter school administrators, school board members and teachers rated the importance and presence of the Effective School Correlates, it is advised that greater dialogue and collaboration be encouraged among long-term charter school leaders and fledgling charter school leaders or those individuals who intend to create new charter schools.
- Charter school leaders are advised to intentionally promote collaboration and dialogue to include the voices of students, families and the greater community in decision making and school policy development in the formation of new charter schools.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Further research recommendations have been identified based on the findings of the study:

- It is recommended that a follow up study should be conducted to include charter schools located outside of the Minnesota and St. Paul metropolitan area.
- It is recommended that an expanded qualitative study should be conducted to gather information regarding the ratings related to the importance and the presence of the Effective School Correlates.

- It is recommended that a follow up study be undertaken of the organizational, curricular, and policy practices of charter schools to ascertain the degree to which they incorporate Effective School Correlates.
- It is recommended that research be conducted to explore the correlation between high achieving charter schools and the presence of the Effective School Correlates in those schools' operations.
- It is recommended that a study be conducted to compare ratings of the Effective School Correlates in newly created charter schools and those charter schools with years of longevity.

## **Summary**

The title of this study is “The Presence of Correlates of Effective Schools in Select Minnesota Charter Schools”. During the course of the study, the researcher intended to explore the extent to which charter school administrators, school board members, and teachers rated the presence and importance of the Correlates of Effective Schools in their schools.

In the mixed method study, both the quantitative analysis and the qualitative response data was supported by the literature review and through the survey that was conducted.

Charter schools are a recent phenomenon in education. Minnesota was the first state to enact charter school legislation in the United States and to witness the operationalization of a charter school. Creating a charter school and nurturing it to a position of stability are daunting tasks and not to be viewed lightly. While many people become stakeholders in each new charter school it is especially important to the



students and their families that the charter schools are constructed on a stable foundation and able to flourish. Since the charter school movement is relatively new, the body of research about charter school growth and development as an organization is limited. The study sought to contribute an evolutionary perspective of charter school longevity for the benefit of stakeholders who would create future charter schools.

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## **Appendix A: Email Invitation to Participants**

### **The Presence of Correlates of Effective Schools in Select Minnesota Charter Schools with Longevity**

Dear Colleagues:

You are invited to participate in a research study about I would like to enlist your help. I am a doctoral student at St. Cloud State University. I am conducting a survey on the presence of Correlates of Effective School in Minnesota charter schools.

This survey is designed to examine the presence and importance of the seven Correlates of Effective Schools in Minnesota charter schools.

The survey should only take about 10 -15 minutes of your time. Your answers are anonymous and will be kept confidential. Only group results will be presented or documented, not individual answers unless you volunteer to take part in the additional phone interview to expand upon the answers given on the survey. Your help with this research is strictly voluntary. Data will be presented in aggregate form with no more than one or two descriptors presented together. You do not have to answer any questions you don't that you are not comfortable answering. There are no inherent risks to participating in the study. The benefit would be too valuable to those organizations and/or individuals intending to organizer and operate a Minnesota charter school in the future. Submission of a completed survey will indicate your consent to participate in this study.

The results of this survey will be presented publicly at St. Cloud State University. If you would like a copy of the study results, you will have an opportunity to make that request once the survey is completed. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me at (763) 504-8501, [frank\\_herman@rdale.org](mailto:frank_herman@rdale.org). You may also contact my faculty advisor, Roger Worner, at (320) 308-4265, [rbworner@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:rbworner@stcloudstate.edu). If you have any questions regarding your

rights as a research participant, please contact St. Cloud State University's Human Subjects Review Board at (320)308-4932 [researchnow@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:researchnow@stcloudstate.edu).

Your completion of the survey indicates that you are at least 18 years of age and your consent to participation in the study.

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with St. Cloud State University, or the researcher. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

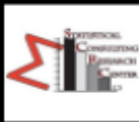
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frank Herman', with a stylized, cursive script.

Frank Herman

Student Researcher

## Appendix B: Consent to Survey



### Correlates of Effective Schools

#### The Presence of Correlates of Effective Schools in Select Minnesota Charter Schools with Longevity Consent to Participate


Dear Colleagues:


I am conducting a research study and I would like to enlist your help. I am a doctoral student at St. Cloud State University and I am conducting a survey on the presence of Correlates of Effective School in Minnesota charter schools. The survey is designed to examine the presence and importance of the seven Correlates of Effective Schools in Minnesota charter schools.

The survey should only take about 10 -15 minutes of your time. Your answers are anonymous and will be kept confidential. Only group results will be presented or documented, not individual answers unless you volunteer to take part in the additional phone interview to expand upon the answers given on the survey. Your help with this research is strictly voluntary. Data will be presented in aggregate form with no more than one or two descriptors presented together. You do not have to answer any questions you don't that you are not comfortable answering. There are no inherent risks to participating in the study. The benefit would be too valuable to those organizations and/or individuals intending to organizer and operate a Minnesota charter school in the future. Submission of a completed survey will indicate your consent to participate in this study.

The results of this survey will be presented publicly at St. Cloud State University. If you would like a copy of the study results, you will have an opportunity to make that request once the survey is completed. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me at (763) 504-8501, frank\_herman@rdale.org. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Roger Worner, at (320) 308-4265, rbworner@stcloudstate.edu. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact St. Cloud State University's Human Subjects Review Board at (320)308-4932 researchnow@stcloudstate.edu.

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with St. Cloud State University, or the researcher. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

Thank you for your time and consideration. 


1. I agree that I am at least 18 years of age and consent to participate in this study. 

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No


## Appendix C: SurveyMonkey Survey




### Correlates of Effective Schools

2. How many years have you been at this charter school? 

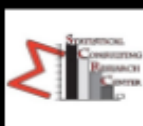
- ☐ 0-2 years    
 ☐ 3-4 years    
 ☐ 5-6 years    
 ☐ 7+ years

3. What is your role in the school district? Check all that apply. 


- ☐ School Board Member  
☐ Administrator  
☐ Teacher

4. How would you rate the presence of the following seven Correlates of Effective Schools in your school? 

	Not at all present	Somewhat present	Mostly present	Continuously present
<b>Safe and Orderly Environment:</b> there is an orderly, purposeful, businesslike atmosphere which is free from the threat of physical harm.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Climate of High Expectations for Success:</b> staff believe and demonstrate that all students can attain mastery of the essential school skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Instructional Leadership:</b> principal acts as an instructional leader and effectively and persistently communicates that mission to the staff, parents, and students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Clear and Focused Mission:</b> a clearly articulated school vision/mission through which the staff shares an understanding of and commitment to the instructional goals, priorities, assessment procedures and accountability.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task:</b> allocate a significant amount of classroom time to instruction in the essential skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress:</b> academic progress is measured frequently through a variety of assessment procedures.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Home-School Relations:</b> parents understand and support the school's basic mission and are given the opportunity to play an important role in helping the school to achieve this mission.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## Correlates of Effective Schools

5. How do you rate the importance to the longevity of your school to the seven Correlates of Effective Schools? 

Not at all important    Somewhat important    Important    Very important

**Safe and Orderly Environment:**

there is an orderly, purposeful, businesslike atmosphere which is free from the threat of physical harm.

☐      ☐      ☐      ☐

**Climate of High Expectations for Success:**

staff believe and demonstrate that all students can attain mastery of the essential school skills.

☐      ☐      ☐      ☐

**Instructional Leadership:**

principal acts as an instructional leader and effectively and persistently communicates that mission to staff, parents, and students.

☐      ☐      ☐      ☐

**Clear and Focused Mission:**

a clearly articulated school vision/mission through which the staff shares an understanding of and commitment to the instructional goals, priorities, assessment procedures and accountability.

☐      ☐      ☐      ☐

**Opportunity to Learn Student**

**Time on Task:** allocate a significant amount of classroom time to instruction in the essential skills.

☐      ☐      ☐      ☐

**Frequent Monitoring of Student**

**Progress:** academic progress is measured frequently through a variety of assessment procedures.

☐      ☐      ☐      ☐

**Home-School Relations:**

parents understand and support the school's basic mission and are given the opportunity to play an important role in helping the school to achieve this mission.

☐      ☐      ☐      ☐



## Correlates of Effective Schools

6. What advice would you offer to organizational representatives planning the creation of new charter schools? 