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Perceptions of Middle School Principals as Instructional Leaders: A Case Study of Two Schools

Todd J. Van Erp

This dissertation submitted by Todd J. Van Erp in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education at St. Cloud State University is hereby approved by the final evaluation committee.

PERCEPTIONS OF MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS: A CASE STUDY OF TWO SCHOOLS

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The purpose of this mixed methods study was to investigate the perceptions of middle school teachers and principals regarding the instructional leadership behaviors of the middle school principal in two top performing Minnesota middle schools. Similarities and differences in those perceptions were explored. Multiple data collection methods were used. The Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) was used to measure the perceptions of Minnesota middle school teachers and principals in relation to the principal's instructional leadership behaviors. Interview questions were based on the ten subscales of the PIMRS survey. Interviews were conducted in both schools with the principal, randomly selected teaching staff, and teacher focus groups. Analysis of the data revealed the most frequently perceived principal behaviors included clear goal setting, promoting instructional improvement and staff development, monitoring student progress, communicating the school's goals, supervision and evaluation of instruction, and building positive relationships and trust.

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Month Year

Approved by Research Committee:

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DEDICATION

May this study provide principals everywhere guidance toward instructional leadership that makes a positive impact on the students we serve.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are a host of individuals that assisted in making this study possible. To my best friend and wife, Nancy, your unwavering support throughout my doctoral coursework and dissertation was not only welcomed, but desperately needed every step of the way. To our children, Maya, Faith, Luke, and Kate, your patience with "Daddy's paper" has been extraordinary. The days of missing out on family activities are over!

Parents may not have a direct contact with the compilation of a dissertation, but their influence helped write the pages of this document. I will be forever grateful for the work ethic that my parents, Peter and Margaret, instilled in me while growing up on their dairy farm. I have accomplished much due to your nurturing and guidance throughout my entire life. To my mother-in-law Donna, your encouragement, support, and meals made our lives more bearable during the times that I was a "less than present" husband to your daughter.

To my immediate family and friends, I appreciate the support and encouraging words from each of you, even if you privately wondered what kind of journey I embarked upon. I look forward to reconnecting with all of you.

The principals and teachers that participated in this study receive special acknowledgement. Your time, energy, honesty, and thoughtfulness helped make this study a valuable contribution to principals in the area of instructional leadership.

A special acknowledgement to my dissertation committee chair, Dr. John Eller, for gentle prodding and questioning during this dissertation process. Finally, I would like to thank the members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Nick Miller, Dr. Kay Worner, and Dr. Roger Worner. I've been fortunate and grateful to have this exceptional group of educators providing direction and advice throughout this venture.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

Principals play an important role in instructional leadership for a school. Marzano (2005) stated, "Leadership is considered to be vital to the successful functioning of many aspects of a school" (p. 5). Because of the nature of a principal's work, he or she has a wide-ranging impact on the school building and activities that occur within its walls (Marzano, 2005). According to Marzano (2005), areas in which principals provide instructional leadership include identifying missions and goals, addressing building-wide and classroom climate, forming teacher attitudes, affecting teacher classroom practices, and monitoring curriculum and instruction.

Despite the positive impact an effective principal can have on student learning, statistics describing the results of America's education system have been discouraging. For example in a 2009 report, "Mission Readiness," written by a group of retired military leaders, noted that 75% of Americans in the 17-24 age range were not fit to serve in this nation's military because they lacked a high school diploma, had slipped into the judicial system, or lacked the mental and physical capabilities needed to serve (Christeson, Dawson-Taggart, & Messner-Zidell, 2009). In another example, Stillwell

(2010) reported that approximately 25 of every 100 students dropped out before graduating from high school. Some might argue that schools cannot singlehandedly meet every student's needs, but even the college-bound population show dismal statistics. In the fall of 2000, 28% of entering college freshmen were enrolled in one or more remedial reading, writing, or mathematics course (Parsad & Lewis, 2003). A 2010 ACT report found that a startling 76% of high school students who took the ACT were not college-ready in all subject areas. Further evidence of a lack of college readiness is revealed by the National Center for Education Statistics (2009), which reported that only 55.9% of first-time full-time bachelor's degree-seeking students earned a degree within 6 years.

In a 2008 report on poverty by the Congressional Research Service, 34.7% of individuals age 25-34 who did not obtain a high school diploma lived below the poverty line. Of those in the same age group who lived in poverty, only 4.4% earned a college degree (CRS Report RL 33069, 2009). Another report attempted to quantify the cost of lost wages from high school dropouts. The report calculated lost wages from dropouts nationwide in 2006-2007 was nearly $329 billion. Minnesota's graduation rate of 78.7% is one of the best in the nation, but a 2007 report still calculates over $3.8 billion of lost wages from high school dropouts during their lifetime (Alliance for Excellent Education Issue Brief, 2007).

In addition to poverty and lost wages, crime in the United States can be traced to the level of a prisoner's education. According to a 2003 Bureau of Justice Statistics special report, the total number of incarcerated individuals drops significantly as the

level of education increases (Harlow, 2003). Incarcerated individuals who did not finish high school made up 41.3% of the total prison population. Those earning a GED made up 23.4% of the total prison population and those with a high school diploma constituted 22.6%. Only 12.7% of the incarcerated population held a post-secondary degree.

Principals cannot ignore the sad realities of lost human capital, lost income, dropouts, and poverty. This much is clear; the current PreK-12 education system does not work for all students. Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) contend that school leaders who focus on instructional leadership have a positive effect on student achievement three to four times greater than leaders who focus on transformational leadership. They explain that school leadership focused on student growth has a greater impact on student progress than other forms of leadership, even that which emphasizes intrinsic motivation and the "the positive development of followers" (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. xi). Principals with a focus on instructional leadership play a central role in the improvement and success of the public education system.

Principals need working knowledge of leadership theory in order to be instructional leaders. McGregor's leadership theories of Theory X and Theory Y (Northouse, 2009) are the foundation for this study. Those who believe in Theory X leadership style, which is synonymous with an authoritarian leadership style, believe that the average employee does not like to work, must be directed to do so, and shirks responsibility when possible (Boles & Davenport, 1975; Langley & Jacobs, 2006; Northhouse, 2009). An authoritarian leadership style fosters dependence,

submissiveness, and a loss of individuality for the workers, who become increasingly dissatisfied with their work; creating discontent, hostility and aggression toward their supervisor (Northouse, 2009).

In comparison to Theory X or the authoritarian leadership model, Theory Y can be considered equal to the democratic leadership style. Theory Y leaders are thought to be more flexible in their work, allowing subordinates to engage in their work with little direction (Northouse, 2009). Workers in a Theory Y or democratic setting are encouraged to take the opportunity to think creatively to solve problems that may arise in the organization, leading to a higher rate of job satisfaction than workers under Theory X supervision (Boles & Davenport, 1975; Langley & Jacobs, 2006; Northouse, 2009).

In addition to a working knowledge of important leadership theories, principals also need to be mindful of how to best implement change in their organization. Change is an essential component of progressive education. Fullan (2008) outlined components necessary to implement change in an organization to support its livelihood, including developing leaders by building capacity in staff and connecting teacher peers with purpose through collaboration. Wagner and Kegan (2006), Reeves (2009), and Senge (1999) all made a case for guiding school change with a thorough process. Some of those process ideas include creating conditions and planning for change (Reeves, 2009), focusing on change that leaders can control (Reeves, 2009), making growth and learning a continuous process and a way of being (Senge, 1999), recognizing that instructional change is a complex process. A principal must be an

informed and intentional instructional leader to orchestrate these processes effectively (Wagner & Kegan, 2006).

Principals are not alone in implementing change and providing instructional leadership for a school staff. Marzano, Pickering, and Marzano (2003) stated: "We live in an era when research tells us that the teacher is probably the single most important factor affecting students' achievement—at least the single most important factor that we can do much about" (p. 1). Teachers set the tone for the learning environment, as well as the what, when, why, and how learning occurs. Creating a positive learning environment promotes higher student achievement (Marzano et al., 2003). A principal's instructional leadership is a key factor in empowering effective teaching.

All principals are responsible for understanding student development. However, a principal at the middle school level must also appreciate how early adolescents present a distinctive challenge to educators. Students in middle school experience an enormous amount of physical, social, emotional, and intellectual change. An early leader in the middle school movement Eichhorn (1966) coined the term "transesence" to describe the uniqueness of mind and body changes in the early adolescent learner. Experiences such as handling major physical changes, asserting independence from the family, developing peer group relationships, establishing sex role identity, developing an acceptable self-concept, and utilizing new reasoning capacities are all common for the transescend (Thornburg, 1974; Wiles & Bondi, 1981). Middle school principals and teachers must understand the wide range of

physical, social, emotional, and intellectual differences in middle school learners so they can foster student learning by means of their instructional leadership.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Studies have shown a discrepancy in perception of the principal's instructional leadership and teacher perceptions of the principal's instructional leadership in the same school (Hallinger, 1990; Lyons, 2010; Ridlehoover, 2010). Although Ridlehoover's (2010) study found agreement in teacher and principal views on desired leadership characteristics, differences were found in teacher experiences with exhibited principal leadership behaviors. Lyons (2010) conducted a study in which teacher and principal perceptions of New York middle school principals were investigated. Lyons recommended a mixed methods study to further explore teacher and principal perceptions of a principal's leadership, because the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) was the only device used to collect information regarding teacher and principal perceptions.

The literature review for this study focused on three main themes of the instructional leadership of middle school principals: 1) general leadership theories and styles; 2) effective instructional leadership; and 3) the uniqueness of the middle school and its learners. The study examined teacher and principal perceptions of the principal's instructional leadership behaviors. Minnesota middle schools that have scored above 80% on the Multiple Measurement Rating scale (MMR) during the 2010-2012 school years were the target schools for this study. Perceptions were

measured with the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) survey, teacher and principal interviews, and teacher focus groups.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Studies have been conducted on the perceptions of instructional leadership, but few have focused on the middle school principal. No studies were found that combined a case study approach that included surveys, interviews, and focus groups. As Lyons (2010) indicated, there was a need to explore teacher and principal perceptions of the principal's leadership in a mixed methods study. Lyons only used the PIMRS to collect information regarding teacher and principal perceptions and did not gather qualitative data from teachers or principals.

In a study that focused on instructional leadership behavior of middle school principals and their impact on student achievement, Minus (2010) used the PIMRS to identify instructional leadership behavior perceptions from principals and teachers and correlated those behaviors with student achievement, measured by the Maryland School Assessment. Minus found that the instructional leadership behaviors with high correlations to student achievement were: framing school goals, supervising and evaluating the curriculum, and protecting instructional time. Teacher input through interviews or focus groups was not part of the data collection process for this study.

In a study focusing on assistant principals, Howard-Schwind (2010) administered the PIMRS in Texas to 257 assistant principals from high schools with more than 984 students. The investigation found that most Texas high school assistant

principals perceived themselves to exhibit instructional leadership behaviors with high frequency. The 97 Texas high school principals that responded to the PIMRS survey agreed with the perception that assistant principals exhibited instructional behaviors with high frequency. Teacher perceptions were not solicited for that particular study.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of middle school teachers and principals about instructional leadership behaviors of the middle school principal and to determine similarities and differences in those perceptions. The perceptions of the principal's role in providing instructional leadership, specifically at the middle school level in Minnesota, have not previously been explored.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study examined the perceptions of teachers and principals regarding the principal's instructional leadership behaviors in top performing Minnesota middle schools. By exploring the perceptions of principals and teachers, areas of strength and potential improvement in principals' instructional leadership behaviors were identified. The findings of this study will be shared with school principals to highlight possible characteristics that current and emerging instructional leaders should consider to improve their skills or when moving into new roles. In addition, this information may be used by school organizations to increase principal effectiveness, and to clearly identify characteristics of new instructional leaders in the hiring process.

This study is critically important to principals who wish to improve the instructional leadership behaviors that have the greatest impact on student learning. This study also highlights the importance of intentional efforts to support learning since principals are ultimately responsible for student learning in their schools.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are principals' perceptions of their instructional leadership behaviors in selected top performing Minnesota middle schools?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of principals' instructional leadership behaviors in selected top performing Minnesota middle schools?
3. What are the similarities and differences in perceptions of principals and teachers regarding principals' instructional leadership behaviors?

ASSUMPTIONS

This study assumes that: 1) principals and teachers are concerned with the positive impact instructional leadership can have on student learning; 2) the study subjects will be honest when completing their surveys, as well as during the interview and focus group process; and 3) teachers recognize and are able to articulate adequately the degree to which their principals' instructional leadership affects student learning in their buildings.

DELIMITATIONS

Delimitations of a study consist of factors that the researcher can control. Listed below are delimitations of this study identified by the researcher.

1. The researcher chose to consider only middle school selection sites that achieved at or above 80% on the Multiple Measurement Rating (MMR) during the 2010-2012 school years.
2. The researcher chose to focus on the MMR calculation for school selection to emphasize the entirety of a school's programming. The components of the MMR score: proficiency, growth, and closing of the achievement gap were considered important for this study.
3. The study was conducted during the months of December 2012 and January 2013.
4. Office staff, paraprofessionals, and custodians were not selected for the study. Only teachers and principals at the selected schools were invited to participate because the researcher believed this group could deliver the most accurate assessment of the principals' instructional leadership behaviors.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THE STUDY

The dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 includes the introduction to the study, as well as the study's purpose, research questions, nature and significance of the study, definition of terms, assumptions, and limitations. Chapter 2

outlines a review of the literature and related research supporting the study design related to principals as instructional leaders. Chapter 3 identifies the research design and methodology of the study. Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the data and a discussion of the findings from the study. Chapter 5 provides a summary, conclusions, recommendations for principals' future practices, as well as recommendations for future studies.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of middle school teachers and principals regarding the instructional leadership behaviors of the middle school principal and to determine similarities and differences in those perceptions. The perceptions of the principal's role in providing instructional leadership, specifically at the middle school level in Minnesota, have not been explored.

Over the past decades, researchers have examined the importance of instructional leadership in schools and found that principals and other school administrators have a significant function in the enhancement of classroom instruction (Burch, 2007; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). An ever-changing global society requires constant review and reflection about education.

Stigler and Herbert (1999) questioned the effectiveness of public education in the United States. Test scores indicate that American students have performed poorly when compared to other industrialized nations. The results of the 1999 Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) revealed that the United States

finished 19th out of 38 countries that administered the eighth grade math test (NCES, 1999). By 2007, the United States improved its standing among other countries, finishing ninth out of 48 countries in the 2007 TIMSS (NCES, 2007). Even with this gain, the United States remains significantly behind countries like China Taipei, Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Japan. These results illustrate the need for attention and improvement of American education. The TIMSS studies offer two examples demonstrating the need for focused improvement of education.

In today's era of accountability, test scores are used to identify deficiencies in the current American systems. Educating children is an important priority for the future of America. As the United States faces challenges in national security, energy usage, international relations, and a struggling economy, the loss of human creative capital could be one of the greatest costs we incur; furthermore, it is one that will never be recovered. It is crucial that educators continue to recognize and respond to their role as a key developer of this human creative capital.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership Defined

Leadership has many definitions. Mumford (2010) defined leadership as "the influence of others toward a collective goal" (p. 5). Langley and Jacobs (2006) share a similar broad definition: "Any situation in which a person must make a decision that affects others defines that person as a leader" (p. 3). Others identify the spiritual dimensions of leadership. Greenleaf and Spears (2002) claimed that great leaders are

seen first as servants and that their act of service is what determines their greatness. Boles and Davenport's definition is more complex: "Leadership then is a process which is a function of group interaction and is an outgrowth of the attempts to bring into focus both institutional and personal goals, as well as the means that could enhance the prospects for the achievement of goals" (1975, p. 225).

Although the 1925 publication of *Manual for School Officers* includes no mention of the term "leadership," by 1955, Weber and Weber identified leadership principles and traits and explained how those traits related to democracy. Those traits included participation in policy formation, imagination and willingness to take risks, as well as energy, friendliness, and leadership and efficiency. These principles and traits named by Weber and Weber became an influential force in the field of education. Since that time, the concept of leadership and its influence on teaching and learning has continued to evolve and serve as a primary focus in education.

Researchers have examined both the definition and role of leadership. Their varied views reveal how difficult it is to define such a broad concept. It is helpful to look at which facet of leadership the definition is attempting to identify. Patterson states that leadership has had a shifting definition, from "bossing" to "managing" to "leading" which is "the process of influencing others to achieve mutually agreed upon purposes for the organization" (1993, p. 3). Lindstrom and Speck (2004) support the concept of shared leadership. In a school, this may mean the school leader engages in many leadership roles to assist in staff development; a principal may play the role of "lead learner," in contrast to being a "lead teacher." One view of leadership may focus

on the personality traits of the leader, while another may concentrate on jobs or actions that a leader must do in his/her position. Another view may center on the influence that the leader may have on their subordinates. Each definition reveals how many different elements are involved in leadership.

Leadership Styles

A leader's perspective and definition of leadership will determine how he or she will assume the duties of leadership in his/her environment. This is referred to as leadership style. Leadership style affects not only how the leadership takes form, but the ways and circumstances in which that leadership can be considered effective. Leadership can be along a continuum of two extremes—authoritative leadership at one end and democratic leadership at the other. McGregor calls authoritative leadership "Theory X" and democratic leadership "Theory Y" (as cited in Northhouse, 2009).

McGregor (as cited in Northouse, 2009) described how individuals in leadership perceive employees, and how their leadership style is affected by that perception. The Theory X leadership style, which can be called an authoritarian leadership style, is built on the idea that the average employee does not like to work, must be directed to do so, and shirks responsibility when possible (Boles & Davenport, 1975; Langley & Jacobs, 2006; Northhouse, 2009). An authoritative leadership style fosters dependence, submissiveness, and a loss of individuality for the workers, who become increasingly dissatisfied with their work, which creates discontent, hostility and aggression toward their supervisor (Northouse, 2009).

Under this authoritarian style, it is assumed that employees must be supervised closely and are motivated primarily by threats, coercion, and punishment. Authoritarian leadership style is generally considered rigid and bureaucratic in dealings with employees, business associates, and customers (Boles & Davenport, 1975; Langley & Jacobs, 2006). According to Mumford (2010), individuals with an authoritarian style of leadership are "conservative, emotionally withdrawn, power seeking, and resistant to change" (p. 96). Mumford points out that authoritarian leaders can also be considered tyrannical at times. Langley and Jacobs (2006) write that the authoritarian leadership style "all too often results in undesirable and/or unproductive relationships riddled with feelings of distrust and doubt as to the efficiency of the leaders" (p. 7). Despite these strong and valid concerns, authoritarian leadership is not necessarily ineffective; a counter view is that authoritarian leadership provides needed direction and goals for subordinates, thus assisting with completing tasks that are expected of the job (Northouse, 2009). The oversight that the authoritarian leader provides helps motivate the worker toward the simple and stated goal: to attain a paycheck. In the authoritarian mindset, the worker only works to get paid. Northouse (2009) explains, "From the Theory X (authoritarian) perspective, it is clear that subordinates have a *need* for leadership" (p. 38).

In comparison to Theory X or the authoritarian leadership model, Theory Y can be considered as synonymous with the democratic leadership style. Leaders are thought to be more flexible in their work, allowing subordinates to engage in their work with little direction (Northouse, 2009). Theory Y, or democratic, leaders tend to

accept new challenges readily and look upon the change with a positive mind. The style encourages leaders and workers to accept responsibility in helping the organization reach its goal, which provides for a high level of satisfaction. Workers in a Theory Y or democratic setting are encouraged to take the opportunity to think creatively to solve problems that may arise in the organization (Boles & Davenport, 1975; Langley & Jacobs, 2006; Northouse 2009). One of the criticisms of the democratic leadership style is that the process of taking responsibility and developing ownership can "take more time and commitment to accomplish work" (Northouse, 2009, p. 39). However, this style of leadership assists in building relationships that "help increase interpersonal competence, intergroup cooperation, and flexibility, and this should result in an increased organizational effectiveness" (Langley & Jacobs, 2006, p. 7).

While there are positives and negatives about both of the extremes of this leadership continuum, the core element of leadership is that leaders are responsible for task completion, as well as providing subordinates with opportunities to flex creative muscle. Research suggests an educational setting is best served by a style that, though possessing authoritarian elements, is defined mostly by the democratic or "Theory Y" style of leadership (Northouse, 2009).

Important Skills for Leaders

Leadership style is one important part of leader behavior; another leadership behavior is to identify and build specific skills to best serve the organization and the individuals associated with the organization. Leaders bring different skill sets to their

positions, and each organization's setting includes a multitude of variables that determine how successfully those skills are applied. Studies identify a number of personal skills an effective leader possesses. These personal skills have an effect on the success of a leader. Langley and Jacobs (2006) outline a wide set of skills:

1. *The ability to be insightful.* The leader "must keep in mind the whole picture—the district, department, or group in which they lead—and work to incorporate as many components as necessary to get the desired results" (p. 20). Also included in this skill: knowledge of potential resources and how they can be accessed, as well as an awareness of new policy, reforms, and other happenings outside of the district that may impact the organization.
2. *Positive, strong interpersonal relationships.* A leader's ability to have an authentic connection with subordinates is important, "because we all feel much better when we get the sense that the person with whom we were engaged in conversation actually listened to what we had to say" (p. 29). Leaders will support staff members in continuous professional development, "for the good of the individual as well as the system as a whole" (p. 31). The result of the leader's encouragement can result in trust building, and the expansion of confidence in the worker's own skills.
3. *Self-growth.* As school leaders, "we must demonstrate the desire to learn and study new ideology that will help initiate and launch new programs, skills in leading, concepts of scheduling and ways of motivating and

improving the learning environment of your building or district" (p. 41). In addition to actively seeking learning opportunities at professional conferences, workshops, seminars, and webinars, the effective leader willingly shares new and useful information with his or her coworkers.

4. *Flexibility*. Being open to consider operating in a different way than what the leader is used to, as well as being able to implement changes that the leader may support, but are not his or her own. Langley and Jacobs (2006) referred to skill as the "ability to be creative and to solve problems" (p. 9). Allowing risk takers the latitude to try new teaching methods or ideas can infuse a sense of innovation into the organization: "Our lives are filled with unpredictable occurrences—some good, some bad—but we must learn to meet these unscheduled actions with a plan to deal with them by being able to change our stance" (p. 47).
5. *Keeping in touch with the community*. Know what is going on around you. At times this means the leader needs to know what resources are available within the community and how to leverage those resources for the mutual benefit of the community and organization. The resourcefulness of a school leader cannot be understated. Langley and Jacobs (2006) state "the resources available to a school district are limited only by the ability of the leaders in the district to obtain them" (p. 56).

The traits outlined by Langley and Jacobs are echoed by the research of Mumford (2010) in naming important traits for leaders. One example of these parallel

ideas lays in what Mumford (2010) dubs "personality". He includes openness, conscientiousness, extroversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (having to do with a person's ability to be emotionally stable). Mumford also includes cognitive skills, interpersonal traits, and needs or motives which are all concepts that appear with same or similar language in the work of Langley and Jacobs (2006). Similar qualities of effective leadership were identified by the National Institute on Educational Governance, Finance, Policymaking, and Management in 1999. Vision, communication, and community building were among those that were also considered keys to effective leadership practices (National Institute on Educational Governance, Finance, Policymaking, and Management, 1999).

Change Leadership

Focusing primarily on instructional leadership often requires changing the structure of leadership in schools. Therefore, principals assuming an instructional leadership role must know how to implement change within an organization, how to become a change agent, and how to sustain change. There is no universally accepted plan for carrying out change in an organization. Each organization has its own unique environment that can affect the proposed change.

There are numerous theories that address the change process in education. Fullan (2008) outlined six secrets to implement change in an organization to help it survive.

1) *Love your employees*. Organizations need to be intentional about investing in employees to assist in their development, as well as helping them "find

meaning in their work and in their relationship to coworkers and to the company as a whole" (p. 12). Principals can stimulate positive relationship building among staff, leading to a more positive work environment for staff, and enhanced student success.

2) *Connect peers with purpose*. Fullan refers to "purposeful peer interaction" (p. 12), which occurs when leaders "provide good direction while pursuing its implementation through purposeful peer interaction and learning in relation to results" (p. 12). This refers to principals providing the structure for teachers to work collaboratively in groups with the intention to improve student learning.
3) *Capacity building*. For leaders to enact a change environment, leaders need to help build new skills, resources, and motivation in employees. Employers practice Theory X behaviors to create fear and motivate workers. Fullan believes motivation will grow as leaders give responsibility to employees and then take time to give feedback and mentoring to develop the employees' new skills, much like that of a Theory Y leader. As an example, principals may encourage teachers to take a lead role in a school-wide initiative, while providing support as needed so teachers can build their leadership skills. The new leadership skills developed from this experience may be called upon at a later date by the principal, colleagues, or the school.

4) *Learning is the work.* In a school setting, this is especially evident. Just as teachers expect learning of students, teachers can advance their talents. Learning new skills can be embedded into everyday responsibilities, resulting in personal benefit and student success. Some may consider this relevant on-the-job training.

5) *Transparency rules.* Fullan describes this principle as a "clear and continuous display of results, and clear and continuous access to practice (what is being done to get the results)" (p. 14). Results should be used in a positive manner that creates a positive pressure to produce a fair and reasonable working environment. Principals can use data like test scores to focus on what can be done to improve student learning, but not as a tool to harass or embarrass teachers.

6) *Systems learn.* Leadership is demonstrated by many individuals within an organization. But when there is change in top-level leadership, or the principal in a school setting, the organization relies on the skills and expertise of many leaders in all levels of the organization to endure the change process.

An implementation process may be needed to help guide the change. When changes are planned for an organization, leaders must not neglect the need to ask and answer key questions: Why do we want to change? Why do we need to change? (Reeves, 2009; Senge, 1999; Wagner & Kegan, 2006). Especially in the educational setting, superintendents, principals, and teachers need to be vocal and specific. Senge

(1999) would call this a "quality movement" in which change permeates throughout an organization. The central topic is "to make continual learning a way of organizational life, especially improving the performance of the organization as a total system" (p. 34).

When implementing change, specifically in the educational field, many components are considered, measured, and managed to be successful. For example, this list of seven components for improving instruction at a school by Wagner and Kegan (2006) could be applied by a principal when implementing a change in their school:

1. Urgency for instructional improvement using real data;
2. Shared vision of good teaching;
3. Maintain focus on student learning and teacher instruction;
4. A shared vision of student results;
5. Effective teacher supervision by the principal;
6. Professional development;
7. Diagnostic data with accountable collaboration.

Whether it is a principal hoping to change teacher leadership styles or an entire organization reflecting on their efficacy, change is a process. Reeves (2009) identified areas of the change process specific to schools. Creating conditions for planning, implementing, and sustaining change are four main points that are addressed by Reeves, and each point has many subparts, variables, efforts, and relational components. With the enormity of the change task, it is a marvel that successful

change is implemented with any kind of consistency. Because many people and variables are involved in the change process, even in the very best situation, successful change can be a fragile process.

Instructional Leadership

The terms school leadership, educational management, and educational leadership are synonymous to the general public. Since most members of society attended a K-12 school, there are varied understandings of the leadership concept. Each individual's understanding likely will depend on his or her past experiences. Some would regard educational leaders as people who "run the school," while others view school leaders as the authoritative "disciplinarians" whose job is to maintain a safe and orderly learning environment. Community members may see school leadership as a means of getting what the community member wants in terms of course selection, curriculum changes, and a host of other requests.

Implementation of proposed changes is as important as the reform itself. For example, in 1995, the State of California confronted low reading and mathematics scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). In response to the uninspiring results, California formed two groups to address reading and math curriculum deficits. The interesting aspect of the state of California response was that at no time during this process was the question raised of what kind of teaching actually occurred in the classroom (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999). This situation exemplifies how instructional leadership could have helped guide California policymakers to ask

questions that educators would ask, having the expertise in teaching and student learning.

Schools operate differently than private companies or other governmental organizations. The core goal of a school is to provide effective instruction for students so they can learn; the specific goal of building on *instructional* leadership is critical for school leaders. Aspiring school leaders should understand that becoming an instructional leader takes time. According to Fink and Resnick (2001), successful instructional leaders need to build "intellectual capital and social capital with their organizations" (p. 606). Intellectual capital is built when principals take the time and energy to assist in or facilitate the decision-making process of curriculum, teaching, and learning. Social capital is developed through cultivation of a safe learning environment among staff members (Fink & Resnick, 2001). The knowledge and trust required for this environment takes time to create and nurture. One model that principals can use to improve instruction involves following a set of tenets including: having teachers use student data to make instructional decisions; working with colleagues to identify good teaching and share student results in a supportive, collegial manner; and providing teacher support by assessing what students should know and do at the end of the lesson (Wagner & Kegan, 2006).

Being a successful instructional leader involves more than knowledge of teaching and learning. Many studies have alluded to the importance of the principal's interpersonal skills. This is congruent with other research regarding general leadership skills (Langley & Jacobs, 2006; Mumford, 2010). These findings are further supported

by a 2004 study of schools in Botswana, Africa that uncovered a perceived deficiency in interpersonal skills of the members of the school management team, causing the teachers to question the leadership abilities of school administrators (Pansiri, 2008). A meta-analysis revealed that interpersonal behaviors were among the top 21 leadership responsibilities recognized in successful school leaders, specifically that of building positive relationships with teachers and staff (Marzano et al., 2005). Seashore-Louis and Wahlstrom (2011) identified a combined approach to instructional leadership. The first part of the approach addresses a shared or distributed leadership model in which those who are impacted by decisions are allowed to participate in decision-making. The second involves instructional leadership in which the principal focuses on and assumes responsibility for improved teaching and learning at the classroom level.

Instructional leadership can be accomplished with the assistance of numerous personalities in a school building. Marzano et al. (2003) explain: "We live in an era when research tells us that the teacher is probably the single most important factor affecting students' achievement—at least the single most important factor that we can do much about" (p. 1). Teachers set the tone for the learning environment, as well as the decisions regarding what, when, why, and how learning occurs. Creating a positive learning environment promotes higher student achievement (Marzano et al., 2003). A principal's instructional leadership is a primary factor in creating effective teaching.

Marzano (2001) identified nine categories of instructional strategies that had the greatest positive effects on student achievement. Those strategies included 1) identifying similarities and differences; 2) summarizing and note taking;

3) reinforcing effort and providing recognition; 4) homework and practice; 5) nonlinguistic representations; 6) cooperative learning; 7) setting objectives and providing feedback; 8) generating and testing hypotheses; and 9) questions, cues, and advance organizers.

Regarding instructional strategies, the school setting does not seem to make a difference in how the instructional strategies are implemented, just as long as implementation occurs. Stigler and Hiebert (1999) found that student achievement remains the same, regardless of whether the school was public, private, or charter. In addition, researchers found in a TIMSS video study that teachers utilized high-quality teaching methods with varying frequency. What made the most positive difference, however, was when teachers employed high-quality teaching methods in a highly consistent manner (Stigler & Hiebert, 1999). Effective instructional leadership reinforces these findings.

The participants of the National Institute on Educational Governance, Finance, Policymaking, and Management forum on educational policy entitled Effective Leaders (1999) recognized the following desired attributes of educational leaders: instructional leadership; management skills; communication, collaboration, and community building skills; vision, risk, and change; and having the ability to create a cadre of leaders. Others have narrowed their focus of educational leadership to fewer desired characteristics. Halpin (as cited in Mullican & Ainsworth, 2001) explained school leadership as having two aspects, one that addresses the school order, and the other which addresses the personal relationships between the principal and staff.

Additional researchers have included a theme of cultivating a relational component with teachers (Fullan, 2008; Langley & Jacobs, 2006; Mangin, 2007). Mangin (2007) specifically noted the evidence of links among principals' knowledge of their own positions, their interactions with teacher leaders, and their support for teacher leadership. The research further demonstrated that districts could influence principals' level of support for teacher leaders by increasing communication to all staff members about the role of teacher leadership. Sirota et al. (as cited in Fullan, 2008) documents "the power of three factors in motivating employees—fair treatment, enabling achievement, and camaraderie" (p. 36). Allowing for the aforementioned factors provides a high level of engagement for employees, even though they, themselves, are not in formal leadership positions.

Langley and Jacobs (2006) identified positive, strong interpersonal skills as essential for a school leader. These include shared decision-making as well as optimism. Langley and Jacobs (2006) also identify five essential skills for leadership. Those skills include: understanding, foresight, flexibility, interpersonal skills, and desire for continual personal and professional growth. Similar characteristics are required in the superintendent and principal relationship, as well as between a principal and teacher. Being an effective communicator, a life-long learner, a successful teacher, and willing collaborator are desired skills a teacher-principal relationship as well (VandeBorgert & Boris-Schacter, 1999). The research indicates that interpersonal and relational awareness are two contributing factors to effective instructional leadership.

Marzano et al. (2005) produced a collection of desired school leader attributes when they conducted a meta-analysis of 69 studies that involved 2,802 schools, approximately 1.4 million students, and 14,000 teachers. They analyzed studies that identified the correlation between leadership attributes and student achievement. The list of responsibilities identified in this meta-analysis provided a wide range of characteristics of a successful instructional leader. Most leaders may have several of these attributes; it would be virtually impossible to be proficient in all 21 areas. Appendix A identifies the 21 behaviors and characteristics highlighted in the work of Marzano et al. (2005).

Of the 21 leadership behaviors outlined by Marzano et al. (2005), there are a number of responsibilities that have the most significant effect on student achievement. Those include situational awareness, with a .33 correlation with achievement; flexibility, which had a .28 effect size; and discipline, outreach, and monitoring/evaluating, which all have an effect size of .25. Leadership responsibilities with the lowest effect size according to the meta-analysis included affirmation (.19), involvement in curriculum, instruction, and assessment (.20), optimizer (.20), relationships (.18), and visibility (.20). This information raises the question of whether school leaders should focus on only those responsibilities that have the largest effect size, while minimizing or ignoring the leadership responsibilities with the lowest effect size. All of these factors play a significant role in research being done regarding instructional leadership and student achievement.

One study related to the work of Marzano et al. was done in 2010 by Ridlehoover. Ridlehoover identified the perceptions of Minnesota principals and teachers with regard to effective leadership practices and how those impact student achievement and school climate. Teacher perceptions of effective leadership practices were also recorded. Perceptions were identified in layers of desirability. Communication was identified as the most important leadership characteristic in student academic achievement and improved school climate; teachers also valued it most. The next three most desirable leadership attributes were educational vision, collaboration, and being an effective problem solver. The next set of desirable attributes included knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, followed by being an agent of change and situational awareness. Optimizer of oneself and others, evaluation, and resource allocator made up the last set of responses. Teachers and principals agreed that these characteristics were the least important of the effective leadership practices selected for the study (Ridlehoover, 2010).

EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Like the general concept of leadership, the concept of instructional leadership has been defined and perceived differently throughout the years. One definition describes instructional leadership as referring to "those sets of leadership practices that involve the planning, evaluation, coordination, and improvement of teaching and learning. It is also referred to as learning-centered leadership" (Goldring, Porter, Murphy, Elliott, & Cravens, 2009, p. xx). Sava (1986) uses a slightly different

interpretation, explaining, "Instructional leadership entails, among other things, the ability to evaluate a teacher's skill, to demonstrate to novices alternative methods of conveying subject matter if one method fails, and to create a positive learning environment for children and teachers" (p. 130). Another view of instructional leadership includes a solid base of knowledge in teaching methods, as well as the ability to hire good teachers who work well with certain grade levels and content. Instructional leaders are also viewed as holding important roles in creating a community of learning and improvement among teachers so teacher development recommendations for one person serve to extend the learning of the entire group (Fink & Resnick, 2001). Finally, instructional leadership includes the continual monitoring of classrooms so principals can view teachers in their environments to understand what is happening in their classrooms (Litchfield, 1985).

Not all educators or scholars agree that the principal's work in a building is to serve as an instructional leader. Some believe a principal's main role should be one of management. Although the comparison is not entirely parallel, the case for instructional leadership can be built using the same ideas which support democratic (Theory Y) leadership as an alternative to authoritative leadership (Theory X). Former Secretary of Education William Bennett wrote in his report *First Lessons* that abbreviated courses in curriculum, child development, and practicums in the principalship would suffice for leadership development. In contrast, Sava (1986) argued that eliminating teaching as a requirement for principal development would be similar to asking an army general to serve as a school principal, and vice versa. Sava

goes on to support the idea that leaders need the experience of teaching in an authentic setting to better understand the day-to-day needs and potential challenges of teaching so that they may be effective instructional leaders.

Bennett also noted in *First Lessons* that a principal should be the individual who is "directing the actual teaching and learning process itself…and making choices about materials and instructional strategies" (as cited in Shanker, 1986). According to Shanker, Bennett expects principals to be ever-present in all areas of the building; to be "experts in public relations, mediation, and child development and in curriculum theory, the applications of research, and the techniques of personnel evaluation" in addition to their teaching and learning responsibilities (p. 132). Depending on the size of the school, principals may be required to engage in a plethora of administrative tasks, all or any of which could distract the principal from focusing on the key responsibility of a school—instruction.

The case for the principal valuing and embracing the instructional leadership model is made more persuasive considering that, even among the challenges and expectations that come with the position, most principals are already expected to serve as the building's instructional leader. According to Sava, "Instructional leadership entails, among other things, the ability to evaluate a teacher's skill, to demonstrate to novices alternative methods of conveying subject matter if one method fails, and to create a positive learning environment for children and teachers" (1986, p. 130). Another view of instructional leadership includes a solid base of knowledge in teaching methods, as well as the ability to hire good teachers who work well with

certain grade levels and content. Instructional leaders are viewed as holding important roles in creating a community of learning and improvement among teachers, so that teacher development recommendations for individuals serve to extend the learning of the entire group (Fink & Resnick, 2001). In addition, instructional leadership requires consistent monitoring of teachers and classrooms in order to provide informed support and guidance (Litchfield, 1985). Goldring et al. (2009) provide a definition of instructional leadership: "Instructional leadership refers to those sets of leadership practices that involve the planning, evaluation, coordination, and improvement of teaching and learning. It is also referred to as learning-centered leadership" (p. X). Another positive aspect and benefit of instructional leadership is the opportunity to influence positive relationships with teachers and students. A meta-analysis from Goldring et al. (2009) found "the more leaders focus their relationships, their work, and their learning on the core business of teaching and learning, the greater their influence on student outcomes" (p. 2).

Instructional leadership concepts that recognize teachers' leadership capabilities are human capital and social capital. Leana (2011) describes how teachers have human capital and that social capital is needed to improve instructional practices thus helping students to be more successful. Human capital centers on the idea of all of the knowledge and experiences that a teacher collects over his/her career and using those experiences to improve student learning. Social capital is the collective knowledge and skills of a team of teachers; it is also the construct that explains how teachers learn from each other to best provide instruction for a particular group of

students. Social capital is one ingredient in school reform that is absent. Leana also explains that included in social capital is the stability of the teaching team. Movement of teachers into and out of teams has a negative overall effect on student learning. Leana's study proposed the idea that teachers tend to be more willing to listen to suggestions from their colleagues regarding instructional methods and techniques than they would from their building administrator. Leana stated, "Teachers were almost twice as likely to turn to their peers as to the experts designated by the school district, and four times more likely to seek advice from one another than from the principal" (p. 33). The findings of this study emphasize the delicate balance principals must achieve when serving as instructional leaders: they must be active leaders and proponents of change, yet they must also nurture learning using collaborative processes among their teaching staff.

Challenges for Instructional Leaders

Embracing the school's instructional leader role seems an obvious choice for a principal seeking to have effective democratic leadership that capitalizes on the gifts and contributions of the entire teaching staff. However, because of the numerous challenges inherent in the position, many principals lament that the task has not risen to their level of approval (Fink & Resnick, 2001; Mullican & Ainsworth, 2001; Reilly, 1984). Principals are required to handle managerial tasks of the school building, which may interfere with instructional leadership function. Fink and Resnick explain that a principal's days "are filled with the activities of management: scheduling, reporting, handling relations with parent and the community, and dealing with the multiple crises

and special situations that are inevitable in schools" (2001, p. 598). Consequently, expecting a principal to be well informed in all curricular areas is not realistic or practical (Reilly, 1984). It is critical that the principal take on the challenge of making distinct his/her function as an instructional leader.

Additional responsibilities and pressures may preclude educators from assuming administrative roles. The additional education and responsibilities required of an administrator are compensated by the school districts to varying degrees, but the intense demands and scrutiny experienced by administrators can certainly dissuade many potential leaders from taking on the administrative role (Allen, 2000). A June 2000 *Washington Post* article shed light on the difficulty that principals face when they are not able to employ or dismiss teachers, yet are held responsible for high stakes test scores (Christie, 2000). The pressures of testing and its consequences on educational leaders have increased significantly since the article was written. Teachers have been left to make choices on curriculum and instruction in the past, and administrators have assisted in keeping those processes internal (as cited in Wagner & Kegan, 2006). Principals face more responsibility for test results, resulting in public scrutiny and potential job loss. Therefore, it is understandable that principals desire to be deeply involved in curricular decisions.

In another study, Reitzug, West, and Angel (2008) explored how principals viewed their practices and how they perceived these as impacting teaching and learning in their schools. Interviews were conducted with 20 principals. Researchers focused on quotes related to recurring concepts or practices, such as data-driven

instruction, testing, and data analysis. Four central themes emerged from the data regarding how principals influenced their schools. They included a focus on building positive relationships with staff and students, alignment of curriculum and instruction to meet test scores, asking teachers about how they think the curriculum and teaching should happen (creating a higher level trust toward teachers and collaboration) and finding out from teachers if their beliefs match their actions as instructors.

Similar concerns were noted in an article titled "The School Leadership Challenge" by the Panasonic Foundation, in cooperation with the American Association for School Administrators. The article acknowledged that principals face increasing responsibilities in today's world of education: "The operational demands that school principals always faced—school safety, keeping the buses running on schedule, contending with mounds of paperwork, disciplining students, mediating adult interrelationships, and handling central office requests and requirements, etc.—have not gone away" (Thompson, 2001, p. 1). Appendix B highlights areas of increased responsibility of the principalship.

Because of the challenges facing principals, sometimes teachers are needed to fill leadership roles. In Washington where teacher leaders participated in the National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT) training, 88% of teachers reported they felt supported by colleagues and supervisors in their leadership roles (Loeb, Elfers, & Plecki, 2010). That sort of support and encouragement is exactly the kind of leadership a principal can cultivate in a school. It again echoes the gratification of leadership based on "Theory Y" or democratic leadership (Northouse, 2009).

Just as Northouse (2009) does not entirely discount authoritative elements of leadership, others agree that a holistic and responsive model must be established. Some assert that leadership needs to address the managerial duties of the position, but more importantly, should address the human element of leadership. Giancola and Hutchison (2005) outline the concept of the human dimension of leadership that focuses on communication based on trust, empowering relationships, other-centered purpose, and personal transformation that will lead leaders to transform their culture.

UNIQUENESS OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS

A third area explored in this literature review pertains to the uniqueness of middle schools, including the administrators, teachers, students, and quality of learning. As explained later in this section, the unique middle school learner needs an equally unique education. This area helps describe the importance of instructional leadership at the middle school level.

Middle Schools' History

Before the early 1900s, most schools were organized into an 8-4 pattern. This meant that students spent 8 years in elementary school, then 4 years in high school (Alexander & George, 1981; McGlasson, 1973; Wiles & Bondi, 1981). Around the turn of the twentieth century, education leaders began to recognize a need for a different type programming for students due to their unique needs in their early adolescent years. At that time in history, most dropouts left school between seventh and ninth grade (McGlasson, 1973). As students moved from the elementary

environment to secondary environment, they needed a transitional period, or bridge, in their physical and intellectual development (Alexander & George, 1981; Overly, Kinghorn, & Preston, 1972; Wiles & Bondi, 1981). It is during this time when students learn to make their own choices regarding special interests, career, and leisure time activities in middle school, since parents or guardians have made these choices for their students up to this point in their lives (Alexander & George, 1981). This relatively recent change in the understanding of student needs and development calls for informed leadership of early adolescent students and the teachers who play such a large role in their lives. The essence of that change is understanding, supporting, and viewing middle school students as decision-makers who are just learning the impact of their personal choices.

Transesence

In addition to the onset of decision-making, the early adolescent body is also undergoing an enormous amount of physical, social, emotional, and intellectual changes. An early leader in the middle school movement, Donald H. Eichhorn, coined the term "transesence" to describe the uniqueness of the early adolescent learner's physical and mind changes (Eichhorn, 1966). Transesence is:

> The stage of development which begins prior to the onset of puberty and extends through the early stages of adolescence. Since puberty does not occur for all precisely at the same chronological age in human development, the transescent designation is based on the many physical, social, emotional, and intellectual changes in body chemistry that appear prior to the puberty cycle to the time in which the body gains a practical degree of stabilization over these complex pubescent changes. (p. 3)

Sociologist Robert Havighurst identified the developmental tasks of human growth throughout an entire human life during his work in the 1950s (Wiles & Bondi, 1981). The developmental tasks for the preadolescent, which are similarly identified by Thornburg (1974), are important to understanding the needs of the middle school student and planning for middle school programming. Havighurst and Thornburg agreed that managing major body changes, asserting independence from the family, developing peer group relationships, establishing sex role identity, developing an acceptable self-concept, and utilizing new reasoning capacities were all developmentally appropriate for middle school learners to experience during this time of their lives. This knowledge is important to instructional leaders so programming can be developed to meet the unique needs of the middle school aged student.

Implications for Principals and Teachers

Middle school principals and teachers need to understand the wide range of physical, social, emotional, and intellectual differences in middle school learners so they can employ effective teaching strategies and programming. Thoughtful and responsive configuration of teacher contacts and scheduling of the school day can alleviate these differences and potential conflicts. Multiple researchers over time (Alexander & George, 1981; Juvonen, 2004; Muth & Alvermann, 1999; Overly et al., 1972; Wiles & Bondi, 1981; Wormeli, 2001) advocated for a host of similar programming characteristics in the middle school, which will be addressed later.

A safe learning environment, important to all learners regardless of age, must not be ignored by the middle school principal. Wiles and Bondi (1981) identified the

basic needs for a transescend learner as a safe and free of threat, to be loved, part of a group with identification and acceptance, and to be recognized and independent. Satisfying this basic need is critical for the adolescent learner to fully engage in the learning opportunities.

Developing the student-teacher relationship is an important part of a preadolescent's development. Alexander and George (1981) state "Every student needs to have a relationship with at least one adult in the school which is characterized by warmth, concern, openness and understanding" (p. 201). This can be accomplished through an advisory program, where each student connects on a regular basis with an adult to provide mentoring, guidance, and goal setting.

In addition to an advisory program, other programming and staffing concepts are considered unique to the middle school setting. Muth and Alvermann (1999) identified the following as essential: interdisciplinary teams, an integrated curriculum, exploratory programs, and educators knowledgeable about young adolescents as middle school specific ideas that support what is considered to be an optimal middle school program.

It is recommended that interdisciplinary team teaching and an integrated curriculum be implemented so the same team of teachers shares the same group of students (Alexander & George, 1981; Muth & Alvermann, 1999; Wormeli, 2001). By using the teaming approach, teachers "can design lessons and units that help students see connections among the various disciplines" (Muth & Alvermann, 1999, p. 5). Teachers can easily discuss strengths, weaknesses of students and adapt to student

needs more quickly, facilitate connections across disciplines, and allow for increased positive peer and teacher-student relationships.

Flexible scheduling is another aspect of middle school programming that should be considered. This adaptation provides extra time for activities that emphasize problem-solving and critical thinking. Extended time periods also provide opportunities for students to make connections across disciplines, as well as more time for interactions and improving interpersonal relationships between students and teachers.

An exploratory curriculum is yet another programming consideration for a middle school, which allows middle schoolers to explore new set of interests and skills they have not experienced in their academic career. Messick and Reynolds (1992) stated,

> research suggests that this age is the optimal time for bonding to occur between students and the larger society. Such bonding occurs when students have opportunities to show competence in diverse areas, are encouraged to pursue individual interests, and participate in classroom settings where fairness is modeled, and have opportunities to exert influence. (p. 111)

Messick and Reynolds (1992) further explain that exploratory subjects can take many forms. Examples include music, art, theater, dance, physical education, health, family and consumer science, and industrial arts. Other offerings such as activity periods, mini-courses, and schoolwide activities provide opportunities to investigate life activities the school may not be able to provide, such as downhill skiing, career day, seasonal carnivals, intramural sports, Greek mythology, and field trips in the community.

In addition to offering a curriculum of English, math, science, and social studies, as well as experiences in art, physical education, industrial technology, family and consumer science and health, teaching the transesend how to study and manage their time is essential to their success. Mastering the skill of note-taking, for example, is one important aspect of learning how to study. As Miller and Desberg (2009) declared, "Note-taking is really part of a bigger skill: *distinguishing between important and unimportant information*" (p. 102). Providing strategies for note-taking, pre-reading a textbook, and decoding vocabulary are skills that middle school students have generally not needed or used until this time in their academic career, and will be invaluable as they move on to high school and beyond. Teaching increasingly active middle schoolers how to budget and manage time is an important life long skill. The adolescent learner needs practice in understanding how much time they have for the activities they need to do, as well as what they want to do (Miller & Desberg, 2009).

Strong instructional leaders are also mindful of the human capital necessary meet the needs of the learners. A critically important task of the middle school principal is hiring and retaining staff members who truly enjoy middle school children and who may be seen by others as loud, energetic, and active. Even though Wiles and Bondi (1981) book, *The essential middle school*, was written over 30 years ago, their words may provide the best description of what it means to be a middle teacher or any other middle school staff member. "Perhaps the most important attributes of the middle school teacher are an honest desire to work with this age group, flexibility, enthusiasm, a good sense of humor, compassion, and tolerance" (p. 50). They further

state that flexibility and enthusiasm, in terms of learning and trying new methods or ideas, are essential traits of the middle school teacher. Patience is also noted as a desirable attribute of the middle school teacher. In addition, "The great disparity in the ability to understand directions and in the length of attention spans calls for a patient approach by the middle school teacher" (Wiles & Bondi, 1981, p. 50). It should be noted that all of the aforementioned characteristics are important for all teachers, but are especially important for middle school staff members, as these characteristics are particularly well suited to the middle school learner.

Instructional leadership is an essential ingredient to improving the education offered to our student throughout the country. Research shows that instructional leadership can have a positive impact on student achievement (Burch, 2007; Marzano et al., 2005; Robinson et al., 2008). A working knowledge of effective instructional leadership practices is critically important to improving student learning. Middle school instructional leaders understand the uniqueness of the students in his/her building and their development as preadolescents. Students are experiencing changes inside and outside of their bodies. These changes require unique teaching and learning strategies. Effective middle school principals use knowledge of student developmental characteristics to help plan and implement optimal programs for learning.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of middle school teachers and principals regarding the instructional leadership behaviors of the middle school principal. Similarities and differences in those perceptions were explored. Two top performing Minnesota middle schools, which will be referred to as School A and School B, were selected for the study. This case study used multiple data collection methods. A survey, the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS), was used to measure the perceptions of Minnesota middle school teachers and principals in relation to the principal's instructional leadership behaviors. Following the completion of the survey, interviews with the principal and randomly selected teaching staff were completed. Interviews were also conducted with teacher focus groups in both schools.

Studies show that school leadership has a positive impact on student achievement (Burch, 2007; Marzano et al., 2005; Robinson et al., 2008). Robinson et al. (2008) posit that school leaders who focus on instructional leadership have a positive effect on student achievement three to four times greater than leaders that

focus on transformational leadership, or as Conger explains, "leaders who are able to motivate their followers to achieve above and beyond their followers' own expectations" (p. 177, as cited in Mumford, 2010). Over the past 20 years, researchers have examined the importance of instructional leadership in schools and found that principals and other school administrators have a significant function in the enhancement of classroom instruction (Burch, 2007; Marzano et al., 2005; Robinson et al., 2008). While there has been disagreement over how well children are educated in the United States (Stigler & Herbert, 1999), improvement depends on the quality of educational leaders and their instructional leadership abilities.

The importance of this study is highlighted by the increasing demand for instructional leadership in today's schools, not just managerial skills has have been the focus for principals in the past. This change in leadership ideology is in response to greater expectations of accountability schools for student learning.

This chapter addresses the general study design, instrumentation, rationale for the study, site selection and potential participants, research methods, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures. The findings of this study will be shared with school principals to identify characteristics that current and emerging instructional leaders should consider to improve their skills. This information can be used by school districts to assist in identifying characteristics of new instructional leaders when hiring principals.

Research Questions

Research questions for this study were replicated, in part, from the work of Howard-Schwind (2010), which focused on the instructional leadership responsibilities of assistant principals in large Texas high schools. This study focused on the instructional leadership of principals in two high performing Minnesota middle schools.

1. What are the principals' perceptions of their instructional leadership behaviors in selected top performing Minnesota middle schools?
2. What are the teachers' perceptions of the principal's instructional leadership behaviors in selected top performing Minnesota middle schools?
3. What are the similarities and differences in perceptions of principals and teachers regarding the principal's instructional leadership behaviors?

Study Design

The purpose of this mixed methods case study was to determine the perceptions of teachers and principals regarding the principal's instructional leadership behaviors in two selected Minnesota middle schools. This study used the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) survey to measure the perceptions of participating teachers and principals. Interviews, using a set of questions that aligned with the 10 subscales of the PIMRS survey, were conducted with teachers and principals regarding the active instructional leadership behaviors of the principal. Teacher focus groups were administered with subjects that were not involved in individual teacher interviews, using the same set of questions as the teacher

interviews. The researcher focused on common phrases, themes, ideas, or verbalized thoughts that were repeated by principal and teacher participants. Commonalities and differences in the data were analyzed and reported.

Rationale

The mixed methods case study approach was chosen to provide an in-depth look at two middle schools that have demonstrated strong student achievement scores on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) as demonstrated by their Multiple Measurement Rating (MMR) score. This approach was chosen to provide the most complete and in-depth picture of the principal's instructional leadership behaviors. As Best and Kahn (1998) stated, case studies allow for deep probing and analysis of "interactions between the factors that explain present status or that influence change or growth" (p. 248). The small number of sites allowed the researcher to obtain an in-depth look at what instructional leadership behaviors the principal exhibited at two high-achieving middle schools. The PIMRS survey allowed the researcher to efficiently collect instructional leadership data from the principals and teachers. By itself, the survey would not provide the in-depth information that the added interviews and focus groups provided. Powell (2004) advocates for a number of data collection techniques in a case study to obtain the most complete picture of the phenomena.

Site Selection and Participants

Using the Multiple Measurement Rating (MMR) for the 2010-2012 school years, two middle schools were selected for participation in the study. The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) implemented the MMR in 2012 as a new school accountability measure in accordance to the No Child Left Behind waiver obtained by MDE from the United States Department of Education (MDE, 2012a).

The MMR represents a combination of four student achievement measures: the number of students proficient in a subject area, student growth, closing of the achievement gap for disadvantaged students, and a school's graduation rate (MDE, 2012a). Minnesota middle schools, however, are scored in only three areas of the MMR: the number of students proficient in a subject area, student growth, and closing of the achievement gap for disadvantaged students. A school with a score of 100% would indicate that: students are meeting the proficiency requirements, those students who are not proficient are growing at or above the state averaged growth target, disadvantaged students are making gains better than the state average for non-disadvantaged students, and for high schools, that students are graduating from high school.

Using the MMR calculation for all three components of the middle school MMR score, the researcher chose 80% as the "cutoff" criteria for potential study sites because a small number of middle schools in Minnesota achieved this score during both school years. The initial designation data from the 2011 MCA scores were examined, then cross-referenced with the MMR data from the 2012 MCA results. Out

of 227 middle schools listed on the 2011 MDE MMR report, only 38 schools, or 16.7%, achieved a MMR score over 80% (MDE, 2012b). In 2012, 49 out of the 224 middle schools, or 21.9%, achieved a MMR score over 80% (MDE, 2012c). Only 23 Minnesota middle schools scored at or above 80% on the MMR both years. Three schools with an MMR over 80% both years were not considered as potential selection sites based on the researcher's relationship to the schools.

Two schools were selected using the aforementioned criteria. School A recorded MMR scores of 91.15% for 2011, and 93.02% in 2012 (MDE, 2012b,c). School B recorded MMR scores of 99.48% for 2011, and 93.92% in 2012 (MDE, 2012b,c).

Teacher participants were selected at each of the high performing Minnesota middle schools. Teachers that participated in the PIMRS survey were asked to have at least one year of experience working with the principal. Teacher interview and teacher focus group participants were selected randomly. Principal participants were selected because they served in the role of principal during the time period that MMR data were collected at their school.

Sample

A form of nonprobability sampling, called convenience sampling, was used. Powell (2004) identified this form of sampling as one that "simply selects the cases that are at hand" (p. 94). The advantage of using this type of sampling is that the researcher has sufficient access to the site and subjects to collect desired data. The limitation of this form of sampling is that the sample group may not represent a

reasonable population of the potential subjects, and therefore, may make this type of sampling inadequate for some types of surveys (Powell, 2004).

Convenience sampling was the best option for the researcher to thoroughly investigate the instructional leadership behaviors of the selected sites. Consideration was given to the sites' proximity and accessibility which allowed the researcher multiple occasions to collect in-depth data from principals and teachers.

Instrumentation

Multiple data sources were used for this study. One instrument, the PIMRS, collected quantitative data relating to the instructional leadership of the principal. The other instrument, the interview questions, allowed the researcher to collect qualitative data from principal interviews, teacher interviews, and at least one teacher focus group at each school.

The quantitative device used in this study was the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS), which was developed in the early 1980s (Hallinger, Chung, & Wen, 2012). The instrument was chosen because, "This was the first research instrument explicitly designed to measure instructional leadership that met accepted standards of reliability and validity" (Hallinger et al., 2012). The PIMRS has been used in over 200 empirical studies in 22 countries (Hallinger et al., 2012). Three different forms of the PIMRS exist for teachers, principals, and supervisors. Each form contains the same questions, with only the wording changed to reflect each group's relationship to the principal. The most current version of the PIMRS was a 50-question, two-part survey that focuses on the instructional leadership behaviors of the

principal. Each question of the PIMRS survey consisted of a Likert scale from 1 to 5 to identify perceptions of principal instructional leadership behaviors, with one meaning the behavior almost never occurred and five meaning the behavior almost always occurred.

All versions of the PIMRS survey take about 15-20 minutes to complete. All versions of the PIMRS survey ask demographic information at the beginning of the instrument, asking the participants length of time serving as a teacher in that school as well as the total length of teaching career. All versions of the PIMRS survey contain the same questions regarding instructional leadership practice; only the wording of each question was changed to reflect the difference in relationship with the principal.

The framework of the PIMRS instrument is based on three dimensions of instructional leadership: 1) defining the school's mission, 2) managing the educational program, and 3) developing the school's learning climate (Hallinger et al., 2012). The three dimensions are further disaggregated into ten instructional leadership functions. Two functions relate to defining the school's mission: framing the school's goals and communicating the school's goals. Three functions support the dimension of managing the educational program: coordinating the curriculum, supervising and evaluating instruction, and monitoring student progress. Five functions support the dimension of developing the school's learning climate: protecting instructional time, providing incentives for teachers, providing incentives for learning, promoting professional development, and maintaining high visibility.

Reliability and Validity

The PIMRS has been used in over 200 dissertation and thesis studies. Best and Kahn (1998) stated that "Reliability is the degree of consistency that the instrument or procedure demonstrates: Whatever it is measuring, it does so consistently" (p. 276). In administering the PIMRS, all current members of the teaching staff that have at least one year of teaching experience will be asked to complete the teacher version of the PIMRS, as this supports the reliability of the instrument (Hallinger, 1990).

Using the Cronbach Alpha coefficients, all subscales of the PIMRS except one scored in the acceptable to excellent range for reliability. Appendix C shows the subscale and Cronbach Alpha coefficients. Validity is "that quality of a data-gathering instrument or procedure that enables it to measure what it is supposed to measure" (Best & Kahn, 1998, p. 276).

To maintain continuity and focus on instructional leadership behaviors, interview questions for principals, teachers, and focus groups were derived from the ten subscales of the PIMRS survey. The interview questions were piloted in two settings. One site included a group of administrators and teachers within the researcher's place of employment and was completed on September 21, 2012. Another piloting session occurred with a group of St. Cloud State University doctoral students in Educational Administration during a class meeting, and was completed on September 28, 2012. As a result of the two piloting sessions, minor wording changes for clarity purposes were made to the instruments.

Collection of Data

A uniform procedure for data collection was conducted at School A and School B. A formal request was made to the superintendent of each of the two school districts to conduct a study of the middle school principal's perceptions of their instructional leadership behaviors. Principals were notified of the superintendent's approval.

A timeframe for conducting the survey was identified by the researcher and principal. The researcher sent an introductory email message to the principal to share with staff. Email was used to deliver the PIMRS survey hyperlink, which participants could easily click to access the PIMRS survey instrument. Timeframes were communicated to teachers with a request for teacher participation since they were current members of the teaching staff at the selected school. Principals completed the principal version of the PIMRS during the same time frame as teachers. On November 30, 2012, the principal of School A allowed the researcher to meet with staff during an in-service day. The researcher introduced the study to teaching staff and answered questions for approximately twenty minutes. The researcher offered to meet with School B teaching staff, but was not able as there were no scheduled meetings near or during the study timeframe.

The rationale for conducting individual teacher interviews was to develop a deeper understanding of the perceptions of teachers in that school. According to Greenbaum (2000), the goal of the focus group was "to delve into attitudes and feelings about a particular topic" (p. 3) or to understand the reasoning behind a

subject's thinking or behavior. Focus groups were conducted because it was not feasible to interview an entire teaching staff. A manageable way of gathering multiple perspectives can be achieved via the focus group process because multiple subjects can be heard in one session. While a focus group does not allow for in depth individual probes, it does allow for individual voices to be heard. Furthermore, data gathered during the process can add layers of meaning beyond that which can be obtained using a survey method. Morgan, Krueger, and King (1998) described the focus group process as a way of learning from people simply by listening to them.

The PIMRS survey available for teacher and principal data collection from School A from December 10-23, 2012, with 31 teacher responses and one principal response recorded during the data collection period. The PIMRS survey was open for School B teacher and principal data collection from January 7-28, 2013. Thirty-two School B teacher responses and one principal response were recorded during the data collection period. Most responding teachers completed the PIMRS survey in its entirety at both schools.

In addition to administering the PIMRS to collect data on the principal's instructional leadership behaviors at two high performing Minnesota middle school principals, interviews were conducted with principals, individual teachers, and with teacher focus groups. Interviews and focus groups were scheduled within the PIMRS survey data collection period. Greenbaum (2000) supports this practice explaining that the "format (individual in-depth interviews) offers the researcher the ability to probe more in depth with the participant" (p. 17). In short, interviews of principals and

teachers help develop a more complete picture of the instructional leadership that the principal provided at the school.

Teachers were chosen for interviews through random selection at both schools. The researcher obtained a list of teaching staff from the principals at each school, and then entered those names in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The random selection function was then applied to the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, creating a random list of teacher interview candidates. Teachers selected from the random function were contacted directly by the researcher through email communication to schedule an interview.

All interviews were scheduled directly with the researcher using email communication. Five teacher interviews at School A were conducted during the school day on Friday, December 14, 2012. Two teacher interviews at School A were conducted during the school day on Wednesday, December 19, 2012. Interview time lengths ranged from 16 minutes to 29 minutes. The mean interview time was approximately 25 minutes. The interview for Principal A was scheduled through email communication and conducted on Friday, December 14, 2012. Principal A's interview lasted approximately 53 minutes. All interviews were recorded with a Philips Digital Voice Tracer and all subjects wore a lapel microphone for improved recording sound quality.

Subjects for School A's focus group were selected randomly from the list of staff members. The focus group was scheduled to meet before the school day on Friday, December 14, 2012. Six teachers confirmed they would be at the meeting, but

only two teachers attended. The focus group meeting was recorded with a digital recording device. The focus group meeting lasted approximately 33 minutes.

In an effort to collect more data, a second focus group meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, December 19, 2012 after the school day. The researcher contacted members of the original focus group that did not attend the first meeting and invited them to attend the second. Additional teaching staff from the random list were invited to attend. The researcher confirmed each member's attendance using a telephone call on the day of the meeting. Six teachers attended the focus group meeting. The focus group meeting was recorded with a Philips Digital Voice Tracer. The second focus group meeting lasted approximately 44 minutes.

A similar interview process was followed at School B. Ten School B teachers were interviewed, five on Friday, January 25, 2013 and five on Monday, January 28, 2013 when the teachers did not have teaching duties before or during the school day. Licensed teachers were again selected at random, with the researcher scheduling interview appointments using email communication. Phone calls were made in the days preceding the interviews at School B to confirm attendance and meeting places. Interview time lengths ranged from 18 minutes to 33 minutes. The mean interview time was approximately 24 minutes. The interview for Principal A was scheduled through email communication and conducted on Friday, January 25, 2013. Principal B's interview lasted approximately 33 minutes. All interviews were recorded with a Philips Digital Voice Tracer and all subjects wore a lapel microphone for improved recording sound quality.

Data Analysis

Following the recommendations of the PIMRS resource manual, each subscale was averaged separately (Hallinger, 1990). The PIMRS was not intended to compute a single instructional leadership score, rather a diverse view of instructional leadership behaviors. Individual items from each subscale were also averaged. Averages for each item and subscale were analyzed to determine areas of strength and potential improvement. Frequency distributions were used to help understand potential agreement or disagreement among teacher subjects regarding the principal's instructional leadership behaviors.

Gall, Gall, and Borg (2010) explained how case studies typically require researchers to begin analyzing the data as it is collected. In doing so, researchers can be responsive to the data in a way that allows them to glean more meaning than they otherwise would be able to do. In this process, researchers consider the data they are collecting and begin to determine what findings are emerging. Then findings are used to modify their data-collection procedures to "in whatever way they consider best to shed further light on the phenomenon of interest" (p. 350). This process is continued until theoretical saturation has been reached. Theoretical saturation refers to "a point in the process of comparing theoretical constructs and empirical indicators of their meaning when additional data collection and analysis no longer contribute anything new about the phenomenon under investigation" (p. 350) at which point the analysis is concluded. It would be difficult to fully achieve theoretical saturation without

analyzing data as it became available, as one can no longer be responsive to the data after the data collection process has ceased.

In this case study, interpretational analysis was used to examine and group elements "in order to fully describe, evaluate, or explain the phenomenon being studied" (Gall et al., 2010, p. 350). Gall et al. explain that the goal of interpretational analysis is to make meaning of data collected in a case study via the practices of identifying themes and patterns.

To aid in the identification of patterns and themes, interview and focus group data were converted to transcripts, which were then coded by similar ideas or themes. Gall et al. (2010) describe a theme as a "salient, recurring feature of a case" (p. 350). The researcher also analyzed the transcripts for patterns in interviews and focus group responses. Patterns, as described by Gall et al. represent "systematic relationships between two or more phenomena within a case or across cases" (p. 350). While focusing on themes and patterns that arose through the coding process, the researcher also analyzed the survey and interview data in ways related to the research questions for this study. Beyond the framework of the survey questions, however, categories for the data are not able to be determined ahead of time, as they emerged organically from the data analysis process.

The primary focus of the study was to record and analyze the perceptions of principals and teachers regarding the principals' instructional leadership behaviors through multiple forms of data collection. Data analysis began as the data were gathered. The researcher responded to the survey data by modifying the interview and

focus group processes to bring more meaning to the survey data as needed. Themes and patterns were identified in all data sources: the survey, interviews, and focus groups. Final analysis of the data, the development of conclusions, and the final summary were completed at the end of the study.

LIMITATIONS

Limitations of a study, as defined by Best and Kahn (1998) "are those conditions beyond the control of the researcher that may place restrictions on the conclusions of the study and their application to other situations" (p. 37). The following limitations have been indentified for this study.

1. As with all case studies, generalizability is a concern (Best & Kahn, 1998; Slavin, 2007). The recorded perceptions of the selected sites are certain to provide insight into each specific situation, but may not be true for a large number of sites. Every effort was made to gather a wide range of representative perspectives. However, the limited scope cannot presume to represent all individuals or teaching situations. For example, a teacher's experience with previous administrators, how those experiences have affected teacher opinions regarding administrators, socioeconomic status of the community, other issues the community is experiencing, size of the community, and other factors may affect the opinions and perceptions of the interviewee and have nothing to do with the instructional leadership of

the current principal. Furthermore, the sample size of the study is small which makes it difficult to extrapolate generalizations.

2. A limitation in any study is how to determine, examine, and analyze the most representative data. Slavin (2007) explains that the "most talkative subjects may not have the essential knowledge that's needed" (p. 153). It is possible that the researcher did not hear from the people that could give the most accurate perception of the principal and their instructional leadership behaviors. Potential participants with negative perceptions of the principal may not have participated, and conversely, potential participants with positive perceptions of the principal may have participated.
3. School test scores were not determined solely by factors related to principals and their effectiveness as instructional leaders. One should question the specific ways that principal's instructional leadership affected test scores amidst other possible contributing factors, such as structures provided from district level administration, change or retention of teachers and teacher leaders, socioeconomic status of the community, as well as a variety of other unknown and uncontrollable factors.
4. Accuracy of principal and teacher responses. The researcher trusted that subject responses were honest and forthright. However, some teachers could have been afraid that the principal would hear their comments. Even though subject responses were reported anonymously and principals were not present or privy to participant identities during the interviews or focus

groups, teachers could have been concerned that any negative responses would result in some form of retribution from the principal or other administrators.

SUMMARY

This mixed methods study investigated the principals' instructional leadership behaviors as perceived by principals and teachers at two high performing Minnesota middle schools. Multiple data collection methods were used; the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale survey, teacher interviews, principal interviews, and teacher focus groups. Similarities and differences in those perceptions were explored. Data were analyzed during and after collection to determine themes and patterns for reporting purposes.

Chapter 4

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

This mixed methods case study explored the perceptions of teachers and principals regarding the principal's instructional leadership behaviors in two top performing Minnesota middle schools. A survey, the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS), was used to measure the perceptions of Minnesota middle school teachers and principals in relation to the principal's instructional leadership behaviors. In addition to the survey, interviews with the principal and selected teaching staff were completed, as were teacher focus groups in both schools. The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of middle school teachers and principals regarding the instructional leadership behaviors of the middle school principal and to determine similarities and differences in those perceptions. The perceptions of the principal's role in providing instructional leadership, specifically at the middle school level in Minnesota, had not previously been explored.

This chapter reports the findings of the study. The data were analyzed and findings presented according to each research question.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are principals' perceptions of their instructional leadership behaviors in selected top performing Minnesota middle schools?
2. What are teachers' perceptions of principals' instructional leadership behaviors in selected top performing Minnesota middle schools?
3. What are the similarities and differences in perceptions of principals and teachers regarding principals' instructional leadership behaviors?

SUMMARY OF STUDY DESIGN

Two Minnesota middle schools were chosen to participate in the study according to their performance on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment as measured on the Multiple Measurement Rating scale. Schools meeting the criteria for the study scored 80% or better on the MMR during the 2010-2012 school years.

The PIMRS survey used in this study included a principal and teacher form that was administered via SurveyMonkey, a web-based survey collection program. The PIMRS consisted of 50 questions, grouped into 10 five-question subscales. The researcher also conducted teacher interviews, teacher focus groups, and principal interviews that were designed to gain more information and depth into the perceptions of instructional leadership behaviors of the principal. The interview and focus group questions were developed based on the ten subscales that make up PIMRS survey. Principal interviews, teacher interviews, and teacher focus groups were conducted using the same interview questions.

According to the Minnesota Department of Education, School A has an enrollment between 750-1200 students in grades six through eight, employed 54.6 full time equivalent (FTE) certified staff, and maintained a 20:1 teacher/student ratio (MDE, 2013). Included in the certified staff are teachers, media specialists, other licensed professionals, and administrators. School A's student demographic included 90.5% white, 3.6% black, 2% Hispanic, 2.8% Asian, and 1.1% American Indian. The number of students receiving free or reduced price lunches totaled 33.6%, students receiving special education services were 15.9%, and English learners comprised 0.4% of the student population (MDE, 2013).

School B maintains a school enrollment between 900-1400 students in grades six through nine, employed 96.8 full time equivalent (FTE) certified staff. Included in the certified staff were teachers, media specialists, other licensed professionals, and administrators. The student demographic for School B included students that were 84% white, 4% black, 3% Hispanic, 8% Asian, and 0.1% American Indian (MDE, 2013). The free and reduced lunch population is identified at 7.6%, special education population is 8.9%, and students identified as English learners is 2.7% (MDE, 2013).

RESEARCH QUESTION ONE

What are principals' perceptions of their instructional leadership behaviors in selected top performing Minnesota middle schools? This section reports data collected from the PIMRS survey principal form, as well as principal interviews from both schools. The principal from School A will be referred to as Principal A, and the

principal from School B will be referred to as Principal B. Both principals have over 30 years of experience in education and served as school principals for 10 years or more.

Tables 1-10 show principal responses that were collected from the PIMRS survey for each subscale, followed by a summary of the interview data from Principal A, then Principal B. Interview themes and patterns were identified at the end of each subscale discussion.

Table 1 provides principals' perceptions of his/her own instructional leadership behaviors in framing the school goals. Each question of the PIMRS survey consisted of a Likert scale from 1 to 5 to identify perceptions of principal instructional leadership behaviors, with 1 meaning the behavior almost never occurred and 5 meaning the behavior almost always occurred.

Table 1

Subscale 1: Defining the School Mission (I)–Framing the School Goals

PIMRS Survey Question	Principal A Response	Principal B Response	Principal Average
1. Develop a focused set of annual school-wide goals	5	5	5.0
2. Frame the school's goals in terms of staff responsibilities for meeting them	5	4	4.5
3. Use needs assessment or other systematic methods to secure staff input on student academic performance	4	4	4.0
4. Use data on student academic performance when developing the school's academic goals	5	5	5.0
5. Develop goals that are easily translated into classroom objectives by teachers	5	4	4.5
Subscale 1 principal averages	4.8	4.4	4.6

Individual principal responses for Subscale 1 are represented in Table 1. In the subscale of framing the school goals, both principals perceived that they exhibited this behavior frequently, as indicated by a combined subscale average of 4.6. When comparing subscale averages for the principal's version of the PIMRS survey in Table 11, the average rating of 4.6 on Subscale 1 is tied for the second highest principal response average with Subscale 5 monitoring student progress. A rating of 4.6 indicated that principals perceived their instructional leadership behavior of framing the school goals to occur almost always.

Principal A explained how the School Improvement Team (SIT), which included representation from all teaching and administrative teams, developed the school goals. Goals and data from the previous year were reviewed, and changes and new initiatives for the upcoming year were discussed. One school goal was established for the current school year. The goal was for all staff to use action research and data to make instructional decisions about the role of homework in student learning. That goal became the focus for all data collection, action research, instructional decisions, professional development, and planning for the current year.

Principal B stated "goals are set in terms of kids." Students that were at risk for failure on standardized tests were identified as "focal students." Principal B said that, "instead of saying that our school goal is to increase our scores by 2% or 3%, our school goal is always trying to make sure that these kids pass, getting these students over the hump, making sure there's growth." It has become the culture of the school for teachers to identify the at-risk students, particularly those who may be part of the "racialized disparity in achievement," as explained by Principal B. Principal B described how an emphasis is placed on achievement for all students because each student is important to someone in the world: "They are someone's child, they are someone's brother, sister, niece, nephew, so we need to honor that."

Table 2 provides a context for Principal A's and Principal B's perceptions of his/her instructional leadership behaviors in communicating the school goals. Individual principal responses for Subscale 2 are represented. Both principals rated themselves high, 4.5, in communicating the school's goals to the community, to

teachers, and when making curricular decisions with teachers. The principals rated themselves slightly lower, 3.5, in the areas of ensuring that the school's academic goals are reflected in highly visible displays in the school and in reference to school goals in forums with students.

Table 2

Subscale 2: Defining the School Mission (II)–Communicating the School Goals

PIMRS Survey Question	Principal A Response	Principal B Response	Principal Average
6. Communicate the school's mission effectively to members of the school community	5	4	4.5
7. Discuss the school's academic goals with teachers at faculty meetings	5	4	4.5
8. Refer to the school's academic goals when making curricular decisions with teachers	5	4	4.5
9. Ensure that the school's academic goals are reflected in highly visible displays in the school (e.g., posters or bulletin boards emphasizing academic progress)	4	3	3.5
10. Refer to the school's goals or mission in forums with students (e.g., in assemblies or discussions)	3	4	3.5
Subscale 2 principal averages	4.4	3.8	4.1

Principal A reported that School Improvement Team members shared the goals with their team members and how the goals would be implemented. The teaching staff

was also made aware of the goals during the fall in service, before students returned for classes. Parents and students were told that the school was working on the role of homework in student learning and that the school would like feedback from them. Presentations to the school board outlined yearly goals, a summary of initiatives, and data to support past and present goals.

Principal B reported that the teaching staff participated in a data session as part of the fall in-service. The teaching staff was reminded that all students are important, not just those who are close to achieving proficiency on the MCA test. Principal B explained, "Every year I feel like I have to prove that there is a racialized disparity." Goals are communicated to parents and students through a weekly update from the principal. Teachers assist students in setting goals for the school year during advisory time. Principal B shared, "So, again, I don't talk about the school improvement goals with kids in terms of what is the school goal, it's more of an individual goal. How can you be your best? How can you grow to your potential? I think that resonates with them (students) better."

Table 3

Subscale 3: Managing the Instructional Program (I)–Supervision and Evaluation of Instruction

PIMRS Survey Question	Principal A Response	Principal B Response	Principal Average
11. Ensure that the classroom priorities of teachers are consistent with the goals and direction of the school	4	4	4.0
12. Review student work products when evaluating classroom instruction	4	3	3.5
13. Conduct informal observations in classrooms on a regular basis (informal observations are unscheduled, last at least 5 minutes, and may or may not involve written feedback or a formal conference)	5	2	3.5
14. Point out specific strengths in teacher's instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)	5	5	5.0
15. Point out specific weaknesses in teacher instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)	4	5	4.5
Subscale 3 principal averages	4.4	3.8	4.1

Table 3 provides principals' perceptions of his/her instructional leadership behaviors in supervising and evaluating of instruction. Individual principal responses for Subscale 3 are represented. Principal B perceptions of her supervision and evaluation of instruction behaviors, 3.8, were not as strong as Principal A at 4.4. Principal B assigned lower scores to herself than did Principal A for evaluating

classroom instruction and conducting informal observations on a regular basis. Both principals perceived themselves to regularly give positive and negative feedback regarding teachers' instructional practices.

Principal A reported that there is time blocked off in his schedule every day to visit classrooms. "The schedule is specific, and I usually do it by team. I like to do the sixth grade team, for instance, because I like to see how they are aligning, and it's just dropbys. So every week I'm in every classroom at least once." Teacher feedback is not given during every visit, unless it is "really good instruction," or if the principal needed additional information to make sense of what was observed.

Principal B noted the importance of hiring quality teachers and that he/she does all hiring of teachers. The principal is the sole evaluator for the new teachers. This enables the principal to conduct an induction process in which instructional strategies and expectations are made clear. Principal B believed that this strategy is a direct way to influence the quality of instruction in the school. The number of teachers in the building has grown substantially and he/she is not in the building every day due to district level committees and commitments. Completing walk-through observations is a way for Principal B to collect information for future staff development, specifically research-based instructional methods. Principal B remarked that getting into classrooms has been more difficult because of an expanded role on district wide committees.

Two main differences appeared in how the two principals supervise and evaluate instruction. Principal A frequently observes "short snippets" of teacher

lessons on a daily basis of all teachers, regardless of their years of service. Principal B focused on the beginning stage of a teacher's tenure. He/she influenced hiring of quality teachers, and then led new teachers through an orientation of teacher expectations and instructional methods. There was a difference in the amount of time spent in classrooms. Principal A reported scheduled time in classrooms, whereas Principal B reported observing probationary teachers. It is important to note a significant difference in staff size and student population between the two schools. Principal B had an assistant principal to help with teacher evaluations of remaining staff, whereas Principal A did not.

Table 4 provides principals' perceptions of his/her instructional leadership behaviors in curricular coordination. Each question of the PIMRS survey used a Likert scale from 1 to 5 to identify perceptions of principal instructional leadership behaviors, a one indicated that the behavior almost never occurred and five that the behavior almost always occurred.

Table 4

Subscale 4: Managing the Instructional Program (II)–Curricular Coordination

PIMRS Survey Question	Principal A Response	Principal B Response	Principal Average
16. Make clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels (e.g., the principal, vice principal, or teacher-leaders)	5	3	4.0
17. Draw upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions	5	5	5.0
18. Monitor the classroom curriculum to see that it covers the school's curricular objectives	4	3	3.5
19. Assess the overlap between the school's curricular objectives and the school's achievement tests	5	4	4.5
20. Participate actively in the review of curricular materials	3	3	3.0
Subscale 4 principal averages	4.4	3.6	4.0

Individual principal responses for Subscale 4 are represented in Table 4. Principal B rated herself lower in Subscale 4 than Principal A. The largest difference in perception was in making clear who was responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels. This difference may have occurred because of the difference in curriculum review procedures that each district utilized.

Principal A's district did not employ a curriculum director, therefore, Principal A provided administrative oversight for the science curriculum district wide. Principal

A reported, "I rely a lot on my people. I like to learn about it, I like to have a basic knowledge about it, but I'm not the expert." Principal A described his/her role as a facilitator in the curricular process. He/she organized meetings and led discussions regarding vertical alignment in the particular core curricular area.

As Principal A noted, teachers have been entrusted to develop a curriculum that will cover the state standards. Principal B reported a weak connection to coordinating curriculum in the building until this school year. "Unpacking the standards" has become a focus at Principal B's school. During the past summer, Principal B's work was focused on "looking at creating learning targets for the standards, pulling out the vocabulary, and writing the formative assessment piece. It also included writing down background knowledge that the teachers thought the kids needed to have prior to really attaining the standard requiring the standard."

Both principals reported that they do not have the final say in selecting books for the chosen curriculum, as that decision is made by an outside committee or district curriculum team. Principals reported that teachers are trusted to select materials that will provide the best possible resource for teachers and students.

Table 5 provides principals' perceptions of his/her instructional leadership behaviors in monitoring student progress.

Table 5

Subscale 5: Managing the Instructional Program (III)–Monitoring Student Progress

PIMRS Survey Question	Principal A Response	Principal B Response	Principal Average
21. Meet individually with teachers to discuss student progress	3	4	3.5
22. Discuss academic performance results with the faculty to identify curricular strengths and weaknesses	5	5	5.0
23. Use tests and other performance measure to assess progress toward school goals	5	5	5.0
24. Inform teachers of the school's performance results in written form (e.g., in a memo or newsletter)	5	5	5.0
25. Inform students of school's academic progress	4	5	4.5
Subscale 5 principal averages	4.4	4.8	4.6

Individual principal responses for Subscale 5 are represented in Table 5. In Subscale 5, monitoring student progress, both principals perceived that they exhibited this behavior frequently, as indicated by a combined subscale average of 4.6. When comparing subscale averages for the principal's version of the PIMRS survey, the average score of 4.6 is the second highest behind Subscale 9 promoting instructional improvement and staff development and tied with Subscale 1 framing the school goals. Both principals scored themselves lowest in the area of meeting individually with teachers to discuss student progress.

Principal A kept data on a number of student academic indicators, including standardized test scores, student grade data from the last ten years, and percentage of students ineligible for activities. Another data point for Principal A is from the Zeros Aren't Productive (ZAP) program. The ZAP program helped identify students who were failing due to incomplete homework. Principal A explained, "We use it to identify students – when they start showing up frequently, it's quick (response to student needs). We know when three or four weeks if we've got some struggles. We have a conversation with the parents, and if it really becomes a problem we know it's probably bigger than just homework."

Principal B frequently reviewed standardized test score data, student grades, and results from the progress monitoring system used by the school. Students who have not passed the MCA tests are monitored on a frequent basis. Because Principal B's school has ninth-grade students, he/she monitored the "F list" because of credits earned towards high school graduation. The administrative Professional Learning Community (PLC) frequently engaged in interventions and conversations to connect with new students "to see if that makes a difference in their grades."

Both principals cited the use of data, specifically standardized tests such as the Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP) and Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA), as important tools to monitor student progress. Data are used to ensure students receive the appropriate interventions for academic success.

Table 6 provides principals' perceptions of his/her instructional leadership behaviors in protecting instructional time.

Table 6

Subscale 6: Developing the School Learning Climate (II)–Protecting Instructional Time

PIMRS Survey Question	Principal A Response	Principal B Response	Principal Average
26. Limit interruptions of instructional time by public address announcements	4	5	4.5
27. Ensure that students are not called to the office during instructional time	3	4	3.5
28. Ensure that tardy and truant students suffer specific consequences for missing instructional time	4	4	4.0
29. Encourage teachers to use instructional time for teaching and practicing new skills and concepts	5	4	4.5
30. Limit the intrusion of extra- and co-curricular activities on instructional time	3	3	3.0
Subscale 6 principal averages	3.8	4.0	3.9

Individual principal responses for Subscale 6 are represented in Table 6. Subscale 6 represents the third lowest average, 3.9, as reported by the principals on the PIMRS survey. Subscale 6 was also the third most similar in principal perceptions of their instructional leadership behaviors.

Principal A reported, "I think that everyone in this building is important for the success of our students. It is the teacher's job to prepare instruction and teach. A teacher's job is not about fixing pencil sharpeners, carrying out clerical tasks, or worrying about what students are eating in lunch. What I'm saying is that we each

need to play our role and to minimize the time the teachers are doing other things." Principal A viewed his/her role as providing resources to teachers to be successful. Resources may be in the form of curriculum, materials, or time. Visibility in the building is another way to protect instructional time. Concerns could be addressed in a face-to-face conversation instead of through email or voicemail. Principal A believed that anything he/she could do to keep the teacher focused on instruction and teaching was protecting instructional time.

Other than MCA preparation and celebration assemblies, Principal B reported there are few interruptions to instructional time. Assemblies are generally held during advisory time, so little instructional time is lost. Collaborative team time is used to discuss students and curriculum. Principal B elaborated, "I think team time in some schools can be about falling in love with the problem. So we have tried to move away from that and into more of a problem-solving mode and a student support mode."

Both principals discussed the need to keep instruction and student concerns as a focus of all team meetings as a way to protect instructional time. Principal B stated, "So I feel like when everyone is really intense on students and instruction, once you get to the classroom and you have your eighty-eight minutes of instruction, I think it's better use because it is more focused and purposeful." Principal A added, "Our meetings are focused, our everyday teaming, I really tried to push on focusing on instruction and learning."

Table 7 provides principals' perceptions of instructional leadership behaviors in visibility.

Table 7

Subscale 7: Developing the School Learning Climate (II)–Visibility

PIMRS Survey Question	Principal A Response	Principal B Response	Principal Average
31. Take time to talk informally with students and teachers during recess and breaks	5	4	4.5
32. Visit classrooms to discuss school issues with teachers and students	5	3	4.0
33. Attend/participate in extra- and co-curricular activities	4	4	4.0
34. Cover classes for teachers until a late or substitute teacher arrives	2	3	2.5
35. Tutor students or provide direct instruction to classes	1	3	2.0
Subscale 7 principal averages	3.4	3.4	3.4

Individual principal responses for Subscale 7 are represented in Table 7. Subscale 7 represents the second lowest average as reported by the principals on the PIMRS survey. This subscale average equaled Subscale 9, promoting instructional improvement and professional development, as representing the most similar principal perceptions of their instructional leadership behaviors.

Principal A conveyed the importance of visiting classrooms for two reasons. The first reason provided was because the visit provided information regarding

teaching and learning in the classroom. The second reason was that his/her presence conveyed to students the importance of teaching and learning.

Both principals reported that district level meetings kept them away from their building and have decreased their ability for visibility within the school. For example, Principal B has been on the superintendent's cabinet for the past two years. In addition, Principal B has been placed on multiple district committees which meet during the school day. According to Principal B, "What I found is that the longer I'm here, the more committees I get put on. Because now I am the most senior secondary principal and I've got the (context of the district) history." When responding to question 3, Principal B referred to a perceived lack of visibility, "I'm not saying it as an excuse, rather it's an explanation because people want to see me more visible. But it's hard, it's really hard and it's one of the things that I lament."

Table 8 provides a context of the principals' perceptions of his/her instructional leadership behaviors in incentives to improve teaching. Each PIMRS survey question asked principals to indicate on a 1 to 5 Likert scale (1 is almost never and5 is almost always) perceptions of their instructional leadership behaviors.

Table 8

Subscale 8: Developing the School Learning Climate (III)–Incentives to Improve Teaching

PIMRS Survey Question	Principal A Response	Principal B Response	Principal Average
36. Reinforce superior performance by teachers in staff meetings, newsletters, and/or memos	2	5	3.5
37. Compliment teachers privately for their efforts or performance	5	5	5.0
38. Acknowledge teachers' exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files	2	5	3.5
39. Reward special efforts by teachers with opportunities for professional recognition	2	5	3.5
40. Create professional growth opportunities for teachers as a reward for special contributions to the school	2	5	3.5
Subscale 8 principal averages	2.6	5.0	3.8

Individual principal responses for Subscale 8 are represented in Table 8. According to principal responses on Subscale 8, this area provided the largest difference in instructional leadership behavior perceptions, 2.4, between the two principals. Principal A perceived his/her behavior of providing incentives to improve teaching as mostly "seldom," whereas Principal B perceived his/her behavior in this subscale as mostly "almost always."

During the interview, Principal A said, "I don't do public stuff, because many people don't like that. But one-on-one, I know everyone likes that." Principal A provided examples of one-on-one conversations with teachers recognizing them for the work they do. Recognition in front of teacher peers would not be appreciated by some teaching staff. "But I've got to know my staff, because some wouldn't appreciate that, as a matter fact some would hate it. But I could go to that same person individually and they would appreciate being recognized." Principal B said, "I try to reinforce the individuals and give them positive feedback. Again, I spend an awful lot of time with probationary teachers and I tried to give them really good feedback. I try to give them confidence and build their competence."

Both principals reported calling upon teachers to lead in-service activities during fall workshop or collaborative team meeting time. Many teachers have opportunities to share the instructional strategies they have acquired in workshops outside of the district or through their own experiences. Principals acknowledge teacher expertise and encourage presentations to entire staff.

Table 9 provides principals' perceptions of their instructional leadership behaviors in promoting instructional improvement and professional development.

Table 9

Subscale 9: Developing the School Learning Climate (IV)–Promoting Instructional Improvement and Professional Development

PIMRS Survey Question	Principal A Response	Principal B Response	Principal Average
41. Ensure that in-service activities attended by staff are consistent with the school's goals	5	5	5.0
42. Actively support the use in the classroom of skills acquired during in-service training	5	5	5.0
43. Obtain the participation of the whole staff in important in-service activities	5	5	5.0
44. Lead or attend teacher in-service activities concerned with instruction	5	5	5.0
45. Set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas or information from in-service activities	5	5	5.0
Subscale 9 principal averages	5.0	5.0	5.0

Individual principal responses for Subscale 9 are represented in Table 9. In the subscale of promoting instructional improvement and professional development, both principals perceived they exhibited this behavior almost all the time, as indicated by a combined subscale average of 5.0. When comparing subscale averages for the principal's version of the PIMRS survey responses, promoting instructional improvement and professional development received the highest average score from

both principals. Also, Subscale 9 recorded the highest level of agreement on the PIMRS survey between both principals.

Both Principal A and Principal B referred to "using the experts in the building." Professional development opportunities outside of the building were encouraged, and teaching staff did an increasing amount of professional development. Principal A stated, "We do say that all the answers are in the building. We've had internal people do staff development for us. Also, when people go to a workshop they are expected to come back and present on a Discovery Day (teachers learning from colleagues) in a mini staff development situation." Also, both principals stated that collaborative team and PLC time provided more opportunities for staff to learn from each other.

Table 10 provides principals' perceptions of their instructional leadership behaviors in providing incentives for learning.

Table 10

Subscale 10: Developing the School Learning Climate (V)–Providing Incentives for Learning

PIMRS Survey Question	Principal A Response	Principal B Response	Principal Average
46. Recognize students who do superior work with formal rewards such as an honor roll or mention in the principal's newsletter	3	2	2.5
47. Use assemblies to honor students for academic accomplishments or for behavior or citizenship	3	1	2.0
48. Recognize superior student achievement or improvement by seeing in the office the students with their work	3	2	2.5
49. Contact parents to communicate improved or exemplary student performance or contributions	3	3	3.0
50. Support teachers actively in their recognition and/or reward of student contributions to and accomplishments in class	5	3	4.0
Subscale 10 principal averages	3.4	2.2	2.8

Individual principal responses for Subscale 10 are represented in Table 10. Both principals perceived they exhibited this behavior, providing incentives for learning, the least among the 10 subscales with an average score of 2.8. This area also had second widest variation, 1.2, in instructional leadership behavior perceptions as reported on the PIMRS survey. Subscale 10 also produced the lowest individual principal rating of 2.2.

Principal A shared how a surprise assembly was held to celebrate and honor teachers for their hard work in meeting their goals for the MCA test. "We really did well (on the MCA's) and we had a celebration. The kids did a gauntlet for the staff to recognize them for all of their hard work." The school also recognized extraordinary students, who are not necessarily the top academically performing students, but students who have shown growth or given tremendous effort in their academic work. Students are recognized for good deeds they perform during the school day. Teachers send home good news notes to recognize students for outstanding academic work or citizenship.

Principal B reported, "we have a celebration at the end of our MAP testing to honor kids, not only to celebrate that we are done but to also thank students for all of their hard work." A student recognition program is held at the end of the school year. Students who achieve a 3.5 grade point average or above receive a certificate from the principal. Ninth-grade students can receive the President's Award if their cumulative GPA meets a certain standard. "Kids love getting the certificate that is signed by President Obama." Principal B shared a new idea, called a Celebration of Learning, in which students will participate in a learning open house. Students create and present an artifact or an e-portfolio that showcases student learning for the school year.

Table 11 provides a summary of the principals' perceptions of their instructional leadership behaviors in the 10 subscale areas.

Table 11

Summary of Principal Averages by Subscale

PIMRS Subscales	Principal A Response	Principal B Response	Principal Average
1. Framing the school goals	4.8	4.4	4.6
2. Communicating the school goals	4.4	3.8	4.1
3. Supervision and evaluation of instruction	4.4	3.8	4.1
4. Curricular coordination	4.4	3.6	4.0
5. Monitoring student progress	4.4	4.8	4.6
6. Protecting instructional time	3.8	4.0	3.9
7. Visibility	3.4	3.4	3.4
8. Incentives to improve teaching	2.6	5.0	3.8
9. Promoting instructional improvement and staff development	5.0	5.0	5.0
10. Providing incentives for learning	3.4	2.2	2.8

The PIMRS survey subscale averages were used to explore the perceptions of principals and teachers, as stated in the previous chapter. A total rating was not an

indication of the quality of principal behavior. The principals rated themselves highest in three areas: promoting instructional improvement and staff development with a 5.0 average, framing school goals with a 4.6 average, and monitoring student progress with a 4.6 average. The principals rated themselves lowest in two areas: providing incentives for learning with a 2.8 average; and visibility with an average of 3.4. The principal's greatest difference in perception was found in the area of incentives to improve teaching, with a difference of 2.4. Both principals shared similar perceptions in two areas: visibility, with a rating of 3.4; and promoting instructional improvement and staff development, with a rating of 5.0.

RESEARCH QUESTION TWO

What are the teachers' perceptions of the principals' instructional leadership behaviors in two top performing Minnesota middle schools? To answer this question, data were collected through the teacher form of the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) survey, teacher interviews, and focus group meetings. Interview and focus group questions were based on the ten subscales of the PIMRS survey.

According to the Minnesota Department of Education, School A enrolled between 750-1200 students in grades six through eight, employed 54.6 full time equivalent (FTE) certified staff, and maintained a 20:1 teacher/student ratio (Minnesota Department of Education, 2013). Included in the certified staff are teachers, media specialists, other licensed professionals, and administrators. The

average salary compensation for teachers at School A was $53,219, with a range of $32,286-$65,593. Education levels of the teaching staff included 29.4% holding a Bachelors degree, and 70.6% a Masters degree. Longevity of the teaching staff included 83.9% having over 10 years of teaching experience, 13.9% having 3-10 years experience, and 2.2% having less than three years experience. Teachers meeting Minnesota teaching license compliance for School A totaled 99.3%, with only 0.7% teaching with special permissions or waivers (MDE, 2013).

School B enrolled between 900-1400 students in grades 6 through 9 and employed 96.8 full time equivalent (FTE) certified staff (MDE, 2013). Included in the certified staff were teachers, media specialists, other licensed professionals, and administrators. The average salary compensation for teachers at School B totaled $60,350, with a range from $34,306-$72,175 (MDE, 2013). Education levels of the certified staff included 18.1% holding a Bachelors degree, and 72.5% a Masters degree, and 1.2% holding a doctorate degree (MDE, 2013). Longevity of the teaching staff included 73.4% with 10 years or more of teaching experience, 25.7% with 3-10 years experience, and 1.0% with less than 3 years experience (MDE, 2013). Teachers meeting Minnesota teaching license compliance for School A totaled 99.5%, with only 0.5% teaching with special permissions or waivers (MDE, 2013).

Teacher participant demographics are listed in Tables 12-14. The demographics only represent teacher responses collected from the PIMRS survey for each of the ten subscales. Following each table, a summary of the interview data from

each school will be reported. Interview themes and patterns were identified at the end of each subscale discussion.

Table 12

Teacher Respondent Demographics–PIMRS

Teacher Demographics	School A	School B	Total Participants
Male	11	8	19
Female	20	22	42
Skipped question	0	2	2
Total respondents	31	32	63
Total teaching staff	55	101	156
Response rate	56.4%	31.7%	40.4%

Teacher responses for demographic information are represented in Table 12. School A had 31 participants, or 56.4%, who began the PIMRS survey. School B had 32 participants, or 31.7%, who began the PIMRS survey. Of the 156 teachers that were invited to participate in the PIMRS survey, 63 completed the survey, reflecting a 40.4% participation rate for the study. Female teachers participated at twice the rate of male teachers, 42 females and 19 males, respectively.

Table 13

Teacher Respondents by Years of Service with Principal–PIMRS

Teacher Respondents by Years of Service with Principal	School A	School B	Total Participants
1	2	0	2
2-4	5	7	12
5-9	9	15	24
10-15	9	7	16
15+	2	2	4
Skipped question	4	1	5
Total participants	31	32	63

Teacher respondents by years of service with the current principal are represented in Table 13. The greatest number of respondents was teachers with 5-9 years of service with the current principal, 38.1% (N = 24) of the total participants. The lowest number of respondents was teachers who served with the principal for over 15 years. This information indicated that teachers did not understand the question, since neither principal had served in their current positions for more than 15 years. Teachers with only 1 year of service with the current principal were instructed to refrain from taking the PIMRS survey (as is recommended in the PIMRS survey administration manual).

Table 14

Teacher Respondents by Years of Teaching Service–PIMRS

Teacher Respondents by Total Years of Teaching Service	School A	School B	Total Participants
1	2	0	2
2-4	2	2	4
5-9	3	2	5
10-15	2	11	13
15+	17	16	33
Skipped question	5	1	6
Total respondents	31	32	63

Teacher respondents by years of teaching service are represented in Table 14. The largest number of respondents were teachers who have more than 15 years of teaching service, or 52.4% of the total participants.

The following tables depict responses collected from the PIMRS survey for each subscale. A summary of the interview data from teachers at School A and School B is provided. Common themes and patterns were identified in the subscale results.

Table 15 provides teachers' perceptions of the instructional leadership behaviors of the principal in framing the school goals. Each question of the PIMRS survey consisted of a Likert scale from 1 to 5 to identify perceptions of principal instructional leadership behaviors, with 1 meaning the behavior almost never occurred and 5 meaning the behavior almost always occurred.

Table 15

Subscale 1: Defining the School Mission (I): Framing the School Goals

PIMRS Survey Question	School A (N)	School A Average	School B (N)	School B Average
1. Develop a focused set of annual school-wide goals	27	4.59	29	4.86
2. Frame the school's goals in terms of staff responsibilities for meeting them	27	3.96	29	4.62
3. Use needs assessment or other systematic methods to secure staff input on student academic performance	22	4.14	29	4.21
4. Use data on student academic performance when developing the school's academic goals	27	4.74	29	4.90
5. Develop goals that are easily translated into classroom objectives by teachers	27	3.81	29	4.07
Subscale 1 teacher averages		4.25		4.53

Teacher responses for Subscale 1 on the PIMRS are represented in Table 15. Teachers in School A rated the principal's instructional behavior of framing the school goals as 4.25, the second highest rating from the teachers. Teachers in School B rated Subscale 1 highest, 4.53. Both principals were perceived to almost always use data on student academic performance to develop the school's academic goals. This is indicated by the ratings of 4.74 for School A and 4.90 for School B on the PIMRS survey question about student data use.

Four of the seven teachers interviewed and both focus groups from School A specifically reported that a team of teachers and administrators met during the summer to review data and develop goals for the upcoming school year. The data from the most previous school year, as well as historical data, were used to develop the goals.

According to School B teacher responses from the PIMRS survey, framing the school goals was rated the strongest behavior of the Principal B at 4.53. Teachers believed the principal was working directly with the superintendent and other middle school principals using test data from the previous school year. One teacher stated, "Goals are always tied to data." A comment from another teacher, "(Principal B) is looking at test scores and other data–(Principal B) is a big data and number cruncher. (He/she) is very good at looking at our holes, what do we need to do to make our school better."

Question 4, using data on student academic performance when developing the school's academic goals, received the highest teacher rating, 4.74 from School A and 4.90 from School B. The perceived processes used to develop the school goals were different; School A used a team from their own building to develop school goals, while School B primarily used a district level team to develop the goals. Regardless of the process, teachers perceived that goals were developed from multiple data points from the previous school year.

Table 16 provides teacher's perceptions of the instructional leadership behaviors of the principal in communicating the school's goals.

Table 16

Subscale 2: Defining the School Mission (II): Communicating the School's Goals

PIMRS Survey Question	School A (N)	School A Average	School B (N)	School B Average
6. Communicate the school's mission effectively to members of the school community	26	4.27	29	4.59
7. Discuss the school's academic goals with teachers at faculty meetings	26	4.50	29	4.72
8. Refer to the school's academic goals when making curricular decisions with teachers	25	4.16	29	4.55
9. Ensure that the school's academic goals are reflected in highly visible displays in the school (e.g., posters or bulletin boards emphasizing academic progress)	26	4.08	29	3.45
10. Refer to the school's goals or mission in forums with students (e.g., in assemblies or discussions)	25	3.52	28	3.32
Subscale 2 teacher averages		4.11		4.13

Teacher responses for Subscale 2 of the PIMRS are represented in Table 16. School A teachers rated their perceptions of the principal's communication of the school goals as 4.11; whereas School B teachers rated their perceptions at 4.13. It is noted that the perceptions of the teachers at both schools were nearly identical, with a difference of .02.

During the fall teacher in-service, Principal A introduced school goals to the teaching staff. School A teachers reported that school goals were distributed in written form, along with the expectation that the goals be posted in classrooms. The principal sent email communications to parents during the course of the year. In those communications, Principal A identified the goals that the school would be working on during the school year. Teachers reported that there was to be implementation of only one goal. Five of seven teachers specifically referenced the fact that goals are revisited throughout the year.

According to all teachers from School B, school goals are communicated to staff during the fall teacher in-service. All teachers also reported that school goals are communicated to parents through a weekly principal email sent to all parents. Other modes of parent communication were identified, but none specifically that communicated the school goals. One focus group member perceived that information shared with parents was more generic when compared to information the teachers receive.

Teachers at both schools reported having school goals shared with them during their fall teacher in-service meetings. Even though teachers from both schools perceived that the school goals were shared with parents, this seemed to be speculation on the teacher's part. Teachers at both schools referenced the revisiting of goals throughout the year; the goals were used as a focal point in planning instruction.

Table 17 provides the teachers/ perceptions of the instructional leadership behaviors of the principal in supervision and evaluation of instruction.

Table 17

Subscale 3: Managing the Instructional Program (I): Supervision and Evaluation of Instruction

PIMRS Survey Question	School A (N)	School A Average	School B (N)	School B Average
11. Ensure that the classroom priorities of teachers are consistent with the goals and direction of the school	26	3.96	29	4.14
12. Review student work products when evaluating classroom instruction	24	3.42	29	3.03
13. Conduct informal observations in classrooms on a regular basis (informal observations are unscheduled, last at least 5 minutes, and may or may not involve written feedback or a formal conference)	26	4.77	30	2.60
14. Point out specific strengths in teacher's instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)	26	4.23	30	3.80
15. Point out specific weaknesses in teacher instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)	26	4.04	30	3.43
Subscale 3 teacher averages		4.08		3.40

Teacher responses for Subscale 3 of the PIMRS are represented in Table 17. According to the teacher responses from the PIMRS survey, Subscale 3 reflected the largest in teacher perceptions between the two principals; School A ranking of 4.08 and School B ranking of 3.40, for a difference in perception of 0.68. The difference in rankings indicated that School A teachers perceived Principal A to supervise and

evaluate instruction more often than School B teachers perceived Principal B to exhibit the same behavior.

Six of seven School A teachers as well as teachers from both focus groups specifically mentioned the weekly walk-through observations conducted by Principal A. Teachers reported that formal feedback is not always given, but the principal will follow up with teachers with clarifying questions or positive feedback. All teachers were aware of the formal observation process and procedures.

Three teachers and the focus group referenced the district's alternative compensation program in their interviews. In this program, tenured teachers can opt to have a colleague serve as a job coach during the years they are not on "high cycle," a term School B teachers used when referring to a year in which they are to be observed by administration. Teachers reported that Principal B completed evaluations for all probationary staff members. Three School B teachers reported they were currently on "high cycle" and the assistant principal was completing those observations.

Despite the teacher perception that Principal B was not as involved in supervision and evaluation of instruction according to the PIMRS survey, both principals were perceived to be involved according to the teacher interviews and focus groups. According to teacher reports, Principal A was more involved on a weekly basis using classroom walkthroughs, and Principal B was focused on probationary teacher observations.

Table 18 provides teachers' perceptions of the instructional leadership behaviors of the principal in curricular coordination. Each question of the PIMRS

survey allowed ratings on a Likert scale from 1 to 5 to identify perceptions of principal instructional leadership behaviors. A rating of 1 indicated the behavior almost never occurred and 5 indicated that the behavior almost always occurred.

Table 18

Subscale 4: Managing the Instructional Program (II): Curricular Coordination

PIMRS Survey Question	School A (N)	School A Average	School B (N)	School B Average
16. Make clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels (e.g., the principal, vice principal, or teacher-leaders)	25	3.56	30	3.57
17. Draw upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions	25	4.16	30	4.73
18. Monitor the classroom curriculum to see that it covers the school's curricular objectives	25	3.60	30	3.33
19. Assess the overlap between the school's curricular objectives and the school's achievement tests	25	3.80	30	4.13
20. Participate actively in the review of curricular materials	25	3.80	29	3.14
Subscale 4 teacher averages		3.78		3.78

Teacher responses for Subscale 4 of the PIMRS are represented in Table 18. Teachers from School A and School B reported similar perceptions of principal

behavior regarding curricular coordination. Teachers at both schools reported an average rating of 3.78 on Subscale 4: curriculum coordination.

Teachers from School A were aware that Principal A was on the district curriculum review committee for a core content area. Teachers also identified that Principal A attended most grade level and discipline meetings, and perceived that attendance allowed increased knowledge and ensuring consistency in the core content areas.

Teachers from School B perceived Principal B to have little involvement in curriculum review cycle. Teachers noted the lack of involvement in the curriculum review process was because the district employs a curriculum director rather than a lack of willingness on Principal B's part to participate. Principal B did become involved when needed at the curriculum review process, as five teachers reported the Principal B would become involved in the curriculum review process when major curricular decisions were made. One teacher reported Principal B attended grade level and content area meetings and was very knowledgeable about what was taught in classrooms.

A commonality between both groups of teachers was that neither teacher group perceived that principal was heavily involved in selecting books and materials for curricular purposes. That task was left to teachers and a curriculum review group. Teachers perceived that both principals gained knowledge of the curriculum through visiting grade level and content area teaching teams frequently during the school year.

Teachers perceived that both principals became involved in curricular decisions only when needed.

Table 19 provides teachers' perceptions of the principals' instructional leadership behaviors in monitoring student progress.

Table 19

Subscale 5: Managing the Instructional Program (III): Monitoring Student Progress

PIMRS Survey Question	School A (N)	School A Average	School B (N)	School B Average
21. Meet individually with teachers to discuss student progress	24	3.38	30	2.87
22. Discuss academic performance results with the faculty to identify curricular strengths and weaknesses	24	4.25	30	4.20
23. Use tests and other performance measure to assess progress toward school goals	24	4.46	30	4.70
24. Inform teachers of the school's performance results in written form (e.g., in a memo or newsletter)	25	4.64	30	4.37
25. Inform students of school's academic progress	23	4.26	30	3.67
Subscale 5 teacher averages		4.20		3.96

Group teacher responses for Subscale 5 of the PIMRS are represented in Table 19. Question 23 and 24 received the highest teacher ratings from both schools; both questions averaged over 4.50. Both principals were perceived to almost always

use tests to assess progress towards school goals and informing teachers of the school's performance results in written form. Question 21, meeting with teachers to discuss student progress, received the lowest rating of Subscale 5; School A at 3.38, and School B at 2.87.

Teachers at School A perceived that the principal monitored student progress by reviewing standardized test data from the MAP and MCA tests. All interviewees and focus group participants reported the abundant use of data in monitoring student progress. Four teachers specifically stated that Principal A used data to address the achievement gap.

Teachers perceived Principal B to use multiple data points in analyzing student progress, especially for students who received intervention services. Two teachers reported Principal B investigated the correlation between student grades and standardized test scores to address grade inflation at School B.

The perception of teachers from both schools was that the principal analyzed data frequently, a perception supported by higher scores from the PIMRS survey. Data were analyzed to monitor struggling students' progress, and to place students in appropriate courses during the current and upcoming school years. Teachers did not report that the principal met with them to discuss student progress, a perception supported by the lowest ratings for Subscale 5.

Table 20 provides teachers' perceptions of the instructional leadership behaviors of the principal in protecting instructional time.

Table 20

Subscale 6: Developing the School Learning Climate (I): Protecting Instructional Time

PIMRS Survey Question	School A (N)	School A Average	School B (N)	School B Average
26. Limit interruptions of instructional time by public address announcements	25	3.88	30	4.43
27. Ensure that students are not called to the office during instructional time	24	3.21	30	3.60
28. Ensure that tardy and truant students suffer specific consequences for missing instructional time	22	3.18	30	2.70
29. Encourage teachers to use instructional time for teaching and practicing new skills and concepts	25	4.32	30	4.53
30. Limit the intrusion of extra- and co-curricular activities on instructional time	24	4.04	30	3.87
Subscale 6 teacher averages		3.73		3.83

Teacher responses for Subscale 6 of the PIMRS are represented in Table 20. A high degree of similar principal perceptions between teachers at both schools was found. School A average rating was 3.73 and School B at 3.83 regarding the principal behavior of protecting instructional time.

Three recurring themes surfaced from teachers at School A. The first theme was the importance placed on instructional time. One teacher's statement, "teaching time is gold, you don't mess with it," seemed to fit the sentiment of the group. The

second was a change in past scheduling practices to protect instructional time. In the past, instructional time was not a priority on late start days that were used for staff development. At the request of teachers and the support of the principal, a renewed importance was placed on protecting instructional minutes during the late starts. A third theme was that a concerted effort has been made to keep announcements and assemblies at a minimum. Announcements occur during the beginning and end of the school day, a limited number of assemblies are scheduled, and the cancellation of unnecessary meetings has occurred.

Teachers reported that Principal B produced staff announcements once a week, and apologized if messages were sent to staff more than once a week because of concerns about cluttering teacher email. Announcements and other potential disruptions to instructional time were handled during morning advisory. Only one teacher reported that interruptions cut into instructional time.

Both principals were generally perceived to value teachers' instructional time. Announcements, assemblies, and other potential disruptions were planned and limited. Modified schedules were used by principals in both schools to protect core content teaching time. Principals employed other strategies to respect teacher time, such as engaging in face-to-face conversations instead of voicemail or email, and thoughtful use of emails to teaching staff.

Table 21 provides teachers' perceptions of the instructional leadership behaviors of the principal in principal visibility. Each question of the PIMRS survey consisted of a Likert scale from 1 to 5 to identify perceptions of principal instructional

leadership behaviors, with 1 meaning the behavior almost never occurred and 5 meaning the behavior almost always occurred.

Table 21

Subscale 7: Developing the School Learning Climate (II): Visibility

PIMRS Survey Question	School A (N)	School A Average	School B (N)	School B Average
31. Take time to talk informally with students and teachers during recess and breaks	25	4.12	30	2.97
32. Visit classrooms to discuss school issues with teachers and students	25	3.84	30	2.37
33. Attend/participate in extra- and co-curricular activities	25	3.96	28	3.21
34. Cover classes for teachers until a late or substitute teacher arrives	24	2.42	29	2.10
35. Tutor students or provide direct instruction to classes	24	1.92	29	1.83
Subscale 7 teacher averages		3.25		2.49

Teacher responses for Subscale 7 of the PIMRS are represented in Table 21. Subscale 7 was the lowest average subscale rating for Principal B at 2.49, and the second lowest subscale rating for Principal A at 3.25. Subscale 7 also contained the largest gap in teacher perceptions of behavior between the two principals at 0.76.

Neither principal was perceived to cover classes for teachers or provide direct instruction or tutoring to students on a frequent basis.

All School A teachers reported a high frequency of classroom visits, visibility in the hallways and frequent attendance at teacher meetings. "(Principal A) is around all the time." Two teachers and one focus group specifically mentioned that the principal did announcements and "words of wisdom" to students each morning. Teachers also reported positive interactions of Principal A with students. "(Principal A) has a very good rapport with the kids. The kids are not afraid to approach (him/her). (He/She) is very connected with the students." One teacher made the statement of the principal's general demeanor: "(Principal A) is a pretty approachable (person)." Two teachers made reference to Principal A's energy level, referring to the principal as "the Energizer Bunny." Even though Principal A received the second lowest ratings in this subscale area, every teacher commented that the principal was frequently observed visiting classrooms when in the building.

Teachers at School B perceived the principal as being away from the building for district level commitments. One teacher commented, "I think that the principal is not in the building because (Principal B) has meetings and other stuff, so (Principal B) is not always in the building." Multiple teachers reported that the principal is aware of his/her lack of visibility in the school and wants to improve it. Teachers appreciated the principal's effort at becoming more visible by working on a movable desk in the hallway for some of his/her work and by the introduction of 3-minute walkthroughs.

Even though Subscale 7 reports the lowest scores regarding principal behavior, teachers perceived that the principal behaviors were a result of district level commitments and other commitments of the position that may prevent the principal from being visible.

Table 22 provides teachers' perceptions of the instructional leadership behaviors of the principal in incentives to improve teaching.

Table 22

Subscale 8: Developing the School Learning Climate (III): Incentives to Improve Teaching

PIMRS Survey Question	School A (N)	School A Average	School B (N)	School B Average
36. Reinforce superior performance by teachers in staff meetings, newsletters, and/or memos	24	3.29	30	3.33
37. Compliment teachers privately for their efforts or performance	25	3.84	30	3.60
38. Acknowledge teachers' exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files	22	2.82	28	2.50
39. Reward special efforts by teachers with opportunities for professional recognition	24	3.33	29	3.14
40. Create professional growth opportunities for teachers as a reward for special contributions to the school	22	2.82	29	3.28
Subscale 8 teacher averages		3.22		3.17

Teacher responses for Subscale 8 of the PIMRS are represented in Table 22. Subscale 8, incentives to improve teaching, represents the second lowest average of principal instructional leadership behavior ratings, according to PIMRS survey. This area also represents the lowest average rating for Principal A at 3.22, and the second lowest score for Principal B at 3.17. A wide distribution of scores on the PIMRS was noted for both principals.

Teachers reported that Principal A encouraged teachers to share what they are doing in their classroom and reference what he has seen in classrooms during late starts or in-service time with teacher colleagues. To the teachers, this was a form of teacher recognition. Another person in the district "noticed that (Principal A) cannot say enough good things about the staff and is always talking about the positive things, the great things that our staff is doing every day." Principal A informally recognizes teachers for the work they do. "(Principal A) gives individual pats on the back, but it's never like a public thing."

Principal B praised teachers publicly as a group, and also gave praise to individuals through individual conversations, email, or written notes. "(Principal B) does not come out in front of a staff meeting and highlight the great things that one person is doing–(Principal B) doesn't do that. I feel valued." Teachers reported they might be asked by the principal to present during staff development or in-service opportunities. "(Principal B) does give opportunities to present the kind of information. It's a way for (Principal B) to say 'hey I really like what this teacher is doing.' I take that as a way for (him/her) to recognize staff."

Teachers from both schools perceived that a form of recognition is delivering presentations to one's peers. Presentations on teaching methods or new skills learned at professional development opportunities are considered a way to be recognized by the principal. According to teacher reports, both principals tend to give private recognition to teachers to show appreciation for their work. Teachers from both schools reported the principal at each school did not engage in individual recognition during staff meetings; recognition is done privately.

Table 23 provides teachers' perceptions of the instructional leadership behaviors of the principal in promoting instructional improvement and professional development.

Table 23

Subscale 9: Developing the School Learning Climate (IV): Promoting Instructional Improvement and Professional Development

PIMRS Survey Question	School A (N)	School A Average	School B (N)	School B Average
41. Ensure that in-service activities attended by staff are consistent with the school's goals	25	4.24	29	4.48
42. Actively support the use in the classroom of skills acquired during in-service training	25	4.12	29	4.14
43. Obtain the participation of the whole staff in important in-service activities	25	4.44	29	4.31
44. Lead or attend teacher in-service activities concerned with instruction	25	4.36	29	4.55
45. Set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas or information from in-service activities	25	4.20	29	3.79
Subscale 9 teacher averages		4.27		4.26

Teacher responses for Subscale 9 of the PIMRS are represented in Table 23. According to responses on the PIMRS teacher survey, Subscale 9 represented the second closest match in teacher perceptions at 4.27 for School A and 4.26 for School B. Subscale 9 also represented the second highest combined principal average scores on the PIMRS teacher survey.

School A teachers received professional articles from the principal and late starts were used to work on school goals and initiatives. Several teachers commented

on the staff members' work with the homework initiative. Principal A supported teachers' requests to attend conferences or workshops outside of the school. When a teaching staff member attends a workshop outside of the district, he/she must share what he/she learned with the rest of the staff. Principal A shared relevant newsletters with staff as he received them. A group of teachers and the principal attend the state middle school conference each year, and have presented at the conference in recent years. Teachers participated in sharing sessions as part of their in-service time because the principal believed staff can learn from one another. "A lot of times (he/she) will say that all of the answers are in the building, meaning (Principal A) wants us to talk to each other, do research, there seems to be a lot of professional development amongst us."

Principal B will seek out people to participate in new building initiatives, such as Response to Intervention (RTI) and Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID). "If you go to a big deal (workshop training), you're going to be sharing." Principal B planned and presented staff development for the year, as well as supported the work of collaborative teams through the implementation of Professional Learning Communities, or PLCs. One teacher reported, "Our work has gotten much more specific, instead of learning about general teaching methods." Off-campus professional development was encouraged.

Both principals are significantly involved in building level staff development opportunities, especially in coordination and delivery of staff development programs. In-service time is often used for teacher improvement or collaborative planning time.

According to teacher perception, principals at both schools believed that teachers should be continual learners and that they can assist each other in the teaching and learning process.

Table 24 provides teachers' perceptions of the instructional leadership behaviors of the principal in promoting instructional improvement and professional development.

Table 24

Subscale 10: Developing the School Learning Climate (V): Providing Incentives for Learning

PIMRS Survey Question	School A (N)	School A Average	School B (N)	School B Average
46. Recognize students who do superior work with formal rewards such as an honor roll or mention in the principal's newsletter	25	4.04	29	3.83
47. Use assemblies to honor students for academic accomplishments or for behavior or citizenship	25	3.36	29	3.41
48. Recognize superior student achievement or improvement by seeing in the office the students with their work	24	2.79	28	2.75
49. Contact parents to communicate improved or exemplary student performance or contributions	24	3.33	25	2.80
50. Support teachers actively in their recognition and/or reward of student contributions to and accomplishments in class	25	3.40	27	3.37
Subscale 10 teacher averages		3.39		3.23

Teacher responses for Subscale 10 of the PIMRS are represented in Table 24. Teacher perceptions from both schools were fairly consistent in providing incentives to learning. Perceptions were indicated by the PIMRS score of 3.39 from School A and 3.23 from School B. Subscale 10 perceptions from teachers were among the three lowest subscales.

School A's "Extraordinary students" program is designed to recognize those students who might not achieve the highest academically; it is a combination of effort and citizenship. Five of seven teachers and both focus groups identified recognition of "Extraordinary students" each semester as a positive program, although some participants were not sure if Principal A initiated the program or if the Dean of Students did. One teacher noted that Principal A celebrated students' achievement on standardized tests. The teacher reported, "Last year we had a reward day where we had blowup toys for an afternoon as a reward for doing well on the MCA tests." Teachers perceived that an Honor Roll is posted at the end of each grading period. Otherwise, teachers reported no other formal student recognition programs are implemented at the school.

Four teachers identified a new student recognition program, called "A Celebration of Learning," in which all students will put together their best work from the school year and present it to parents and community members. Three teachers identified as important the posting of an honor roll, while two teachers were not certain that an Honor Roll was posted. Teachers perceived a student recognition program at the end of the year for each grade level to be an important event; students

are recognized for their grades, musical performances, competitions, debate, math, other academic activities offered through the school.

A common theme between both schools regarding Subscale 10 was student recognitions occurring at the end of the school year. Honor rolls were posted, but according to teacher perceptions, no formal student recognition program occurred throughout the school year.

Table 25

Summary of Teacher Averages by Subscale

PIMRS Subscales	Teacher Response Average School A	Teacher Response Average School B	Difference In Teacher Response
1. Framing the school goals	4.25	4.53	-0.28
2. Communicating the school goals	4.11	4.13	-0.02
3. Supervision and evaluation of instruction	4.08	3.40	0.68
4. Curricular coordination	3.78	3.78	0.00
5. Monitoring student progress	4.20	3.96	0.24
6. Protecting instructional time	3.73	3.83	-0.10
7. Visibility	3.40	2.49	0.91
8. Incentives to improve teaching	3.22	3.17	0.05
9. Promoting instructional improvement and staff development	4.27	4.26	0.01
10. Providing incentives for learning	3.38	3.23	0.15

Comparisons in average teacher responses by each PIMRS subscale are represented in Table 25. Teacher response data between both schools were similar,

except on two subscales, 3 and 7. The teacher perception difference for Subscale 3, supervision and evaluation of instruction, was recorded at 0.68. The teacher perception difference for Subscale 7, visibility, was calculated at 0.91. Otherwise, the remaining eight subscales recorded differences of 0.28 or lower, with six subscales recording a difference of less than 0.20.

Statements from teacher interviews and focus groups supported the differences in perception between teachers from School A and School B in Subscale 7, visibility. According to interview and focus group responses, all School A teachers reported the high frequency of classroom visits, visibility in the hallways and frequent attendance at teacher meetings. Teachers also reported positive interactions between Principal A and students. Teachers at both schools perceived the need for their principal to be away from the school for district level commitments.

RESEARCH QUESTION THREE—TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL PERCEPTION COMPARISON

What are the similarities and differences in perceptions between principals and teachers regarding the principals' instructional leadership behaviors? To answer this question, data were collected from teachers using the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) survey, teacher interviews, and focus group meetings. Interview and focus group questions were based on the ten subscales of the PIMRS survey.

Following the recommendations of the PIMRS resource manual, each subscale rating was averaged separately (Hallinger, 1990). The PIMRS was not intended to

compute a single instructional leadership score, rather to provide a diverse view of instructional leadership behaviors. Individual items from each subscale were also averaged. Averages for each item and subscale were analyzed to determine areas of strength and potential improvement. Frequency distributions were used to help understand potential agreement or disagreement among teacher subjects regarding the principals' instructional leadership behaviors.

Table 26 compares and contrasts principal and teacher perceptions of the instructional leadership behaviors of the principal in the ten subscales of the PIMRS survey. Common themes and patterns were identified in data gathered from the PIMRS, interviews, and focus groups according to the ten subscales of the PIMRS survey.

Table 26

Comparison of Principal and Teacher PIMRS Responses by Subscale—School A and B

PIMRS Subscale	Principal Average School A	Teachers Average School A	Perception Difference School A	Principal Average School B	Teachers Average School B	Perception Difference School B
1. Framing the school goals	4.80	4.25	0.55	4.40	4.53	-0.13
2. Communicating the school goals	4.40	4.11	0.29	3.80	4.13	-0.33
3. Supervision and evaluation of instruction	4.40	4.08	0.32	3.80	3.40	0.40
4. Curricular coordination	4.40	3.78	0.62	3.60	3.78	-0.18
5. Monitoring student progress	4.40	4.20	0.20	4.80	3.96	0.84
6. Protecting instructional time	3.80	3.73	0.07	4.00	3.83	0.17
7. Visibility	3.25	3.40	-0.15	3.40	2.49	0.91
8. Incentives to improve teaching	2.60	3.22	-0.62	5.00	3.17	1.83
9. Promoting instructional improvement and staff development	5.00	4.27	0.73	5.00	4.26	0.74
10. Providing incentives for learning	3.40	3.38	0.02	2.20	3.23	-1.03

Comparisons in teacher and principal PIMRS responses at School A and School B are represented in Table 26. Perception differences were calculated by

subtracting the teacher's average subscale score from the principal's subscale score. A positive difference indicated the principal subscale score was higher than the teacher subscale score. A negative difference indicated the principal subscale score was lower than the teacher subscale score.

Principal A rated his/her instructional leadership behaviors higher than did teacher responses on eight of 10 subscales. The largest positive difference was recorded in Subscale 9, promoting instructional improvement and staff development, with a difference of 0.73. The largest negative difference was recorded in Subscale 8, providing incentives to improve teaching, with a difference of -0.62. Two subscales produced very similar perception results. Subscale 6, protecting instructional time at 0.02, and Subscale 10, providing incentives for learning at 0.07, found the most similar perceptions between teachers and Principal A on the PIMRS survey.

Principal B rated his/her instructional leadership behaviors higher than teacher responses on six of 10 subscales. The largest positive difference between teacher and principal perceptions was recorded in Subscale 8, providing incentives to improve teaching, with a difference of 1.83. The largest negative difference was recorded in Subscale 10, providing incentives for learning, with a difference of -1.03. Three subscales produced comparable perception results between teachers and Principal B: Subscale 1, framing the school goals at -0.13; Subscale 4, curricular coordination at -0.18; and Subscale 6, protecting instructional time at 0.17.

On Subscale 1 in interviews and focus groups, both the principal and teachers reported familiarity with how goals were framed for the upcoming school year. Even

interview responses indicated an understanding of the goal setting process, showing a 0.55 difference in the perceptions between the principal and teachers. During interviews and focus group meetings, many School B teachers did not seem sure of how the school goals were set, yet their rating on the PIMRS survey showed a difference of -0.13, meaning the principal's perception was rated slightly lower than teachers.

Differences in perceptions between teachers and the principal for subscale 2, communicating the school's goals, were similar. School A principal rated himself/herself 0.29 higher than the teachers perception, whereas School B principal rated himself/herself -0.33 below the teacher's perception, almost the same gap in perception as School A. Teachers from both schools reported that they learned about the school goals during the fall in service meeting with all teachers.

In Subscale 3, School A teachers reported that Principal A was in classrooms every week, a rating 4.08 for the teachers, lower than the Principal A's rating 4.40. A majority of teachers commented on Principal A's visits to their classrooms, indicating that once a week was common.

School B teachers reported that Principal B was not in the classrooms as often as they expected because of meetings and district office obligations.

Teacher groups from both schools perceived their respective principals as allowing teachers to make curricular decisions regarding Subscale 4, curriculum coordination. They also reported that Principal A and B were frequently involved in team and grade level meetings where curriculum was discussed.

In Subscale 5, the principal and teachers at School A had very similar perceptions about monitoring of student progress, as indicated by the difference in perception of 0.20.

Although School B teachers reported during interviews how Principal B used data to make decisions regarding programming for students, the teachers' reported 3.96 result was much lower than the principal's perception of that behavior at 4.80. Both groups of teachers reported their respective principal frequently used standardized test data to make data-driven decisions about students.

Teachers from School A and School B shared very similar perceptions about Subscale 6, protecting instructional time. The difference in perception at School A was 0.07, and 0.17 in School B. Teachers from both schools referenced an increase in the importance of classroom instructional time. Teachers reported that teaching time is sacred with few interruptions. Homeroom time is used for announcements or group or student organization meetings for students that would otherwise meet during or after the school.

In Subscale 7, School A perceptions between principal and teachers were very similar, as indicated by a -0.15 difference. Even though Principal B and teachers from School B identified visibility as a perceived area of improvement, teachers perceived principal visibility with a score of 0.91 above the principal's perception. The results of two questions kept principal and teacher perception scores lower in the area of visibility. Question 34 pertained to the principal covering classes for teachers until a

late or substitute teacher arrives, and question 35 asked about the principal tutoring students or providing direct instruction to classes.

Subscale 8, incentives to improve teaching, produced the largest gap in principal and teacher perception for both schools. Perception differences for School A were -0.62, while School B's was 1.83. There was a wide distribution of scores from teachers. According to interview and focus group data from both schools, principals tended to informally recognize teachers in private. Some teachers preferred this, while others would like to see more public recognition. Teachers at both schools reported that giving presentations during staff developments was a way for principals to publicly recognize teaching staff.

Both teaching staffs reported that principals were quite active in instructional improvement and staff development. Staffs in both schools have multiple opportunities to learn from each other, including staff development opportunities generated from the teaching staff. Even so, principal and teacher perception differences were almost identical, with School A recording a difference of +0.73, and School B posting a +0.74 difference in perception.

In Subscale 10, providing incentives for learning, School A recorded the lowest difference in teacher and principal perception at 0.02. Principal B rated himself/herself the lowest in this subscale, with a difference in perception from teachers of -1.03. Even though there was a wide distribution of scores for both schools, a majority of the teacher responses where clustered around a rating of 3. Although some teachers could identify how students were recognized by their

achievements, some teachers did not seem aware of the student recognition programs implemented by their own school.

SUMMARY

This mixed methods case study explored the perceptions of teachers and principals regarding the principal's instructional leadership behaviors in two top performing Minnesota middle schools. The Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) was used to measure the perceptions of Minnesota middle school teachers and principals in relation to the principal's instructional leadership behaviors. Interviews were conducted with the principals, teachers, and teacher focus groups to gather more in-depth information. The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of middle school teachers and principals regarding the instructional leadership behaviors of the middle school principal and to determine similarities and differences in those perceptions. Chapter 5 will include conclusions and recommendations based on the data reported in Chapter 4.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this mixed methods case study was to explore the perceptions of middle school teachers and principals regarding the principals' instructional leadership behaviors in two top performing Minnesota middle schools. The perceptions of the principal's role in providing instructional leadership, specifically at the middle school level in Minnesota, had not previously been explored. A survey, the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS), was used to measure the perceptions of Minnesota middle school teachers and principals in relation to the principal's active instructional leadership behaviors. Interviews were conducted with the principals, teachers, and teacher focus groups in both schools. Survey and interview data were analyzed and organized according to each research question.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are principals' perceptions of their instructional leadership behaviors in selected top performing Minnesota middle schools?

2. What are teachers' perceptions of principals' instructional leadership behaviors in selected top performing Minnesota middle schools?
3. What are the similarities and differences in perceptions of principals and teachers regarding principals' instructional leadership behaviors?

CONCLUSIONS

Behaviors Principals are Perceived to Practice

Themes that emerged from the principal and teacher responses have been organized according to principal instructional leadership behaviors that were most perceived to occur, and those perceived to occur less often. According to the data gathered from this study, principals were almost always perceived to engage in the following instructional leadership behaviors: clear goal setting, promoting instructional improvement and staff development monitoring of student progress, communicating the school's goals, and supervision and evaluation of instruction. An additional instructional leadership behavior frequently identified in teacher interviews and focus groups was the principal's ability to build positive relationships and trust with teachers.

Clear goal setting. Although principals developed goals differently, both principals used data and a specific process to determine the goals for the school year. All students were important to each principal, regardless of student demographic designation. Wagner and Kegan, (2006) outlined a number of components, one being

the use of real student data, that must be considered, measured, and managed for a school to be successful.

One could argue that the competitive nature of both principals helped create student and school success. One principal in particular was reported by teachers to be very competitive. According to teacher reports, the principal set goals in his professional and personal life and encouraged students to do the same. Teachers reported that the principal's competitive nature motivated the students and staff to be the best they could be. Teachers viewed competition in test scores with other schools positively.

Along with framing of school goals, the importance of revisiting goals throughout the school year was cited by a majority of teachers. Revisiting the school goals was accomplished in staff and team meetings, PLC work time, as well as email communication reminders. Referring back to the goals on a regular basis seemed to keep the goals clear and helped to maintain the school's focus and direction.

Promote instructional improvement and staff development. Both principals reported that professional development opportunities to improve teaching and learning were encouraged. Teachers were asked to share their skills with others, thus building capacity in teachers as instructional leaders. The idea of building instructional leadership capacity with teachers aligns with the work of Fullan (2008) in building capacity to implement change, as well as Leana (2011), who described how teachers have human capital and that social capital is needed to improve instructional practices, thus helping students to be more successful.

Both principals in this study provided opportunities for teachers to learn from their peers through PLC work and teacher in-service time during which teachers frequently presented to peers regarding their work in the classroom. This practice supported Leana's statement, "Teachers were almost twice as likely to turn to their peers as to the experts designated by the school district, and four times more likely to seek advice from one another than from the principal" (p. 33). Both principals in this study provided a learning environment that focused on continuous improvement. Goldring et al. (2009) provided a definition of instructional leadership: "Instructional leadership refers to those sets of leadership practices that involve the planning, evaluation, coordination, and improvement of teaching and learning. It is also referred to as learning-centered leadership" (p. X).

Part of the improvement in student learning comes from aligning curriculum. Instead of immersing themselves in the task of aligning curriculum, which Marzano et al. (2005) identified as having one of the lower effect sizes on student achievement, both principals trusted teachers and others with curriculum experience to make curricular decisions in the best interest of students. According to Elmore (as cited in Wagner & Kegan, 2006), teachers have been left to make choices on curriculum and instruction in the past, and administrators have assisted in keeping those processes internal. This type of instructional leadership behavior definitely aligned with MacGregor's Theory Y leadership style (Northhouse, 2009), in which employees are trusted to do the work for which they have been trained and hired.

Monitoring student progress. Both principals were perceived by teachers to be significantly involved in monitoring multiple data points to facilitate student achievement. Data points such as MCA and MAP test scores, student grades, progress monitoring data, and other data points, were accessed and analyzed on a frequent basis to alter programming, change curriculum, or provide student interventions as needed to promote student achievement. This allowed for flexibility in programming so the needs of students were being met in a timely manner.

Communicating the school's goals. Both principals shared the school goals at the fall teacher workshop, throughout the school year in email communications to parents and families, and in staff development and PLC activities. Offering goals to the school community may also have provided an accountability mechanism for the teaching staff and students to continue putting forth their best work. Sharing school goals with the community can be a form of outreach, which Marzano et al. (2005) identified as having a significant positive effect on student learning.

Supervision and evaluation of instruction. According to the 21 leadership behaviors outlined by Marzano et al. (2005), monitoring and evaluating instruction had a significant positive effect on student learning. Principals in this study used methods that best reflected their supervision and evaluation of instruction. One principal intentionally scheduled classroom visits into his/her day, while another worked exclusively with all new teachers in the building to establish high teacher expectations. Both made instructional leadership in the classroom a priority even

though their schedules were filled with other commitments both inside and outside of the building.

Building positive relationships and trust. Researchers such as Giancola and Hutchinson (2005), Langley and Jacobs (2006), Marzano et al. (2005), Seashore-Louis and Wahlstrom (2011), and Mumford (2010) all identified the importance of building positive relationships in the leadership role. Most teachers at both schools reported maintaining a positive relationship with the principal. Teachers reported feeling comfortable in having conversations with their principal on any issue. Teachers respected that the principal may not always agree with their views or ideas, but appreciated that the principal would listen. Principals reported to make attempts to learn more about the personal lives of teachers to learn more about them as people. Individual teachers were rarely singled out in front of the group for praise, which teachers seemed to appreciate. All individual recognition was done on a private level, which the principals believed to build positive relationships with teachers.

Furthermore, teachers in both schools reported a feeling of trust from their principal. In turn, principals trusted that teachers make sound decisions that would have the greatest positive impact on student achievement. Principals at both schools readily praised teachers for the tremendous work done in their teaching of students. Also, principals shared they could not do the work alone. They viewed teachers as valuable assets to the organization. Again, instructional leadership behavior of this kind aligned with MacGregor's Theory Y leadership style (Northhouse, 2009). Employees are trusted to do the work for which they have been trained and hired. This

style encourages leaders and workers to accept responsibility in helping the organization reach its goal, which provides for a high level of satisfaction.

Less Probable Principal Behaviors

The data gathered from this study indicated that principals and teachers perceived the principal to engage less frequently in the following instructional leadership behaviors: visibility, incentives to improve teaching, incentives to improve learning, and curricular coordination. All four of these instructional leadership behaviors were rated lowest by teachers and principals.

According to Marzano et al. (2005), leadership responsibilities with the lowest effect size according to the meta-analysis included affirmation; involvement in curriculum, instruction, and assessment; optimizer; relationships; and visibility. This information raises the question of whether school leaders should focus on only those responsibilities that have the largest effect size, while ignoring those with the lowest effect size. This information does not mean that those instructional leadership behaviors are less important than those perceived to be practiced more often.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study have provided valuable insight into the perceptions of the instructional leadership behaviors of two middle school principals of high performing schools in Minnesota. From the results of the study, several recommendations for professional practice emerged for middle school principals in how they can engage in quality instructional leadership practices. Those guidelines

and recommendations, along with recommendations for further study are discussed in the following sections.

Recommendations for Professional Practice

The following recommendations are made based on the research study and the conclusions drawn from the data.

1. It is imperative that principals have comfort and ability in using data. Principals use data to make programming and individual student decisions, and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. This skill is vital when creating school goals and monitoring student progress. With school accountability measures in place, the principal's ability to effectively and efficiently handle data will remain essential to the school's success.
2. Principals in this study provided opportunities for teachers to learn with their colleagues. Other principals should consider investigating staff development opportunities that are developed within their building. Using teachers as leaders for these opportunities allows the staff to grow as a learning community and honors the expertise and resources that exist in the building.
3. Even though visibility was perceived to happen less often than other behaviors and has a smaller effect size on student achievement, visibility of the principal is still important. Being available to teachers and students helps build positive relationships, creating a safe learning and working environment for all. Also, being present in classrooms sends a strong

message to teachers and students about the importance of the work that is done in classrooms.

4. Principals need to maintain the importance of building relationships. As Langley and Jacobs (2006) stated, building relationships will, "help increase interpersonal competence, intergroup cooperation, and flexibility, and this should result in an increased organizational effectiveness" (p. 7). Principals in this study understood that staff needed to work together as a team to provide the best opportunity for student achievement.

Recommendations for Future Study

From this mixed methods study of perceptions of middle school principals as instructional leaders, a number of questions can be considered for future research.

1. In this study, principal and teacher perceptions of principal instructional leadership behaviors were very similar. A larger principal and teacher sample of effective middle schools may provide insight into this phenomenon.
2. A comparison of teacher and principal perceptions in struggling schools with successful schools. The principals' perceptions in this study were similar to teachers' perceptions.
3. A correlation of a principal's length of service at a school and the school's academic achievement. Both principals in this study served over 10 years in their current positions at successful schools.

4. According to the results of this study and Marzano's work on instructional leadership, principal visibility does not have as large of effect size as many other instructional leadership behaviors. Studying the most important aspects of principal visibility would be helpful for principals to focus their time and efforts in this area.

SUMMARY

This mixed methods case study explored the perceptions of teachers and principals regarding the principal's instructional leadership behaviors in two top performing Minnesota middle schools. Data were collected from principals and teachers using the PIMRS survey, interviews, and focus groups.

In this study, teacher and principal perceptions of the principal's instructional leadership behaviors were found to be mostly similar. Behaviors that were perceived to occur most often by teachers and principals were framing of the school goals, promoting instructional improvement and staff development monitoring of student progress, communicating the school's goals, and supervision and evaluation of instruction. Interview and focus group data revealed the principal's ability to build positive relationships and trust with teachers was important as well. The importance of the study highlights possible instructional leadership behaviors that current and emerging instructional leaders should consider to improve their skills and increase principal effectiveness.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

21 Responsibilities of the School Leader

21 Responsibilities of the School Leader

Responsibilities of the School Leader	Description of responsibility
1. Affirmation	recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of students, staff, and the school as a whole.
2. Change Agent	consciously challenging the status quo; being willing to lead change initiatives with uncertain outcomes; systematically considering new and better ways of doing things; consistently attempting to operate at the edge versus the center of the school's competence.
3. Contingent Rewards	using hard work and results as the basis for rewards and recognition; using performance versus seniority as a primary criterion for rewards and recognition.
4. Communication	developing effective means for teachers to communicate with one another; being easily accessible to teachers; maintaining open and effective lines of communication with staff.
5. Culture	promoting cohesion among staff; promoting a sense of well-being among staff; developing an understanding of purpose among staff' developing a shared vision of what the school could be like.
6. Discipline	protecting instructional time from interruptions; protecting teachers from internal and external distractions.

7. Flexibility	adapting leadership style to the needs of specific situations; being directive or nondirective as the situation warrants; encouraging people to express diverse and contrary opinions; being comfortable with making major changes in how things are done.
8. Focus	establishing concrete goals for curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices within the school; establishing concrete goals for the general functioning of the school; establishing high, concrete goals, and expectations that all students will meet them; continually keeping attention on established goals.
9. Ideals/Beliefs	possessing well-defined beliefs about schools, teaching, and learning; sharing beliefs about school, teaching, and learning with the staff; demonstrating behaviors that are consistent with beliefs.
10. Input	providing opportunities for staff to be involved in developing school policies; providing opportunities for staff input on all important decisions; using leadership teams in decision making.
11. Intellectual stimulation	continually exposing staff to cutting-edge research and theory on effective schooling; keeping informed about current research and theory on effective schooling; fostering systematic discussion regarding current research and theory on effective schooling.

12. Involvement in curriculum, instruction, and assessment	being directly involved in helping teachers design curricular activities, address assessment issues, and address instructional issues.
13. Knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment	possessing extensive knowledge about effective instructional practices, curricular practices, and assessment practices; providing conceptual guidance regarding effective classroom practices.
14. Monitoring/evaluating	continually monitoring the effectiveness of the school's curricular, instructional, and assessment practices; being continually aware of the impact of the school's practices on student achievement.
15. Optimizer	inspiring teachers to accomplish things that might be beyond their grasp; being the driving force behind major initiatives; portraying a positive attitude about the ability of staff to accomplish substantial things.
16. Order	establishing routines for the smooth running of the school that staff understand and follow; providing and reinforcing clear structures, rules, and procedures for staff, providing and reinforcing clear structures, rules, and procedures for students
17. Outreach	ensuring that the school complies with all district and state mandates; being an advocate of the school with parents, central office, and the community at large

18. Relationships	being informed about significant personal issues within the lives of staff members; being aware of personal needs of teachers; acknowledging significant events in the lives of staff members; maintaining personal relationships with teachers.
19. Resources	ensuring that teachers have the necessary materials and equipment; ensuring that teachers have the necessary staff development opportunities to directly enhance their teaching.
20. Situational awareness	accurately predicting what could go wrong from day to day; being aware of informal groups and relationships among the staff; being aware of issues in the school that have not surfaced but could create discord.
21. Visibility	making systematic and frequent visits to classrooms; having frequent contact with students; being highly visible to students, teachers, and parents.

APPENDIX B

Increased Responsibilities of Pprincipals

Area of increased responsibility	Description
Instructional leadership	Provide guidance, mentorship and leadership to teachers in regards to teaching methods. Also serve as a coordinator and manager of curriculum that meets state and national standards.
Distributed leadership and shared decision making	While this leadership style removes some responsibility from the principal, allowing this type of environment takes more time and requires a strong leadership skill set to navigate the challenges this concept brings to the organization.
Increased public scrutiny in a high stakes environment	Test scores are publicized statewide and locally, with the potential to affect property values, and autonomy of the school. Principals need advanced skills in "public engagement, interpreting and managing data, and political savvy" (p. 1).
Federal, state, judicial, and union requirements	Principals are expected to have a working knowledge of federal and state educational programs, educational law, and union contracts within the school setting.

Increased Responsibilities of Principals

Area of increased responsibility	Description
Instructional leadership	Provide guidance, mentorship and leadership to teachers in regards to teaching methods. Also serve as a coordinator and manager of curriculum that meets state and national standards.
Distributed leadership and shared decision making	While this leadership style removes some responsibility from the principal, allowing this type of environment takes more time and requires a strong leadership skill set to navigate the challenges this concept brings to the organization.
Increased public scrutiny in a high stakes environment	Test scores are publicized statewide and locally, with the potential to affect property values, and autonomy of the school. Principals need advanced skills in "public engagement, interpreting and managing data, and political savvy" (p. 1).
Federal, state, judicial, and union requirements	Principals are expected to have a working knowledge of federal and state educational programs, educational law, and union contracts within the school setting.

Parent and community involvement and partnership management	Leadership in this area requires developing ideas that will engage parents and community in partnerships and alliances that promote student learning and school improvement.
Leading complex change	In addition to the above skills, principals must "take the reins in developing the organizational capacity and structure needed to support good teaching and learning in all classrooms, be skilled at dealing with resistance to change, build consensus among diverse stakeholder groups, and establish, communicate, and implement shared vision and strategic direction" (p. 2).

APPENDIX C

Reliability Estimates for the PIMRS

Reliability Estimates for the PIMRS

Subscale	Reliability
Frame goals	.89
Communicate goals	.89
Supervision/Evaluation	.90
Curricular coordination	.90
Monitors student progress	.90
Protects instructional time	.84
Visibility	.81
Incentives for teachers	.78
Professional development	.86
Academic standards	.83
Incentives for learning	.87

*Reliability estimates are Cronbach Alpha coefficients

APPENDIX D

Principal Interview Questions

Principal Interview Questions

Questions based on the PIMRS survey questions.

1. How do you frame the school goals?
2. Tell me how school goals are communicated to all stakeholders.
3. What is your process for supervising and evaluating instruction?
4. What is your role in coordinating curriculum?
5. Describe how you monitor student progress?
6. What steps do you take to protect instructional time?
7. How do you maintain a visible presence in the school?
8. What do you do to recognize or reinforce exemplary teaching practices?
9. How do you promote professional development for your staff?
10. What do you do to recognize students for their learning?

APPENDIX E

Teacher and Focus Group Interview Questions

Teacher and Focus Group Interview Questions

Questions based on the PIMRS survey questions.

1. How does your principal frame the school goals?
2. Tell me how school goals are communicated to all stakeholders.
3. How does your principal supervise and evaluate instruction?
4. What is your principal's role in coordinating curriculum?
5. Describe how your principal monitors student progress?
6. What does your principal do to protect instructional time?
7. How does your principal maintain a visible presence in the school?
8. What does your principal do to recognize or reinforce exemplary teaching practices?
9. How does your principal promote professional development for the staff?
10. How does your principal recognize students for their learning?

APPENDIX F

Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale
Principal and Teacher

PRINCIPAL INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT

RATING SCALE

Principal Form

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THE PRINCIPAL INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT RATING SCALE

PART I: Please provide the following information about yourself:

(A) School Name: _____

(B) Years, at the end of this school year, that you have worked with the current principal:

___ 1 ___ 5-9 ___ more than 15

___ 2-4 ___ 10-15

(C) Years experience as a teacher at the end of this school year:

___ 1 ___ 5-9 ___ more than 15

___ 2-4 ___ 10-15

PART II: This questionnaire is designed to provide a profile of principal leadership. It consists of 50 behavioral statements that describe principal job practices and behaviors. You are asked to consider each question in terms of your observations of the principal's leadership over the past school year.

Read each statement carefully. Then circle the number that best fits the specific job behavior or practice of this principal during the past school year. For the response to each statement:

5 represents *Almost Always*
4 represents *Frequently*
3 represents *Sometimes*
2 represents *Seldom*
1 represents *Almost Never*

In some cases, these responses may seem awkward; use your judgment in selecting the most appropriate response to such questions. Please circle only one number per question. Try to answer every question. Thank you.

To what extent does your principal . . . ?

	ALMOST NEVER				ALMOST ALWAYS
I. FRAME THE SCHOOL GOALS					
1. Develop a focused set of annual school-wide goals	1	2	3	4	5
2. Frame the school's goals in terms of staff responsibilities for meeting them	1	2	3	4	5
3. Use needs assessment or other formal and informal methods to secure staff input on goal development	1	2	3	4	5
4. Use data on student performance when developing the school's academic goals	1	2	3	4	5
5. Develop goals that are easily understood and used by teachers in the school	1	2	3	4	5
II. COMMUNICATE THE SCHOOL GOALS					
6. Communicate the school's mission effectively to members of the school community	1	2	3	4	5
7. Discuss the school's academic goals with teachers at faculty meetings	1	2	3	4	5
8. Refer to the school's academic goals when making curricular decisions with teachers	1	2	3	4	5
9. Ensure that the school's academic goals are reflected in highly visible displays in the school (e.g., posters or bulletin boards emphasizing academic progress)	1	2	3	4	5
10. Refer to the school's goals or mission in forums with students (e.g., in assemblies or discussions)	1	2	3	4	5
III. SUPERVISE & EVALUATE INSTRUCTION					
11. Ensure that the classroom priorities of teachers are consistent with the goals and direction of the school	1	2	3	4	5
12. Review student work products when evaluating classroom instruction	1	2	3	4	5

	ALMOST NEVER				ALMOST ALWAYS
13. Conduct informal observations in classrooms on a regular basis (informal observations are unscheduled, last at least 5 minutes, and may or may not involve written feedback or a formal conference)	1	2	3	4	5
14. Point out specific strengths in teacher's instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)	1	2	3	4	5
15. Point out specific weaknesses in teacher instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)	1	2	3	4	5
IV. COORDINATE THE CURRICULUM					
16. Make clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels (e.g., the principal, vice principal, or teacher-leaders)	1	2	3	4	5
17. Draw upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions	1	2	3	4	5
18. Monitor the classroom curriculum to see that it covers the school's curricular objectives	1	2	3	4	5
19. Assess the overlap between the school's curricular objectives and the school's achievement tests	1	2	3	4	5
20. Participate actively in the review of curricular materials	1	2	3	4	5
V. MONITOR STUDENT PROGRESS					
21. Meet individually with teachers to discuss student progress	1	2	3	4	5
22. Discuss academic performance results with the faculty to identify curricular strengths and weaknesses	1	2	3	4	5
23. Use tests and other performance measure to assess progress toward school goals	1	2	3	4	5

	ALMOST NEVER				ALMOST ALWAYS
38. Acknowledge teachers' exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files	1	2	3	4	5
39. Reward special efforts by teachers with opportunities for professional recognition	1	2	3	4	5
40. Create professional growth opportunities for teachers as a reward for special contributions to the school	1	2	3	4	5
IX. PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT					
41. Ensure that inservice activities attended by staff are consistent with the school's goals	1	2	3	4	5
42. Actively support the use in the classroom of skills acquired during inservice training	1	2	3	4	5
43. Obtain the participation of the whole staff in important inservice activities	1	2	3	4	5
44. Lead or attend teacher inservice activities concerned with instruction	1	2	3	4	5
45. Set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas or information from inservice activities	1	2	3	4	5
X. PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR LEARNING					
46. Recognize students who do superior work with formal rewards such as an honor roll or mention in the principal's newsletter	1	2	3	4	5
47. Use assemblies to honor students for academic accomplishments or for behavior or citizenship	1	2	3	4	5
48. Recognize superior student achievement or improvement by seeing in the office the students with their work	1	2	3	4	5
49. Contact parents to communicate improved or exemplary student performance or contributions	1	2	3	4	5
50. Support teachers actively in their recognition and/or reward of student contributions to and accomplishments in class	1	2	3	4	5

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Professor Dr. Philip Hallinger, author of the *Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale* (PIMRS), received his doctorate in Administration and Policy Analysis from Stanford University. He has worked as a teacher, administrator, and professor and as the director of several leadership development centers. He has been a consultant to education and healthcare organizations throughout the United States, Canada, Asia, and Australia. He is currently Professor and Executive Director of the College of Management, Mahidol University, in Thailand.

The *PIMRS* was developed with the cooperation of the Milpitas (California) Unified School District, Richard P. Mesa, Superintendent. As a research instrument, it meets professional standards of reliability and validity and has been used in over 150 studies of principal leadership in the United States, Canada, Australia, Europe, and Asia.

The scale is also used by school districts for evaluation and professional development purposes. It surpasses legal standards for use as a personnel evaluation instrument and has been recommended by researchers interested in professional development and district improvement (see, for example, Edwin Bridges, *Managing the Incompetent Teacher*, ERIC, 1984). Articles on the development and use of the *PIMRS* have appeared in *The Elementary School Journal*, *Administrators Notebook*, *NASSP Bulletin*, and *Educational Leadership*.

PRINCIPAL INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT

RATING SCALE

TEACHER FORM

Published by:

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Teacher Form 2.0

THE PRINCIPAL INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT RATING SCALE

PART I: Please provide the following information if instructed to do so by the person administering the instrument:

(A) District Name: _____

(B) Your School's Name: _____

(C) Principal's Name: _____

(D) Number of school years you have been principal at this school:

___ 1 ___ 5-9 ___ more than 15

___ 2-4 ___ 10-15

(E) Years, at the end of this school year, that you have been a principal:

___ 1 ___ 5-9 ___ more than 15

___ 2-4 ___ 10-15

PART II: This questionnaire is designed to provide a profile of your leadership. It consists of 50 behavioral statements that describe principal job practices and behaviors. You are asked to consider each question in terms of your leadership over the past school year.

Read each statement carefully. Then circle the number that best fits the specific job behavior or practice as you conducted it during the past school year. For the response to each statement:

5 represents *Almost Always*

4 represents *Frequently*

3 represents *Sometimes*

2 represents *Seldom*

1 represents *Almost Never*

In some cases, these responses may seem awkward; use your judgement in selecting the most appropriate response to such questions. Please circle only one number per question. Try to answer every question.

Thank you.

To what extent do you . . . ?

	ALMOST NEVER				ALMOST ALWAYS
I. FRAME THE SCHOOL GOALS					
1. Develop a focused set of annual school-wide goals	1	2	3	4	5
2. Frame the school's goals in terms of staff responsibilities for meeting them	1	2	3	4	5
3. Use needs assessment or other formal and informal methods to secure staff input on goal development	1	2	3	4	5
4. Use data on student performance when developing the school's academic goals	1	2	3	4	5
5. Develop goals that are easily understood and used by teachers in the school	1	2	3	4	5
II. COMMUNICATE THE SCHOOL GOALS					
6. Communicate the school's mission effectively to members of the school community	1	2	3	4	5
7. Discuss the school's academic goals with teachers at faculty meetings	1	2	3	4	5
8. Refer to the school's academic goals when making curricular decisions with teachers	1	2	3	4	5
9. Ensure that the school's academic goals are reflected in highly visible displays in the school (e.g., posters or bulletin boards emphasizing academic progress)	1	2	3	4	5
10. Refer to the school's goals or mission in forums with students (e.g., in assemblies or discussions)	1	2	3	4	5
III. SUPERVISE & EVALUATE INSTRUCTION					
11. Ensure that the classroom priorities of teachers are consistent with the goals and direction of the school	1	2	3	4	5
12. Review student work products when evaluating classroom instruction	1	2	3	4	5

	ALMOST NEVER				ALMOST ALWAYS
13. Conduct informal observations in classrooms on a regular basis (informal observations are unscheduled, last at least 5 minutes, and may or may not involve written feedback or a formal conference)	1	2	3	4	5
14. Point out specific strengths in teacher's instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)	1	2	3	4	5
15. Point out specific weaknesses in teacher instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)	1	2	3	4	5
IV. COORDINATE THE CURRICULUM					
16. Make clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels (e.g., the principal, vice principal, or teacher-leaders)	1	2	3	4	5
17. Draw upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions	1	2	3	4	5
18. Monitor the classroom curriculum to see that it covers the school's curricular objectives	1	2	3	4	5
19. Assess the overlap between the school's curricular objectives and the school's achievement tests	1	2	3	4	5
20. Participate actively in the review of curricular materials	1	2	3	4	5
V. MONITOR STUDENT PROGRESS					
21. Meet individually with teachers to discuss student progress	1	2	3	4	5
22. Discuss academic performance results with the faculty to identify curricular strengths and weaknesses	1	2	3	4	5
23. Use tests and other performance measure to assess progress toward school goals	1	2	3	4	5

	ALMOST NEVER				ALMOST ALWAYS
38. Acknowledge teachers' exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files	1	2	3	4	5
39. Reward special efforts by teachers with opportunities for professional recognition	1	2	3	4	5
40. Create professional growth opportunities for teachers as a reward for special contributions to the school	1	2	3	4	5
IX. PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT					
41. Ensure that inservice activities attended by staff are consistent with the school's goals	1	2	3	4	5
42. Actively support the use in the classroom of skills acquired during inservice training	1	2	3	4	5
43. Obtain the participation of the whole staff in important inservice activities	1	2	3	4	5
44. Lead or attend teacher inservice activities concerned with instruction	1	2	3	4	5
45. Set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas or information from inservice activities	1	2	3	4	5
X. PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR LEARNING					
46. Recognize students who do superior work with formal rewards such as an honor roll or mention in the principal's newsletter	1	2	3	4	5
47. Use assemblies to honor students for academic accomplishments or for behavior or citizenship	1	2	3	4	5
48. Recognize superior student achievement or improvement by seeing in the office the students with their work	1	2	3	4	5
49. Contact parents to communicate improved or exemplary student performance or contributions	1	2	3	4	5
50. Support teachers actively in their recognition and/or reward of student contributions to and accomplishments in class	1	2	3	4	5

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Professor Dr. Philip Hallinger, author of the *Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale* (PIMRS), received his doctorate in Administration and Policy Analysis from Stanford University. He has worked as a teacher, administrator, and professor and as the director of several leadership development centers. He has been a consultant to education and healthcare organizations throughout the United States, Canada, Asia, and Australia. He is currently Professor and Executive Director of the College of Management, Mahidol University, in Thailand.

The *PIMRS* was developed with the cooperation of the Milpitas (California) Unified School District, Richard P. Mesa, Superintendent. As a research instrument, it meets professional standards of reliability and validity and has been used in over 150 studies of principal leadership in the United States, Canada, Australia, Europe, and Asia.

The scale is also used by school districts for evaluation and professional development purposes. It surpasses legal standards for use as a personnel evaluation instrument and has been recommended by researchers interested in professional development and district improvement (see, for example, Edwin Bridges, *Managing the Incompetent Teacher*, ERIC, 1984). Articles on the development and use of the *PIMRS* have appeared in *The Elementary School Journal*, *Administrators Notebook*, *NASSP Bulletin*, and *Educational Leadership*.

APPENDIX G

IRB Information

PLEASE ENABLE MACROS FOR SPELL CHECK!

Sponsored Programs

Institutional Review Board Application
For
Conduct of Research Involving Human Subjects

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Project Title: **Perceptions of middle school principals as instructional leaders: A case study of two schools**

Project Summary (3-5 sentences, include method of data gathering): **The purpose of this study is to determine the perceptions of teachers and principals regarding the principal's instructional leadership behaviors in two selected Minnesota middle schools. This mixed-methods case study will utilize the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) to measure the perceptions of participating teachers and principals, interviews with the principal and selected teaching staff, and teacher focus groups in both schools.**

Anticipated Beginning Date for Data Collection: **November 26, 2012** Ending Date: **December 30, 2012**

Location of the Research: **Two Minnesota middle schools, sites to be determined based on availability and desire to participate**

RESEARCHERS

Principal Investigator (PI): **Todd Van Erp**

Type of Research: ☐ faculty/staff ☐ undergraduate ☐ graduate masters ☒ graduate doctoral

Mailing Address: **648 Brianne Drive, Sartell, MN 56377**

Telephone: **320-333-6483** Email: **tvanerp6@gmail.com OR vato1001@stcloudstate.edu**

Advisor or Course Instructor (if PI is a student): **Dr. John Eller**

Other Investigators: **None**

If you collaborate with an individual from another institution, the research must be submitted to that institution's IRB as well, and a copy of the approval letter must be filed with SCSU's IRB

SPONSORS

Is there potential or confirmed funding sources for this research project? ☐Yes ☒No

If confirmed, please include funding agency and corresponding internal grant/contract account number.

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

By signing below I certify/agree:

- I have read and will comply with the letter and spirit of the ***Ethical Principles for the Conduct of Research with Human Participants*** adopted by the St. Cloud State University Institutional Review Board (available at http://www.stcloudstate.edu/irb/scsucodeofethics.asp)
- The information in this application is correct.
- I will conduct the research in accordance with all submitted statements, except when changes are needed to eliminate an immediate, apparent hazard to subjects.
- I will obtain written approval of significant deviations from the originally approved protocol or consent document(s) ***before*** making those changes.
- I will promptly report to the IRB unexpected or otherwise significant adverse events that occur in the course of this research. I will make reasonable efforts to alleviate the effects of adverse events.
- I will report to the IRB and the subjects any significant new findings that develop during the course of the study that may affect the risks and benefits to subjects.
- I will use an informed consent process that ensures potential research subjects fully understand the purpose of the research study, the nature of the procedures they are asked to undergo, the potential risks of these procedures, and their rights as a study volunteer. I will ensure that co-investigators or others assisting with the research are fully informed of these procedures.
- I will not begin any part of the research until final written approval is granted.
- Approval is in effect for one year unless otherwise indicated. The research is subject to continuing review and approval. I will comply promptly with IRB requests to report on the status of the study.
- I will keep records of this research, data, outcomes and adverse effects to permit ongoing assessment of risks and benefits to participants.
- I am aware that certain departments may have their own standards for conducting research, and that it is up to me to familiarize myself with them.

Investigator's Signature Todd J. VanEss Date 11-9-12

Advisor/Instructor's Signature [signature] Date 11/9/12

TYPE OF REVIEW

REVIEW WORKSHEET

Check **ALL** categories—if any—that apply to your research.

Common Categories of Exempt Review

☐ **i. Research conducted in an educational setting involving normal education practices**, such as research that examines or compares regular and special education:
- instructional strategies/techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods

☒ **ii. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement) , survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior if confidentiality or anonymity is maintained.**

☐ **iii. Research involving activities in category 2 with subjects who are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office**—regardless of whether the subjects may be identified or the information is sensitive.

☐ **iv. Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens**, if one of the following is true:
- **the sources are publicly available or information is recorded by the investigator in a way that subjects cannot be directly or indirectly identified.**

☐ **v. Research subject to the approval of Federal Department or Agency heads and designed to study or evaluate public benefit or service programs.**

☐ **vi. Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, if one of the following is consumed:**
- **wholesome foods without additives, or a food that contains a food ingredient, agricultural chemical, or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe by the Food and Drug Administration, Environmental Protection Agency, or U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service**

Common Categories of Expedited Review

☐ **i. Clinical studies of drugs or medical devices only when research on drugs for which an investigational new drug application is not required. (Note: Research on marketed drugs that significantly increases the risks or decreases the acceptability of the risks associated with the use of the product is not eligible for expedited review.) or research on medical devices for which (i) an investigational device exemption application is not required; or (ii) the medical device is cleared/approved for marketing and the medical device is being used in accordance with its cleared/approved labeling.**

☐ **ii. Collection of blood samples by finger stick, heel stick, ear stick, or venipuncture as follows:**
- **from healthy, nonpregnant adults who weigh at least 110 pounds (collection may not occur more than 2 times per week or exceed 550 ml in an 8 week period), or from other adults and children, considering the age, weight, and health of the subjects and the collection amount, frequency, and procedure (collection may not occur more than 2 times per week or exceed the lesser of 50 ml or 3 ml per kg in an 8 week period)**

☐ **iii. Collection of biological specimens by noninvasive means for research purposes.**
Examples include:
- **hair and nail clippings in a nondisfiguring manner;**
- **teeth at time of exfoliation or if routine patient care indicates a need for extraction;**
- **excreta and external secretions (including sweat);**
- **uncannulated saliva;**
- **placenta removed at delivery;**
- **amniotic fluid obtained at the time of rupture of the membrane prior to or during labor;**
- **supra- and subgingival dental plaque and calculus, provided the collection procedure is not more invasive than routine prophylactic scaling of the teeth and the process is accomplished in accordance with accepted prophylactic techniques;**
- **mucosal and skin cells collected by buccal scraping or swab, skin swab, or mouth washings;**
- **sputum collected after saline mist nebulization.**

☐ iv. **Collection of data through noninvasive procedures** routinely employed in clinical practice, excluding procedures involving general anesthesia, sedation, x-rays, or microwaves. Any medical devices used must be approved for marketing.
Examples include:
- physical sensors that do not involve input of significant amounts of energy into the subject;
- weighing or testing of sensory acuity;
- magnetic resonance imaging;
- electrocardiography, electroencephalography, thermography, detection of naturally occurring radioactivity, electroretinography, ultrasound, diagnostic infrared imaging, doppler blood flow, and echocardiography;
- moderate exercise, muscular strength testing, body composition assessment, and flexibility testing where appropriate given the age, weight, and health of the individual.

☒ v. **Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings** made for research purposes.

☒ vi. **Research on individual/group characteristics** or behavior or research employing oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies on areas such as perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, social behavior, etc. **If confidentiality or anonymity is maintained.**

Other

☐ **Other, please explain**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Briefly summarize the proposed research and its significance. Include explanations of the following: 1) research question/hypothesis, 2) research design, including independent/dependent variables, if appropriate, and 3) relevant theory

Purpose of the Study--The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of teachers and principals regarding the instructional leadership provided by the principal and to determine similarities and differences in those perceptions.

Significance of the Study--Exploring the perceptions of both groups will identify areas of strength and areas of potential improvement in instructional leadership for principals.

Research Questions
1. What are the principals' self-perception of their instructional leadership in high performing Minnesota middle schools?
2. What are the teachers' perceptions of the principal's instructional leadership in high performing Minnesota middle schools?
3. What are the similarities and differences in perception between principals and teachers regarding the principal's instructional leadership?

Research Design--The case study will be administered at two Minnesota middle schools. Principals will complete the principal version of the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) survey and a principal interview, with questions based on the PIMRS. Teachers will complete the teacher version of the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) survey. 12-18 teachers will be interviewed, with questions based on the PIMRS. Approximately 12-18 teachers will participate in focus groups, using the same questions that were used during the teacher interviews.

Data from the PIMRS survey will be analyzed using simple statistical calculations. Interview and focus group data will be transcribed and coded. Common themes will be identified and reported.

SUBJECT POPULATION

1. How many subjects will participate in the research? Who will the subjects be?

The case study will be administered at two Minnesota middle schools. Approximately 100-150 middle school teachers will be asked to participate in the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) survey. Approximately 12-18 teachers will be interviewed using the attached

teacher interview questions. Approximately 12-18 teachers will participate in focus groups, using the same questions that were used during the teacher interviews.

Two middle school principals will take the PIMRS survey. The principals will also be interviewed, using the attached set of principal interview questions.

2. What are the ages of potential subjects? *(Check all that apply.)*

- ☐ 0-7
- ☐ 8-17
- ☒ 18-64
- ☒ 65+

3. Some populations are considered "vulnerable" to coercion or undue influence. Will any of these populations be invited to participate in the research? *(Check all that apply.)*

- ☐ children (under age 18)
- ☐ prisoners
- ☐ pregnant women
- ☐ economically/educationally disadvantaged individuals
- ☐ elderly individuals (over age 65)
- ☐ non-English speakers
- ☐ mentally disabled individuals

If any of the above vulnerable categories have been checked, provide rationale for using these vulnerable populations and detail the safeguards that will be included in the research to protect their rights and welfare.

- ☒ no vulnerable populations

SUBJECT IDENTIFICATION AND RECRUITMENT

4. How will potential subjects be identified *(e.g. college classes, phone books, membership directories, etc.)* and recruited?

   Minnesota middle schools that have achieved an 80% or higher ranking on the Multiple Measurement Rating from the Minnesota Department of Education initial designation period (2010 - 2011), and 2012. Principals and teachers from the selected schools will be asked to participate in the study.

5. Copies of advertisements, bulletin board notices, telephone scripts, letters, and other recruitment materials are attached. ☒Yes ☐N/A

6. Written documentation of cooperation/permission is REQUIRED from any individual or organization that assists you in identifying and recruiting subject

The following are attached and **MUST** be submitted simultaneously with this application:

Yes	N/A	
☐	☒	Letter/email from professor(s) allowing you to distribute materials in their classes.
☐	☒	Letter/email from independent school(s) that will provide access to students.
☐	☒	Letter/email from medical organization(s) that will provide access to clients/patients.
☒	☐	Other, please explain Letter from superintendents of participating school districts

7. Will subjects be compensated for participating in the research? ☒Yes ☐No

   If so, what kind of reward will be given (monetary, extra credit, or other) and when will subjects receive it *(e.g. the beginning of the study, the end of the study, or at each visit)*?

   Principals will be given a $100 gift card at the end of the study to spend on staff treats for a staff meeting.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

8. Describe the research procedures and list tasks/activities that subjects will be asked to complete

   1. The middle school principal will complete PIMRS survey (Principal form) using SurveyMonkey.

   2. The middle school principal will be interviewed by the researcher.

   3. Teachers that have worked under the principal for at least one year will complete the PIMRS survey (Teacher form) using SurveyMonkey.

   4. Teachers (6-9 subjects) will be individually interviewed by the researcher.

   5. A focus group of teachers (6-8) will be interviewed by the researcher.

The following are attached and **MUST** be submitted simultaneously with this application:

Yes	N/A	
☒	☐	Attached is a copy of surveys or data collection instrument.
☒	☐	Attached is a copy of interview questions.
☒	☐	Attached is a copy of handouts.
☐	☐	Other materials attached, please explain

9. How will data be collected, recorded, and stored?

The Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) survey data will be administered and collected using SurveyMonkey. At the conclusion of the data collection period, survey data will be downloaded and stored on the St. Cloud State University server. The survey data will be saved for future review, then will be destroyed.

Interviews and focus groups will be recorded on an electronic device. Interview and focus group data will then be transcribed and stored on the St. Cloud State University server. The survey, interview and focus group data will be saved for future review (up to one calendar year), then will be destroyed.

All raw data (survey, interview, and focus groups) will destroyed within one year of collection.

10. Will the data include names or other identifiers? ☐Yes ☒No

    If yes, will the data be coded and identifiable information removed? ☐Yes ☒No

    If yes, explain the coding process, what additional measures will be taken to keep your data secure and who will have access to it?

11. The raw data and/or coding key from this research will be destroyed *(Check ONLY one)*

    ☐ when the study is complete ☒ within three years
    ☐ when my degree is awarded ☐ other

RISKS AND BENEFITS

12. Will the research present more than minimal risk* to subjects? ☐Yes ☒No

    **Minimal risk means that the harm or discomfort anticipated in the research is no greater than that encountered in daily life or during routine physical/psychological examinations or tests.*

13. Does the research involve:

Yes	No	
☐	☒	Physical pain, discomfort, or injury from procedures or drugs
☐	☒	Undesired and/or unexpected psychological changes *(e.g. depression, confusion, hallucination, stress, guilt, embarrassment, loss of self-esteem, etc.)*
☐	☒	Deceptive techniques *(e.g. giving false feedback about performance, staging an event or situation, concealing the purpose of the research, etc.)* <u>*A debriefing statement is required.*</u>

    If yes, how will subjects be misled *(i.e. what information will be withheld or what false information will be provided)*? Describe when and how this deception will be revealed to subjects and provide a copy of the oral or written debriefing statement. **See the IRB's handout on deception and the debriefing process** for information, examples, and a template.

☐	☒	Invasion of privacy/absence of informed consent *(e.g. covert observation, review of private medical or educational records, etc.)*
☐	☒	Sensitive information *(e.g. alcohol/drug use, sexual orientation, illegal activities, physical/mental illness, violence, etc.)* that could result in social and economic harm *(e.g. civil/criminal liability or damage to financial standing, employability, insurability, reputation, etc.)* if a breach in confidentiality occurred

14. What precautions will be taken to minimize or prevent potential risks, inconveniences, and discomforts *(e.g. anonymous data collection, presence of trained personnel who can respond to emergencies, etc.)*?

Surveys will completed anonymously. Interviews of principals and teachers will be conducted privately. Focus groups will be informed of potential risks of participation by sharing information in the presence of colleagues.

INFORMED CONSENT PROCESS

The informed consent process begins when you first approach potential subjects and continues throughout your research. Typically, it involves:

- presenting information that enables an individual to knowledgeably and voluntarily decide whether or not to participate as a research subject.
- documenting consent with a written form signed by the subject.
- responding to the subject's questions/concerns during the research and communicating any new findings that may affect the subject's willingness to continue participating.

When your research involves individuals under the age of 18, you must obtain and document the consent of parents or guardians. If your research involves subjects who are between the ages of 8 and 18, child/minor assent must be documented as well. A single project could require an adult consent form, a parental consent form and a child/minor assent form.

15. Minimally consent forms **MUST** include the following information, please verify that your consent process addresses the following:

Yes	
☒	Provides a clear understanding of the project to potential participants.
☒	Explain the voluntary nature of the research and give the option to withdraw at any time.
☒	Include researcher and advisor contact information for questions.
☒	Explain to participants how to request study results.
☒	Adult consent states the individual is "at least 18 years of age" to consent.
☒	Confidentiality states data will be presented in aggregate form or with no more than 1-2 descriptors presented together.

16. All projects require consent forms for potential participants:

The following are attached and **MUST** be submitted simultaneously with this application:

Yes	N/A	
☒	☐	A cover letter/page accompanying a confidential anonymous survey
☒	☐	Adult consent form
☐	☒	A parental/guardian consent form
☐	☒	A child assent form

17. If applicable, explain the procedures that will be used to obtain child/minor assent and attach a copy of each assent form.

☒ not applicable/no minors participating