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The Unseen School Leader: A Study of Media Specialists and Their Roles

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The Unseen School Leader: A Study of Media Specialists and Their Roles

by

Mark John Krueger

A Starred Paper

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Abstract

Media specialists have a unique role in K-12 schools today. They are one of few individuals in a school that works with the entire school and is linked with everyone. With this role come leadership opportunities. Principals hold the primary leadership role in a K-12 school and allow the media specialist these leadership opportunities. The areas that media specialists impact a school are: school-wide skills, curriculum leader, technology leader, instructional partner, administration collaboration, student achievement, and grants and budgets. This study focuses on media specialists and their roles in K-12 schools in Central Minnesota and how their principals value their role. The study focuses on the following questions:

1. To what extent do K-12 building principals perceive the overall value of media specialists with respect to their influence or impact on school improvement?
2. To what extent are media specialists perceived as leaders by building principals?
3. Does the perceived value of media specialists impact their role?
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Chapter I

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Introduction

This qualitative study is designed to examine the perceived values among building principals regarding the role and responsibilities of media specialists. This study will aid in our understanding of the relationship between building administrators and media specialists. Additionally, the analysis will examine the extent that principals support media specialists and provide opportunities for leadership development.

Media specialists are involved in many different areas of the school. All of these areas are aimed at two things: student achievement and school improvement. Media specialists have knowledge of the school curriculum, including the entire scope and sequence of each grade level and content area. Supporting the entire school’s curriculum allows the media specialist to lead and to have an impact on learning. Zsiray Jr. (2003) illustrated how the transition to school administration is an easy transition for media specialists because of their role as a curricular leader. He also stated that they have the skills to be school leaders through their daily interactions with staff in areas of curriculum and developing community in the entire school. In addition to connection to curriculum, media specialists have a great deal of interaction with the entire school. Media specialists interact with the different departments and become intertwined with all of the curricular areas.

Kearney (2000) argued that “pre-service teachers see media specialists as a resource manager and information specialist; and that pre-service teachers do not share the vision of the library media specialist as partner and leader in instruction” (p. 75). Kearney’s book discussed
ways to change these perceptions. Methods such as developing an understanding of teacher roles and how to plan collaboratively are some examples of how a media specialist can change these perceptions. Collaboration is very important in school improvement as the media specialist can engage in professional development and other teaching and learning opportunities with licensed staff. Media specialists are needed to lead collaborative efforts among teachers.

Media specialists exhibit many leadership traits. According to Dees et al. (2007), “leadership is the ability to influence or inspire others to achieve shared goals” (p. 11). Media specialists have the ability to be school leaders because they have the opportunity to connect with staff and students throughout the entire school. Media specialists interact with students, teachers, administrators, and the community. Media specialists can also have a direct influence on curriculum. By being an advocate of the library media program, media specialists can become school leaders by promoting technology use, staff development, and instructional collaboration. Media specialists can influence the school climate, culture, and curriculum because they possess a global perspective of the entire building.

Wools (2008) stated, “Media specialists who understand and describe for others the importance of their place in the present and future world of education will be able to help teachers become more effective teachers and students become better learners” (p. 224). Understanding and describing these positions, media specialists will have value as an indispensable part of the school in the areas of teaching and learning, curriculum, and technology. This, in turn, will have an impact on school improvement and student achievement while supporting the school’s mission and values. Media specialists play an integral role in schools and their relationship with school administrators are especially important. The relationship
between the school administrators, specifically the school principal, and the media specialist is a very important relationship that requires leadership from both parties for school improvement.

Principals and media specialists share similar roles, one of which is leadership; however, principals are also managers. According to Grint (2005), in his book *Leadership: Limits and Possibilities*, principals can examine through two lenses: management and leadership. Leaders allow for dynamic collaboration, which guides followers in solving their own problems under the direction of the leader. Leaders also inspire, motivate, and make followers feel like they are being a productive part of the whole. In schools, leaders are in places of power, such as principals, but they can also be other licensed staff.

As mentioned earlier, media specialists are among possible licensed staff that can be leaders in the school, but to be successful in this, there must be collaboration between media specialists, teachers, administrators, and staff. According to Wilson and Lyders (2001), “Principals, assistant principals, and librarians are the only individuals in the school actively involved with the process of learning for the entire school” (p. 33). Media specialists can envision the needs of students and teachers and then support those needs. This support creates a sense of ownership in the media program for the entire school, not just the media specialist because of the sense of collaboration. Opportunities for media specialists to act as school leaders include: serving on various committees, facilitating staff development trainings, and participating in staff meetings. Kearney (2000) said “These teams are critical because in many schools they constitute a model being used to restructure the instructional program” (p. 28). Being active in meetings, committees, and collaborations allow media specialists to influence shared school goals, as they become an integral part of the system they are trying to improve.
Over time, as media specialist roles have evolved and changed, their position in the school has adjusted accordingly. Media specialists have two primary roles in a school: supporter and teacher. As a supporter, media specialists help with testing, technology support, and teacher support. Their teaching role allows them to impact student achievement, which carries impact on leadership roles across the school. Media specialists teach information literacy skills to both teachers and students throughout their school, as well as responsible use of technology.

According to Harvey (2008), “If library media specialists want to impact school improvement, they have to be leaders in their building” (p. 15). Again, library media specialists are in a position to be school leaders and to impact the schools in a positive way. However, their effectiveness as school leaders might be hindered by two factors—poor relationship with administration and poor relationship with other staff. Vansickle (2000) later said, “The leadership role is the most important factor in establishing the viability of the school media program” (p. 11). Vansickle’s article studies pre-service media specialists and their view of their school leadership role. Vansickle found in her study that most pre-service media specialists view themselves in a support role rather than a leadership role, not a combination of the two. Consequently, Vansickle argued that the collaborative process needs to be further developed among media specialists and pre-service classroom teachers because neither is examined and developed enough to help develop a sense of further leadership.

Principals hold primary leadership in the school. Marzano (2005) stated that there are two main types of leadership styles in schools: transactional and transformational. Transactional leadership focuses on management and setting goals. Transformational leadership forms “a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may
convert leaders into moral agents” (p. 14). Transformational leadership is the goal of many schools as it involves more stakeholders. But in reality, leadership tends to fall in between the two definitions, as principals are neither entirely transactional nor entirely transformational. This is seen in a study by Gold (2003), where she examined leadership and principals in ten successful England schools:

Another member of the staff of that school told us: ‘the head and deputy head are the school leadership . . . the SMT [senior management team] is important, ultimately the head teacher is the boss, he makes the final decisions, he is responsible . . . it’s on his shoulders. (p. 134)

One theme that is evident is that of principals being as much managers as leaders. Lumby and Tomlinson (2000) conducted a study of eight principals in England and focused on leadership. One leadership technique discussed was leadership as directive. They implemented this technique by directing the teachers and other staff on what was expected of them. The study also found that principals felt that they were paid to make decisions, therefore often not involving other staff for input. The overarching theme was that of control. If principals feel their job is to make decisions, as illustrated in the study, then they may be less likely to work collaboratively; such an attitude hinders the leadership potential of media specialists.

**Problem Statement**

The problem of this study is to examine principals’ perceptions of media specialists’ roles and responsibilities and look at how administrators value those roles within their school. Principals determine which areas in school are valued, and so principal leadership becomes a key influence on the role of media specialists. This study will also examine the nature of the
professional relationship that exists between media specialists and building principals. Media specialists are an untapped leadership resource for many schools and building principals serve as cultural gatekeepers. Because principals largely determine whether media specialists are viewed more as leaders or support staff, this study will draw attention to the relationships principals have with media specialists, examining how much value principals place on the contributions of media specialists and how many leadership opportunities they offer media specialists.

During the summer of 2013, interviews were conducted at varying institutions to investigate the dynamics of principal-media specialist relationships. Interviewees included principals from two elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools. All of the schools were located within a 30-mile radius of St. Cloud, Minnesota. Interviews were recorded and then converted to text through speech-to-text software. Data was then analyzed and reported. All results were made available to respondents.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine how principals value their media specialists and if that value is related to leadership opportunities for media specialists. The productive potential of media specialists lies with the principal, who determines if media specialists act more in a support or leadership role. After examining their values and views of media specialists, this study will be used to assist school administrator preparation courses so they can learn how to best impact student achievement.
Research Questions

1. To what extent do K-12 building principals perceive the overall value of media specialists with respect to their influence or impact on school improvement?
2. To what extent are media specialists perceived as leaders among building principals?
3. Does the perceived value of media specialists impact their role?

Assumptions

The research assumptions for this starred paper are the following:

1. All interview responses were honest and truthful.
2. The interview questions asked in this study are valid and reliable.
3. Each administrator was different.
4. Each school’s leadership structure will be different.

Delimitations

The interview questions were delimited by the following:

1. Building principals were only interviewed.
2. The schools being used are only public schools.
3. All schools will be within a 30 mile radius of St. Cloud, Minnesota.
4. Only two elementary schools, two middle, and two high schools were used.
5. Only schools with employed media specialists were used.

Definition of Terms

*Media specialist:* The title of a licensed school staff member, formerly known as a “librarian.” Often referred to as a teacher librarian or a library media specialist. According to Purcell (2010), “School library media specialists assist teachers and students in functioning in an
increasingly complex world” (p. 31). Their job consists of supporting students, teachers, staff, and the general school community in their learning goals.

**Principal:** Traditional leader of a school. The supervisor of the media specialist who reports to the principal on a daily, weekly, or yearly basis.

**Transactional Leadership:** A leadership style that involves waiting for problems to occur before leadership behavior is needed. Focuses on management versus leadership. Marzano (2005) stated that “Transactional leaders are so aggressive in their management behavior that followers of this leadership style believe that they should not take risks or demonstrate initiative (p 14).

**Transformational Leadership:** A leadership style that produces results beyond expectations. Marzano (2005) stated that transformational leaders “form a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents” (p. 14). It involves intellectual motivation and inspires followers.

**Conclusion**

Media specialists have the ability to expedite school improvement and student achievement. According to Harvey (2008), “School improvement impacts the entire school—every department, every teacher, every student—and library media specialists need to be right there leading” (p. 6). According to Donham (2008), media specialists “bring to the school a vision for the ways in which the library media program intersects with all aspects of the school community and curriculum. They work collegially with teachers, administrators, staff, and parents” (p. 311). Through the media specialist’s leadership and interaction with these integral groups of the school, they create that vision and direction of the school media program.
Chapter II will discuss media specialists’ roles and responsibilities, as well as consider more specifically how the media specialist can impact school improvement and student achievement. Areas covered include: curriculum leadership, technology leadership, collaboration with teachers, interactions with school administration, and interpersonal qualities and skills. The third chapter will highlight the research methods of the study as well as the specific interview questions and protocol. Chapter IV will examine the findings of the interviews, while chapter V will discuss the results.
Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study focuses on media specialists and how their roles are perceived by those in school leadership positions, including teachers. These perceptions can prohibit the media specialist from largely impacting the school as a school leader. Marzano (2005) discussed two types of leadership—transactional and transformational leadership. Transactional leadership waits for problems to occur and often times is more management-focused than concerned with leadership, while transformational leadership involves motivation of followers and therefore produces results beyond expectations. As leaders, media specialists can influence a school in a variety of ways; additionally, their position allows the potential for influence over the entire school, which can result in higher student achievement. To maximize their effectiveness, media specialists first need to develop certain interpersonal or school-wide skills, which will allow them to foster the relationships they need to become productive school leaders. This chapter will discuss the relevant literature on media specialists and their roles within a school. The different roles and areas that media specialists impact are: school wide interpersonal skills, curriculum, technology, instruction, administration, and student achievement.

Methodology for Literature Review

The primary tool used for gaining knowledge and understanding of the topic was Internet. The locations primarily used were search engines that were a part of Saint Cloud State Library databases. The primary ones used were Google Scholar, EBSCO, JSTOR, and Academic Search premier. Search terms used for finding literature for this project were leadership, principals, media specialists, collaboration, administration, technology, instruction, curriculum, and
communication. At times there was difficulty finding appropriate articles for a desired topic, but there was a great deal of available resources at the end of articles that could be found and researched also. The main reasons these databases were used was the high quality of content in the articles and also the ease of use of getting full text articles available to print off. If the articles were not available in full text then they were found in the periodical section of the Saint Cloud State Library and a photocopy was made.

**School-wide Skills**

When going into the library media field, the first quality that media specialists need to take into account is their interpersonal skills. The Shannon (2002) article highlighted some studies that place particular emphasis on interpersonal and communication skills. In her research, Shannon stated that “in their study of the personality and communication behaviors of exemplary school library media specialists, Herrin, Pointon, and Russell (1985) found them to be confident, open to change, and effective communicators” (p. 4). This study concluded that three-fourths of a media specialist’s time is spent communicating. Shannon also discussed how communication and interpersonal skills play a role in developing curriculum, a budget, and working with teachers.

Because communication is so integral to interpersonal relationships, media specialists need to communicate clearly what their role in the school is; part of this role is being service-oriented. Wools (2008) stated:

An excellent school library media specialist should possess outstanding teaching skills and enthusiasm for learning and the continued accomplishment of students. A service
orientation is necessary so that information flows steadily from the media center to the teachers and students, and a helpful attitude must be maintained at all times. (p. 39)

Wools (2008) discussed the overall direction of a media program, but desire to serve is essential when a person or teacher decides to become a media specialist. It is the media specialist’s job to make learning accessible to whomever needs help: students, teachers, staff, or community members. If a media specialist does not exude helpfulness, it will be obvious to the stakeholders of the school, who will not buy into the media program or view the media specialist as a leader if they do not have the qualities needed for the program’s success. Therefore, media specialists who are not service-oriented will cause the program to suffer.

Communication and interpersonal skills are vital for a media specialist to possess. These skills will allow them to work with the stakeholders in the school. When communicating effectively with the different groups of a school, media specialists build credibility the media program, which can then come to be viewed as an integral part of the school. Also, as a result of this, media specialists can then be seen as school leaders by the different parts of the school.

As advocates of learning, media specialists should believe that everyone has the ability to learn. According to Coatney (2009), “teachers and principals, school librarian, staff, students, and their parents are all learners, and they are also teachers. Everyone learns from each other; they revise, question, and evaluate” (p. 41). Media specialists need to have this outlook because their job as service-oriented leaders is to help people learn. It is the ability to learn that allows media specialists to have the school wide impact. They work with the entire school and help multiple groups learn. Coatney, who was a past president of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), described this as her theme for her term as president. This same mission, to
help people learn, should drive school libraries and media specialists within their schools. According to Coatney (2009), media specialists also “need to link the mission of the school library program to the school mission” (p. 42). This allows the media specialist to create a sense of school ownership and consensus among colleagues because it aligns to grade level and school goals. Media specialists need to effectively communicate their views to the entire school. This is a crucial step in creating a leadership role in a school for media specialists.

According to a study conducted by Tilley and Callison (2001), there is a shortage of trained librarians. They conducted a study on how recent developments in school libraries are shaping the university programs that are preparing them. They gathered research by emailing questionnaires to all of the 56 accredited programs in the United States. Respondents were asked to comment on the mission of the media program in their school and, according to Tilley and Callison (2001), “20% of respondents stated that there is a need to recruit people who can be effective decision makers and problem solvers” (p. 225). This study indicates a perception that too few media specialists are being trained, even though the need is great.

**Curriculum Leader**

Media specialists play a role in all curricular areas in a school, and they have the ability to be a leader in all of these areas because they are already deeply involved in them. According to Vansickle (2000) “as leaders in information resources and technology integration, it is the responsibility of each library media specialist to establish a vision of how the media program relates to the entire curriculum” (p. 11). Kearney (2000) discussed curriculum and media specialists, and says media specialists:
Must use our leadership skills to become knowledgeable about their curriculum, understand curriculum design, and participate in its creation; create a library information skills curriculum; develop collection in collaboration with teachers and staff to meet the instructional need of the school; collaborate with classroom teachers on the planning, implementation, and assessment of the instructional program . . . and resources across all curricular areas through meaningfully integrated curricular units. (p. 71-72)

The periodical *Teacher Librarian* (2009) published an interview of Sara Kelly Johns who has been a media specialist since 1999 and Associate Editor for AASL; the interview reiterates that media specialists need to know the school’s curriculum. Johns (*Teacher Librarian*, 2009) said that knowing the curriculum involves more than just understanding learning techniques. Johns stated that media specialists should,

> Understand learning/teaching techniques, but also articulation and mapping the curriculum with the school library program. These help make the teacher-librarian an important contributor to what is being done in each school. Also, know and model the school’s mission with your program and be involved in the curriculum and department committees so you know what is most important/relevant to everyone. (p. 2)

Johns argued that this is the best way for media specialists to be relevant and that curriculum is the area in which media specialists can have the greatest impact on a school. Furthermore, she said that having a balanced collection allows students to grow and develop their intellectual freedom.
Media specialists can provide leadership for the entire school in the area of curriculum. Creating curriculum maps both formally and informally, such as having conversations, allow media specialists to provide leadership. According to Howard (2010):

The school librarian also works with teachers to make certain there is vertical alignment of the units and the students are not repeating the same content over the course of several years. Through this collaboration, teachers can see the leadership skills and curriculum knowledge of the school librarian and his/her willingness to contribute to the overall educational plan of the building. (p. 36)

Howard (2010) also stated that having a collection map is vital to a school and its curriculum. A collection map organizes the school resources into subject areas for teachers and their units of study, something much more easily done in media centers today because of automated circulation systems. The circulation systems allow for curriculum to be analyzed and show how often it is being used, leading to purchase of new curriculum or to promoting the current collection that libraries already have, including purchasing new books for the library collection. Leadership is reinforced with the creation of curriculum and collection maps because work in these areas allows teachers to see the value of media specialists in terms of how they can affect the entire media program and school vision. Curriculum maps allow teachers to more easily access materials that align with their standards, helping them save time in finding needed materials and then maximizing effective use of them. It is in this way that media specialists both affect creation of a school vision, and aid in help carrying it out.
**Technology Leader**

Media specialists are a main link for technology integration in schools, as discussed in the book *No School Library Left Behind* by Carl A. Harvey. Harvey (2008) argued that the media specialist is a primary connector of technology to students and staff. Technology leadership involves providing access to digital information for students and staff, as well as integrating new technologies into the classroom. Harvey stated that media specialists need to provide the following resources to facilitate the success of students and staff: “print and non-print resources, links on the school website, online subscriptions and databases, and video streaming” (p. 76). Included in the non-print resources are leadership in areas of hardware such as training on use of projectors, helping with printers, and purchasing these technologies for the school.

Web 2.0 tools have exploded onto the forefront of education. Dees et al. (2007) discussed the role of technology leadership and Web 2.0 tools, explaining that with “many new online tools entering schools over the past 5 years—such as wikis, blogs, and podcasts—media specialists are the resident technology gurus” (p. 11). These types of technologies promote leadership by the media specialist because interaction occurs with the classroom teacher through instruction of how to implement these tools. This allows the media specialist to be seen as an instructional partner because the media specialist is playing a role in instruction with both the teacher and students.

Harvey (2008) stated that technology leadership extends beyond integration into the curriculum; media specialists also have the ability to recommend the purchase of technology tools that will help the school achieve its goals. Harvey discussed teacher and school technology
needs in terms of how the media specialist acts as the go between. When teachers need to place specific technology requests, it is the media specialist who should respond. The media specialist deals with technology ideas and plans in the district and then relays that information to school personnel (Harvey, 2008). Harvey stated that media specialists have the ability to model new technology for instructional practices to teachers and students. This allows for collaboration between media specialists and teachers in the integration of technology to achieve student involvement and success. As media specialists manage technology solutions for both students and teachers, considering special requests and new trends, they lead the school in digital literacy.

Dees et al. (2007) called the media specialist the “go to” person for many areas related to technology. Everhart (2007) went beyond that position and placed an emphasis on promotion as part of technology leadership. Media specialists promote new technologies such as using wikis, blogs, and podcasts in the classroom. With technology becoming more prevalent in classrooms and schools today, the media specialist can be seen as a leader in the area of technology.

**Instructional Partner**

Media specialists also have the ability to lead through their role as an instructional partner, and they accomplish this through demonstrating expertise across the curriculum. The book, *Enhancing Teaching and Learning* by Jean Donham (2008) discussed how to establish leadership through teacher interaction. In it, Donham argued that just working together does not automatically show leadership but that expertise matters. The media specialist leads more through influence than by direct instruction, different from the principal in that the principal demands that teachers follow them. Instead, media specialists have to gain confidence with teachers through collegial efforts (Donham, 2008). Media specialists have to establish expertise
in their interactions with teachers because teachers will not acknowledge them as leaders if they lack sufficient knowledge of their area. Donham stated that the “say-do” ratio for media specialists must be high (p. 317). This means that media specialists need to do what they say so they build trust between them and the teacher. Implementing expertise through collaboration allows the media specialist to further serve the entire school. Media specialists have a very clear expertise and by collaborating with teachers they can help teachers implement digital literacy skills into student learning. Donham argued that planning and collaboration between teachers and media specialist allow for greater success because having a group work together creates more efficient lessons. Media specialists can contribute their educational expertise through collaboration, which will have school-wide benefits.

A study done by O’Neal (2004) explored how quality library media programs affect student achievement through implementing instructional practices. O’Neal assessed the “perceptions of administrators, teachers, and media specialists regarding the current and ideal roles of the media specialists as instructional partner, teacher, information specialist, and program administrator” (p. 294). In all, 28 schools returned a total response rate of 70%. The conclusions (p. 295) include:

1. Administrators’ perception of current practice of the overall instructional roles of media specialists differs from how media specialists view their ideal practice.

2. There are significant differences in what teachers perceive as the current practice of media specialists’ current overall instructional roles.

3. There are differences in what media specialists perceive as the current practice and that of media specialists’ actual roles.
Media specialists’ value and instructional role are not the same. There is a disconnect between media specialists’ training and their actual role in schools. Media specialists are vital to connect the media center and the classroom. (p. 295)

There is a disconnect between the ideal role and reality among media specialists. In her article titled “All Librarians Do is Check Out Books, Right,” Purcell (2010) discussed the evolving role of the media specialist. Purcell argued that the role has changed over the years. One area of change is in their role as a leader and as an instructional partner. Leadership qualities are illustrated through their collaboration with administration, teachers, students and members of the community. To be a leader, they must collaborate. Purcell argued that instruction has changed because “media specialist’s knowledge of school-wide curriculum and individual classroom projects and assignments allows teachers to have an expert available to help them provide students opportunities to build upon prior knowledge and form relationships to increase relevancy” (p. 32). Their role in collaboration with teachers and instruction allows them to have a direct impact on student success.

As new standards develop, media specialists are in a position to lead a collaborative effort. Morris (2004) said that the media specialist needs to be a part of the team of teachers in instructional leadership. Morris also stated that student achievement is impacted when a licensed media specialist interacts and collaborates with teachers.

Media specialist advocacy is seen through collaboration and work as an instructional partner. Media specialists advocate on a daily basis for their media program. According to Ewbank and Moreillon (2006), media specialists must help teachers with the implementation of new standards in the curriculum. Ewbank and Moreillon stated that it is a media specialist’s role
to collaborate in designing and implementing relevant lessons that meet school standards; doing so will then have an impact on their students in their ability to think critically and learn content. The main purpose of the article is to advocate for the role of media specialists, which impacts a school and its mission. Media specialists take into account what is best for the entire school, not just one or two individuals.

According to Campbell (2009), “leaders are people that other people want to follow” (p. 52). Her article focused on media specialists as people exhibiting this characteristic. To best utilize their leadership position, media specialists need to be proactive and intuitive because they must design and implement information literacy lessons that stimulate critical thinking so students can learn (Campbell, 2009). Being a member of the instructional process is very important, and it happens through collaboration. Media specialists act as a guide for teachers so they can see the importance of information literacy and how that can play a role in their teaching. Lastly, media specialists also need to be inclusive, progressive, and imaginative. Media specialists can exhibit leadership in instruction as an essential quality for a school.

**Administration**

Media specialists and administrators possess many of the same skills when it comes to dealing with a school’s staff. Wilson and Lyders (2001) discussed the positions of both the media specialist and the principal to show how they work together. They argued that both the media specialist and principal have the entire school’s interest in mind. They both need to take into account the needs of the entire school, whether that be in terms of technology use, curriculum development, teaching methods, learning styles, or leadership strategies. Finally, both help and persuade others through their management roles (Wilson & Lyders, 2001). Media
specialists manage many areas day to day. They manage staff, technology support, formal and informal lessons to students and staff, and the circulation collection. Because both principals and media specialists exhibit these traits, a good rapport is often developed between the principal and media specialist. A good rapport with the principal is needed to develop a working relationship. This encourages the media specialist to go to the principal or administration with issues that arise. Media specialists need to collaborate with the administration on such items as curriculum, purchasing, and creating a mission for the media center. This allows the media specialist to demonstrate leadership capabilities when working with the administration. In spite of this common mission, according to Wilson and Lyders, a study was conducted in 1994 that said “only 16% of school principals felt librarians had a great deal of influence over establishing a curriculum” (p. 50). Gaining administration support, including support for an information literacy curriculum, is vital for a media specialist and a school’s media program.

An article by Alexander, Smith, and Carey (2003) explained how the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 allowed schools and districts the option of employing school library media specialists. As a result, 64 of the 176 school districts did not employ media specialists. This may be the result of the media specialist not being viewed as a leader in schools and not receiving adequate support from the principal. Alexander et al. looked at the study of Kentucky 10 years after it was conducted. They sent questionnaires to 180 randomly selected schools, and 102 were returned from a mix of 55 elementary, 23 middle, and 24 high schools. The findings showed that principals of middle schools and high schools see media specialists as a greater asset than do elementary schools. Additionally, schools where principals had media program awareness training in their administrative preparation courses provided higher support
of the media program. Most administrative preparation courses do not include this type of training, but principals need to be educated on what media specialists do when learning to become administrators.

Principals carry the weight of leadership for the entire school on their shoulders. The two main leadership styles focused on are transactional and transformational leadership. Marzano (2005) explained transactional leadership as being passive or waiting until problems occur. Leaders who adopt this type of style are “so aggressive in their management behavior that followers of this leadership style believe that they should not take risks or demonstrate initiative” (Marzano, 2005, p. 14). Transactional leadership tends to focus on management and specific goals. Transformational leadership is a style that transforms followers into leaders. One attribute this leadership style uses is that “individual consideration is characterized by giving personal attention to members who seem neglected” (Marzano, 2005, p. 14). Transformational leadership needs to be displayed from a leader who is “powerful, confident, and who is a dynamic presence that invigorates followers” (Marzano, 2005, p. 14). These two leadership styles play a role in how media specialists work with their principals and for what is best for the school. The leadership style that is used by the principal has as effect on how media specialists are viewed in their school.

Everhart and Dresang’s (2007) findings illustrated that “previous research has shown that media specialists are not viewed as leaders by themselves and others. Listserv postings and National Advisory Board input confirm that this is a challenging area, particularly that of demonstrating community involvement” (pp. 277-278). Listserv postings are an area where a group of media specialists can post comments, or questions on topics in their field and the
National Advisory Board is a national board that aids media specialists professionally. They also found that 62% of candidates did not have to improve their technology skills, but 43% felt that they needed to know instructional techniques.

An article by Zsiray Jr. (2003) examined two principals and their views of library media specialists. Because they are also licensed as media specialists, they have an understanding of how their leadership as a media specialist played an integral role in their professional development as principals. In the interview of Zsiray Jr.’s (2003), one interviewee said that media specialists:

Understand the scope and sequence of the school wide curriculum. They spend considerable time trying to coordinate the school and its many programs. They spend time with their school administrator planning and coordinating resources and working on the school improvement plan. Serving as a library media specialist was the perfect training ground for what an administrator must do to be a successful school leader. I would almost go as far as to say that the daily role of a principal and a library media specialist are almost synonymous. (p. 15)

McGhee and Jansen (2005) discussed how the principal can guide a media program effectively. The first way a principal can impact a media program is through developing strong school-wide strategies in instruction and curriculum. Since the principal is generally in charge of hiring the media staff, it is vital that they select new hires that are philosophically best aligned with the school mission and goals. The administrators need to support the media program through a proper budget, by developing a schedule with the media specialist, and in providing adequate space for the media program to operate. The principal and media specialist also need to
collaborate with the media specialist to develop a common understanding the media specialist’s role in the school. They will then be able to understand the media specialist’s instructional role throughout the entire school so they can support it. The main theme that McGhee and Jansen covered was that administration needs to actively support the media program. Administration plays a key role in the development of the media program.

Hartzell (2002) painted a different picture of school administrators, bringing to light many realities of school libraries and lack of principal interaction with them. Hartzell argued that principals do not understand what media specialists actually do and do not realize the impact that they can have on the school. Principals have many incorrect perceptions about media specialists and libraries. Among these misconceptions is the idea that libraries are merely warehouses for materials and that media specialists simply keep these “warehouses” running. Moreover, he proposes that principals do not see media specialists as teachers. In a study reported by Hartzell (2002), “principals think media specialists spend 20% less time on instruction than the media specialists reported spending” (p. 94).

Principals have misconceptions about the role of media specialists for many reasons, but a few stand out. First is their own upbringing and experience as K-12 students. Hartzell (2002) said the average age of principals is around 49-years-old, and more than 40% are over age 50. These administrators were in schools that saw librarians and media specialists in very different roles than they are in today. A second reason is their experience as teachers. In their undergraduate work, administrators were not trained adequately on what librarians and media specialists actually do. They were not trained in collaboration and cooperative teaching methods. Lastly, administrative training is lacking in regard to the media program. The training
does not focus on what media centers can do but instead looks at what problems the programs face. It does not even discuss the possible benefits of a strong media program. According to Veltze (cited in Hartzell, 2002):

> Although 91% of the professors of administration across the country who responded to [Veltze’s] survey thought that media specialists could be of more help to teachers if teachers and media specialists had more time to plan together, 90% did not see the principal as an important influence in teacher-librarian collaboration. (pp. 102-103)

Hartzell argued for these perceptions of limited principal influence to be altered to allow for the media specialist to have a greater impact on the school.

Many school administrators are uninformed about media specialists and their role. According to Gallagher-Hayashi (2001) in a survey of 250 university administrator training programs, only 18% integrated school library information into their programs. After their training is complete, administrators still do not understand the importance of involvement in the media program. As a result, media specialists must themselves inform the school of their role there, which gives the impression of lacking administrative support. Gallagher-Hayashi stressed the need to set goals that impact success of the entire school and raise the expectations of their principals. To raise expectations, media specialists need to have regular, positive contact with their administrators. Media specialists need to demonstrate they want to work with the administration toward school goals (Gallagher-Hayashi, 2001). They can also create joint visits to the library for the principal to see how and what the media program can do for the entire school.
Media specialists need to gain the respect of their school administrators because the quality of teaching and learning is higher in schools where principals have a positive outlook on the media program. Oberg (2006) confirmed that principal support is critical to the success of the media program in a school; it helps create a positive school culture. Oberg said a principal can support the media program by fulfilling the following roles: “as a supervisor working directly with teachers, model demonstrating personal commitment, a manager enabling the program, and as a mentor providing visibility and importance” (p. 14). If the principal demonstrated these roles, then the impact of the media program was greater in those schools. Media specialists who have a vision of the media program lead principals to see the media specialist as a school leader. Oberg also stated that media specialists have to do three main things to gain support of their principals: build professional credibility; communicate effectively with principals, and work to advance school goals.

**Student Achievement**

Media specialists have the ability to impact student achievement, as supported in the research of Lance and Loertscher (2005) that was conducted in 14 states and over 8,700 schools; it found that strong school library programs make a difference in academic achievement. Reading scores rise based on levels of media staff, the size of the collection, and spending on the collection (Lance & Loertscher, 2005). Further evidence supporting the connection between strong media specialist support and student achievement is in a 1993 study of Colorado (cited in Lance & Loertscher, 2005); it confirmed that academic achievement was affected in 220 schools when the following happened:

- There was a professional library media specialist on site.
• The library media specialist collaborated with teachers to create exciting learning experiences using the library media resources.

• The library media collection contained large amounts of quality materials, including print and multimedia.

The Colorado study (cited in Lance & Loertscher, 2005) demonstrated what must happen to promote a higher level of student achievement. According to Lance and Loertscher, a media program needs to create quality, information-rich and technology-rich environments that are easily accessible to teachers and students. Additionally, media specialists need to provide staff that exhibit leadership and partner with teachers to deliver quality-learning experiences (Lance & Loertscher, 2005). Media specialists also need to collaborate and work with teachers on their lessons. They need to incorporate the media center and the media specialist into the planning, which allows the teacher to see the media specialist as a co-equal in the teaching and learning process. Lance and Loertscher contended that media specialists are crucial to the teaching and learning process because they teach strategies that students need in order to achieve academic success. They also partner with teachers to offer a broader knowledge base. Because of the diverse roles of media specialists, they play an essential role in student achievement.

Because a key role of media specialists is to increase academic achievement, there have been many studies done to link the two. Farmer (2006) conducted a study that examined 60 California schools and their libraries’ impact on test scores. Farmer found that past literature had many trends such as:

• a positive correlation between school libraries and schools with high academic ratings
• a positive correlation between library skill knowledge and academic achievement
• a positive correlation between elementary schools with libraries and library media specialists with higher educational gains. (p. 22)

Farmer focused on implementing national standards in library media, developing academic achievement, and the perceptions of administrators and media specialists in terms of program implementation being shaped. The results were that there was not a difference in achievement due to the program implementation across the curriculum. There was, however, a significant difference in the implementation of information access skills and reading scores. The recommendations of the entire study by Farmer (2006) suggested that, to have the greatest impact on student achievement, media specialists must:

• develop, implement, and assess a strong library media program in collaboration with the school community
• have a solid collection that supports the curriculum
• plan and teach in collaboration with classroom teachers
• obtain concrete administrative support
• participate actively in learning communities with school staff (p. 30)

Media specialists can also act as learning specialists. Learning specialists help improve student achievement through assisting in the design, instruction, and evaluation of student learning. Zmuda and Harada (2008) argued that media specialists are well positioned in the school to be learning specialists. They are influential on leadership teams because of their knowledge of the curriculum and can communicate student-focused goals through the media program (Zmuda & Harada, 2008). Media specialists initiate collaboration with the classroom
teacher to improve student learning. They can help personalize instruction to fit each learner’s needs. It is through collaboration of lesson building that media specialists can have an impact as learning specialists.

Mardis (2007) conducted a study that asked media specialist practicum students about their transition from teachers to school library media specialists. The study used nine female participants from urban, suburban, and rural schools. The questionnaire was organized in increments of 30 hours, 60 hours, and 90 hours of practicum experience. Almost all of the participants felt they would bring curriculum knowledge and lesson planning flexibility to their role as media specialists. Mardis stated late in the practicum experience that participants felt “their vast role encompasses day-to-day management of the media program positioning the media program in a leading role” (p. 229). It is extremely important for media specialists to promote and administer their media program in a role of leadership for the school.

Grants and Budget

Media specialists also play a key role in school budgeting. Because their budget is often set by administration, they need to find new avenues to help support their buildings. Andy Plemmons is a media specialist in Georgia who tries supplementing his curriculum with grants and other revenues. Plemmons (2014) stated that “Home Depot collaborated with us on our Little Free Library project by building and donating two libraries” (p. 1). He also has secured supplemental materials for his school by getting a 3D printer donated through a post on Twitter. Media specialists are always trying to find unique ways to help add to school resources.

School materials and equipment continuously need upgrading; so many media specialists turn to grants and grant writing for additional aid. Grant writing for media specialists requires a
few key aspects. According to Nutt (2001), “just knowing what the ‘grantor’ company has in mind to fund is half the battle. Believe it or not, the amount of money is not important when writing the grant; being specific and doing your homework is what counts” (p. 28). You need to have a catchy title, clear structure, and logical methodology; the least important aspect is the budget. Media specialists like Plemmons, are often asked to write grants to promote their program and support their school. Budgets are a very important part of a media specialist’s job, but grants are becoming an increasingly important way that they help support their schools.

**Summary**

Media specialists have the ability to be leaders in their schools, but the literature states that media specialists do need some specific interpersonal skills to be successful in this; such skills include: the ability to communicate effectively, to exhibit confidence, and to maintain openness to change. They also need to be enthusiastic and have a passion for their job. Additionally, the majority of media specialists’ time is spent serving others in their school, which makes being enthusiastic crucial for media specialists. Media specialists also have to be aware of curriculum and its changes. They need to be involved in each class and content area so they can purchase the correct materials and instruct efficiently. Curriculum integration is one of many ways they must demonstrate leadership in the school; another is staying involved with building technology. Media specialists teach information access to both students and teachers, promote their programs, and model the use of new technologies that can have an impact on their schools. Media specialists also act as instructional partners. Collaboration creates more effective lessons, and as a result, students learn more when media specialists are reaching their full potential as school leaders.
Although all of these areas are ways that media specialists demonstrate leadership and show their involvement, administrators still fail to see their true value. Contributing to this failure is that administrators, often times, do not fully understand the media specialist’s role. Also at fault here is the issue of media specialist training; media specialists do not receive enough training on how to properly promote their programs, which perpetuates the limits administrators place on their role in the school. There is a disconnect between how media specialists are trained and how they try to implement their media programs. A major part of this discrepancy is their inability to work with school administrators to come up with a common vision and mission of the media program. Even though all of these barriers exist, the data and impact of media specialists is demonstrated; they greatly impact student achievement. Schools that have full-time media specialists have higher student achievement than do schools without a full time media specialist.

Even though media specialists are valuable resources in the areas of curriculum, technology, instruction, and student achievement, gaps still remain after studying the literature. How can media specialists establish themselves as leaders? Do media specialists have enough tools and training to establish themselves as leaders? If their entering position is primarily a support role, how can they change the vision of their program and their position to that of a school leader? The literature has illustrated that media specialists have the potential to be leaders in many different areas. By examining principal’s views of media specialists one can assess how principals view their media specialists as leaders in the areas of the literature review. The principal’s views of their media specialists as leaders will allow the true value of their role. It is
through the examining of the literature review that the research questions were created. Chapter three will focus on research methods and how the data will be collected.
Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the methods of research of this qualitative study and the various stages that it will take to complete the research. This chapter includes the following sections: subjects of study (or the population), the research approach, the research methods, the methodological limitations and delimitations, and the procedures for data collection. These sections allowed for a complete and thorough process leading up to the data analysis.

Research Questions

To examine principal’s perspectives on a media specialist’s impact on schools, the following questions were examined:

4. To what extent do K-12 building principals perceive the overall value of media specialists with respect to their influence or impact on school improvement?

5. To what extent are media specialists perceived as leaders by building principals?

6. Does the perceived value of media specialists impact their role?

Subjects of Study, Population, and Sampling Method

This study involved interviewing six K-12 building principals within a thirty-mile radius of St. Cloud, Minnesota. The sampling of schools was chosen by convenience and purposive sampling. Tongco (2007) stated that “purposive sampling technique, also called judgment sampling, is the deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possesses. It is a nonrandom technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of informants” (p. 147). Purposive sampling was chosen because of the familiarity of the surrounding St. Cloud area to the researcher. All of the schools chosen held relatively similar student population size
among the three levels. Two elementary, two middle, and two high schools were chosen. Of the six principals that were interviewed, two were from an elementary school, two were from a middle school, and two were from a high school. The interview examined how principals value media specialists and whether this valued tied into the availability of school leadership opportunities for media specialists. Principals within a 30-mile radius of St. Cloud were chosen as the sampling population because central Minnesota has a unique mix of school sizes; additionally, the majority of schools have licensed media specialists. This allowed for a mix of principals with different experiences to be interviewed, offering potentially variable senses of a media specialist’s value. The researcher set up a meeting with principals at numerous districts to reach a sampling size of at least six administrator interviews. The researcher interviewed principals at schools in districts of populations at approximately 200 students or fewer, as well as districts up to the size of over 4,000 students. Such a range allowed the study to see if there is any consistency between districts and whether principals’ values differ with the size of districts and level of instruction.

**Research Approach**

This descriptive study implemented qualitative methods through the use of interviews. The interviews examined what value principals place on media specialists and also how principal support does or does not lead to leadership opportunities for media specialists. This study will provide data to graduate schools that have an Informational Media program, as well as school administration preparation programs so both can examine media specialist’s value in K-12 schools. The research approach is rooted in grounded theory. Grounded theory is “a research method that will enable the researcher to develop a theory which offers an explanation about the
main concern of the population of their substantive area and how that concern is resolved or processed” (Scott, 2009, p. 1). In this research proposal, the substantive issue was media specialists, their value as well as their roles and leadership opportunities. Principals were the population interviewed about this issue. The interviews were conducted to collect the data. The core categories were taken from the data towards forming a theory regarding leadership and media programs. The data, through grounded theory, informed understandings of how principals value media specialists and whether that value impacts the role of media specialists. It also examined how a principal’s support can impact the development of media specialists as leaders and consequently further their impact on students.

**Method**

The objective of this research study is to understand if how principals value media specialists of media specialists informs the roles and responsibilities media specialists take on within the school. This was a qualitative study that used structured interview methods. The interview questions served as a guide for the research, but as Best and Khan (2006) stated: “The qualitative researcher initially has some ideas about the design but is open to change as the data is collected and analyzed” (p. 251). The questions, as well as follow-ups and probes, focused directly on the perceptions of school principals and their valuing of media specialists.

**Research Procedures**

Research included interviews of school principals within a thirty-mile radius of the St. Cloud area. First, the interviews were scheduled in the early summer. A request for the interview was then sent either through phone call or email (see Appendix A). District and principal contact information was gathered through the Minnesota State High School League
website. If the information was not available through that website, then a direct link was also available to the individual school websites from the Minnesota State High School League website. Middle schools and elementary schools were located through local school websites. The interviews were conducted during June of 2013.

All interviews followed a strict protocol. Prior to the interview being conducted, the subject filed out the informed consent (see Appendix B). The interview consisted of eight questions, the length of which was determined through the pilot study (see Appendix C). Prior to the interview starting, school demographics were recorded. The interview was recorded using voice-recording applications on a cellular phone so the data could be analyzed further. The VoiceMemo app was used to record the interview. After the interview, a transcriptionist was hired to take the audio recording and transcribe it into a Microsoft Word document. The audio recordings were sent via email to the transcriptionist in an .mp4 audio format. The transcriptionist listened to the audio and typed the responses down and emailed them back to the researcher. The initial responses of administrators influenced any follow-up questions or probes that were designed to gain specific responses about the value of media specialists and leadership opportunities. The probes encouraged the participants to elaborate on their answer so further analysis could take place. The interview lasted approximately 20 minutes. The interview data was then analyzed using qualitative data software. The data was coded by two different coders and then organized according to the responses to the interview questions. The responses were collected individually but organized topically. The total number of responses was then tabulated and compared to analyze larger themes. It is from this data that recommendations can be made.
to graduate programs that prepare media specialists. After the interview process took place, a thank you letter was sent to the participants for being a part of the study.

**Analysis**

The data analysis took place using multiple means. First, a cellular phone was used to record the interview. Field notes were also taken and tabulated. The next step was to transcribe the interview recording to text. A voice-to-text application was used to accomplish this. After the text was brought into a document and after the formatting was fixed, qualitative data software was used to analyze the data. The qualitative data software, QDA Miner Lite, was used for analysis. The data was uploaded to the software in the form of Microsoft Word documents. Themes were identified after the transcribed Microsoft Word documents were imported into QDA Miner Lite. The interviews were read and themes were picked after reading each interview. After the first interview was read and themes created, the next interview was examined to see if themes matched or if new themes arose. The themes were then coded in QDA Miner Lite software according to color, which allowed for organization of the data.

**Methodological Limitations**

The methodological limitations focused on the researcher and the researcher’s interaction with the process. For a successful study, the researcher needed to be aware of time and setting. The summer was chosen to conduct the interviews because this is when the school year is finished and when principals have more availability.

**Human Subjects Approval**

In an effort to ensure that the rights and welfare of subjects participating in this study are adequately protected, all requirements set forth by the St. Cloud State University Institutional
Review Board were strictly followed. This paper was conducted involving typical education practices. Data was collected by means of the interview process, and there are no foreseeable discomforts or risks involved for participants. The terms of consent, presented in the informed consent documents, allow for voluntary participation and are indicated by the signed document. A draft of the informed consent document is presented in Appendix B, and the approved consent form is presented in Appendix E.

**Pilot Study**

A specific pilot study was done with St. Cloud School District principals. The researcher interviewed two administrators to gain their input on how to best organize a line of questioning for the study. A principal from one of the middle schools and a principal from one of the elementary schools were chosen based on their availability. This also allowed feedback on the clarity of questioning and the length of the actual interview. This further allowed questions to be modified and gave an indication of what follow up question or probes should be asked. It also allowed the researcher to modify the research process as needed. This data was not included in the final study.

**Summary**

In this chapter, the steps for selecting interviewees and organizing the interview process are explained. This study has the potential to change the way media specialists are looked at in K-12 schools. School principals within a 30-mile radius of the St. Cloud area were chosen because they all staff media specialists; another factor determining their selection was the differences of sizes between districts. Principals’ views from these different schools allowed the researcher to use the qualitative data from the main set of questions to drive different follow-up
questions in order to gain greater insight into the similarities and differences of media specialists and media programs. Chapters IV and V will focus on the interviews themselves, as well as the analysis of the interviews and its data.
Chapter IV

FINDINGS

This chapter discusses the findings from the interviews. The six interviews were conducted in June of 2013. The length of the interviews ranged from eight minutes to twenty. Follow-up questions were asked and recorded also. Transcripts of the interviews are available in Appendix D. After the interviews were concluded, the interview transcripts were coded for larger themes. These larger themes became the base for the findings. The themes were:

- **Media-to-Administrator Interactions:** This theme discusses tasks in which the media specialist and administrator work directly together. Tasks include meeting directly or indirectly, forming site or leadership teams for the school, and planning for specific budget management.

- **Staff Development:** This theme explores how the media specialist helps school staff; it directly relates to how the media specialist interacts with staff. Technology development and individual meetings are how support to staff is given.

- **Leadership:** This theme examines media specialists and their impact on leadership in the school, which is exhibited through technology integration, school activities and events, curriculum integration, parent involvement, and communication.

- **Teaching and Learning:** This theme explores how the media specialist impacts teaching and learning in schools; it is done through student contact and teaching lessons.

After the data were collected through audio recording, they were then transcribed into Microsoft Word documents. The interview results were organized and then imported into a
qualitative data analyzing software called QDA Miner Lite. This software was then used to code the interview responses. These responses were then put into tables and analyzed according to the themes. The type of qualitative analysis used was established through grounded theory. Best and Kahn (2006) explained that grounded theory is based in fieldwork and explains what has been observed. According to Charmaz (1996), grounded theory is “a logically consistent set of data collection and analytic procedures aimed to develop theory” (p. 27). Grounded theory is a method of examining data for repeated ideas or concepts, which are then tagged with codes. These themes become apparent as data is collected and grouped into categories. These categories become the basis for new theory.

**Findings**

The themes arose from the interview data and the patterns analyzed from them. In the following table, the results for each school were tabulated. A total of all responses was also tabulated and recorded. At the beginning of the interview, some basic demographic data were taken, and all interview transcripts include this demographic data. The demographic data will be described later in chapter 4, along with the tables of the interview data.

**Media to Administrator Interactions**

This section focuses on three subgroups, which were meetings, department or site teams, and budget management that involve interactions between media specialists and administrators. Qualitative analysis of answers to open-ended questions was done. Meetings were either formal or informal during the school day. Formal meetings are where it is a scheduled meeting between the administrator and media specialist. Informal meetings are often times not scheduled and come up as a small issue arises. Many topics were covered during these meetings such as
budget, school needs, or anything else specific to what the administrator needs to cover. These often arise as needs of the school arise. The second subgroup of answers indicated that the media specialist interacted as a part of department or site teams. If they were a part of a specific team or committee in the building where they had direct contact with the administrator and leadership responsibilities, it was recorded as part of this group. The third subgroup covered is budget management. Media specialists interact with administrators often as part of the budget process, including trying to secure grants and other sources of funding.

**Staff Development**

This section focuses on media specialists and how they impact staff development. There are two main subgroups from the interview data. The first is technology development. The media specialist helps drive the school’s technology needs. The second subgroup is individual instruction. Individual instruction was described as training in which the media specialist would learn to meet with individual teachers to address their unique needs. This interaction could include informal and formal meetings between the media specialist and the staff member.

**Leadership**

This section focuses on leadership and how the media specialist exhibits leadership qualities. There are five subgroups in this section of the interview data. First, the data focuses on technology integration. These responses looked at how the media specialist focused on integrating technology with their staff members. Finding and evaluating new technologies was discussed in the interview. The second subgroup is school activities and events; it examines the role played by the media specialist in these events, with the media specialist serving as an event planner. The next subgroup discussed is curriculum integration. The responses examine what
role the media specialist plays in the school curriculum and how they can help impact instruction. The curriculum includes the media center as well as new curriculum adoption for the schools. The next area that responses covered was parent involvement. The media specialist is an individual that has contact with parents on school-specific topics. The last subgroup that was addressed was communication. Responses indicated how media specialists communicated with their staff and the importance of that communication in the success of the school’s media program.

**Teaching and Learning**

This section focuses on the role the media specialist plays in teaching and learning. There are two subgroups in this section. The first subgroup of responses that studied was on student contact. A media specialist has direct contact with students. Responses addressed how media specialists interacted with students and the types of activities that were being covered. Student contact involves any contact the media specialist has with students or student groups. It involves the media specialist leading a specific group activity. The second subgroup is teaching lessons. Media specialists teach specific lessons and standards. These lessons and topics were the focus of this area.
Responses

**Figure 1.** Elementary School 1 Interview Responses.

Elementary School 1’s demographics are:

- 600 students and 50 teachers
- 1 administrator
- Media paraprofessionals: .2 previous years, 1.0 this year
- 30% free and reduced lunch rate
- 30% minority rate

The school is located in a small, rural town of approximately 600 people; it is 10 minutes from St. Cloud. The media center is located in the center of the building and is very well lit.

Elementary School 1 had three areas with the most answers. These areas were meetings between the administrator and media specialist, technology development, and curriculum integration.
Areas that had no responses in the interview data were individual instruction, parent involvement, communication, and teaching lessons.

**Figure 2. Elementary School 2 Interview Responses**

Elementary School 2’s demographics are:

- 700 students and 50 teachers
- 1 administrator
- Media paraprofessional: 1 full time
- 22% free and reduced lunch rate
- 3% minority rate

The school is located in a small town of 15,000 people, a suburb community of St. Cloud. The media center was very open and centered in the building. It was very well lit, with computer labs connected to it and books available nearby. Elementary School 2 had 22 total responses.
The highest response categories include: technology development, technology integration, and curriculum integration. This school’s responses only had two categories with no responses. Those categories were parent involvement and communication. Other than those two categories, Elementary School 2 was very consistent in its responses.

Figure 3. Middle School 1 Interview Responses.

Middle School 1’s demographics are:

- 870 students and 56 teachers
- 2 administrators
- Media paraprofessionals: 2
- 43% free and reduced lunch rate
- 21% minority rate
Middle School 1 is located in the heart of St. Cloud, MN. The media center is located in the middle of the school and did not have any outside windows. It had very few computers, but it had many bookshelves containing books for the entire school. Middle School 1 had 17 total responses that were coded. Their results had two areas that had three responses each. These coded areas were meetings and technology integration. Areas that had zero responses were budget management, student contact, and teaching lessons. All other areas were very consistent in their answers.

![Middle School #2](image)

**Figure 4.** Middle School 2 Interview Responses.

Middle School 2’s demographics are:

- 931 students and 40 teachers
- 1 administrator
- Media paraprofessionals: 1 full time
- 33% free and reduced lunch
- 10% minority rate

Middle School 2 is located in a town of approximately 13,000 people and is a suburb of St. Cloud. The media center is located on aside of the building with no outside windows. It had many books and bookshelves available to the students and staff. Middle School 2 had 19 total coded responses. They had four responses, each in the areas of budget management and technology development. They also had three responses in communication. There were zero responses in school activities and events, student contact, and teaching lessons.

![High School #1](image)

*Figure 5. High School 1 Interview Responses.*
High School 1’s demographics are:

- 800 student and 55 teachers
- 2 administrators
- Media paraprofessionals: 1 full time
- 13% free and reduced lunch
- 1% minority rate

High School 1 is located in a town of approximately 4,500 people; it is roughly 20 minutes from St. Cloud. The media center was very inviting, had many tables and chairs for workstations, and also had computer labs available. High School 1 had 16 total coded responses. Their highest numbers of responses were in the areas of meetings (4) and technology development and student contact (3). They had three areas that had zero responses, which were individual instruction, parent involvement, and communication.
Figure 6. High School 2 Interview Responses.

High School 2’s demographics are:

- 1230 students and 75 teachers
- 4 administrators
- Media paraprofessionals: 2
- 28% free and reduced lunch
- 9% minority rate
High School 2 is located in a suburb of St. Cloud in a town of 13,000; it is approximately 5 minutes from St. Cloud. The media center was open and light, with separate computer labs. High School 2 had 22 coded responses. Its highest number of responses was 4 in the area of meetings. The other areas that had three responses were technology development, curriculum integration, and student contact. The two areas with zero responses were budget management and parent involvement.

The overall responses showed some consistencies. Looking at Table 1, there were anywhere from 15 to 22 responses in the interviews. Three areas had anywhere between 15 and 19 coded responses. These areas were curriculum integration (15), meetings (18), and technology development (19). Only two areas had fewer than five coded responses. These two areas were parent involvement and teaching lessons.
Table 1

Overall Interview Results

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Media to Administrator Interactions</th>
<th>EL1</th>
<th>EL2</th>
<th>MS1</th>
<th>MS2</th>
<th>HS1</th>
<th>HS2</th>
<th>Total Responses</th>
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<td>Meetings</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technology Integration</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The theme that had the highest number of responses was leadership, with 41 total responses. This was expected, as this theme had the highest number of subgroups. Media to administrator tasks was next, with 32 responses. This theme had the most consistent coded answers, with only two zeros being recorded.

**Conclusion**

The interview data brought forward results that will be discussed in the following chapter. Many themes and trends were seen as a result of the interviews. The results and impact
of this data will be discussed in Chapter V. The data will help answer the research questions stated in Chapter III and help examine the value administrators place on media specialists in K-12 schools.
Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter discusses and interprets the results of this study. It will also include recommendations for further research. The focus and recommendations for practical application of this reflection will center on views of how media specialists are valued in central Minnesota schools.

Discussion of Results

Building principals in the central Minnesota area clearly value their media specialists. The interview data supports this in many ways. The first way that the data suggests principal support is in the ratio of media specialist to administrator tasks (see Table 1). Included in this data section was administrator and media specialist meetings (both formal and informal), being a part of department and site teams, and budget management. The data show that principals indicated 18 times that they met with media specialists regularly. Many different topics were covered during these meetings. Often times, they discussed the needs of the principal or building. The principal of High School 1 said, “With our system, it is more impromptu meetings. When she needs to meet with me she does, or when I need to meet with her we sit down and meet but usually on a daily basis we connect. But nothing just scheduled and formalized” (see Appendix D, High School 1). Also from High School 2 was the comment that these meetings are requested to come and address particular issues so whether it be here at the building level or at the district level and I am just going to use her name Maria is seldom at our building level simply because we use our administrative time on some other tasks that
don't involve her but from a district perspective she has been at probably four meetings
five meeting over the course of this year simply because of the technology aspect (see
Appendix D, High School 2).

These meetings are individual or with committees; what is important to note is that all of
the principals met very frequently with their media specialist.

Budget management was also a very important issue, as the media specialist and media
program are important parts of their school and curriculum. At Elementary School 1, the
principal gives the media specialist input on how funds from the technology budget should be
allocated. The media specialist helps with “building, decisions, so as far as technology our
building” (see Appendix D, Elementary School 1). The principal at Middle School 2 stressed the
importance of input from the media specialist on how budgeting decisions should be made. Their
media specialist, for example, “would be we have some grant dollars that came through and how
do we spend that x amount of dollars came to the middle school and she proposes the plan and
she sat down and we talked about the plans she had in place and how it impacts student learning”
(see Appendix D, Middle School 2). Findings indicate that the amount of time that principals
and media specialists spent interacting had a great impact on their schools. Principals perceive
this value in their daily interaction with their media specialists.

Another area of high interview responses was in leadership. Research Question 2 is
directly answered by these responses as it illustrates how principals view media specialists as
leaders in their schools. The areas in which media specialists show leadership are technology
integration, school activities and events, curriculum integration, parent involvement, and
communication. The areas that had the largest amount of responses from principals were the
areas of technology integration and curriculum integration. These areas had the most direct impact on their schools and consequently on student achievement.

The principals said the following about technology integration:

- **Middle School 2**: “She has it laid out financially, training wise, whether it makes sense for student learning those things but as far as involving the staff, she is really good at that and her tech team is a big part of that” (see Appendix D, Middle School 2).

- **High School 2**: “She is always coming to me and reporting to me about how she got teacher A to now use tool B, you know and so got this person doing this on the active board. This person who is kind of afraid of technology is now doing podcasts for their book reports. This person has figured out there is a better way to do assessments than using a scantron and we can do it still online and we can still get results that can be tabulated quickly” (see Appendix D, High School 2).

- **Middle School 1**: “Again as I said he is part of our instructional leadership approach and operation with testing of integration of technology into the classroom. Also with providing professional development information for our teachers” (see Appendix D, Middle School 1).

- **Elementary School 2**: “If she has a high functioning team she adjusts her level of professionally development to push those teams even more, or if it is a team that is struggling with tech integration she can tone it back and provide the right kind of support for mentoring that is needed” (see Appendix D, Elementary School 2).
• *Elementary School 1:* “so as far as technology our building was deciding if we should
go smart boards or Promethean boards and she led the research on that and so she was
instrumental in making that decision” (see Appendix D, Elementary School 1).

• *High School 1:* “The direct way, she is in classrooms demonstrating some of the
technology things. When a teacher might not know how to use a piece of technology
or they are trying to put research skills into their curriculum, she is in there
demonstrating that, helping with that” (see Appendix D, High School 1).

Clearly, the principals feel that their media specialists are there for their staff in the area
of technology integration. Whether it was through introducing new technology or in managing
the school’s current technology, media specialists were consistently available to their staff. The
principals saw this and therefore view their media specialist as the technology leader in their
schools.

The other area that was greatly covered was curriculum integration. Comments from the
principals in the area of curriculum integration included:

• *Elementary School 1:* “I would say to be a strong support for classroom instruction, to
be a knowledgeable person in regard to best practice technology, to assist staff when
looking for supplemental materials and I think too it is just kind of important for the
media specialist to know the kids because that is kind of a hub in elementary schools”
(see Appendix D, Elementary School 1).

• *Elementary School 2:* “We formulated a pretty specific plan that focused on not just
materials but the curriculum and the instruction and the evaluation of the plan and we
had numerous meetings with administrators and media specialists at the table” (see Appendix D, Elementary School 2).

“We had a 21st century every grade level team and specialist area had a 21st century goal this year. She was really the ring leader of our specialist team, our music, art phy
ed teachers and she sat on that team and they developed 21st century goal and unit that they implemented which was exceptional and Lori was the leader of that group. She really helped all the other grade levels because of a key piece of that 21st century goal.”

- Middle School 1: “Just it could range from books for professional development to stock the library” (see Appendix D, Middle School 1).

Curriculum development for the media specialist’s school was, from the principal’s standpoint, very important. Curriculum development had the third highest amount of coded responses in the study. The principal’s valuing of the media specialist may come from several areas of expectation, but technology and curriculum was at the forefront of a media specialist’s value in a school.

The perceived value of a media specialist can affect job performance and school role. This study conclusively illustrates that being a media specialist means different things at different schools, but their value consistently lies in specific school and administration needs. Current trends indicate that direct student contact and instruction is an overall diminishing concern, as the priorities of media specialists are shifting towards the development of close working relationships with school staff. Having evidence for this shift is seen in there being 3 coded responses for teaching lessons and NINE for student contact (see Table 1). The student
contact that did take place was more supportive than instructional. Principals see their media
specialists as playing a school-wide role, and they value such an expansive influence. One thing
to note is that all of these schools do not have their media specialists provide prep, meaning they
are not required to teach an elective class; this creates more time for the media specialist to
accommodate miscellaneous school needs that can arise with unpredictability.

Findings and Literature Review

The findings in this study have a direct correlation with the literature review. The
findings provide evidence that administrators do view their media specialists as having a distinct
leadership role in their school. The main areas covered in the literature review were: school-
wide skillsets, leadership in curriculum and technology, instructional partnerships, collaboration
with administration, and advocacy for student achievement. This study illustrates the media
specialist’s value in these areas.

The area of school-wide skills is discussed by some of the principals in this study.
Middle School 1 principal said, “Well respecting works with communicating with teachers. He
works with identifying what their needs are and helping them achieve whatever goals they may
have. He has good relationships with teachers. Like I said he works with them really well. They
trust him” (see Appendix D, Middle School 1). In addition to that, Middle School 2 principal
said

She does through staff development she does and she even makes it so nonthreatening
against the person. What she has is so nonthreatening. She is so very well organized but
yet strong, yet saying there are times we have got to move in this direction. But I'll tell
you this, she has worked hard to gather input from our staff prior to ever leading in a
direction. She has worked very hard at saying what do you think and she lays the groundwork (see Appendix D, Middle School 2).

Media specialists have the ability to greatly impact the school because they work with all of it. This directly goes back to the Shannon (2002) article that studied how media specialists need to be effective communicators.

This study also directly indicates how media specialists have an impact on curriculum, such as how they play a role in curriculum integration in schools. High School 2 principal said: “Materials appropriate for students and how we are using that material, what are they accessing—we talk about those things, we talk about specific classroom activity and what folks are learning there” (see Appendix D, High School 2). These materials are proven to be integral to school curriculum. Elementary School 1 principal said about their media specialist: “She is kind of that central person for checkout of materials and things that go with different units, she will help them find that. I think she does a nice job of ordering books for the library that meet curriculum needs and then she does a nice job of sharing those with all the staff first then students” (see Appendix D, Elementary School 1). These responses illustrate how they relate directly to the Kearney (2000) article; they show the media specialist as knowledgeable about the curriculum and as helping to build what is best for their schools.

There is also data supporting the role of transformational leadership from the principal, which supports the media specialist. The principal at Middle School 2 gives input by saying “her staff development skills are outstanding. She’s the best at working with staff” (see Appendix D, Middle School 2). This type of input helps the media specialist develop her leadership and clearly shows that the principal values them. The principal at High School 1 illustrates
transformative leadership by trusting their media specialist running two different important budget accounts. “She is very involved in the decision making. She runs two different budget accounts. One for the media department and one for technology” see (Appendix D, High School 1). This trust allows the media specialist to feel connected to their principal and illustrates the value they place with the media specialist to run such important budget accounts. All of the principals shed light in one way or another in how they use a transformative leadership approach with their media specialists.

The media specialist is also a technology leader, proven in this study in many different ways. High School 1 principal stated:

I see how they inspire teachers, it is not that they are just telling teachers about specific things to do; they are doing them with the teachers. So when my media specialist wants a teacher to try something, she will not just say I think this is a great idea for you, she will show it and she will make their job easier so it is an easier transition for the teacher to say yeah this does work (see Appendix D, High School 1).

This is how the media specialist is integrating technology and getting the buy-in among teachers. Elementary School 2 principal said of the media specialist: “Her input on technology use and integration I value significantly. She is the kind of person that, she is a good go to person with anything. I trust her opinion” (see Appendix D, Elementary School 2). Dees et al. (2007) explained how the media specialist is the go-to person for technology. These responses, among others, illustrate directly that this is the case throughout the study.

The principal responses also indicate how media specialists act as instructional partners. On media specialists acting as partners to teachers in their instruction, Middle School 2 principal
stated: “think you cannot be a teacher and do really well because obviously the person how you
perform. I think it is a bit more challenging to understand what teachers needs are if you haven't
been there before. The same question you asked me would be like could I be an effective
principal without ever having taught in the classroom” (see Appendix D, Middle School 2). This
directly relates to the Donham (2008) article in Chapter II, because it gains the teachers’ trust
and allows them to be able to work as a partner with the media specialist—not as one person
being the expert and the other not. The media specialist works together with the teacher, and
they learn from each other.

The media specialist also needs to work closely with administration, and this study
illustrates the amount of time that media specialists and administrators work together. The
number of coded responses shows that it is consistent among all of the schools. The media
specialist and principal work together on nearly a daily basis, and the value of their relationship
is seen in the interview responses. There were 18 responses about meeting on a frequent basis,
and the topics of those meetings were based on specific school needs (see Table 1). The feedback
from this study goes against what much of the literature review explores. The literature review
explores how media specialists are not employed by many school districts in Kentucky. The
study conducted by Everhart and Dresang (2007) was one that highlighted how media specialists
were not viewed as leaders. Everhart and Dresang’s findings illustrated how previous research
has shown that media specialists are not viewed as leaders by themselves and others. This study
has no evidence to support this argument. Hartzell (2002) argued that principals do not
understand what media specialists actually do and do not realize the impact that they can have on
the school. This claim is also refuted by this study. The principals interviewed have a direct link
to their media specialists and know how their programs influence schools; consequently, principals in this study recognized the value of their media specialists and their media programs.

The literature review also states that many school administrators are uninformed about media specialists and their role. According to Gallagher-Hayashi (2001), in a survey of 250 university administrator training programs, only 18% integrated school library information. Also according to the literature, future administrators do not think to be engaged in media programs because of this failure in their training. This research claim is contradicted by the results of this study, in which principals were very engaged with their media specialist and their overall media programs.

The interview results also illustrate how media specialists impact and affect student achievement. In the literature review, according to Lance and Loertscher (2005), research done in 14 states and over 8,700 schools demonstrated that strong school library programs make a difference in academic achievement. Reading scores will rise based on levels of media staff, the size of the collection, and spending on the collection (Lance & Loertscher, 2005). There is a definite correlation between sufficient monetary investment and the success of media programs, as supported in this study; it finds all of the principals committed to their media programs through their inclusion of the media specialist in budgeting choices regarding collection and technology development. In fact, budget management was mentioned 8 times in interview responses.

According to the demographic data, every school in this study is staffed with at least one paraprofessional in addition to the media specialist (see Appendix D). This demonstrates the principals’ commitment to media programs, as they hire needed support staff to ensure that
media specialists can fulfill all of their school roles. According to the Minnesota Department of Education website, all of the schools that were interviewed had consistent or rising MCA scores. Consistent scores could have some decreases, but the most that decreased was 6.8%, which was in the MCA Math for Elementary School 2. Both Elementary School 1 and High School 2 had their percent proficient go up in both the MCA Math and MCA reading tests. The rest of the schools went up 4.9% or down 5.3%. Everything fell between those percentages, illustrating the impact and aid the media centers offer students.

It is clear that this study has supported much of the literature review. The one area it has refuted was much of the literature available stating that administration does not understand or value the work of a media specialist.

**Recommendations for Application**

This study can be useful for both administrators and media specialists in how they are trained. Part of the literature review focused on administration and their general thoughts and feelings toward media specialists and media programs. This study can be used by administrator preparation courses to allow their candidates to see how administrators and media specialists interact. They can see how both the media specialist and a media program in a school obtain value. According to the Wilson and Lyders (2001), a study was conducted in 1994 that said “only 16% of school principals felt librarians had a great deal of influence over establishing a curriculum” (p. 50). This is not currently the case, as curriculum influence was one of the key points the principals in this study commented on frequently. Wilson and Lyders also discussed a study conducted in 2001 where principals were not learning enough about libraries in their preparation programs. It is essential that media specialists inform administration of the library
and their role in the school; however, this study refutes the previous study by Wilson and Lyders
as it and illustrates how, if implemented and learned about correctly, the media specialists and
media programs benefit schools greatly. By implementing this study into administrator
preparation courses, candidates in the courses can examine the administrator comments and their
views on media programs. The principals’ comments illustrate the media specialist’s high value
in the school program, a priority that should become a part of training for future administrators.

This study could also be beneficial to media specialist preparation programs. Similar to
the administrator preparation programs, this study would allow media specialists to view the
types of comments that empower good media programs. Wilson and Lyders (2001) discussed
the positions of both the media specialist and the principal, examining how they work together.
They argued that both the media specialist and the principal have the entire school’s interest in
mind. They both need to take into account the big picture of the entire school in terms of needs
for technology, curriculum, teaching, learning, and leadership. They both help and persuade
others and also manage personnel (Wilson & Lyders, 2001). This study confirms these claims
and demonstrates how this overlap of responsibility happens daily in the work of principals and
media specialists. Because every school is different and every school’s needs are different, the
principals meet the school’s needs in very different ways. Some principals had scheduled
meetings with their media specialist, but some conducted informal daily meetings. Some of the
principals only met weekly with their media specialists, but they all met and interacted in some
way that allowed them to maintain open communication and a connected goal. By having
preparation programs for media specialists view this study, media specialists will be able to
anticipate the interpersonal skills needed to successfully do their job.
Recommendations for Further Research

This study demonstrated many positive perspectives of principals that empower their media specialist and media programs. One way that this dynamic could be explored further would be through revisiting the same schools but interviewing media specialists and teachers. It would be interesting and of great value to both the administration and media specialist preparation programs to view how media specialists in those schools felt about their value. The teachers and other staff ultimately impact this value as well, because media specialists work directly with everyone; therefore, their comments would also be of value. Finally, studying media specialists’ input on these questions of value and leadership would allow greater exploration of why they either are or are not valued in their schools.

A second way that further research can be examined from this study would be to compare and contrast how these schools that are well-staffed by both a media specialist and paraprofessionals compare to others that are not staffed by a media specialist and/or a paraprofessional. How do those schools meet their technology and curriculum leadership needs? As schools continue to grow in dependency on digital literacies and more 1:1 initiatives are put in place, considering how these needs will be met is fundamental. Are these needs met by trained and licensed media specialists, who know best practices for their training and for other curricular areas, or are they being met by unlicensed staff? These would be interesting questions to pose for comparison across Minnesota’s school districts, possibly allowing the chance to see if there is a correlation between staffing and school needs being met.
Conclusions

This study has shed light on how principals in the central Minnesota area empower and value their media programs. Their interviews allowed this study to consider the validity of prior research, contradicting some findings while supporting others. The study would be of use to Information Media graduate programs around the state, as it would allow them to view the value of media specialists and media programs through the eyes of the principals that oversee their schools. The principals in this study all value their media specialists and empower them to advocate for their programs. This study demonstrates media specialist’s value and how it can positively impact a school and student achievement; even though these findings would be useful to graduate programs, this study has only begun to scratch the surface of principal and administrator feelings about media specialists and media programs. There is ample room to expand the study to the whole state. Doing so would provide a wider array of answers and input regarding media specialists and media programs.
References


Appendix A

Script for Consent to Interview

**Email Message:**

Dear Mr(s). ________________,

My name is Mark Krueger and I am writing to ask for permission to interview you for my starred paper for the Department of Information Media at St. Cloud State University. My research is focused on media specialists and their roles in schools. Media specialists can play a unique role in K-12 schools. I am requesting a short interview, at your convenience, where I would record the questions and answers. The following questions will examine the role that the media specialist and media program has in your school. The purpose is to gain insight into what strengths and weaknesses media programs in the area have, particularly in the area of leadership. The interview is voluntary and you have the option to withdraw at any time. The responses and data from this interview will be kept confidential with only the grade level of your school being tied to any responses and data. If this is possible, when would be a time that you have available to meet? Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mark Krueger

**Phone Message:**

My name is Mark Krueger and I am calling to ask for permission to interview you for my starred paper for the Department of Information Media at St. Cloud State University. My research is focused on media specialists and their roles in schools. Media specialists can play a unique role in K-12 schools. I am requesting a short interview, at your convenience, where I would record the questions and answers. The following questions will examine the role that the media specialist and media program has in your school. The purpose is to gain insight into what strengths and weaknesses media programs in the area have, particularly in the area of leadership. The interview is voluntary and you have the option to withdraw at any time. The responses and data from this interview will be kept confidential with only the grade level of your school being tied to any responses and data. If this is possible, when would be a time that you have available to meet? Thank you for your consideration.

Mark Krueger
Appendix B

Informed Consent

THE UNSEEN SCHOOL LEADER:
A STUDY OF MEDIA SPECIALISTS AND THEIR ROLES

Introduction: The relationship between building principals and media specialists is a unique one. Principal’s value of media specialists impact media specialist’s roles and responsibilities in their school. This interview will examine principal’s values of media specialists and whether that value impacts the roles and responsibilities of the media specialist and whether leadership opportunities are available as a response to their values.

Primary Researcher: Mark Krueger
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Purpose: This interview will examine principal’s values about their media specialist. The following questions will examine the roles and responsibilities that the media specialist has in your school and what leadership opportunities are available to them.

Procedures: If you decide to participate, you will be asked eight interview questions regarding media specialists and their roles within your school. The questions will focus on media specialists and their roles and responsibilities in your school. The questions, along with follow-up questions will last a total of approximately twenty minutes. The interview will be recorded with a voice recording application on a cellular phone. A cellular phone is being used to capture the interview responses so they can be put to text to be analyzed at a later time. Once the data is tabulated and organized the recordings will be deleted. This time period will approximately be December of 2013.

Confidentiality: The responses and data from this interview will be kept confidential. Names of administrators or names of schools will not be stated in as data. Only the grade level of instruction will have any data tied to it. The data will be presented in aggregate form or with no more than one to two descriptors presented together. Any study results can be obtained by emailing Mark Krueger at mark.krueger@isd742.org. The study results will be sent to all of the media specialist preparation programs in the state of Minnesota.

Benefits: The potential benefit of this study is to see what other schools view media specialists’ roles and responsibilities as.

Voluntary Participation: This interview is voluntary and you have the option to withdraw at any time, where your responses will not be tabulated or published in any data.
Acceptance to Participate in Media Specialist study Interview: Your signature indicates that you are 18 years of age and give consent to participate in the interview and study of administrators and their value of media specialists in K-12 schools.

Do you have any further questions at this time? If you have further questions after the interview you can contact the researcher at Mark.Krueger@isd742.org or by phone at (320) 248-1111.

Name

Signature

Date
Appendix C

Interview Questions

1. How often do you engage or involve your media specialist in daily decision-making and how specifically?

2. Does your media specialist participate in administration team meetings?

3. To what extent do you value the media specialist input or recommendations in your leadership team meetings or just when you or she are meeting?

4. To what extent do you and the media specialist meet? Specifically what do you discuss when you meet?

5. What is the role of the media specialist as it relates to the overall educational program?

6. What activities or events have the media specialist led or provided that directly or indirectly affects learning, whether that be students, staff?

7. In your opinion does your media specialist act in ways to inspire or encourage teachers? What do or don’t you see?

8. In what ways have your media specialist act in ways to motivate or lead staff toward the achievement of a school vision?
Appendix D

Interview Responses

Elementary School 1

How many students does your school have? 600

How many teachers? 50

Support staff? 30

How many administrators does your school have? 1

Does the media center have any support staff? 2 last year, 1 this year

Approximately what is the free reduced lunch rate? 30%

What is the minority percentage at your school? Less than 10%

How often do you engage or involve your media specialist in daily decision making and how specifically? Daily, every day I meet or talk with my media specialist about all kinds of decisions at the school whether it is instructional decisions, technology decisions, programing, testing, and so we kind of work together as a team because I don’t have another administrator in the building to work with so she is kind of like my team partner.

Would you say you formally meet or more just informal? I would say both. We formally meet usually after announcement time in the morning we will meet but then periodically throughout the day also. As the need arises, yep or just to check in to see how things are going, we have some technology issues in the past so just checking all that stuff.

Does your media specialist participate in administration team meetings? I would so I don’t really have administrative team meetings, what I have is kind of like, I don’t even know, like a team leadership meeting and yes she is a part of that. How often does that meet? We meet once a week and then the big core leadership team meeting meets once a month.

To what extent do you value the media specialist input or recommendations in your leadership team meetings or just when you or she are meeting? I think a lot of things kind of default to her because she knows the capability of the technology. She knows the contact people, should something happen with our technology or we have to upgrade or change and for testing purposes she is kind of our go to person also and then just to have her there to support teachers and whatever they need for their technology. Does her input help drive some of your, absolutely,
like building, decisions, whether “@@@” so as far as technology our building was deciding if we should go smart boards or “@@@” boards and she led the research on that and so she was instrumental in making that decision. **Was that this past year?** No that was a couple years ago.

**And you kind of answered part of this, to what extent do you and the media specialist meet?** You said pretty much every day. We do. **Specifically what do you discuss when you meet?** Depending upon time of the year, you know to start off the year. A lot of it is progress monitoring, testing, and we will talk about different ways to use our computer lab. Sometimes we have some grants in the building and she is a person that a lot of times is a lead person on that grant. Also for her to know all the different curriculum that the teachers work with so she can order materials to supplement that curriculum. She is part of our data team.

**What is the role of the media specialist as it relates to the overall educational program?** I would say to be a strong support for classroom instruction, to be a knowledgeable person in regard to best practice technology, to assist staff when looking for supplemental materials and I think too it is just kind of important for the media specialist to know the kids because that is kind of a hub in elementary schools.

**What activities or events have the media specialist led or provided that directly or indirectly affects learning, whether that be students, staff?** What has she led? Activities or events. So our testing for sure whether it is math testing or MCA testing she leads. She does take a lead role on some of our grants that we write to support technology, a lot of our grants go to support technology and she takes the lead role on that. Programs in the building like concerts or “@@@” in the building she does take a lead role on those because she needs to be involved for different purposes. **Any activities or events within the media center that you see?** Book fairs, she leads that.

**In your opinion does your media specialist act in ways to inspire or encourage teachers? What do or don’t you see?** I think one nice thing is that she’s around and out and about in the building checking in with teachers on what they need and she is available. Now next year will be really nice because we will have that fulltime person so she will be more available for teachers. And when she is around when she is around the building does that mean specifically she is out in the classroom. Out yeah checking in with teachers, collaborating. **Collaborating like specific lessons?** Yeah, subject areas.

**In what ways have your media specialist act in ways to motivate or lead staff toward the achievement of a school vision?** Well I think she does a really nice job of taking new staff members in our building and working with them on the “@@@” boards and helping them find information that they can use for their daily lessons from the “@@@” boards. She is kind of that central person for checkout of materials and things that go with different units, she will help them find that. I think she does a nice job of ordering books for the library that meet curriculum needs and then she does a nice job of sharing those with all the staff first then students.
How many students does your school have? 700

How many teachers? 50

Support staff? 35

How many administrators does your school have? 1

Does the media center have any support staff? 1 full time para

Approximately what is the free reduced lunch rate? 22%

What is the minority percentage at your school? 3%

How often do you engage or involve your media specialist in daily decision making? You know our media specialist sits on all of our major committees within the building. We have three committees that are high functioning that really control a lot of what we do and that would be our strategic leadership team which really focuses on curriculum instruction and assessment and then we also have a site management team which is more scheduling and use of building space and she sits on that, that kind of functions a little bit with our technology committee and the third would be what we call a pbis committee, a positive behavior and Lori is very active in that. I don’t meet with Lori on a day to day basis but because she is on those three committees she is pretty involved in the decision making that goes on in our school. In the strategic leadership, that is more strategic than it is curriculum instruction or assessment. Do all these involve just administrators, teachers, media specialist? Everybody.

Does the media specialist participate in administration team meetings and then why or why not? We do not have administration team meetings at our school, being the only administrator I don’t have a team that I meet with in that capacity. I know that district wide our media specialist will meet with our technology supervisor but within our building we do not have that structure in place. Are there ever district level admin meetings that media specialists or your media specialist are a part of? Yeah they were a part of this past year in setting our district technology plan with the major changes we made with the moving one to one in grades six through 12. We formulated a pretty specific plan that focused on not just materials but the curriculum and the instruction and the evaluation of the plan and we had numerous meetings with administrators and media specialists at the table.

To what extent do you value your media specialist’s input or recommendations in either formal or informal meetings? I value her input significantly. She works with all of our teachers, works with staff on a regular basis more than anybody else. She is in all of our classrooms. She meets with our grade level teams on a regular basis. Her input on technology
use and integration I value significantly. She is the kind of person that, she is a good go to person with anything. I trust her opinion. **Does she have a lot of input on curriculum also or?** Our biggest way that we make decisions with curriculum in our district is thru what we call contents specialists. We have 12 elementary contents specialists and the media specialist here is on that team of 13 and that is where we identify the areas within our curriculum that we focus on. Two years ago it was putting together a letter C plan. This past year it was focusing on improving our “ cards and social studies standards and she is involved in all of those.

**To what extent do you and the media specialist meet?** This past year we set regular meetings once every two weeks and I have to be honest that we stayed true to that for a few months and then near the end of the year it kind of trickled off but that is definitely a priority for this year as we start the year. **What specifically do you both discuss, are they formal meetings or more informal?** We each have our own agenda items so I probably call it a bit more informal. For us it is identifying the strengths within our teachers and the level of technology integration. It is also identifying where the challenges are. Where we need to focus support. It is also looking at our professional development and what we need to be providing. We had some professional development days that were really honed in on technology and this summer we had the number of hours that we wanted to make sure we were focusing on the needs of our teachers. **You talked about the professional development, How much does your media specialist do?** She does quite a bit. I would say between our two elementary media specialists they are doing 90% of it.

**What is the role of the media specialist as it relates to overall educational program?** I would say she is highly involved. We view it as an extremely important position. It used to be our district where the media specialists provided prep time in our specialist schedule and up until two years ago that was going on and we have since removed it recognizing that they are too valuable although the time they were providing that specialist time for students was a good thing. They are much more valuable with tech integration and working with classroom teachers.

**What activities or events have the media specialist led or provided that directly or indirectly affects learning whether it be students, staff?** Our media specialist planned four hours of technology professional development for our classroom teachers this year. They have put together grants to purchase technology through our ed. foundation. They were active members of our district technology plan to determine the amount integration we were hoping to implement this year as well as supporting the one to done model that we had in grades 6 thru 12. **Even though it is grades 6 through 12 the elementary media specialists had input on how things were going to be integrated even at those levels?** Yeah at those levels as well as being advocates for what is the plan for E through grades 5 to make that we’ve got a system in place recognizing that we are not ready for one to one that we need to make sure tools and equipment here as well. It has been primarily professional development. You know I love to read ”@@@” those types of things that are very active. We have a summer reading challenge that is going on. Our media specialist was a key planner in that event.
In your opinion does your media specialist act in ways to inspire or encourage teachers? What specifically do you or don’t you see? She definitely does. Lori is just, I could speak in general terms about media specialists but Lori in general really reaches out to staff. There was some push back from our classroom teachers when we pulled our media specialist out of the specialist schedule. Some wondering what is the media specialist going to be doing all day and our kids need that specialist’s time so Lori really hearing some of that pushed back when overboard in the amount of communication she pushes out staff with emails and more importantly attending grade level meetings. Questioning them. She really in the way she works with teachers with tech integration is really. She has a high level of professional understanding of where people are at, if she has a high functioning team she adjusts her level of professionally development to push those teams even more, or if it is a team that is struggling with tech integration she can tone it back and provide the right kind of support for mentoring that is needed. She really recognizes and understands that.

You kind of mentioned this with how she goes to grade level meetings, does she collaborate in specifically any other ways with teachers or staff in general? We had a 21st century every grade level team and specialist area had a 21st century goal this year Lori was really the ring leader of our specialist team, our music, art, phy ed teachers and Lori sat on that team and they developed 21st century goal and unit that they implemented which was exceptional and Lori was the leader of that group. She really helped all the other grade levels because of a key piece of that 21st century goal was that it included technology and Lori not only worked with the specialist team but provided support to all the other grade level teams. She kind of led the specialist team but also was a part of each of the other group grade levels? Exactly.

In what ways has your media specialist acted in ways to motivate or lead staff toward the achievement of a shared school vision? Lori again her involvement in our important strategic site committees, her presence there, her representation of technology and ways that she can help classroom teachers, is really important. Her involvement on our elementary contents specialist team in leading curriculum change and development and just her approach to trying to make tech integration easier than it seems for folks is really probably the biggest thing that she does. We do not see as much push back I think that other buildings might in that area because of Lori’s leadership. We don’t have a perfect model by any means. There are ways we can improve.
Middle School 1

How many students does your school have? 870

How many teachers? 56

Support staff? 42

How many administrators does your school have? 2

Does the media center have any support staff? 2

Approximately what is the free reduced lunch rate? 43%

What is the minority percentage at your school? 21%

How often do you engage or involve you media specialist in daily decision making? Probably I would say more than 50 percent of the time. Pretty much he is part of the instructional approach that we have here and also how do we communicate with teachers and also how we communicate with students. So well over 50 percent. I always consult with Steve. Do you meet probably meet daily? Informally, if he has a question, he comes to me and if I have a question I go to him. Pretty open door.

Does your media specialist participate in administration team meetings? No Why or why not? Basically I have asked him to come in a couple of times if there is any questions on grading or just any instructional practice but it is not every time we meet. Again it is just more an informal meeting. How often do your administration team meet. Once a week. Is it typically just you and the assistant? Me, assistant principal and counselors.

To what extent do you value the media specialist input or recommendations when they are part of those meetings? A ton. I value their recommendation typically because of the skill level and experience that Steve has. Pretty insightful has equipped south pretty well so his input and insight and experience is very valuable. When you do need to call him in what type of topics or information are you looking for. Just it could range from books for professional development to stock the library. If upgrade or adding technology any technology ideas, sharing in that. Build schedules. Also use him for technology for security.

To what extent do you and the media specialist meet and you said informally? Yes regularly. I would say about 4 or 5 times a week but informal. Is there ever any formal where you guys need to schedule time or is it pretty much always informal. Yes. Except for maybe twice a year where we have to plan out our yearbooks and also plan out our schedule for the year. We get his input because he does the scheduling for testing. So that happens. When you and he meet informally is it just what specifically pops up that day. Yes
whatever pops up that day, just check in and from what is wrong with my computer to I need batteries to we need to add some more computers for Read 180, to we want to do math corp, how many computers can we get from district you name it. Do you see it more technology based questions versus media literacy? It just depends. There has been some literacy questions, is this the right book, a parent might have a concern. Primarily it is more technology related.

**What is the role of your media specialist as it relates to your overall educational program, whether it be building or district?** The role is important and essential. Again as I said he is part of our instructional leadership approach and operation with testing of integration of technology into the classroom. Also with providing professional development information for our teachers.

Are there specific chunks of time you set aside for your media specialist to do any professional development or is it more? If he needs it he will let me know. Or do you see him maybe going out and working with specific teachers? He has done that. Especially if there are any technology needs or integration of technology, using an ipad, are there any apps a teacher can use. If they want to use clickers for formative assessment, also if there are any projects.

**What activities or events has the media specialist led or provided that either directly or indirectly affects learning?** Testing also any assembly presentations, concerts, presentational theater, district wide presentations in the building, any professional development opportunities in the building.

**In your opinion does your media specialist act in ways to inspire or encourage teachers?** Yes very much so. How or what do you or don’t you see. Well respecting works with communicating with teachers. He works with identifying what their needs are and helping them achieve whatever goals they may have. He has good relationships with teachers. Like I said he works with them really well. They trust him.

**In what ways has your media specialist acted in ways to motivate or lead staff to the achievement of a shared school vision?** Very influential in helping teachers see the big teacher when they bring technology into the classroom. It is a best practice. Trying to motivate teachers to get away from the traditional lecture style but trying encourage to using technology to using the ipad. We have a nice supply of ipads to incorporate the technology, we have doc cams we also have tablets for teachers and we provide training for that. So it is like a smorgasbord of technology integration to help teachers with their lessons.

**Is your media specialist part of any building leadership team at all, leadership meetings?** He has been a part of the leadership meeting but that has been periodically just based on need and planning. But he is not a regular. No.
Middle School 2

How many students does your school have? 931

How many teachers? 40

Support staff? 60, this includes everyone who isn’t a licensed teacher.

How many administrators does your school have? 1

Does the media center have any support staff? 1

Approximately what is the free reduced lunch rate? 33%

What is the minority percentage at your school? 10%

How often do you engage or involve your media specialist in daily decision making and specifically how? It varies, I mean, from day to day. There are some times it is multiple times in one day, there are other times it might be during the week. Our media specialist though is very big, I involve her a lot in staff development. She is also our high tech coordinator which is a high tech committee in our building where we have representatives from each of our teams sixth grade team, seventh grade team, eighth grade team, special education team, LAR”@@@” team, and our counseling team. She works with those and seems like they are her fingers. She kind of trains them, works with them, and then they go out and work with the other folks in the building so that is a big part of it but there are times it is several times a day I need to ask her input, much of it is technology and how we are spending our money and what are the new, what’s out there as far as us in order to improve our technology in the building. Staff development is the biggest thing I do. I’ll just tell you that again, I can repeat it over again. Her staff development skills “@@@” are absolutely outstanding, she’s the best at working with staff. Some of it is budgetary. Some of those things, is her budget. She has a pretty hefty budget and I do that intentional because she works with the entire building and that’s why I do that. I’ll think of some things down the road I’ll share them.

Does the media specialist participate in administration specific team meetings at all? She does. She is at the district office. She is part of the district technology team and then that team will come in and meet when we have our administrative meetings, principals, the special ed director and so forth in our district. Then she will come up as a representative of that group. She is also I wouldn’t say formally but she is informally a part of a group that I usually would get together. I meet with our counselors once a week and there are times I pull her in because I want her input. She is also a longstanding person on our middle school leadership team which again has representatives from the same “@@@” I shared before on our high tech team she is longstanding on that one. With the district level admin meetings, is that like is she formally scheduled with them? Yep formally scheduled once a month the district technology committee
meets with our core team of staff which again it is a superintendent, principal, special ed
director, community ed director, early childhood. It is our core people, a group of administrators
and then she meets with them along with our main technology person in our district. So you
have those folks “@@@” they are talking about here is what we are looking at budget wise, this
is the money you have been given money here is how we are looking at spending the money,
here what is what we think would be up and coming decisions and again they simply bounce
them off of us and then we give them the yeah or the nay and they move forward from there but
she is big on that she is a part and needs to be.

To what extent do you value the media specialist’s input or recommendations in these
meetings? A thousand percent, no its I trust her with the decision making. She has taught
before. She has been a teacher and I think that was important that she has been in the classroom.
She gets what teachers are going through. She gets what students needs are, teacher needs are,
she gets that and she spends money wisely and she makes decisions wisely and she is great at
processing and thinking things thru and having a plan in place, by that I mean she is a go to
person for me. There are certain people in the building, she is one of them. Do you think the
fact that she has been a teacher has increased her creditability with the teachers? I think
you cannot be a teacher and do really well because obviously “@@@” the person how you
perform. I think it is a bit more challenging to understand what teachers needs are if you haven’t
been there before. The same question you asked me would be like could I be an effective
principal without ever having taught in the classroom. Possibly but I think I’m better because I
have taught in the classroom, so could she be an effective media specialist without ever having
taught? Probably because of her makeup and who she is but I think she is better equipped
because she has been in the classroom. Do you view that the teachers value her input similarly
to how you value it? Absolutely, well respected. Well respected in our building absolutely.
Teachers and maybe because she has been in the classroom they respect her more. I’d say that to
me I don’t think she would have had to have been a teacher for teachers to respect her it is who
she is and how she operates. I just think she is better at what she does because she has been in a
classroom. I think they would still value her tremendously. You partially answered this, to what
extent do you and the media specialist meet. She calls me, I call her. The only regular scheduled
meetings that we have would be our leadership team meeting and that is regularly scheduled one.
We are in the same room scheduled together but after that let me tell you we are back and forth.
Email, do you have 15 minutes to meet today, that type of thing. We are in constant contact with
each other. She is invaluable to that function of this building. She is actually invaluable to the
functioning of our district I’ll tell you that right now. She is that good.

What is discussed specifically in these team meetings? I know you mentioned budget, any
other topics that pop up? An example would be we have some grant dollars that came through and how do we spend that x
amount of dollars came to the middle school and she proposes the plan and she said down and
we talked about the plans she had in place and how it impacts about student learning. That type
of thing. Most of what we talk about though is impacting student learning which “@@@”
impacting teacher instruction so it impacts student learning, most of it is that. We have some
direct budget talks simply because of the budgets cuts, x amount of dollars here. How do you think about this. Can you do with less and if so what would it look like but much of it is dealing with student learning and staff development. Oh yeah, much of it is that. Some of it is, Laura I can’t get my computer to do this, can you help me with this? She is a tech whiz.

**What is the role of the media specialist as it relates to the overall educational program of the building or district?** I know the bottom line is it impacts student learning. That is the bottom line. That is the overall function of that media specialist, is to improve whatever they can to improve student learning period. Many things funnel into that and I share with you all of those things, staff development, helping teachers just trouble shoot sometimes, getting her tech people out there as her fingers, training her tech thing. She does testing, I should tell you that again. She does a lot of our testing setup when we do the “@@@@” and the MCAs, the stuff, she makes sure everything is up and running and she trains our staff as proctors, staff development.

**What activities or events have the media specialists led or provided that directly or indirectly affects learning?** Yeah, staff development, that’s the biggest piece. Whatever it takes she is willing to help. **Anything specific with students that comes to your mind?** Not with students, it is through teachers, almost always thru teachers. The teachers are the ones that impact the students. They are the ones that have the contact with all of our kids and so they have to be the experts. She does not do things with students. Rarely if at all, and which she shouldn’t. Its all about training the teachers so the teachers are equipped to go out and work with our students. They feel better about what they are doing as teachers. Laura knows that by educating x amount of teachers they are going to go out and grab our 900 plus kids and do a great job with them.

**In your opinion do media specialists act in ways to inspire or encourage teachers and how specifically?** She does, she does through staff development she does and she even makes it so nonthreatening against the person. What she has is so nonthreatening. She is so very well organized but yet strong, yet saying there are times we have got to move in this direction. But I’ll tell you this, she has worked hard to gather input from our staff prior to ever leading in a direction. She has worked very hard at saying what do you think and she lays the groundwork. There are times when she said Larry I think it might best come from you because we know we are going to have to force the issue a little bit and I think she is right. It is best coming from you to say not an option today or tomorrow or this next initiative. Larry can you send an email out. I say absolutely. You know what it’s not an option this needs to be done. We’re moving in this direction, you know, bamm, and then Laura can take it. She doesn’t need to be the bad guy. She does not need to be that.

**In what ways have the media specialist acted in ways to motivate or lead staff toward the achievement of a shared school vision?** Like I shared a little bit earlier, she does go out. She does gather input from them. She does have her tech team that is kind of her sounding board, she gathers information from them. **When you say she goes out and gathers input, does she mostly do it through the tech team?** Some but some she’ll just get her people like I do. I don’t
know if you have that connection but I go out like before I’m really going to get into something. I want to know what my main leaders are going to say and technically most of that is her tech team but there are still a handful of people that you still go to. So she will go out and she gather information. The thing is she also does a tremendous amount of planning and study and research and she will have a plan laid in place before ever really jumping onboard with anything big. She has it laid out financially, training wise, whether it makes sense for student learning those things but as far as involving the staff, she is really good at that and her tech team is a big part of that but she also like I said has her other people that she goes to just like I do. She is good. I would venture to say she is much like what Maria does at the high school. Maria came in and had a different approach, different from what bob had. I’m not saying bob was incorrect but I think Maria is more out that working with staff that’s my guess. Laura is as big an influence and impact on why our school is successful as anybody but again, is it the media specialist? Not necessarily, it is the person. That is what I can tell you about Laura. It is the person. I might have another media specialist in there that wouldn’t have near the impact. It is the person she is that good. “@@@@@” any information it is not about the programs, it is about the people. That’s the only thing I have to say about her. It is the people. She is the people, she is that good. If you ever a chance to work with her, man, she is just really, really good. She won’t stay long in this position. I think if we ever get money I think she will end up being a district wide person, she is doing that already.
High School 1

**How many students does your school have?** Approximately 800.

**How many teachers?** Approximately 55.

**Support staff?** Support staff, are you including paraprofessionals in that? Yes. Then I would look at probably between 10 to 12.

**How many administrators does your school have?** Administrators, there is a principal and an assistant principal.

**Does the media center have any support staff?** The media center has one support staff directly assigned to the media specialist but then we also have our district tech support and since we are a one to one ipad school we have one tech support assigned to ipads that works directly with her.

**Approximately what is the free reduced lunch rate?** Probably about 12 to 13 percent. And the minority percentage.

**What is the minority percentage at your school?** Probably about 1 percent.

**How often do you engage media specialists in daily decision making?** Being the school size that we are with 800, I talk with my media specialist daily. She is very involved in the decision making. She runs two different budget accounts. One for the media department and one for technology. **Do you have daily meetings?** With our system, no it is more impromptu meetings. When she needs to meet with me she does, or when I need to meet with her we sit down and meet but usually on a daily basis we connect. But nothing just scheduled and formalized. No.

**Does the media specialist participate in administration team meetings or district admin meetings? Why or why not?** The way our current system is setup having an assistant principal and again I meet with him on a daily basis if the three of us need to sit down and talk about something we will schedule meetings when it appropriately fits. For example, when we are looking at our ipad distribution we will all sit down together so it is really topic specific. But definitely we have meetings several times throughout the year.

**To what extent do you value media specialist input or recommendations in admin meetings?** An extreme amount. I look at my current media person and she is involved in the budgeting when it comes to capital and I have actually my staff members when requesting capital for technology they submit it to her and then we will sit down to determine what will be rewarded based on our dollar amount. I look to her for instructions, staff development, she is very much involved in that especially in our PLC and she has been trained in the area and she has been an integral part of our staff development team not our site based team, our department chairs. She works directly with department chairs. Yes.
To what extent do you and the media specialist meet, you said it was impromptu. What specifically do you discuss, specifically throughout the year? Different staff needs. We talk about her role is also to get into classrooms and help teachers use technology and to help teachers have access to the media center and what services we have so we talk about that. We also talk about student needs, for example we have several students who are post secondary but they like to use our media center so we have set up places for those kids to go. Also she is big part of we have her doing it is called ‘our friends of Rachel club’ which is promoting positive school culture. She works with students with advisory. She puts together our tech-wiki we have an advisory program which is one day a week which focuses on college and career readiness and she works and puts all the information and the content on the wiki for staff access. One day a week, it is a Thursday but the planning and preparation, we are in constant communication. She is either communicating with me or my assistant principal.

What is the role or what do you see is the role as the media specialist as it relates to the overall education program? It is vital. If she and again particularly this person she has done a great job moving out of a traditional/library setting to embracing technology. Students come to her and staff goes to her. There are presentations, there are trainings. She does a nice job conveying the district’s vision and message. And her connection to students…wanting them to use the media center is unbelievable.

What activities or events has the media specialist led that either directory or indirectly affects learning? Indirectly affects learning I look at these and they might not seem big but they change the student culture. The ‘friends of Rachel club’ because it is all about acceptance and belonging and how people treat each other. She is very key to that. She also has had students part of her tech squad so they are the students have embraced the use of technology in our school and they kind of get a say on what apps we want on our ipads so that whole part with learning. Do students have to apply for that? You know I am not quite sure as far as her system how it goes but I know obviously they have worked with her enough and then she knows the students which are advanced in that area so it is a little bit of applying and but is also a little bit of using students talents but I have never seen her turn anyone away either. So what was the question again, In your school what activities or events that directly or indirectly does the media specialist play a part of? Every year we put together a talent show and that is another indirect thing she does. And again it is just about promoting that this is a good place to be and to want to learn. The direct way, she is in classrooms demonstrating some of the technology things. When a teacher might not know how to use a piece of technology or they are trying to put research skills into their curriculum, she is in there demonstrating that, helping with that. One big component that I did not talk about, she collaborates with our history teachers on history day and she is very integral on that as far with our 9th grade curriculum, she teaches the research skills behind it. And then throughout the project when the students are using the media center she is co-teaching different parts of that project and promoting the competition aspect outside of Becker.

Can you just briefly explain the ‘friends of Rachel’ program again? The ‘friends of Rachel’ program two years ago we had ‘friends of Rachel’ it is based upon Rachel Scott she was
a student that was killed at Columbine so it was her family that have developed this organization that goes around to different schools and as a result of hearing their presentation the bottom line is to be in tune with what is going on in your school and trying to make it a good place for kids so the anti bullying and just connecting with kids that for example I know that this year they made it a specific quest to find out everyone’s birthday and to make sure if it was your birthday you got a birthday message so it is just a good culture piece to your school. **And the media specialist is one of the head people for this program?** Yes she works with, it is a smaller group but she works with probably 10 to 12 students that really have embraced this. And they kind of put events and things like that on during the year. Yes and there are posters throughout the school.

**In your opinion, do media specialists act in ways to inspire or encourage teachers?** Yes every day. How specifically or what do you or don’t you see. I see how they inspire teachers, it is not that they are just telling teachers about specific things to do; they are doing them with the teachers. So when my media specialist wants a teacher to try something, she will not just say I think this is a great idea for you, she will show it and she will make their job easier so it is an easier transition for the teacher to say yeah this does work. And as far as with the students, I would just say the rapport that they build daily because they have a space in the building that is kind of almost the hub of the building during the day the academic hub where kids are coming and going and the relationships she is building with kids and inspiring them to problem solve and to tap into that creative part of their brain is very strong. Good.

**In what ways have the media specialist acted ways to motivate or lead staff toward the achievement of shared school vision, school or district?** Probably answer that throughout the one component that we have not really talked about is testing. One of the things she looks at is different data. She does some surveying and always getting those results to staff. See what else is there, and as far as the shared vision, during their PLC’s looking at that at the beginning of the year the district media specialists met all together but towards the end of the year they were going out to the different professional learning communities and saying hey how can we help you and here is the vision we see and how can we bring this forward.
High School 2

**How many students does your school have?** 1230

**How many teachers?** 75

**Support staff?** 25

**How many administrators does your school have?** 4

**Does the media center have any support staff?** 2

**Approximately what is the free reduced lunch rate?** 28%

**What is the minority percentage at your school?** 9%

**How often do you engage or involve media specialists in daily decision making?** In regard to entire school or … in regard to entire school. Where our media specialists are involved in daily decision making would be specifically around things that happen in classrooms that would be school wide types of things. For instance technology is the biggest aspect of involvement for them so we are going to Google email and Google calendar and all of that so we are going to have them very involved in how do best train, how do we organize what are we going to share with staff in what order, how are those things going to take place what have they seen within the staff on readiness and availability for training, what works well for there so those would be the biggest things and then the other daily decision making type of things would be around if there are specific areas of interest that they have for example my media specialist is a fairly regular presenter at staff meetings with information that we have talked about ahead of time and put together. Would you say you and your media specialist meet fairly often. we have over the last two years because that person is new so we have, the first year we probably met every 2 to 3 weeks, this year we have met monthly to sit down and talk about things going on there.

**Were those formal meetings where you would schedule?** Yes we would schedule them. The first year we put them right on the calendar at the beginning so we would stay with them and then we would bring together the media specialist and our network supervisor and me to talk and have those meetings.

**Does the media specialist participate in administration team meetings?** not every district.. not in ours unless they are requested to come and address particular issues so whether it be here at the building level or at the district level and I am just going to use her name Maria is seldom at our building level simply because we use our administrative time on some other tasks that don’t involve her but from a district perspective she has been at probably 4 meetings 5 meeting over the course of this year simply because of the technology aspect. how often do your administrative team meetings.. we have one meeting a month for all administrators and then we have one meeting a month for just what is called a core team which is building principals,
specialized director business manager and superintendent. So I meet twice a month and she been to probably 5 over the course of what would be 18 meetings or so.

**The only time you basically need them is on as is needed basis?** Yes, They are not going to sit on that group as a regular.

**To what extent do you value the media specialists input or recommendations when they are part of those meetings?** A great deal. Our media specialist in the way we use that person has a great deal of first hand knowledge of students because of the number of students that come through the media center, spend time there actually connect with the media center staff because that is important and so that is one way another way is because they have first hand knowledge what is going on in the classroom because they provide a lot of instructional support through resource, through technology through some presentation all those kind of things. It also happens that we have someone with a personality who likes to know and wants to know people so that is the valuable aspect.

**To what extent do you and the media specialist meet?** A few times. I would say formally around once a month and informally probably at least weekly. I will spend time with Maria. That is where are just now and we are just talking through some of the Google mail stuff so we are checking in pretty regularly and some of that is around media and some of it is around other committees because she is also a person who is very involved in school wide committees and so it might be committee work that we are doing.

**What specifically whether it be committee work or just you and her meeting, what to you discuss typically in meetings?** We will discuss any number of things. We will discuss interplay of personalities within the employees in the media center, we talk about what is happening student behavior in the media center we talk about materials appropriate for students and how we are using that material what are they accessing we talk about those things, we talk about specific classroom activity and what folks are learning there. We talk about the success of technology that is being implemented, what do we need more of what do we need more training on are we doing a good job there. We spend time talking about balance between print media and technology online and what is the right way to go there. I’m trying to think what else we discuss. Those are the primary things. **And I would assume those pop up in multiple meetings at different times?** Yes

**What is the role of the media specialist as it relates to the overall education program?** In my building, they are what I consider a resource manager. When our staff needs help the media specialist is going to be the number 1 go to person because do you need books, do you need websites, do you need technology In your room, do you need to bring your students to the media center, how is the best way to present this, what materials might we access to do something better, do you have time to create a web page for me that would have a number of links so my kids can go to that web page and do research and not be stuck in Google searching through 87,000 results.
What activities or events have the media specialist led or provided that directly or indirectly affects learning? I think the biggest thing that the media specialist has led have been training for our staff for use of active boards, training of effective ways of using online support, research, etc., as simple as doing searches, to setting up courses online, to using moodle.” A number of our staff have moodle’ accounts so the kids are going on moodle to do their work and how can we most effectively set that up. She has done things with Battle of the Books where kids are reading. She has done other things that encourage staff to read professionally because we believe it will help us be better. She has gone and presented to classes on how to do research and just continued to provide a media center that invites kids in to use resources and isn’t something where they do not want to come because they might move something out of place or they might be a little bit too loud or whatever.

In your opinion, does your media specialist act in ways to inspire or encourage teachers? Absolutely yes. How? All the same things that I was saying. She is someone who sends the message, tells people that learning is ongoing for everyone all the time and the information is out there and opportunities to learn are out there, it’s my job to try and help you find those for you and for your students and I want to work with you and I want to be a part of what goes on in your classroom and how can I help and then also what can I learn from you that could be shared with other people because a classroom teacher doesn’t get into another teacher’s classroom while they are teaching. The media specialist is one other person besides me and my two assistants who get into other classrooms and can share the information.

Have you, do any specific instances come to mind that you maybe have seen your media specialist inspire or encourage? She is always coming to me and reporting to me about how she got teacher A to now use tool B, you know and so got this person doing this on the active board. This person who is kind of afraid of technology is now doing podcasts for their book reports. This person has figured out there is a better way to do assessments than using a scantron” and we can do it still online and we can still get results that can be tabulated quickly. Got this group bring your own device and they’re doing pull everywhere so they are getting feedback from their students and seeing what kids know and doing informative assessment and things like that.

You mentioned bring your own device, how is involved is the media specialist in the bring your own device? She would probably be the number one person to have people connect with if they have questions or concerns about how to do that and she is always helping send the message that technology is here to stay and our job is to harness it then to use it to the best of our ability and keep it appropriate.

In way ways have the media specialist acted in ways to motivate or lead staff toward the achievement of a shared school vision? Our school goals are around an informed and supportive public. They are around post secondary readiness for all students and so when I think about those things, how has she helped them to do that. We have incorporated a program called ramp up for readiness thru the U of M and a number of schools across the state are doing that. I think there are 20 last year and there will be somewhere in the low 50s this year. She has been one of the primary leaders in that group and has been the person who has gone around to all of our advisory peropole to make sure they have the technology they need, that they can access the
lessons, that they can show the videos that are part of what is expected there. **What is the ramp up to readiness?** It is a program where there are 20 lessons and we do it in an advisory program so we have an advisory once a week on Wednesdays and so there are lessons where they are learning all kinds of things about post secondary, what do you need to have for test scores, what tests are out there, what is it like to go to college, what’s the social life like, how am I going to be successful, what are my career interests, what’s my college interest, how am I going to do a college search, how do I fill out an application, every aspect of how do I be ready to move on to that next step, whatever it’s going to be, whether it is a career or more training or education even military things like that so she’s been a key person on that leadership team. That’s a 9 through 12 program? “@@@”.
Appendix E

IRB Approval

St. Cloud State University Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Office of Sponsored Programs Administrative Services 210

Website: stcloudstate.edu/osp

Name: Mark Krueger  Address: 1324 Scout Drive

Sartell, MN 56337  Email: mark.krueger@isd742.org

Email: osp@stcloudstate.edu  Phone: 320-308-4932

IRB APPLICATION DETERMINATION:

EXEMPT

Co-Investigator:  Project Title: THE UNSEEN SCHOOL LEADER: A STUDY OF MEDIA
SPECIALISTS AND THEIR

ROLES  Advisor: Dr. Jeanne Anderson

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application to conduct research involving human subjects. Your project has been: EXEMPT

We are pleased to advise you that your project has been deemed as exempt in accordance with federal regulations. The IRB has found that your research project meets the criteria for exempt status and the criteria for protection of human subjects in exempt research. Please note the following items concerning our exempt policy:

-- Principal Investigator assumes the responsibilities for the protection of human subjects in this project --Exempt protocols DO NOT need to be renewed.

--Exempt protocols DO NOT require revisions. However, if changes are made to a protocol that may no longer meet the exempt criteria, a new initial application will be required.
--Adverse events (research related injuries or other harmful outcomes) must be reported to the IRB as soon as possible.

--The IRB reserves the right to review the research while it is in progress or when it is completed.

Good luck on your research. If we can be of further assistance, please contact the Office of Sponsored Programs at 320-308-4932 or email lidonnay@stcloudstate.edu. Please use the SCSU IRB number listed on any of the forms submitted which relate to this project, or on any correspondence with the IRB.

For the Institutional Review Board:

For St. Cloud State University:

Dan Gregory,  Associate Provost for Research Dean of Graduate Studies

Linda Donnay  IRB Administrator  Office of Sponsored Programs

OFFICE USE ONLY

Today's Date: SCSUIRB# 1146 - 1425 EXEMPT : 6/5/2013

Type of Review: Expiration Date:

6/7/2013