Principal Perceptions of Parental Aggression

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This dissertation titled
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Abstract

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Principal Perceptions of Parental Aggression

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This study of Ohio public, private, charter, and vocational school principals during the 2012-2013 school year explored existence or no existence of parental aggression towards school principals. The study researched predictors of aggression towards school principals and identified the frequency of their occurrence. The operationalized definition of parental aggression for this study was parental conduct that the school administrator perceives as threatening to their physical, psychological, or professional well-being. Through regression analysis and descriptive statistics, connections between acts of parental aggression and the demographics of the community, principal, and school were found. This study may serve as a platform to more deeply explore issues relating to aggressive parents, as well as, fill gaps in existing literature and provide insight into possible predictors of parental aggression.
Dedication

I dedicate this to

Without the support of my family, this could not be possible. Thanks to Joseph, Lucas, Elana, Jodi, Rick, and Vicki Unger. Special thanks for support and guidance of John and Anna Lou Lucas.
Acknowledgments

I would like to show my appreciation to my dissertation committee Dr. Godwyll, Dr. Janson, Dr. Larson. I would also like to acknowledge the support and efforts of my undergraduate professors, especially Dr. Joe Bendixen, and Dr. George Ecklund. Thanks to My high school, middle school and elementary school teachers, Mr. Ervan Pulse, Mr. Dale Knauer, and Mrs. Susan Long for pushing me to work towards perfection. The Guidance of my Professional Colleagues Mr. Howard Butler, Mr. Scott Wilson, Mr. Mike Daye, Mrs. Martha Kinzer, Mr. Steve Hackett, and Mr. Chris Clark to work to continually improve education. Special thanks to Dr. Dina Miller for her help and guidance in putting together a quality dissertation. Dr. Gene Geist, the chair of my dissertation committee; his help, knowledge and guidance through this process has been instrumental in me completing this dissertation. Thanks to Dr. William Larson for his inspiration to strive for excellence during my studies in educational leadership.
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Chapter 1 Introduction

Background of the Study

Jaksec (2003) concluded that most school principals had received aggressive behavior from parents with the intent to alter decisions that they or the school had made. Jaksec (2003) suggested that principals needed special training in dealing with conflict between parent and principal. The response to aggressive behavior by most school districts has been to enact procedures in dealing with violent aggressive acts, not provide training to improve staff understanding of the root causes of aggressive behavior and the differing perceptions of events that sometimes worsen the situation (Jaksec, 2003; Trump, 1999).

Many researchers have suggested the existence of a link between parent and school-staff relationships and school climate (Anderson-Levitt, 1989; Fine, 1993; Katz, 1996; Jaksec, 2003; Lasky, 2000; Lightfoot, 2003; Lodish, 1994; Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1986; Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, & Greenfield, 2000; Waller, 1932). Parent-school staff relationships and their impact on school climate is most commonly explored relative to the importance of good teachers, cooperation among parents and school staff, and providing for students’ needs (Jaksec, 2003; May, et. al, 2010). Both principals and teachers play a distinct role in parent-staff relationships. Each one has a different perspective on the existence of issues involving parents. Certain issues may be resolved at the teacher level without the involvement of the principal, and there are issues resolved at the principal level without the knowledge of the teacher. Considering this, the principal should have the most comprehensive view of the issues of aggressive parents in the
school (Jaksec, 2003). Therefore, school principals were chosen as the subjects of this study on perceptions of parental aggression.

Violent, aggressive behavior in or among individuals of an organization, can result in barriers to communication and eventually the breakdown of parent-principal relationships. Researchers have found that acts of parental aggression, parental conduct that the school principal perceives as threatening to their physical, psychological or professional wellbeing, leads to increased staff burnout (Jaksec, 2003; May, et. al, 2010). Staff turnover and the lack of a safe secure environment for students can result in lower academic achievement (Belfield & Levin, 2007; Jaksec, 2003).

Acts of parental aggression have a major influence on the climate and culture of the school (Jaksec, 2003). Community members, parents, students, and teachers often compete to exert power and influence over each other. This distracts schools from the key goal of educating children (Jaksec, 2003; Senge, 2000). Each group is unique in that they offer different types of influence, depending on their position, wealth, status, education, and motivations (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Hoy & Miskel, 2012; Jaksec, 2003; Senge, 1990, 2000). When influences conflict, positions of power, perceptions and motivations breed distrust and dislike between parties within school relationships (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). The nature of parent-school relationships, specifically parent-principal relationships, requires that the principal recognize competing perceptions, and exercise skills necessary in developing dialogue, understanding, and focus on learning that is necessary to ensure the success of the school as a learning organization (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; Jaksec, 2003; Senge, 1990, 2000). Successful school principals must
have the skills necessary to navigate the conflicting perceptions of community, parents, staff, and students in order to provide a safe learning environment (Jaksec, 2003). An Ohio principal gives an example of the power of perceptions of parental aggression as he recalls an account of his experience with what he perceives as an aggressive parent:

After it was decided that our school would permit students with Ed Choice Scholarships to our school, parental aggression increased dramatically. The two areas of aggression are grades and discipline. Parents yell and scream in the office intimidating the office personnel. I have had to go and help teachers, volunteers and support staff from the verbal abuse as well as the invasion of space. On a few occasions, a teacher was threatened with "I will kill that teacher." Parental aggression survey data ("Ohio Principal", 2012) Unpublished survey data (2012)

This type of perceived aggression towards principals is the basis of this study.

Preconceived perceptions of aggressive behavior can affect principal-parent relationships putting up barriers in developing and nurturing parent principal relationships (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003).

The literature on parent-teacher relationships is limited and concentrates on how to improve the relationships (Jaksec, 2003; May, et. al, 2010). Most studies view the parent and school staff relationship through the lens of either the parent or the teacher. The friction between parent and staff is often attributed to the differing expectations of the child by the parent and school staff as well as misunderstandings of the differing perceptions of the parties involved (Jaksec, 2005; Lightfoot, 2003). The research on interactions between principals and parents is the most absent (Jaksec, 2003). The lack of
depth and breadth of literature on parental aggression towards school principals is noted by several authors (Jaksec, 2003; May, et. al, 2010). Although limited in nature, enough evidence exists that, there is a concern among parents, teachers, communities and school staff regarding school-parent relationships (Jaksec, 2003; May, et. al, 2010).

Problem Statement

Parent-principal relationships are complex and full of differing perceptions of what is best for the student. Differing perceptions, positions of power, and prior experiences, set the stage for possible parent-principal conflict. In order to provide principals with an understanding of what that may cause conflict between parents and principals that may result in principals leaving the profession, and reduced academic achievement for schools, it is necessary to explore the principal’s perspective of the issue of parental aggression towards school principals.

This study identified predictors of aggression towards school principals and the frequency which acts of parental aggression are reported. For this study, the operationalized definition of parental aggression was parental conduct that the school administrator perceives as threatening to their physical, psychological, or professional well-being. The study further investigated through regression analysis, connections between the reported acts of parental aggression and the demographics of the principal, school and community. This study may serve as a platform to more deeply explore issues relating to conflict in parent-principal relationships. This study provides principals with a deeper understanding as to where parent-principal conflict is most likely to occur and provides principals, school districts, and state departments of education with data to help
target those principals and schools who need resources to provide training to reduce parent-principal conflict.

**Research Questions**

1. Do principals perceive the existence of parental aggression?
2. What are the relationships between the acts of parental aggression and the demographics of the principal, school, and community?
3. What are the predictors, if any, of principal perceived acts of parental aggression?

**Significance**

Positive changes in school climate and improvement of parent-principal relationships could reduce school violence (Dinkes, Kemp, & Baum, 2009). Providing a safe, stable environment is essential in the educational development of students. Understanding the difference in perceptions among parents, teachers and principals is essential in reducing conflict and providing for the educational needs of students (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). In many cases, improved parent-principal relationships results in higher academic achievement and reduced school violence (Jaksec, 2003, 2005; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; Trump, 2003). A stable environment allows the student to take academic risks and make mistakes that are necessary for the maturation process (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003).

Aggressive behavior by students, parents or school staff members can disrupt parent-principal relationships (Jaksec, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). One interaction with a parent or staff member perceived as hostile can change the way that the principal and the parent approach each other with concerns (Jaksec, 2003, 2005). In many cases,
the parent and principal will go into survival mode, where their natural instincts of self-preservation and protection become the number one priority (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). Barriers erected by the parent to protect their child, or by principals to protect their career, may lead to change in behavior that could reduce communication, cooperation, and vision. Lawrence-Lightfoot referred to these phenomena as ghosts in the classroom—unseen forces of experience that shape and guide parent-school relationships (2003). Poor understanding of these forces that fuel conflict can lead to increased violence and more problems with parent-principal relationships (Jaksec, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). Lawrence-Lightfoot (2003) stressed the importance of principal-parent cooperation, and called these interactions "essential conversations", which can reduce misunderstandings and conflicts in parent-principal relationships.

The identification of predictors of parental aggression, the frequency of their occurrence, and the location of the parental aggression will provide valuable data to boards of education, parents, principals, school staff, and state policy makers. These data are essential for the development of the School that is a learning organization, where parties work and learn cooperatively (Senge, 2000). The information will allow parents and principals to have a better understanding of principals’ perceptions concerning parental aggression, which may provide an opportunity to develop common threads of understanding in which to build essential conversations about concerns (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). Better understanding of the perceptions of stakeholders involved in the education of students may provide for a more productive and safe learning environment within the school (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). The reduction of conflict among parents
and principals can reduce staff stress, and the resulting turnover and retraining of new staff members (Jaksec, 2003). The data will also allow boards of education and state policy makers to distribute data-based resources to parents, principals, and schools most in need.

Limitations of this Study

1. The first limitation of this study was that only one state, Ohio, was represented; therefore, the results are not generalizable to all states.

2. By using only principals in this study, only their perspectives were represented. Since the principal handles the most severe cases of angry parents, these incidents may appear disproportionate to aggressive school incidents. The principal may also have a more callous view of parental aggression and thus underreport incidents.

3. This study relied on self-report data. Principals who responded to the electronic survey answered questions according to their individual perception of the question. Social desirability bias could have influenced respondents to give answers that they feel are socially acceptable, and not exactly what occurred (Fisher, 1993).

4. Principals’ ability and willingness to complete the survey were also limitations. Principals in districts with greater workloads could have had lower response rates. Principals in districts with lighter workloads may have had increased participation.
5. Culture may have had an impact on survey results. Varying cultural values, whether personal or within the school or community, may have influenced the self-report responses to the survey. The same occurrences of parental aggression may have differing perceptions of severity based on the cultural norm for a particular respondent. The instrument used in this study did not allow such differences.

6. The bias of the researcher could also be a limitation. The personal experiences, educational background, and perceptions about parental aggression may have influenced the design of the instrument, the way in which data were collected, or how analysis was completed.

Summary

Many school principals perceive that actions of parents are threatening their physical, psychological, or professional well-being. These perceptions affect parent-principal relationships that are necessary for providing an efficient, effective, and safe learning environment. This study of Ohio school principals’ perceptions revealed the existence, predictors, and environmental influences of parental aggression toward principals.

Definition of Terms

The following is a list of terms operationalized for the purpose of this study on parental aggression towards principals.

*Educational level of the principal* is defined as the self-reported highest level of educational attainment reported by the principals that respond.
Experience of the principal is the self-reported total number of years of experience in education of the principals that respond.

Learning Organization is “an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future” (Senge, 1990, p. 14).

Parental aggression is parental conduct that the school administrator perceives as threatening to their physical, psychological, or professional well-being.

Parental aggression measure is the total perceived incidents of parental aggression as reported on the principal parental aggression survey.

Poverty measure is identified as students receiving federal free and reduced lunches.

School is a public educational institution serving some configuration of grades from kindergarten through grade 12 including public, charter, and vocational schools.

School location is identified as rural, urban or suburban using the national center for education statistics local codes.

School type is identified as vocational, public, or charter as self-reported by the principals who respond.
Chapter 2 Review of Relevant Literature

Introduction

Parent-principal relationships are complex and include differing perceptions about what is best for the students (Jaksec, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). These differing perceptions can create conflicts among relationships (Jaksec, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; May, et al. 2010). Prior experiences of having or interacting with others with different positions of power can also influence parent-principal relationships.

The purpose of this study has been to examine perceived parental aggression towards school principals, which may help fill gaps in existing literature about perceived parental aggression. This study’s focus has been to examine parent-principal relationships, identifying frequency and predictors of parents’ aggressive acts towards school principals. Perceived parental aggression has been measured from the school administrator’s perspective of what behaviors are threatening to the leaders’ physical, psychological, or professional well-being. The research questions the chapter addresses are principals’ perceived existence of parental aggression, possible relationships between acts of parental aggression and demographic information, and potential predictors of these perceived acts of parental aggression. In order to provide a foundation to examine the research questions, this literature review, related to learning organizations; school climate and aggression; parent, teacher, and principal perceptions; parent and school-staff relationships; and workplace violence, has been provided.

This chapter reviews the literature regarding parental aggression toward school principals, violence, and the relationships between school and parents, to examine what
might contribute to this conflict. In this chapter, school climate includes perceptions and interactions among classroom, school, and community (Hoy & Miskel, 2012; Senge, 2000). The perceptions and interactions of parents, teachers, principals, and the community members affect school climate, which, in turn, influence the perceptions and interactions of those in the system (Senge, 2000). A manifestation of that influence sometimes involves conflicts and aggression (Jaksec, 2003; Senge, 2000). Within the school climate, relationship conflicts can be present between parents and school principals. The parent-principal interaction is a key relationship within the school system that has not been researched as much as the parent-teacher interaction (Jaksec, 2003; May, et. al, 2010).

**Theoretical Framework**

The connections between leadership, organizations and conflict have been noted by several experts in educational systems (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Hoy & Miskel 2012; Senge, 2000). As schools become more focused on a model of learning that is based at student and organizational levels, it becomes more important that the authoritarian leadership styles, such as scientific management, are used less, and shared leadership styles with a more open climate are used more often (Hoy & Miskel, 2012; Senge, 2000). Not only will it result in less friction, but will likely result in a more congenial relationships between parents, teacher, principals, students, and community members (Seng, 2000).

In order to move to a more open and shared leadership model, it is essential that the parties involved in the education of students understand each other’s perceptions of
the meaning of a quality education and the manner in which to provide it (Senge, 2000). Educators, parents, students, and policy makers need to be able to frame and reframe goals, expectations, and challenges that face today’s schools (Bolman & Deal, 2003). The capacity for individuals to engage in dialogue and continually develop new mental maps integrating where they have been and where they want to go will allow them to adapt to change in educational environments (Isaacs, 1999; Senge, 1990, 2000). If leaders and organizations embrace and employ the principles of a learning organization while developing their mental maps, they may have a better understanding of the perceptions of parents, staff, and political leaders (Senge, 2000). The understanding of other perceptions, particularly opposing ones, would allow principals to engage individuals and groups “that have concerns about the school” with the proper tone and response, which may lead to more harmony and less conflict (Senge, 1990; 2003).

Leadership style, organizational structure, and the interactions between the individuals in a system typically shape the climate of the organization (Hoy & Miskel, 2012). In order to develop a school climate that is best suited for students, stakeholders should be engaged in open dialogue about the teaching of the children (Isaacs, 1999; Senge, 1990, 2000). Open dialogue within learning organizations is a way to communicate that requires trust and transparency among individuals. A school system where trust and openness are present, may contribute to the effectiveness and functionality of the organization (Hoy & Miskel, 2012; Isaacs, 1999; Senge, 1990, 2000). In turn, the organization’s climate can influence the school systems’ level of pursuit and success of obtaining open dialogue (Senge, 1990, 2000).
The influence of perceived parental aggression on the interactive relationships of school climate and personal relationships within the school system are important to the way the school operates. These relationships are crucial in forming the basis of a learning organization (Senge, 1990, 2000). School climate is the environment resulting from complex interactions of individuals within the system (Senge, 2000). Climate has an impact on individual relationships, and individual relationships affect the climate. This is a self-reinforcing, interactive relationship, where expectations of behavior within the school system continuously form the dynamics within that system (Senge, 2000).

Parent-school relationships include conflicting perceptions regarding the purpose and delivery of education to students (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). These conflicting positions can lead to disagreement, anger, and, in a few cases, violence (Jaksec, 2003). Violent aggressiveness, while rare, has an influence on the school system (Jaksec, 2003; Senge, 2000). Aggression and violence within the school setting are growing concerns among students, parents, and public policy makers (Jaksec, 2003; Trump, 1999).

The literature on parental aggression towards school principals is reviewed, reported, and analyzed within this theoretical framework using the next three sections, which are titled “school climate and aggression”, “perceptions: parents, teachers, principals,” and “relationships, parents and staff”. This study examines the existence, influence, and predictors of perceived parental aggression toward school principals. Parental aggression toward school principals is the only topic included that has only been noted as lacking in peer reviewed literature (Jaksec, 2000, 2003, 2004; May, et. al.)
School climate and aggression. The operational definition of school climate is “the general feel or atmosphere of the school” (Hoy & Miskel, 1996, p. 140). The atmosphere of the school is a reflection of the quality of the relationships between the community members, parents, principals, school employees, staff, students, and teachers within the school system (Lawarence-Lightfoot, 2003). School climate may be influenced by numerous factors including perceptions, relationships, wealth, religion, weather, facilities and local community expectations (Hoy & Miskel, 2012; Lawarence-Lightfoot, 2003; Senge, 2003).

School climate includes parent-staff relationships, which is most commonly examined from both parent and teacher perspectives (Jaksec, 2003). Parents tend to emphasize the importance of good teachers, while teachers are concerned about cooperation among parents and school personnel. Parents and teachers are usually focused on providing a school climate to meet student needs (Anderson-Levitt, 1989; Fine, 1993; Jaksec, 2003, 2004; Kaatz, 2009; Lasky, 2000; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; Lodish, 1994; Loeber, & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1986; Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, & Greenfield, 2000; Waller, 1932).

A stable school environment can provide increased engagement and effective communication of stakeholders, which include teachers, principals, school staff and parents (Jaksec, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; May, et. al, 2010; Senge, 2000). Engagement involves active connections between communities, parents, schools, and students, which are vital in providing a climate that is conducive to learning (Jaksec, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). Connections based on positive experiences are the
building blocks to alliances that need to be in place with parents in order to have what Lawrence-Lightfoot (2003) calls “essential conversations”. These conversations reduce conflict, violence, and misunderstanding between school staff and parents (Hall, 2008; Hill et al., 2003; Kanters, 2002; Katz, Adman, Reese, Debbie, & Clark, 1996; Pettit, 2004; Sheldon, & Epstein, 2002).

In addition to fostering stable relationships, school climate needs to be safe (Trump, 1999). Positive changes in school climate and the educational environment may improve school safety (Dinkes, Kemp, & Baum, 2009). Providing a safe, stable environment in the educational development of students, may improve academic achievement of the students of the school (Dinkes, Kemp, & Baum, 2009; Trump, 1999). Such a stable environment can provide the students with the opportunity to take academic risks and make mistakes that often are necessary for the maturation process (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). If a stable environment is not provided, students, as well as the school staff members, will tend to behave as if they are in survival mode, where their natural instincts of self-preservation and protection become the number one priority (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). Unsafe school climates can breed conflict that leads to increased discipline problems with students (Jaksec, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; Maslow, 1943). These problems can bring about tension and conflict between parents and school personnel (Jaksec, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). Research indicates the primary source of conflict between parents and teachers is student discipline (Jaksec, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; May, Chen, & McClure, 2006). For this reason, discipline
should be administered in a manner that reduces tension in order to provide a safe environment for students (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003).

Schools not only need safe environments, but they also need to be operated with consideration of such matters as structure, administrative processes, supervisor styles, policies, and culture (Senge, 2000). In order for organizations to be attentive to these processes, to survive and to remain relevant and productive, it typically is necessary for the culture of an organization to undergo constant change (Burke, lake, & Paine, 2009; Bolman & Deal, 2003; Senge, 2000). The influence of school culture change at an organizational level can include stressors that trigger violence and aggression (Paludi, Nydegger, & Paludi, 2006). Organizational structure can intensify workplace conflict and stress during times of change (Baxter & Margavio, 1996; Jaksec, 2003).

Experts have found connections between leadership, organizational structure, and conflict (Baxter & Margavio, 1996; Bolman & Deal, 2003; Hoy & Miskel 2012, Senge, 2000; Strike, 2007). Conflict, which may express itself as violence, has been observed in organizations where scientific management practices are common (Baxter & Margavio, 1996; Callahan, 1962). Scientific management, a theory that analyzes workflow to improve productivity and efficiency, was developed by Fredrick Taylor in the late nineteenth century (Taylor, 1911). Authoritarian leadership style is consistent with the scientific management theory, which emphasizes productivity and expense of employee well-being (Callahan, 1962; Taylor, 1911). An example of negative consequences of this leadership style is the violence that has occurred in the United States Post Office, which was studied by Baxter and Margavio (1996). They found a strong relationship between
high-pressure work environments, often present within organizations using scientific management methods, and workplace violence (Baxter & Margavio, 1996). Baxter and Margavio also found that when individuals who were more likely to be violent, were in those same stressful environments, the violence was more likely to produce a terrible outcome (1996). Scientific management styles, which encourage the production of goods and services over personal worth and well-being, tend to contribute to the inability of workers to manage their emotions and behaviors (Baxter & Margavio, 1996).

These scientific management practices also influence schools (Callahan, 1962; Taylor, 1911). Callahan (1962) documented the negative impact of scientific management practices on schools, and labeled them the “Cult of Education Efficiency”. Many of the scientific management ideas, which still lurk in the standards and accountability movement of today, are in conflict with what researchers have suggested is needed in order to improve parent-school relationships (Callahan, 1962; Senge, 2000). Scientific management practices embrace an authoritarian approach that could potentially be construed as abusive (; Senge, 1990). This authoritarian style tends to build resentment among members of the organization (Baxter & Margavio, 1996; Callahan, 1962). The closed climate facilitated by the use of authoritarian-scientific management practices reduces innovation and communication, and feeds mistrust among individuals within the system (Baxter & Margavio, 1996; Callahan, 1962; Senge, 1990). The use of authoritarian power, both formal and informal, dictates the amount of opposition or friction that an individual will receive when trying to accomplish a goal (Hoy & Miskel, 2012; Strike, 2007). The way power is used by the leader or the institution will, in part,
influence the climate of the organization (Hoy & Miskel, 2012; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). Allowing parents to voice their opposition openly in a constructive manner will break down barriers to progress and will help them work towards resolving the conflict (Jaksec, 2003; Senge, 2000). As schools become learning organizations, it will become more important to break away from more authoritarian leadership styles, such as scientific management, and progress to a more open climate that allows for more shared leadership (Hoy & Miskel, 2012; Senge, 2000). The result will be less friction between parties, and a reduction of resentment between parents, teachers, principals, students, and communities (Senge, 2000).

An open and shared leadership model, in contrast to closed authoritarian leadership, necessitates that most parties to a child’s education understand each other’s perceptions of what a quality education is, and the manner in which it could be provided (Senge, 2000). To obtain the objective of mutual understanding, educators, parents, students, and policy makers would be served by framing and reframing goals, expectations, and challenges that face today’s schools (Bolman & Deal, 2003). The desired framing and reframing could be achieved if school leaders would continually develop a mental map of where they have been and where they want to go. This mental mapping process will enable them to adapt to change in their respective educational environments (Senge, 1990). By employing their knowledge of the structural, human resource, political, and symbolic perceptual lenses, as Bolman and Deal (2003) suggest, leaders and organizations will have a better understanding of the perceptions of parents, staff, and political leaders (Bolman & Deal, 2003). The understanding of parents, staff
and political leaders’ perceptions will allow educational leaders to develop mental maps in order to engage concerned individuals or groups with the proper tone and response that may lead to more understanding and harmony and less conflict (Senge, 1990).

To engage groups with the proper mental maps, the learning organizations must include all possible stakeholders in the educational system (Senge, 2000). Classroom, school, and community stakeholders can move the process of learning forward (Senge, 2000). Parents and principals are a critical part of that process (Senge, 2000). Senge (2000) uses the phrase “I see you” to reveal that the stakeholders of learning organizations are transparent seeing each other’s value and contribution to the organization as a whole (Senge, 2000). Parents must be able to recognize and respect the principals’ perceptions, and principals need to respect the parents’ perceptions (Senge, 2000).

Mutual respect involves understanding opposing perspectives, which can lead to true dialogue (Iaacs, 2003). Dialogue, according to Iaacs (2003), is a conversation “in which people think together in relationship. Thinking together implies that you no longer take your own position as final. You relax your grip on certainty and listen to the possibilities” (p. 422). The use of this type of dialogue will both increase the likelihood of understanding and reduce the likelihood of aggression in schools. For example, an examination of experiences and perceptions regarding inappropriate aggressive behavior (Senge, 2000) can contribute to a better understanding and likely reduction of the possibility of aggression in schools and the workplace.
Inappropriate, aggressive behavior by students, staff, and community members is considered unacceptable in the school and workplace environment (Trump, 1999). Among other things, aggressive behavior can escalate into violent behavior that can have tragic results (Arundel, 2006; Farrington, 1989; Maxwell, 2006; Sweeney & Thorp, 2006; Trump, 1999). Examples of these results are:

- The April, 1999 Littleton Colorado School shooting, which left fifteen people dead, and the public focusing their attention toward the issue of school violence (Trump, 1999).
- Teacher Jennifer Paulson, who taught at Britney Elementary in Tacoma, Washington, being fatally shot outside her school in February, 2009 (Trump, 2010).
- David Benke fighting off a gunman who shot two Deere Creek Middle School students in February 2010 (Trump, 2010).

These incidents, while infrequent, are still enormously tragic (Arundel, 2006; NSSC, 2006; Trump, 2010). The media portrays school violence as a significant problem facing today’s schools, but the statistics shows that school violence is declining (BBC, 2000, 2001; NSSC, 2006). A single school can expect, according to the National School Safety Center, a shooting incident frequency of 1 in 12,000 years (Maxwell, 2006; Swezey & Thorp, 2006). In other words, statistics shows that schools are relatively safe places for students (NSSC, 2006).

According to researchers at the National School Safety Center (2006), who analyzed Bureau of Justice Statistics on school violence, “homicides of school age
children were about 50 times more likely to occur away from school than at school” (p. 2). Fifteen to eighteen-year-old students were more likely to be victims of violent crime outside of school than the younger group (NSSC, 2006). However, the researchers also found children ages twelve to fourteen were more likely to be victims of violent crime in school than children fifteen to eighteen-year-olds (NSSC, 2006). The school should be seen as a place of employment for principals as well as a place of learning for students. Research into workplace violence provides some basis to study the influence of violence and aggression on the climate of the school.

Studies have been conducted regarding factors that contribute to workplace violence (Baxter & Margavio, 1996). While studying the increased incidence of workplace violence in the San Diego California Post Office in 1989, Baxter and Margavio (1996) found that technological innovation and population growth had led to worker frustration, which could have contributed to the violent acts in 1989 (Baxter & Margavio, 1996). In 1993, the Dearborn, Michigan post office experienced similar acts of violence.

In addition to documenting acts of violence, Baxter and Margavio found that managers mistreated employees in order to achieve production goals (1989). Management used authoritarian leadership style. The authoritarian leadership style, coupled with scientific management, had produced resentment from employees toward managers (Baxter & Margavio, 1996). Some employees retaliated against the managers with violence. Interviews with spouses of the survivors of the violence revealed that survivor spouses voiced empathy for the perpetrators. The spouses of the perpetrators were also interviewed and shared that their spouses also experienced severe and repetitive...

Although worker mistreatment has been identified as contributing to workplace violence, other potential factors have been identified (Baxter & Margavio, 1996). Economic struggles, social pressures, worker abuse, and scientific management styles seem to play a role in workplace violence. No single factor seems to be solely responsible for workplace violence (Zender, 1992). There is also debate on whether violent acts are the result of unstable individuals or the result of the person’s workplace environment (Baxter & Margavio, 1996; Zender, 1992). According to the literature, management style, technology, and economic disparity have a greater influence on the potential for violence than the stability of individuals who perpetrate workplace acts of violence (Baxter & Margavio, 1996; Zender, 1992).

Management style has not been the only contributor to workplace violence within the United States Post Office (Baxter, & Margavio 1996). This workplace in particular has a high level of stress (Baxter, & Margavio 1996). According to Baxter and Margavio (1996) in their study entitled Assaultive Violence in the U.S. Post Office, “it has long been theorized that external events or conditions (e.g., economic deprivation) frustrate individual efforts at goal attainment, creating distress in the individual that ultimately triggers aggressive behavior” (p.179). Stress of layoffs, changes in work environment, and high expectations tend to increase the likelihood of workplace violence (Baxter & Margavio, 1996). In other ways, acts of workplace violence may provide an outlet where individuals can stand up to or express opposition to negative organizational dimensions.
Baxter and Margavio (1996) also state that, if authoritarian work organization fundamentally undermines a person’s status, honor, or sense of self-control (e.g. self-respect or “masculinity”), especially in the context of economic crisis or rapid technological and organizational change, it creates grievances that undermine workplace integration and commitment, weaken individual and institutional forms of social control, and catalyze alternative definitions of situations that increase the probability of violence. (p. 280)

This description of the impact of an authoritarian work organization provides an understanding of the circumstances that may motivate individuals to commit violent and aggressive acts in the workplace (Baxter & Margavio 1996). It also seems possible that similar economic, social, technological, and self-respect factors may trigger aggressive behaviors in parents and self-respect situations that trigger workplace violence could trigger aggressive behaviors in parents and guardians of school age children in the school setting (Baxter, & Margavio, 1996; Jaksec, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). Violent and aggressive behavior may also have its origin in personal factors and workplace management style, which are present in segments of our society (Baxter, & Margavio 1996; Jaksec, 2003). Whether the workplace is a school, city, factory or other place of employment, violent and aggressive behavioral traits tend to be similar (Baxter, & Margavio 1996; Jaksec, 2003).
Many of the same procedures used to secure workplaces have also been adapted and implemented in schools (Trump, 2010). Check-in procedures, security cameras, locked exterior doors, and crisis management plans first arose in the workplace and migrated to the school environment (Trump, 2010). These procedures have, in part, arisen in response to the media’s portrayal of violent workplace events, such as violence at post offices, factories, and specifically the tragic school shootings (Trump, 2010). Although incidents of violence are rare in both schools and workplaces, addressing the perception of the risk appears to have gained increased importance as more incidents have occurred (Baxter, & Margavio 1996; Jaksec, 2003; Trump, 2010). For example, the Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy has resulted in increased security of doors, installation of security cameras, updating other security procedures, and instituting more thorough background checks of school employees (Trump, 2010).

**Perceptions of parents, teachers, and principals.** An understanding of the relationships between perceptions and realities tends to represent an important intersection. Both individuals and organizations hold their perceptions as reality (Bohn, 1967; Whitaker & Fiore, 2001). To the disgruntled employees, upset community members, or the parents defending their children, the manner in which they understand the details around the event is their reality (Bohm, 1967). An individual's actions, language, and reactions are based on his or her perceptions, which make up this person’s reality, whether the facts are or are not correct (Bohm, 1967).

Many parents tend to perceive that the educational needs of their children are the responsibility of the teachers and principals. Contrastively, principals and teachers often
perceive that educating students is a shared responsibility. This disconnect may lead to friction between parents, teachers, and principals. For this reason, effective communication between parents, teachers, and principals is needed in order to obtain an accurate understanding of the expectations and the degree to and manner in which they can be addressed (Lindle, 1989). However, the situation is also influenced by the tendency of parents to perceive that the teachers communicate to them in a condescending manner that lacks a personal touch (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; Lindle, 1989). Principals, on the other hand, often perceive parents as being threatening and aggressive with unreasonable demands (Jaksec, 2003). These conflicting perceptions tend to shape parent-school relationships (Jaksec, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; Senge, 2000).

Perceptions and reality cannot be separated (Bohm, 1967). In fact, perceptions of the individuals, as already indicated, is reality to them (Bohm, 1967). Parents and staff members tend to have different perceptions of what the school is and what its function should be (Bohm, 1967, Jaksec, 2003, Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). These perceptions are typically shaped by life experiences and personal expectations (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). These life experiences could involve culture, education level, socio-economic status, geographical location, and religion, and, in turn, often guide the interactions between parents and school staff members (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). Parents’ perceptions, as well as their moods and behaviors, are also influenced by their child’s experiences during each school day (Lehman & Repetti, 2007). Often parents only hear the child’s side of the story concerning conflict, discipline, or misbehavior (Lehman &
Repetti, 2007). In order to place into an effective perspective the stories from their children and to pursue useful educational objectives, parents need to know and have an accurate perception of the teachers (Jaksec, 2003, Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003).

However, parents, as previously mentioned, often feel alone, threatened, belittled, and weak when communicating with school staff members (Jaksec, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). Often, parents do not believe that teachers and principals listen to their concerns (Lindle, 1989). Parents also have the perception that teachers and administrators are intimidating (Jaksec, 2003; Lindle, 1989). In addition, pressure exists from politicians, departments of education, school boards, and the current standards and accountability movement, which, to parents and students, can make education seem professional, cold, and data-driven. Parents may also feel stressed from non-school related matters. For example, financial struggles, chaotic family situations, illnesses, contentious prior experiences with schools, and poor attitudes of school personnel may influence interactions with principals and school staff members (Jaksec, 2005; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). This cold, data-driven approach is in direct contrast to what parents actually want from the school. Parents tend to prefer a personal touch that addresses their wants, needs and concerns for their children (Jaksec, 2003; Lindle, 1989). When they do not get the personal touch that they desire, parents view educators as stuck-up, patronizing, and uncaring (Jaksec, 2003). “School people are not likely to earn respect by adhering to a cold business-like approach” (Lindle, 1989, p.14), because “parents see a personal touch as the most enhancing factor in school relations” (p. 13). A positive
accommodating attitude is needed for principals to create effective relationships with parents.

The lack of positive school-parent relationships can lead to an elevation of conflict and tension that may also lead to acts of violence and aggression (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). Violence and aggression are linked to criminal behavior (Farrington, 1989), which adds to the perception that abusive and violent parents may be an occupational hazard causing, bodily harm, stress, and endangering jobs of school personnel. Consequently, teachers and principals perceive a risk of violence affecting their well-being (BBC, 2000, 2001; Jaksec 2003). This perception of risk has led to stress among educators (Philips, 2005). For that matter, some parents reportedly purposely intimidate school personnel with the intent of influencing the outcome of decision-making. (Anrudel, 2006; Attanucci, 2004; Bird, 2007). These types of interactions can lead to undesirable outcomes, such as challenged school-community relationships.

Parental verbal aggression, which is “the uses of any means to achieve the desired outcome including, profanity, race, sex, lack of intelligence, etc.,” is used by many, if not most, parents in the presence of children under the age of the age of eighteen, according to a study by Griffin (2008). This study also suggests that parental verbal aggression is considered an acceptable behavior to most adults (Griffin, 2008). Research outcomes also suggest a relationship between aggressive parents and aggressive students (Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Farrington, 1989; Hotaling, Strauss, & Lincoln, 1989; Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1986; Miller, 2005; Olweus, 1980; Paperney & Deisher, 1983; Patterson, Dishion, & Bank, 1984; Trickett & Kuczynski, 1986). The majority of
principals have experienced perceived acts of parental aggression (Jaksec, 2003). These acts tend to be verbal in nature with the intent of intimidating school employees (Jaksec, 2003; May, Johnson, Chen, Wallace, & Rickets, 2010). Acts of parental aggression can increase stress on school principals and lead to higher principal turnover (Jaksec, 2003). The findings of Jaksec (2003) support the fears of principals that problems exist, and that acts of violence are on the rise. (Attanucci, 2004; Gibbs et al., 2005; Phillips, 2005). Researchers agree that there is natural friction and competing agendas for what is best for the student, which leads to conflict and friction between school principals and parents (Attanucci, 2004; Jaksec, 2003; Phillips, 2005). Outside of Jaksec’s study of principals’ perceptions of parental aggression in Florida, little literature exists regarding principals’ perceptions of parental aggression. Although there is a lack of research examining principals’ perceptions of parental aggression, there are research studies regarding teacher perceptions of parental aggression (May, et. al., 2010).

Teachers have perceptions that the risk of violence and shooting are on the rise, but some research does not support the existence of that fear (May, et. al, 2010; May, Chen, & McClure, 2006). Confrontation with an aggressive parent is the exception, not the norm, for most school staffs (Jaksec, 2003; May, et. al., 2010). Although physically violent behaviors are not usual in schools, verbal confrontations with parents occur frequently (Jaksec, 2003; May, et. al., 2010; May, Chen, & McClure, 2006). Teachers perceive parents as aggressive, and feel alone in managing the actions of these parents. Teachers also perceive that criminal justice personnel and local school boards do not
support them in dealing with aggressive parents (Johnson, Chen, Hutchison, & Ricketts, 2010; May, Chen, & McClure, 2006).

The anxiety over conflict with parents may be the reason that most teachers prefer only occasional, not frequent, communication with parents (Moses, Slough, & Croll, 1987). This avoidance of parent contact is in direct conflict with Lawrence-Lightfoot's (2003) concept of "essential conversation", which opens communication between parents and teachers to improve understanding of each other, and thus minimize conflict in parent-teacher relationships. Despite research showing that hostile parental behavior is not frequent (Jaksec, 2003; Johnson, Chen, Hutchison, & Ricketts, 2010; May, Chen, & McClure, 2006), teachers still have a perception that the risk of school violence precipitated by parents is on the rise. Little research exists describing the reasons teachers feel that school violence is more prevalent today than it was two or three years ago.

One study that has significantly contributed to parental aggression knowledge base is the May, et. al, (2010) study of teachers in Kentucky schools. In order to develop an instrument to study parental aggression toward teachers, researchers had to develop original constructs because of the lack of prior data on which to base the study. A focus group of ten administrators convened using a structured group format. The focus group categorized aggression into three themes: verbal, property, and physical, which emerged from that portion of the study. Triggers for parental aggression were identified as absences, curriculum, discipline, extracurricular activities, grades, negative media portrayal, and special education. These seven categories served as the foundation for the development of the May, et. al, (2010) survey instrument. The survey was sent
electronically to 33,106 Kentucky teachers. A small number, 5,971 or 18%, returned their surveys; this low response rate may have demonstrated sample bias. Teachers with strong opinions about parental aggression were more likely to respond to the survey, thus these low response rates could influence the results of the study.

May, et. al, (2010) used descriptive statistics to describe the Kentucky teachers, schools, and communities that were studied. A one-way analysis of variance statistical procedure was selected to examine the existence of identified behaviors at each grade level. A multiple linear regression analysis was used to examine the influence of salient behaviors on teachers. Study results revealed that more than one in three teachers reported a parent shouted at them in anger. More than one in four teachers reported a parent used profanity directed at them. One in eight teachers reported harassment, because of having received several email messages from an angry parent. Teachers, 5.6 percent of those who were sampled, also reported that that a parent detained or attempted to detain them in an unwanted location. This parental aggression also included damage to teachers’ property, as reported by 2.3 percent of teachers. Older teachers were identified as less likely to report experiencing aggression by parents, while teachers with higher education, and those who lived in larger communities were more likely to report having experienced parental aggression.

One might conclude that parental aggression is not a major problem since May, et. al, (2010) found that incidents of conflict with aggressive parents are relatively rare. Jaksec (2003, 2005) concluded that even though problem parents were in the minority, they might still significantly affect the climate of a school in a negative way. While these
parents can create a negative influence, positive interactions between parents and school staff can create a positive influence Jaksec (2003, 2005). In fact, May, Chen, McClure (2006) found that the interactions between parents and school staff were mostly positive. Positive relationships between school staff and parents are necessary for the development of the school environment that is conducive to the academic and social development of students (Hackett, 2010). Lawrence-Lightfoot (2003) and Morris (1998) propose that a climate of mutual respect is necessary for dealing with parent-teacher conflict. Teachers should be prepared for the worst, listen well, admit mistakes, take good notes, and communicate clearly in order to resolve conflicts (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003).

Teachers and parents have a shared responsibility for the socialization of students. This shared responsibility may cause conflict between parents and teachers (Katz, Aidman, Reese, & Clark, 1996; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). Parent-teacher relationships tend to be adversarial due to the existence of differing interest, thus caution must be taken (Anderson-Levitt, 1989; Attanucci, 2004; Fine, 1993; Katz, 1996; Lasky, 2000; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; Lodish, 1994; Trumbull, Rothsteine-Fisch, & Greenfield, 2000; Waller, 1932). If teachers and parents ignore these conflicts, adversarial relationships may continue to pass from generation to generation, and become more deeply rooted, causing mistrust between schools and families (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003).

The literature on parent-teacher perceptions of aggression is primarily qualitative in nature, describing the importance of parent-teacher relationships, but not indicating whether a problem exists. More studies on parental aggression towards school personnel,
particularly quantitative research with larger samples, could help determine if a problem exists and provide a focus upon improving parent-school relations. Studies about school-staff perceptions and parent-staff relationships may even reveal the best way to build a school climate conducive to student learning.

**Relationships; parents and school staff.** According to McEwan (1998), parent-educator cooperation often leads to successful students. Parents and educators who nurture connections based on the good of the child typically have more tools to address other problems such as behavior and discipline (Lawrence-Lightfoot 2003). Educators who use various forms of relevant communication and conflict resolution are perceived as effective educational leaders by staff, students, parents and community members (Whitaker & Fiore, 2001). Senge (2000) stresses the need to improve dialogue between parties involved in the education of a child in order for schools to develop into learning organizations. However, development of positive parent-school relationships is not easy. Parents and teachers can be natural enemies because of conflicting interests about what is best for the students (Waller, 1932). Lawrence-Lightfoot (2003) supports Waller’s (1932) cynical description of parents and teachers as having conflicting educational expectations of students. Parents see teachers and principals as indifferent, stuck-up and only caring about their paycheck (Lindle, 1989). Teachers and principals many times feel that parents do not value a quality education and their expert analysis of the situation. Parent-school relationships can be adversarial and include obstacles and barriers to cooperation (Jaksec, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). The two primary parent-school relationships
influenced most by conflicts is the teacher-parent relationship and the principal-parent relationship.

Teachers are the first line of communication between schools and parents (Jaksec, 2005; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; Waller, 1932). Relationships between parents and teachers are one of the essential factors in increasing student achievement (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). These relationships are also influenced by parental aggression, which is initially focused at the teacher level, and then at the principal level (Jaksec, 2005).

Literature from both the parent’s and the teacher’s perspective explores the manner in which each relates to the other and how it is necessary to have good communication in order to create positive learning environments (Jaksec, 2003; May, et. al, 2010; Senge, 2000). Struggles within parent-teacher relationships are usually attributed to differing expectations of the child by the parent and the teacher. These different expectations are contributing factors to the friction that occurs in parent-school staff relationships (Jaksec, 2005; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; Waller, 1932). Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot (2003) explains that parent-teacher interaction is:

usually seen as neutral and civilized; but most parents and teachers will admit that despite the civil tones and the polite decorum characteristic of the exterior of most conferences, the space between them is full of mines ready to explode and that bloodshed is just as likely as a balm, adversity just as likely as alliance. (p.43)

Adversarial aspects of parent-teacher relationships (Waller, 1932) are often rooted in the conflicting positions of what is in the best interest of the student (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; Waller, 1932). Parents want fairness, flexibility, and understanding from the
teacher, while the teacher wants to give students the same opportunity and maintain objectivity in their classroom (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; Waller, 1932).

Lawrence-Lightfoot (2003) explained the interactions between parents and teachers and found that because of “culture, bias, agenda, race and gender,” the relationships between parents and teachers may not be as smooth as they appear on the surface.

Every time parents and teachers encounter one another in the classroom, their conversations are shaped by their own autobiographical stories and by the broader cultural and historical narratives that inform their identities, their values, and their sense of place in the world. These autobiographical stories are usually unconscious replays of childhood experiences in families and in school—are powerful forces defining the quality and trajectory of parent-teachers dialogs. (pp. 3-4)

Past educational experiences of both parents and teachers, referred to as “ghosts in the classroom”, are constantly interfering, shaping, and inhibiting relationships between the parent and the teacher (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). Good parent and teacher interaction is needed to provide a positive learning environment (Katz, 1996). Researchers assert that a positive environment provides many opportunities for principals and teachers to implement programs to improve parent-school relationships (Jaksec, 2003, 2004, 2005; Johnson 2009). Interactions between school staff and parents play a key role in setting a positive school environment that promotes learning. This positive environment discourages conflict and escalation to school violence (Johnson 2009; Katz, 1996).
The nature of parent-teacher-student relationships, as previously mentioned, can be characterized by conflict (Jaksec, 2004, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; May, Johnson, Chen, Wallace, & Ricketts, 2010). While conflict can lead to negative outcomes, Jaksec (2003) explains that not all conflict is bad. Conflict is an opportunity to solve the problem, whether academic or behavioral, which could benefit the student (Jaksec, 2003). Jaksec (2003) explains that the educator needs to recognize the adversarial nature of these relationships, and use it as an opportunity to develop positive relationships and reduce the negative possibilities.

School staff members view parental aggression as a safety and security issue. The behavioral standards should be set for parents, school staff members and community members (Trump, 1999). To address safety concerns about improper behavior, training should begin with teachers, principals and school staff. Staff members who face common everyday aggressive behaviors like bullying and harassment are at risk of being in situations that could develop into severe violent incidents.

Parents may exhibit aggressive behaviors with intent to pressure teachers to give their children better grades and increased services (Arundel, 2006). This pressure can lead to increased stress on teachers (Arundel, 2006; Brown, 1984; BBC, 2000; Jaksec, 2003, 2004, 2005; Moses, Slough, & Croll, 1987; Phillips, 2005). Then, this increased stress may lead to the increased likelihood of violent or aggressive acts in a manner similar to violent acts that occurred in the United States Post office during the 1980’s (Baxter, & Margavio, 1996; Zender, 1992). Jaksec (2003) goes a step further by arguing that aggressive parents discourage school employees, resulting in school employees
leaving the profession. Teachers voice that the consequences of stress and unreasonable demands by parents are the reasons they identify interacting with aggressive parents to be the least enjoyable part of their job (Gibbs, 2005).

Principals are crucial to the development of a positive learning environment needed to promote students’ learning (Hackett, 2010). The nature of relationships between parent and principal is full of potential conflicts, due to the conflicting demands of the student by the principal, and the parent (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; Waller, 1932). The principal must strive to balance the wants and needs of students, parents, community, staff, and school boards in order to provide the required conditions for learning (Howley & Howley, 2005). The role of the principal is one that requires performing a balancing act with the demands of parents, schools, and teachers (Howley & Howley, 2005). Principals incapable of this balancing act are often dealing with conflict and miscommunication in their own personal lives, which can determine their success or failure (Howley & Howley, 2005).

Jaksec (2003) has examined the different aspects parental aggression towards principals working in elementary, middle, and high schools in the state of Florida. His first study involved 653 school administrators, in 191 different schools, in the 12th largest school system in the United States. His second study included 669 principals from 67 different school districts throughout the state of Florida. The instrument used was a researcher-developed, self-report survey that measured the amount and type of parental aggression towards school principals. He conducted both district level and state level studies to answer questions about the existence, frequency and type of parental
aggression towards school principals (Jaksec, 2003). Jaksec (2003) found that the
majority of administrators had been the victims of parental aggression with varying
degrees of severity. Types of parental aggression reported included verbal, physical,
spatial, and threats concerning the professional career of the principal.

Jaksec (2003) concluded that aggressive behavior by parents towards principals
was a frequent occurrence. In contrast, May et al., (2010) found that parental aggression
towards teachers was not as frequent among Kentucky teachers as it was among Florida
principals. The higher reported perceptions of parental aggression at the principal level
than at the teacher level may have emerged as the principal has a comprehensive
perspective of issues arising from aggressive or violent behavior in the school and is
often the person who deals with the most severe problems (Jaksec, 2003). The studies of
Jaksec (2003) and May et al. (2010) were in agreement in revealing that school personnel
fear acts of violence. Both studies agreed that there is a conflict between parents and
school staff (Jaksec, 2003; May et al., 2010). Parents and school-staff members often
have competing agendas, which need to be resolved (Attanucci, 2004; BBC, 2000; Gibbs
parents appeared to be the least studied school relationships. The literature, with regard to
poorly behaving parents, includes research from an administrative perspective and
focuses on policy, procedure, and planning.

Summary

School climate includes the perceptions and relationships of those involved with
the aim of meeting students’ educational needs. Parents and principals are essential
stakeholders among those who are involved in the establishment of a safe and stable place for students to learn. Parents and principals can transform schools into learning organizations. In order for learning organizations to function properly, however, it is necessary for parents and principals to work cooperatively for the success of the organization (Senge, 2000). Violence, aggression, and conflict among parents and principals typically hurt effective parent-principal relationships. Parental aggression toward school principals can negatively influence the process of creating an effective school climate for student learning.

Parental aggression may cause staff burnout, lower academic achievement, and a worsening of parent-principal relationships (Jaksec, 2003; May, et. al., 2010). A continual power struggle between various groups within the school setting with different interests can be a distraction to the learning process. Parents and principals can have various interests depending on their familial and occupational positions, socio-economic statuses, and education levels (Bolman, & Deal, 2003), each of which can contribute to differing perceptions. Such a continual conflict of perceptions and interests can lead to distrust and animosity between parents and principals within the school system (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). Within the school, parents often perceive that they are in a position of weakness and at the mercy of the principal (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). The principal can often be in a defensive position because the principal may perceive that the parents are there to interfere in the operation of the school. Given these potential conflicts, a principal needs to have skills, such as conflict resolution skills, in order to
identify and address differing perceptions, which are often best addressed by developing common ties with parents (Jaksec, 2003, 2005; Senge, 2000).

Conflicts and perceptions within schools and among parents and principals as previously mentioned may affect relationships (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). Perceptions of aggression and the breakdown of relationships can escalate into violent behavior (Trump, 1999). Acts of aggression may influence parent and principal perceptions. The manner, in which these perceptions of aggression are addressed, particularly by the principal, can be critical to the safety of the school (Jaksec, 2000, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003).

Common reactions by school leaders to perceptions of conflict and violence have been to implement safety procedures, and lock down facilities (Baxter & Margavio, 1996; Jaksec, 2003; Trump, 1999). Although violent or aggressive behavior is rare in schools, the influence of such events often has a noticeable effect on the climate and culture of organizations (Baxter & Margavio, 1996; Jaksec, 2003, 2005). Researchers agree that the influence of conflict and violent behaviors on parents and principals would be worthy of future study (Baxter, & Margavio, 1996; Jaksec, 2003; May, et.al., 2010; Zender, 1992).

Perceptions of aggressive behavior, school violence, workplace violence, and parent-principal relationships typically influence the operation of school systems (Jaksec, 2003; May, et. al., 2010, Trump, 1999). The school system is not only a place of learning, but is also the workplace of teachers, staff, and administrators. Workplace violence literature provides support, not only for the importance of research into violent and
aggressive behavior, but also serves as potential resources for ways in which parents and principals can address violence and aggression in schools.

Connections between workplace violence and leadership style were observed by Baxter and Margavio (1996). In fact, a relationship appears to exist between the research pertaining to workplace violence and leadership and the research regarding school violence and leadership, the latter of which could particularly benefit from additional studies. There is likelihood that the same conditions that exist in the U.S. Post Office may exist within the school environment, and may require more investigation. Research outcomes also reflect a connection between poor socio-economic conditions and increased workplace violence (Baxter, & Margavio, 1996). The connection also extends into the school workplace, since this stressor may influence many relationships, including relationships within the school. For this reason, specific relationships including those among poor economic backgrounds, leadership style and acts of parental aggression should be explored. In addition, school managers, like workplace managers, need to be trained to identify and address conflicts that might arise from these relationships (Baxter & Margavio, 1996). Educating management in conflict reduction is supported in the literature on violence, parent-teacher relationships, parent-principal relationships and school climate (Baxter, & Margavio, 1996; Felson, 1992; Jaksec, 2003; May, et. al, 2010; Zender, 1992).

This particular dissertation study has been approached to include various pieces of literature that lie outside of “principal’s perceptions of parental aggression”. It was necessary to include these works, particularly as they have connections to “principal’s
perceptions of parental aggression” in order to provide as broad of a base of scholarly research as possible in which to ground the study. The approach seems particularly needed, given the lack of depth and breadth of literature on parental aggression (Jaksec, 2000, 2003, 2005; May, et. al., 2010). Some relevant studies have been conducted, but they are not broad enough in their examination and lack they empirical quality (Jaksec, 2000, 2003, 2005; May, et. al., 2010). Less scholarly articles about parental aggression against school personnel were found; however, they also lacked empirical quality and professional analysis, which are often found in professional journals (Jaksec, 2000, 2003, 2005, May, et. al, 2010). Conducting an Ohio-based study could result in broad, diverse, and useful data regarding the perceptions of principals pertaining to the aggression of parents (Jaksec, 2000, 2003, 2005; May, et. al, 2010). For that matter, scholars who focus on parental aggression agree that more research needs conducted in order to build upon existing research and fill the gaps in the literature (Jaksec, 2000, 2003, 2005; May, et. al., 2010).

To close this chapter, the focus of this dissertation is to study perceptions of principals regarding parent aggression. The study identified predictors of perceived aggression towards school principals and the frequency of acts of parental aggression among Ohio principals. The study further investigated, through regression analysis, relationships between acts of parental aggression and the demographics of the principal, school and community. This study can serve as a platform to explore issues related to aggressive parents and their relationships with school principals. This study can contribute to the body of literature on principal perceptions of parental aggression.
Chapter 3 Methodology

Purpose

Different perceptions of parents and principals can lead to conflict, and even violence. These conflicts within the school climate have the potential to influence principals to leave the profession, which may result in a reduction school academic achievement. Parental aggression toward principals contributes to conflict within parent-principal relationships. Principal perceptions of these conflicts may help to identify what specific factors might result in aggressive behaviors by parents.

The purpose of this study is to identify parental aggression towards school principals. The study identified predictors of aggression towards school principals and the frequency that acts of parental aggression occurred. For this study, the operationalized definition of parental aggression was parental conduct that the school administrator perceived as threatening to their physical, psychological, or professional well-being. The study further investigated, through regression analysis, connections between the acts of parental aggression and the demographics of the community, principal, and school. This study could serve as a platform to more deeply explore issues related to aggressive parents, as well as provide insight into possible predictors of parental aggression. This study may provide principals with a deeper understanding of where parent-principal conflict is most likely to occur, and provides school districts, state and national policy makers with data to help target those principals and schools who need training resources to help reduce parent-principal conflicts.
No variables in this study were manipulated. Focus was on self-reported responses to the Principals Perceptions of Parental Aggression Survey (PPPAS), and how they related to the characteristics and demographics of the community (e.g. wealth, resources, etc.), individual principal (e.g. education, race, age etc.), and the school (e.g. size, and location). Regression analysis was used in order to explore predictors of parental aggression towards school principals. Descriptive statistics were used to identify frequency and location of acts of parental aggression.

**Research Questions**

1. Do principals perceive the existence of parental aggression?
2. What are the relationships between the acts of parental aggression and the demographics of the principal, school, and community?
3. What are the predictors, if any, of principal perceived acts of parental aggression?

**Research Design**

This study involved a self-report survey of Ohio school principals. Using the data from the principal’s perceptions of parental aggression survey (PPPAS), the researcher performed statistical analyses that addressed the research questions.

**Identification of Population**

The population for this study consisted of Ohio school principals during the 2012-2013 school year. This included public, private, vocational, and charter schools as identified by the Ohio Department of Education.

**Sampling Plan**

The entire population of 2,912 Ohio school principals was included in this study.
Identification of Variables

The Independent variables for this study were the amount of education, leadership style, sex, and training in parent communication of the principal. Independent variables of the school included grade level, socio-economic status, and the student population. They were used to measure influence of perceived acts of parental aggression.

The dependent variables for this study were the parental aggression measures, which were the number of reported acts of perceived parental aggression towards principals, and the percentage of time principals spent on addressing acts of parental aggression, as measured by the PPPAS.

Instrumentation

The instrument for this study was developed from Jaksec’s School Administrator Parent Aggression Survey (SAPAS) (Jaksec, 2003), and self-reported demographic questions about the schools, communities and principals being surveyed. Relevant literature was reviewed (Lindle, 1989, McEwan 1998, Whitaker & Fiore, 2001) in developing this instrument. Questions from Jaksec’s SAPAS were used to measure parental aggression towards school principals. Jaksec’s parental aggression study of Hillsborough County, Florida schools and his study of all Florida schools resulted in a reliable survey to measure parent aggression (Jaksec, 2003). The combination of small and large school districts located within rural and urban population centers, the population distributions, and the combination of school systems made results from Florida more easily generalized to other states with similar structures (Jaksec, 2003)
**Development of the instrument.** This researcher consulted with experts throughout the development of the (PPPAS) instrument. Dr. Jaksec was contacted via email and phone about the survey he used in his study. He provided reliability statistics on his study and gave permission for questions to be used from the School Administrator Parental Aggression Survey.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-contact</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(C. Jaksec, personal communication October 28, 2011 3:22 p.m.)

The alpha coefficients show a relatively high internal consistency for verbal threats and intimidation (see Table 2) (Coolidge, 2006).

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Pearson R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal and Non-contact</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal and Physical</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(C. Jaksec, personal communication October 28, 2011 3:22 p.m.)

Prior to completing the survey, subjects were informed via email of any risks of participating in the study, and no personal identifying information was collected. The survey responses were anonymous. The subjects were then asked about principal
demographics (e.g. gender, age, educational level, ethnicity, years of experience as a principal, and years of experience in education), followed by 22 quantitative questions on perceptions of parental aggression and three open-ended response questions about their experiences.

Reliability. Reliability statistics measures the rate consistency scores can be reproduced across study samples (Thompson & Snyder, 1998). The reliability as calculated by Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for the principal perception of parental aggression survey was relatively high. Scores should be between .7 and 1 in order to be considered reliable. Both total and individual item Alpha statistics were relatively high (see Table 3).
Table 3  
*Cronbach’s Alpha Test for reliability*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Alpha</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instrument</td>
<td>.784</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 1</td>
<td>.786</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 2</td>
<td>.786</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3</td>
<td>.785</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question 4</td>
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<td>Question 24</td>
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<td>Question 25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question 26</td>
<td>.752</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 27</td>
<td>.768</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data collection.** This researcher created and administrated the PPPAS in Qualtrics, a web-based survey and data collection system. The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) database of principals in Ohio was used by Qualtrics to distribute the electronic survey. With the use of electronic surveys, Qualtrics data collection system, and an ODE email database, it was possible to survey the entire population of Ohio
principals. The PPPAS was sent via email to members listed in the ODE database of Ohio school principals. Embedded within this email was a link to access the survey.

**Data analysis.** This researcher cleaned and examined the data using SPSS. Visual observations of distribution graphs of the parental aggression data revealed a Poisson distribution. Unlike normal data distributions, Poisson distributions have occurrences that are independent of each other, happen at a constant rate during a certain time period, and they are rare events among studies in education (UMASS.edu/wsp.statistics). Poisson distributions are common among studies that deal with crime and violence, where the majority of phenomenon studied occurs infrequently. Finding this distribution was not a surprise, given the similarity between acts of parental aggression and crime and violence.

Poisson regression was used with this data distribution because the statistical assumption of normality of data distribution was not met. Outliers were identified as principals with problems and represented principals reporting parental aggression acts in the top 15 percent of responding principals. This researcher used crosstabs with demographic data and Poisson regression analysis with dependent variable using sum scores, in answering the research question of identifying any relationships between principal-reported acts of parental aggression and demographic information. In order to analyze poverty data measured by federal free and reduced lunch program participation, this researcher grouped poverty data into quartiles. Data was relatively evenly distributed within these quartile groups.

**Parental aggression measure.** Statistical package for social sciences was used to create a frequency distribution scale to investigate the existence of parental aggression
among the variables (Coolidge, 2006). This frequency distribution scale was used to identify data patterns. Acts of parental aggression toward school principals was measured by the PPPAS. Analyses using SPSS were performed on demographic data, and calculated sums from the raw scores of the PPPAS. Poisson regression analysis was used to analyze these new scores.

**Poverty Measure.** The poverty measure for this study is the self-reported percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunches. This has been a common measure for school poverty employed by educational researchers since 1946 (Viadero, 2006). While alternative measures are being developed, the federal free and reduced lunch rates are still the most common measures of school poverty (Cruse, Powers, 2006; Howard, 2010; Viadero, 2006; WPI, 2013).

**Population and sample.** The population for this study was public, private, charter, and vocational school principals during the 2012-2013 school year. This researcher was interested in exploring results from various types of public and charter schools in Ohio to include a wider representation of schools addressing parental aggression towards school principals. By selecting schools in the population of principals, more comparisons can be made based on school size, location, and curriculum.

**Power analysis.** By definition, the power or sample size was acceptable because there was sufficient power to detect statistically predictive power using Poisson regression at the p < .05 level of significance. With non-normally distributed data, like Poisson, a sample size of only one can result in rejection of the null hypothesis. However,
a sample size of at least four is recommended (Silva & Kulldorff, 2013, 2012). Using Wilk’s Lambda statistic, the Observed power for the PPPAS was 1.00, which is above the .82 statistic needed for sufficient power (Brown, 2007). An a priori estimation of power was not performed since the sample size was the same as the population of principals in Ohio, and number of respondents was more than sufficient for the regression analysis to accurately determine the predictive power of the independent variables.

**Summary**

The purpose of this study was to examine parental aggression towards school principals. The study identified predictors of aggression towards school principals and the frequency that acts of parental aggression occurred. For this study, the operationalized definition of parental aggression was parental conduct that the school administrator perceived as threatening to their physical, psychological, or professional well-being. Qualtrics was used to collect PPPAS data, and SPSS was used to perform power, reliability, frequency, and regression analyses. The instrument, PPPAS, consisted of 22 demographic and principals’ perceptions of parental aggression questions followed by three open-ended response questions. Predictors of parental aggression were measured through Poisson regression analysis. Location, frequency, and conditions of acts of parental aggression were examined with descriptive statistics and responses to the open-ended questions.
Chapter 4 Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify parental aggression towards school principals. The study identified predictors of aggression towards school principals and the frequency that acts of parental aggression occur. For this study, the operationalized definition of parental aggression was parental conduct that the school administrator perceived as threatening to their physical, psychological, or professional well-being. This study also investigated relationships between acts of parental aggression and the demographics of the principal, school and community. This study may provide principals with a deeper understanding of where parent principal conflict is most likely to occur, and provide educational policy makers, parents, principals, school districts, and teachers with data to help target those principals and schools that need resources to provide training to reduce parent principal conflict.

Descriptive Analyses

The principal perception of parental aggression survey (PPPAS) was administered to 2,912 Ohio principals via electronic survey. The survey was administered via email using Qualtrics. Of the 256 principals who opened the survey, 206 completed it. The instrument used was the PPPAS, consisting of 22 quantitative and three open-ended response questions to measure principals’ perceptions of parental aggression.
Dependent Variables

The dependent variable in this study was the self-reported occurrences of parental aggression as measured by the PPPAS referred to as the Parental Aggression Measure. This score was a composite of the reported acts of parental aggression.

Independent Variables

Independent variables were the amount of education, leadership style, gender, and amount of training in parent communication of the principal. Independent variables of the school included grade level, poverty level, and the student population. They were used to measure influence of perceived acts of parental aggression.

Demographics of Survey Respondents

Of the Ohio principals who responded to the survey, 3.4% were African American, 94.2% white, .8% Asian American, and .8% were Multiracial or other. The responding principals were 49% male and 51% female. The majority, 86.8% of principals reported being married, and 13.2% unmarried. Of the responding principals, 85% reported having children of their own, and 15% reported not having children. In regards to leadership style, 43.3% principals reported having a coach leadership style, 5.9% campaigner, 7.9% explorer, 17.2% innovator, 6.9% sculptor, 3% curator, 15.8% conductor, and 0% scientists. Over one-half of the responding principals had more than 21 years of employment in the field of education. Of the responding principals, 2% reported that they had 0-5 years of experience, 6.9% had 6-10 years of experience, 14.7% had 11-15 years of experience, 16.7% had 16-20 years of experience, 16.7% of
principals had 21-25 years, and 43.1% of principals reported having 26 or more years of experience. (see Figure 1).

![Years of Principal Experience](image)

**Figure 1 Years of Principal Experience**

Of the responding principals, 32% were employed in high schools, 21.4% middle school, and 46.6% were employed in an elementary school. In regards to education, 2.4% of the responding principals had bachelor’s degrees, 87.8% had master’s degrees, and 9.8% possessed Ed./Ph.Ds.

**School Demographic Data**

The following are demographic statistics collected from the responding Ohio principals and the schools in which they were employed. Responding principals reported that 32% of the schools were high schools, 21.4% middle schools, and 46.6% reported being elementary schools. Concerning the school student populations, 48.5% had a
student population of 400 students or less, 37.9% had a school enrollment between 401 and 800 students, 9.7% reported an enrollment of between 801 and 1,200 students, 1.5% had an enrollment of between 1,201 and 1,600 students, 1.5% reported an enrollment between 1,601 and 2,000 students, and 1% reported over 2,000 students enrolled. The following is an illustration of school size for this study. Note the small number of responses from principals in schools with a student population of over 1,201 students. This lack of response may influence overall group comparisons of perceived acts of parental aggression (see Figure 2). To explore potential problems, analyses were performed excluding both these comparison groups and combining groups for more accurate comparison.

Figure 2 School Student Population
In response to the type of school, 73.3% of the principals reported that they worked in a public school, 23.3% were private schools, 2.9% were charter schools, and .5% reported being vocational schools.

**Perceptions Principal and Parent**

Within the school system, perceptions often represent reality (Lightfoot, 2003). David Bohm (1967) explains that thought is collective, and there is no such thing as separation of perception and reality. The open-ended response data provides some powerful examples. A principal reported that:

Parent felt threatened when I sent an attendance letter to the home stating I was going to take them to an attendance hearing if the absences didn't (SIC) improve. Mom, grandmother and community activist came to the school to confront me since I obviously can't (SIC) say anything to their faces! She went off on a tangent about the school then not taking care of her daughter's bullies that her teacher lies about everything, etc. The parent withdrew her child from our building that day and then demanded we give her back all school supplies (this was Oct. at the end of the first quarter). When she didn't (SIC) receive her specific items back, she went crazy; yelling and threatening that "you'll get yours you fucking bitch" over and over. Security was called and escorted off school grounds. A safe school was issued which meant she can't (SIC) come onto our school grounds otherwise she could be arrested. That was the last we heard of this parent.

A parent felt that I was not doing my job at protecting his child from bullying. The child was short in stature and so was the father. If anyone made any comment
about his son's height, be (SIC) immediately took offence to this. He instructed
his son to take matters into his own hands and deal with the others aggressively.
When I punished the other boys and his son (for reacting inappropriately) (SIC)
he became explosive. He cussed at me, accused me of being a poor administrator
and calls me several names (SIC). The superintendent was called in and the
meeting was brought to a quick close when he used profanity against me. The
SRO was called in and a police report was filed. He was not permitted in the
school. I must tell you that I was warned about this person from the other school
he pulled his child from. He maintained the same behavior with those school
officials. The boy was enrolled in his third school and lasted there four weeks
because of the same issues. He is now being home schooled and doing work with
online schooling (Anonymous, 2012).

These experiences illustrate the principal’s struggle to understand a parents perception,
and it shows the principal’s struggle to be understood by a parent perceived as
aggressive. The reported parent’s perception and reality is that he or she was protecting
his or her child. The reported perception and reality of the principal is that he or she is
receiving abusive behavior that this principal feels cannot be tolerated. In both of these
cases, perception and reality were intertwined, which is often the case in parent-principal
relationships. When considering data from this study, it is important to remember that the
data represent the perceptions of the principals studied.
Principal Perceptions of the Factors Influencing Parental Aggression

Frequency data were collected concerning acts of parental aggression and details surrounding those acts. The vast majority (65.7% of responding principals) reported that discipline was a major factor involved in incidents involving parental aggression. Grades and special education issues followed with 7% reporting them as a major issue involved in acts of parental aggression. Sports and others were last with 5.5% of responding principals listing them as a major factor involved in acts of parental aggression. Most problems of parental aggression involved student discipline (see Figure 3).

Figure 3 Issues that Accompany Act of Parental Aggression
Frequency Data Perceptions of Parental Aggression

The data in this section will cover Principal perceptions of the existence of parental aggression and problematic interactions with parents. The frequency data are presented in percentages of responding principals. Among responding principals, 38.2% believe that parental aggression requires more attention by their district, 13.2% neither agree nor disagree, and 48.5% do not believe that parental aggression needs more attention by their district. Among responding principals, 30.5% report that they have voiced their concerns regarding parental aggression in their district. The majority (52 percent of responding principals) reported not being threatened by acts of parental aggression as much as they did two or three years ago. In contrast, 36.6 percent of principals reported that they feel more threatened than they did two or three years ago (see Table 4).
Table 4

Frequency Data Principal Perception of Parental Aggression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parental aggression is an issue that requires more attention from your district.</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>48.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have voiced my concern regarding acts of parental aggression in my district.</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel more threatened by acts of parental aggression than I did 2 or 3 years ago.</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>52.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have altered my approach with parents due to previous encounters with hostile parents.</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>43.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents generally support the decisions that I make regarding their children.</td>
<td>87.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have considered changing professions because of problems that I have had with problem parents.</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The policies at the school I work in adequately punish those parents who create conflict.</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school board supports me in dealing with parent problems.</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have reduced my involvement with extracurricular activities to avoid problem parents.</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>67.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would not conduct a meeting with a parent who was considered hostile.</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>63.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has been necessary to have other school personnel in a room when meeting with a hostile parent.</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel vulnerable to acts of parental aggression</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>59.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PPPAS Survey Data**

The conflicting nature of principals’ perceptions of parental aggression is evident in the data reported above. It is also present in their open-ended response questions. Several principals reported no incidents of parental aggression. Other principals report no stories of parental aggression in their open-ended response questions. One Ohio principal reports that, “I rarely have experienced an aggressive parent. The very few times it occurred, it was verbal aggression when they felt their child was unjustly picked on or singled out by a teacher or a peer” (Anonymous, 2012).
Problematic Principal Interactions with Parents

The PPPAS found that 95% of responding Ohio principals perceived the existence of parental aggression. Their responses to this perception varied according to education, gender, poverty, type of school, and grade level. The majority of principals reported that they have altered their approach to dealing with parents because of experiences with hostile parents. Most principals also believe that school district policies do not adequately punish parents who create conflict. These responses indicate that principals have a concern about aggressive parents. It also reveals that principals’ perceptions of parental aggression influence the daily relationships between parents and principals. During meetings with parents perceived as hostile, most principals have had to have other personnel in the room, but most principals did not refuse to have a meeting with those same hostile parents.

Furthermore, responding principals felt comfortable working with parents of another race. Responding principals also reported that they have not altered their participation in extra-curricular activities such as school sporting events, plays, concerts, and banquets because of parental aggression. The majority of principals generally believe that boards of education support them in the decisions they make about hostile parents. They also feel free to discuss their experiences with aggressive parents to their superiors. Most principals feel safe at their job and do not feel vulnerable to acts of parental aggression. They feel comfortable in their ability to deal with hostile parents, but are cautious during those interactions.
Independent Variables

Male and female. The population of male and female principals responding was evenly split. The PPPAS consisted of 97 male and 102 female respondents. The responding principals worked mostly in public schools, and a majority of males and females had master’s degrees. Both genders reported having high parental involvement and similar training in communicating with parents.

Differences among male and female principals included student population size in their schools of employment and grade level of their schools. Males were mostly employed at the high school level and in schools with student populations of 401-800. They also reported, in order of significance, discipline, sports, and grades as the major factors of parent-principal conflict. Females, by contrast, were mostly employed at the elementary level in schools with student enrollments of 400 or less. Females reported, in order of significance, discipline, extra-curricular activities, and grades, as major factors of parent-principal conflict.

The gender differences in the mean acts of parental aggression were not statistically significant. However, females reported a mean act of parental aggression score of 33.56 and males reported a score of 59.90. This difference in scores between the genders appears to be quite noticeable and will be discussed in the section on outliers and Poisson regression (see Table 5).
Table 5  
Male and Female Mean Parental Aggression Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is your gender?</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>59.8969</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>114.96082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>33.5588</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>37.42625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46.3970</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>85.41928</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**School grade level.** Principals at the high school level felt less supported by parents in the decisions they made than principals at the elementary and middle schools. Middle school principals felt the most supported. Middle school principals were less likely to consider changing professions because of problem parents than their high school and elementary counterparts. High school principals were more likely to consider a profession change, and elementary school principals varied in their consideration.

When exploring if school policies adequately addressed parents that create conflict, more high school principals believed that school-policies adequately punish disruptive parents. Elementary school principals were less likely to believe that school policies addressed disruptive parents adequately. High school principals in this study reported that they believed that their school boards supported the decisions they made about perceived problem parents, more so than middle school and elementary school principals did. Elementary school principals felt least supported. The PPPAS scores revealed that the middle school principals felt freer to discuss problems with parental aggression with their superiors than did elementary or high school principals. Elementary school principals felt least free to discuss problems. The PPPAS scores showed that more elementary school principals reported reducing their involvement in extra-curricular
activities because of problem parents than did their high school and middle school counterparts. Middle school principals were least likely to reduce extra-curricular activities.

**Training in communication with parents.** The PPPAS showed that whether or not principals received training in communicating with parents, they perceived that school policies at the school in which they work did not adequately punish parents who create conflict. When looking at the two groups, principals who received training in communicating with parents were less likely to perceive that the school policies at the school they work in adequately punish parents who create conflict. Principals who did not receive training in communicating with parents were more likely to perceive that the school’s policies at the school in which they work adequately punish parents who create conflict. An Ohio principal explains how training was used in a parent-principal conflict situation:

> I have been trained in body language interpretation and de-escalation, so I believe that I handle aggressive parents and students well. In my rare experiences with these situations, I have been able to employ de-escalation techniques when necessary to keep the situation under control. As a proactive measure (SIC) I employ body language interpretation as a method to detect triggers in others and learn to avoid or circumnavigate these triggers while still saying what I need to say and doing what I need to do. (Anonymous, 2012)

Principals who received training in communication with parents were more likely to perceive that the school board supported them in dealing with parent problems.
Among survey scores that were considered outliers, 80% of these principals with problem parents had been trained in communicating with parents, which was higher than the sample as a whole. This implies that most districts are responding to parent-principal conflict with training, though the principals reported minimal impact. Two possible explanations are that the training is ineffective, or that it does not sufficiently address the most important factors involved in the conflict. These schools and principals need to be identified for further study, possibly using a case study research design, in order to determine the most influential contributor to the conflict. This could help determine proper training.

**School student population.** The PPPAS scores revealed that principals from schools with a student population of over 1201 spent the highest amount of time on problematic interaction with parents. Principals from schools with student enrollment of less than 400 reported the least amount of time spent on problematic interaction with parents, with a mean score of 15.17% of time spent on problematic interactions. Principals from schools with enrollment of 401-800 students reported a mean score of 21.91% of time spent on parent interactions that were problematic. Principals from schools with enrollment of 801-1,200 students reported a mean score of 18.95% of time spent on parent interactions that were problematic. Principals with a school of greater than 1,201 students reported a mean score of 34.75% of time spent on parent interactions interaction that were problematic. Regarding school-student population, the smaller the school, the lower the percentage of time spent on problematic parent interaction.
The existence of parental aggression was measured by the sum total acts of parental aggression. Scores for each category of the school population were calculated and compared. Principals in school districts with a population of 1,201-1,600 or more had a mean score of 282.00 acts of parental aggression. Other categories were student populations of 801-1,200 with a mean score of 63.9 acts of parental aggression, student populations of 401 to 800 with a mean score of 42.13 acts of parental aggression, and the smallest schools with a population of 400 or less with a mean score of 31.18 acts of parental aggression. This analysis showed that the smaller the school, the lower the incidents of parental aggression (see Table 6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student population and mean acts of parental aggression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the current enrollment of the school in which you work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400 students or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>401-800 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>801-1200 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1201-1600 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1601-2000 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 or more students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Principal level of education.** The PPPAS found that the greater the amount of education a principal had, the greater the perception of parental aggression. Survey scores also showed that principals with higher the levels of education were most likely to alter their approach to parents because of an encounter with hostile parents. Principals with bachelor’s degrees had mean reported acts of parental aggression score of 8.40. Those
with master’s degrees had a score of 42.51, and principals with Ed./PhDs. had a mean score of 88.31 (see Table 7). The average mean for the total group was 45.99. This is consistent with the findings of May, et. al., (2010), who in their study of Kentucky teachers found similar results among schoolteachers.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is your highest level of education?</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College Graduate</td>
<td>8.4000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.58027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>42.5085</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>68.18675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed. / PH.D.</td>
<td>88.3158</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>180.47562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45.9900</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>85.08842</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Poverty. The PPPAS measured poverty by looking at participation rates in the federal free and reduced lunch program. Poverty had an impact on other variables. As the percentage of participation in the free and reduced lunch program increased, the amount of time principals spent dealing with aggressive parents and the total principal reported acts of parental aggression likewise increased. This trend held true with the sample as a whole and with the outlier population studied.

The data on poverty was broken into quartiles to better view the results. Principals in schools in the first quartile had up to 25% of their students that qualified for free and reduced lunch. Those schools had mean acts of parental aggression scores of 20.30. Those same principals reported a mean percentage of time spent on issues of parental aggression of 12.66. Principals in the second quartile had 26 to 50% of their students qualify for free and reduced lunch. These schools had mean acts of parental aggression...
score of 47.76. Those same principals reported a mean percentage of time spent on issues of parental aggression of 18.43. Principals in the third quartile had mean acts of parental aggression score of 20.30. Those same principals reported a mean percentage of time spent on issues of parental aggression of 12.66. Principals in the third quartile had 51 to 75 percent of their students qualify for free and reduced lunch. Those principals reported mean acts of parental aggression score of 51.10. Those same principals reported a mean percentage of time spent on issues of parental aggression of 20.31. Principals in schools in the fourth quartile had 76 to 100 % of their students qualified for the federal free and reduced lunch program. They had mean acts of parental aggression score of 96.55 (see Table 8).
Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What percentage of your students qualify for the federal free and reduced lunch program-percentage</th>
<th>Mean Total Acts of Parental Aggression Measure</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st quartile</td>
<td>20.3000</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>33.44984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd quartile</td>
<td>47.7581</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>57.52339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd quartile</td>
<td>51.1034</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>63.78767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th quartile</td>
<td>96.5455</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>201.33051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45.8762</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>84.89191</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those same principals reported a mean percentage of time spent on issues of parental aggression of 28.36. Principals in schools with high poverty rates perceived more acts of parental aggression and spent more of their time dealing with them.

**Distribution**

The histograms below show reported acts of parental aggression. The histograms exhibit non-normal distributions known as Poisson distributions. Most of the data reported by principals regarding acts of perceived parental aggression are considered outliers. Poisson distributions occur when gathering statistics on events that happen infrequently (see Figure 4, 5, and 6). Note the similarity in the histograms between male and female principals. Note that the majority of scores related to perceived acts of parental aggression fall in the outlying areas of the graphs.
Figure 4 Complete Data Set “Acts Of Parental Aggression”

Figure 5 Male Principals “Acts Of Parental Aggression”
Outliers

The outliers for this study are defined as principals falling in the 85th percentile or higher in the acts of parental aggression measure. The outlier principals found in the perceptions of parental aggression Poisson distribution have several similar characteristics. The means between male and female principals were distinctly different, but the distributions were similar. Because of the difference in mean parental aggression scores, male and female principals were separated and the outliers of each were evaluated.

The PPPAS showed that the 15 male outliers had a mean parental aggression measure of 252.6 acts of parental aggression. The group was all white and all principals
came from public schools. Most had master’s degrees and 46.7% were high school principals. Among the males with outlier score in the distribution, 80% had training in communicating with parents. Most of the schools had a student population of 401-800. The major stressors contributing to aggressive parents’ behaviors were discipline, sports, and extra-curricular activities.

There were 15 female principals identified as having scores considered outliers by the PPPAS. They had a mean parental aggression measure score of 80.73 acts of parental aggression. The group consisted of 14 white females and 1 black; 80% were employed at public schools, and 20% at private schools. Most female principals possessed master’s degrees, 80% were employed in elementary schools, and most taught in schools with 400 or fewer students.

The groups differed in two areas, one being the type of school. The majority of females were elementary principals compared to the majority of males, who were high school principals. The other area was student population of the school. Most females were principals in schools with 400 or fewer students, and males were mostly in schools with a population of 401-800. School student population and grade level may have accounted for some differences in the mean parental aggression measure score. These differences are obvious when one observes the mean parental aggression scores for high school middle school and elementary school and the various student populations represented at these schools (see Table 9).
The difference in the means of males and females can partially be explained by the fact that outlier female principals are in elementary schools, and most outlier male principals are in high schools. Principals from high schools had a mean parental aggression measure of 59.51, while elementary school principals had a mean measure score of 35.98. School student populations also play a role in the mean aggression scores. The mean for schools with student populations of less than 400 was 31.18. The mean parental aggression score for schools with populations of 401-800 was 42.13. Note the difference in reported acts of parental aggression between high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools (See Figure 7).
Since the groups distributions were identified as a Poisson distribution, the occurrences tended to be concentrated as outliers. Another indicator of a Poisson distribution is a large difference in the median and the mean scores (Fisher, 1958). Medians and means of the male, female, and the total data set were compared. The data set mean was 45.888 acts of parental aggression compared to the median score of 19.000. Female principals’ mean score was 33.55, and the median score was 19.50. Male principals had a mean score of 58.44 with a median score of 18.50. This data affirms that the parental aggression survey resulted in data with Poisson distributions. Differences
were also present when comparing median scores to mean scores of male and female parental aggression measures. The mean male perception of acts of parental aggression far outnumbered that of females, but when comparing the median scores, the female reports slightly outnumbered male reports. This is because the outliers tended to be male principals in large high schools with high poverty levels, which affected the mean male scores to the positive. In the table below, the PPPAS statistics between male and female respondents can be compared. (See Table 10 and 11)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Missing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>58.4400</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>18.5000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Despite the difference in means, there was no significant finding at the $p < .05$ level of significance that gender was a predictor of parental aggression.

**Poisson Regression**

Poisson regression must be used with the parental aggression measure because of the non-normal distribution of data. The equation for the regression analysis is $Y=a+x_1+x_2+x_3+e$. $Y$ = the total acts of parental aggression as measured by the parental aggression measure; $e$ equals the error and $a$ equals the intercepts. The Poisson regression analysis resulted in three significant predictors of parental aggression at the $p < .05$ level.

**Poverty.** The Poisson regression analysis was used to analyze, at the $p < .05$ level, the dependent variable of total acts of parental aggression measure and the independent variable of poverty. There was a significant relationship between them. The Poisson regression coefficients for poverty level and acts of parental aggression were -1.559, -.704, -.636 and 0. The relationship was positive, showing that as free and reduced lunch rates increased, so did the reported acts of parental aggression. *(See Table 12)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>102</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>33.5588</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>19.5000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 12**  
*Poisson Regression Parameter Estimates Table Poverty Quartiles*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Wald Confidence Interval</th>
<th>Hypothesis Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>4.570</td>
<td>.0217</td>
<td>4.527 to 4.613</td>
<td>44359.798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Quartile</td>
<td>-1.559</td>
<td>.0359</td>
<td>-1.630 to -1.489</td>
<td>1882.377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Quartile</td>
<td>-.704</td>
<td>.0284</td>
<td>-.760 to -.648</td>
<td>612.748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Quartile</td>
<td>-.636</td>
<td>.0284</td>
<td>-.692 to -.580</td>
<td>500.750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Quartile</td>
<td>0(^a)</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grade level.** The Poisson regression was also used at the \( p < .05 \) level to analyze the dependent variable of total acts of parental aggression measured and school grade level. Again, a significant relationship was found between these two variables. The Poisson regression coefficients for school grade level and acts of parental aggression were .503, .260, and 0. The relationship direction was positive; as the grade level increased so did the reported acts of parental aggression. *(See Table 13)*
School student population. A positive relationship was also found between student population size and total acts of parental aggression measured, using the Poisson regression analysis at the $p < .05$ level. The Poisson regression coefficients for student population size and acts of parental aggression were -.321, -.020, .396, 1.881, 1.824, and 0. These coefficients revealed a positive relationship between these variables; as the student population size increased so did the reported acts of parental aggression. (See Table 14)
The results of the Poisson regression analyses showed that there was a significant relationship between each of the three independent variables of school student population, poverty, and student grade level, and principal perception of parental aggression. The trend showed as these three independent variables increased, so did the reported acts of parental aggression.

**Research question data.** Data was collected using the PPPAS and analyzed to answer three questions: The first of which is do principals perceive the existence of parental aggression? The (PPPAS) shows that 95% of responding Ohio principals reported acts of parental aggression. Their responses to this perception varied according to education, gender, poverty, type of school, and grade level. The majority of principals reported that they have altered their approach to other parents because of an experience with a hostile parent. Most principals reported that they had concerns about aggressive parents, and they believed that school district policies did not adequately address parents...
that create conflict. Results also revealed that aggressive parents influence the daily relationships between parents and principals.

The second question being: Are there relationships between the parental aggression measure and the independent variables? The data showed that most principals experienced parental aggression. The majority of the reported incidents of parental aggression reported by principals originated in large high schools with high poverty. The data formed a Poisson distribution, which is common among studies dealing with crime and violence. There was no significant relationship found with leadership style, type of school, gender or communication training. There was a significant relationship between the parental aggression measure and grade level, student population size, and poverty.

Finally, what are the predictors, if any, of principal perceived acts of parental aggression? Using Poisson regression analysis, a significant relationship exists between the parental aggression measure and grade level, student population size of the school, and poverty, at the $p < .05$ level. The larger the student population, the more reports there tended to be of parental aggression. Furthermore, as grade level increased, so did acts of parental aggression, and as federal free and reduced lunch rates increased, so did the perceptions of parental aggression.

Results from the PPPAS showed that perceptions of parental aggression towards school principals was present and influenced the daily operations of schools. Connections exist between school population size, grade level, poverty and principals perceptions of parental aggression. School principals perceived an existence of parental aggression
towards school principals, which increases as student enrollment, grade level and poverty increases.

Descriptive analysis showed that many principals perceive the existence of parental aggression and because of their perception altered the way they approach parent-principal relationships. It is evident in an Ohio principal’s response that alterations have been made because of perceptions of parental aggression.

Today, I put them off until the superintendent can be present. I tell them I'm (SIC) not comfortable with them and we can talk with her in the room. Generally, this is disarming, because one of their tactics is to tell the superintendent. I speak the truth, in a controlled, respectful manner. The problem with that is when the parent isn't (SIC) well mentally due to stress or addiction or otherwise they aren't hearing anything you say and are really seeking someone to blame or to fight with (Anonymous, 2012).

Principals routinely have other school personnel sit in on meetings, especially those that may result in conflict. This is a precautionary measure, but may result in intimidation of the parent. School principals, in general, feel free to discuss issues of parental aggression with their superiors and identify discipline, grades, special education and sports as the major issues with parents. Discipline causes the majority of parental aggression reports by principals. About half of principals have had training in communication with parents, but with no noticeable improvement in reports of acts of parental aggression.
Summary

Of the Ohio principals participating in this study, ninety-five percent reported perceptions of acts of parental aggression. Their responses varied according to education, gender, poverty, type of school, and grade level. Most of the reported incidents of perceived parental aggression were from large high schools with high poverty. The PPPAS data on reported perceptions of parental aggression measure was in a Poisson distribution, which is common when dealing with studies involving crime and violence and other rare events. The majority of principals reported that they have altered their approach to dealing with parents because of their experience with hostile parents. Most principals also believed that school district policies do not adequately punish parents that create conflict. These responses indicate that principals are affected by perceptions of parental aggression. They also revealed that perceptions about aggressive parents affect the daily relationships between parents and principals. Three school characteristics were related to principal reported perceptions of parental aggression. This study found that grade level, school population size, and poverty were predictors of principal perceptions of parental aggression.

In chapter 5, the significance of these findings, and how they relate to principals perceptions of parental aggression are discussed. Chapter 5 will include a summary, introduction, followed by sections on implications of the study, findings, interpretation of findings, relationships between variables, and predictors of parental perceptions of parental aggression.
Chapter 5 Conclusions, Discussion, and Suggestions for Future Research

Introduction

This study explored existence or no existence of parental aggression towards school principals. The study researched predictors of aggression towards school principals and identified the frequency that acts of parental aggression occur. The operationalized definition of parental aggression was parental conduct that the school administrator perceives as threatening to their physical, psychological, or professional well-being. Through regression analysis and descriptive statistics, connections between acts of parental aggression and the demographics of the community, principal, and school were found. This study may serve as a platform to more deeply explore issues relating to aggressive parents, as well as fill gaps in existing literature and provide insight into possible predictors of parental aggression. The population for this study was responding public, charter, and vocational school principals during the 2012-2013 school years. The purpose was to explore characteristics and demographics of the individual principal (e.g. education, race, age), the school (e.g. size, and location), and the community (e.g. wealth, resources), in order to identify the existence or no existence of parental aggression towards school principals. Characteristics of principals, schools, and communities were used to identify predictors of aggression towards school principals, as well as the frequency of acts of parental aggression towards school principals.

Applying the theory of learning organization to schools has become essential in transforming schools to meet the needs of communities, industries, parents, and students (Senge, 2000). In order for learning organizations to function in schools, it is necessary
for principals and parents to work cooperatively for the success of the organizations. “In
a school that learns, people who traditionally may have been suspicious of one another-
parents and teacher, educators and local businesspeople, administration and union
member, people inside and outside the school walls, students and adults-recognize their
common stake in the future of the school system and the things they learn from one
another” (Senge, 2000 p 5). A potential roadblock to a school becoming a learning
organization is the parent-principal relationship. According to Jaksec, (2003) and May et.
al. (2010), parental aggression is causing staff burnout, lower academic achievement, and
worsening of the parent-principal relationship. According to organizational literature,
violent or aggressive behavior is rare in both schools and workplaces, but the occurrence
of such events has a significant impact on the climate and culture of organizations
(Jaksec, 2003; Trump, 2010). This study investigated parental aggression towards school
principals in order to answer three research questions: (a) Do principals perceive the
existence of parental aggression? (b) What are the relationships between the acts of
parental aggression and the demographics of the principal, school, and community?
(c) What are the predictors, if any, of principal perceived acts of parental aggression?

Self-report survey data collected by the PPPAS were analyzed using regression
analysis and descriptive statistics to answer the research questions. The non-normally
distributed data in this study is identified as a Poisson distribution, which is commonly
found in studies concerning acts of violence and aggression. This datum's distribution
showed that the majority of perceived of acts of parental aggression were found within
the outliers, which tended to be male principals from large high schools with high
poverty rates. Although acts of parental aggression within schools are rare, the impact on staff and students is notable. This study, using the Principals Perceptions of Parental Aggression Survey (PPPAS) found that a majority (95%) of responding principals had experienced parental aggression. These acts tended to be verbal in nature with intent to intimidate or change the decisions of school personnel. An Ohio principal explains, “Most of my experiences have been verbal. I believe they are trying to bully us into doing what they want us to do or not do for their child. It is exhausting” (Anonymous, 2012).

Principals were not the only target of parental aggression. Parental aggression was also directed towards students, teachers, and other parents. A principal tells about parent-on-parent aggression in the school:

Two days ago (SIC) I had a parent come to the school because she and another parent had a disagreement at home. The parent threatens to harm the students of the parent she was upset with (SIC). I removed the students from the room she was in and explained to her that she could not speak to the children. I took her home. While meeting with the parents of the children the aggressive parent had approached the aggressive parent who had returned to the school and physically assaulted the parent (Anonymous, 2012).

Even though aggressive parents are in the minority, they still may significantly influence the climate of a school in a negative way. The negative impact of aggressive parents and violent, aggressive behavior by adults on the operation of schools and the professional lives of school administrators is revealed in the results of the PPPAS survey.
Findings

The following are major findings of this study: 95% of responding Ohio principals reported acts of parental aggression. The data on reported acts of parental aggression have a Poisson distribution, with the majority of the data points identified as outliers in this study. These data points help determine a profile of the principals who reported the most acts of parental aggression. The profile of these principals was male principals in schools with high poverty and large student populations. Poverty, grade level, and student population size were predictors of parental aggression; the majority of the reports of acts of parental aggression existed in the top 15% of reporting principals, who tended to be male principals in large high schools with high poverty.

Interpretation of Findings

Perceptions. Principals perceive the existence of parental aggression. As mentioned, a high percentage (95%) of responding Ohio principals, reported acts of parental aggression. Their responses to this perception varied according to education, gender, poverty, type of school, and grade level. The majority of principals reported that they have altered their approach to dealing with parents because of the experience with parental aggression. Most principals also believed that school district policies do not adequately address parents that create conflict. Principals also perceived that those making policy decisions often overlook parent behavior that is violent and aggressive.

In this study, principals reported their perceptions were that parents feel free to intimidate, threaten, and belittle school employees when it comes to handling issues with teachers and administrators in the school setting. They also perceived parents justifying
their behavior as protecting and defending their child. Many principals have voiced their concern about aggressive parents and their perceived negative impact on the educational process. Principals also reported that aggressive parents might influence the daily relationship between parents and principals, which in turn may disrupt the ability of the school to educate students to their maximum potential. A difference in opinions and perceptions concerning what is best for students can lead to conflicts between parents and principals. A principal explains, “We must remember that the parents want what's best for their children, and sometimes that is in conflict with our goals for the same child. Sometimes that leads to angry, hurtful words being said” (Anonymous, 2012).

The principal has to balance the needs of children and parents in the school system. Special skills are needed in order to navigate, predict and address competing agendas. Included among these skills is understanding the parental perspective, even if principals do not agree with it. This understanding will provide opportunities for intervention that will allow for possible resolutions to challenges (Jaksec, 2003). Another skill is recognizing aggressive behavior from parents. With appropriate skills, the principal can address violent-aggressive behavior by parents that tends to influence the behavior and attitudes of staff, students, other parents and principals within the school system in a negative way. With proper information, principals can become aware that in learning organizations, parents are a critical part of the system. Therefore, training for principals and teachers on how to deal with aggressive, abusive, and bullying behavior from parents is imperative to provide a learning environment where students, parents and staff feel safe and is conducive to learning.
The data show that acts of parental aggression have a significant impact on the professional lives of principals. Many principals have considered changing professions and have altered how they deal with parents in general because of their encounter with aggressive parents. Even though problem parents are in the minority, they can still significantly influence the job performance of the principal in a negative way (Jaksec, 2000, 2003). Policies, behaviors, and preconceptions about parent interactions based on problem parents make it difficult for principals and parents to communicate and serve the needs of students. As a result, this can lead to burnout and constant turnover of principals and school staff. When school leadership changes frequently, it can hinder the development of long-term goals and continuous improvement of school staff. However, stability among school leadership contributes to a positive learning environment that increases student achievement.

Positive relationships between school staff and parents are essential for the development of the school environment that is conducive to the academic and social development of students (Hackett, 2010). Senge (2000) explains the importance of cooperation and understanding among stakeholders in the development of a learning organization. Lawrence-Lightfoot (2003) and Morris (1998) propose that a climate of mutual respect is essential in dealing with parent teacher or parent administrator conflict.

To develop positive relationships and address parental aggression, many principals are employing various techniques to counter aggressive and potentially bullying behavior by parents. Ohio principals had several comments within the open-ended response section of the PPPAS concerning acts of parental aggression. Principals
also shared examples of how they handled issues with aggressive parents (see appendix 2). Staying calm, de-escalating, working together, having positive focus, being professional, respecting, listening, focusing on problems, showing concern, accepting, having empathy, understanding, being rational, redirecting, focusing on reconciliation, delaying and compromising were used in examples of how to handle angry parents (Anonymous, 2012).

Learning organizations require commitment and buy-in from individuals concerned with the education of children (Senge, 1990). A dialog must be developed with parents in order to achieve buy in (Bohm, 1967). The following is an Ohio principal’s personal experience employing various strategies to bring the situation under control in order to develop dialog:

I have been trained in body language interpretation and de-escalation, so I believe that I handle aggressive parents and students well. In my rare experiences with these situations, I have been able to employ de-escalation techniques when necessary to keep the situation under control. As a proactive measure, I employ body language interpretation as a method to detect triggers in others and learn to avoid or circumnavigate these triggers while still saying what I need to say and doing what I need to do. (Anonymous, 2012)

The teacher and the principal should be prepared for the worst, listen well, admit mistakes, take good notes, and communicate clearly in order to resolve conflict (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). One Ohio principal explains, “In the past I have always tried to listen to what the parents were saying underneath the emotion. I often allowed parents
to air their grief’s (SIC) and then respond by summing up their concerns, to prove that I heard them and understood them. Then I often tried to find a compromise if possible. However, sometimes a compromise is not possible, and in those cases I tried to be as positive and polite as possible” (Anonymous, 2012).

**Parent-principal relationship and its influence on the school learning environment.** Positive changes in school climate and improvement of the educational environment reduce school violence (Dinkes, Kemp, Baum, 2009). Providing a safe, stable environment is essential in the educational development of students, which, in many cases, results in higher academic achievement. This stable environment allows the student to take academic risks and make mistakes that are necessary for the maturation process. The environment in large high schools with high poverty is less likely to provide a stable environment. One interaction with a hostile parent may be disruptive to the entire parent-principal relationship at a particular school, as that one negative interaction with a parent can change the way that the principal approaches the other parents with concerns. Poor school climate breeds conflict that leads to increased problems with parents and students (Jaksec, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003).

In order to improve school climate, it is essential to increase involvement of stakeholders, which includes parents, principals, school staff, and teachers. Improved parental, community and student involvement reduces school violence (Hall, 2008; Katz, Adman, Reese, & Clark 1996; Kanters, 2002; Sheldon, & Epstein, 2002). Building connections with parents is essential in providing a climate that is conducive to learning (Lawrence-Lightfoot 2003; Jaksec 2003). Alliances need to be built with parents in order
to have what Lawrence-Lightfoot (2003) calls “essential conversations”. These conversations reduce conflict, violence, and misunderstanding between school staff and parents (Hall, 2008; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; Pettit, 2004; Katz, Adman, Reese, & Clark, 1996; Kanters, 2002; Sheldon, & Epstein, 2002). The parent-principal relationship is not static; it is continually changing to meet the individual needs of the parent, principal, school, and student. It is imperative that school principals have coping mechanisms in place that allow them to handle the occasional hostile parent in a way that preserves the parent-principal relationship.

**Impact on staff.** The major factors involving parental aggression are discipline; perception of mistreatment of their child by students, staff or parents; student rights; and bullying. A principal explains, “It is not uncommon for swearing and shouting to occur when a parent disagrees with school policy. Threats to call the school board are (SIC) common; however, most of these threats are not followed through on” (Anonymous, 2012). Because of these occurrences of parental aggression, barriers are erected, behaviors change, creativity is reduced, and communication suffers. This results in short tempers, less productivity, less job satisfaction, reduced learning opportunities, and staff turnover.

**Relationships with the Variables**

The parental aggression measure data from this study were in the form of a Poisson distribution, which is common among studies of crime and violence. This means that occurrences of parental aggression are relatively rare for the population as a whole and tend to be concentrated in the outliers. The Poisson regression analysis of the PPPAS
data showed that the majority of reports of parental aggression were from large high schools with high poverty rates. Events of violence and aggression, although rare, have a significant impact on schools. Among the variables explored as possible predictors, only three were statistically significant. Although mean male and female differences among the number of acts of parental aggression were large, they were not statistically significant, and gender was not a predictor on the PPPAS.

**Male and female.** Male and female respondents to the PPPAS reported that they were employed in public schools; most were married with children, and achieved master’s degrees. Both genders also reported having high parental involvement and similar training in communicating with parents. Differences included student population sizes in their school of employment and grade level of their school. The focus of this study included gender differences in the mean acts of parental aggression. Females reported a mean score of act of parental aggression as 33.56, and males reported a score of 59.90. This difference was most likely due to other variables and did not produce a significant relationship to the parental aggression measure. The Poisson regression performed at the p<.05 level did not reveal a significant difference in male and female principals, despite the difference in the means. The difference in the reports of parental aggression was likely influenced by demographic data from the study. These demographic differences may be due to the fact that 48% of male principals surveyed were employed at the high school level compared to 15% of female principals. Of the responding male principals, 8% were in schools with an enrollment of over 1,200 students compared to 0% of female principals. Both of the school demographic
differences mentioned were predictors of parental aggression towards school principals. To explore the difference in male and female perceptions of parental aggression, another study more tailored to exploring perceptions of aggression based on gender might be warranted.

**Predictors of acts of parental aggression.** Data shows that relationships exist between the parental aggression measure and the independent variables of grade level, and poverty, school size. A Poisson regression analysis was employed that showed a significant relationship between the parental aggression measure and grade level, school population size, and poverty. The results showed three predictors of parental aggression towards school principals were statistically significant.

Larger schools have higher reported perceptions of parental aggression. Principals from larger school districts have a greater perception for attention to given to the issue of parental aggression from their school district. They have voiced their concern about parental aggression more than principals with smaller student populations did. Principals from larger schools feel more threatened by acts of parental aggression than their counterparts in smaller districts. They also perceived less parental support for the decisions they made. There exists a positive relationship between school size and principal reported acts of parental aggression. Larger-sized schools may provide fewer opportunities for principal-parent interaction. Parent communication with principals in larger schools tends to be more formal and about problems with behavior, grades or other items that have a negative impact on the student. A principal from a school with a population of over 1,600 reports that:
I had a parent threaten to shoot me, kill me, ruin my life, threaten my family and just about anyone connected with the schools over my career. It's (SIC) usually relative to student behavior, and they feel or say they feel picked on and everyone is out to get them. I try to be very calm and just listen when I'm (SIC) dealing with aggressive enabling parents. (Anonymous, 2012)

The PPPAS results showed an increase in perceptions of parental aggression towards school principals in high poverty schools. This analysis shows that as the poverty level, as measured by percentage of students on federal free and reduced lunch rates, increases, acts of parental aggression increase. Principals employed in districts with high federal free and reduced lunch rates need to be given training to improve parent, student and community relationships.

Principals reported there are two different sets of rules: those that are written and those for the wealthy. This belief makes principals’ discipline personal and administered inconsistently. They often feel caught in the middle between written and unwritten rules. A principal explains his experience:

I used to be a principal in an urban district where poverty caused parental stress. Some of these parents became frustrated and would act out (SIC). In 30 years of education and 17 years in administration, I have seen a lot. I do believe it is important to be fair and consistent with students in all areas. I am also a parent who has had 3 children raised and taught within our school district. I know what it is like to experience those emotional moments that both positively and negatively impact your own children. What are frustrating are those experiences where
parents are not reasonable. Parents always support the notion we need strong discipline in our schools. However, when it comes to some families (often the well-to-do families) they often seem to want us to operate according to different standards when it involves their children. I do not get that. Being fare (SIC) firm and constant with discipline is a must when dealing with student discipline, this is especially important when dealing with students and parents that come from poverty. (Anonymous, 2012)

The possible existence of two sets of rules as described by this respondent’s perceptions deserves further examination into potential cultural bias with regard to poverty in the application of school discipline. The perception of two sets of rules, the tendency to deal with problems with anger and aggression, and negative experiences with the educational system may collectively contribute to increased incidents of parental aggression towards school principals.

Principals at the high school level perceived more acts of parental aggression than those at lower grade levels. Students at the high school level have more extra-curricular activities, which may lead to more conflict with staff, parents, and other students. This increased conflict may result in more stress on the parent-principal relationship as compared to elementary and middle schools principals. Competitive sports, academic competitions, and school plays are events where school staff selects students according to their talents. The selection process and the competitive nature of these events may cause conflicts. Principals in high schools may need to intervene more often with conflicts than their elementary and middle school counterparts. At these grade levels, decisions about
students have greater influence on parent-principal relationships, which may include the fact that parents may attend to their child’s perceived needs more intensely than parents of younger students. A high school principal gave this report about a run in with an aggressive parent:

Most of my past experience (SIC) with parental aggression revolved around student discipline. My most dramatic incident occurred when I assigned a student to 3 days of in-school-suspension (ISS). Her parents disagreed with my decision and chose to keep the student at home instead. When the student returned, I sent her to ISS. At some point, the student must've (SIC) contacted her father by cell phone, because he was in my office that same morning arguing with me for putting punishment. I argued that she didn't (SIC) serve the suspension that I assigned, and she was truant for staying home. Moreover, I argued that she violated the cell phone usage policy to contact her father. Her father threatened to beat me up and was shouting profanity at me (SIC). Finally (SIC) I stood up and told him to leave, or I would call the police and have him removed -- it helps that I'm (SIC) 6'5" tall. After I stood up and threatened to call the police, he chose to leave, and he took his daughter. He then withdrew her from my school. That withdrawal certainly didn't (SIC) hurt my feelings as that student was a constant disciplinary issue for me and my teachers (SIC). (Anonymous, 2012)

Discipline is the most common cause of parent-principal conflict (Jaksec, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). Issues that require principal intervention become more severe as a child progresses through grades. High school students are more
likely to receive more harsh punishments for behavior than those punishments received by students in lower grades. The implications for graduation, academic success, and child’s future become more apparent as the child ages. This makes discipline a critical issue for both parent and principal. The combination of more severe discipline of students and the impact of that discipline on parents may make the parent-principal relationship at the high school level more adversarial. An Ohio principal explains his experience at both the primary level elementary school and secondary level high school, “I have worked in both secondary and primary schools, and parental aggression is substantially worse at the secondary level (Anonymous, 2012)”.

Based on the principal reported open-ended response data, possible reasons for more adversarial principal-parent relationship are a higher number of problematic principal-parent interactions and reduce of overall parent-principal interaction.

Due to the reduced parent-principal contact, it is important to bring some positive points into any interactive situation, such as parent-principal meetings. It is best to gather some information about accomplishment, likes, dislikes, and interest of the student and parent before the meeting. This will allow for the start of positive connection before items of concern is addressed. When a parent-principal relationship is developed based on positive experiences, the connections exist that will allow for less conflict when dealing with problems.
Implications of this Study

This study on parental aggression towards school administrators shows that the majority of school principals have experienced parental aggression. It also shows that school population size, poverty, and grade level are predictors of parental aggression towards school staff. The predictability of these acts of aggression will allow the policy makers and local school districts to identify target resources to those most in need, who are principals in large high schools with high rates of poverty.

1. Do principals perceive the existence of parental aggression?

Most principals perceive some parents as aggressive, especially when dealing with occurrences of behavior that may require discipline of their student. This perception of aggression may be grounded in experience, culture, school climate, or the principal’s perceived reality of the situation. The nature of the position of principal of a school requires principals to make decisions that students, parents, and community members may not agree with. The decision-making responsibilities often lead to parent-principal conflict without having a conversation or meeting face-to-face.

The school principal must be able to handle the conflict and tension that comes with the job. The inability to deal with conflict and aggressive individuals may lead to increased perceptions of vulnerability of the principal. Perceptions of vulnerability by the parent or the principal could lead to escalation of parent-principal conflict. It is essential that school principals have good conflict management and coping skills in order to direct parent principal interactions in a positive direction.
2. What are the relationships between the acts of parental aggression toward school principals and the demographics of the principal, school, and community?

The phenomenon of parental aggression varies in relationship to the gender and education level of the principal as well as with the predictors of wealth, school size and grade level. Male principals reported higher occurrences of parental aggression than their female counterparts did. This could be due in part to the schools they chose to work in which was large high schools with low wealth. Why did male principals studied choose to work under these conditions? It could be because males seek out these situations because of the way they interact with others. It could be because of social norms that tend to push males and females in different directions. It could also be community perceptions of the role of male and female school principals.

The amount of education of the school principal also played a noticeable role in reported acts of parental aggression. Principals with higher degrees reported more acts of parental aggression than did principals with less education. This could be the result of differing understandings or perceptions of what constitutes aggressive behavior. The confidence of attaining a higher level of education may result in a principal becoming less flexible. This confidence may make a principal more aggressive during their interactions with parents. Some parents may feel threatened or inferior when dealing with a principal with an advanced degree. On the other hand, the culture of some communities may place less importance on the attainment of advanced degrees. This culture may result in the principal perceiving an atmosphere of disrespect.

3. What are the predictors, if any, of principal perceived acts of parental aggression?
School size was a predictor of principal perceptions of parental aggression. Larger school student population resulted in higher reports of parental aggression by the school principals. Schools with high student populations tend to be less personal in relating to parents resulting in fewer positive relationships being built between principal and parent. The lack of a good relationship built on positive interactions may lead to more conflict between parent and principal.

The grade level of students was a predictor of parental aggression towards school principals. The importance of receiving good grades, participation in the arts, athletic completion, and maintaining a good reputation tends to increase as students mature. As students age, the severity and consequences of improper behavior also tend to increase. Increased expectations and competition at the high school level may lead to more conflict between parents and principals. Society is also becoming less flexible in dealing with improper behavior pertaining to aggression, and violence. The lack of flexibility by principals in dealing with issues of discipline could lead to more conflict between parents and principals. When students are disciplined at the high school level, the impacts on the future of these students and the hopes of their parents are more apparent. This could result in behavior perceived as aggressive by principals. Parents may also perceive decisions made by principals as being directed towards their child, thus reducing their opportunity for success. Decisions made by principals concerning student behavior, activities, honors, recognition, and success could be interpreted by the parents as aggressive behavior by the principal.
As students age, parental involvement in schools tends to decrease. Decreases in parent-principal contact at the high school level provide less opportunity for positive relationships to be developed as they are in the elementary and middle school. In elementary and middle schools where parental involvement is more common, the perception of parental aggression by the principal is less. The decrease in parent-principal contact as a student ages may lead to more misunderstanding and lack of positive relationships. Common threads of understanding between parents and principals may develop by more parent-principal contact, which may reduce the likelihood of perceptions of aggression by principals and parents.

Poverty as measured by federal free and reduced lunch rates were predictors of principal perceptions of parental aggression. This increased perception of parental aggression by the principal could be a result of fewer school and community resources for students, parents and principals to address the needs of quality education. Lack of both public and private resources could lead to increased stress on parents and principals that could be manifested as anger and aggressive behavior. The difference in culture between those who have received higher educational opportunities and those that have a high school education or less could also be a source of conflict. Mutual understanding of beliefs, aspirations, and motivations are essential in developing relationships between parent and principals. Principals, teachers, and most school staff have received continual academic and professional development training since leaving high school; this culture of academic importance is not shared with many individuals from poverty-stricken communities. Principals must strive to bridge this gap in order to reduce conflict and
promote cooperation in providing academic opportunities for children. Credentials, titles, and the formality of the world of education may be intimidating, belittling, and unimportant to those who have not participated in formal education beyond grade school and high school. When parents fear a situation or feel mocked because of their lack of education, they tend to be defensive, especially when dealing with their children. Crime and violence tend to be present at high levels in high poverty areas and could influence the school environment. Some argue that the same amount of crime and violence are present in communities that are more affluent, but they are concealed because of access to legal and financial resources. Regardless of the view of crime and violence in high poverty communities, families, children, parents, principals and schools do not have the same access to resources needed to deal with crime and violence. Because of the increased possibility of violence in their community and the inability to deal with it, the relationship between parents and principals could become more confrontational.

Resources need to be deployed to these principals in order to help them respond appropriately to their increased perceptions of risk to encounter violent-aggressive parents. Early intervention is essential in providing a safe learning environment for students, an environment free of distractions that allow teachers to provide for the learning needs of students and create a climate for success (Hackett, 2011). Providing proper training allows parents and principals to build bridges of mutual respect, which is key in developing a successful partnership with parents to provide the proper positive learning environment (Fullan, 2003; Jaksec, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003; Senge, 2000; Strike, 2007).
Abusive and violent parents can be an occupational hazard for school staff (BBC, 2001; Jaksec, 2003). School principals, especially principals in large high schools with high poverty, need training in coping with acts of aggression. Violent-aggressive behavior from parties needs to be addressed by school systems, within school policy, and in a way that provides principals with tools to address improper behavior. The impact of these encounters has changed the way principals relate to other parents, students, and their staff. Because of these acts of aggression, concern has been shifted away from the educational process and has moved more toward protecting principals’ own careers. A principal explains an experience with a parent threatening him with losing his job, “I am a principal at a private school. Parents will write anonymous letters to try to have you fired. Start rumors about you to other parents. Step into your personal space to try to intimidate you” (Anonymous, 2012). Principals have considered changing professions because of the stress that these encounters have caused them. They also report that violent-aggressive behavior has been directed towards students, teachers and other parents. The fact that this behavior is directed at multiple individuals within the school disrupts the safe environment needed to facilitate the learning process. A principal tells about a parent assaulting a teacher. “I once observed the mother of a Kindergarten student who was put on the wrong bus, assault the male Kindergarten teacher. The teacher was literally beat up, and the mother was arrested” (Anonymous, 2012).

**Recommendations**

Resources need to be devoted to those principals and schools identified as having highest reported perceived frequency of acts of parental aggression toward principals.
The profile identified by the PPPAS is male principals in large high schools with high poverty rates. These resources include programs that are implemented to enable principals to address conflict resolution and to cope with aggression. Based on results of the PPPAS, aggressive-violent behavior by adults in schools needs to be addressed by key stakeholders, parents, school staff, and community members. Participants in “learning organizations” (Senge, 2000) are responsible for the safe and secure education of students.

Principals can get training and education regarding parent-principal relationships from a variety of sources. Universities can provide graduate training to new and existing principals through established programs of studies and continuing education opportunities. Boards of education or federal departments of education may have financial resources to provide principals with training appropriate to the development of skills for working with aggressive parents. Also, a possible resource is personal coaching or therapy to help principals develop personal interaction skills, resolve conflicts, and attend to personal bias’ that may get in the way of positive parent-principal relating.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Most of the acts of parental aggression show up with male principals in large high schools with high poverty levels. These principals and schools need to be identified for the purpose of a case study or other qualitative research to explore parental aggression. This will more deeply explore what circumstances are occurring that result in acts of parental aggression towards school administrators.
A study of hostile or aggressive principals from the parent perspective may provide insights not yet researched. Parents often have experienced conflicts with school administrators when the parent perception was that the principal was the aggressor. Data from this study would add to the body of literature on aggressive adult behavior in the school. A study of school secretaries concerning their experiences with hostile or aggressive parents may be helpful, because school secretaries are in the frontline position when it comes to aggressive behavior in the school. Data from their prospective would improve the understanding of the parent-school staff relationship.

This study identified gender differences in reported incidents of parental aggression. However, the PPPAS did not detect significant differences. Further research on gender differences among principals within the smaller schools and lower grade levels may reveal different results.

The PPPAS was a created instrument using Jaksec’s (2000) School Administrator Parental Aggression Survey (SAPAS) questions and demographic variables. Further use of this specific instrument may provide higher reliability with repeated use. Therefore, the validity may increase as this instrument is used in repeated studies to measure principals’ perceptions of parental aggression. Using the PPPAS with school districts from other states in the United States may also help increase validity and generalizability.
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Appendix A: Open Ended Response Data

The following raw open-ended response data was collected from Ohio Principals. Spelling, grammar, and content have not been altered.

1. Please describe your experiences with aggressive parents.

Text Response

Often times, we disagree over the phone in regards to a matters.

only a few occasions, not serious.

parent was angry and threatened to come across my desk

Most take their child's position rather than trying to find out what really happened. Some won't give in after being shown the facts. Most you have to just let off steam then they are fine.

A wide range of events, from swearing, to intimidation, to confrontation, to filing charges and being in court.

too many to describe...I have been called everything imagineable

Most are either discipline or athletics

I have never had a parent who was physically aggressive. Perhaps in urban districts this is a problem. I am also unsure of the meaning of aggressive? I think a more appropriate term might be "demanding" in that they want specific and unique treatment for themselves or their child.

I remain calm, consistent, confident, but assertive. I do not treaten, argue, or give orders.

very limited

Verbally trying to intimidate me - with regard to their students suspension from school -swearing etc ,

When parents become aggressive I immediately end the meeting. I announce to them that the
meeting is over and end the meeting without further discussion from me.

It is not uncommon for swearing and shouting to occur when a parent disagrees with school policy. Threats to call the school board are common, however, most of these threats are not followed through on.

The parents have tended to have a distorted vision of how their students behave.

Mainly verbal attacks regarding a decision made for the whole school with which the parent did not agree.

Parent entered building without permission to go to kids classroom and I called the police

More verbally aggressive -- threats of being unfair and incompetent. Statements such as, "you call yourself a principal?" "I am calling Channel 2 News (or school board, or superintendent)"

I used to be a principal in an urban district where poverty caused parental stress. Some of these parents became frustrated and would act out.

My aggressive parents have been related to situations where they feel someone treated their child in a negative manner.

I have worked in both secondary and primary schools and parental aggression is substantially worse at the secondary level.

Yelling, screaming, cursing

Only a very few instances of minor verbal aggression which was easily eased by my using good manners

I'll have another administrator sit in on meetings with the aggressive parent.

I have not experienced this issue in my career. Sometimes parents get loud. It is rare.

I was threatened by a father and a friend who came in after school to confront me why his daughter was being suspended. He suggested he wanted to kick my ass. I called and filed a police report and escorted him from the building.
Parent went into personal space and threatened me. I have had to get a protection order. Now they are slamming us on face book.

Mostly profanity and rude comments

False accusations that were taken to a Board meeting in executive session while I was present.

Aggressive yelling in my office.

usually calmed down after initial outburst

Only one time did I need to deal with an aggressive parent who believed a story her child told her about how I disciplined him in the classroom.

Mostly parents who don't agree with a decision at school. Could be discipline but sometimes sports.

I have had parents be verbally aggressive mostly when they disagree with a decision to discipline their child.

One parent Screamed Obsenities at me because I asked him to move out of the fire line.

Name calling, upset, and irrational. Tend to react to kids stories than act.

Mostly threats about going to higher authority

The only real threat I've ever faced was when a male parent, who was sitting in a chair, stood and physically approached my desk as if to intimidate me. The only other type of threat I received was from 2 different female mothers threatened to sue the school over how their child was disciplined.

I've been sworn at twice in my career. Never been touched inappropriately by a hostile parent. I try to let things calm down before talking with a parent. Sometimes put off for a day

Generally really good even when conflicts arise

We must remember that the parents want what's best for their children and sometimes that is in conflict with our goals for the same child. Sometimes that leads to angry, hurtful words being
one incident was a parent who threatened to call the state department because she felt we were not caring for her special needs daughter properly. Parents often agree at the meetings then become angry when they perceive nothing was done

Hostile parents have little to lose. They have frequent encounters with the law and much experience with the justice system and the know little will ultimately happen with respect to their behavior.

Generally over a grade, teacher behavior, or disciplinary action.

Very Infrequent, 1 or 2 a year.

I have had parents yell at me in my office but it has been years since this happened. I have had angry phone conversations with parents Haven't experienced any problems.

After it was decided that our school would permit students with Ed Choice Scholarships to our school, parental aggression increased dramatically. The two areas of aggression are grades and discipline. Parents yell and scream in the office intimidating the office personnel. I have had to go and help teachers, volunteers and support staff from the verbal abuse as well as the invasion of space. Occasionally, pushing into their space while yelling. On a few occasions, a teacher was threatened with "I will kill that teacher."

I am very assertive and refuse to take much from an aggressive parent

parent upset about her son being suspended. Came to school physically aggressive

I rarely have experienced an aggressive parent. The very few times it occurred it was verbal aggression when they felt their child was unjustly picked on or singled out by a teacher or a peer.

They are usually upset with the situation, not necessarily you in particular

I have had parents that swear at me and call me names.
Most of my experiences with aggressive parents have ended well when I have been able to convince the parent that I am acting in the best interest of the child; it's hard for parents to see that sometimes. Parents take their children's punishments personally, rather than seeing them for what they are, a consequence the child earned.

It has been mostly verbal.

Some of these parents tried to organize meetings or called other parents trying to ask their collaboration to discredit me.

My first year as a principal I had a loud, screaming parent. I put the word out that the police would be called to escort any unruly parent from the building. Since then I have had few problems.

Special education - attorneys and advocates present at most meetings

As an assistant principal, two parents were trying to fight each other and I had to break them up since it was in the school. Actually had to physical pick puma woman and move her back from a situation.

It seems whenever there is a discipline issue that requires a "punishment or removal from school" there is conflict.

Mainly due to discipline

Parents constantly make excuses for their child so when I call to tell them their child did something wrong, they get mad and don't want me to give a consequence.

Anger and shouting. Loud disagreement

Expulsion hearings, athletic events, etc. I have been in the business for 43 years. Question above the previous question was unclear regarding time span

Very limited, an overprotective parent who believes the lie of the child. Given time, they understand or decide to disagree but support us.
Shouting, irrational behavior, sense of entitlement...

Verbal aggressiveness, grand physical gestures, attempts to physically invade personal space, physical contact with inanimate objects

I am lucky to be in a private school in which the relationships between the parents and administration are positive. There have been only a few occasions when parents have seemed to cross the line and these instances have been verbal, never physical in nature.

Two days ago I had a parent come to the school because she and another parent had a disagreement at home. The parent threatened to harm the students of the parent she was upset with. I removed the students from the room she was in and explained to her that she could not speak to the children. I took her home. While meeting with the parents of the children the aggressive parent had approached, the aggressive parent returned to the school and she physically assaulted the parent.

Aggressive parents come to school in a heightened state generally due to what the student has reported.

Cursing

It's been mostly over the phone

I am a principal at a private school. Parents will write anonymous letters to try to have you fired. Start rumors about you to other parents. Step into your personal space to try to intimidate you. Sometimes parents get hot under the collar about a school decision based on policy with which they disagree. When they don't get their way they can resort to a raised voice, or threat to complaints our sponsor, state board, or even US dept of Ed.

I have none.

My experience has mainly been because they don't understand why a curriculum change was made, why a discipline action was handed out, and unfortunately because they don't want to
believe their child could do something wrong. Parents believe children because in my opinion they don't want to have to discipline them at home. Accountability of students is lacking and educators is rising.

Parent felt that I was not doing my job at protecting his child from bullying. The child was short in stature and so was the father. If anyone made any comment about his son's height, he immediately took offence to this. He instructed his son to take matters into his own hands and deal with the others aggressively. When I punished the other boys and his son (for reacting inappropriately) he became explosive. He cused at me, accused me of being a poor administrator and call me several names. The superintendent was called in and the meeting was brought to a quick close when he use profanity against me. The SRO was called in and a police report was filed. He was not permitted in the school. I must tell you that I was warned about this person from the other school he pulled his child from. He maintained the same behavior with those school officials. The boy was enrolled in his third school and lasted there four weeks because of the same issues. He is now being home schooled and doing work with online schooling.

I do not have that many. Usually, most parents just want someone to listen to their concerns. So I listen and work on letting them know that I will investigate and find out more about whatever it is. And I do get back to them within a day.

Parent under the influence of drugs cussing, threatening to harm, screaming untrue slanderous things, bumped into me. Another parent threatening to "get me" and had ugly verbal confrontations.

Most parents in my district threaten to speak to board members. They are not physically aggressive. They are demeaning and consider a position in education below them.

The parents have used profanity and threatened to call the school board.

Very large and angry parent likes to play the race card. Hears only what he wants.
Mostly it has had to do with yelling, but no physical aggression.

NA

NA

At my previous inner city district it was quite frequent and volatile with parents. My school resource became a regular at parent meetings my first few years. I was an asst. Principal and had frequent volatile situations with parents of students at risk.

Mainly "bullying" types of behavior where they yell and bring up items (past experiences, what other parents say) that do not relate to the current situation in attempt to make their child not accountable

Only verbal confrontations

In 30 years of education and 17 years in administration I have seen a lot. I do believe it is important to be fair and consistent with students in all areas. I am also a parent who has had 3 children raised and taught within our school district. I know what it is like to experience those emotional moments that both positively and negatively impact your own children. What is frustrating are those experiences where parents are not reasonable. Parents always support the notion - We need strong discipline in our schools. However, when it comes to some families (often the well-to-do" families) they often seem to want us to operate according to different standards when it involves their children. I do not get that.

Loud Verbal and irrational

I have been threatened, had parents invade my personal space and call me names

Most of my experiences have been verbal. I believe they are trying to bully us into doing what they want us to do or not do for their child. It is exhausting.

Usually everything has been verbal. They seem to feel better if they can vent first. then we are usually able to get to the issue at hand.
Foul language, standing over my desk while I'm sitting, threatening to sue, threatening to go to the newspaper, threatening to go to the board / superintendent.

Usually custody issues cause temperatures to arise and parents fighting over their children.

During my 36 year career I have had various confrontations with parents of over a myriad of issues. Most of the time they have been resolved at the building level. Some have moved on to the Board of Education level.

I find the majority of aggressive parents are female and their aggression is limited to being verbally abusive.

Most parents come into the office hostile, but after I let them have a chance to vent their frustrations, the meeting can continue in a calm manner.

I have had parents threaten me with legal action, physical harm and reporting me to my boss or board of education.

Very limited
they consume so much of your time, it is uncomfortable, frustrating, and irritating

I have had only a handful of issues with verbally aggressive parents. Each issue was able to be worked out.

I give them their due, express their side or thoughts and it helps the situation.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
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<td>130</td>
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### 2. Please, describe how you would handle an aggressive parent.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Text Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would continue to speak to the person in a calm, professional manner. I would ask them to either calm down and have a civil discussion or I would ask them to return when they have calmed down or schedule an appointment. If I felt threatened I would send for a colleague and also call 911.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't back down. I try to de-esclate parents by letting them talk and then bring them around. 90% of the time you can talk them down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I attempt to diffuse. Understand their issues but help them understand the limitations and rules necessary to manage an institution and many children.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Listen calmly, don't incite</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stay calm. Remind that we are to work together. Focus on the positives of the child. Gain his/her trust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to calm the situation but if they become verbally abusive, I end the conference.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I make sure that I listen and let them vent. Lately if I have to make a decision I take more time to come up with that decision. Allowing extra time usually helps parents to settle down and be more open to a difficult decision that needs to be made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I usually ask the parent to calm down and if that is not possible then I tell the parent we will meet at another time to discuss the issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to diffuse situation w/ calm demeanor, but firm resolve. voice understanding/ ensure fairness and due process/ explain decisions/ make aware of consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been trained in body language interpretation and de-escalation, so I believe that I handle aggressive parents and students well. In my rare experiences with these situations, I have been</td>
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able to employ de-escalation techniques when necessary to keep the situation under control. As a proactive measure I employ body language interpretation as a method to detect triggers in others and learn to avoid or circumnavigate these triggers while still saying what I need to say and doing what I need to do.

Have a witness. Leave door open. Try to wait a day to meet.

Handle in a professional manner; if I believe it will get physical I would contact the police

I listen. Then I put myself in their shoes and behave accordingly.

I offered her the number of the department of ed and the superintendent if she felt she needed it. I attempt to talk quietly and ask that they lower their voice.

Let them talk and vetn, let them come up with many possible solutions to a given problem and show them video of their misbehaving child or read statements about their child's behavior.

Greet them pleasently, adjourn to a private conference room, Ask them what their goal is by meeting with me; what do they want to see as a result.

With respect ,yet advising them what I will do in the coreect way

I try to listen and stand firm.

Stay calm and diffuse the situation in a rational manner.

I ask their name, tell them I would like to help work through the issue if at all possible, but it will take coming into my office to sit down and work together. I try to stay calm, repeat the directions again. If the parent is does not calm down, I let the parent know that he/she will need to leave the building until they are calmer and willing to work through the issue. If not, I will call the police.

Also, their child will not be permitted to attend school at our school if they continue to act in such a manner per our handbook.

First, try and deescalate the situation. If this fails I ask them to leave the premises.

depends on their level of aggressiveness---from listening, to writing letters to calling the police
I listen first, and then recognize how they are feeling. I let them know that parents defending their children is natural and expected. If their complaints/concerns are valid I let them know that I will support them. If they are unjustified (which is 99% of the time) I explain why and shed light on the issue so they may understand. I am lucky that I have always been able to come to a satisfactory solution for the child and parent.

Listen, ask them their opinions more, or if they are out of control, call school security.

I stop the meeting or phone call and tell them we can meet again when they have calmed down. I have also called the police.

Again, I try to show the parent that I care about the child. I usually insist that the child is present to reduce "he said, she said" and I start with a statement that we are meeting because I care about the child and his/her future.

Concluded the meeting immediately and invited them to speak to the superintendent.

Be very empathetic and listen to them. If they remain aggressive, I would suggest that we meet again. Give a specific timeframe on how to resolve the issues on the best interest of the school and the children.

1. Ask to calm down. 2. My secretary is instructed to call the police.

Calm and respectful. I listen and provide appropriate resources.

Most times I bring them into a private room and ask them how I can help or have them describe the situation to me. If it is something I need to investigate, I let them know I will do so and give them a day I will follow up with them. Most times it is the same or next day. If the investigation is still ongoing I call them and give the information on my progress.

I try to listen, I try to be rational but I refuse to back down.

Ask this what they want us to do for them to resolve the conflict.

I have threatened to call the sheriff if it has gotten too bad but that has only happened a few times.
in my ten years as an elementary principal.

Stay calm and do not raise voice. Do not get into a verbal debate or try to change their minds at that moment.

Calmly and stay on topic.

accepting, empty, explanation, "what is done is done - where we go from here?"

As I handle any aggressor, with acceptance and understanding of their position due to their information. Then I explain that "all the known facts are not all the facts." I deal with presenting the facts, truth and school policies.

Firmness, attempt to diffuse and rationalize situation.

keep control of the conversation by re-directing and focusing on the issue at hand. leaving physical space between the parent and me. not engaging in similar behavior. When it is apparent that a successful resolution is not possible at that time, escort the parent out.

I would usually be firm and tell the parent that their behavior is not currently appropriate for the situation and tell them unless their demeanor changes, the conversation would end. I've never had a parent not adjust their behavior once that point has been made. As I mentioned, I am an administrator at a private Catholic school and have had few issues with violent or aggressive parents. If they are aggressive it is typically in a manner asking me to continue to look into a situation or reevaluate a decision. They have not really been physically or verbally aggressive in a mean spirited manner.

I usually don't speak to aggressive parents right away. I will have them to wait. I also usually meet them with a smile. I do not argue with parents and I listen.

I typically invite them into my office, listen to their concern, use active listening, and develop an action plan with the parent to resolve the source of aggression.

Be calm, explain abusive language will not be tolerated.
Listen to the parent, remain calm, if they continue to be aggressive say we'll have to talk at another time. Keep office door open.

I usually remain as outwardly calm as I can and try to keep me voice low and soft.

I would try to defuse the situation and if that did not work, I would conclude the conversation to give the person time to calm down and then meet with necessary ground rules established and with a more neutral party if needed.

Professionally

I always allow them to vent. By letting them vent they are heard. Once they are heard you can quite often reason with them. They are important to the process even if they are wrong. If they didn't work I did call Central Office and have them hold the meeting. This was in a racial accusation meeting. I felt if was best if I didn't run the meeting.

I try to diffuse their anger by simply listening to them. I assure them that I will look into the matter and get back to them in a timely manner. I also, at times, call in the guidance department or the SRO to help with more serious situations.

Usually, I let them talk (and yell) to get it out of their system if it is in private in my office. Then I try to sum up what they are upset about to make sure they understand that I have listened. Then I either explain the "rest of the story" or, if I was unaware of the situation, I assure them that I will investigate and get back with them. If they get verbally or physically abusive, I ask them to leave. If they don't, I let them know that I will call the police. Then, if they don't leave, I or my secretary will call the police. I have only had to do this once.

Depends on the level of aggressiveness. Have had to contact the police and have one banned from the school grounds.

I try to communicate positive behaviors as much as negative ones.

Try to de-escalate them. Offer to meet with the superintendent.
Keep calm (on the outside) Let them yell themselves out. the try and reason.

I've them the opportunity to vent before proceeding.

Have an administrative colleague present

Keep them calm, if not possible end the meeting and reschedule

I would quietly and firmly ask them to leave until they could converse in an appropriate manner.

I would also have my full time school resource officer involved in the meetings. Parents who were unable to control themselves were removed and/or arrested.

Listen, summarize their feelings, let them know I will check into their allegation and get back in touch with them.

through recognizing parent feelings, acknowlegement, listening, and then looking at the issue,

I try to pay them a compliment at the beginning of the conversation regarding how much they love their child because they come to school everyday, they are clean, etc. Or I will remind them of the common goal that we have before hitting them with what they need to know.

Let them vent. If they continue, if it is on the phone I hang up. If the meeting is face to face, tell them I am walking out if the anger continues.

Inform them that they need to calm down or the meeting will be stopped and continued when they are able to display a more positive attitude/demeanor.

Do unto others and that usually works. I am calm in demeanor and let them do the talking. Give and take on both parts always emphasizing what is best for the students.
I try to listen to their side of the story and try to get their input as to how they would handle the situation.

In cases like verbally abusive parents I usually try to let them vent while I listen to them. If it gets too nasty I will leave the meeting and give them an opportunity to cool off a little.

Listen to them initially without interruption. Let them voice their concerns and work on a plan to fix the problem together.

Work my best to diffuse it the situation and then cease to meet with them if the hostility continued

I had all my facts documented, consulted with superiors before meeting, spoke kindly but frankly about the situation, consequences, need for behavior contract. refused to back down on consequences

I would listen to what they had to say. Many times they just needed to vent. I would explain why I did what I did or why I needed to do what I did. I always explain what I have done to help solve the a problem and provide them with an much detail as possible.

Talk to them and not down to them. Try to stay calm and be professional.

Usually, the louder the parent becomes, the softer I try to speak. I will also try to move to a place where I have an escape, should that be needed. I've also alerted my secretaries to call the police at the first threat that they hear and to err on the side of being over-reactive.

I always like to talk to them and work towards reconciliation.

My first attempt is to deescalate the situation. If that is not possible with me, soley, I would (and have) called for additional support.

listen to them and talk them down

Try to get them to calm down, and then redirect to the key points at hand. Discuss possible solutions.
Today, I put them off until the superintendent can be present. I tell them I'm not comfortable with them and we can talk with her in the room. Generally this is disarming, because one of their tactics is to tell the superintendent. I speak the truth, in a controlled, respectful manner. The problem with that is when the parent isn't well mentally due to stress or addiction or otherwise they aren't hearing anything you say and are really seeking someone to blame or to fight with.

I listen to the parent's concerns first and let them get all their opinions on the table. I parrot back their concerns to make sure I have a good understanding of the problem. Then, I try to address each concern. I let them know that I am enforcing school policies and explain why I made the decision that is upsetting them. If they are still hostile and threatening, then I may end the meeting because we aren't going to agree and there is no need to go further. I tell them that they may contact the superintendent and escort them to the door.

Listen, Evaluate their concerns, hold my ground.

I try to remain calm and not antagonize them in any way. I try to understand their perspective and listen while at the same time not leading them to believe that I am in agreement with them.

Speaking quietly, slowly and repeating their concerns in a manner such as, "Ok, let me see if I understand your concerns" than restating what I believe the parent is most concerned about

I listen a lot. Then I try to calmly repeat their concerns one at a time. If it's an aggressive phone call, I listen thoroughly and often suggest/arrange for a later meeting.

I remain calm, keep my voice low, tell them if they don't calm down the meeting will end. Stop the profanity because it is disrespectful and will not be tolerated. If they continue I will have security remove them from the building. Most calm down.

I remain standing to "escort" them away from my office and I leave my door open at all times.

I tell them I am not going to have a conversation if they can not discuss the problem respectfully.

Stay calm, keep the focus on the issues at hand and the student's best interests.
Every situation is different.

In the past I have always tried to listen to what the parents were really saying underneath the emotion. I often allowed parents to air their griefs and then respond by summarizing their concerns, to prove that I heard them and understood them. Then I often tried to find a compromise if possible. However, sometimes a compromise is not possible, and in those cases I tried to be as positive and polite as possible.

Permit adequate venting until parent is composed, even if necessary to schedule another meeting, then showing empathy to their needs, followed by talking over some strategies, followed by goal setting.

I would make sure that I met with others. I would make sure I had access to the exit in case of safety concerns. I would have the meeting in a space with plenty of room.

I usually invite them into the office and let them talk themselves out. The longest was two hours.

In the end it is usually about themselves, not their child.

Separate from public space, remain calm, defuse situation

Give them a chance to vent, and if they do not calm down, either schedule another time to meet or call the authorities.

attempt to de-escalate; end meeting

Quickly as possible desescalate. Find a common ground we can agree on.

REMOVE MYSELF FROM THE SITUATION.

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3. Please, describe a situation in which you have experienced parental aggression.

Text Response

A student was suspended from school for their behavior and the parent came into the school yelling and using profanity towards me.

Parent expressed their dissatisfaction in the way I was perceived to unfairly treat her son. The parent was very direct about their feelings of me be ineffective.

they were angry at me for disciplining their child

One particular parent wants to be called each time their son is in the office.. went to the superintendent over the expectation to do his work. Now I just have the supt call mom when he has to come to the office.. seems to have fixed it -- for now

Parent argues everything is a violation of civil rights, student was suspended for drawings that were deemed threatening in nature, parent disagreed and tried to intimidate principal and secretary.

expelling a student for assuat resulted in numerous verbal threats, false accusations and other

Athletics

AGain-the term aggressive is not appropriate for what I have experienced. Demanding is more descriptive. They have asked for special accomodations or treatment above and beyond the necessary accommodations for a disability or condition.

Parents upset over a more strict dress code implemented in our school.

Na

Football game - parent was upset about coaching - asked him to leave he refused - became more agitated swearing physically standing against me - police intervened

I was called to a meeting where the parent was aggressive with the teacher and other staff, after about 3 minutes in the meeting the parent became threatening and I immediately ended the
meeting and asked the other school personnel to leave and told the parent we would not meet if they could not control their emotions and actions and that they could reschedule at a later date once they regained control. They were not happy with me but I stuck to my position.

I have filed the necessary paperwork to ban a parent from our school grounds after that parent threatened bodily harm to my staff over a detention she disagreed with.

IEP meeting - parent became verbally abusive including expletives. Ended the meeting promptly and told the parent that we were walking down the hallway and out the door to her car. She was not to return to the building or I would call the sheriff's department. I used a firm but calm voice that quieted her barrage of language and she did follow my directive.

Parents Cussing and swearing at me on the phone or in the office.

Last spring a student wrote an essay as a class assignment to solve a problem. Her problem was that there wasn't enough money to buy books because the Principal uses the lunch money and fee money to buy jewelry. When I called the parent to discuss the situation, the parent became very accusing, and said that maybe I had something to hide. Then the grandmother called and said the same things and more.

I once observed the mother of a Kindergarten student who was put on the wrong bus, assault the male Kindergarten teacher. The teacher was literally beat up and the mother was arrested.

A few parents feel like they have to threaten to get the result that they want.

Aggressive parents frequently select a time of day that is highly public, i.e., arrival, dismissal, lunch

Anger over a decision or perceived mishandling of a situation involving their child

I suspended a female student for calling another student a Nigger the mother came in and called me an Asshole and slammed my door as she left.

Broke up a situation between two parents, between teacher and parent, parent screaming....in 27
147

years I have seen it all.

Parent punched her son in my office. She was agressive, but not toward administrator

Meetings in office with me, with me and other school personnel.

Parent was told not to be on school grounds unless they had my promotion

When teaching, I quietly reprimanded two students who continued to be disruptive in class privately and off to the side of the room. One boy went home and said I belittled him in front of the class, and told the other boy he shouldn't be friends with him any more. She came in screaming, accusing me of something that never happened and refused to listen to anything I had to say. We ended up having a meeting with the principal to "clear the air".

I had a parent I had never met say filthy things on facebook about me. Many read it, but I considered the source.

I am currently involved with an aggressive parent who demanded an MFE because she feels her child is dyslexic. We are completing the MFE but it doesn't look like the child will qualify for special education and I fear more will come of this, etc. a law suit and dealing with lawyers.

When a student accused a teacher of slapping her.

Worse back in 90's (must of been era!), many try to threaten your position (call board member).

They usually have little or no logic to back up emotion.

As the previous answer indicated, I had an angry parent leave his seat and get in my face. He was really just angry that his son had put himself in the situation that he was in and really just needed to vent or direct his anger. But as I explained to him that my goal wasn't to punish his child, he almost immediately calmed down and was very apologetic.

A parent was nuts. Swore at me and a teacher. We listened and did not confront the parent.

Asked the parent to control self and return when calm. Would call law enforcement if continued.

Set up another time to meet.
When I dealt with children services to report abuse

Not allowing a student graduate due to OPT scores.

The parent wanted to argue with me about her child's services in a hallway where others were listening. I asked her to step in the office and she refused and left. She followed it up by calling the office of the superintendent.

I had a parent threaten to shoot me, kill me, ruin my life, threaten my family and just about anyone connected with the schools over my career. Its usually relative to student behavior and they feel or say they feel picked on and everyone is out to get them. I try to be very calm and just listen when I'm dealing with aggressive enabling parents.

The parent was angry at the discipline for which her son received. She wanted me to change the disposition. She cursed and directed insults at my assistant. wh did the investigation I told him to leave the room and I finished the meeting. She was still angry.

I was accused of trying to get into a child's cellphone, "breaking" their password.

I had a child who was frequently in trouble and his mother would come in to my office demanding I comply with her requests. I have usually found teh parents who are agressive tend to have emaitional poroblems of tehir own they are trying to deal with.

There was a teacher who was being threatened because the teacher put a note in the child's planner that the child had hit another student. The note said what happened and to please speak with her child about the situation. There was a consequence given of losing recess. The parent came in the building yelling and screaming that her child does not do these things and the teacher was lying. If she saw this teacher, she would killer her so you better get that principal down her now or call the police because she would take out that teacher if she sees her. She was screaming all this as she entered the door so everyone in the building could hear it. I was in a meeting with the pastor. I was called to come help. As I walked down the hallway, I could hear this parent
who was still repeating the same thing over and over. Get me that principal now or else, if I see that teacher, I will kill her. She is a liar. She is... she is killing my child's self esteem and i will kill her. It was a long hallway so I could hear this over and over as I came. Once the mother saw me, she came walking quickly right at me. She got up in my face within 1 inch. She began screaming again about this teacher. I told her she needed to calm down and we would work through the issue. She would not stop. She threatened me, called me a racist white trash... started cussing etc... she was going to report us for racism. She thrust her self into my space several times. I stood silently. Then she made a fist. I let her know at this point, she would have to leave, she was out of control, and this was unacceptable. She started screaming other stuff, "you are no principal". you are just a ....... , more cussing. I positioned myself to walk towards the door. I held the door open, told her she must leave or I would call the police. Then, I stood silently until she left. The next day, I informed her with the pastor that her family was no longer welcome to our school given her verbal abuse and threats to myself and the teacher.

Sending a student to an off-site ISS program. Parent was very verbally aggressive on the phone. She then sent her husband in who was verbally and potentially physically aggressive. I escorted him out of the building and told him that I was contacting police and requesting that he no longer have a right to be on school property, which they did.

A father of a student came into my office because his son had said that I was unfair and picked on him. His child was a "different" kind of student and needed a lot of redirecting. I explained how I handled this redirection in a respectful way, told him I appreciated that he was looking out for his child which was what any good parent would/should do. After a long conversation he saw that I knew his child well and could appreciated how I had to expect certain behavior for his son in a classroom situation. (We don't yell out when we are angry, our job in school is to learn and enjoy learning, we don't throw things because people may get hurt of materials may break.) The
meeting ended with an apology and a thank you from the father, and a handshake and smile.

Parent felt threatened when I sent an attendance letter to the home stating I was going to take them to an attendance hearing if the absences didn't improve. Mom, grandmother and community activist came to the school to confront me since I obviously can't say anything to their faces! She went off on a tangent about the school then not taking care of her daughter's bullies, that her teacher lies about everything, etc. The parent withdrew her child from our building that day and then demanded we give her back all school supplies (this was Oct. at the end of the first quarter). When she didn't receive her specific items back, she went crazy; yelling and threatening that "you'll get yours you fucking bitch" over and over. Security was called and escorted off school grounds. A safe school was issued which meant she can't come onto our school grounds otherwise she could be arrested. That was the last we hear of this parent.

Usually due to suspending or expelling kids from school. Many parents do not accept that their child has done anything wrong.

I once gave a child an out of school suspension for secretly recording her teacher in an effort to get the teacher in trouble. The parent insisted that it was her fault, not her daughter's, and that her daughter was not going to serve the out of school suspension. When I told the parent that I could not force her to take her child home, but I could make the child sit all day in the office, the parent became confrontational and tried to be physically aggressive (stepping close to me, moving her arms). She said she was going to call the police because her rights were being violated. I told her that I did not want her to call the police in front of her daughter, but she did anyway. The police chief arrived, told the parent that this was a private school and I could pretty much do what I wanted. The parent then took her child home for three days, but ended up withdrawing her at the end of the year.

See above
When parents have a different perspective of the situation and very accusatory.

One parent was cursing and I just didn't back down. Parents can be bullies also!

Bullying situation. Parent pounded fist and said sons blood will be on my hands when he commits suicide from years of bullying.

I had one parent whose livein boyfriend allegedly shot and killed two men and was on the run, who came to the school after we called her about a minor discipline issue with her child. She threaded another parents, staff and myself saying everyone was lying on her child. She actually tried to hit the other parent with a full book bag. After I told her to leave, She cursed me out and I asked the parent if she would like to report the incident to the police. Dhe said yes and the police took over the situation.

Parent came in because she did not like what a teacher decided. I a child said that when you shake three fingers at another person you want to have sex with them. The child did it several times to other students and it was reported to the teacher. The teacher addressed the child and moved his card to red and contacted his mother to let her know of what had happened. She began yelling at the teacher, hung up on her and then came up to the school. I met with the teacher and the mother and grandmother. The told me that the gesture was not punishable and that the teacher had lied and changed the story. They became hostile and used the racist word and accused us of being unfair to her child.

Concerned a potential abuse

I have experienced parents cussing and getting mad over such things as a telling a dad that his son couldn't wear a shirt that said freakin. That is just one example of something that should never have been an issue.

Father was agery because his daughter was truant and I "had let it happen".

Parents sending disrespectful and inappropriate letters.
The most aggression I receive is a parent who threatens to pull her children from our school as a power play. One parent did so because I scolded her about posting comments on Facebook for all to see about one of our teachers. She pulled one student immediately, then the second one at the end of his school year.

Mother began shouting that she did not have to listen to me or anyone else regarding her daughter.

Parent was displeased with the fact that her child was going to be excluded from the graduation ceremony because of her choice to have hair carvings. Parent used extreme profanity directed at me personally, the school, and the pastor. She then threw the notice at me, flung open the door to my office, screamed her way out of the building and continued to have a verbal outburst as she exited the building.

A parent has verbally raised her voice and announced that a disciplinary decision would ruin her child's life and suspending him was an act that she considered assault toward him. Other than aggressively demanding we reverse the decision she was not otherwise aggressive and was not aggressive physically in any way.

A parent was contesting the discipline decision that was being considered to do assault committed by their child on another child

Expelling a student

Phone conversation, parent yelling

I have had parents start rumors about me and write anonymous letters in an attempt to get me fired.

I replaced a teacher, a parent wanted to know the details of why and I said I could not discuss that. She was irate and would not take no for an answer. In that case she had closed my office door and proceeded to yell. There was no actual physical aggression.
I was accused of being racist because this student was constantly being given detentions. It was a sad case of the parents thought their child was perfect, needed no behavior modifications, but he was clearly having attention issues. DENIAL on the parents part.

See the first question, I recalled the most recent and most violent that I have had in a very very long time.

I had a parent who had lost custody of her son. She came in to the office for some information, which we gave her copies of. Then she left, but snuck back in with the students at recess and started going through her sons desk and interrupting class. I told her she had access to her son's papers at the proper time - not in the middle of class - and that she had to leave. She kept saying that she was allowed to "be here and get his things". I told her to pick up the materials and come to the office now, or I would call the police to remove her. I had my cell phone out ready. She picked things up and went to the office with me where I allowed her make copies and then I escorted her to her car.

See above.

I had to exclude a student from a class trip due to behavior. The parents responded by saying that "If I was smart, I would be the CEO of a company not a principal at a public school.

A group of parents insist on seeing video. District won't permit it so they assume I am a liar and their children wrongly persecuted. They have gone to the board. where it was suggested I was spoken to. I do not get supported.

Disagreements concerning grades or discipline.

Verbal disagreement...not a major issue

A parent was not angry at me as much as the counselor for inappropriate comments made toward their child. The resource officer escorted the parent from the building.
I had a parent throw suspension papers at me and also have had one approach me in the parking lot after school with concerns about how situation was handled. Parent said I was lying about her child.

My first full week of serving as HS principal in 1997 - we had an aggressive parent (mother) who threatened to end her life and in doing so had planned to also take the lives of our superintendent, mine, and my assistant principal as the result of a dispute over a dress code issue that we enforced that also landed in the United States Supreme Court.

EVERY PARENTAL CONTACT A PARENT IS ANGRY

I had a parent threaten to kick my ass in front of his whole family. I told him that if he laid a hand on me that I would eventually own everything he has. It did not result in a fight.

A parent was frustrated with some students bullying their child and wanted it resolved quickly.

During open house this fall, a grandpa (custodial parent in this case) met me in the hallway. He kept moving into my personal space accusing us of running a concentration camp, etc. He is also the one we believe was taking pictures of staff member's rear-ends (mine included) with his cell phone during a fall celebration outside. Interesting situation.

A parent came in because they didn't feel I had handled a bullying situation to their satisfaction.

We called in the police because they had already involved themselves.

Parent was upset that their child was being suspended for bringing a cap gun to school and aiming it at a student and pulling the trigger with a cap firing. He took the gun, broke it in half and yelled a couple of four letter words as he tossed it onto my desk.

Again, mostly in bus issues and custody issues, parents get a little rowdy;-)

I have a parent who is currently upset over her son being inadvertently left off the district golf team. Our coach neglected to attend the meeting to determine awards. I have contacted the coaches association and the boy in question will be placed on the second team, but I don't think...
that will be the end of the situation.

Situation involve a teacher who the parent deemed incompetent to teach and wanted them fired. A student who was actually trying to stop a fight, actually made the fight worse. The student held the arms of one boy, therefore allowing the other boy to be beaten badly. Although he attempted to help, he was involved in the fight and received punishment for his part. Dad did not like the fact that his son was receiving discipline. After hearing my side, he agreed to the punishment.

No real experience with parental aggression...it's a minimal issue at our school

Child was sexually harrassing fellow classmates. Parents felt the child was singled out and blamed the teacher for lack of supervision

A parent got mad that I suspended his son and wanted to challenge me to a fight. Told him to leave the building or be arrested. Did not antagonize him and he left.

I had a parent, a guy I had graduated high school with, give me a two armed shove to chest, nearly knocking me down, as he was leaving a volleyball game because his child did not play.

I had a parent approach me at a fundraiser and was angry about a special needs child in his daughter's classroom. He yelled at me and would not let me pass him. I contacted the board president and he and another board member met with him and discussed the situation. Then we all got together to work out the situation. It was resolved.

This was over a case that ultimately ended up going to OCR. A two year ordeal.

parent advocate was brought in to help with a perceived problem with a sped student - lots of yelling by family - advocate saw all of the good things we were doing and told parent they were sorry but they really could not help them

n/a

Most recently, on different occasions, a parent has sat in a meeting with me and the superintendent, called me "her," refused to look at me, repeatedly said I was unprofessional,
brought in a list of what he considered indiscretions on my part. This parent has a history with other teachers, parents and the sheriff's office. My superior was supportive of my position.

I had disciplined a Board member's child. It was a more serious kind of issue. The Board member and spouse had requested executive session with the Board for an appeal hearing. The Board member's spouse came across the table at me and was screaming that I didn't know what I was doing and I was picking on their child. Come to find out years later, that the child admitted to my daughter and her friends that he did it and thought it was funny.

Suspended son for bullying behavior

When students were cut from a class because they were not meeting the standards set forth to continue in the class and the parent felt that the student should still be able to take the class. The parent tried to intimidate me through phone calls, threats, and sending in the "other" parent.

Enforcing suspension due to student misconduct. Father of student was very angry, shouting and using profanity, threatening to remove student from our school.

A grandmother calls in occasionally and yells at the secretary, and then at me, about a variety of her granddaughter's allegations against her teachers and me. I explained that I needed to discuss the issues with the child's mother as well. Grandma became very upset at that point and began shouting about being related to "a couple of senators" and threatening to bring in her "lawyers" and/or sit in the child's class to prove the teacher was treating her badly. I assured her I would check into the issues and she accused me of not having done so "the last time" she called to complain. I reminded her of the actions I took but she interrupted and shouted over me. I finally kept quiet and only made comments like, "I see" or by repeating/rephrasing her complaints as I took notes. She finally settled down some and became emotional, blaming the child's mother for mistreating her and sharing other personal troubles. Once the conversation calmed, I was able to provide information that seemed to help before ending the call.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Responses</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Principal Perceptions of Parental Aggression Survey (PPPAS)

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your race?
3. Are you married?
4. Do you have children?

5. What job titles have you had during your educational career? "Please check all that apply"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Counselor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>School Psychologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Superintendent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. How many years have you worked in the field of education?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0-5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6-10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>11-15 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>16-20 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>21-25 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>26 years or more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Please select the place on the rural urban continuum that best represents the population of the area in which your school is located. Large City "Population greater than 250,000" Large Town "Population greater than 25,000" Rural "Not located within any Incorporated area"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. The majority of your time is spent with which of the following grades?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Middle School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. What is your highest level of education?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Less than high school graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>High school graduate/ G.E.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Some College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>College Graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Masters Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ed. / PH.D.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. What is the current enrollment of the school in which you work?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>400 students or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>401-800 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>801-1200 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1201-1600 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1601-2000 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2001 or more students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. What percentage of your students qualifies for the federal free and reduced lunch program?

12. Please, rate the level of parental involvement at your school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>overwhelmingly active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>mostly active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>more active than non-active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>about as active as non-active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>more non-active than active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>mostly non-active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>overwhelmingly non-active</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13. How would you describe your interaction with the parents of your students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>overwhelmingly positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>mostly positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>more positive than non-positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>about as positive as non-positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>more non-positive than positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>mostly non-positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>overwhelmingly non-positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. When problems arise with parents, which of the following issues are typically involved? "Select as many as apply"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Curriculum decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Special education issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Extracurricular activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
15. What is the most common cause of problems between you and the parents of your students? "Please select one"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Curriculum decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Special education issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Extracurricular activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. During the past 12 months what percentage of your interaction with parents would you consider problematic?

17. Have you ever received training in communication with parent's?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. Select which of the following best describes the type of school that your are employed at.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Charter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Vocational</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
19. Which of the following best describes your leadership style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Campaigner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Explorer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Innovator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sculptor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Curator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Conductor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Scientist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. In each of the following, indicate the number of times each type of aggression was directed towards you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Parents have threatened to contact &quot;other authorities,&quot; that is the school board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A parent / guardian directed Shouting or profanity at me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A parent leveled false accusations at me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Verbal threats / intimidation were made against my physical well-being by a parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I was present when a parent physically confronted another school employee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>A parent occasionally blocked my path of entry or exit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>A parent intentionally invaded my &quot;personal space&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>A parent threw an object (i.e., pencil, paper) in an attempt to injure/intimidate me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>A parent made actual physical contact with me that is hit, kicked or shoved.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
21. Using the scale below, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Parental aggression is an issue that requires more attention from your district.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I have voiced my concern regarding acts of parental aggression in my district.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I feel more threatened by acts of parental aggression than I did 2 or 3 years ago.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I have altered my approach with parents due to previous encounters with hostile parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Parents generally support the decisions that I make regarding their children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I am less comfortable confronting a parent who is of a different race.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I have considered changing professions because of problems that I have had with problem parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The policies at the school I work in adequately punish those parents who create conflict.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The school board supports me in dealing with parent problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I have reduced my involvement with extracurricular activities to avoid problem parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I would not conduct a meeting with a parent who was considered hostile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>It has been necessary to have other school personnel in a room when meeting with a hostile parent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I feel vulnerable to acts of parental aggression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I feel free to discuss experiences with hostile parents with my superiors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22. Please, describe your experiences with aggressive parents.
23. Please, describe how you would handle an aggressive parent.
24. Please, describe a situation in which you have experienced parental aggression.