A Study of Highly Effective Ohio Public Elementary School Principals' Perceptions of Personal Instructional and Pedagogical Leadership

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This dissertation titled

A Study of Highly Effective Ohio Public Elementary School Principals’ Perceptions of

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Abstract

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A Study of Highly Effective Ohio Public Elementary School Principals’ Perceptions of Personal Instructional and Pedagogical Leadership

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This study sought to explore the personal perceptions of the leadership behaviors of public elementary school principals in Ohio whose schools had consistently demonstrated Above Expected Growth on the Value-Added measure and how these behaviors may contribute to the growth of their students. Research was conducted via a two-stage multi-methods study, in which survey data was first collected using Hallinger’s Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) and then followed with interviews, which were intended to present a deeper understanding of the principals’ perceptions of their leadership practices that contribute to the growth of the students in their schools. Principals indicated varying levels of frequency with which they engage in the leadership practices in the PIMRS, as well as a variation in their employment of leadership styles (transactional, transformational, instructional, pedagogical).
Dedication

This work is dedicated to my parents Lee and Carolyn whom I admire and appreciate more than words can say. My father, in particular, is especially pleased with the completion of my work. It is also dedicated to my sister Kara, whom I love dearly and appreciate the patience she’s had with me over the course of our lives. I dedicate this work to my husband Josh, who has always given me cause to believe more in myself and who has loved me in some of the most trying times. Finally, to the many talented teachers in Shelby and professors at the University of Notre Dame, St. Mary’s College, and Ashland University, who have inspired my desire to further my own education and serve as an example to others, I dedicate this work to you.
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I would also like to acknowledge the principals in Ohio who were part of this work. I know firsthand how precious their time is and I am grateful that they gave some of it to me. Their knowledge and experiences that they shared helped to make this dissertation possible and also helped to make me a better educator. I hope that others can learn from their work as administrators and improve their practice to make better schools for all of our students and teachers. After all, they are why we do what we do.

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Although they are my parents, I also have a great deal of admiration and respect for their
work as professionals. My parents have inspired, supported, and loved me for my whole
life. This dedication and acknowledgment hardly seems like enough, but it is important.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

This multi-method inquiry of public elementary school principals in Ohio explores the perceptions of these educational leaders about their own leadership behaviors. The study uses the results three years (2012, 2013, 2014) of building-level Value-Added data from the 4th Grade Ohio Achievement Assessment to ascertain those principals whose schools have maintained a measure of *Above Expected Growth* or the letter grade of A or B. For the purpose of sample selection in this research, those principals whose building ratings meet these criteria are defined as “highly-effective,” which is reflective of the consistent Value-Added growth achieved by their schools. The Value-Added measure, which measures student growth over a year’s time, has become a critical facet of both the school and district report cards, as well as the evaluation of both teachers and principals in Ohio. This study sets out to discover those leadership practices and behaviors in which these principals engage in order to support Value-Added student growth, as well as to develop a profile of the principals who work in schools that are achieving this growth with their students. Principals in this study were first asked to respond to a quantitative survey and then a sample was selected to participate in qualitative interviews in the second phase of research. The first chapter of this dissertation presents the background of the study, including the current environment of educational leadership; specifies the problem this study attempts to address; and describes the professional significance of the study. The chapter concludes with a definition of key terms of the dissertation and the research questions the study intends to answer.
Background

The principal’s role in the public school is one that has grown more deeply complex and evolutionary than ever before. What used to be regarded as a managerial or supervisory role has become much more; now, as school leaders, principals are expected to be much more involved with many more aspects of the school community. According to O’Donnell and White (2005, p. 57), today’s leaders have a plethora of “additional responsibilities related to student achievement and the skills necessary to lead and motivate all people who influence student learning.” Their “new” role is complicated and hard to define (Catano & Stronge, 2007). As much of the literature suggests, changes in the work environment have caused both role ambiguity and role overload for school principals (Mackey, Pitcher, & Decman, 2006). Principals are no longer solely responsible for management duties, such as scheduling, budgeting, and conducting administrative meetings, nor are they the lone leaders in the school building, responsible for developing and monitoring curriculum, supervising instruction, and disciplining students. The principalship has become a cluster of functions (Mullican & Ainsworth, 1979), requiring a delicate balance of leadership style along with an understanding of the make-up the school as an organization in order to positively affect teacher pedagogy and the resulting student achievement. Rather than just creating a list of behaviors to complete in the day of a principal, this study seeks to explore what principals perceive themselves doing in their daily practice in order to bring all of the facets of their work together to benefit the growth and achievement of their students in their schools.
In addition to the demands of their daily practice, principals, now more than ever, are faced with a plethora of conflicting interests from a variety of sources in carrying out their responsibilities; they no longer solely answer to the superintendent and deal with the supervision and cursory evaluation of subordinates and discipline of students. Building principals may often find themselves conflicted between the interests and demands of local school boards, district offices, parents, students, teachers, building staff, government mandates, and their own philosophies and interests that influence their decisions and planning. Principals are responsible for working with the entire spectrum of stakeholders (Mangin, 2007, p. 319) within the community. Within their own buildings, though, principals also have a broader view of the instructional program across the whole school, and so they play an important role in assuring that teachers offer students “a coherent educational experience” (Printy & Marks, 2006, p. 129). As VanderJagt, Shen, and Hsieh (2001, p. 41) put it, principals “have a perspective on the whole organization, rather than individual classrooms.” Because of this unique global perspective, the principal is ultimately in the best position to interpret the goals of all stakeholders (Mullican & Ainsworth, 1979); this position, though, can be one that is often paradoxical in nature. Principals may struggle with how to achieve influence over classrooms in which they rarely participate (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008).

The paradoxical nature of principal leadership is also such that, according to Miller (1976, as cited in Mullican & Ainsworth, 1979), good leadership can enhance the implementation of bad programs as well as good programs. Printy and Marks (2006) identify another facet of the paradox of leadership in the struggle of principals between
maintaining a stable environment and promoting on-going innovation and change. There are several work environment tensions that still exist; principals may struggle with infusing innovation, encouraging the use of professional discretion, and allowing a sense of autonomy, while trying to balance the leadership influences that assure content standards of learning and expectations for instruction are maintained (Printy & Marks, 2006). Just as principals must be participants in the professional learning community within their school, they must also be the guides of this process. This paradoxical balance of leadership is also exhibited in the role ambiguity many principals experience in trying to be both the guide and participant of learning in their schools, while attempting to provide stability in an innovative environment.

The complex demands of the public education system have led to an increasing need for integrating the leadership of teachers and the leadership of principals to promote student achievement. Students and communities are changing and evolving, and schools are being expected to do more with less in educating students. What the research suggests, though, is not that principals are responsible for leading this change all by themselves. The concept of leadership has evolved with the needs of students and communities. Schools that are successful in achieving and maintaining improvement build the capacity for leadership from within the organization (Williams, 2009, p. 30), which also requires that the meaning of leadership must be broadened. Teachers as professionals have genuine contributions to make to the field of educational leadership, and principals must be prepared and equipped to accept this shared leadership (Burch, 2007; Gurr, Drysdale, & Mulford, 2006; MacNeill, Cavanagh, & Silcox, 2003; Mackey et
al., 2006; Marks & Nance, 2007; Mullican & Ainsworth, 1979; Printy & Marks, 2006; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008; Williams, 2009; Ylimaki, 2007). Furthermore, Murphy (1988, p. 128) affirms, “the research that has been done does not support the conception of instructional leadership as an area of responsibility solely under the control of the principal.”

While school administrators may have to answer to the sometimes-conflicted interests of outside forces, these stakeholders can also be a school’s most valuable resources. Many of the problems that schools and students face are reflective of larger societal problems. In order to even begin to address these problems on behalf of their students, principals need to unite school, family, and community (VanderJagt et al., 2001). Effective leadership requires principals and school leaders to consider decisions based on unique sets of needs or circumstances in their response to the particular needs of their respective communities (Marks & Nance, 2007).

Principals can seek to build trust through supportive behavior, but cannot “make” teachers trust one another (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008, p. 462). One of the most powerful actions a principal can consciously take to promote this trust is to model the professional behavior he or she expects of his teachers. Ylimaki (2007) and Murphy, Elliott, Goldring, and Porter (2007) explicitly identify modeling in shared instructional leadership, where principals model instructional leadership behaviors and invite other school members to participate in school transformation, which then increases the capacity for school change. One of the most concrete actions that the effective principal took in Ylimaki’s (2007, p. 15) case study was that she “practiced what she preached.” Teachers feel empowered to
engage in school change when they see that it is a cultural value, lead by the instructional leader.

While the majority of the literature suggests that shared leadership between teachers and principals is the most effective in building lasting and beneficial school reform, there are some areas in which the research does not agree. For one, there is not a consensus on exactly how to best realize teacher leadership. The processes of shared decision-making, committee leadership, and peer coaching are some keys to teacher leadership, but none of them are absolute. Essentially, the ways in which principals and teachers lead are in tension (Printy & Marks, 2006). Principals, whether they like it or not, may inherently lead with a top-down philosophy (as they are often recipients of this same leadership style in the directives they receive from central office), while teachers, bolstered by the support of teachers’ unions, may believe that a bottom-up approach is most effective.

Further, while most researchers have identified students’ socioeconomic status (SES) as one of the strongest predictors in their achievement, this may not always be the case. Wahlstrom and Louis (2008, p. 467) offer research that suggests that “teachers’ collective efficacy/responsibility may be a stronger predictor of student achievement than students’ SES,” making principal leadership with teachers even more critical to student success. This finding would indicate that principals have an urgent job in harnessing the energies of teachers and other leaders in order to improve teaching and learning at the classroom level (Mullican & Ainsworth, 1979).
Another critical area of disagreement is the actual impact that principals may have on student learning. Bowers and White (2014, p. 707) acknowledge that the principal “has long been identified as having a strong role in the effectiveness of the instruction provided within a school.” If the most direct effect on student achievement, however, stems from high quality pedagogy on the part of classroom teachers, and teachers can make these professional decisions on their own to positively affect student growth and learning, then perhaps the school leader’s impact on student achievement is not one of great, or at least direct, significance. In one research study, the researchers even found that principals had both a positive and negative correlation with student achievement (Van de Grift & Houtveen, 1999, p. 375).

While some of the research around educational leadership calls into question the impact that principals have on schools, especially in terms of student learning outcomes (Gurr et al., 2006), other research has linked characteristics of principals with improved student test scores (Mackey et al., 2006). Heck and Marcoulides (1993, p. 26) concluded that the way in which principals “govern the school, build a strong school climate, and organize and monitor the school’s instructional program” are important predictors of the academic achievement of students; thus, the principal must now be considered as one of the “school effects” variables that directly influence student achievement. In addition, in their review of school leadership effects, Hallinger and Heck (1996) highlighted identified vision and goals as the most significant avenue through which school leaders impact student learning.
Conceptual Framework

Hallinger and Wang (2015, p. 28) present an instructional leadership model for principal leadership based on a conceptual framework that incorporates three dimensions: Defines the School Mission, Manages the Instructional Program, and Develops a Positive School Learning Climate (Figure 1). This framework will be used to explore the components of instructional leadership in this study.

![Figure 1. PIMRS Conceptual Framework (Hallinger and Wang, 2015, p. 28).](image)

Problem Statement

This study seeks to illuminate the components of leadership that are critical to the successful academic growth of students. In order to contribute to this understanding, this research will seek the perspectives of highly-effective (as defined by achieving a building score of Above Expected Growth, or the letter grade of A or B on Ohio’s 4th grade Value-
Added measure) principals in terms of their own leadership behaviors by addressing the following overarching research question: What instructional leadership and management functions, practices, and behaviors do highly-effective principals see themselves as engaging in most frequently? This question will be explored through the employment of Hallinger’s Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) to measure the following 10 dimensions of instructional management: 1) framing the school’s goals; 2) communicating the school’s goals; 3) supervising and evaluating instruction; 4) coordinating the curriculum; 5) monitoring student progress; 6) protecting instructional time; 7) maintaining high visibility; 8) providing incentives for teachers; 9) promoting professional development; 10) providing incentives for learning.

In addition, this study will address the following subordinate questions, in order to further illustrate the professional knowledge, experiences, and leadership practices of the principals in this study: What is the profile of highly effective principals (in order to develop this profile, this study will include the demographic information of the principals, differences in principals’ own levels of education, and other positions have the principals held and lengths of tenure)? What are the differences in principals’ leadership practices (transformational, transactional, instructional, pedagogical)? How do these principals develop themselves professionally to enhance their own practice?

**Purpose of Study**

By examining the perceptions of highly effective principals and what they report themselves doing in order to improve pedagogy and student growth, this study may offer contributions to the existing body of both practical and theoretical knowledge. The
perceptions of principals of their own instructional and pedagogical leadership practices have not been widely studied (Reitzug, West, & Angel, 2008); however, Johnson (1993, p. 339) suggests that “if school effectiveness is to be better understood and improved, careful attention must be paid to the high quality performance and the relevance of the organization’s senior executive to organizational attainment.” Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, and Lee (1982, p. 34) purport that “the research and practice literature do not necessarily present models that describe how certain management or leadership activities actually become translated into concrete activities which help children to succeed in school.” This study seeks to address that gap in the literature. Also, the self-reported perceptions of principals are important, as Grissom and Loeb (2009, p. 21) affirm that “asking principals to provide self-ratings reflects an informational advantage in the sense that principals experience themselves performing the tasks,” which is why this study seeks those perceptions from the principals themselves. Bartell (1989) suggests that we must now ask successful principals why they do what they do and how they believe their work affects the instructional program. If educational leadership can be considered one of the most important determinants of an effective learning environment, it becomes even more critical for the building principal to be able to “assess and evaluate the impact and perceptions of his leadership” (Kelly, Thornton, & Daugherty, 2005, p. 17). While all principals are engaged in the task of leading schools, according to Parkes and Thomas (2007, p. 207), “they do not all think about or perceive activities the same way.” Parkes and Thomas (2007, p. 207) go on to suggest that “more effective principals utilize various activities as opportunities for instructional leadership and for attainment of the school’s
vision, purpose, and goals.” Crum and Sherman (2008, p. 577) also recognize the stories of effective principals as “insider knowledge” to the craft of educational leadership and to provide windows into better understanding their successful practice. This study will seek to relate these activities to successful student growth by developing a deeper understanding of the instructional and pedagogical leadership practices and perspectives of principals of highly effective schools to determine the relationship, if any, between these practices and student growth, as measured by Value-Added, Ohio’s measure of student progress or growth.

Principals will also have the opportunity to reflect on their own practice through this work, which may provide a deeper understanding of the reasoning and results of decisions about practice, which Bartell (1989) highlights as a means of identifying effective administrative practices. McDaniel and DiBella-McCarthy (2012, p. 669) cite self-reflection as a means through which leaders may find clarity with respect to their own core values, identity, emotions, motives and goals.

Examination of other related factors may also shed further light on the components of effective educational leadership that may benefit student achievement in terms of achievement of growth on Ohio’s Value-Added measure. The educational attainment of the school principal is one factor to consider, as it has traditionally been thought that the higher level of graduate study may be reflective of an individual’s effectiveness in the profession (Jacob, 2012). In addition, the professional trajectory of principals may influence their ability to affect student growth and achievement (Bowers & White, 2014), so the question about what their prior positions have been in the
profession is included in this study. Furthermore, the professional development of principals is a key factor in their ability to deliver effective instructional leadership on the behalf of students, which lends itself to inclusion in this study (Rodriguez-Campos, Rincones-Gomez, & Shen, 2005). This study also explored what kinds of professional development may be most important for principals in affecting positive change for their students and teachers. This study sought to explore the values and beliefs of principals, since according to Harris, Cavanaugh, Reynolds, and Giddings (2004), the values and beliefs of an individual influence that individual’s behavior and guide his work practices and approaches. Bartell (1989, p. 118) cautions against simply developing “lists of what every principal should do to become an instructional leader,” rather, encouraging researchers to explore the subtlety that underlies practice and focus on the beliefs of the principals themselves and the values and meanings they attach to their own behaviors. Bartell (1989) adds that effective administrative practices need to be examined both for the quality of reasoning that goes into decisions about practice and the end result of the decisions themselves. As Tisdell and Taylor (1999) put it, philosophy informs practice. LeSourd and Grady (1990) also found a correspondence of belief with leadership actions. Thus, an exploration of the values and beliefs held by the principals in this study has been included in order to better understand how they may influence the behaviors and work practices of these principals and their perceptions of how they may influence student growth outcomes.
Significance of Study

Leithwood and Mascall (2008) concluded that there is a need for more research aiming to identify forms of distributed leadership capable of improving student achievement using value-added or change-over-time measures. In 2008, Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe identified fewer than 30 studies that have examined the links between leadership and student outcomes, indicating a significant disconnect between practice and theory. This study seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge around the leadership practices that may lead to improved achievement outcomes for students (value-added measures) through the perspectives of the leaders themselves. Many researchers have observed leaders in practice and created theories about those practices that may be most effective; few have asked the leaders themselves what it is that they seem as most impactful in their own practice. This study seeks to implore leaders about these considerations as seen through their own perspectives.

Definition of Terms

**Elementary School**: Ohio school serving students at least through grade 4.

**Highly-Effective Principals**: principals whose buildings were ranked overall as Above Expected Growth or a letter grade of A or B, based on 4th grade OAA scores over a 3-year period (2011-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014).

**Instructional Leadership**: a form of transformational leadership emphasizing the involvement with school change that is uniquely instructional (Mullican & Ainsworth, 1979).
Multi-Method Design: a research methodology combining both quantitative and qualitative research and methods (Creswell, 2009).

Pedagogical Leadership: a form of transformational leadership to improve pupil learning in numeracy and literacy and across the broader curriculum (Webb, 2005).

PIMRS: Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale, a Likert scale developed by Dr. Philip Hallinger to measure educational leadership behaviors of principals, made up of 10 instructional leadership functions or subscales, and 50 items (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985).

Public School: Ohio school, defined as “Not a Community School” in the Ohio Department of Education’s database.

Two-Stage Study: a study in which the researcher begins with a basic question (principal perceptions of leadership behaviors and student growth) through a broad quantitative analysis (the PIMRS via Qualtrics) and then probes specific inquiries through qualitative methods (interviews) as a means of uncovering the subtle processes that underlie expertise in leadership behavior (Hallinger & Heck, 1996).

Value-Added: Ohio’s measure of student progress or growth which provides information on how much a student has learned over time, as measured in grades 4-8 (Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2008).

Research Questions

1. What are effective public elementary school principals’ perceptions of their own instructional leadership behaviors in the following 10 dimensions as measured by the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale:
a. Frame the school goals
b. Communicate the school goals
c. Supervise and evaluate instruction
d. Coordinate the curriculum
e. Monitor student progress
f. Protect instructional time
g. Maintain high visibility
h. Provide incentives for teachers
i. Promote professional development
j. Provide incentives for learning?

2. What is the profile of highly effective principals, including the differences in elementary school principals’ own levels of education and other positions have the principals held?

3. What are the differences in elementary school principals’ leadership practices (transformational, transactional, instructional, pedagogical)?

4. How do these principals develop themselves professionally to enhance their own practice?
Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Theoretical Framework

In most schools, the principal is regarded as the central educational leader and as a result, is the one person who has the most opportunity to exercise leadership in a school (Gurr et al., 2006, p. 371). In an age of increased accountability, teachers and students are continually expected to be more productive and achieve higher goals; thus, principals, as educational leaders, are expected to guide this productivity and learning, as well as be a contributing force in developing and implementing school change, all while still excelling at their daily administrative duties. Principals are expected to be an agent of change in school reform and face increasing pressure to be accountable for all aspects of school improvement and the resulting achievement of students (Marks & Printy, 2003, p. 391).

According to MacNeill et al. (2003, p. 1), the effectiveness of a school in educating students is largely dependent upon the nature of leadership in the school. Further, leadership is a central ingredient—and often even considered the keystone element—in school and district success as defined in terms of student growth and achievement (Murphy & Hallinger, 1988; Leithwood et al., 2004; Marzano et al., 2005, as cited in Murphy, Elliott, Goldring, & Porter, 2007). The role of the principal as one who can both articulate and implement the vision of an effective instructional environment for all students and teachers has developed as an important factor in the success of students (Marsh, 1997; as cited in Mackey et al., 2006). Bowers and White (2014, p. 707) identify instructional leadership as the means through which principals can “lead instructional
improvement throughout their schools,” noting its evolution from the concepts of good management practices and effective schools research (Edmonds, 1979).

Just as there is a need for clarity in the complex role of a public school principal, there is also a need to clarify the leadership style necessary for effective school administration. Leithwood (2004, p. 10) offers the distinction of a transformational approach to leadership, wherein there is an emphasis on emotions and values with the aim of “fostering capacity development and higher levels of personal commitment.” Instructional leadership and transformational leadership are not the same thing (Marks & Printy, 2003), though, and instructional leadership goes deeper than people know (Burch, 2007). While they may work in tandem to complement one another, a principal cannot simply subscribe to one or the other. Rather, what is suggested is a new body of leadership known as integrated leadership. Instructional leadership emphasizes the involvement with school change that is uniquely instructional (Mullican & Ainsworth, 1979). According to Bowers and White (2014, p. 707), principals can “manage the organization, coordinate the core instructional program of the school through setting a vision and mission, focus on aligned and high quality teacher professional development work to build community, and distribute leadership with teachers through instructional leadership.” The leadership apparent in high performing schools is a particular type, which Murphy et al. (2007, p. 179) term “leadership for learning,” “instructionally focused leadership,” or “leadership for school improvement.” Further, as Catano and Stronge (2007) purport, while different types of leadership are necessary in varying
contexts, educational leadership is so unique that it may be considered its own dimension of leadership altogether.

Leadership in schools is essentially a combination of formal and informal leadership, where teachers assume responsibility for leadership under the principal’s guidance (MacNeill et al., 2003). This responsibility has become increasingly valuable and necessary to improving student achievement in recent years. While the accountability era has placed more pressure on building principals to improve student achievement, there is a disconnect between reform policy and the actual instruction that results in the classroom (Nelson, Fairchild, Grossenbacher, & Landers, 2007). These implementation failures often occur as a result of the complex interactions between the proposed change (advocated by policy makers) and “the existing norms, belief systems, and practices of those responsible for implementation in practice” (generally, classroom teachers) (Timperley & Parr, 2007, p. 111). Policy implementation is also construed by agents who construct their own interpretations of the policies (Mangin, 2007). Thus, principals as effective instructional leaders must be prepared to be activists in the realm of policy and begin to become advocates for the best interests of their students and teachers in the policy realm, rather than trying to muddle through the implementation of policy that they may or may not find of value, but is often tied to financial sanctions for the school.

This requires yet another facet of educational leadership, bringing about the need for principals to understand both the management side of implementing policy, as well as how it will impact teaching and learning in the classroom. These understandings must be integrated. Integrated leadership is not simply the balance between transactional and
transformational leadership; this ignores the curricular aspect that is unique to educational leadership. Although they may not have much experience in specific content areas, principals are expected to understand the tenets of quality instruction as well as have sufficient knowledge of the curriculum to know that appropriate content is being delivered to all students (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). Principals must understand high quality teaching and learning and support this process by providing cohesive professional development opportunities. Marks and Printy (2003, p. 371) define shared instructional leadership as the “active collaboration of principals and teachers on curriculum, instruction, and assessment.” In this role as an instructional leader, the principal works in collaboration with teachers to accomplish organizational goals for teaching and learning. Webb (2005, p. 75) affirms this, citing that “instructional leadership assumes that the critical focus of the leader’s attention is the behaviors of teachers as they engage in activities which affect the growth of students.”

Webb (2005) also offers a form of transformational leadership to improve pupil learning in numeracy and literacy and across the broader curriculum, “pedagogical leadership.” In this form of leadership, pedagogical leadership “develops human capital by helping schools to become caring, focused, and communities focused on inquiry where teachers work together as members of a community of practice” (Webb, 2005, p. 76). In this role, school leaders recognize that the learning of students is likely to reflect the learning opportunities available for teachers. In addition, Robinson et al. (2008, p. 665) offer the concept of educational leadership to include “not only the building of collegial teams to do the work of teaching and learning, a loyal and cohesive staff, and
sharing an inspirational vision,” but also the focus of such relationships on very specific pedagogical work for the improvement of teaching and learning on behalf of students. Beyer and Ruhl-Smith (1998, p. 119) emphasize that principals demonstrate that commitment to the school and those who are involved in it through “modeling what it means to be committed to the activities in the learning process and collaboration.”

O’Donnell and White (2005, p. 58) offer a “broad” perspective of instructional leadership that involves all activities that affect student learning, beyond the “narrow” perspective, only involving behaviors that directly affect curriculum, teacher instruction, staff development, and supervision.

While they are the leaders of their buildings, principals do not have to act alone. Much of the recent research and literature on educational leadership suggests that principals are more effective when they do not act in isolation. Spillane, Diamond, and Jita (2003, p. 541) present a model of school leadership not just as a function of what an individual leader knows and does, but as constructed of “the dynamic interaction of multiple leaders and followers and their situation around leadership tasks.” Timperley (2008) suggests that schools are not run by a single person whose role is the delegation of tasks to others, but that leadership is distributed among both those who are formally identified as leaders and those who exercise leadership in more informal ways through a distributed perspective on leadership. A shared leadership model may perhaps have the potential to meet the challenges of the current accountability era (Ylimaki, 2007).

According to Marks and Nance (2007), the principal bears the ultimate responsibility for improved school achievement, but must also work with a variety of groups and teams
within the school and the larger community to achieve this goal. The needs of students and communities are changing and becoming more complex as each school year begins; thus, the ways in which schools meet these needs must evolve as well. Principals, perhaps more out of necessity than anything, must focus on building a professionalized staff of teachers whom they can rely upon to exert leadership in the school. Professionalized teachers are now seen as curriculum experts with a large body of specialized knowledge on teaching and learning to contribute to the school reform process. Sherman and Crum (2007, p. 395) cited the effects of principal leadership that occur indirectly through the principal’s efforts to effectively influence those who are directly involved with the instruction of students (teachers). Furthermore, effective instructional leaders enable those around them and empower teachers to make sound decisions in their classrooms that lead to successful teaching practices and student achievement gains (Sherman & Crum, 2007). While principals are responsible for creating opportunities for this professional interaction to take place, teachers are also responsible for engaging in these opportunities in a productive manner. Principals can have both a direct and an indirect effect on pedagogy and the resulting student achievement, particularly in how they might structure teachers’ working conditions (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004, as cited in Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). They play a critical role in allowing time for teachers to collaborate and for providing ample and meaningful opportunities for job-embedded professional development (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). Principals make the difference in helping teachers to be successful for their students.
Leadership’s Effects on Student Achievement

Principals matter in the learning students do each day at school. Bowers and White (2014) see instructional leadership as a means to lead instructional improvement. Furthermore, Kelley et al. (2005) cite educational leadership as possibly the most important single determinant of an effective learning environment, concluding that “the presence or absence of a strong educational leader can directly influence student achievement (p. 18).” Principals serve a valuable place in the improvement of instruction and learning, as they work as instructional leaders because they have a wider perspective on the systemic whole of a school than one an individual classroom (Printy & Marks, 2006). As Timperley and Parr (2007) found, a focus solely on leadership was not sufficient to change teacher pedagogy for the improvement of student outcomes because leaders were not sufficiently focused on those student outcomes and did not have sufficient [literacy] knowledge. Principals lend cohesion to the curricular framework of a school, as they have a broader perspective of the needs of students and the talents of teachers across the system. This coherence comes in the form of the leader’s ability to involve the whole school in improving the quality of education (Timperley & Parr, 2007).

In addition to their systemic perspective, principals also have detailed knowledge of students’ problems and discipline issues, which can be a critical step in rectifying some of the most severe problems public schools face (VanderJagt et al., 2001).

While principals must act as members of a team, they must also serve as guardians of their school learning community. Principals must protect the mission of their school at all costs, and rightly so, as they face increasing pressure to deliver better
instruction (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). The principal must be committed to the concept that measureable learning is “the central mission of the school” (Ylimaki, 2007, p. 13).

According to Murphy et al. (2007), instructionally anchored leaders ensure that school vision is then translated into specific and measurable results in terms of student growth and achievement. Test scores are not necessarily the only measure of monitoring in a school, though. Murphy et al. (2007) suggest the use of a wide variety of both formal and informal monitoring and data-collection strategies for monitoring student growth. This data, in turn, can then be used as a tool for improving teaching and learning.

Administrators are not only charged with improving test scores and student achievement (Mackey et al., 2006; Mangin, 2007; Marks & Nance, 2007), but are morally obligated to ensure that “every teacher give every student the best education possible every day” (Printy & Marks, 2006, p. 131). Gurr et al. (2006) also identify student outcomes as the key focus of schools in their case study of successful school principalship in nine schools in Victoria, Australia. The bottom line is students’ learning, which is affected primarily through effective teaching (Williams, 2009). Williams (2009) goes on to assert that teachers are charged with improving student achievement. In turn, principals are charged with ensuring that teachers do just this.

Just as principals have the most power in the building to exercise authority when necessary, so do they have the most power to affect pedagogy on a wide scale through support and professional development. According to Mangin (2007, p. 323), resarch indicates that “principal involvement is a significant factor in providing teachers with the kind of comprehensive professional development necessary to promote instructional
change.” Furthermore, Marks & Printy (2003) suggest that the relations of school leadership between principals and teachers contribute to the potential of their active collaboration around instructional matters to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in their schools. To this end, principals and school leaders play a vital role in creating the conditions in schools for improved instruction by teachers (Burch, 2007). Wahlstrom and Louis (2008, p. 483) also cite the significant influence on the quality of pedagogy resulting from instructional leadership that is shared among the teachers and with the principal. Principals create conditions to allow professional learning communities to flourish (Williams, 2009). Further, the effectiveness of teacher leadership is dependent upon principal support (Mangin, 2007). Thus, in order for professional learning communities to work and for genuine adult learning to occur, principals must create the conditions for this to exist through building trust with and among staff, and also by being prepared to uphold the decisions of a PLC. All in all, “principals who demonstrate effective instructional leadership and help at-risk students are able to meet students’ and teachers’ basic/instructional, academic/professional, and affective needs” (Mackey et al., 2006, p. 40). Above all else, effective educational administrators maintain a stringent focus on student learning (Murphy et al., 2007). Borba (2009) concludes that principals must work to ensure that all students have the opportunity to be provided with a quality instructional program each day at school. Empowering teachers through focusing on students’ learning allows school reform to be as bottom-up as possible and top-down as necessary (Williams, 2009).
The link between leadership and student achievement is one that deserves attention because what principals do impacts how students perform. Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) cite that most research has conceptualized the relationship between leadership and student outcomes as “indirect, with leaders establishing the conditions through which teachers make a more direct impact on students” (p. 637). According to Witziers et al. (2003, p. 401), leadership has an indirect influence on student achievement through “the way that it has an impact on school organization and school culture.” Murphy et al. (2007) surmised that the impact of leadership behaviors in terms of valued outcomes is indirect; that is, leaders influence the factors that influence the outcomes. Furthermore, Witziers et al. (2003) found that the effects of school leadership are related to student achievement most directly in primary schools. Bista and Glassman (1998) also reported that particularly in the elementary school, the principal can affect student performance more forcefully and effectively. Burton, Carper, and Wiburn (2011, p. 25) recognize that “while teacher quality is a direct link to student achievement, school leadership serves as a critical indirect link.” For this to occur, though, academic improvement must be the primary focus of school administrators.

Gaziel (2000, p. 25) defines an effective principal as “an instructional leader who affects school climate and student achievement.” The principal’s behaviors and routines create links between the organization and culture of the school and the instructional climate, which affect student achievement (Witziers et al., 2003). Fancera and Bliss (2011, p. 352) cite several ways in which principals can indirectly improve student achievement: defining the school’s mission, managing curriculum and instruction,
supervising teaching, monitoring student progress, protecting instructional time, and addressing the instructional climate. These are very much in line with Hallinger’s (2003, p. 332) theory of shared instructional leadership, which emphasizes the following components: a) a climate of high expectations, innovation, and educational improvement; b) a shared sense of purpose in the school; c) a reward structure that reflects the school’s mission as well as goals set for staff and students; d) a range of activities aimed at intellectual stimulation and the continuous development of staff; and e) pedagogical knowledge and skills.

Fancera and Bliss (2011, p. 352) also provide ways in which principals can indirectly improve student achievement, with their greatest influence over the instructional goals occurring when they establish clear goals for the school. According to Hallinger (2011), research identifies principal instructional leadership as a key factor in instructionally effective schools. Hallinger and Heck (1996) also acknowledge strong administrator effectiveness among those factors that make a difference in student learning. According to Kelly et al. (2005, p. 17), educational leadership is “possibly the most important determinant of an effective learning environment.” McGough (2003) emphasizes that principals are considered critical contributors to superior school operations. Robinson (2007) found that leadership makes a difference to student achievement through its emphasis on clear academic and learning goals. Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2004, p. 49) found a “substantial relationship” between leadership and student achievement. One critical consideration in this impact is that in order to have a positive impact on student achievement, school leaders must focus on
improving key school and classroom practices and have an accurate understanding of the magnitude of change implied by these efforts. According to Sherman and Crum (2007), the focus of all school activity must be to improve student achievement, with the role of the principal as critical for setting this tone.

**Reflective Practice**

A critical facet of a leader’s effectiveness is his own belief in his ability to perform the task of leadership in the first place. According to McCormick (2001, p. 23), effective leaders have “confidence in their own abilities to meet the demands of the leadership situation in which they exist.” This self-confidence is a leader’s self-efficacy—the confidence in one’s own ability to lead. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004, p. 573) define self-efficacy as “a perceived judgment of one’s ability to effect change.” Similarly, McDaniel and DiBella-McCarthy (2012, p. 664) define leadership self-efficacy as “one’s perception regarding one’s capabilities to lead.” Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) found that a school leader’s efficacy can explain significant variations in annual achievement scores and that the efficacy of school leaders arose from the aligned and supported nature of their working conditions. In this way, there is a connection joining successful leadership practices with student learning in schools.

Burton et al. (2011, p. 24) affirm that effective personal interactions among administrators and teachers support “reflective inquiry,” and this self-reflection remains critical to establishing positive outcomes for students in the process of teaching and learning. O’Donnell and White (2005) emphasize that school leaders should take time to reflect on the contexts and systems of their schools in order to ensure that their time is
spent in the most effective manner for the benefit of their students and teachers.

According to Provost, Boscardin, and Wells (2010), principals’ perceptions of their own behaviors are predictors of student achievement. In addition, Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004, p. 573) cite that “what principals do is a direct consequence of what and how they think.” Murphy et al. (2007, p. 194) affirm that effective leaders are more aware of their own values and beliefs; as a result, they may be more reflective regarding their practice and its impact on others in the school and larger community. In this way, they serve as role models for what happens to children in their schools.

**Professional Development for Principals**

There is little research behind professional development for administrators, or even teacher leaders to equip them with the leadership capacity to lead their colleagues. Furthermore, under No Child Left Behind, professional development grant money has been focused for teaching staff development, rather than developing administrative capabilities (Burch, 2007). This has left some distinct needs in professional development for instructional leaders. In a 1989 study of the Westchester Principals’ Center in New York, Hallinger and Greenblatt (1989) found that few district policies or norms that require, encourage, reinforce, recognize, or reward professional development for principals, who are typically seen as the “lead learner” in their buildings. In addition to a lack of priority given to the professional development from districts or state and federal policies, the sheer chaos of many principals’ workdays makes professional development a luxury. A principal’s daily work is comprised of an enormous number of brief tasks many of which are varied, fragmented, and frequently interrupted (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987;
Peterson & Cosner, 2005). There are frequent interruptions from a variety of sources, which undermine principals’ ability to complete tasks. The interactions of principals and their buildings require a range of cognitive complexity and require a great deal of affective intensity (Peterson & Cosner, 2005), so that principals very frequently must “shift gears” in their thinking in order to deal with a myriad of situations or interactions. These factors make the daily tasks of principals incredibly complex, ambiguous, and lead to a high level of uncertainty in the workday. As a result, planning and engaging in professional development may become exceptionally tough for principals. Many administrators also cite the time away from the building as a major deterrent to professional development time. Regardless of the difficulty to fit it in, principals need professional development (Fenwick & Pierce 2002) in order to continue to upgrade their skills to meet the increasing challenges schools face (Rodriguez-Campos et al., 2005). Sergiovanni (1991) suggests that the professional knowledge of educational administrators is crafted in use; professional development can enhance school leaders’ ability to learn from their experiences (Peterson & Cosner, 2005). Furthermore, Rodriguez-Campos et al. (2005, p. 311) purport that when principals are able to improve their professional practice through training, it has “a positive effect on the school environment.”

In order to maximize the professional time principals may spend out of the building developing their own professional practice, Fenwick and Pierce (2002, p. 2) identify three philosophical orientations of the professional development of school administrators: traditional/scientific management, craft, and reflective inquiry. In the
traditional model, the principal is exposed to the research base on management and the behavior sciences to learn the general principles of administrative behavior and rules for organizational effectiveness and efficiency. In this mode, the principal is typically the passive recipient of professional knowledge, stemming from research generated at universities. This traditional mode has typically been generalized, rather than specific to the school context of individual principals, although in recent years, many districts, professional agencies, and other educational entities have created in-service academies and workshops or seminars to address the specific needs of a smaller client base.

The craft model of professional development allows the principal to be trained by other experienced professionals (Fenwick & Pierce, 2002). The principal receives knowledge from other seasoned administrators through shadowing or internships in order to observe how another principal interacts with school personnel and the public, deals with problems, and responds to crises. In the reflective inquiry approach, the principal also has an opportunity to interact with other professionals, but through the uses of networking and mentoring for professional development (Fenwick & Pierce, 2002). In the reflective inquiry mode, principals are encouraged to generate knowledge through a process of systematic inquiry so that they are able to make informed, reflective, and self-critical judgments about their professional practice. Principals are active participants in their learning, and their knowledge comes from self-reflection and engagement in networking and mentoring. Networking involves linking principals for the purpose of sharing concerns and effective practices in order to provide them with the collegial support needed to help them to be more effective school leaders. Whitaker (1997)
identified networking as a practice of effective instructional leaders, allowing them to keep in close contact with their peers on both formal and informal levels and at local, state, and national levels. Similar to networking, the practice of mentoring helps the principal to understand professional norms and expectations from a professional colleague and critical friend. Hallinger and Greenblatt (1989) found that principals often rely on these networks for support and development, through mentors and colleagues, as well as formal organizations and networks. In addition to these components of reflective inquiry, Fenwick and Pierce (2002) cite reading and journaling as fundamental practices in this mode of professional development. Reading and journaling allow principals to read professional literature and other relevant writing to enlighten them about the human condition, leadership, and pedagogy, as well as to engage in reflective writing via journaling. The importance of this reflective practice is also demonstrated in Sergiovanni’s (1991, p. 41) call to “help administrators to become more reflective professionals who are students of their own practice.”

While the academic attainment of principals has not been directly correlated with student achievement levels (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985), it does bear some exploration as a factor that may have an indirect influence on the growth and achievement of students. In a statewide study over a six-year data set in Illinois, Bowers and White (2014) found that principal attendance at a selective graduate degree institution was an important factor significantly related to the rate of state proficiency growth. In addition, Brewer (1993) suggests that the principals matter, particularly in their selection of high quality teachers and their ability to set clear and academically oriented school goals, both of which may
have an important impact on student achievement. A greater level of educational attainment on the part of the principal might help to support both of these factors. Baker and Cooper (2005) report that principals who had more rigorous academic training themselves might better understand the importance of such training. These principals, in turn, would be more likely to seek out teachers who had also undergone similar training and shared similar values and expectations. As Brewer (1993) points out, principals who stress academic excellence may be more likely to select and motivate teachers who are likely to share the drive to carry out this school goal, leading to higher levels of achievement for students. Baker and Cooper (2005, p. 450) also cite Brewer’s (1993) conclusion that “the greater percentage of teachers appointed by a principal with high academic goals, the higher the student test score gains.” Furthermore, the continued educational attainment of the principal serves as a model for the building of a commitment to lifelong learning. In a related study on the effects of teacher educational attainment on student educational attainment, Sanders, Skonie-Hardin, Phelps, and Minnis (1994) concluded that the values teachers exhibit concerning lifelong learning will be passed on to their students through their personal examples and their teaching methods. Educational attainment, then, is an important part of the principal’s influence on student achievement through the selection of high quality teachers who can support the academic goals of the building and the example of lifelong learning it provides for the students and staff.

Effective principals must have a sound understanding of the curriculum, not from just a cursory exposure to it themselves, but by being a part of the development process
from the beginning. As Murphy et al. (2007, p. 185) summarized, “school improvement-centered leaders are knowledgeable about and deeply involved in the school’s curricular program.” They must be as engaged with the material and expectations as teachers, working alongside teachers through the implementation. In this way, they are also able to serve as support resources for new or struggling teachers and have a genuine understanding of how things are supposed to work in the classrooms during supervision or observation. This support, of course, presumes first that the principal is able to provide constructive feedback in order to improve teaching or is capable of designing a system in which someone else might provide this support (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). The principal’s role understanding becomes less of that of supervisor and more of that of a facilitative team member. This is also known as facilitative instructional leadership, where in leadership is recognized in terms of “what it enables others to do, rather than prescribing what others should do” (MacNeill et al., 2003, p. 15) Essentially, the key to successful collaboration is “a laser-like focus on meeting student needs and supporting each other as educational colleagues” (Nelson et al., 2007, p. 66).

**Accountability and Effectiveness**

Hallinger (2005) recognizes the current focus on accountability and performance standards in American education and purports that principals are in the center of this drive to improve student growth and achievement with increased accountability, while facing a heightened expectation that they function as instructional leaders. In their review of empirical research on the principal’s role in school effectiveness, Hallinger and Heck (1996, p. 10) note “the priority of student outcomes as an important goal for school
improvement and point to classroom and school-level variables as the avenues through which principals reach this goal.” Williams (2009) also recognizes this focus on student achievement as the bottom line, while Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) cite the increased pressure on principals to deliver better instruction. Thus, principals are ultimately accountable for improving student performance (Marks & Nance, 2007). Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004, p. 573) see good principals as “the cornerstones of good schools” and view the principal’s leadership efforts to raise student achievement as the key to the success of a school. In this era in which schools face increasing accountability for improving test scores, leaders must take an active role to ensure all students are making positive academic and growth gains (Quattrochi & Chapman, 2010). According to Johnson (1993, p. 339), in order to better understand and improve school effectiveness, research must pay careful attention to “high-quality performance and the relevance of the principal to the attainment of the organization.” Bartell (1990) also suggests that one way to understand what principals do in order to have an impact on instruction is to examine those who are recognized as effective principals and outstanding leaders.

High-quality performance, or effectiveness, in this case, can be measured using Ohio’s Value-Added measure. Value-Added in Ohio has come about as a result of the recent press for higher accountability in public school systems. Misco (2008, p. 11) sees value-added assessment as a response to the end of the statistically possible achievement gains in schools that occurred as a result of No Child Left Behind, changing the unit of analysis from schools and districts to that of individual students. Ohio initially created a standards-based academic accountability system based on student achievement on
statewide assessments (Ohio Achievement Assessments, or OAA) in grades 3-8 and a high school graduation test (Ohio Graduation Test, or OGT) with the passage of Senate Bill 1 in 2001, in compliance with the federal No Child Left Behind Act (Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2008). Using the student achievement data from the OAA, in 2002, Battelle for Kids, a national non-profit organization, created Project Schools’ Online Assessment Reports (SOAR) in partnership with the Ohio Department of Education, which introduced the value-added growth measure to 42 pilot districts in Ohio (Quattrochi & Chapman, 2010). This measure is considered a measure of progress, or growth, which provides information on how much a student has learned over time, rather than a measure of achievement, which measures what students know and can do at a particular point in time (Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2008). In 2003, House Bill 3 made Value-Added part of Ohio law and then Ohio revised its operating standards to included Value-Added for all districts in 2006. In this same year, the first teacher Value-Added reports were generated for those pioneer schools. Following this in 2007, Value-Added was included on the State Report Card for districts and buildings (Quattrochi & Chapman, 2010). Since 2010, Battelle for Kids and the Ohio Department of Education, with the support of federal Race to the Top grant money, have phased in the linkage of value-added data to individual teachers so that this data will be available for 100% of reading and math teachers for grades 4-8 in the 2013-2014 school year (Battelle for Kids, 2014).

The Ohio Value-Added model is based on the SAS Institute’s Education-Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS), also known as the “Sanders model” after its
inventor, William Sanders (Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2008). This model utilizes a multivariate response model (MRM), or the mean gain approach, for this level of value-added reporting, which measures school and teacher gains as compared to a growth standard when tests are uniformly administered in consecutive grades (grades 4-8 in Ohio) (Battelle for Kids, 2011). This student growth data has also become a significant portion of the Ohio Teacher and Principal Evaluation Systems, accounting for up to 50% of these teacher and principal evaluations. In Ohio, Value-Added is now a significant indicator of how schools and districts are supporting the progress of all students; however, some critics of value-added assessment assert that its explanatory power is limited because it is essentially only an estimate of school effect of certain kinds of knowledge (e.g., content knowledge) (Misco, 2008).

According to the Operating Standards for Ohio Schools (Ohio Department of Education, 2010, p. 6), the “value-added progress dimension’ means a measure of academic gain for a student or group of students over a specific period of time that is calculated by applying a statistical methodology to individual student achievement data derived from the state achievement assessment.” Quattrochi and Chapman (2010, p. 7) surmise that value-added assessment “measures the effectiveness of a school and its teachers by using data on individual students’ academic growth over time.” As Jerald (2009) suggests, this data can provide useful diagnostic information on school- or district-level performance. According to the Thomas B. Fordam Institute (2008), by reporting value-added through the compilation of the value-added gain of every student in a school, it is possible to determine whether that school as a whole made sufficient
progress for the year. This focus on student growth, rather than just on levels of absolute achievement or proficiency, broadens the understanding of the part instruction plays in student learning (Hershberg, Simon, & Lea-Kruger, 2004). Also, by following individual students over time, “value-added accounts for student background characteristics over which schools have no control and that have historically tended to bias test results” (Hershberg, et al., 2004, p. 2). The SAS/EVAAS website, the organization responsible for the calculations of Ohio’s Value-Added model, states that this model does not require adjustment of socioeconomic factors (SAS Institute, Inc., 2014), which has traditionally been considered one of the greatest barriers to student achievement in school. In *Misconceptions about Value-Added Reporting in Ohio* (SAS Institute Inc., 2012, p. 2), SAS also acknowledges that the adjustment for socioeconomic or demographic (SES/DEM) characteristics of students is not statistically necessary because EVAAS uses “all available testing history for each individual student and does not exclude students who have missing test data…each student serves as his or her own control, and to the extent that SES/DEM influences persist over time, these influences are already represented in the student’s data.” Thus, where achievement has traditionally been related to a student’s family background, progress measures are not related to a student’s family background (Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2008). Contrarily, though, this use of the individual student as his or her own control may also “ignore the nuances of variables external to the classroom because the data are tied to past performance and can continue to ignore these variables for years” (Misco, 2008, p. 13).
The premise behind Ohio’s Value-Added measure, then, is to determine how schools and teachers are doing in meeting students where they are and growing them in a year’s time. A rating of Above Expected Growth (also indicated by the letter grade of A or B on the Value-Added Measure) indicates that students in a school or district, taken as a group, made greater than expected progress and it is possible to assume that a school or district that is continually rated Above Expected Growth (or A or B) is having a significant impact on its students’ achievement (Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2008). For the purposes of this research, elementary schools who administered the OAA in grade 4 and achieved an overall Value-Added rating of “Above” or A or B for three consecutive years will determine the consideration of a school as “highly effective.”

Additional contrarian evidence regarding Ohio’s Value-Added model does exist, though. In a study of whether building-level factors correlate with grade-level ratings in value-added modeling, Franco and Seidel (2014, p. 30) found that for the schools “where the context of the educational experience differs from the average in the state (e.g., urban schools where building-level characteristics such as demographics and faculty qualifications are at the outer edge of the distribution of schools on which ‘typical school’ estimates are based),” the value-added ratings at the grade level may not be reliably interpretable. The conclusions from this research go on to assert that it is “likely that the educational needs presented by groups of students in some schools contribute to a school effect that is well outside the average schooling effect estimated in the value added model” (Franco & Seidel, 2014, p. 41); however, the researchers in this study did not advocate for an adjustment to the value-added model for socioeconomic factors at the
building level, indicating that it would not be appropriate nor statistically reliable. Thus, there is no reason to believe that such an adjustment could be done effectively based on the data available. As it stands now, although it may be an imperfect reflection of student growth, Ohio’s Value-Added model may be as effective as it can be.

**Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS)**

This research will help to support reflective practice among the principals who participate and those who may benefit from the leadership in the field. The Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) was developed by Dr. Philip Hallinger and has been used in educational leadership research since 1982 as a research tool for scholars to gain a better understanding of the relationship between leadership and learning. Hallinger’s work has been influential on the conceptualization of educational leadership, redefining the concept of educational leadership altogether, according to Wiziers et al. (2003). The PIMRS also clarifies the ambiguity underlying the definition of instructional leadership by defining this aspect of the principal’s role in terms of observable practices and behaviors that principals can implement (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987). Gieselmann (2009) recognizes the PIMRS as the most commonly used instrument in studies that employed an instructional leadership perspective. It has also been cited as the model that has been used most frequently in empirical investigations (Hallinger, 2005). Also, Hallinger and Murphy (1987) indicate that principals who obtain high ratings across the various job functions of the PIMRS are perceived as engaging in instructional leadership behaviors associated with principals in effective schools. O’Donnell and White (2005) suggest that principals should use and reference PIMRS to
conduct a comprehensive self-assessment of their own instructional leadership behaviors. In addition, Grissom and Loeb (2009, p. 21) purport that principal self-ratings reflect an “informational advantage in the sense that principals experience themselves performing the tasks.”

**Conclusion and Summary**

In this chapter, the key literature was presented on the theoretical framework of principal leadership in schools, leadership’s effect on student achievement, reflective practice for leaders, professional development for principals, accountability and effectiveness in schools (including Ohio’s Value-Added model), and the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS). The literature reveals that school leaders face many challenges in today’s schools in terms of working to improve student growth and achievement in the current climate of accountability, taking time to reflect on their own practice and find the time and resources to improve their own leadership through professional development, and employing a balance of leadership styles to benefit their teachers and students. The PIMRS also serves as a means through which principals can reflect on their practice and leadership; thus, it was selected as the research tool for this study.

Contrarian evidence for Ohio’s Value-Added measure was also discussed in this review of literature. While the current EVAAS model of Value-Added measurement has been challenged in some research regarding “typical school” estimates, it was still determined to be as accurate as possible, given all of the current data and is a current legislative reality for schools in Ohio in the current climate of accountability and
assessment. While the model may not be perfect, it is the best that it can be at the current time.

Considering the internal and external factors that affect schools and their leaders, it is important to develop an understanding of those practices of school leaders who are leading successful schools for their students. This research seeks to explore the leadership of principals who have helped their schools to achieve consistent student growth on Value-Added and to understand their own perspectives on their work through their own stories. This study will seek to make a contribution to the greater understanding of effective school leadership through the perspectives and practices of the principals in these schools.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Research Questions

This study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are effective public elementary school principals’ perceptions of their own instructional leadership behaviors in the following 10 dimensions as measured by the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale:
   a. Frame the school goals
   b. Communicate the school goals
   c. Supervise and evaluate instruction
   d. Coordinate the curriculum
   e. Monitor student progress
   f. Protect instructional time
   g. Maintain high visibility
   h. Provide incentives for teachers
   i. Promote professional development
   j. Provide incentives for learning?

2. What is the profile of highly effective principals, including the differences in elementary school principals’ own levels of education and other positions have the principals held?

3. What are the differences in elementary school principals’ leadership practices (transformational, transactional, instructional, pedagogical)?
4. How do these principals develop themselves professionally to enhance their own practice?

**Design of Study**

Hallinger and Heck (1996, p. 36) offer support for what they term “two-stage studies,” in which the researcher begins with the basic question of principal effects on student achievement through a broad quantitative analysis and then probes specific inquiries through qualitative methods as a means of uncovering the more subtle processes that underlie expertise in leadership behavior. LeSourd and Grady (1990) are also proponents of utilizing two data collection procedures, an attitude measurement and a series of open-ended interview questions, in the study of educational leadership. This research followed what Creswell (2009) recognizes as multi-method design, combining both quantitative and qualitative research and methods, in order to better understand the perspectives of the participants.

The research occurred sequentially in two phases in what Creswell (2009, p. 209) describes as a sequential explanatory design (Figure 2).

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*Figure 2. Creswell’s (2009, p. 209) Sequential Exploratory Design.*

Creswell (2009) characterizes this strategy by the collection and analysis of quantitative data (participant responses on the Principal Instructional Management Survey) in the first phase of research; the qualitative data (principal interviews) was
collected and analyzed in a second phase that builds on the results of the initial quantitative results. In this study, participants first responded to a quantitative survey (PIMRS) and then the researcher reviewed their responses to select participants for qualitative interviews in the second phase. In this design, the quantitative data received greater emphasis, or weight, in the study, as it was emphasized first and informed the secondary qualitative data collection, as it was used to identify participants for qualitative data collection in a follow-up phase. The qualitative data was considered the secondary form of data, embedding it within the larger quantitative study and providing a supporting role in the study (Creswell, 2009). Creswell (2009) suggests the use of this design to explain and interpret quantitative results by collecting and analyzing follow-up qualitative data, particularly when surprising or unexpected results arise from the quantitative data in order to examine these results in more detail. In this study, this design was appropriate because it allowed for a deeper understanding of the quantitative survey results provided in the first phase through the interviews conducted in the second qualitative phase. The participants selected for interviews in the second qualitative phase were those who provided surprising or unexpected results (outliers), as well as those who provided responses near the mean, in the quantitative survey phase, which follows the intention of this design provided by Creswell (2009).

In this study, the first phase was the quantitative phase, where the participants were identified through non-random sampling. Participants were selected based upon the overall performance of their school buildings over a sequential three-year period. Sandelowski (2000) also deems this sampling technique as criterion sampling, since this
form of purposeful sampling will occur using the research participants’ scores on preconceived criteria, such as Value-Added scores. In the second phase, qualitative interviews were conducted with participants identified through similar purposeful extreme sampling. As Creswell (2009) concludes, the idea behind this qualitative phase of research is to purposefully select participants that will best help the researcher understand the problem and research question. Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007, p. 287) support this purposeful sampling technique in mixed-methods research, too, suggesting that “the goal of such research is not necessarily to generalize to a population, but rather to obtain insights into a phenomenon or individuals; thus the researcher purposefully selected those individuals for this phase that maximize understanding of the underlying phenomenon.”

**Survey Instrument**

The Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) (Appendix C) was chosen as the evaluation tool for this research study because it has demonstrated a consistent record of yielding reliable and valid data, as evidenced by its use in over 200 empirical studies in 26 countries (Hallinger, Wang, & Chen, 2013). For example, in a quantitative correlational study of 325 middle level educators (both teachers and principals) in Pennsylvania, O’Donnell and White (2005) found that the behaviors assessed using PIMRS within the dimension of promoting the school learning climate did have a positive influence on student test scores. This finding also strengthens what may be the predictive relationship between principal instructional leadership behaviors and student achievement. Furthermore, the PIMRS is grounded in a conceptual framework
that proposes three dimensions in the instructional leadership role (Defines the School Mission, Manages the Instructional Program, and Develops a Positive School Learning Climate) (Hallinger, 2011; Hallinger & Murphy, 1987; Hallinger et al., 2013). These dimensions are then delineated into 10 instructional leadership functions, or subscales, and 50 items. In its development, Hallinger and Murphy explain that the PIMRS generally followed steps prescribed by Lathan and Wexley (1977) for constructing behaviorally anchored rating scales, which rely on descriptions of critical job-related behaviors for the development of scale items. The clusters of similar items are then grouped together to form one overall criterion or behavior observation scale (Latham & Wexley, 1977). According to Hallinger (2011), the rater assesses the frequency with which the principal enacts a behavior or practice associated with that particular instructional leadership function, with each item rated on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (almost never) to 5 (almost always). The instrument is scored by calculating the mean for the items that compose each subscale, resulting in a profile that provides data on perceptions of principal performance on each of the 10 instructional leadership functions (Hallinger, 2011). In a meta-analysis of reliability results, Hallinger et al. (2013) concluded that the Principal Form of the PIMRS demonstrated moderately high to very high reliability, depending on the scale being analyzed, with alpha coefficients at .96 for the whole scale, between .88 and .93 for the three dimension-level subscales, and between .74 and .85 for the 10 function-level subscales. Condon and Clifford (2012, p. 3) define reliability as “a measure of consistency and stability” and affirm that a measure has reliability when “the responses are consistent and stable for each individual who
takes the test.” In a 1985 study, Hallinger and Murphy (pp. 225-226) tested the reliability and validity of the PIMRS using the following five criteria:

1) Content validity—items making up each subscale of the instrument must be relevant to the critical requirements of the job; each item assigned to a subscale achieved a minimum average agreement of .80 among a group of raters.

2) Reliability (Cronbach’s alpha)—subscale achieved a reliability coefficient of at least .75 as a test of the instrument’s internal consistency, ensuring that the instrument would be reliable for both research and evaluation.

3) Validity (analysis of variance)—the subscales should discriminate among principals; variance in principal ratings within schools was, in most cases, less than the variance in ratings of principals between schools at a significance level of .05.

4) Construct validity (subscale intercorrelation)—groups of items within a subscale correlated more strongly with each other than with other subscales.

5) Construct validity (documentary support)—an analysis of school documents related to the instructional management behavior of the principals generally yielded instructional management profiles similar to those obtained with the questionnaire.
In this study, Hallinger and Murphy (1985) determined that each of the PIMRS subscales met the tenants of reliability and validity across the board, except for Promoting Professional Development and Enforcing Academic Standards, which did not meet the standard set for validity (analysis of variance).

In comparison to other assessments of principal performance, the PIMRS was selected for several reasons. Condon and Clifford (2012) conducted a scan to review publicly available measures intended to evaluate principal performance. In their review, they limited the school principal performance assessments to those that were psychometrically sound, meaning that the instrument had been tested for validity and reliability using accepted testing measures; with a minimum reliability rating of 0.75; and could demonstrate that content validity and/or construct validity testing had occurred (Condon & Clifford, 2012). The PIMRS met each of these requirements to be included in their review. Condon and Clifford (2012) highlight its wide use in the field and note that the content validity of the PIMRS is based on a review of the instructional leadership literature, and the content is validated through extensive expert review. According to this review, the content validity was rated at .80 for each item in the scale. Condon and Clifford (2012, p. 3) state that content validity “is established by ensuring that the test items under consideration measure all of the dimensions or facets of a given construct…can be established by linking the test or other items to a set of standards or practices.” Furthermore, Condon and Clifford (2012) add that construct validity is shown in the PIMRS by higher correlations among items within a subscale than for the same items for other subscales and rate the reliability at .75. Construct validity, according to
Condon and Clifford (2012, p. 3) is determined by “the degree to which the test items meet a ‘construct,’ which is the element that the items purport to assess.” Other instruments cited in the review by Condon and Clifford (2012) were Vandenberghe’s (1988) Change Facilitator Style Questionnaire, which measures the extent to which leaders can facilitate change; Ebmeier’s (1992) Diagnostic Assessment of School and Principal Effectiveness, which measures the strengths of schools and their leaders so that school improvement plans and principal professional development goals would be better informed; Larsen’s (1987) Instructional Activity Questionnaire, which specifically addresses instructional leadership aspects of principals’ work; Kouzes and Posner’s (2002) Leadership Practices Inventory, a measure of general leadership practices; Knoop and Common’s (1985) Performance Review and Improvement System for Education, which examines principal capacity to improve school-level systems; Leithwood and Montgomery’s (1986) Principal Profile, which is an interview-based assessment technique that measures leadership effectiveness on certain tasks and characterizes leadership style; and Porter, Murphy, Goldring, and Elliot’s (2006) Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education, which is a tool to be administered to principals, teachers, and principals’ supervisors to produce a quantitative diagnostic profile. The research in this case, though, is focused on the perceptions of principals’ own leadership behaviors. The PIMRS is rooted in the conceptual framework of instructional leadership and is available in a principal form, making it appropriate for use as a self-evaluation tool. Its wide use and strong reliability and validity also make it the preferable choice for the purposes of this research.
Participants

In the quantitative phase, participants were identified as those principals working in public (defined as “Not a Community School” or “Public School” in the Ohio Department of Education’s database) elementary schools (serving students at least through grade four) in Ohio that have shown consistent performance in student growth based upon the Value-Added growth measure. The use of the Ohio Department of Education’s Value-Added measures determined those cases where schools have experienced consistent success over at least a three-year period (2011-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014), rated as either A or B or “Above” on their overall Value-Added measures. In order to select the school buildings for participation, the researcher obtained a list of all 4th grade Value-Added scores for every public school in Ohio over the three-year period and then filtered the list to reflect only those buildings that met the criteria of “Above,” A, or B. This subsample of schools comprised the list of schools to be included in the study, wherein a census of the subsample was performed, as an invitation to participate was extended to all of the principals whose schools met the criterion. All participants were over the age of 21. Gender and race were not criteria in the selection, since participation was based on the Value-Added score. Most will have worked for at least one year and have obtained at least a bachelor’s and/or master’s degree or higher and administrative license. Currently, Ohio Administrative Code requires that in order to be granted a professional administrative license, an individual must hold a master’s degree from an accredited university, complete an approved principal preparation program and receive the recommendation of the dean or head of teacher education at the university,
successfully complete an examination prescribed by the state board of education, and have two years of successful teaching experience at the age/grade levels for which the principal license is sought (Ohio Department of Education, 2014). In some cases, principals in Ohio may also work under alternative, provisional, or permanent licenses or certificates, depending upon when and how they originally obtained licensure.

The researcher obtained the Public School Contact Information spreadsheet from the Ohio Department of Education website, containing the e-mail addresses and contact information for all public school principals in the state of Ohio. This spreadsheet was sorted to include only those schools that met the Value-Added criteria. Any e-mail addresses that were omitted were obtained directly from the respective school districts’ websites if available, or obtained via telephone calls to the schools if not accessible online.

In addition, the districts identified for participation in the study fall within every category of the Ohio Department of Education’s School District Typology (Ohio Department of Education, 2013), ensuring a cross-sectional representation of the general population (Figure 3).
The researcher crosschecked the 352 selected school districts with the School District Typology data to ensure that each major grouping and category was represented in the sample. The Ohio Department of Education initially created this typology for public school districts in 1996 to provide a consistent way in which to group like districts together. According to the Ohio Department of Education’s document “Methodology and Descriptors for the 2013 School District Typology,” the current analysis uses the latest figures from the 2010 census, as well as the Ohio Department of Taxation and December 2012 Ohio Department of Education statistical reports to place districts within four major groupings (rural, small town, suburban, urban), and then further classify them into eight typology classifications (two within each major grouping and one additional classification for five “Special Districts” with special circumstances), reflecting their
school poverty (percentage of students flagged as economically disadvantaged) and student population numbers, within the major groupings (Ohio Department of Education, 2013). In this study, consideration of the school district typology is important to ensure that the perspectives of principals working in all settings across Ohio are included, as Johnson (1993) supports the acquisition of perceptions from across geographical regions as a means of minimizing the danger of distinctive circumstances influencing the results of perceptual data. Using the database information from the Ohio Department of Education, these principals were identified and contacted via e-mail in order to gain their consent for participation in the study, as approved by the Ohio University Institutional Review Board (IRB) on April 7, 2014, and amended on June 4, 2015 (Appendix E).

In the second qualitative phase of research, the researcher examined the participants’ quantitative responses on the PIMRS and again used purposeful extreme case sampling (Creswell, 2009) to determine those to interview in follow-up interviews to further explore the self-reported perceptions of the participants. The researcher examined the frequency with which the participants responded with their perceptions of their own behavior on the PIMRS items in order to select the interviewees. This took place following the completion of the surveys. The researcher was seeking those whose responses on the PIMRS were of particular interest (those whose responses are similar to other participants, as well as those who have notably different responses, as gleaned from the survey data). The researcher interviewed three participants (outliers at each extreme end, as well as one in the middle), in the interest of time and cost of conducting the interviews. It was predicted that the survey responses would result in clusters of
participants around frequencies of responses. From these clusters, the researcher chose participants to interview from each outlying end, as well as one in the middle. The principals selected for interviews were from varying geographical locations around the state as well, one in central Ohio, one in southern Ohio, and one in the northeastern region of the state. The districts where the principals worked also varied in their Ohio School District Typologies, including rural, small town, and urban with average to high poverty and very small to average student population. In order to maintain confidentiality and protect the identities of the participants, the researcher assigned pseudonyms to the participants selected for interviews: Alan, Amanda, and Richard. Alan’s score yielded the lowest overall mean. He is a male principal at an elementary school that serves 575 students in kindergarten through 5\textsuperscript{th} grade. His school is situated in southern Ohio and is considered rural with average poverty and a very small student population. Amanda’s overall score fell closest to the mean. Her school serves 775 students in central Ohio and is classified as an urban school with high poverty and an average student population. Richard was the principal whose overall score was the highest. His school serves 259 students in the northwest region of Ohio and is classified as small town with high poverty and an average student population.

There was at least one initial interview of each participant and the possibility of at least one follow-up interview via phone or e-mail. In this phase, the researcher was seeking what Patton (2002) terms as “illuminative cases,” where in the interest of limited resources and time, the researcher sought to examine those cases from which he could learn the most and selects those cases for study. This study also lent itself to an emergent
design (Patton, 2002), as it was not possible to determine which participants would be interview candidates until the first phase of quantitative data collection and analysis had been completed and was able to help to guide the selection of participants for the second qualitative phase of study. After the first interview was completed, the researcher intended to evaluate the responses from the participant to determine whether the information obtained from the interview was aligned with the intended outcomes of the research. From there, the researcher was able to make any necessary adjustments to the interview format to continue with the interview process.

**Data Collection Procedures**

To accomplish the objectives of this study, the PIMRS was distributed to participants via e-mail. The researcher sent an initial invitation to participate, or prenotice letter (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009), including a summary of the research project and rationale for the selection of the participants, as well as to provide participants with the opportunity to ask questions or gain more information about the study via e-mail or telephone call. The timeline for the collection of data was such that it would take place early in the summer after school was out in June and most principals would be in their offices working to complete the previous school year’s business, but before most principals left for vacation time, traditionally in July, when there is generally also a lull in interviewing, hiring, and preparing for the next school year in August. The survey invitation was initially sent to principals on June 8, 2015 (Appendix A), with three follow-up reminders via e-mail, following Dillman et al.’s (2009) method of reminders,
in an attempt to collect as many responses as possible before many principals began summer vacation in July, utilizing the following follow-up techniques:

1. If the survey was not completed within 14 days after the initial e-mail, a reminder e-mail was sent via Qualtrics to non-respondents as a friendly reminder (June 22, 2015). A brief explanation of the research was included as a reminder invitation.

2. After 7 days, a second follow-up reminder was sent to non-respondents via an e-mail link in Qualtrics (June 29, 2015). Included in the second reminder was another brief explanation of the research to serve as a reminder for participants and emphasize the value of their participation.

3. A third and final e-mail reminder was sent on July 6, 2015 to any remaining non-respondents in a final effort to garner responses. The e-mail also included a brief reminder explanation of the research and an emphasis on the value of the participants’ responses in the completion of the research.

It was determined that the survey would be closed on July 13, 2015, finalizing any opportunity for further responses. The waves of survey responses returned occurred over six weeks total (Table 1).
Table 1.

Survey Response Waves

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If they chose to participate, the principals received the PIMRS via an e-mail link to complete (which should have taken approximately 20-30 minutes). Permission to use the PIMRS for this study was obtained from Dr. Philip Hallinger via e-mail correspondence in April 2015 (Appendix D), and requires that a copy of the data set and a soft file copy of the completed study be returned to Dr. Hallinger for further instrument development.

The PIMRS is divided into two parts. Part one of the principal version of the PIMRS asks participants for the name of the district and school, number of school years as principal at the school, total number of years as a principal, and gender. Part two of the PIMRS instrument is scored on a Likert-type scale of 1 to 5 for each five individual behavior statement items within the 10 instructional leadership subscales (framing school goals, communicating school goals, supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating curriculum, monitoring school progress, protecting instructional time, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, promoting professional development, and providing incentives for learning), indicating the frequency with which the specific
behavior is performed by the participant. For each of the items, participants rated
themselves, where 1=Almost Never and 5=Almost Always.

In the second phase, the interviews were conducted face-to-face at mutually
agreed-upon sites and may have included some follow-up questions via telephone or e-
mail for further investigation. The interviews lasted 45 minutes to just over an hour. The
qualitative interviews were based upon the responses provided on the PIMRS and also
included several unstructured, open-ended questions intended to elicit the views and
opinions from the participants (Creswell, 2009) about their responses on the PIMRS and
their own leadership behaviors. LeSourd and Grady’s (1990, p. 114) interview questions
used in their research on principals’ descriptions of their leadership served as a basis for
the interview questions in this research inquiry (Figure 4). LeSourd and Grady (1990)
developed these questions in order to provide respondents with an opportunity to generate
and elaborate meanings of their own choosing using “nondichotomous questions
expressing a single idea” (p. 112).
How would you describe yourself as a principal?

Tell me about your responsibilities as a principal.

What do you expect of yourself as a principal?

How do you tell if you’re a good principal?

What makes a good principal?

How would you describe your school?

Tell me about your leadership in the school.

How are decisions made in your school?

How would you describe your influence in your school?

How would other people describe you as a principal?

*Figure 4. LeSourd and Grady's (1990, p. 114) Interview Questions.*

The researcher contacted each selected participant via e-mail to ask if they would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview to their survey responses. None of the principals were informed of the level of their scores on the PIMRS; rather, they were invited to participate simply based on the results of the survey. One principal responded via e-mail, while the researcher had to follow up with phone calls to the other two principals in order to successfully schedule interviews with them. In each instance, the researcher scheduled a time immediately after the school day ended for each of the participants and met each of them at their school building to conduct the interviews. Before arriving at each site, the interviewer sent a reminder to the participants about the time of the interview via e-mail or text message. Because the participants were chosen
based upon their PIMRS responses, the interviews were emergent in nature, seeking to illuminate their perspectives on their leadership practices as reflected on the quantitative survey. Creswell (2009, p. 179) also identifies the advantages and limitations of this form of qualitative research. Advantages include allowing the researcher control over the line of questioning and the participants being able to provide historical information. Limitations of qualitative interviews include the reality that not all people are equally articulate and perceptive, the provision of information in a designated place rather than the natural field setting, and the consideration that the researcher’s presence may bias responses.

The researcher conducted the interviews in the winter (November-January) when principals’ pressing professional obligations were at a slight lull after the fall administration of testing and before spring semester began. The interviews lasted 40 minutes to one hour and took place over four weeks to allow time for follow-up. The follow-up interviews were conducted in order to further understand and elaborate the responses of at least two outliers and one typical case (Patton, 2002). Interviews were recorded digitally using a recording device, and the data was stored on a password-protected computer drive. The researcher conducted the first interview with Amanda, which served as a pilot. After reviewing her responses in the pilot, the researcher determined that the questions did not need to be altered, but had further questions about several managerial aspects (scheduling of specials for teacher collaboration time and length of the school day at her school), as well as further elaboration about her perceptions of her leadership style (transformational, transactional, pedagogical,
instructional) that were not explicitly addressed in the first interview session. She responded within five days and provided further elaboration to the researcher’s questions. Since the original questions were not altered, the first interview served as an inclusive pilot and was included in the results. In the next two interviews of Alan and Richard, the interviewer made a note to inquire about those aspects of their work and did not need to conduct further follow-up after their interviews.

In order to maintain the confidentiality of the participants, their names were protected with pseudonyms. Interview data was transcribed by a transcriptionist and organized to identify common patterns and themes based on the important words, phrases, and sentences from participants. The interview transcripts were also shared with the participants to allow them an opportunity to review their responses for the purpose of member checking via e-mail. Any discrepancies or changes to the transcripts were noted by the researcher and addressed before the coding process began. The interview data and notes were stored on a password-protected computer drive. The identifiable data will be destroyed within six months of the completion of the defense of the dissertation.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

Data were analyzed at the completion of each phase of the research. The quantitative data collected in the first phase was collected via Qualtrics in the e-mail link sent to principals. Once this data had been collected over the four-week window (June-July 2015), the data were analyzed using SPSS software to find the frequency of each response item and to infer whether there is a correlation between the frequency of that
particular leadership attribute/practice and the effectiveness of educational leadership on student growth outcomes.

After gathering the participants’ responses on the PIMRS via the Qualtrics electronic survey from June to July 2015, the researcher was able to begin the data analysis process in SPSS with the support of the faculty methodologist. After collecting their responses via Qualtrics, the researcher downloaded the responses to SPSS and worked with the faculty methodologist in order to complete the analysis of the quantitative data in SPSS, which was organized into tables in chapter 4. The researcher then used the results of the quantitative data analysis to determine the mean of participants’ responses to the PIMRS and identify three principals to contact for interviews. This analysis took place near the end of October 2015.

The second phase of the research followed the quantitative analysis, wherein the survey data from the PIMRS was used to highlight any statistical significance among the experiences and perceptions of the principals. The qualitative interview data was transcribed by a transcriptionist and then organized and assembled into themes, as they emerged as common to or deviating from the participants’ transcripts. The qualitative data codes were also based upon the 10 instructional leadership subscales of the PIMRS, in order to harmonize the study’s conceptual framework and to enable an analysis that directly addressed the research questions and goals (Saldaña, 2013, p. 62) (Appendix F). The editing and analysis of the data followed Saldaña’s (2013) elemental method for descriptive coding, summarizing in a short word or phrase the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data. The participants’ identities were protected by using a list of pseudonyms
for their names. The code list was stored on the researcher’s password-protected personal computer and backed up on a password-protected flash drive. The data will be destroyed within six months of the completion and defense of the dissertation. The qualitative results of the interview data were incorporated into a comprehensive description of the perceptions of the principals being studied in conjunction with their responses on the PIMRS.

**Role as Researcher**

Considering my role as the researcher in this study, particularly in the qualitative phase, required some self-reflection upon how I situate myself in the research. First of all, I have worked in public education for 13 years, first as a high school teacher for eight years, and most recently as an intermediate (two years) and elementary (three years) school principal for the past five years. I currently work as an elementary school principal in a K-4 building. My daily work is centered around the same practices upon which I am asking my participants to reflect. I also have familiarity with Ohio’s Value-Added model, as it is a part of my own building and district report card ratings, as well as part of my own professional evaluation. I hope to improve my own professional practice as a result of this research.

My perceptions of instructional and pedagogical leadership have been shaped by my own education and experiences. I have earned a bachelor of arts in English with a double-minor in African & African-American Studies and Education, Schooling, & Society. I also completed additional coursework in order to obtain my teaching license. My master’s of education degree is in Educational Administration, with which I also
obtained my principal’s license. I have completed coursework toward my doctorate in education in Educational Administration, including completion of the additional coursework to obtain my superintendent’s license. I have studied educational leadership in all of my graduate work and have knowledge of the practices and processes involved in instructional and pedagogical leadership. In addition to my work experience in public education and my own educational attainment, I have lived in Ohio for the majority of my life, leaving only to go to Indiana for my undergraduate work. I attended a parochial elementary school and public middle and high schools myself, but all of my professional work experience as an educator has been in public schools.

While I am a public elementary school principal myself, I do not have any personal connection or acquaintance with any of the participants in my research. We may share similar professional experiences through our work, but I do not know any of them personally. My own school and district are not included in the study. I expected to maintain neutrality in my research (Patton, 2002), with no intention of proving a particular perspective, but rather to understand and learn from multiple perspectives.

Limitations and Delimitations

One of the most significant limitations of the research instrument, the PIMRS, is the reliance on the self-reported perceptual data from the principals themselves. Hallinger and Murphy (1985) acknowledge this limitation of the instrument, particularly in its use for self-reporting, since perceptions are not evidence of actual behavior and can be affected by rating error. Additionally, the questionnaire data do not provide a measure of the effectiveness of the principals’ behavior, just the frequency with which the raters
perceive the behaviors to be performed. Furthermore, according to Hallinger’s PIMRS Manual Version 2.2, principal self-assessment using the PIMRS taken alone may not provide a valid picture of principal instructional leadership. This is because some principals tend to overestimate their role behavior, while others underestimate the degree of leadership exercised in a particular domain. Hallinger (2013) goes on to suggest, though, that in particular, new and some highly effective principals tend to under-rate their performance on the scale.

The delimitations of this research study are those factors that the researcher can control, based on the choices the researcher makes in conducting the study. One delimitation of the study is the choice of which participants to include for interviews. Based on the limited resources of financial costs and time, the researcher had to travel to the participants for the interviews, as well as to allow for the potential for additional travel for any follow-up interviews if necessary. Another delimitation of the study is the control of the selection of the potential pool of participants for the study. Rather than including every principal in the state as part of the pool of potential participants, the researcher has chosen to narrow the pool to include only those who work in public elementary school settings and who meet the specific criteria of Value-Added measures, since this research seeks to illuminate the experiences of those principals in this setting. The researcher chose to focus specifically on elementary principals because fourth grade is the first point at which Value-Added data is available, making it an important baseline for future academic growth for students. Additionally, as noted in the researcher’s role, the researcher is relatively new to the elementary setting and in the interest of improving
her own professional practice, the researcher is interested in learning more about the perspectives of public elementary school principals.
Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion of Data

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of highly effective principals and what they report themselves doing to improve pedagogy and student growth through their leadership practices and behaviors. The results of this study, organized around four research questions, are presented in this chapter.

Participants

The survey was sent in June 2015 to 352 Ohio public school principals, whose e-mail addresses were publicly available in the Ohio Department of Education Ohio Education Directory System (OEDS) in the spring of 2015 (date last updated at retrieval was 12/15/14). Of those e-mails sent, six e-mails bounced back as undeliverable, 129 participants responded and started the survey, and 57 survey responses were usable and valid, yielding a successful response rate of 16%.

In order to determine those participants to invite for follow-up interviews in the second phase of the research, the researcher analyzed the overall descriptive statistics (Table 1) to identify the participants whose responses were closest to the minimum (2.64), maximum (4.98), and overall mean (4.13).

Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Descriptive Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using the standard deviation of .478, the lowest score of 2.64 fell within three standard deviations below the mean, while the highest score was within two standard
deviations above the mean (4.98). Through the use of purposeful extreme case sampling (Creswell, 2009), the researcher interviewed three participants (outliers at each extreme end, as well as one in the middle), in order to obtain the perspectives of principals who represented each extreme, as well as a perspective that represented the score closest to the mean. Through this employment of purposeful extreme case sampling, the researcher intended to identify a cross-sectional representation of the sample across the extremes and close to the mean. In the interest of limited time and resources, the researcher determined that interviewing these three participants would provide the perspectives being sought, allowing for the lowest, highest, and closest to the middle perspectives to be represented through these three cases. This also allowed for the researcher to make comparisons between the principals’ responses to highlight any similarities and differences in their practices.

Alan’s responses yielded the lowest mean score (2.64). His school is situated in southern Ohio and is considered rural with average poverty and a very small student population. Amanda’s overall score fell closest to the mean (4.12). Her school is located in central Ohio and is classified as an urban school with high poverty and an average student population. Richard was the principal whose overall score was the highest (4.98). His school is in the northwest region of Ohio and is classified as small town with high poverty and an average student population.

Interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes to just over an hour and were conducted in the months of November 2015 through January 2016 at each participant’s school after school hours. Participants were not informed of their overall PIMRS score as
the basis for their invitation for an interview, just that they were selected based on their responses, so they were not aware of where their scores fell in the overall continuum of participant responses. The researcher did contact one of the participants (Amanda) via e-mail for further elaboration on her responses after the first interview, which allowed the researcher to make adjustments to the interview guide in the completion of the following interviews with Alan and Richard. The researcher did not need to contact them for additional follow-up after their first interview session. Interview data was transcribed and coded according to Saldaña’s (2013) descriptive coding method (Appendix F). Codes were determined using the themes of the 10 subscales of the PIMRS (frame the school goals=FR, communicate the school goals=CM, supervise and evaluate instruction=SE, coordinate the curriculum=CC, monitor student progress=SP, protect instructional time=PT, maintain high visibility=VI, provide incentives for teachers=IT, promote professional development=PD, and provide incentives for learning=IL), as well as from the themes that emerged from the responses participants provided based on LeSourd and Grady’s (1990) interview questions (Figure 4), which included building relationships (RL), Value-Added (VA), leadership (LD), and teacher (TE).

According to the data collected from the participants, 20 were male (35%) and 37 were female (65%) (Table 2). The participants interviewed in the second phase were male (two) and female (one).
Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants’ years of experience in the position of principal spanned from one year (11%), 2-4 years (32%), 5-9 years (19%), 10-15 years (19%), and more than 15 years (19%) (Table 3). The principals who participated in interviews indicated that they had total years of experience ranging from 2-4 years (two) and 5-9 years (one). Alan, the principal with the lowest overall mean, had been a principal the longest, while Amanda and Richard, the principals with the median and highest mean scores, had the fewest number of years of experience as a principal.

Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number of Years as Principal</th>
<th>1 year</th>
<th>2-4 years</th>
<th>5-9 years</th>
<th>10-15 years</th>
<th>More than 15 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N=57.

Participants also reported their tenure as principal in their current building as one year (14%), 2-4 years (46%), 5-9 years (21%), 10-15 years (14%), and more than 15 years (5%) (Table 4). Of the participants interviewed in the second phase of the research, Alan had been at his current building for 10 years, Amanda had been at her building for
five years, and Richard was in his first year at his building, but had been at his previous building in the same school district for three years.

Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Years as Principal at Current School</th>
<th>1 year</th>
<th>2-4 years</th>
<th>5-9 years</th>
<th>10-15 years</th>
<th>More than 15 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N=57.*

**Research Question 1**

The first research question asked principals to consider their instructional management behaviors in the ten domains of the PIMRS. What are effective public elementary school principals’ perceptions of their own instructional leadership behaviors in the following 10 dimensions as measured by the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale:

a. Frame the school goals
b. Communicate the school goals
c. Coordinate the curriculum
d. Supervise and evaluate instruction
e. Monitor student progress
f. Protect instructional time
g. Maintain high visibility
h. Provide incentives for teachers
i. Promote professional development

j. Provide incentives for learning?

The overall mean for each of the 10 dimensions of leadership in the PIMRS was calculated and organized by subscale (Table 6). The dimension with the highest overall mean was that of framing the school’s goals (4.45), indicating that this was the dimension of leadership that the principals who responded to the survey most frequently practice in their leadership. Contrarily, the dimension of providing incentives for teachers was reported with the lowest overall mean (3.74) by the principals, suggesting that the items in this dimension are practiced least often by those principals who participated in the survey.
Table 6.

**Overall Descriptive Statistics by PIMRS Dimension**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PIMRS Dimension</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frame the School Goals</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>.566</td>
<td>.320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate the School Goals</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>.703</td>
<td>.495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervise &amp; Evaluate Instruction</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>.568</td>
<td>.379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinate the Curriculum</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>.616</td>
<td>.327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor Student Progress</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>.572</td>
<td>.327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protect Instructional Time</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>.505</td>
<td>.255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain High Visibility</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>.678</td>
<td>.459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Incentives for Teachers</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>.833</td>
<td>.694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote Professional Development</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>.572</td>
<td>.327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Incentives for Learning</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>.778</td>
<td>.606</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N=57.*

**Frame the school goals.**

In the area of framing the school goals, principals reported that they use data on student performance when developing the school’s academic goals most frequently (4.70), while they reported use of a needs assessment or other formal or informal methods to secure staff input in goal development least often (4.17) (Table 7).
Table 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frame the School Goals</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop a focused set of annual school-wide goals</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>.732</td>
<td>.536</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frame the school’s goals in terms of staff responsibilities for meeting them</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>.714</td>
<td>.510</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use needs assessment or other formal and informal methods to secure staff input or goal development</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>.833</td>
<td>.684</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use data on student performance when developing the school’s academic goals</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>.706</td>
<td>.499</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop goals that are easily understood and used by teachers in the school</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>.596</td>
<td>.355</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N=57.

In the area of framing the school goals, the interviewees offered contrasting perspectives on the manner in which they carry out the practice of framing the school goals with their teachers and schools, as evidenced in the following comments:

- Alan: “We haven’t taken that extra step. That’s where we need to get to. We just started. We have an older staff, for the most part. They’re used to just coming in, shut your door and teach. That’s what we do. Accountability’s new for them. We’re trying to take these accountability pieces, which you can set goals from, and do all those good things. It’s different for them.”

- Amanda: “This is the piece you have to have go with it. The Value-Added piece came from working with the staff about their instructional practices and
what they are really trying to teach kids and how they were teaching them…Here’s what I expect. Now, they’re talking to kids. The whole instruction’s changing because we found out the kids don’t know vocabulary.”

- Richard: “There is something about [school district] that even though nobody tells you, you pick up from day one that there’s a lot of high expectation in this district. You either at that point decide, okay, I’m going to go above and beyond to surpass those expectations or you’re not going to end up in [school district] very long.”

**Communicate the school goals.**

In communicating the school goals, the factor principals reported themselves doing most frequently was developing goals that are easily understood and used by teachers in the school (4.58), while the practice they reported least often was ensuring that the school’s academic goals are reflected in highly visible displays in the school (3.23) (Table 8).
Table 8.

**Communicate the School Goals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop goals that are easily understood and used by teachers in the school</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>.596</td>
<td>.355</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate the school's mission effectively to members of the school community</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>.904</td>
<td>.816</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss the school's academic goals with teachers at faculty meetings</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>.675</td>
<td>.456</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refer to the school's academic goals when making curricular decisions with teachers</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>.710</td>
<td>.504</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that the school's academic goals are reflected in highly visible displays in the school (e.g., posters or bulletin boards emphasizing academic progress)</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>1.210</td>
<td>1.465</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refer to the school's goals or mission in forums with students (e.g., in assemblies or discussions)</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>1.164</td>
<td>1.356</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N=57.*

The principals emphasized an unstructured approach to communication of school goals with school and community members and families, as demonstrated in the following comments from their interviews:

- Alan: “I’d say still developing [communication of school goals]…It’s another step that we need to take because it’s just a new way of operating business. I think
it was there in the past for some schools and stakeholders and how you get them involved. One issue that we have in our area as far as stakeholders...most are farming types. We don’t have a lot of businesses, so when you’re trying to get businesses involved in the community, that’s a hard piece for us to get to...It’s a piece that I think we need to continue to work on...We have the school messenger system...Between me and you, I’ve slacked a little bit there.”

- Amanda: “A lot of it with my parents is through PTA. A lot is through PTA and then we write a monthly newsletter. I try to talk about what we’re doing in a classroom but also most of my staff send out a weekly newsletter. We’re big into the ‘I can…’ statements or the learning targets in the look for’s. That has moved us more with communicating what our goals are for our standards...Through our principals’ meetings, we go to various things to where you can share with people what your vision is for the school, how you run the school.”

- Richard: “In both buildings I’ve been at, most of it is just getting parents to understand the day-to-day stuff...We really don’t communicate a whole lot other than my teachers are very good when it comes to conference time, or if a parent wants a meeting, being able to break that stuff [data] down and go through it with them. When it comes to the academic side of things, then that’s when that becomes more of those one-on-one meetings where you’re talking with it and going over it, versus a mass communication is more of just the management part of it.”
Supervise and evaluate instruction.

In the area of supervising and evaluating instruction, participants most frequently indicated that they both ensure that the classroom priorities of teachers are consistent with the goals and directions of the school (4.49) and point out specific strengths in teacher’s instructional practices in post-observation feedback (4.49); they reported that they review student work products when evaluating classroom instruction least often (4.07) (Table 9).
Table 9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervise and Evaluate Instruction</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that the classroom priorities of teachers are consistent with the goals and directions of the school</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>.630</td>
<td>.397</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review student work products when evaluating classroom instruction</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>.799</td>
<td>.638</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct informal observations in classrooms on a regular basis (informal observations are unscheduled, last at least 5 minutes, and may or may not involve written feedback or a formal conference)</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>.758</td>
<td>.574</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point out specific strengths in teacher’s instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>.658</td>
<td>.433</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point out specific weaknesses in teacher instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>.747</td>
<td>.558</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N=57.*

The area of supervising and evaluating instruction was an area where the three principals who were interviewed differed in their responses. When reflecting upon how they supervise and evaluate instruction, the three principals who responded in interviews noted how they view this aspect of their practice in their comments below:
• Alan: “Well, it’s just a tough piece to approach with a teacher, to be honest with you…It’s something that I have to get better at doing.”

• Amanda: “I’ve had more people leave my office crying this year. It’s not because I’m mean. It’s that they’re developing and they want to be skilled…I said they’re developing across the board right now and they just feel like failures but they’re not.”

• Richard: “I’ve only had one teacher in four years that has not met that expectation. Everybody else has. In fact, I was talking to my superintendent…through the OTES process. I said, ‘One of my goals…is to figure out who are my go-to people in this place and how to match tasks to their strengths…’ We have a checklist of things that we look for…That’s part of my responsibilities, making sure that my teachers are doing that, that they’re consistent with it.”

**Coordinate the curriculum.**

When coordinating the curriculum, the principals surveyed most often draw upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions (4.46), but they least often assess the overlap between the school’s curricular objectives and the school’s achievement tests (4.09) and participate actively in the review of curricular materials (4.09) (Table 10).
### Coordinate the Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels (e.g., the principal, vice principal, or teacher-leaders)</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>.854</td>
<td>.730</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draw upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>.683</td>
<td>.467</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor the classroom curriculum to see that it covers the school's curricular objectives</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>.743</td>
<td>.551</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess the overlap between the school's curricular objectives and the school's achievement tests</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>.786</td>
<td>.617</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate actively in the review of curricular materials</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>.873</td>
<td>.760</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N=57.*

The principals who participated in the interviews shared their experiences in coordinating the curriculum:

- Alan: “I think I’m kind of hands-off with the teachers. I feel like I’m there to support them. If they come to me with a need, I do my best to meet that need. I try to guide them in certain ways. Obviously, we have to pick out the path series, the reading series, and things like that. Once it gets to that point, I’m not the reading expert, I’m not the math expert. I’ll get you what you need and you’ve got to know what to do with it…I guess that’s basically how I see myself. It’s to guide you in that right direction, but you’re the one that’s the expert in the reading, the
math, and the sciences…I rely a lot on [name]. Her title is curriculum instruction, one of these titles. Like I said, she helps a lot.”

• Amanda: “With my background being curriculum, I was just taking mental notes the whole time and started a voluntary book study to get to know the staff…They were all over the place and they weren’t standards-based here. They were program-based and that was the biggest thing. I was like, they’re teaching page from page for Everyday Math. They’re doing everything by a page. Nobody knew their content…Now, we’re doing writing. This is our first year for a writing program and my teachers are in little bitty boxes because they don’t know how to go outside what they’re trying to teach the class.”

• Richard: “We found some things like IXL, MobyMax, those kind of programs that we could give kids access to at school. They could do it at home to help increase some of that math and do some carryover at home, extra reinforcements, things like that. Then, we also looked at what is our biggest deficit in math. It was two years into us starting Singapore. When we started Singapore, it was both feet in…we looked at what is our biggest weakness. It was really our kids knowing their facts…I mean, we changed our expectations of what we’re looking for, like making it more systematic with a framework. We wanted to make sure we were doing mini-lessons and that we had our small groups…I stepped back from it and looked at it again, how can I support my teachers in what they need? Well, they needed some extra math supplemental things, so my intern was able to take the lead on that. We worked together to help bring those things to them.”
Monitor student progress.

In the monitoring of student progress, the participants noted that they most often use tests and other performance measures to assess student progress toward school goals (4.58), but they most rarely inform students of the school’s academic progress (3.60) (Table 11).

Table 11.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monitor Student Progress</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meet individually with teachers to discuss student progress</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>.739</td>
<td>.546</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss academic performance results with the faculty to identify curricular strengths and weaknesses</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>.750</td>
<td>.563</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use tests and other performance measures to assess progress toward school goals</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>.533</td>
<td>.284</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform teachers of the school's performance results in written form (e.g., in a memo or newsletter)</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>.905</td>
<td>.820</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform students of school’s academic progress</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>1.100</td>
<td>1.209</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N=57.*

Principals who were interviewed discussed the ways in which they work to monitor student progress with teachers and how they communicate this progress to families and other stakeholders as evidenced in their remarks:
Alan: “On the top end, our school’s grade care, it usually comes out pretty good. Bottom end, we’re a little behind…I mention that because I don’t know if we’re ever going to get out of that because of 5th grade math, to be quite honest with you…That’s a transition we need to make that we started the MAPs testing this year. That’s a new piece, of course. We’re all the way up through doing math and reading…Our grade cards go home the Friday after the grading period ends.”

Amanda: “When I first arrived, the OAA was very big and this building was like in the 79, 82, 84 percent range, which I said could be the luck of your genes, could be some of your instruction. When you get that 90 and you’re getting there consistently, it’s you’re instruction…They thought they were so great. You guys are passing kids, but you’re not growing kids, so we really had to look at, when I first got here, what growth means compared to what passing means…Here’s our goal. Here’s the kids graphing their goal and here’s a pre-assessment that shows that they knew nothing and at the end, maybe they have 14, maybe they have 20…it’s more of a formative assessment analysis according to the standard…I guess that in my opinion that the data has reflected that end goal, but that end goal can look a lot different…the ones that get it take off with it and that’s where you just see and you wish that you could have every kid in the class that believes that’s how data’s used.”

Richard: “We run intervention blocks all day. They have scheduled times…If we find that there are students that [need intervention]—we use AIMSweb as our screener. Then, we also use iReady in the district. If we find through AIMSweb,
that’s how our intervention is determined. We use iReady more for classroom-based instruction guidance…We might do a little outside the box…and try to do some smaller groups in the classroom versus having the kids come out. In terms of our intervention and our RtI, I oversee all the data, keep tabs on our kids who are moving through Tier 2, Tier 3. Are we progressing toward possibly testing? What have we done? What haven’t we done? Are there some related services to look at? …Part of that process is if we get to that point where the parent comes in and we’re looking at Tier 3, then not only does it become what are the interventions that we’re going to do here at school, but you also have to have an intervention at home that you’re going to work with your child on as well.”

**Protect instructional time.**

In their efforts to protect instructional time, participants indicated that they most frequently limit interruptions of instructional time by public address announcements (4.61), while they more rarely ensure that tardy and truant students suffer specific consequences for missing instructional time (2.93) (Table 12).
Table 12.

Protect Instructional Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protect Instructional Time</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limit interruptions of instructional time by public address announcements</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>.559</td>
<td>.313</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that students are not called to the office during instructional time</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>.915</td>
<td>.837</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that tardy and truant students suffer specific consequences for missing instructional time</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>1.223</td>
<td>1.495</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage teachers to use instructional time for teaching and practicing new skills and concepts</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>.567</td>
<td>.322</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit the intrusion of extra- and co-curricular activities on instructional time</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>.636</td>
<td>.405</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. \( N=57 \).

All of the principals who were interviewed noted that they do their best to protect instructional time in their schools. They mentioned scheduling as one of the means they use to achieve this in the course of the school day. The interviewees shared the ways in which they work to protect instructional time in their interview statements:

- Alan: “We’re practicing for our music program right now—second grade just had theirs—first grade, so they want to do the music practice at 9:00 in the morning. Well, they have their specials time in the afternoon, so to me, it makes more sense to just use your specials time. What about the PE teachers—is it important to them? Well what’s more important, our reading and math? I let them do that in
the morning. I’ve got to watch doing that, but you have to protect that time…it balances out, but you’ve got to watch.”

- Amanda: “Being as big as we are and having the shortest day in the district, there’s not a lot of time. In total, we have about 4 ½ hours of instructional time per day. Most teachers do a 120-minute block of time with math and reading and integrate social studies and science through math and reading. Due to having reading groups, we have center time that is supposed to be based on the instructional goals for the day while teachers work with reading groups…I feel that it is a slow process to change ‘center’ time as a differentiated instructional time for students rather than let’s all do the same thing with no real expectations across the building. If we used all of our time ‘growing’ students with well-planned scaffolded tasks toward the goal, our 4 ½ hours would be plenty of time.”

- Richard: “The only ones [specials classes] that double up, but it’s curriculum-based, would be 3rd and 4th grade. Third and fourth grade have a computer tech curriculum. They go in for their computer time, but they also have what’s built into their schedule for their curriculum. Because of the three, my 4th grade does a rotation in the morning…We found in this format that we’re doing currently, you always get snow days in the winter, either a Monday or a Friday. That really hinders that group who has their three weeks when the majority of the snow days hit.”
Maintain high visibility.

In order to maintain high visibility, participants reported that they take time to talk informally with students and teachers during recess and breaks most often (4.56), but they infrequently tutor students or provide direct instruction to classes (2.72) (Table 13).

Table 13.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maintain High Visibility</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take time to talk informally with students and teachers during recess and breaks</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>.756</td>
<td>.572</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit classrooms to discuss school issues with teachers and students</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>.863</td>
<td>.7453</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend/participate in extra- and co-curricular activities</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>.759</td>
<td>.576</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cover classes for teachers until a late or substitute teacher arrives</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>1.151</td>
<td>1.324</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor students or provide direct instruction to classes</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>1.264</td>
<td>1.598</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N=57.*

The three principals who participated in interviews mentioned their visibility around the building as a common theme in their daily practice. They shared the ways in which they maintain high visibility during the course of the interviews in the following comments:

- Alan: “Just really, there’s always that catch phrase at the bottom of your contract that says, basically, ‘anything that comes up,’ so it’s really wiping off cafeteria tables this morning because the custodian was moving chairs out because of a
reason in another part of the building. I just feel like anything that comes along…
We have some, not really duty responsibilities, but in the morning, I try to watch
the front because most of the elementary kids get dropped off in front.”

- Amanda: “[I’m] hands on, very hands on. I make it around my building into
every classroom at least once a day, if not twice. I usually start my day within the
first hour. Now, it takes me probably 45 minutes to get around the building, and
then spend a lot of time building family relationships with my families. I never
see a child in my office that I don’t make a phone call to the parent, whether it’s
good, bad, or whatever. Build a lot of relationships with the staff and with the
students. Just very hands-on in every aspect of it would probably be the word I
would use.”

- Richard: “I do find myself in here [the office] more this year. We have a walk-
through requirement from the district. It’s two to four walk-throughs on every
teacher. I have 18 staff members to do, so that doesn’t require a lot of time for me
to go out…I know going into the second semester and then for next year, because
things run so smoothly here and I’ve got that management stuff down, I’ll be able
to spend more time and go into classrooms.”

**Provide incentives for teachers.**

In their efforts to provide incentives for teachers, participants responded that they
most often compliment teachers privately for their efforts or performance (4.60), but they
less frequently acknowledge teachers’ exceptional performance by writing memos for
their personnel files (3.18) (Table 14).
### Table 14.

**Provide Incentives for Teachers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reinforce superior performance by teachers in staff meetings, newsletters, and/or memos</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>1.159</td>
<td>1.344</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliment teachers privately for their efforts or performance</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>0.651</td>
<td>0.424</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledge teachers’ exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>1.269</td>
<td>1.612</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward special efforts by teachers with opportunities for professional recognition</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>1.155</td>
<td>1.333</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create professional growth opportunities for teachers as a reward for special contributions to the school</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>1.246</td>
<td>1.553</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N=57.*

The provision of incentives for teachers was an area in which the interviewees shared contrasting perspectives. Alan noted a “Teacher of the Year” incentive, which directly contrasted to Amanda’s perspectives on how to best provide incentives to her teachers. The interview participants discussed some of the ways in which they do or do not provide incentives for teachers in the following statements:

- Alan: “The biggest incentives that I try—bringing in food seems to work. I bring in food once in a while. As far as actual incentives that I use are covering a recess, different things like that. One that’s worked well lately, I
send out a weekly update e-mail every Sunday night or early Monday morning. I put in a little teaser for them. I think the first three with the right answers get a Pepsi or something like that…[Superintendent] started last year and I think he may continue this year. I don’t know that they call it ‘Teacher of the Year.’ He just wanted to reward or give some notice out there among our own staff of teachers that—I could nominate anybody, any teacher could nominate anybody. Then we look through the nominations…it was district-wide…we were all together in one group and we had recognition.”

- Amanda: “Number one is time. Whenever I’ve tried to do celebrations with the staff, they are a different staff. A lot of people have teenage kids and they have obligations and their families come first…I’ll give you an example and this will be how we roll it back of why I don’t. I’ve got an awesome 3rd grade team, but they are as different as daylight and dark. I’ve got my special ed team that does nothing but nurture kids and say, ‘I’m a believer and you’re doing this.’ I have my gifted cluster and they are putting out snow globes in the ELA and the kids are sitting in their snow globes…I’ve got extremes but all of them have their talents…For me to identify either one of those for whatever the reason would cause a friction within the team. Individually I call them in and tell them, what you do for kids can’t be done in a snow globe…I don’t ever want you to think what you’re doing is less worth.”

- Richard: “I look at myself as I try to build capacity within my staff…If somebody does something that I think would benefit the whole building, or
just saying or even telling the teacher, ‘Hey, you know what? I want you to share this with the group because they might be able to adapt some things they’re doing even though it’s a different, even though your content is different, it’s just the framework of it. Maybe they can apply something to it.’

Or actually having them lead some morning PD sessions.”

**Promote professional development.**

In order to promote professional development, principals responded that they most frequently lead or attend teacher inservice activities concerned with instruction (4.58), and least often set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas or information from inservice activities (4.18) (Table 15).
Table 15.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promote Professional Development</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that inservice activities attended by staff are consistent with the school’s goals</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>.627</td>
<td>.393</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actively support the use in the classroom of skills acquired during inservice training</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>.675</td>
<td>.456</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtain the participation of the whole staff in important inservice activities</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>.701</td>
<td>.491</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead or attend teacher inservice activities concerned with instruction</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>.653</td>
<td>.427</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas or information from inservice activities</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>.947</td>
<td>.897</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N=57.

The principals who were interviewed each shared a focus on professional development. They often see themselves as an example of professional learning for the school, mentioning the ways in which they also engage in professional development themselves. They noted the ways in which they promote professional development among their teachers in their following interview comments:

• Alan: “When we have time [professional development]…We had one of the state support people come in. We did a Monday morning leadership with him. That’s probably the last thing we did…[Our teachers] have specials time every day of that month, so if they wanted to, they could—a second grade
teacher can go watch a first grade teacher. I’d like to get that implemented before I get out there, that there’s a little bit more of that going on.”

• Amanda: “We’re reading the same one [book study] again with 13 new staff members. It’s *Assessment for Learning* and it just changed the practices in the building because as I watched, they were all over the place and they weren’t standards-based here…By doing a book study, it allowed people to start having discussions that I wasn’t telling them what to do and it just allowed for collaboration, and then we talked about learning targets. We talked about the formative assessment practices. It changed the whole culture of the building at the time…It’s not that they mind meeting. It’s the fact that they want the control over that piece of it. We are very guided by what their contract reads and everything else is voluntary. Sometimes, you have five show up and sometimes, you have the whole staff show up.”

• Richard: “What I typically do is anything I get from our DL [District Leadership] team meeting or an admin meeting that I can bring back to the building, I’ll build it into the agenda. If not, then I try to pick a topic that either people are struggling with in the building or just whether something I’ve read something or something else to bring into the meeting…I’m going to start this book study with them. We have a PD next Friday. I get an hour and a half of building time with the staff. I’m going to do an introduction, just do the first chapter of this with them at that point. This will lead into the rest of my staff meetings this year because this really is more of that classroom
instruction piece. I don’t expect things to change in that realm right now, but I want them to have the information so that as they’re preparing for next year, to have some of these to start frontloading.”

**Provide incentives for learning.**

In order to provide incentives for learning, respondents indicated that they most often support teachers actively in their recognition and/or reward of student contributions to and accomplishments in class (4.23), while more rarely contact parents to communicate improved or exemplary student performance or contributions (3.67) (Table 16).
Table 16.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provide Incentives for Learning</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognize students who do superior work with formal rewards such as honor roll or mention in the principal’s newsletter</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>1.252</td>
<td>1.566</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use assemblies to honor students for academic accomplishments or for behavior or citizenship</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>1.181</td>
<td>1.395</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize superior student achievement or improvement by seeing in the office the students with their work</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>1.218</td>
<td>1.483</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact parents to communicate improved or exemplary student performance or contributions</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>1.006</td>
<td>1.012</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support teachers actively in their recognition and/or reward of student contributions to and accomplishments in class</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>.756</td>
<td>.572</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N=57.

Providing incentives for learning was an area where the principals interviewed shared differences in their philosophies on how best to acknowledge student achievement and growth. Alan suggested that his school acknowledges student learning through achievement (honor roll), while Amanda’s approach focused on growth. The principals who shared their practices in the interviews offered the ways in which they provide incentives for learning in the following remarks:
• Alan: “We still do an old-school typical thing that [previous superintendent], he was principal in this position before he moved on up. Straight A, AB honor roll, attendance; we do those grade three on up. Second grade gives out some awards in the classroom, attendance, and, I think, student achievement awards. For straight A’s, we work with local businesses. I forget who we’re using. I think, straight A, we may have switched this year. Straight A gets something from Buffalo Wild Wings and AB get the Golden Corral. We’ve heard that they really don’t like the Gold Corral, so they wouldn’t try to get on all-A honor roll because they wanted to get on AB because they wanted to go to BW’s. McDonald’s does our attendance awards. It’s a Happy Meal for that. We meet quarterly for those.”

• Amanda: “We do their formative assessment successes, but they don’t mind it. It has been my philosophy. Your child is an individual but for me to recognize the kid that gets 100 every week versus a kid that’s growing 40 points up from 0, I can’t give a kid a star for getting to 40 points because it’ll be like…it’s still an F. You got a one, yay! If I pick those kids out that have a four, now do certain teachers do it to an extent? Their wall of fame has also been for growth and not A’s. The focus always has to be on growth.”

Research Question 2

The second research question sought to develop a professional profile of principals, including educational attainment and tenure in their current and prior professional roles. In terms of their own educational attainment, the majority of
respondents (39) reported attainment of a master’s degree, plus additional coursework for administrative/principal licensure (68.4%) (Table 17). Of those interviewed, all three had obtained at least a master’s degree. Alan, the principal with the lowest score, indicated that he had obtained a master’s degree only, while Amanda and Richard, the principals with the median and highest scores, indicated that they had completed additional coursework beyond the master’s degree for administrative licensure; additionally, Amanda indicated that she was exploring the possibility of returning to graduate school for a doctorate.

Table 17.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Level of Education Attained</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree, plus additional coursework for administrative/principal licensure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree, plus additional coursework for administrative/principal licensure</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Specialist Degree, plus additional coursework for administrative/principal licensure</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate (Ed.D., Ph.D., etc.)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate, plus additional coursework for administrative/principal licensure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, including:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not write thesis</td>
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<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELL and Gifted Endorsement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Specialist</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N=57.
The professional positions held prior to the current position as building principal ranged from three years as a teacher to 20 years as an assistant principal (Table 18). The principals interviewed held previous positions as special education teachers (Alan and Richard) and as a central office curriculum specialist (Amanda).
Table 18.

*Other Professional Positions Held Prior to Current Position as Building Principal*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Years in Position</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>N=40</td>
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<td>Instructional Coach</td>
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<td>N=8</td>
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<td>School Counselor</td>
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<td>Principal at Another Building</td>
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Table 18 (continued)

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<tr>
<td>Central Office Administrator</td>
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<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Office Administrator</td>
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<td>Technology Coordinator</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Role</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Prior Experience in Education</td>
<td>No # given</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Participants may have selected more than one response, yielding a total number of responses greater than 57.

Research Question 3

The participants who participated in interviews shared the differences they indentified in their leadership practices, highlighting their views of themselves as transactional, transformation, instructional, and pedagogical leaders in their schools, as demonstrated in the following comments:

- Alan: “I’d like to think that I lead by example. I try to treat people how I want to be treated…I don’t know that I want people mad at me, so I try to get things worked out…That’s where I’m at [transactional leadership]…I feel just keep my head above water and doing the best I can with discipline reports…doing what
evaluations need to be done. That, to me, that’s my day. I wish I had more time to
do some of that stuff [instructional leadership], but I just don’t feel like I do
because the time I turn around with having anyone to help…I feel like I’m
treading water.”

- Amanda: “I see myself as both a transformational and a transactional leader. A
transformational leader when it comes to working with staff to build instructional
practices and community throughout the building…I always want my staff to feel
I work harder than they do for our students, or at least equal. We are all here for
the education of students, but in different roles. I am transactional when it comes
to the way we treat students and parents within our school. I articulate
expectations for how we talk to, nurture, use good word choice, and show respect
for all involved…I see myself through both pedagogical and instructional
leadership. I have always been an instructional leader with my K-2 staff as we
learn together and work through our strengths and weaknesses as a team. Through
our study of best practices and growing together, I would say my role is now more
instructional…Lead by example.”

- Richard: “I actually see myself more as a management leader in the building than
I do instructionally…I still don’t see myself as that instructional kind of leader as
much as a management side. I do think that if I do either one of the two better
than the other, it’s the management. I think I’ve gotten that part down…You have
to find that balance because if you’re all instructional and you’re in classrooms,
then you’re never here to help with all the other issues that you need to. It’s a
double-edged sword because sometimes, you find yourself trapped in here and you never get out there...I don’t think I’ve met anyone who has it all down. I’ve met a few other principals at the elementary level here in [district]. There’s one in particular that I would say, nothing against the management side of it, but he would be what I would want to aspire to be as an instructional leader. He’s very, very good at breaking down data.”

Research Question 4

Participants were asked about their preferences for professional development models. The majority of respondents \((n=45)\) indicated that they prefer the traditional model, with an equal number \((n=45)\) also preferring the reflective inquiry model (Table 19). Only 17 participants indicated that they prefer the craft model, while three participants indicated other models of professional development in which they engage.

Table 19.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Development Preferences</th>
<th>(n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Model</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft Model</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Inquiry Model</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Participants had the ability to indicate preference for more than one model of professional development, yielding a total number of responses greater than 57.

The principals who agreed to participate in the interviews noted that they value professional development for themselves, but professional development for them as administrators is not always a high priority in their districts, so they are often self-
directed when they can develop themselves professionally. The interviewees shared their preferences and experiences with professional development, as evidenced in the statements below:

- Alan: “The district does professional development when we have time. We did a couple of years ago. We had one of the state support people come in. We did a Monday morning leadership with him. That’s probably the last thing we did. [Superintendent] would be up for anything that we want to try. Three times a year now, we have countywide principals’ meetings. I’ll try to get to a couple of those a year.”

- Amanda: “I get a little bit [of professional development]—it’s like your bosses…I feel supported that I can make a phone call to our superintendent, or our assistants right now. I could text them. I could call them about anytime, but I also feel there is so much to do here, like you don’t feel supported…I like to reflect [on my leadership].”

- Richard: “I look at is as I have to manage the building. I have to be the instructional leader. Then, I have all the other things that I have to get done, like personal things. I have to have my evidence for my OPES. I’ve got to make sure this is my license renewal year. I’ve got to make sure I have my CEUs. I’m going to do all of that as much as I can during the day because I’ve got a 3-year-old at home. I don’t have time at night to sit and do that kind of stuff.”
Chapter 5: Summary and Reflection

Problem Statement

This study sought to illuminate the components of leadership that are critical to the successful academic growth of students. In order to contribute to this understanding, this research sought the perspectives of highly-effective (as defined by achieving a building score of Above Expected Growth, or the letter grade of A or B Ohio’s 4th grade Value-Added measure) principals in terms of their own leadership behaviors by addressing the following overarching research question: What instructional leadership and management functions, practices, and behaviors do highly-effective principals see themselves as engaging in most frequently? This question was explored through the employment of Hallinger’s Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) to measure the following 10 dimensions of instructional management: 1) framing the school goals; 2) communicating the school goals; 3) coordinating the curriculum; 4) supervising and evaluating instruction; 5) monitoring student progress; 6) protecting instructional time; 7) providing incentives for teachers; 8) providing incentives for learning; 9) promoting professional development; 10) maintaining high visibility. In addition, this study addressed the following subordinate questions in order to determine how these additional factors might influence the professional practice of principals and the growth of their students: What is the profile of highly effective principals, including their own levels of education and other positions the principals have held? What are the differences in principals’ leadership practices (transformational, transactional,
instructional, pedagogical)? How do these principals develop themselves professionally to enhance their own practice?

**Review of Methodology**

This study was conducted in two stages, using a multi-methods design (Creswell, 2009). The first phase consisted of the collection and analysis of quantitative data via an e-mail link containing the Principal Instructional Management Survey (PIMRS) in Qualtrics. The e-mail was sent to 352 Ohio public elementary school principals from districts varying in population, poverty, and location across the state. The commonality among all of the school principals selected for the survey was a consistent high level of performance on Ohio’s Value-Added measure over a three-year period (2012, 2013, 2014). Using Value-Added performance data from the Ohio Department of Education, the researcher selected all of those schools that administered the 4th grade Ohio Achievement Assessment to identify those schools that demonstrated student growth at the Above level, or achieved a letter grade of A or B on the Value-Added component of the school report card. This process yielded the 352 school principals to contact for the survey. The researcher then consulted the Ohio Educational Directory System (OEDS) to obtain the contact information for the principals and sent an invitation to participate with the survey to them in June 2015. Following Dillman et al.’s (2009) method, the researcher sent three e-mail reminders for completion of the survey, which yielded 57 complete and usable responses. Participants responded to assess the frequency with which they enact a behavior or practice associated with instructional leadership functions with each item rated on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (almost never) to 5 (almost
always) (Hallinger, 2011). With the support of the faculty methodologist, the researcher analyzed the survey data using SPSS to determine the frequency with which the principals reported they perceived themselves performing the instructional leadership practices in the PIMRS. The researcher selected three participants to participate in follow-up interviews in October 2015 and contacted the principals with the highest, lowest, and closest to the mean scores on the PIMRS, in order to gain a perspective across the extreme outlying responses (highest and lowest overall mean scores) and that of a participant whose score was in the middle. The principals selected for the interviews were from varying regions around the state (southern, central, and northeastern Ohio), varied in the levels of poverty present (average to high), and had differing student population numbers (very small and average). The three districts in which the schools were situated were considered rural, small town, and urban.

In the secondary qualitative phase of research, the principals consented to meet for interviews, which were conducted in November 2015 through January 2016, based upon the participants’ scheduling preferences. The first interview served as an inclusive pilot for this study, as the researcher determined that the original questions were suitable and needed a follow-up simply to include more information; thus, it was included with the results. The interviews were conducted at each principal’s school building after school hours and lasted 45 minutes to just over an hour. In addition to discussing their responses on the PIMRS questions and their professional practices, LeSourd and Grady’s (1990) interview questions (Figure 4) were used as a guide for the open-ended emergent interviews with the principals. These questions led to the principals’ emergent
discussions to reveal themes about the building of relationships in their leadership, their attribution of teaching and instructional practices to their Value-Added data, Value-Added growth itself, and their leadership.

Each interview was transcribed by a transcriptionist and then sent to the participants for the purpose of member checking. Any discrepancies identified by the participants were noted and addressed before coding. The researcher read the transcriptions of the interviews and identified themes in the data following Saldaña’s (2013) method for descriptive coding. The qualitative data codes were also based upon the 10 instructional leadership subscales of the PIMRS, in order to harmonize the study’s conceptual framework and to enable an analysis that directly addressed the research questions and goals (Saldaña, 2013, p. 62) (Appendix F). The editing and analysis of the data followed Saldaña’s (2013) elemental method for descriptive coding, summarizing in a short word or phrase the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data. In addition to the 10 PIMRS subscales, the additional emergent themes that became apparent in the interview data were building relationships (RL), Value-Added (VA), leadership (LD), and teachers (TE). The interview data was combined with the survey results to develop a comprehensive description of the practices of the principals in this study.

**Summary of Findings**

The 57 principals who completed the survey were male (35%) and female (65%). Overall, the principals’ responses generated a mean of 4.1253, with a minimum of 2.64 and a maximum of 4.98. An analysis of the overall mean for each of the 10 dimensions, or subscales, of leadership practices on the PIMRS, the dimension in which principals...
indicated they engage most frequently was that of framing the school goals (mean=4.45); contrarily, the dimension that yielded the lowest overall mean in the principals’ practice was that of providing incentives for teaching (3.74). Considering the individual items on the PIMRS, in a Likert-type scale where 1=Almost Never and 5=Almost Always, principals indicated that the practice in which they perceive themselves engaging most infrequently fell in the subscale of Maintain High Visibility, tutor students or provide direct instruction to classes (Mean=2.72). The practice which principals reported they most frequently engage was on the subscale Frame School Goals, use data on student performance when developing the school’s academic goals (Mean=4.70).

Principals indicated that they had varying levels of experience as building level principals, ranging from one year to more than 15 years, with the largest majority serving in the position for 2-4 years (32%). The principals who responded to the survey have worked in their current positions from one year to more than 15 years, also with the majority of them working in their current positions for 2-4 years (46%). Most of the principals in this study have attained a master’s degree, plus additional coursework for administrative/principal licensure (68.4%). Most of the principals’ previous experience was in the position of teacher (n=40), followed by 15 who had served as principal at another building. The principals who participated in the interviews also shared a variety of leadership styles within their practice, indicating that they employ the transactional and transformational leadership models, as well as instructional and pedagogical leadership when appropriate. Most principals indicated that they prefer both the
traditional model of professional development and the reflective inquiry model of professional development ($N=45$).

**Discussion of Findings**

The survey data provided a snapshot of the professional practice of the principals who participated in this study. Principals were able to share those leadership practices in which they most frequently engage, helping to create an understanding of what may become best practice for instructional leadership. In particular, principals indicated that they most frequently use data on student performance when developing the school’s academic goals ($Mean=4.70$), which is a practice that is enhanced by the use of Value-Added data on school and district report cards and on teacher and principal evaluations. This practice is consistent with Hallinger and Heck’s (1996) conclusion that identified vision and goals as the most significant avenue through which school leaders impact student learning. Student performance data permeates almost everything that schools do, so it is no surprise that it was a highly rated practice in the process of setting goals by principals in this study. This was also consistent with the interview data that the principals shared, as they indicated that student performance data is one of the first places they look to guide the many other decisions that they make about forming and communicating goals, promoting professional development, and generally seeking to better meet the needs of their students and teachers. Principals must understand where to begin to do all of this and student data tells that story.

In addition to the use of student performance data, principals in this study indicated that they frequently compliment teachers privately for their efforts or
performance (Mean=4.60). The use of student data may not always tell the whole story of a teacher’s instruction or a student’s learning, so this practice is a critical one in building relationships with teachers, which also emerged as a theme in the interview data. Amanda discussed how she takes the time to compliment teachers in a private setting in order to protect her school culture from becoming competitive or negative, which also helps to foster positive relationships and trust between her and her teachers. Additionally, she pointed out how she views the talents of her teachers as unique, so it would be unfair to compare what her special education teacher does with what her gifted education teacher does in terms of student data. She recognizes that just as her teachers’ styles are unique, so are the needs and resulting progress of the students, so she emphasized how important it is to handle compliments (and suggestions for improvement) in a private setting. This was something that she found to be very important in establishing and maintaining positive professional relationships among her staff. On the other hand, though, Alan discussed his district’s Teacher of the Year recognition, which is a public display of professional recognition, in which principals indicated that they engage less frequently (Mean=3.67). In both cases, the principals noted that providing incentives for teachers in the form of compliments or recognition is an important part of their professional practice in building relationships with their staff.

Relationship building was a theme that emerged in several areas of both the survey data and the interview data. Principals reported that they frequently take the time to talk informally with students and teachers during recess and breaks (Mean=4.56), which is a practice under the subscale of Maintaining High Visibility. The principals in
this study identified this practice as one that they perform almost always and it serves to build relationships among them with their staff and students. Amanda discussed her time with students at recess and also spent with her staff outside of school, although she was careful to indicate that she only engages in activities with the whole staff, rather than with any particular faction of staff members. This informal time, she believes, shows her staff that she is “one of them,” and that she values them as people, not just employees. She also discussed how time spent in these settings is helpful to the relationships she builds with students and also with managing student behavior. This also allows her to gain a perspective on students outside of the classroom and the principal’s office, which she cited as a positive practice in dealing with parents and families on a regular basis as well.

One of the practices that principals reported they least frequently engage in fell in this same subscale: Acknowledge teachers’ exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files (Mean=3.18). All of the principals who were interviewed discussed the requirements of the Ohio Teacher Evaluation System (OTES) and the time that it takes in their professional practice. The OTES requirements leave the principals with little time to devote to additional written records for teacher files, which could be why this practice was not one in which they reported as almost always engaging.

Principals also indicated that they do not frequently tutor or provide direct instruction to students (Mean=2.72). In his interview, Alan discussed the expertise he attributes to his teachers in their content areas and grade levels, so he does not see himself as frequently engaging in this practice. He went on to discuss his focus on the managerial tasks of his day in order to keep his building functioning properly, rather than
his time being devoted to working with students in direct instruction. This is the case for many of the principals who responded in the survey as well. Many of them had worked in grade levels or content areas other than their current administrative assignment, so they may lack the professional knowledge or pedagogical understanding for the tutoring or direct instruction of students. Furthermore, as Amanda and Richard corroborated, most principals view their teachers as the classroom experts. While they may be able to offer constructive feedback to improve their teaching practice, the principals do not see themselves as those who should necessarily be providing direct instruction to students, but would rather provide support to the teachers who are entrusted with the instruction of the students each day.

While engaged in the interviews of the principals in this study, the researcher was intrigued by the perceptions of the principals’ own daily practices. One significant difference was the perception of their own leadership in relationship to their responses. Alan, the principal with the lowest mean responses, indicated that he most infrequently practiced the instructional leadership practices in his survey data, which was consistent with his interview responses. When asked about his daily practices, Alan focused on transactional leadership practices, including the completion of paperwork and duty responsibilities around the building (e.g., arrival and dismissal procedures), and quickly asserted that he was a transactional leader when asked about his leadership style. He did not acknowledge assuming instructional leadership responsibilities in his school, indicating that they have another person who is responsible for all curricular matters and attributing all instructional success to the teachers in his school. At the conclusion of the
interview, he asked the researcher about the dismissal procedures at her building. These responses about his daily practice were consistent with his survey responses on the PIMRS as well.

On the other hand, Amanda and Richard, the other two principals whose responses yielded the median and highest scores on the PIMRS, spoke about their role in leading instruction in the building through practices including intervention and enrichment, leading book studies, intentional scheduling to provide collaborative time for teachers, communication and involvement with parents and families, and involvement with teachers on various levels in regard to instructional practices, reported that they aspire to be transformational leaders who lead instruction, but still felt like they were primarily transactional leaders. Their survey responses were consistent with their practices as they discussed them in the interviews, but were inconsistent with their perceptions of themselves. The researcher noted that they both discussed scheduling for teacher-based team time at the conclusion of the interviews, in contrast with the dismissal procedures that the principal with the lowest mean discussed. These two principals, though, while they discussed all of the things that they do as instructional leaders, did not see themselves as such; rather, they aspire to be instructional leaders and do not believe that they are there yet in their perception of their own practice.

In the realm of professional development, the interviewees discussed the lack of time and priority that professional development for the principals themselves seems to take in their districts and in their own practices. As instructional leaders, the principals noted that they see themselves as setting an example for the school in terms of engaging
in professional development, but it was not an aspect of their practice in which they see themselves as frequently engaging. This dichotomy is consistent with what Burch (2007) noted in terms of the allocation of grant money for administrative professional development—most professional development money under NCLB was focused on teaching staff development, rather than the development of administrators. The complex tasks of a principal’s day rarely allow for the luxury of time to spend in professional learning during the school day, in or out of the building, and there are fewer opportunities for principals to seek out professional development focused on leadership. Principals often feel pressure to be instructional experts in order to support and grow teachers through the evaluation process, which requires an intense understanding of instructional practices and content knowledge, leaving little time or resource for their own leadership development. The reality of the demands on principals in schools today require high levels of professional expertise, but leaves little time or resources for the development of this expertise. The principals in this study attested to this in their own practice as well.

All three principals attributed the success of their schools on the Value-Added measure to the expertise of their teachers. They each discussed having a core group of teachers at the 4th grade level who were masters of their respective content areas and who had worked together for at least three years. The principals believed that the teachers were the key to the success of their students, as they each mentioned the high expectations that their teachers had for their students, despite varying schedules and instructional delivery. All three principals also discussed what they saw as the importance of building positive relationships within their respective school communities, treating
their students and staff with fairness and honesty, and being a positive role model in the school.

**Conclusions**

In regard to considerations for the professional practice of principals, several conclusions may be drawn from this research. First of all, principals should utilize student performance data to develop a school’s academic goals. Participants indicated a high frequency of this item in their practice, as its mean on the PIMRS was 4.70. In addition, all three of the interviewees discussed their use of student performance data in their practice and planning for the goals of their schools, even in varying degrees. Lee mentioned that his school was still in the beginning stages of setting goals based on student data, but talked in detail about his school’s achievement scores. While he and his staff are beginning the process of goal-setting based on student data, Amanda, in contrast, discussed the consistent and nearly constant attention that she and her staff give to student data in setting goals for their school and their students. She mentioned frequent use of student data in making decisions and setting goals for her building. This practice emerged as a best practice for principals from the survey and interview responses.

Principals should also seek to build positive relationships with teachers and school community members. This practice became emergent in the survey data in several areas. In talking informally with teachers and students, principals indicated that they were able to carry out this relationship building. Building positive relationships was also apparent in the practice of recognizing teacher performance. While Lee discussed his district’s practice of selecting teacher of the year, Amanda contrasted this practice with
her belief about the importance of complimenting teachers privately. Lee noted that the selection of teacher of the year is a collective effort in his district, as everyone has an opportunity to nominate an individual for the recognition. Amanda emphasized that she believes that complimenting teacher performance privately builds trust and rapport among her staff; she sees public recognition as divisive because she sees each of her teachers as individuals, as unique as the needs of their students. The interview participants also highlighted the importance of building trust with their teachers through the evaluation process. While Lee indicated his own discomfort in having hard conversations with teachers about their performance, Amanda and Richard discussed their perspectives on the importance of doing so in order to strengthen and improve the work of their teachers. They also noted that even though this was a difficult part of the evaluation process, it was a means through which they build trust with the staff through providing them with honest feedback in the best interest of their students.

Based on the PIMRS responses (mean=2.72), principals spend the least amount of time tutoring or providing direct instruction to students. As the interviewees noted, they see the classroom teachers as the experts in their content areas and grade levels. Lee, in particular, mentioned the role in which he sees himself in this capacity for his teachers is one of support. He stated that he seeks to get them what they need to be successful in the classroom and then leaves them to do their job. In addition, the lack of time that principals devote to this practice could also come from their lack of experience in grade levels or content areas outside of their administrative assignment. Two of the principals who participated in interviews, Lee and Richard, indicated that their previous teaching
experience was in special education. They have specialized knowledge in intervention, but not necessarily in the pedagogical practices of the general education classroom, which also precludes them from providing direct instruction or tutoring to students. Finally, principals also expressed that they view the teachers as classroom express in content and pedagogy. The interviewees discussed the ways in which they provide support to teachers and the confidence they place in them to provide students with appropriate instruction to meet their needs.

In addition to their expertise in classroom instruction, all three of the principals who participated in interviews noted that they attribute the success of their schools on the Value-Added measure to their teachers. Lee, Amanda, and Richard each discussed that they saw the success of their schools based on a core group of teachers who had worked together for at least three years and were “masters of their content.” The principals each discussed varying attributes of these teaching teams (personalities of the teachers, instructional strategies and philosophies, schedules), but they all shared the same central theme around the importance of the teachers at this level.

Principals should develop a balance of leadership of leadership styles (transactional, transformational, instructional, pedagogical) in their practice. The interviewees reported seeing facets of each leadership style in their own practice. The principals in this study each noted that the management of the school was the first priority, in order to allow for the ability for them to be instructional leaders. While Lee indicated that he most saw himself as a transactional leader, which was consistent with his PIMRS responses, he identified aspects of his practice that are evident in instructional
and pedagogical leadership as well. Richard explicitly mentioned that his first priority in his job was ensuring that he was available for teachers when they needed him to be a manager of the building, and he tries to balance that with the time he spends in classrooms and out of his office as an instructional leader. He noted that he aspires to be an instructional leader, although the researcher identified many of the practices in his daily work that already make him an instructional leader. Amanda identified herself as an instructional leader initially, but also spent time talking about the practices she performs as the manager of the building, too. All three principals offered differing approaches to the balance of leadership in their practice, but all three of them indicated that they do have a balance of the leadership styles in what they do.

**Suggestions for Future Study**

This study was focused solely on those principals working in an elementary setting (schools that serve students in grade 4); however, Value-Added data now exists through grade 12. One suggestion for future study may be to include the perspectives of principals at other grade levels, as this would certainly increase the sample size and tell more of the story about leadership and student growth. Principals and teachers at varying grade levels may offer varying perspectives on the leadership and instructional practices that contribute to the growth of their students because of the differences in expectations, cultures, and approaches to teaching and learning at different grade levels. Future study may also focus on the varying perspectives of school leaders in schools of different sizes. It would be worth comparing the perspectives of those working in varying sized schools.
in the future; while this study included schools of different sizes, future research may include this as a specific factor to consider.

This study was confined to those principals working in public “not community school” settings; future research may include those working in charter, community, and other school settings as well. Charter, community, private, and parochial schools are often structured differently from public schools, as they may be selective in admission and may be more limited or more prosperous in the services they offer to the students they serve (e.g., they may face a lack or abundance of special education services or gifted education programs); for these reasons, the perspectives of those working in these settings may be different from the public school principals who participated in this research. In the case of schools outside of the public realm, they may see consistent success or struggle with student growth and would be worth considering for exploration in future research.

Future research may also include a comparison of districts who are not seeing success in Value-Added for various reasons to determine differences and similarities in leadership practices. A researcher may also be interested in exploring the perspectives of teachers working in both successful Value-Added districts and those who are struggling to see this growth in their students to compare teacher perspectives of leadership and instruction in both cases. It may also be of benefit to seek out the perspectives of parents and families in successful school districts, perhaps particularly those that seem to be anomalies in terms of the components that research has traditionally attributed to this success (educational level of parents, SES, etc.). Future research consideration may also
be given to the districts that are seeing great success in student achievement (proficiency data), but are struggling to meet their Value-Added growth measures. Another consideration for future study might be to study the leadership perspectives of superintendents at successful school districts.

Additional future research may also include additional interviews of principals who participated in the PIMRS survey. The researcher selected three participants for interviews in this study in the interest of providing a general cross-sectional representation of the perspectives across the continuum of responses; with more time and resources, though, future research may lend itself to including more interviews to expand on the perspectives and experiences highlighted in the interviews included in this research study.

Professional development for principals is another factor to be considered for future study. As the principals in this study noted, they feel that they are the example of professional learning for the building, but do not always have the time, resources, or district support to engage in professional learning. Principal leadership needs to be fostered by school districts in order to prepare leaders to successfully provide leadership for students and teachers, but there is still a problem in how to make this happen. Principals need a great deal of instructional and content knowledge, in addition to the leadership skills and practices addressed in this study. Future studies may focus on ways in which to meet this need for principals and schools to address the professional development of principals.
Limitations and Assumptions

One of the most significant assumptions in this study was the importance placed upon the use of Value-Added data as a means of determining the effectiveness of schools and their leaders. While achievement data (proficiency) is just a snapshot of a student’s performance on one test on one day, Value-Added growth data in Ohio is supposed to be indicative of student growth over a longer period of time (one school year). Value-Added data is an indicator of success in schools where students may not otherwise be demonstrating proficiency, but are still making growth over the course of a school year. Nonetheless, Value-Added data still does not tell the whole story of a school and its success. As discussed in Chapter 3, also, the Value-Added measure is not perfect, as some research suggests that some building-level characteristics outside of those on which “typical school” estimates are based may impact interpretation of value-added ratings. Many other aspects of a school community are a part of student success, none of which may reflected on a school’s report card.

Additionally, some schools may be experiencing great achievement success in terms of student proficiency, with poor marks on their Value-Added measures. At this point in time, though, Ohio law has required Value-Added data to determine a large part of a school’s success because it is included on the school and district report cards and teacher and principal evaluation models. Thus, the reality is that this data, although it may not tell the whole story about a school and its leadership, has been made a high priority to the public in terms of evaluating the perceived quality of schools, districts, teachers, and principals in Ohio.
An additional limitation of this research study was the finite time and resources for the completion of the work. As noted in the considerations for future research, the researcher selected three principals for follow-up interviews, which was also a delimitation of this study. With additional time and resources, additional principal interviews would provide a wider perspective of the leadership practices and perspectives studied in this research; however, both were limited in this instance, so there is more to be told in the story of these principals in the future.
References


http://portal.battelleforkids.org/ohio/Race_to_the_Top/rttop_value-added_services.html?sflang=en


Educational Administration, 46(5), 562-580.


Appendix A: Invitation Letter

[Date]

Dear Principal,

I am writing to request your assistance with my doctoral dissertation research project being conducted on highly effective public school principals’ perceptions of their own pedagogical leadership behaviors.

Your voluntary participation has been requested because your school was one of just 352 public elementary schools to consistently achieve “Above” on your Value-Added rating over a 3-year period (2012, 2013, 2014). The private and confidential responses you give as the principal will provide important insights into what principals are doing to successfully increase academic growth for all students.

You will find attached to this e-mail an informed consent letter that further outlines the parameters of the research, as well as a link to the survey instrument itself. The survey should only take 20-30 minutes of your time at the most. I may contact you in the future to follow up with a brief interview. As a public school principal myself, I value your time and appreciate your contributions to my research.

Thank you again for your time and consideration. It is only with the generous help of people like you that research such as this can be successful. If you have any questions and would like to speak to me prior to completing the survey, please feel free to contact me via the phone number or e-mail listed below.

Sincerely,

Kristin L. Jones
Ohio University
Department of Educational Studies
kj984007@ohio.edu
(419) 512-6321
Appendix B: Consent Form

Ohio University Consent Form

Title of Research: A Study of Highly Effective Ohio Public Elementary School Principals’ Perceptions of Personal Instructional and Pedagogical Leadership

Researcher: Kristin L. Jones

You are being asked to participate in research. For you to be able to decide whether you want to participate in this project, you should understand what the project is about, as well as the possible risks and benefits in order to make an informed decision. This process is known as informed consent. This form describes the purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks. It also explains how your personal information will be used and protected. Once you have read this form and your questions about the study are answered, you will be able to begin the survey in electronic format. Your voluntary participation in the survey will serve as your informed consent and will allow your participation in this study. You may print a copy of this document to take with you.

Explanation of Study:
My name is Kristin Jones and I am a doctoral student in the Educational Administration Program in the Department of Educational Studies at the Patton College of Education at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. I am conducting research as part of my dissertation on elementary principals’ self-reported perceptions of their own instructional and pedagogical leadership behaviors using the Principal Form of the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS). This study aims to understand highly effective Ohio public school principals’ perceptions of their own behaviors.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete the PIMRS, rating your leadership behaviors (50 items) and to answer several questions about your professional experience, educational attainment, and professional development. Following your completion of the PIMRS, you may be contacted for an interview, where I will be asking you to further reflect on your responses and consider how your leadership behaviors influence outcomes for students in your school.

You should not participate in this study if you are uncomfortable reflecting on your own professional practice.

Your participation in the study will last approximately 20-30 minutes for completion of the survey and possibly an additional 45 minutes for the interview, which will be audio-recorded.

Risks and Discomforts:
No risks or discomforts are anticipated from your participation in this study for you to reveal your perceptions of your own leadership behaviors. You may feel that the topic of the study is sensitive, in which case you may choose to leave any particular questions, or free to rest or stop participating in the study.

Benefits:
Individually, you may benefit because you will have the opportunity to reflect upon your own practice as a school administrator, as well as to explore the connection between your work and the outcomes for your students.

The anticipated benefits to society and/or the scientific community are the expansion of the knowledge base of what helps students to be more successful, as well as practical knowledge of how principals can enhance these effective practices in their work. The findings of this study could be transferable to school administrators at other levels and in various settings to better understand how their practices can best support learning outcomes for students. In addition, this information may be helpful to superintendents and policy makers in determining how to best allocate resources and consider policies and practices that may influence the leadership of principals in educational institutions.

Confidentiality and Records:
In order to maintain confidentiality, participants’ identity will be protected by using a code list of pseudonyms. The code list will be stored on my personal computer (password protected) and backed up on an external flash drive (password protected and stored in a locked file). Only the researcher and her advisor and committee will have access to the interview data. It will be destroyed within 6 months after the defense and successful acceptance of the dissertation by TAD. All data collected for this study will be used only for the stated research purposes in writing the dissertation.

Additionally, while every effort will be made to keep your study-related information confidential, there may be circumstances where this information must be shared with:

* Federal agencies, for example the Office of Human Research Protections, whose responsibility is to protect human subjects in research;
* Representatives of Ohio University (OU), including the Institutional Review Board, a committee that oversees the research at OU.
**Compensation:**
No compensation will be provided.

**Contact Information:**
If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact:

Kristin L. Jones  
E-mail: kj984007@ohio.edu  
Phone: (419) 512-6321

Dr. David Richard Moore  
E-mail: dmoore3@ohio.edu  
Phone: (740) 597-1322

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Dr. Chris Hayhow, Director of Research Compliance, at Ohio University, at (740) 593-0664, or email (hayhow@ohio.edu).

By continuing to the electronic survey, you are agreeing that: you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered you have been informed of potential risks and they have been explained to your satisfaction you understand Ohio University has no funds set aside for any injuries you might receive as a result of participating in this study you are 18 years of age or older your participation in this research is completely voluntary you may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Version Date: 06/01/2015 (Version 2)
Appendix C: PIMRS Principal Version and Additional Survey Questions

PRINCIPAL INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT

RATING SCALE

Principal Form

Published by:

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Hallinger@gmail.com

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Principal Form 2.1
THE PRINCIPAL INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT RATING SCALE

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

(A) District Name: __________________________

(B) Your School's Name: _______________________

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

   __ 1   ___ 5-9   ___ more than 15
   ___ 2-4 ___ 10-15

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

   __ 1   ___ 5-9   ___ more than 15
   ___ 2-4 ___ 10-15

(E) Gender: ___ Male  ___ Female

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

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

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

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

Thank you.
To what extent do you . . .?

I. FRAME THE SCHOOL GOALS

1. Develop a focused set of annual school-wide goals
   1 2 3 4 5

2. Frame the school’s goals in terms of staff responsibilities for meeting them
   1 2 3 4 5

3. Use needs assessment or other formal and informal methods to secure staff input on goal development
   1 2 3 4 5

4. Use data on student performance when developing the school’s academic goals
   1 2 3 4 5

5. Develop goals that are easily understood and used by teachers in the school
   1 2 3 4 5

II. COMMUNICATE THE SCHOOL GOALS

6. Communicate the school’s mission effectively to members of the school community
   1 2 3 4 5

7. Discuss the school’s academic goals with teachers at faculty meetings
   1 2 3 4 5

8. Refer to the school’s academic goals when making curricular decisions with teachers
   1 2 3 4 5

9. Ensure that the school’s academic goals are reflected in highly visible displays in the school (e.g., posters or bulletin boards emphasizing academic progress)
   1 2 3 4 5

10. Refer to the school’s goals or mission in forums with students (e.g., in assemblies or discussions)
    1 2 3 4 5

III. SUPERVISE & EVALUATE INSTRUCTION

11. Ensure that the classroom priorities of teachers are consistent with the goals and direction of the school
    1 2 3 4 5

12. Review student work products when evaluating classroom instruction
    1 2 3 4 5
13. Conduct informal observations in classrooms on a regular basis (informal observations are unscheduled, last at least 5 minutes, and may or may not involve written feedback or a formal conference)  
   ALMOST  NEVER          ALMOST  ALWAYS  
   1    2    3    4    5  

14. Point out specific strengths in teacher's instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)  
   ALMOST  NEVER          ALMOST  ALWAYS  
   1    2    3    4    5  

15. Point out specific weaknesses in teacher instructional practices in post-observation feedback (e.g., in conferences or written evaluations)  
   ALMOST  NEVER          ALMOST  ALWAYS  
   1    2    3    4    5  

### IV. COORDINATE THE CURRICULUM

16. Make clear who is responsible for coordinating the curriculum across grade levels (e.g., the principal, vice principal, or teacher-leaders)  
   ALMOST  NEVER          ALMOST  ALWAYS  
   1    2    3    4    5  

17. Draw upon the results of school-wide testing when making curricular decisions  
   ALMOST  NEVER          ALMOST  ALWAYS  
   1    2    3    4    5  

18. Monitor the classroom curriculum to see that it covers the school's curricular objectives  
   ALMOST  NEVER          ALMOST  ALWAYS  
   1    2    3    4    5  

19. Assess the overlap between the school's curricular objectives and the school's achievement tests  
   ALMOST  NEVER          ALMOST  ALWAYS  
   1    2    3    4    5  

20. Participate actively in the review of curricular materials  
   ALMOST  NEVER          ALMOST  ALWAYS  
   1    2    3    4    5  

### V. MONITOR STUDENT PROGRESS

21. Meet individually with teachers to discuss student progress  
   ALMOST  NEVER          ALMOST  ALWAYS  
   1    2    3    4    5  

22. Discuss academic performance results with the faculty to identify curricular strengths and weaknesses  
   ALMOST  NEVER          ALMOST  ALWAYS  
   1    2    3    4    5  

23. Use tests and other performance measure to assess progress toward school goals  
   ALMOST  NEVER          ALMOST  ALWAYS  
   1    2    3    4    5  

Principal Form 2.1  3
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<th></th>
<th>ALMOST NEVER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24. Inform teachers of the school's performance results in written form (e.g., in a memo or newsletter)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. Inform students of school's academic progress</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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**VI. PROTECT INSTRUCTIONAL TIME**

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<tr>
<td>26. Limit interruptions of instructional time by public address announcements</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>27. Ensure that students are not called to the office during instructional time</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>28. Ensure that tardy and truant students suffer specific consequences for missing instructional time</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Encourage teachers to use instructional time for teaching and practicing new skills and concepts</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>30. Limit the intrusion of extra- and co-curricular activities on instructional time</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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**VII. MAINTAIN HIGH VISIBILITY**

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<tr>
<td>31. Take time to talk informally with students and teachers during recess and breaks</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>32. Visit classrooms to discuss school issues with teachers and students</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>33. Attend/participate in extra- and co-curricular activities</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>34. Cover classes for teachers until a late or substitute teacher arrives</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>35. Tutor students or provide direct instruction to classes</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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**VIII. PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR TEACHERS**

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<tr>
<td>36. Reinforce superior performance by teachers in staff meetings, newsletters, and/or memos</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>37. Compliment teachers privately for their efforts or performance</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>38. Acknowledge teachers' exceptional performance by writing memos for their personnel files</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>39. Reward special efforts by teachers with opportunities for professional recognition</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>40. Create professional growth opportunities for teachers as a reward for special contributions to the school</td>
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**IX. PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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<td>41. Ensure that inservice activities attended by staff are consistent with the school's goals</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>42. Actively support the use in the classroom of skills acquired during inservice training</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>43. Obtain the participation of the whole staff in important inservice activities</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>44. Lead or attend teacher inservice activities concerned with instruction</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>45. Set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas or information from inservice activities</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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**X. PROVIDE INCENTIVES FOR LEARNING**

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<tr>
<td>46. Recognize students who do superior work with formal rewards such as an honor roll or mention in the principal's newsletter</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. Use assemblies to honor students for academic accomplishments or for behavior or citizenship</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. Recognize superior student achievement or improvement by seeing in the office the students with their work</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. Contact parents to communicate improved or exemplary student performance or contributions</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. Support teachers actively in their recognition and/or reward of student contributions to and accomplishments in class</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Principal Form 2.1

5
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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

The PIMRS was developed with the cooperation of the Milpitas (California) Unified School District, Richard P. Mea, Superintendent. As a research instrument, it meets professional standards of reliability and validity and has been used in over 200 studies of principal leadership in the United States, Canada, Australia, Europe, and Asia.

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

The PIMRS is copyrighted and may not be reproduced without the written permission of the author. Additional information on the development of the PIMRS and the rights to its use may be obtained from the publisher (see cover page).
The following additional questions were included with the PIMRS in Qualtrics and sent to principals in this study:

- **What is the highest level of education that you have attained?**
  - Bachelor’s Degree
  - Bachelor’s Degree, plus additional coursework for administrative/principal licensure
  - Master’s Degree
  - Master’s Degree, plus additional coursework for administrative/principal licensure
  - Educational Specialist Degree (Ed.S.)
  - Educational Specialist Degree, plus additional coursework for administrative/principal licensure
  - Doctorate (Ed.D., Ph.D., etc.)
  - Doctorate, plus additional coursework for administrative/principal licensure
  - Other (please indicate below):

- **What other professional positions have you held, prior to your current position as a building principal (please select all that apply), and for how long (please indicate number of years in the box following each selection)?**
  - Teacher
  - Instructional Coach
  - School Counselor
  - Assistant Principal
  - Principal (at another building)
  - Central Office Administrator
  - Technology Coordinator
  - Consultant (Curriculum, Technology, etc.)
  - Other Administrative Role (Athletic Director, etc., outside of Central Office)
  - No prior experience in the field of education.

- **How do you develop yourself professionally in order to enhance your own practice (please select all that apply)?**
  - The traditional model: exposure to research as the passive recipient of professional knowledge (in-service academies, workshops, seminars, etc.).
  - The craft model: training by other experienced professionals (shadowing or internships to observe how another principal interacts with school personnel and the public, deals with problems, and responds to crises).
  - The reflective inquiry model: interaction with other professionals through the use of networking and mentoring (generating knowledge through a process of systematic inquiry and self-reflection and networking/mentoring, including reading and journaling).
• Other (please describe any other form of professional development in which you engage):

Thank you for your time! I may contact you for a brief follow-up interview about your answers. The contact information you provide will remain confidential and will not be included in the study in any way.

• Name:
  o Preferred phone number:
  o Preferred e-mail address:
Appendix D: Permission to Use Instrument

Dr. Philip Hallinger
199/43 Sukhumvit Soi 8
Bangkok, 10110, Thailand
hallinger@gmail.com

April 12, 2015

Kristin Jones:

Dear Kristin,

As copyright holder and publisher, you have my permission as publisher to use the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) in your research study. In using the scale, you may make unlimited copies of any of the three forms of the PIMRS.

Please note the following conditions of use:

1. This authorization extends only to the use of the PIMRS for research purposes, not for general school district use of the instrument for evaluation or staff development purposes.

2. This is a single-use purchase for the author’s graduate research, thereby requiring purchase of additional rights for use in any future research.

3. The user agrees to send a soft copy (.pdf) of the completed study to the publisher upon completion of the research.

4. The user agrees to send a soft copy of the data set and coding instructions to the publisher upon completion of the research in order to enable further instrument development.

5. The user has permission to make minor adaptations to scale as necessary for the research.

6. If the instrument is translated, the user will supply a copy of the translated version.

Please be advised that a separate permission to publish letter, usually required by universities, will be sent after the publisher receives a soft copy of the completed study.

Sincerely,

Professor Philip Hallinger

www.philiphallinger.com
Appendix E: IRB Approval

A determination has been made that the following research study is exempt from IRB review because it involves:

Category 2. research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior.

Project Title: A Study of Highly-Effective Ohio Public School Elementary School Principals’ Self-Reported Perceptions of Personal Instructional and Pedagogical Leadership Behaviors and Beliefs

Primary Investigator: Kristin Lee Jones

Co-Investigator(s):

Advisor: David Richard Moore

Department: Education

Robin Stack, CIP, Human Subjects Research Coordinator
Office of Research Compliance

Date: April 7, 2014

The approval remains in effect provided the study is conducted exactly as described in your application for review. Any additions or modifications to the project must be approved (as an amendment) prior to implementation.
The amendment, detailed below has been reviewed and approved by a designate of the Institutional Review Board at Ohio University.

Amendment: Title change. Seeking funding. Changes to inclusion criteria. Increase enrollment to 352. Changes to research questions. Updated Appendix A and B. Consent form revised.

Project: A Study of Highly-Effective Ohio Public Elementary School Principals' Perceptions of Personal Instructional and Pedagogical Leadership

Primary Investigator: Kristin Lee Jones
Co-Investigator(s):

Advisor: David Richard Moore

Department: Education

Office of Research Compliance Staff
Rebecca Gale, AAB, CIP
Shelby Rex, BS
Robin Stack, CIP

The approval remains in effect provided the study is conducted exactly as described in your approved application. Any additions or modifications to the project must be reviewed and approved by the IRB (as an amendment) prior to implementation.

IRB approval does not supersede other regulatory requirements, such as HIPAA, FERPA, PPRA, etc.

Adverse events/unanticipated problems must be reported to the IRB promptly.

Date: June 4, 2015
### Appendix F: Qualitative Data Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>Frame the School Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CM</td>
<td>Communicate the School Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>Supervise and Evaluate Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Coordinate the Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>Monitor Student Progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT</td>
<td>Protect Instructional Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Maintain High Visibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Provide Incentives for Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>Promote Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IL</td>
<td>Provide Incentives for Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RL</td>
<td>Building Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA</td>
<td>Value-Added</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LD</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>TE</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
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