

THE INFLUENCE OF A MANDATED SCHOOL
IMPROVEMENT PROJECT ON SELECTED
PRINCIPALS' PRACTICES

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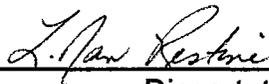
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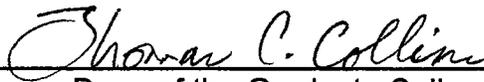
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

... the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people. (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p.5)

With the 1983 report, A Nation at Risk, school reform and the call for accountability have had a rippling effect throughout schools in the United States. According to Terrel Bell (1993), the original intent of A Nation at Risk was to call to the attention of the American people the need to rally around their schools. This report called for significant changes in schools. "Education," stated Bell, "is now a major high-priority national concern, as well as a state and local responsibility" (1993, p. 595). Since this report, many states have undertaken school improvement projects designed to prepare learners for the 21st century.

How important is the principal in school improvement? The leadership of the principal has emerged as a primary factor in the success of school improvement projects. The report, A Nation at Risk, recommends that principals play a crucial leadership role in developing community support. "Leadership," stated Bell, "has begun to attract more attention as a key ingredient in any successful school reform" (1993, p. 597). The findings of a Senate Select Committee on Equal Education Opportunity concur with the conclusions of Terrel Bell:

In many ways the school principal is the most important and influential individual in any school. He is the person responsible for all of the activities that occur in and around the school building. It is his leadership that sets the tone of the school, the climate for learning, the level of professionalism and morale of teachers, and the degree of concern for

what students may or may not become. He is the main link between the school and community and the way he performs in that capacity largely determines the attitudes of students and parents about school. If a school is a vibrant, innovative, child centered place; if it has a reputation for excellence in teaching; if students are performing to the best of their abilities one can almost always point to the principal's leadership as the key to success (Smith & Piele, 1989, p. 4-5).

A number of researchers tout the relevance of the principal's leadership. Anderson (1989) acknowledged that "a principal's leadership was one of the most crucial elements necessary for school success" (p. 53). Andrews and Basom (1990) concluded that no person is more important to the climate and culture of the school than the school principal. Ron Edmonds (1979) listed, as the number one correlate of an effective school, the notion that the leadership of the principal is characterized by substantial attention to the quality of instruction. Other researchers have continued to focus on the principal as the single most important factor in successful school improvement. Sergiovanni (1987) concluded that principals are the main characters in bringing about adoption and implementing goals and, according to Fullan (1991), "Principals can have a major impact on the degree of implementation of particular innovations" (p. 157)

One of the major educational school improvement projects involving school principals is Quality Performance Accreditation (QPA). In 1991, Kansas schools began the implementation of an educational improvement program entitled Quality Performance Accreditation (QPA). Quality Performance Accreditation is designed to "address school improvement, accountability, and school performance at the building level" (Kansas Quality Performance Accreditation, 1992, p. 2). The successful Quality Performance Accreditation program has five basic components:

1. Using effective schools principles
2. Creating a learning community
3. Training and retraining of staff
4. Emphasizing high academic performance
5. Meeting world class standards using integrated curricular instruction

It is worth noting only component number one addresses the role of the principal in this comprehensive reform act. Given the connection between leadership and program success, it would seem worthwhile to focus on leadership while the reforms are being implemented. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to describe the influence of a state mandated school improvement program on the role of the principal.

During the initial year of QPA, 50 schools were selected as pilot schools; and, by the completion of 1994, all Kansas schools were actively involved in QPA. As part of the School Improvement Act of 1991, school accreditation and continued state funding are based upon successful performance in this program.

Quality Performance Accreditation is designed around Effective Schools ideals. The Kansas State Board of Education (1993) described the focus on the effective schools model as one in which:

Educators will place a high priority on creating a safe and orderly environment in the schools; build a climate of high expectations for success for all students; commit to developing higher quality of instructional leadership; develop a clear and focused school mission; frequently monitor students' progress for success; and dedicate themselves to building better, positive home/school relations. (p.2)

The QPA document continues to list that each school and district will implement and practice, specifically, each district will establish the following standards:

- Establish and maintain high expectations for student learning,
- Continuously monitor student learning/achievement as a basis for program evaluation,
- Provide a safe and orderly environment,
- Have instructional leaders who pay particular attention to teaching and learning which result in improved student performance,
- And have a broadly understood academic focus and school mission which prepares students to live, learn, and work in an international community.

(p.7)

The effective schools movement was strongly influenced by Ron Edmonds. Edmonds (1979) contended that effective schools consisted of the following correlates:

- The leadership of the principal is characterized by substantial attention to the quality of instruction;
- There is a pervasive and broadly understood instructional focus;
- An orderly, safe climate exists that is conducive to teaching and learning;
- Teacher behaviors convey the expectation that all students are to obtain at least minimum mastery; and
- Pupil achievement is used as the measure for program evaluation.

Lezotte (1993) further expanded the list from five to seven correlates.

Lezotte stated that the original correlates were valid and essential and that with the successful implementation of the original five plus two more, schools would move toward a "learning for all" mission. Lezotte (1993) suggest that effective schools demonstrate evidence of the following correlates:

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

- Clear and Focused Mission
- Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task
- Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress
- Home-School Relations

Purkey and Smith (1982) found two elements common in effective schools research. These elements are high expectations for student achievement on the part of the school staff members and strong instructional leadership on the part of the principal or another staff member.

They further stated that the following elements were common to effective schools:

- Well defined goals and emphases,
- Staff training on a school wide basis,
- Control by staff over instructional and training decisions,
- A sense of order,
- A system of monitoring student progress,
- And good discipline.

With the strong influence of Effective Schools research incorporated into QPA, the Kansas principal must be knowledgeable of the effective schools expectations for the principal as instructional leader. Andrews and Soder (1987) found that high achieving schools were positively correlated with strong educational leaders. According to Mace-Matluck (1986), leadership from either the principal, another administrator, or a group of teachers is necessary to initiate and maintain the improvement process. Mazzarella and Grundy (1989) stated that effective school leaders are people of action. They have the ability to establish, visualize, and clearly communicate goals - - goals that are ambitious and specifically tied to student improvement (Mazzarella & Grundy, 1989, p.22).

Although the role of the principal is not specifically written or stated in any Quality Performance Accreditation documents, effective schools research focuses on the principal as the instructional leader (Lezotte, 1993). The principal as instructional leader is expected to be knowledgeable about curriculum and instruction and able to intervene directly with teachers in making instructional improvements (Hallinger, 1992). Hallinger summarized that high expectations for teachers and students, close supervision of classroom instruction, coordination of the school's curriculum, and close monitoring of student progress have all become synonymous with the role of instructional leader. Hallinger (1992) argued that, while instructional leadership demanded a new focus and set of work activities from the principal, the role conceived for the principal was still inherently managerial in nature.

Lawrence Lezotte (1993) described the role of instructional leadership for the principal as a leader of leaders rather than leader of followers. Lezotte wrote that with the first generation of instructional leadership the focus was primarily on the principal and the administrative staff of the school. In the second generation, this function becomes one of creating a community of shared values. The principal will need to develop his/her skills as a coach, partner, and cheerleader.

According to the research reviews, the principal is the most important person in school improvement (Anderson, 1989; Bell, 1993; Fullan, 1991; Sergiovanni, 1997; Smith & Piele, 1989). Do school reform and mandated school improvement programs have any influence on the role of the principal?

This study will examine the influence of QPA (external influence) and the principals' mental processes (internal influence) on principals' instructional leadership (practice) and the perceived impact on students and staff.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Leithwood (1988) established a framework to serve as a guide for exploring the nature, causes, and consequences of principals' practices. Leithwood stated that the model is intended to suggest that what principals do, or their practices, are most directly consequences of what they think. He further stated that certain elements turn out to have greater impact on their thinking than other elements. Principals, according to Leithwood, have been observed to engage in quite distinct patterns of practice shaped by their thoughts.

The Leithwood model suggests that external influences impact principals' mental processes. In turn, principals' actions affect classroom factors and school wide factors. The final impact is on the students and staff. Leithwood categorized these factors into three areas: influences, principal's practice, and impact. The framework below is parallel to the one found in Leithwood (1988) and should be read right to left (Fig. 1.1).

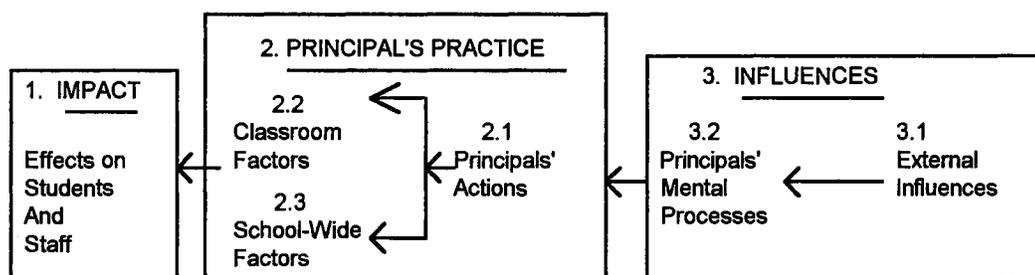


Figure 1.1 A framework to guide the review of literature on the nature, causes and consequences of principals' practices. (Leithwood, 1988)

Leithwood (1988) conducted a comprehensive review of research from pre-1985 to 1988. The intent of the review was to identify the aspects of the principalship that needed further research and to establish a context for better

appreciation of the significance of three studies by Stager, Cousins, and Begley (1988). Sixty-one studies were included in the Leithwood review.

Upon summarizing the research, Leithwood focused on influences on principal's practice. Leithwood identified four external factors that influence the mental processes of the principal: (a) the principal's role (e.g., expectations, complexity); (b) a large cluster of influences concerning the attitudes, abilities and behaviors of others (e.g., teacher's willingness to innovate); (c) characteristics of the school system (e.g., district policies and procedures); and (d) the principal's own "background" (e.g., training, socialization experiences.)

For the purpose of this study, a modification was made to the Leithwood model. The external influence for this study was limited to Quality Performance Accreditation and how QPA influences the mental processes of the principal. The mental process of the principal was defined as what the principal thinks. The Leithwood framework suggests that what principals do is most directly a consequence of what they think. How a principal thinks about Quality Performance Accreditation should affect practice. Therefore, QPA, a state mandated program, should influence the mental processes of the principal.

Thus, the framework proposed that the influence of QPA (external) influences mental processes (internal) which, in turn, affects principals' practice and instructional leadership. The principal's actions affect classroom and school-wide factors and impact students and staff (Fig. 1.2).

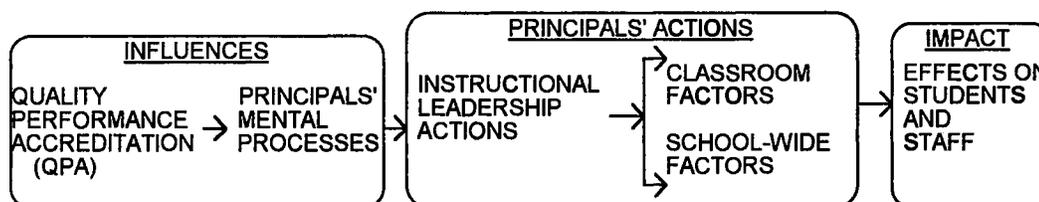


Figure 1.2 A framework to guide the study of the influence of QPA.

In order to develop an operational framework for instructional leadership, reference must be made to the Kansas Quality Performance Accreditation document (1993). This document lists, as one of the components of a successful Quality Performance Accreditation Program, the effective schools principles. Schools implementing these principles are to place a high priority on creating a safe and orderly environment, build a climate of high expectations for success, commit to developing a higher quality of instructional leadership, develop a clear and focused school mission, frequently monitor students' progress, and build better and positive home/school relations.

Further, listed in the same document in Process Outcome I , Standard D, is the call for schools to have instructional leaders who pay particular attention to teaching and learning which results in improved student performance (QPA, 1993, p.9).

For the purpose of this study, the operational framework for instructional leadership activities performed by the principal was identified using five categories as described by Krug (1993). These five categories consist of defining and communicating mission, managing curriculum, supervising teaching, monitoring student progress, and promoting an effective instructional climate.

Defining and communicating a mission; According to Krug, means that leaders articulate and share a clear vision of purpose, goals, and intended outcomes. Instructional leaders distinguish a purpose and an active commitment to achieving the educational mission.

Managing curriculum and instruction. Krug stated that instructional leaders need a broad base of curriculum-related knowledge in order to be aware of the special needs of each instructional area. An effective instructional leader is able to

blend the individual teaching styles and content areas into an integrated learning experience.

Supervising teaching. As an instructional leader, Krug relates that the principal needs to guide and support instructional activities. The principal encourages innovative teaching, helps with specific problems, and facilitates communication across the classroom. Instructional leaders are aware of the advances in instructional and learning theory.

Monitoring student progress. According to Krug, principals need to evaluate learning outcomes regularly and use the results to improve the instructional programs. Instructional leadership means understanding, implementing, and supporting a cycle of improvement. Improvement depends on defining realistic goals, assessing learning outcomes, and using assessment results to inform instruction and planning.

Promoting an instructional climate. Krug feels the principal creates an atmosphere that values learning and supports achievement. The principal plays a primary role in defining reinforcement systems, creating excitement, and communicating a message to students that learning has a value outside of the classroom (Krug, 1993, p.241).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

State mandated school improvement programs externally influence the role of the principal. External influences affect the mental processes of the principal and together these influences affect the actions of the principal which ultimately impact students and teachers.

Researchers suggest that strong instructional leadership is associated with school effectiveness (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Sergiovanni, 1987; Smith & Andrews, 1989) and that principals' practices influence teachers (Gomez & Jamachain, 1989; Seay & Blase, 1992; Spalding, 1994) and student

achievement (Davidson, 1987; Heck, 1992; Heck & Marcoulis, 1993; Mendez-Morse, 1991).

Instructional leadership models, adopted by policy makers (external mandates) and focused on school reform, are not necessarily implemented by principals (Hallinger, 1992) and/or are interpreted differently by principals (Flanagan, Richardson, & Lane, 1992; Goldman & Conley, 1993; Turner, 1986; Western Institution for Research and Evaluation, 1993).

Although instructional leadership is associated with effective schools, instructional leadership models/mandates are implemented and interpreted differently by principals. The different interpretations of principals can be explained by what principals do (their practices) and are consequences of what they think (their mental process).

Andrews (1990) contended that in a compliance model, leadership is benign, status-quo oriented, and performed through the authority of the roles of office. If the model developed by the State of Kansas is based upon the effective schools model, the principal will function as an instructional leader.

However, if principals perceive their role in the school improvement program developed by Kansas as one of compliance, the principal will be concerned with simply maintaining and meeting state regulations and mandates. School improvement will be minimal and related exclusively to the state mandated standards.

This study examined the influence of QPA (external) and mental processes (internal) on principal's instructional leadership (practice) and the perceived impact on students and staff from the perspective of selected principals and teachers.

This study will be directed by the following research questions:

- How has QPA influenced thinking about the role of the principal?

- How have principal's practices been affected by QPA?
- How have students and staff been influenced by principals' practice?

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative research was the method of inquiry used in this study.

Merriam (1988) stated that qualitative research requires that inquiry is inductive, focusing on process, understanding, and interpretation, rather than deductive and experimental. According to Bogdan & Bilken (1992) qualitative research has five characteristics:

- a natural setting being the direct source of data,
- the researcher is the key instrument,
- the research is descriptive,
- the researcher is concerned with the process rather than simply with outcomes or products,
- the researcher analyzes the data inductively, and the meaning is the essential concern. (p. 27)

The selected method of research for this study was qualitative case study.

A case study is an ideal design for understanding and interpreting observations of educational phenomena (Merriam, 1988). Education has turned to case study research to explore the processes and dynamics of practice (Merriam, 1988).

Yin (1989) stated that case study is an empirical study that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in a real life context where the boundaries between the phenomena are not clearly evident and multiple sources of evidence are used.

Yin (1989) classified case studies into three categories: explanatory, descriptive, and exploratory. Explanatory case study is designed to explain the causal links in real life that are too complex for survey or experimental strategies. Descriptive case study describes a real-life context in which an

intervention occurred. The final category, exploratory case study, is used when the researcher wants to explore situations being evaluated that have no clear, single set of outcomes.

The specific strategy to be used for this project was the exploratory case study. Exploratory case study is used when the goal of the research is to develop a pertinent working hypothesis and propositions for further research (Yin, 1989). Exploratory case study was used since the purpose of this study was examine and explore the influence of a mandated school improvement process and to study the impact of the process on the mental processes and practices of the principal.

Data Needs

Since the purpose of this study was to examine and explore the influence of a mandated school improvement process and to study the influences on the mental processes and actions of the principal, data was obtained from principals actively engaged in the process. The researcher visited three school sites to interview and observe principals. Three teachers were also interviewed to gather their perceptions of principals' roles, practices, and impact on students and staff.

"A good respondent can express thoughts, feelings, opinions, and his or her perspective of the topic being studied" (Merriam, 1988, p.76). All selected respondents must have had a perception of the principals' practice prior to the implementation of QPA. Each principal must have been the administrator of the school prior to the beginning of the QPA process. This enabled participants in the study to have an idea about how the principal functioned prior to QPA.

Data Sources

When selecting a school site, the recommendations of Marshall and Rossman (1989) were considered. They recommend that (a) entry into these

sites be possible; (b) each contain a high probability of a rich mix of the processes, people, and programs being studied; and (c) that the researcher will be allowed to remain at each site as long as necessary.

The sites in this study were three secondary schools that were members of the South Central Kansas Educational Service Center (SCKESC) currently participating in QPA. The South Central Kansas Educational Service Center serves 30 school districts in south central Kansas. The largest school in the cooperative has a student population of over 1870 students while the smallest school has 89 students. The average student population is 455.6 students. The three schools selected had a student population of between 400 to 500 students and will be rural schools.

These particular schools were selected for the study based upon a recommendation from other professionals in the field, area service center, or local university. The schools recommended were chosen based upon reputation as an effective school, a good resource for the study of QPA, and knowledge of the principal in the areas of effective schools and QPA. Each school was in the fourth year of the QPA process, and each principal expressed an interest in this project.

Data Collection

The researcher functioned as the primary instrument in the collection of the data. The use of multiple methods of collecting the data ensured the triangulation of data sources and secured the trustworthiness of the study. Triangulation strengthens reliability as well as internal validity (Merriam, 1988). The most important advantage presented by using multiple sources of evidence is the development of converging lines of inquiry (Yin, 1989). Multiple methods used consisted of document analysis, interviews, and direct observation.

The procedures for data collection began in 1996. Time in the field was be contingent on the amount of time needed to collect the data, the amount of time allocated to the researcher by the participants, and the amount of data collected. Additional guidelines considered when completing the collection of data were exhaustion of sources, saturation of categories, emergence of regularities, and over-extension of information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

One of the most important sources of case study information is the interview (Yin, 1989). The researcher visited each site and interviewed the principal and teachers. Open-ended questioning techniques were used to gain a perception about the role of the principal, what each individual saw the principal doing, what the principal did prior to QPA, and what was being done presently. The interview protocol was first piloted and revised with input from a small cadre of area principals.

Documents were reviewed to indicate evidence of impact on students and staff, and instructional leadership. Documents are defined to include public records, personal papers, physical traces, and artifacts (Merriam, 1988). Documents are helpful in verifying the correct spellings, titles, or names of organizations, can provide other specific details to corroborate information, and inferences can be made from the documents (Yin, 1989).

The principal was be observed by the researcher during the visits to each site. Each observation focused on the role of the principal as an instructional leader as influenced by QPA. "Participant observation maximizes the advantage of the human being as instrument" (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p.193). Merriam (1988) states that participant observation is a major means of collecting data in case study research. "When combined with interviewing and document analysis, case studies allow for a holistic interpretation of the phenomenon being

investigated" (p.102). Throughout the concurrent data collection and analysis process, particular attention was paid to emergent themes and categories.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data was on-going during the course of this study. "Without concurrent data collection and analysis one runs the risk of ending up with data that are unfocused, repetitious, and overwhelming in the sheer volume of material that needs to be processed" (Merriam, 1988, p. 124).

Throughout the analysis of the data, the theoretical framework model (Fig. 1.1) was referenced to explain the impact of QPA on the principals' instructional leadership. Research questions continued to be referenced as the data were analyzed and emergent themes and categories were discovered. According to Lincoln and Guba (1981) "devising categories involves both convergent and divergent thinking" (p.134). Categories were constructed using the Krug (1993) categories for instructional leadership and the seven guidelines created by Lincoln and Guba (1981, p. 99) for developing categories:

- Include information that is relevant and not excluded by boundary-setting rules.
- Include information that relates or bridges several already existing information items.
- Include any information that identifies new elements or brings them to the surface.
- Add any information that reinforces existing information, but reject it if the reinforcement is merely redundant.
- Add new information that tends to explain other information already known.
- Add any information that exemplifies either the nature of the category or important evidence within the category.

- Add any information that tends to refute or challenge already known information.

Once the data were collected and analyzed, completed categories were designed to represent the original themes of the study. A description was developed based upon the influence of QPA on the role of the principal, the impact of QPA on the principals' practice, and the impact on students and staff.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Since 1983 and the A Nation at Risk, many states have undertaken vigorous mandated educational reform programs. As the processes began, little attention was given to the effects of state mandated school improvement on the role of the principal. This study was designed to contribute knowledge concerning the role of the principal in state mandated school reform. Andrews (1990) contended that in a compliance model, leadership is benign, status-quo oriented, and performed through the authority of the roles of office. If the model developed by the State of Kansas is based upon the effective schools model, the principal will function as an instructional leader.

However, if principals perceive their role in the school improvement program developed by Kansas as one of compliance, the principal will be concerned with simply maintaining and meeting state regulations and mandates. School improvement will be minimal and related exclusively to the state mandated standards.

SUMMARY

As researchers have indicated, the principal is the most important person in school improvement. Without the vision, leadership, and abilities of the principal, school improvement will not occur. This study examined how state mandated school improvement programs impacted the mental process and practices of the principal.

The second chapter of this study presents a review of related literature pertaining to the role of the principal in the effective schools programs, principals' practice, and the impact of instructional leadership on students and staff.

The third chapter explains the rationale for the method chosen; the researcher's potential for bias; selection of sites; selection of respondents; method of data collection; data analysis procedures; and the reliability, validity, and generalizability of the study.

The fourth chapter presents the data gathered through the field work of the researcher. This study was directed by the following research questions: How has QPA influenced thinking about the role of the principal? How has the principals' practice been affected? How have students and staff been influenced by principals' practice?

The fifth chapter includes analysis and findings gathered from the data while the final chapter discusses conclusions, implications, and presents suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

With the 1983 report, A Nation at Risk, school reform and the call for accountability have had a rippling effect throughout schools. Since this report, many states have undertaken school improvement projects designed to prepare learners for the 21st century. The first section of this chapter discusses state school reform and the principal. The second section examines principals' practice. The third section reviews influences on principals' practice, and the fourth section presents a review of the literature regarding the principals' impact on classroom and student achievement. The fifth section discusses principals and their effect on teachers. The final section discusses and defines instructional leadership.

School Reform: Legislative/State Mandates and Principals

Legislative school reform has influenced the practices of many individuals in schools. Turner (1986) studied the impact of Texas school reform on the instructional role of the principal. After surveying 314 principals in the East Texas Study Council, the researcher concluded that people did not see the mandates to be as important as did the legislators. Furthermore, Turner stated that the degree of reported change among school systems appeared related to central office leadership.

Flanigan, Richardson, and Lane (1992) studied South Carolina's school improvement project, entitled the Educational Improvement Act (EIA). EIA is based on a set of expected performance and attendance criteria for the student; the roles of teacher and principal; in which action would occur. In their study, the researchers (1992) surveyed principals in deregulated South Carolina schools. Legislators deregulated schools to encourage productive and

successful schools to initiate new and innovative ideas. Based upon the responses from the principals, Flanigan, Richardson, and Lane concluded that schools given this freedom and latitude were not the creative, innovative schools that were previously envisioned.

Goldman and Conley (1993) explored reactions to Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century (Oregon House Bill 3565). After surveying the certified staffs of 92 schools in 18 Oregon school districts, they determined that school restructuring legislation can be developed without broad-based participation of teachers. They further concluded that principals and teachers may not be as accustomed as central office staff to interpreting the political agenda surrounding legislation. School leadership, whether derived from principals or teachers, appeared to be an important factor in how school staffs responded to change.

In a study of Utah's Strategic Plan for Public Education (USSP), or House Bill 162 (HB 162), researchers at the Western Institute for Research and Evaluation (1993) asked 214 Utah principals about their current levels of awareness and understanding of strategic planning. Researchers reported that approximately 82% of principals surveyed were aware of the intent, but only 25% could provide accurate information regarding the details of these initiatives. Fifty-four percent reported they felt comfortable in their ability to use strategic planning to improve their school. The findings suggest that principals did not restrict their thinking to the particular model of strategic planning embodied in USSP or HB 162.

Leadership is an important variable in state mandated school improvement programs. Leadership is not necessarily focused on the tasks of principals, but rather on some person within the organization (Goldman & Conley, 1993; Turner, 1986).

People do not believe mandated change is important as do legislators and mandated change does not result in the innovative schools that have been envisioned (Turner, 1986; Flanigan, Richardson, and Lane, 1992).

Principals and Their Practice

The many tasks performed by the principal seem never ending. Sergiovanni (1987) stated that the principal's job is to coordinate, direct, and support the work of others. He says:

This is accomplished by defining objectives, evaluating performance, providing the necessary resources, building a supportive psychological climate, running interference with parents, planning, scheduling, bookkeeping, resolving teacher conflicts, handling student problems, dealing with the school district's central office, and otherwise helping to keep the school running effectively day by day thus improving its ability to achieve its objectives. (p.6)

Reisert (1992) interviewed 56 Indiana public school principals to examine how the principal's role has changed. He concluded that changes have occurred through more time required, more paper work, higher expectations, and greater accountability.

Leithwood, Begley, & Cousins (1992) described four dimensions that detail the practices of principals. These dimensions include:

- goals principals attempt to achieve in their schools (nature, source, and use of such goals)
- factors in classrooms and the school which principals believe they must influence to accomplish their goals
- strategies used to influence such factors
- the nature of decision-making processes

Smith and Andrews (1989) studied 2,500 teachers and identified four areas of interactions that occur between the school principal and instructional staff. These interactions include resource provider, instructional resource, communicator, and visible presence.

When describing the ideal principalship, Sergiovanni (1987) stated that several administrative theorists identify the following four functions related to task and processes:

- planning - - setting goals and objectives
- organizing - - bringing together human, financial, and physical resources
- leading - - guiding and supervising subordinates
- controlling - - evaluation responsibilities

The functions listed by Sergiovanni and other researchers help to point out the multifaceted and complex nature of the role and practice of the principal.

Dwyer (1985) spent over 1,000 hours in 12 different schools studying principals. Dwyer determined that nine categories are covered by the daily routines of these principals. These categories are goal setting and planning, monitoring, evaluating, communicating, scheduling, staffing, modeling, governing, and filling in. In 50% of the Dwyer observations, a principal's routine fit within the communication category.

Peterson and Warren (1993) noted a change in the role of the principal in the area of building governance. As more groups and individuals become involved with the governance of the building, these researchers found that the role of principal included new decision-making jurisdictions, more time at formal and informal meetings in order to make decisions, and more time as a conflict resolver or mediator due to the influence increased by the new governance structure.

Instructional leadership is an important function of principals' practices and especially school effectiveness. Strong instructional leadership has been associated with school effectiveness (Andrews & Soders, 1987). Attempting to find and define the concept of instructional leadership is difficult. Krug (1992) related that recent studies suggest a five-factor taxonomy to describe what instructional leaders do. This taxonomy includes defining mission, managing curriculum and instruction, supervising teaching, monitoring student progress, and promoting the instructional climate.

Hallinger (1992) contends that the instructional leadership model adopted by policy makers during the 1980's was never truly implemented by many American principals. He further states that "while instructional leadership demanded a new focus and set of work activities from the principal, the role conceived for the principal was still inherently managerial in nature" (p. 38).

Leithwood and his colleagues (1992) concluded that instructional leadership conveys a meaning which encompasses only a portion of those activities now associated with effective school leadership. They further argued that problem-solving is an appropriately generic and comprehensive conception of what will be demanded of future leaders, more appropriate than instructional leadership.

Research indicates that the principal's role is multifaceted (Dwyer, 1985; Krug, 1992; Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1987; Smith & Andrews, 1989). Consistent throughout the research of what principals do in their practice are the functions of support, influence, leadership, planning, and organization (Dwyer, 1985; Krug, 1992; Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1987; Smith & Andrews, 1989). The research further suggests that the principal's role is managerial in nature (Hallinger, 1992). The research also indicates that the role of the principal is changing with more time being required,

more paper work, higher expectations, greater accountability, and building governance (Dwyer, 1985; Reiser, 1992). Leithwood (1992) stated that instructional leadership only describes a portion of activities associated with effective schools and conveys only a part of what principals do in their practice.

Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership is a term that has been closely associated with the Effective Schools movement. Lezotte (1992) wrote that instructional leadership and Effective Schools have gone hand in hand from the beginning.

Niece (1993) conducted a case study of four secondary schools in Ohio in an attempt to identify what sources influenced the instructional leadership of secondary school principals. During his research, Niece used five categories of instructional leadership for identification of data collected. He listed that an effective principal at the secondary level possessed a substantial knowledge base in curriculum, instruction, and evaluation; provided vision and direction for the school; promoted positive teaching and learning environments; established patterns of effective communication and motivation, and maintained high expectations for self, staff, and students.

Using a similar research format, Krug (1992) studied eighty-one principals using five categories of instructional leadership to identify the activities that principals engaged in. During five consecutive days, principals were randomly paged during the school day and asked to complete a short form describing the activity they were doing and, if any, the relevance to instructional leadership. The categories were defining and communicating a mission, managing curriculum and instruction, supervising teaching, monitoring student progress, and promoting instructional climate.

Hallinger (1992) concurred with the previous findings on instructional leadership. He wrote that high expectations for teachers and students, close

supervision of classroom instruction, coordination of the school's curriculum, and close monitoring of student progress have become synonymous with the role of instructional leader.

On the contrary, it is suggested that the role of instructional leadership should be revised or even shared. Cunard (1990) suggested that the role of the principal as instructional leader is no longer primarily one of the principal but should be shared with teachers. In describing this new role, Cunard proposes that shared instructional leadership would include letting teachers become responsible for staff development, creating an instructional council, constituting a position of instructional dean and recognizing the value of peer coaching.

Leithwood (1992) further supported the notion of a shift in instructional leadership. He stated that instructional leadership no longer appears to capture the essence of what school administration has become. He suggests that transformational leadership evokes a more appropriate range of practice and it should subsume instructional leadership as the dominant image of school administration. Leithwood asserted that instructional leadership focuses on first order changes such as improving the technical and instructional activities through close monitoring of teachers' and students' classroom work. He further determined that instructional leaders also make changes that affect building a shared vision, improving communication, and developing collaborative decision-making processes.

In order to define instructional leadership for this study, the first reference must be made to the Kansas Quality Performance Accreditation document (1993). Quality Performance Accreditation is designed around the effective schools ideals. The Kansas State Board of Education (1993) described the focus on the effective schools model as follows:

Educators will place a high priority on creating a safe and orderly environment in the schools; build a climate of high expectations for success for all students; commit to developing higher quality of instructional leadership; develop a clear and focused school mission; frequently monitor students' progress for success; and dedicate themselves to building better, positive home/school relations. (p.2)

The QPA document further enumerates in Process Outcome I that each school and district will implement and practice effective schools principles and procedures as evidenced by the following standards:

- Establish and maintain high expectations for student learning
- Continuously monitor student learning/achievement as a basis for program evaluation
- Provide a safe and orderly environment
- Have instructional leaders who pay particular attention to teaching and learning which result in improved student performance
- Have a broadly understood academic focus and school mission which prepares students to live, learn, and work in an international community (p.7)

For the purpose of this study, instructional leadership activities performed by the principal will be identified using the five categories described by Krug (1993). These five categories consist of defining and communicating mission, managing curriculum and instruction, supervising teaching, monitoring student progress, and promoting an effective instructional climate.

Defining and communicating a mission. According to Krug, this means that leaders articulate and share a clear vision of purpose, goals, and intended outcomes. Instructional leaders distinguish a purpose and an active commitment to achieving the educational mission.

Managing curriculum and instruction. Krug states that instructional leaders need a broad base of curriculum-related knowledge in order to be aware of the special needs of each instructional area. Effective instructional leaders are able to blend the individual teaching styles and content areas into an integrated learning experience.

Supervising teaching. As an instructional leader, the principal needs to guide and support instructional activities. The principal encourages innovative teaching, helps with specific problems, and facilitates communication across the classroom. Instructional leaders are aware of the advances in instructional and learning theory.

Monitoring student progress. Principals need to evaluate learning outcomes regularly and use the results to improve the instructional programs. Instructional leadership means understanding, implementing, and supporting a cycle of improvement. Improvement depends on defining realistic goals, assessing learning outcomes, and using assessment results to inform instruction and planning.

Promoting an instructional climate. The principal creates an atmosphere that values learning and supports achievement. The principal plays a primary role in defining reinforcement systems, creating excitement, and communicating a message to students that learning has a value outside of the classroom (Krug, 1993, p.241).

The literature suggests that instructional leadership encompasses five areas within the principals' practice: curriculum and instruction, vision and direction, supervision of teaching, monitoring student progress, and promoting an instructional climate (Hallinger, 1992; Krug, 1992; Niece, 1993). Additional literature suggests that the role of instructional leadership should be revised or even shared (Cunard, 1990; Leithwood, 1992).

Influences on Principals' Practice

As schools began reform movements, external influences increased. Peterson and Warren (1993) reported that changes in governance structures result in informal coalitions, interest groups, and individuals emerging to influence, and in some situations, make decisions. The researchers determined that principals in these situations spent more time in informal committees and also in informal discussions.

Seay and Blase (1992) interviewed six principals and thirty-three teachers from a suburban school district in the southeastern United States using qualitative research methods of open-ended interviews and document analysis. The researchers reported that interest groups affect the nature of interactions between the principal and teachers and that principals in this study realized they were working in a political arena in which persuasion, tact and compromise were valuable skills.

Leithwood (1988) listed characteristics of the school system and the community as two sources of obstacles for the principal. Those characteristics of a school district creating obstacles include hierarchical structures, rigid and time consuming policies and procedures, inadequate resources, and conservative stances of administrators. The obstacles in a community included the interest of parents, pressure from special interest groups, and conservative views about the nature of appropriate school programs.

Fullan (1991) listed eight factors that affect the initiation of change. The factors include existence and quality of the innovation, access to innovations, advocacy from central office, teacher advocacy, external change agents, community pressure, new policy and funds, and problem-solving and bureaucratic orientations. Fullan stated that "innovations get initiated from many different sources and for different reasons" (1991, p. 51).

Research indicates that pressure from external influences continues to be an obstacle that influences the role of the principal (Seay & Blase, 1992; Leithwood, 1988; Peterson & Valli, 1993).

Principals' Influence on Student Achievement

Research reveals that the principal can influence student achievement. Heck and Marcoulides (1993) studied 85 elementary and 33 high schools in California, achieving their comparison test scores for three consecutive years. In each school, one principal and six teachers completed questionnaires. The researchers concluded that the effects of the principal's instructional leadership are not strong on student outcomes, but they did suggest that by manipulating variables at the building level, principals can have a positive influence on student achievement. Their findings indicated that the manner in which high school and elementary principals govern their buildings, build strong school climate, and organize and monitor the school's instructional program are important predictors of academic achievement.

After studying 20 Chicago schools, Davidson (1987) stated that most principals (95%) expected the majority of students in their schools to perform well. On the contrary, the teachers in these buildings indicated that only 33.7% had high expectations for students. The teachers indicated that home background was the major factor in student achievement.

Mendez-Morse (1991) suggests that effective principals can make a difference in the academic achievement of at-risk students. Characteristics of principals in schools in which at-risk students were achieving academic success were (1) support of teachers' instructional methods and the modifications of instructional approaches and materials, (2) the allocation of resources and materials, (3) visits to classrooms for instructional purposes, (4) solicitation and providing feedback on instructional methods and techniques, (5) and analysis of

data to focus attention on improving the curriculum or instructional approach to maximize student achievement (p.4).

Heck's research (1992) supported previous studies indicating what principals do as instructional leaders correlates with the predictability of school outcomes. Furthermore, Heck's study, which focused on principals as well as the classroom behaviors of teachers, provided support for the belief that school variables, including the principal's instructional leadership, are predictive of the school's academic outcomes. Yet, in a study of 104 eighth grades in Mississippi, Couch (1991) concluded that the degree to which a principal demonstrates instructional leadership had no effect on student achievement scores.

Researcher indicate that what a principal does in practice can influence student achievement (Heck, 1992; Heck & Marcoulides, 1993; Mendez-Morse, 1991), and when a principal manipulates the variables within a school, they can predict student achievement (Heck, 1992; Heck & Marcoulides, 1993).

Principals' Influence on Teachers

Studies indicate that principals do have some influence over teachers. The extent and magnitude of this influence does seem to vary. Gomez and Jamgochian (1989) studied the perceptions of ten principals and their influences on one hundred and forty-two teachers in a middle class/urban community. Principals perceived themselves as having more influence than attributed to them by the teachers. They further reported that teachers see themselves as being influenced by the principal.

Seay and Blase (1992) reported that the principals in their study listed the ability to affect the choices made by teachers as the primary function of interactions with teachers. Furthermore, influence of external groups such as parents, students, system level administrators, boards of education, business,

and other political groups greatly affects the nature of the interactions between principals and teachers.

After conducting a case study of a principal in south central Texas, Spalding (1994) indicated that principals influence teachers' decisions by manipulation of teacher suggestions, using voting techniques, planting information, exchange, and use of expert knowledge. Spalding further concluded that principals in this study went to great efforts to control the decision-making of the teachers.

Heck (1992) found favor and support were used as bargaining chips in the exchange between the principal and the teachers. Teachers' perceptions of the principals' implementation of instructional leadership activities may be useful in determining the principals' effectiveness in performing the role.

Firestone and Wilson (1989) concluded from their study of 175 elementary and 118 secondary schools in southeastern Pennsylvania that principals contribute most by supporting teachers' efforts and giving them the autonomy to adjust to in-class and over-time variation in student ability. They further suggested that teachers have stronger influence over student achievement than do principals.

After surveying 437 middle school teachers, Bushman (1992) found that principal authenticity is the single most overriding determinant of a climate of faculty trust in a building. High authenticity according to Bushman leads to high organizational and colleague trust and, most dramatically, principal trust.

Research indicates that principals do have influence with teachers (Gomez & Jamgochian, 1989; Seay & Blase, 1992; Spalding, 1994) and that the relationship between principals and teachers is impacted by the use of various strategies (Spalding, 1994), influence from external groups (Seay & Blase, 1992), supporting teachers efforts (Firestone & Wilson, 1989), and building a

climate of trust (Bushman, 1992). Heck (1992) stated that teacher perceptions of the principal may determine the principal's effectiveness.

Summary

This review focused on the influences of principals' practice and how these influences effect different aspects of the academic community . A select group of legislative state mandates were first reviewed to illustrate the effects on the role of the principal. Since the call for reform echoed from A Nation at Risk, the majority of states have developed school reform programs.

The second section of the review showed the many tasks that principals perform in their practices. Sergiovanni (1987) appropriately illustrated the many tasks associated with the principals and cited what researchers reported as the major functions of an ideal principalship. With the impact of school reform, the role of the principal is changing (Resiert, 1992; Peterson & Warren, 1993).

As school reform begins to impact schools, the need to become aware of interest groups as external influences on the principal's practice has become apparent (Peterson & Warren, 1993; Seay & Blase, 1992; Fullan, 1991). Leithwood (1988) listed the school system and the community as obstacles to the principal while Fullan (1991) stated that innovations are initiated from many different sources and for different reasons.

The influence of the principal on student achievement was reviewed in the next section. The actions of effective principals affect the academic achievement of the students (Mendez-Morse, 1991; Heck, 1993; Heck & Marcoulides, 1993). The implication of this section reflects the need for mandated school reform that allows principals the latitude and flexibility to focus on specific items for the improvement of student achievement.

The final section focuses on the influence of the principal's practice on the teachers. The conclusion is that principals do influence teachers (Gomez &

Jamgochian, 1989; Seay & Blase, 1992; Spalding, 1994). If the principal's practice influences teachers, then a state mandated program, (which influences principals), will in turn directly affect teachers.

Chapter III is an in-depth review of the qualitative methodology used for this study. This chapter provides an explanation for the selection of qualitative research methods, and enumerates the research bias, techniques for data collection, data needs, data sources, and data analysis.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Chapter I explained that the purpose of this study was to identify the influence of a state mandated school reform and its effects on the role of the principal. Chapter II served as in-depth review of the relevant literature concerning the influence of the principals' practice and how these influences affect different aspects of the academic community. The review of literature revealed that the role of the principal is changing and that the principal needs to become aware of influences on practice. Furthermore, the review revealed that influence on students is indirect, however, the principal does influence students and teachers. In this chapter the research methodology which guides this study is presented as to the qualitative methodology which will be used; a description of the participants, information about the instrument, and the methods of data collection and analysis. The reliability, validity, and generalizability of this methodology are also addressed.

Rationale for the Method

Researchers frequently debate the relative merits of the two popular paradigms used in determining the nature of reality: positivism or scientific inquiry and naturalistic inquiry. For the purpose of clarity, Lincoln and Guba (1985) contrast five positivist and naturalistic paradigm axioms:

1. Positivist reality is single, tangible, and fragmentable; while in the naturalistic paradigm realities are multiple, constructed, and holistic.
2. The relationship of knower to the known for positivist inquiry is independent, a dualism; while for the naturalistic inquiry knower and known are interactive, inseparable.
3. In the positivist paradigm, time-free and context-free generalizations (nomothetic statements) are possible; however, in the naturalistic

paradigm only time- and context-bound working hypotheses (idiographic statements) are possible.

4. For the positivist there are real causes, temporally precedent to or simultaneous with the effects; while for the naturalist, all entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping, so that it is impossible to distinguish causes from effects.

5. Inquiry in the positivist paradigm is value free, but the naturalistic paradigm inquiry is value-bound. (p. 37)

Guba and Lincoln (1988) argue that the positivist paradigm is appropriate in controlled experiments, such as the field of chemistry or physics; however, they contend that the naturalistic inquiry has a place too in all social/behavioral research. The choice of paradigm should be made on the basis of fit between the "assumptions and postures of a paradigm and the phenomenon being studied or evaluated" (p. 56). For many researchers in education and social sciences, scientific inquiry, however appropriate to the "hard" sciences, is not well suited in the study of human behavior. According to Guba and Lincoln (1988), the results of this kind of research often proves to be "inconclusive, difficult to aggregate, and impossible to relate to the happenings in the real world" (p.x).

The selection of a research strategy is a decision that is based upon the problem being presented by the researcher. Marshall and Rossman (1995) and Yin (1994) suggest the researcher ask three questions: What is the form of research question (e.g., describe or demonstrate distribution of such phenomenon)? Does the research require control over behavior, or does it seek to describe naturally occurring events? Is the phenomenon under study contemporary or historical? In this study, the researcher is not interested in predicting behavior nor statistical data, but rather in a study of a real-life

educational phenomenon. When selecting a particular research method, Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen (1993) explained that, while both qualitative and quantitative methods can be used, qualitative methods are generally preferred, primarily because they allow for thick data to be collected that demonstrate an interrelationship with content. Merriam (1988) states that qualitative research requires that inquiry is inductive, focusing on process, understanding, and interpretation, rather than deductive and experimental. According to Bogdan and Bilken (1992) qualitative research has five characteristics:

- natural setting being the direct source of data,
- the researcher is the key instrument,
- the research is descriptive,
- the researcher is concerned with the process rather than simply with outcomes or products,
- the researcher analyzes the data inductively, and the meaning is the essential concern. (p. 27)

In this study, the researcher investigated the influence of QPA on the practice of the principal. With a qualitative design, the emphasis of the study explored the meaning, variations, and perceptual experience of phenomena (Crabtree & Miller, 1992).

Based upon the problem and questions addressed in this research, qualitative case study method and data collecting technique were employed. Qualitative case study method was selected when the researcher decided to investigate the influence of QPA. The study, focused on practice of principals, were guided by the following research questions: How has QPA influenced thinking about the role of the principal? How has the principals' practice been affected? What is the perceived impact on students and staff?

The researcher attempted to understand and provide data concerning the influence of a state mandated school improvement program on the practice of the principal. Merriam (1988) contends that case study is an ideal design for understanding and interpreting observations of educational phenomena. In a qualitative case study, inquiry is inductive-focusing on process, understanding, and interpretation-rather than deductive and experimental (Merriam, 1988, p. 21). Yin (1989) contends that case study is an empirical study that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in a real-life context where the boundaries between the phenomenon are not clearly evident and multiple sources of evidence are used.

The decision to use case study research is predicated by the nature of the research questions, the amount of control, and the desired end product (Merriam, 1988, p. 9). This study focused on the problem of the influence of mandated school improvement programs and principals' practices. The questions that direct this study meet the criteria for a qualitative case study. "How" and "why" questions are likely to be favored in the use of case studies (Yin, 1989). Yin further states that case studies are appropriate when a "how" or "why" question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has no control.

Yin (1989) classified case studies into three categories, explanatory, descriptive, and exploratory. Explanatory case study is designed to explain the casual links in real life that are too complex for survey or experimental strategies. Descriptive case study describes a real-life context in which an intervention occurred. The final category, exploratory case study, is used when the researcher wants to explore situations being evaluated that have no clear, single set of outcomes.

The specific strategy of case study for this study was exploratory case study. Exploratory case study is used when the goal of the research is to develop a pertinent hypothesis and propositions for further research (Yin, 1989). Yin further stated that exploratory case study can be used to explore an intervention that has no clear single set of outcomes. Exploratory case study was used since the purpose of this study was to examine and explore the influence of a mandated school improvement process and to study the effects of the process on the mental processes and actions of the principal.

Selection of Sites

When selecting a school site, the recommendations of Marshall and Rossman (1989) will be considered. They recommend that (1) entry into these sites be possible; (2) each contain a high probability of a rich mix of the processes, people, and programs being studied; and (3) that the researcher will be allowed to remain at each site as long as necessary.

The sites used in this study consisted of three secondary schools that are members of the South Central Kansas Educational Service Center (SCKESC) and are participating in QPA. The South Central Kansas Educational Service Center serves 30 school districts in south central Kansas. The largest school in the cooperative has a student population of over 1870 students while the smallest school has 89 students. The average student population is 455 students. The three schools selected will have a student population of between 400 to 500 students and will be rural schools. These particular schools were selected for the study based upon a recommendation from other professionals in the field, area service center, or local university. Each school is in the fourth year of the QPA process, and each principal expressed an interest in this project.

Prior to the final selection of a site, each of the three building principals were contacted by the researcher. Each principal was asked about the length of his/her tenure at this particular site, the phase of the school in the QPA process, interest in participating in this research, and finally the accessibility of the school.

To protect the identity of each site and respondent, pseudonyms were used in further reference. Consent Forms were given to each respondent for their voluntary signature to further protect their rights (Appendix A).

Selection of Respondents

The respondents selected for this study were individuals who possess specialized information. "A good respondent can express thoughts, feelings, opinions, and his or her perspective of the topic being studied" (Merriam, 1988, p.76). Crabtree and Miller (1992) suggest the selection of respondents should include individuals that have been in the culture long enough to no longer think about the phenomenon. The respondents were required to have been associated with the practice of the principal prior to the implementation and during the present phase of QPA. Since the researcher had no prior knowledge of the individuals within the organization or the community, the principal of each site entrusted to develop a preliminary list of possible respondents. The final list of respondents was be the decision of the researcher.

Respondents selected for this study was placed into three categories: the principal and certified staff. Certified staff were defined as any individual in the organization that requires a license in order to practice in the organization. The principal will be the primary respondent in this subgroup.

Data Collection

The researcher was the primary instrument in the collection of the data. Interviews, observations, and document reviews were the primary methods of

collecting the data ensuring triangulation of data sources and trustworthiness. Triangulation strengthens reliability as well as internal validity (Merriam, 1988). The most important advantage presented by using multiple sources of evidence is the development of converging lines of inquiry (Yin, 1989).

During 1996, the procedures for on-site data collection began. Data was collected at each site taking as long as necessary to gather the information. The length of time was determined by the number of individuals interviewed or until the data begin to repeat. The analysis of data was a process that took place from the first encounter in the field until the report was finally composed.

Interviews. One of the most important sources of case study information is the interview (Yin, 1989). Open-ended questioning techniques was used to gain information about the role of the principal, what each individual sees the principal doing, what the principal did prior to QPA, and what they do now. The research questions provided a guide for the interviewing. Probes were developed as the research progresses.

The interview protocol was first piloted and revised with input from a small cadre of area principals. Each interview was tape recorded and the data transcribed verbatim. Interviews lasted from 45 minutes to an hour.

Member checks were initiated to ensure the credibility of the study. Each respondent was provided the opportunity to review the data from his/her interview. A follow-up thank you letter was mailed to each respondent (Appendix B). After the transcription of the interviews is completed, copies will be mailed to each site coordinator along with a letter of explanation for each respondent (Appendix B). A follow-up phone call to each coordinator was made to confirm receipt of the data. Lincoln and Guba (1989) state that a member check is the single most important technique for establishing credibility. They further list that member checks serve the following functions:

- allows the evaluator to assess the intent of a given action
- allows a chance for the respondent to correct errors of fact or errors of interpretation
- allows a chance to offer additional information
- puts the respondent on record as having said certain things
- allows a chance for the inquirer to summarize
- gives the respondent a chance to judge overall adequacy of the interview itself. (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 239)

Documents. Documents were reviewed to indicate evidence of impact on students and staff and instructional leadership. Documents are defined to include public records, personal papers, physical traces, and artifacts (Merriam, 1988). Documents are helpful in verifying the correct spellings, titles, or names of organizations, can provide other specific details to corroborate information, and inferences can be made from the documents (Yin, 1989).

In this study, documents consisted of the results of the Kansas State Assessments in math, reading, and social studies. These assessments are a series of mandatory tests administered to all 10th grade students throughout the state. Additional documents included data pertaining to attendance, discipline, and student achievement. Any type of standardized testing implemented by the school was reviewed and interpreted for useful information.

The Kansas State Board of Education (1993) stated in Process Outcome I that each school and district will implement effective schools principles and practices. These standards are as follows:

- Establish and maintain high expectations for student learning

- Continuously monitor student learning/achievement as a basis for program evaluation.
- Provide a safe and orderly environment
- Have instructional leaders who pay particular attention to teaching and learning which result in improved student performance
- Have a broadly understood academic focus and school mission which prepares students to live, learn, and work in an international community

Documents were reviewed to establish evidence of these standards.

Observation. The researcher observed the principal during the on-site visits. Each observation focused on the role of the principal as an instructional leader as influenced by QPA. "Participant observation maximizes the advantage of the human being as instrument" (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p.193). Merriam (1989) states that participant observation is a major means of collecting data in case study research. When combined with interviewing and document analysis, case studies allow for a holistic interpretation of the phenomenon being investigated.

What the principal does as an instructional leader in everyday practice will be observed. The observations consisted of shadowing the principal periodically during the school day. Notes were taken during the participant observations. The notes were transcribed onto three by five note cards after the researcher left the field. The decision to end the collection of data depended upon the amount of time allowed by the researcher to be in the field. Further guidelines considered when completing the collection of data were exhaustion of sources, saturation of categories, emergence of regularities, and over-extension of information. (Guba & Lincoln, 1985)

Data Analysis

The analysis of data is a process that takes place from the first encounter in the field until the report is finally composed. Merriam (1988) stated that without on-going analysis the researcher risks ending up with data that are unfocused, repetitious, and overwhelming in sheer volume of material.

As suggested by Creswell (1994), several activities will occur simultaneously in a qualitative analysis. Simultaneous activities in this research included collection of data, sorting of information into categories, formatting the information into themes, and writing the qualitative text.

Once the data collection phase was completed, the first step in the analysis process was to review the initial research proposal and the questions that directed this study:

- How has QPA influenced thinking about the role of the principal?
- How has the principals' practice been affected?
- How have students and staff been influenced by principals' practice?

During this initial stage of the analysis, the conceptual framework developed from the work of Leithwood (1988) and modified for this study, was used to review the data. As suggested in Figure 1.2 this study examined the influence of QPA (external) and mental processes (internal) on principal's instructional leadership (practice) and the perceived impact on students and staff from the perspective of selected principals, teachers, and parents.

The next phase of analysis was reviewing the collected data. Each piece of data was read several times from beginning to end. Merriam (1989) describes this phase of the process as holding a conversation with the data. As suggested by Merriam (1989) queries were written in the margin while reading the collected data notes, comments and observations. Words and phrases representing independent thoughts were highlighted.

With the overwhelming amount of data collected, a systematic approach to the development of categories was then implemented. The purpose of a systematic approach to analysis is to assist in the reduction of data and the development of categories and themes. The data was desegregated into the smallest piece of information. Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen (1993) stated that unitizing data may be defined as desegregating data into the smallest pieces of information that may stand alone as independent thoughts in the absence of additional information (p. 117).

Throughout the concurrent data collection and analysis process, particular attention was paid to emergent themes and categories. The questions presented by the researcher were used to develop the categories.

Member checks were initiated to secure the credibility of the study. Lincoln and Guba (1989) state that a member check is the single most important technique for establishing credibility. They further list that member checks serve the following functions:

- allows the evaluator to assess the intent of a given action
- allows a chance for the respondent to correct errors of fact or errors of interpretation
- allows a chance to offer additional information
- puts the respondent on record as having said certain things
- allows a chance for the inquirer to summarize
- gives the respondent a chance to judge overall adequacy of the interview itself. (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 239)

At the conclusion of each interview, the respondents were asked for additional input or clarification of information. These interviews were informal. Once the data was transcribed, a copy was provided to each respondent.

Changes, additions, and corrections were requested. Each interview was mailed to the home school in care of the site coordinator and corrections requested (Appendix B). No respondent returned their interview or contacted the researcher.

Once the data were collected and analyzed, three case studies were composed from the field research at the three sites. Categories were designed to represent the original purpose and questions of the study.

Researcher Bias

Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen (1993) state that personal capabilities and professional experience should be taken into consideration when determining a research problem. Interest in this topic comes from being an active participant in QPA and having witnessed the process from birth to its present form. I began in education during 1984 as a junior high school Language Arts teacher. After teaching for three years, I began a career in administration. For the past nine years, I have served as either an assistant principal or a principal in three different school systems. During this tenure, I have acquired extensive background in the implementation of QPA. Three schools in which I practiced were participating in the QPA program.

By being an active participant in the QPA process, some researcher bias has developed. The following are four current biases:

- Rather than minimizing work, QPA has added to the substantial amount of paper work required by the building principal and others in the organization.
- Being a state mandated program, the concern arises that mandated change adds to compliance in a principals' practice.
- When developing the QPA process, the role of the principal was not explained. The only reference to the duties of the principal is the

description of instructional leadership that correlates with the effective schools research.

- QPA has required the school to document the performance of students and demonstrate that the building is improving.

Researcher bias was addressed through trustworthiness criteria.

Trustworthiness Criteria

The issue in qualitative research is not so much the objectivity of the researcher as the effort of the researcher to remain balanced, fair, conscientious, and trustworthy. Lutz and Iannaccone (1969) suggest that no science is free from observer bias, and the most one can do is to be vigilant in attempting to establish reliability and validity. Patton (1990) claims that being aware of the researcher's perspective affects the fieldwork, "to document all procedures, and to be open in describing the limitations of the perspective being presented" (p. 482) and assists in the development of the researcher's objectivity and reliability of the study.

Reliability is frequently defined as the ability of others to replicate the study. Guba and Lincoln (1988) believe this is often not an issue for naturalistic or qualitative inquiry; nevertheless, they contend it is an impossibility "to have internal validity without reliability, [and that] a demonstration of internal validity amounts to simultaneous demonstration of reliability" (p.120). They offer a means to test reliability using an audit trail. They contend an outside team, whose purpose is to review each decision and action, could verify the appropriateness of the procedures when the researcher thoroughly documents and explains procedures.

As with reliability, there are means for ascertaining validity or the credibility of the findings. Patton (1990) suggests triangulation is to have those who were studied review the findings.

Reliability and credibility are closely associated to generalizability. With the current abundance of qualitative research, the concept of generalizability has undergone change. Since qualitative research is more descriptive and inductive rather than analytical and deductive, it is not reasonable to expect broad generalizations in the scientific sense. The knowledge regarding state mandated change may be generalized to the effects of mandated change of other entities, such as teachers, students and total schools.

Summary

This chapter explained the rationale for the method chosen for the study; the researcher's bias; selection of sites; selection of respondents; method of data collection; data analysis procedures; and the trustworthiness (reliability, validity, and generalizability) of the study.

CHAPTER IV

THE CASES

The previous chapters explained the purpose of this study, gave an in-depth review of the related literature, and presented the methodology that guided this study. This chapter will present the data gathered via field work conducted by the researcher and guided by the research questions:

How has QPA influenced thinking about the role of the principal?

How have principals' practices been affected?

How have students and staff been influenced by principals' practice?

Preliminary Steps and Site Entry

An initial meeting was conducted with the executive director, assistant director, and administrative assistant of the South Central Educational Service Center (SCESC) to identify member schools that would meet the criteria for this study. When selecting a school site, the recommendations of Marshall and Rossman (1989) were considered. They recommend that (1) entry into these sites be possible; (2) each contain a high probability of a rich mix of the processes, people, and programs being studied; and (3) that the researcher will be allowed to remain at each site as long as necessary.

The criteria included student populations of 400 to 600 students, schools currently in the fourth year of the QPA cycle and principals who must have been in practice at the particular school prior to the implementation of QPA. The Service Center provided a list of the member schools, and student enrollments were obtained from the 1995-96 Kansas Educational Directory.

Of the 30 schools belonging to the SCESC, only one school was identified as meeting the criteria for this study. Two schools met particular requirements

but were not in their fourth year of QPA. The only school meeting the criteria declined to be a part of the study.

The researcher decided that an adjustment needed to be made in the criteria for student enrollments in order for this study to continue. An alteration was made to include any school with an enrollment between 200 and 400 students. This number was selected since it represented a broad base of Kansas schools. At an additional meeting with the service center representatives, three schools were identified that had populations between 200 and 400 students. All three schools met the aforementioned criteria for the study.

The building principal at each site was contacted via telephone by the researcher. During this initial telephone conversation, the nature of the research project was described. The principals were each asked about their tenure in the buildings, the phase of their school in QPA, their interest in being a part of this study, and finally the accessibility of their buildings and staffs. All three principals agreed to be a part of the study.

The selection of individuals for the study was based upon information provided by the building principals and the criteria for respondents. The selection of respondents was made during the initial phone call to the principal after they agreed to become part of the study. The researcher described the need for people who have worked closely with the principal and would have perceptions about the principal's practice during the QPA process. "A good respondent can express thoughts, feelings, opinions, and his or her perspective of the topic being studied" (Merriam, 1988, p.76). Crabtree and Miller (1992) suggest the selection of respondents should include individuals that have been in the culture long enough to no longer think about the phenomenon. The respondents were required to have been associated with the practice of the

principal prior to the implementation of QPA and during the present phase of QPA.

In the course of the telephone conversations, it was discovered that each of the three selected sites had a building leadership team in place. The leadership teams were developed to meet the needs of QPA and to direct the schools through the process. Two of the schools, Liberty High School and River View High School, have chosen the Onwards to Excellence (OTE) model for school improvement. Red Lane High School chose the North Central Accreditation process as their model and guidance for QPA accreditation.

Each principal agreed that the individuals on the leadership teams would be able to provide valuable information and would meet all criteria for participation in this study. Site coordinators asked their respective leadership teams for permission to be part of the study. No member declined, and times were arranged by the site coordinators for interviewing each member.

The principals each shared that they had no classified staff that they felt could contribute to the study. Therefore, interviews were only conducted with certified teachers and administrators.

The researcher visited each school on two separate occasions. During the first visit, the principal and one teacher were interviewed with observations and document review. On the second visit, the remaining respondents were interviewed and additional observations conducted. Additional documents were also retrieved for review.

During the first site visit, times were arranged for observations of the principals. The observations were scheduled at the convenience of each principal. Two observations were scheduled for each day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Field notes were taken at this time, and later

transcribed to computer disc. The notes were later put on note cards after analysis of emerging categories related to the three research questions.

Documents were reviewed that indicated evidence of impact on students and staff and the instructional leadership of the principal. Documents are defined to include public records, personal papers, physical traces, and artifacts (Merriam, 1988). While at each site, the respondents were asked for any document, personal papers, physical traces, and artifacts (Merriam, 1988) that would correlate with the three research questions. Each site recommended that a copy of the school's building profile be provided for this study. A school profile is a document that is required by the state summarizing the findings of data collection. A school profile should provide a picture of what is taking place in the school, both in terms of learning and teaching. Additional items were retrieved from each site and were coded according to their application to each research question.

In order to protect the identity of the schools in the study, pseudonyms have been assigned to each respondent and site in this study.

Red Lane High School

Whoever said Kansas was flat had never been to Red Lane. Nestled at the foot of the Flint Hills is Red Lane High School (RLHS). Even though the sign on the highway points towards Red Lane High School, one never does see the town. What is seen is a one story, well maintained brick building. Upon pulling into the RLHS parking lot, I got the feeling of being out in the middle of nowhere, reflective of a small rural school. What was especially notable was the quiet. As I walked to the front door, the only sound heard was the whoosh of the strong Kansas wind. I entered the building while classes were changing. The first students I came upon were involved in a passionate embrace. Seeing me did not seem to bother them. "What a friendly school," I thought to myself.

Red Lane High School is located in a small rural community of approximately 800 people in Central Kansas. The school district includes five smaller communities that give the district a total population of 1,500. The school district encompasses an area of about 350 square miles. RLHS has 260 students, predominately Caucasian, in grades 9-12. The staff consists of 22 teachers, one librarian, one counselor, and one principal. RLHS is in the fourth year of the QPA process.

Principal Rice

Past a group of students was the main office. When I entered the office, the principal, Mr. Rice, was busy signing his name to a set of certificates that were to go to the students of the month. The certificates were part of an intervention developed by the school climate committee for QPA. In a later conversation Principal Rice shared that the committee determined that students need to like school more, and, in an effort to encourage them, students were recognized monthly.

I introduced myself to Principal Rice. Neatly dressed in a shirt and tie, he led me back to his office. The office was very small with no windows. A collection of books, notebooks, and other documents were stacked on shelves behind Rice's walnut desk which barely fit into the office. On one side of his desk were stacks of papers and a telephone, and on the other was a computer and monitor. Three chairs were strategically placed against the wall. I chose the middle chair and pulled it up to the desk.

The activity director poked his head in the door to speak briefly with Principal Rice. The activity director just wanted to brag about a student who performed extremely well at a debate tournament the day before. Rice responded that he was proud of the student and had sent the student a note

telling him so. It seems that this student was an at-risk student who had not had a lot of success in school.

Principal Rice shared with me that he had been the principal at Red Lane High School for six years. Prior to that, he was a principal at a small school in central Kansas for ten years and an athletic director/assistant principal at a Kansas school just thirty miles down the road from Red Lane for three years. Principal Rice has been involved in education for thirty one years.

We began our dialogue by discussing the impact of QPA on the practice of the principal. Principal Rice felt that QPA had influenced his practice but that his previous background had contributed more of an influence. The school district where he previously worked was involved in a school improvement process that modeled the Effective Schools movement. Principal Rice had attended a national conference in Phoenix, Arizona; and had personally heard some noted experts in the field of Effective Schools. He stated, "When QPA came along, we didn't ask to be one of the pilot schools because we were already doing the same kind of stuff. My training in Effective Schools made QPA easier for me to swallow."

Rice continued to speak of the training he had received prior to QPA as the biggest influence on his practice. "I was trained in more of what I call the human relations mode in education. Our expectations are for education in the first place." A prior superintendent of Rice encouraged him to look at the Effective Schools movement. Rice commented,

It was actually something he was interested in and took all of our administrators with him. We went to all sorts of meetings and conferences. Through the Effective Schools movement I got exposed to people like Madeline Hunter and Larry Lezotte.

As Principal Rice continued to discuss his prior training, he began to discuss his interpretation of the guidance provided from the Kansas State Department of Education.

I thought that the Effective Schools model was the direction the state department was going to go, but I think their vision was mixed. I don't think the state department wanted to accept just one person's vision of what Effective Schools should be so they formed a massive committee and came up with QPA. My first reaction to QPA was that it was a perversion of Outcomes Based Education. The only reason I call it perversion is because the committees didn't have enough guidance or direction. They weren't sure about things and when you have a committee as large as they had to work with an awful lot of philosophies blended together to come up with something. The worst thing about QPA has been the lack of guidance from the state.

We were briefly interrupted when a retired elementary principal stopped by to tell Principal Rice a joke. "He stops by two or three times a week. He's a neat guy but he really needs a hobby," chuckled Rice.

Taking advantage of a natural break, we shifted the interview to instructional leadership. Principal Rice shifted to the front of his chair and from the look on his face, I could tell this was his passion in the QPA process.

"A great deal of what I do as an instructional leader was done previous to QPA coming in," began Rice. "I have a stack of notes that say praise that I give to students. I make certificates on the computer of all kinds." Principal Rice sends those to students when he sees their names in the paper, where they perform in a play or musical, if they are a homecoming candidate or if they accomplish something special. "I just want to try to give the students something

to stick in their lockers. I think positive strokes are very important to kids. We give them so many negatives things, I think the positives are important."

Principal Rice felt the affective domain of QPA was relatively easy for him to see and recognize. Along with the Effective Schools training, Rice is also a TESA (Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement) trainer.

TESA prepared me for identifying the teaching strategies that teachers should be using. It helped me identify things that I see in the classroom such as probing and delving, the kinds of things you get into in the strategy lines in TESA.

Monitoring student progress is an instructional leadership activity that has been influenced by QPA. According to Principal Rice,

QPA makes you start thinking about what is going to happen to my profile. We worry about drop-out rate while at the same time you are convinced that you must raise test scores. You look at keeping that troubled kid in school, but you don't want to keep him there if he is going to drag your test scores down. You kind of walk that balance beam. Do I get rid of this one to help the others, or do I drag him along and hold the others down?

The safety issue of QPA and the school profile were also areas that were influenced. "Even in my opening statement in our student handbook, I have included the word "safety" in the opening statement. I didn't use to do that."

The profile has also influenced the expulsion at RLHS. Mr. Rice commented that,

We look at alternatives to expulsions. We do lots more in-school suspensions than we used to do, and this is the trend to try and keep kids in school. An expulsion is not an easy thing for a principal to do. It still comes down to the fact you are weighting what is best for the good of the group.

Rice continued to speak of the influences of QPA on data and record keeping. Rice pointed out that the most important thing that he does now due to QPA/NCA is look at test scores. "I study the test scores and expect my teachers to study them also." Rice said that prior to QPA they looked at the test scores, then threw them on the shelf. Principal Rice also asks his teachers in their curriculum groups to look at test scores. "I don't think we did a good job of that before we were forced to look at test scores that closely."

Principal Rice continued to elaborate on the influences of QPA on monitoring students.

We didn't do a very good job of disaggregating test data. Now teachers have to feel some ownership for their own subject areas. This has been very positive. It comes back to teachers being held accountable for what they are teaching or not teaching. I encourage the teachers to make decisions and recognitions on their own. I am also not afraid to point out to them and say, 'look at this study.'

Much like a domino effect, curriculum development has also been influenced by QPA. Principal Rice believed that prior to QPA the textbook was the only real influence on the direction of curriculum. "Since QPA, we study curriculum in the opposite way," explained Rice. "We design our curriculum for what we feel students should know and then we match the textbook as closely as we can. This is the right way." Principal Rice maintained that this has forced communication between the administrator and teachers to be closer. "The whole understanding of the curriculum of K-12 has improved a great deal, and it has caused administrators to have to talk curriculum development to teachers where before it seemed pretty theoretical. Whereas, today is a lot more practical."

Principal Rice took a deep breath as we moved to the final area of the interview, the impact on students and staff. The staff at RLHS is required to

write out three goals. One goal is to be a personal goal, one a school goal, and one a course goal. This is one aspect that has forced the teachers to communicate with the administration. "I review the goals with the teachers, then I send them to the superintendent."

Goals are also written for individual departments. "They sit down as a department and make decisions." Rice shared an example the language arts group. The language arts committee of the high school and the middle school went together and decided the six-trait writing model would be a great way to improve writing. They got the language arts committee to write goals and do the installing of the six-trait into their curriculum for one year. After that year, the remainder of the staff was trained in the model. Today, every teacher at RLHS has at least one writing assignment a semester that is graded on the six-trait model.

The same strategy was instituted in problem solving across the curriculum according to Rice. "We ask for documentation in their lesson plans and papers that I can store and keep so that our NCA/QPA committee can see the documentation." The teachers are required to do one problem solving activity during the year plus participate in a school wide problem solving day. For the school wide problem solving day, RLHS took the day off from normal academics and did nothing but problem solving activities. "The communication that has taken place because of the integration and cross curricular activities would never have happened without QPA/NCA," pointed out Rice.

After the problem solving day, one of the student leaders wrote an editorial to the local newspaper criticizing the day saying he would rather have stayed at home and worked on his physics than come and play junior high games. Rice noted that he had responses from students at the lowest academic level asking when they could do this again.

Principal Rice expressed that he feels that teachers are working harder than they have in the past. "Teachers work harder in different ways. They are conscious of trying to improve test scores. For the most part, they have responded positively," concluded Rice.

The impact of QPA on the students drew a grin from Principal Rice. It is not uncommon to have a student at RLHS ask, "Are you doing this because of QPA?" During another conversation Rice had a student say, "You just do that to look good on your profile for QPA, don't you?" Rice observed that the students hear about QPA so often that they are probably getting sick of it.

I asked Principal Rice if there was anything else he would like to add about QPA and the impact on his practice; he referred back to curriculum and decision making. He reported,

Quite frankly, it's a lot healthier the way we're doing it now. QPA has relieved some of the cares and concerns you had about curriculum because now you have a group who really are the experts in the field sharing in those decisions.

Principal Rice was quick to point out that he still feels he has influence over the process. "I'll say you need to work on this or have you thought about that?" explained Rice. "This process has made it a whole lot easier to create a vision for RLHS."

Principal Rice looked at his watch and declared that Mrs. Rose, my next respondent, was now on planning period and was expecting me in her room. As Principal Rice escorted me to Mrs. Rose's room, I was surprised how tight the hall ways seemed. Also, I found it strange that no student said a word to Principal Rice as we walked down the hall.

Mrs. Rose

When we arrived at Mrs. Rose's room, she was waiting behind her desk. Principal Rice introduced me and said he would be in the office when I completed the interview. Mrs. Rose's room was a typical high school English room with the desks in neat rows. Posters of nouns and verbs decorated the wall and term papers were neatly stacked on her desk. Mrs. Rose apologized for the "mess," explaining that the week was the next to the last week for the seniors, and she was attempting to grade their final term papers. She was also putting together lesson plans for the next two days since she was going to be out of town attending an Effective Schools conference.

Mrs. Rose is the chairperson for the NCA/QPA leadership team. She has worked with Principal Rice for four years and was appointed to the leadership role by Principal Rice. Mrs. Rose has been in education for six years.

We began the interview by discussing the influence of QPA on the practice of the principal. Mrs. Rose explained that Principal Rice has selected a "hands off" approach to QPA.

He lets me and my committee pretty much have free rein in what we want to do. Sometimes I think this is a wonderful way to approach it, and then there are days that I really kind of want to wring his neck to be really honest.

Rose stated there are certain times that she is unsure about what she is supposed to do or that she may be looking for a definite answer in a certain question that Principal Rice isn't sure of either. "I just don't think he is sure from the state [Kansas] himself, what it is we are supposed to do. We get differing communications from the state everyday," noted Rose. "The state doesn't know what their plan is. It is so hard to know whether you are in compliance with them when Principal Rice doesn't even know."

Another teacher poked her head in to ask a question about a section of the profile she was retyping. Mrs. Rose said,

Bless her heart: she is our computer expert and is retyping and doing the updates because the three members of the leadership committee are the most computer illiterate people in the building. She is saving our necks. QPA takes so much time.

After the business teacher left the room, we began to discuss the influence of QPA on the instructional leadership activities of Principal Rice. Again Mrs. Rose returned to discussing Principal Rice's "hands off" style.

On the other hand we're very lucky. He has given us chances to break into our committees, plus we are able to work on committees that we feel comfortable serving on. He is very cooperative as far as if we need time off to work on NCA/QPA. Principal Rice has been very lenient in allowing me to go to in-services.

His "hands off" approach also added to the perception of ownership according to Mrs. Rose. "I think the teachers feel more ownership of the process because it is based strictly on teacher input, student input, and parent input. Principal Rice hasn't tried to sway any side one way or the other."

Mrs. Rose believed that Principal Rice has influenced the students by making sure they are aware of QPA. She stated,

After three years of hearing the faculty talk about NCA and QPA, our students are pretty knowledgeable about what is going on. They have certainly been subjected to the six-trait writing across the curriculum. They may hate doing it, but they know the process now and what they are supposed to do.

I concluded the interview by asking Mrs. Rose if there was anything else she could think of that was a result of QPA and the influence on Principal Rice.

Mrs. Rose shared with me that the whole process has been frustrating not only for her, but also for Principal Rice.

He has to go to more meetings than I do. He has to attend the site council meetings, the steering committee meetings, plus the administrative meetings where they talk about the latest communiqués from Topeka. He really never gets away from QPA.

It was my turn to apologize to Mrs. Rose for having monopolized her planning period, especially on the eve of her being absent from her classes for two days.

I walked back to the office to meet Principal Rice. Part of the charm of a small school is the concept of everybody knowing everybody. As I walked down the hall the students looked at me, yet nobody asked me what I was doing or if they could assist me.

Principal Rice was waiting for me in his office. Principal Rice and myself previously decided to interview each of the teachers during his/her planning period. Since the other two respondents had already had their planning periods for the day, we decided to just meet each person and conduct interviews on another day.

Again, as we walked down the hall, nobody spoke to us. As we walked into the art room, Mrs. Beal was working with a student and failed to notice our entrance. After about a minute, one of her students got her attention and pointed us out. We were introduced and discovered we had attended the same college in Eastern Kansas. Even though there was a disparity in the times of our attendance, we did share some of the same teachers. I scheduled a time with Mrs. Beal for an interview and left, allowing her to get back to helping a student on his charcoal sketches.

The final respondent was not in the building; therefore, I did not have the opportunity to set a date for his interview. Principal Rice volunteered to

coordinate the date. I thanked him and then left seemingly undetected by the students.

Red Lane Revisited

On my return trip to Red Lane High School, I purposely missed the turn to the high school to see the town. What I saw was a complete contrast from Red Lane High School. From a building supported with the use of technology and full of people, I observed a town with few businesses, no stop lights, and very few people moving about. Many of the streets were unpaved and had I checked, I imagined I would have found many of the doors to the houses unlocked.

After viewing the town, I arrived early for my afternoon interviews with the final two respondents. Going directly to the office, I was told Principal Rice was in the cafeteria. "Go left out of the door, take another left, and you can't miss it," directed the secretary. As I walked down the hall I could smell two distinct aromas. Taco crunch and fresh bread were the day's lunch and, as I walked by the rest rooms, the stale reek of cigarette smoke. I entered the rest room but found nobody smoking.

I entered the lunchroom to find Principal Rice sitting with a group of teachers enjoying his lunch. "This is a tough duty," laughed Rice. That day was the next to the last for seniors, so the conversation at the table centered around what to expect from the seniors and of the regional baseball tournament game scheduled for the next day.

A set of legs carrying a stack of 15 pizza boxes came walking into the lunchroom. Being the last day for seniors, Principal Rice had given the seniors permission to have pizza delivered for their lunch. As we sat around the lunchroom, I couldn't help but notice, at apparently the most hectic time, only 25 students were in the lunchroom. Only eight folding tables were needed to seat all students.

A new group of teachers came into the lunchroom for the final shift. "Hey, Mr. Rice, somebody is smoking in the rest room," advised one teacher. "Guess I'd better check it out," responded Rice. He returned empty handed, not finding the culprit.

Principal Rice explained to me that he had an interview this afternoon for a physical education position. "My interviews take about 3 hours," boasted Rice. "I take pride in my interview skills and of the process we go through." Not only does Principal Rice sit on the interview committee, but his guidance counselor, athletic director and one student are members. "We don't leave a stone unturned," added Rice.

The student member of the committee came and sat down at the table. She was just returning from a successful summer job interview at a country club in Wichita. "I told you you'd get the job," shared Rice. "Remember what I told you. Be nice to the doctors and lawyers; they'll tip big," chuckled Rice. The student smiled and excused herself to go change for the interview. Principal Rice likes to include students on the interview committee because he thinks they have a knack of seeing through people when they are creating a front.

The bell rang, and it was time to interview Mrs. Beal, the art teacher. Mrs. Beal chose her classroom to conduct the interview. The art room is located down the same narrow hallway as the English room of Mrs. Rose. The desks in the room were arranged in squares, four to a formation. The desk were all different heights adding to a unique surface and were scarred with writing and chalk dust from the student activity of the day.

Mrs. Beal

Mrs. Beal has been working with Principal Rice for six years, having been at RLHS for 15 years. This led into her commentary on the influence of QPA on Rice's principalship. "Our old principal did nothing for QPA," began Beal. "Most

of us didn't have the foggiest idea what we were supposed to be doing. Principal Rice came from a school that had been actively involved in QPA, and he expected us to be caught up to where he had been. We weren't, so he had to drag us along."

Principal Rice had to blend together three different factions within the organization. According to Beal,

He had that group of people who did not want to do all of this. They felt this was just another fad. Been there, done that. There was also the group that were of the opinion that we've got to do it, so let's just do it, and get it over with. Then you have the younger teachers who think this is neat and exciting and couldn't wait to do QPA.

Beal noted that Principal Rice had to take all of these groups and make them work together.

The three members of the leadership team did most of the work on the profile related Beal. "Principal Rice would come in and look at it. If we needed something he would get it. He did give us time off and did get substitutes for us. He didn't expect us to do it after school."

Developing the target areas didn't come about without frustration and anger from members of the faculty. Mrs. Beal responded that,

I was very upset when they came up with the affective, communication and problem solving areas. I was angry. In fact I actually lost my temper in a faculty meeting. Since then, the other teachers have been real touchy around me. Especially with the problem solving target area. I've said all along that doing mathematical sums, adding up your scores and figuring out your grades is not problem solving. But the state department said that it had to be mathematics. That really made me mad. I problem solve with my students when they do art.

Mrs. Beal felt that since she couldn't keep her mouth shut and was quite vocal, Principal Rice assigned her to the problem solving committee.

I was unhappy about it, and I told him so. I told him that I have lived with an administrator (Mrs. Beal's husband is a superintendent of a neighboring school district), and if you're trying to get rid of me, just tell me. That's how administrators get rid of people they don't want any more. If you're trying to get rid of me, just tell me and I'll leave, but don't play this stupid game.

From the tone of Mrs. Beal's voice, I could tell she was still upset with her assignment to this committee.

I'm still unhappy about being on the problem solving committee. I asked Principal Rice why he put me on the committee that I was most vocal against and then make me in charge of it? Principal Rice did listen to me and assured me he wasn't trying to fire me. I'm still here. I really think he felt bad.

With her voice beginning to crack, Mrs. Beal began to speak about her frustrations with their committee. "I told Principal Rice that I was done; I quit; I resign. I am not going to be in charge of this committee, but nobody else would do it. Somebody has to lead. Somebody has to take the reins or nothing gets done," an emotional Beal explained. "Principal Rice was very nice about it. He knew that I was upset. Never do I cry, and I cried. That really ticked me off," confessed Beal.

Without missing a beat Mrs. Beal began to talk about the problem solving day that the school had just finished. "It was very successful. The teachers enjoyed it, and the students enjoyed it." Principal Rice was very cooperative during the problem solving day. According to Mrs. Beal,

We received a grant from Texaco for the funding of the problem solving day. But had we not received the grant, Principal Rice had told me he would have found the money. He went and picked up the stuff we needed. He even gave us the day off. We did all of the scheduling through him, and we had to have his permission to not have school that day. Some administrators would have been real leery about it because it could have turned into a zoo.

We began to discuss impact on students. During the problem solving day a couple of seniors would rather have been doing something else. "Honest and truly the ones that didn't like it were our seniors that are top notch, the straight A'ers. Other people came and took their place, and they are not used to that. It was very hard on them because they are not used to taking second seat to some of the other kids."

Mrs. Beal also felt that the students were getting pretty used to the six-trait writing model. "Even though they do say, ugh when you mention it," injected Beal. "Two years ago the students just went, 'huh?', but now they pretty much go okay and know they have to do it."

As we began to wrap up the interview, Mrs. Beal concluded with a few brief comments about Principal Rice's leadership style. "With his style he doesn't stand over us with a bull whip," remarked Beal. "We know that he is for QPA, and he pushes us. He keeps us headed in the right direction," ended Beal.

Mr. Allen

The final interview was with the band teacher who had the previous night completed the final concert of the year. Trying to find Mr. Allen was a problem. He was busy coordinating the moving of equipment from the auditorium back to

the band room. Once I finally located him, we went to the band room to conduct the interview.

The band room looked like a room hit by a tornado. The chairs were scattered throughout the room, not in traditional rows, but rather in random positions. This being the day after a concert, the students were returning the chairs to the room from the auditorium and were allowed to sit with their friends instead of playing their instruments.

Mr. Allen has been a teacher at RLHS for 17 years. He has worked with Principal Rice for five years plus he was on the interview committee that recommended the hiring of Rice. I asked Mr. Allen about how he felt QPA had affected the role of Principal Rice. Mr. Allen thought that they all began from square one, Mr. Rice included. He thought that Principal Rice knew a little more than what they did. "Principal Rice really helped pull us through and has given us a lot of input when necessary, but yet he let us feel our way through some things."

Mr. Allen began to speak about the leadership style of Principal Rice and of the responsibility given to the members of the leadership committee. "Principal Rice let us handle QPA ourselves and do what we felt was necessary to do, knowing that if we got stuck we could go to him and ask for his recommendations."

Contrary to the freedom provided the committee members, Mr. Allen observed a completely different relationship between Principal Rice and the site council.

My perception of the site council was that it was supposed to be self governing, and the principal was not supposed to be the person in charge. I think Principal Rice has had a hard time separating himself from

that role. He thinks he needs to lead the site council and keep them abreast of the things that are going on, especially with the NCA process. Mr. Allen went on to say that he senses that Principal Rice has had a hard time letting go of the site council.

It is not like he's telling them what to do; it is just that I think he feels the need to just be in charge. This is a totally different perception than he gives us when it comes to doing things here in the building.

Coincidentally, Principal Rice is also a member of the committee that was chaired by Mr. Allen. "He is very good at being just a committee member," remarked Allen. "He was very willing to provide input when necessary." One of the outcomes of this committee was an advisor/advisee program. "We perceived that the attitude of the students was negative and that there was not enough positive reinforcement going on anywhere." Mr. Allen commented that Principal Rice was receptive to this recommendation. "Principal Rice was a real trooper. He welcomed everybody's input. He let us all just toss out ideas and take the things that worked and reject some of the things the rest of us didn't like."

Our first interruption of what was to be many, occurred at this time. Mr. Allen had students moving equipment back to the band room and loading items into his car.

Mr. Allen found it hard to notice any change in the day to day practice of Principal Rice, but he observed communication with students had increased.

Principal Rice has been very conscientious with making sure that the student body is aware of things that they are supposed to be accomplishing. He really wanted to make sure that the kids were aware of what we were doing, why we were doing it, and why it was so important that they take it seriously. He had already convinced the faculty that

these things were important, which I think made his job easier to support all of that.

We were again interrupted by a mother looking for her daughter who is an aide for Mr. Allen. After explaining that she was either in the auditorium or the parking lot, we got back to business.

An additional change that Mr. Allen noted was a more detailed Principal Rice.

He has always been an organized person, but I think he is now more detailed. From our very first faculty meeting with Principal Rice, he had his agenda written out, and he knew exactly what he was going to cover. After a while you could almost time those faculty meetings because you knew what we were going to do and how long it was going to take to get through each one.

Allen went on to explain that as they have gone through QPA, Principal Rice sees the important items that they need to tackle. " He is more detailed in a sense of the things we cover at the faculty meetings. I think he has become better organized, and his details are more relevant," remarked Allen.

As RLHS began the assessments and survey portion of QPA, they found the data to be depressing. Allen remarked that an example was the first survey conducted on student attitudes. "There was no place to go but up. It was pathetic," disclosed Allen. Principal Rice's comment about the surveys was, "They are depressing," shared Allen. But Rice was able to laugh at the results which made a big difference. Mr. Allen continued,

If all we were going to do was moan and groan and gnash teeth and not come up with solutions, nothing was going to get solved. But Principal Rice was able to put things into perspective which a lot of people could

not have done. That is why we really started brainstorming on our committee.

Again we were interrupted by the girl now looking for her mother. Mr. Allen suggested the girl go stop by the office and see if she was there. "I bet we see her again," interjected Allen. We smiled and continued on with the interview.

Mr. Allen felt that the students have been positively affected more than the faculty but not because of what Principal Rice has done.

Much like any faculty, you have staff members that just as soon as they hear of any educational concept that is new or different, they either automatically shut their ears, hold their breath, or run screaming in the other direction. It doesn't matter what you do to try to make it palatable to people; some people just never buy in.

On the other hand, Allen felt the students react differently to QPA.

They're either going one of two ways, either just a matter-of-fact, do whatever we have to do, or they become very enthusiastic about it. They can see that some of the things we're trying to do really are going to be beneficial to them.

Again the door opened; this time it was the girl and her mother just wanting to let Mr. Allen know they'd found each other.

We began to wind down the conversation after this interruption. Mr. Allen finished by saying that Principal Rice could have talked until he was as blue as the wall and not made a difference to the people who were "bad-mouthing" QPA. "I think that has been the hardest thing that he has had to face and, from that respect, it has probably been harder to see big changes in his leadership ability."

In closing Mr. Allen complemented Principal Rice saying, He never gives up. Sometimes I think he would like to, but you know he is always going to be there to back you up or to say I understand how you feel but this is why we have to do this. This is a wonderful technique to use.

This concluded my time at RLHS. As I walked back to the office, I observed a senior girl having a discussion with the senior office aide at the main counter. They were talking about the one girl not graduating because she owed \$.50 on a library fine. "Get real," declared the senior office aide, "I'll pay the fine for you." The other girl refused her offer, citing the principle of the matter, "I turned the book in; I shouldn't have to pay the fine." At that time Principal Rice came in and hearing the end of the conversation, paid the fine for her. "Oh, well," said Rice as he shook his head, "fifty cents for four years; it's worth it."

I thanked him for his time and efforts in coordinating my visit at RLHS. Upon walking toward the parking lot, I accidentally dropped my notebook, and I watched the strong Kansas wind whip my papers across the parking lot. It made me really realize and appreciate the desolate environment as I single-handedly chased down my notes.

LIBERTY HIGH SCHOOL

Crossing the shallow, sandy-bottomed Ninnescah River and heading east on Highway 81, there is an intersection locally known in Sumner County as the "Liberty Y". In season, a busy farmer's vegetable stand is the main roadside attraction as the fresh asphalt continues straight east instead of wrapping around north. Three more eastward miles past thriving fields of milo, interspersed with soybean fields here and there, bring a traveler to the "bedroom" community of Liberty.

On the eastern outskirts of town are the tracks of the Santa Fe Railroad. Past those a block, within a modest residential area, is a closed arboretum with ornate iron gates. Before one has time to gaze past the gates to an obscure view of a covered bridge, it is time to turn left on Merchant Street which still accommodates middle-of-the-street parking and a small "M & M" IGA store directly across from the Liberty School's crosswalk. I head for the Liberty School buildings.

The first facility is that of a flat-roofed, blond brick school typical of such structures built in the 1950's. The aluminum-framed, doubled insulated glass windows are painted royal blue, an improvement over the original orange, which seems garishly bright compared to the rest of the building. This building is Liberty Elementary School. Next in progression is the extension of the same limestone brick-fronted entryway of Liberty Middle School. It presents itself with a more dramatic entrance consisting of a decorative masonry archway encasing glass doors. Mixed with the older brick sits a new golden colored Morton building housing the industrial arts classes for all students.

Finally, on the very opposite end of the town sits the equally drab brick, two story Liberty High School. As with any renovated building, aluminum framed windows update the outside, but the lack of landscaping or even basic trimming seems to present the entire school block with a disheveled first impression.

The Liberty School District serves one town which has a population of 1,750. The District has an elementary school, a middle school, and a high school, all located within three blocks of each other. Liberty High School is predominantly Caucasian with approximately 190 students. The staff consists of a principal, an assistant principal, a counselor, and 23 teachers.

I pulled around to the back parking lot, entering the nearest set of doors which delivered me into the gymnasium. As I wandered around the hall trying to

find the main office, a teacher finally asked if he could help me. He directed me to the office which, to my surprise, was located in the older part of the building. When I finally found the office, Principal Hill was behind the main counter visiting with the secretaries. Principal Hill offered me a cup of coffee then invited me into his office, located behind the counter.

Principal Hill

Principal Hill took a few minutes to program the phone so it wouldn't ring into his office. "This is a new system that I'm still trying to figure out," explained Hill. After a couple minutes of pushing different buttons, we were set to begin.

The setting for the interview was a small 6' x 12' office decorated around the theme of the Old West. Pictures of the Wild West adorned the walls with silhouettes of cowboys and broncos sitting on a shelf. Behind the desk was a large window which allowed Principal Hill to supervise the front entrance of the building from the confines of his office. The school office was previously part of a classroom, now divided into three offices. Principal Hill's office is the middle office. Inside this office is a large metal storage cabinet and a book case with four shelves that hold QPA documents, old college textbooks, and 10 years worth of yearbooks, representing each of the years Principal Hill has been principal of LHS. Behind the desk is a computer stand with a computer and monitor.

"QPA has definitely influenced what I do; maybe not so much what I do, but how I do it," began Principal Hill. Before the ten years as LHS principal, Hill began his career in western Kansas both as a teacher and administrator. This past year he celebrated his 25th year in education. It should be noted that two weeks after this interview, Principal Hill announced his resignation and accepted a superintendency in western Kansas.

Principal Hill felt that QPA has given his staff a new direction with some new goals that they could "shoot for", especially with the QPA testing and the Kansas Assessments. Hill felt that the assessment added to getting everybody on board. He further commented that,

Everybody started pulling the same direction. QPA has added to the cohesiveness of the staff. It has given the staff some ownership that I think is so important. It is kind of hard to get that ownership with the staff until you get them really involved in doing something.

Hill explained the LHS staff was participating in the Onward Towards Excellence model. Besides the building leadership team, the rest of the staff was involved in small committees. "Everybody got involved, and by doing so, we were able to get things going towards the goals we wanted," noted Hill.

Having the staff actively involved seemed to fit the leadership of Principal Hill. "As a principal, I'm basically the coordinator of QPA. I depend on a lot of my people," remarked Hill. "I delegate to a lot of them to do most of the research to come up with conclusions and then present it. I am more of an overseer of the entire program rather than being really involved." Hill noted that he was also a member of the committees and had worked with the staff during the QPA process.

Principal Hill also felt that QPA has helped what he looks for in the staff and school of LHS. "We have devised an evaluation tool that helps us look towards the outcomes of QPA. This way we are teaching towards the outcomes. I am not evaluating so much personalities, but I'm evaluating what is being taught."

Hill reached into his desk drawer and pulled out a copy of the evaluation instrument and of the classroom visitation form. The classroom form is a single page document of NCR paper that asked for a brief summary of the lesson

observed, positive practices observed, and suggestions for improvement. This three copy form is filled out after each observation and a copy is given to the teacher. The summative evaluation is developed based upon the documentation of the teacher and the classroom observations of the administrator. LHS has used this process for one year.

I asked Principal Hill if any training he had received prior to QPA had any influence on his practice. In a short, abrupt tone, Hill responded, "I don't recall anything that has come along that had the push and support statewide as QPA." Hill continued saying that a number of things have happened during his career. He mentioned individually guided education, schools without failure, assertive learning and assertive discipline. "Some of those things were here for a while, then kind of backed off. I think QPA has been the greatest for us to the total education picture that I've seen in my 31 years in schools."

QPA has not had a profound influence on the thinking of Principal Hill when it comes to the school profile. "The only thing that has changed is that I make sure that I record referrals and discipline actions taken since that all needs to come out in the final QPA report at the end of the year."

Hill stated that data wasn't something used in his early years of administration.

We didn't keep track of how many kids we suspended. We just kept it in a file. I didn't keep any totals. Today we make it a point that every referral, every detention, every suspension we get in writing. At the end of the year, we get into the computer and work with the data and send it to the state. QPA has made lot of data collection necessary that wasn't being done properly, not to the degree it is. That takes a lot of time.

It was also noted by Hill that they go back through each student's transcript to see if he or she has passed algebra or any math higher than

Algebra I. "Here again," stated Hill, "it is just the time that is involved in going back through their transcripts and seeing exactly where they are and what they have done. Then we collect all of that and put it on paper."

The impact on the students was short and to the point. "I think the impact is in kind of a different direction. We are trying to teach to outcomes, and we've tried to post what our objectives are for the classes. We've posted those in the hallways. The teachers also give those out to the students. The impact on the students is minimal as compared to the staff," concluded Hill.

Principal Hill feels that QPA has affected his staff by the amount of training they must receive. "We have to do Rubrics type grading; we have to do six-trait writing; and we also have to grade the math test, the writing test and the reading test. Our staff has to do a lot of work for these things. My counselor has more testing to do with some of the things that are QPA related."

As Principal Hill stated earlier, the staff has spent extra time, and there are monetary expenses involved with QPA.

I sent my entire English department to the six-trait writing workshops so they are all trained in the six-trait model. We've also incorporated writing across the curriculum, and we require writing for math and journals. We have put in a second computer lab. We actually have about three different areas now for computer labs, and we put the second one in with 20 computers just so we could use that for English writing.

I explained to Principal Hill how Krug describes an instructional leader and then asked Hill if QPA has influenced his instructional leadership. Hill responded by saying,

QPA has affected how I am as an instructional leader. It has taken a lot of my time to tie things together. You can still be an instructional leader,

and you have to be, but QPA has taken up a little bit more of my time and taken away from my being an instructional leader.

Principal Hill felt the need to justify that statement by adding,

That isn't all that bad. Every once in a while I need some direction. I need a little help from the top. We get into a rut, and we need to have a little direction. QPA has been good for me.

As part of QPA, Hill has been making different information available to his teachers hoping they are reading the literature. Principal Hill also encourages his teachers to keep up-to-date in their content areas. As Principal Hill began to talk, his phone began to ring and ring and ring. "Guess I didn't read the directions right," chuckled Hill.

Picking up where he left off, he continued, "We try to provide in-service for the teachers, if nothing more than to get them out and get them where they can hear somebody or somebody else's program, or pick up things to keep motivated." Hill also believes that, "Peers help motivate your teachers when you can get the teachers out there and see them."

I asked Principal Hill if there were any big differences in what he was doing today as compared to four years ago. He related that he was doing the same thing, just a lot more of it, and spending a lot more time doing it. "I would say that QPA takes a lot of time, and when you have only so many hours, then it takes away from something else. In my case it takes away from home," explained Hill.

Mr. Hill wanted to speak about the impact of QPA on the community. He related that they had been using a Principal's Advisory Council for years prior to QPA. When QPA came along, he renamed the council the Liberty High School Site Council.

I like to draw in as many people as I can. That has been a result of QPA. I think the site counsel has been a big help just as a sounding board. The site council does not make policy, but they can discuss and come up with ideas to discuss.

Principal Hill explained that the site council has been used on two bond elections and both passed.

As we began to finish the interview, Principal Hill spoke of the good qualities of QPA.

QPA has been good for my staff. The industrial arts department, the PE department, and the English department are still not far removed from each other in terms of what they do and what their goals are. When we came together, we found out that we had a lot in common. QPA has required us to mold together and strive for a common goal.

Principal Hill closed his interview by saying that some of the things QPA is asking are unrealistic, but maybe not unreasonable.

I know you have to set your goals higher than what you want in order to strive to reach them, but sometimes I think they wanted too much too quick. You know change is slow, and actual improvement and documented improvement is not going to happen overnight. We're going to see the results maybe three to four years down the road.

I thanked Principal Hill as we walked to the new part of the building looking for Vice-Principal Clark. It was almost like entering an entirely different school. As we walked down the corridors of LHS the older section was dimly lit with narrow hallways outlined by navy trimmed woodwork and light blue carpeting. The old part of LHS was built in 1915 and reminded me of the image of the old infirmaries from the movies. The new section is in complete contrast with wide halls, excellent lighting and white paint.

We found Mr. Clark in the hallway visiting with a student about returning a baseball uniform. Besides being an administrator, Clark is also an assistant baseball coach in the spring.

Mr. Clark

We went into Mr. Clark's office which I'm sure will double as a closet once he is finished this year. The office barely fit Mr. Clark, myself, and the three chairs that occupied it. The office is lined with shelves and a counter that wrapped around the room. On the counter is a computer, telephone, fax machine, pictures of Mr. Clark's family and stacks of books. The one advantage of the office is that it is in the new part of the building and is air conditioned. Mr. Clark didn't complain about his small office, but rather was excited about being transferred to an elementary principal's position in a different building for next year. "A building with a normal sized office," added Clark.

After a few minutes of small talk, we began our interview. Mr. Clark has observed differences in the way Principal Hill operates at specific times during the school year but not on a daily basis. "I've seen his role in the QPA process as being more effective during certain times of the year. When we are doing surveys, having faculty meetings, and things like that," began Clark.

Mr. Clark felt that the biggest impact on the practice of Principal Hill was in the delegation of responsibility.

What he tries to do is delegate responsibilities with the QPA process, involve the building leadership team and the QPA team. He has them do the work, then report back to him. He acts more like a coordinator, the organizer. He sets the agendas for our QPA meeting days.

Clark explained that LHS has a QPA day each month. During the half days provided, Hill gets the total faculty involved, but he also lets the building leadership team plan those days. "There are only 9 or 10 times a year when he

is really involved in QPA. The rest of the time it's just the normal daily routine and responsibilities that go with his office," noted Clark.

Mr. Clark spoke of the delegation process of Principal Hill explaining that since Hill was the principal of the building, he was automatically the chairman of the committees. Since Clark was the assistant principal, he too was automatically on the committees. Principal Hill then asked for volunteers to serve on the leadership committee. He ended up with a total of seven people on that committee.

From that point on he delegated each of us certain responsibilities within that committee. He eventually involved the entire staff. Each member of the staff was assigned to one of the building leadership teams, and they worked in small groups on specific goals that we set for our QPA process. The small group reported back to the leadership team, and then the leadership team would make recommendations back to the principal. Of course Principal Hill had the final say, but ultimately it ended up being a staff decision.

Mr. Clark stated that the leadership team as a group felt that it was important that the staff have ownership in the QPA process. "We included not just our teachers, but we included the auxiliary personnel such as school nurses and instructional aides. Everyone involved in our building was assigned to a committee." Clark did add that the principals at each of the buildings are the people in charge. It should be noted that the total district has bought into QPA and provides six half days off during the year for in-service/QPA related business.

Assistant Principal Clark continued that delegation is not new to Principal Hill; as a matter of fact Clark considers delegating to be one of Hill's main

strengths. "Principal Hill has the ability to delegate responsibility and to have staff buy into whatever it is that is the issue at the time," explained Clark.

Mr. Clark shared that staff delegation was responsible for a new facility, restructuring the curriculum, an assertive discipline program, rewriting their policy handbook, and initiation of a human sexuality curriculum into LHS.

The impact of Principal Hill's practice of QPA has had no effect on the students according to Mr. Clark. "We take a look at what the students say, but really as far as the QPA process, the students remain relatively unaffected", said Clark. "Even if we identify a problem through the QPA process, the students are unaware of the reason why we initiated the strategy. One program that we initiated that the students do not like was a reading program that was identified as a problem through the QPA process. We set aside time on a weekly basis for the students just to read. Some will and some don't and some teachers make their kids read while some teachers don't make their students read. It's a good program and the idea behind it is sound, but we've had problems with that one," pointed out Clark.

Our conversation began to switch from students to the area of instructional leadership and the principal's role of visionary and the management of curriculum. "Here again, his instructional leadership goes back to the small groups within the building. They brought to the attention of the leadership team and of course Principal Hill, several small concerns." Changes resulted in the methods of enrolling students, identifying at-risk students, setting up programs and helping new students. LHS has also changed some class objectives and some course descriptions to fit the needs of the QPA process. Mr. Clark felt that this was one of the reasons the QPA process was able to identify problems.

Mr. Clark reached behind his desk and pulled out a copy of the rewritten curriculum guide that was changed as a result of QPA. The document was on

11x16 inch legal paper stapled together. Each discipline within the curriculum has written subject area goals, essential skills, and then the standard of excellence. Each individual course within the department has written its own course outcomes.

I became curious to learn if Principal Hill made all of his decisions by the use of committees or if he made some decisions by himself. Mr. Clark explained that he uses both techniques to make decisions. An example he gave was Principal Hill designing a math criterion referenced test to give to the incoming freshman to help identify their needs and to help with their placement into appropriate math classes. Clark also stated, "Sometimes he has to make decisions by himself, but more often than not it is the recommendation from the staff, either the entire staff or a departmental recommendation."

Clark concluded the interview by adding that he felt one of the major influences on practices derived from QPA was the amount of time spent on the process and the communication with the state department. "The amount of time required to fill out the QPA forms is very time consuming even with the computerized disks that seemingly haven't been working all the time. Also, the time Principal Hill spends filling out forms takes him away from his other responsibilities," concluded Clark.

Mr. Clark was the contact person for this site and had scheduled the other interviews for the planning periods of both teachers. I was going to return in five days to conduct those interviews.

Liberty Revisited

Mr. Clark met me in the parking lot where he was having a discussion with a teacher about a student she thinks plagiarized another student's work. Knowing this was the next to last week of school and seeing Mr. Clark's facial

expression, I could see that this was not a critical issue worth much time. "If you'd like me to visit with the student, let me know," offered Clark.

Mrs. West

Mr. Clark led me down the crowded hall to the older part of the building into the computer lab. It was here that Mrs. West was waiting for me. She advised me that I had played golf with her son the week before.

The room was filled with 30 computer stations, each sharing the same message: "Good Morning." Mrs. West has taught at Liberty High School for eight years and has been in education for 10 years. With the formalities out of the way, we began the interview.

"Frankly, I felt that our principal was more concerned with looking good on paper and getting the book together more than I saw him needing to make change within our building," said West. She commented that they had not once met as a leadership team this year.

As Mrs. West continued to speak about the profile, I could detect frustration in her voice. When speaking of the role of the principal, the answers from Mrs. West were crisp, short, and direct. She is not happy with the QPA process being used at LHS. "It seems to me that QPA is another thing the state had put upon schools to accomplish, and Principal Hill wanted to fulfill that requirement of putting together this book."

Mrs. West handed me a copy of their profile. The profile has a yellow cover with the picture of a boy and girl, hands on a ladder, looking up. The document is divided into four sections: introduction, academic achievement, behavior, and attitude. Each section has been printed on different colored paper, adding to the attractiveness of the profile.

It is a beautiful profile. The reason I was named to the committee was because Principal Hill was told to get people on your committee who know

how to use the computers and can do this work. We made it look pretty, but as far as actually taking it and doing something with it, I have some real concerns. Our school has done little with the change.

As we began to talk about instructional leadership, the frustration of Mrs. West only seemed to escalate. She shared with me an incident that happened early in the QPA process. It seems when they did a student survey, Principal Hill became very excited when it came out that the students were concerned about a parking problem. Since the students were dissatisfied this year, they would fix the problem and it would look good on paper. LHS was already in the middle of a remodeling project that included a new parking lot. Mrs. West criticized Principal Hill stating:

Everything Principal Hill had read about QPA seemed to indicate that we needed to prove change. He felt this was a great one for the safe and orderly environment. It was a concern of the students, and we were going to be able to fix that real quick. As a staff we didn't care if the students had a place to park, we saw other needs for change.

Mrs. West concluded by adding that they spent a lot of time putting together the profile, and she felt like it was just paperwork to meet a requirement. "As far as making a change in our system, I haven't really been seeing any change."

The frustration train of Mrs. West was now on full throttle. "We do lack leadership," proclaimed West. "I feel a little stymied with where we are at because a lot of time and effort was spent putting together the profile and trying to assess the goals."

To add to her frustration, she shared that after they had been involved in the process for one year, they found out they had to have a math and reading goal. "No one had ever told us that. Our goals were things like improving my situation or improving grade point average. When we found out that we had to

have a math and reading goal, it scared our administration to death so Principal Hill changed the committees a little bit."

Mrs. West noted that tests now had to be administered and that the six-trait writing model was implemented. "The English teachers are good with the training, and they do get the days off to grade the test. As far as a staff, we don't have any idea whether we have seen change over the past three years," asserted West.

Mrs. West added that one positive aspect of QPA that has affected Principal Hill is communication with the staff.

Prior to QPA we hardly had any staff meetings. We would have one the first day of school and one on the last day of school. I have been here eight years, and I could count on one hand the number of staff meetings we have had. QPA did force us to be together as a staff and to work and talk about surveys and to evaluate the satisfaction or dissatisfaction from parents. QPA provided us a little bit of camaraderie.

Describing the effect of QPA on the principalship of Hill, Mrs. West did note that she felt his frustration.

It caused him more frustration because he had the powers that be say we have to put this together, and we have to prove that we're doing some business here. I felt like we had a lot of pressure from the state to put this thing together and we really weren't given the opportunity.

According to West, the leadership for QPA was provided by the counselor at LHS. "We had a very good counselor here for the last many years who is not here now. Had it not been for him and his push, we wouldn't have been this far. He kept us in line and focused." Mrs. West disclosed that when they would go to OTE training at the service center, Principal Hill would spend the majority of his time ordering their meals on his car phone. "Of the ten days we went, we would

leave at noon. Principal Hill would say, 'I don't think they're covering anything we need to know,' so we'd leave. That was very frustrating to me," pointed out West. When describing the practice of Principal Hill, Mrs. West remarked,

I believe that there are some principals who believe that if the ship appears to be sailing very smoothly, then you must be a hell of a captain. So it's good to make this school look like it's sailing very smoothly. I believe that every one of us has areas of improvement and that none of us are teaching to our capacity. I see some weaknesses within the school that could have been addressed and helped with QPA, and they weren't.

As I concluded the interview, I asked Mrs. West to sum up her perceptions of Principal Hill's practice as influenced by QPA. She stated that she thinks most principals would be threatened by QPA, especially by the amount of work that goes along with it.

The principal has to approach his staff in a way to prove to them that this is something that is going to be around awhile and not just something that the state has mandated. They need to be motivated and excited. We did not have that motivation and excitement. Principal Hill thought this may just pass. I honestly believe that Principal Hill felt if we stalled long enough, the state would dissolve QPA, and maybe there was hope deep down in his heart that he wouldn't have to mess with it.

Taking a deep breath, Mrs. West noted, "I may have been entirely too candid." I smiled, patted her on the back, and told her she did fine. Deep down inside I was really thinking, "Wow, what an interview."

My next interview wasn't scheduled until later in the day, so I attempted to observe Principal Hill in his daily routine. Mr. Clark met me and explained that Principal Hill wasn't in that day. I arranged to return to the building later in the day to conduct the final interview with Mrs. Terry.

Assistant Principal Clark escorted me up the deserted halls of Liberty High School to the second floor of the older part of the building. This section of the building was built in 1915 and is outlined with blue lockers and narrow halls. The stairs are painted an interesting shade of blue, somewhere between a navy and a robin's egg blue.

Mrs. Terry

Mrs. Terry's English room is in the east corner of the second floor. I found her huddled behind her desk, which was located at an angle in the front of the room.

Without standing she greeted me. Mrs. Terry teaches senior English, but since the seniors had finished the year last week, she was busy grading some make-up work and getting plans ready for her QPA six-trait writing committee.

Our interview began with Mrs. Terry explaining her perceptions of Principal Hill's practice as influenced by QPA.

Instead of a principal as someone who says do this, do that, and makes direct commands on everyone, to me Principal Hill has more of a facilitative type relationship between the teachers and himself. Mr. Hill established various committees in creating a profile. I was seeing less of his being the person who just gave the orders. The word facilitator is good. Everybody had roles and every once in awhile we hit a snag or weren't quite sure what we were to do, so we would go to Principal Hill and ask what did you mean? Or, are we doing this correctly?

Terry finished by saying Principal Hill has assumed a facilitative role. "Instead of giving commands, QPA has been a group kind of endeavor. QPA has not been just one person calling the tune," pointed out Terry.

"Prior to QPA, I think Mr. Hill admits this about himself. He calls himself a 'control freak' to me," stated Terry. She now feels he has learned to delegate more.

Instructional leadership was the next area discussed with Mrs. Terry. She explained that within the basic steps of the QPA process, Principal Hill is managing the curriculum. She feels that he has been supervising the goals and taking an active role in the improvement of the school.

Even in the weekly bulletin - like today is free reading and that was part of the reading goal to encourage reading. He also reminds us of things we need to do on this scheduled date and that this is part of this goal.

Again Terry reminded me that Principal Hill was a facilitator.

Commenting on the climate of the school, Mrs. Terry hasn't observed any changes due to the influence of QPA on the instructional leadership of Hill. "It has always been a good learning climate in this building. Principal Hill has always been wonderful for that. QPA has given us a little bit different way to approach what we've always done. QPA is just a little bit better way of getting at what we want to do educationally."

According to Terry, an additional role of Principal Hill has been to encourage the continuing education of his staff. She shared that Principal Hill sent his staff to workshops for additional training. "His role has been to get us to workshops that get us to use the information. He got us the training and did the sort of things that he needed to do so that we could be successful with it." Terry also added that she felt they wouldn't have used the six-trait model had it not been for his administration of the writing assessments. "The six-trait model was simply something he wanted us to do."

The affects of QPA on the students were not apparent to Mrs. Terry. She did note the reading project that was currently in place. She felt that was the only influence she could note.

Mrs. Terry concluded the interview by adding that she felt the stress of QPA had effected the practice of Principal Hill.

I have observed that he has been very stressful with the paper chase. There are so many different sets of inputs and regulations and things coming from the state department. A lot of times I think he felt we were changing horses in the middle of the stream. We would be going in one direction and then get a letter and it would say no we want it another way. I really felt sorry for him.

I thanked Mrs. Terry for her valuable time and escorted myself out of the room. I walked to the main office to find Principal Hill had returned. I had hoped to shadow him for the remainder of the day. After visiting with Principal Hill, he felt there was nothing he was going to do that would provide any information to the study. I thanked him for allowing me to be in his building and for the opportunity to interview members of his staff.

On the way out of the building, I stopped by Vice Principal Clark's office to thank him for his help. I again found him engaged in a conversation about baseball, this time attempting to solicit funds for his son to be part of an all-star team. At this time, Mr. Clark shared with me that Principal Hill was accepting a position in western Kansas as a superintendent.

Riverview High School

At the end of a wheat field blooms a town, Riverview, the only town in this Kansas Unified School District. Riverview is considered a rural community and most of the activity centers around that of agrarian people. As I came into town, I had to slow my vehicle to allow a white propane tank on a trailer to turn onto

the roadway. Directly up to the city limits are fields of wheat stubble, soybeans, and milo. Soon-to-be wind rows of baby cedars line the two lane highway along with cyclical grain bins.

As I entered the city limits of Riverview, the first set of buildings observed were those on the school bus parking lot. The buses were parked diagonally having just completed their morning route. The next set of structures is the high school. I purposely drove past the buildings in order to get a better picture of the town.

The downtown business district is three blocks long and begins with a "Duckwalls" and ends with a rodeo advertisement. Pick-up trucks are diagonally parked in front of the two banks and scarce businesses. Riverview is located in close proximity to the largest town in Kansas and is termed a suburban town. While the population of Riverview is only 1,900, the school district serves a population of over 3,900 people. The school district has two grade schools, one middle school, and one high school, all located in Riverview.

After driving downtown I returned to the Riverview High School campus. The RHS yard was neatly groomed and meticulously edged with numerous young pin oaks completing the landscaping. The campus consists of three buildings, a main building, a science building, and an industrial/fine arts building. Within the confines of the buildings are the following: Twenty-nine classrooms, industrial technology and home economics lab areas, a writing lab, a main office with a separate college and career guidance office, a cafeteria/commons area, a gymnasium, a weight training room, a wrestling room, and three locker rooms.

Riverview High School serves 350 students grades 9-12. The majority of the students are Caucasian. The staff consists of 21 full-time teachers, four half-time teachers, three special education teachers, a guidance counselor, a

librarian, an assistant principal, and a principal. Riverview is in the fourth year of QPA.

I entered Riverview High School by a side door that led to the gymnasium. Evidently I looked lost as a student graciously asked me if she could help me. I told her I needed to find the main office, and she pointed the way and wished me a good day. This attitude exemplified my total experience at Riverview.

The Assistant Principal, Mr. Storm, met me outside of the office. Smiling, he shook my hand and explained that Principal Bell was expecting me, but was in a meeting with a group of teachers discussing block scheduling; he would visit with me instead. As we walked into the office, a group of seniors girls were talking to the secretaries explaining how they were not looking forward to graduation. One girl explained, "I'm really going to miss it here." This happened to be the last week of school for seniors.

Mr. Storm

Mr. Storm escorted me into his office located just off of the main office. His office was large with a cluttered desk and two chairs facing the front of his desk. The walls were covered with schedules of teachers and certificates.

Mr. Storm has worked with Principal Bell for 18 years. Eight of those years he served as assistant principal. Mr. Storm graduated from a local university with a degree in social science and later received a masters from the same institution.

After a brief conversation about farming (Mr. Storm also is the owner of a large farm and spends the majority of his free time managing the operation), we began the interview.

Mr. Storm spoke highly of Principal Bell and of the leadership he exhibited during the initial stages of QPA. "He just didn't sit around and wait for things to happen," commented Storm. "He took the bull by the horns and did what

needed to be done and put things in motion." Storm continued to add that Principal Bell had to work to convince the faculty to buy in with QPA and that he had to learn the process as he went and then teach the faculty. Principal Bell emphasized to the faculty that QPA was something that they were all going to have to confront, and that they would all have to deal with. "This attitude from Principal Bell contributed to the staff taking the ball and running," added Storm. "Principal Bell convinced the staff that since we're going to have to do the process, let's do QPA in a way that is going to improve our school."

Our interview was interrupted briefly by the FFA instructor sticking his head in the office to ask about transportation to a meeting. After Mr. Storm congratulated the instructor for an excellent job at a FFA judging contest held the day before, the interview proceeded. Storm continued to share that Principal Bell has tried to involve everyone in the process in order to gain consensus in QPA. "Whether it is just doing clerical things or appointing members to the leadership team, he wanted everybody involved," remarked Storm.

Our next focus of the interview was to examine the influence of QPA on the practice of Principal Bell. Mr. Storm began by saying that Principal Bell really hasn't been changed by QPA. Principal Bell has always included people in decision making and delegated responsibilities. "It has made him busier," observed Storm. "There are so many more decision making processes taking place. In the seven years I've been in this position the number of things to be done has increased dramatically. QPA has also increased Principal Bell's work load."

Our conversation began to shift towards the area of instructional leadership and the effects of QPA on Bell's practice. After I explained the five areas of instructional leadership defined by Krug (1993), Mr. Storm had little to contribute in this area. He felt that "Principal Bell made QPA a part of his

practice through instructional leadership. He has always been good at all of the those things (Krug descriptors). I would say the best way to describe Principal Bell is as an instructional leader."

Our conversation began to wind down as Principal Bell arrived at the door, apologizing for his prior meeting taking so long. I asked for about 10 minutes to finish up my conversation with Mr. Storm. "No problem, take your time," responded Principal Bell.

I asked Mr. Storm if there was anything else concerning the influence of QPA on the practice of Principal Bell that I forgot to ask. Storm responded:

The QPA process has been good for the leadership team, and it's been good for Principal Bell. It has really made us look at our school and take a look at the things we can do to correct problems. Due to QPA, Principal Bell has a better feel for the school. It has provided him a process that allows him to get more information.

Mr. Storm and I shook hands as I thanked him for his time and valuable information. I was escorted to Principal Bell's office by Mr. Storm. Principal Bell met us about half way across the office. We were introduced, and he welcomed me to Riverview High School and into his office.

Principal Bell

Principal Bell explained to me that he has been the principal at Riverview High School for eight years. Prior to this appointment as principal, Bell taught in the Riverview school system for four years, then was the assistant principal at RVHS for six years. Principal Bell received his undergraduate degree from a central Kansas college and his masters degree from an area university.

The office of Principal Bell is large and very tidy. Every item from the desk to his shelves is meticulously in place.

We began the interview by discussing how QPA had influenced his practice. Principal Bell related that QPA has added a lot of extra responsibility. "Especially with the school profile - you have to do a lot of background work. Some things we took for granted and didn't try to analyze. We had to stop and reflect," expressed Bell. As Riverview began the QPA process, they were given a lot of incorrect information. "I first thought the profile was going to be a pain. We were told we had to do all of these things and that it was going to be a nightmare."

Principal Bell reached to the shelf behind him and handed me a copy of the school profile developed for Riverview. The document was a neatly bound document with a white cover and a picture of the school mascot on the front. The document was divided into twelve sections further divided by light blue inserts. As I quickly thumbed through the document, I was impressed by the neatness of the graphs and of the early reference to the district and school mission statements.

As I put the document to the side to be reviewed later, Bell continued, "Reluctantly, we got started, but then we visited with some different people in the state department. Once they explained the nuts and bolts to us, the process has become quite helpful. The process is still time consuming," added Bell.

Principal Bell explained, "The biggest drawback has been the challenge of so many things to do and then to have QPA dumped on us on top of that." Bell believes that QPA has added additional stress to his administration. "QPA is always in the back of your mind. If you put something off until later, you realize that you need to do this or that," shared Bell. "That's kind of a worry. "

Referring back to the school profile and the data enclosed within the document, Bell shared, "Prior to QPA, I didn't use data for much of anything." Bell said that in a conversation the topic of dropout rate or attendance might

come up, but nothing to the extent you have to discuss for QPA. "It's opened our eyes to some different things and made us do things that we haven't done before."

Since so much emphasis is being placed on the profile, I asked Principal Bell if he thought about the impact on the profile document when making decisions? Bell remarked that he does think about the profile. He shared with me that this year Riverview has had a larger number of dropouts than ever before. While looking at this data, his initial comment to the committee was, "Our profile is going to take a big hit." Bell further explained that the committee then began dialogue as to what they can do to keep kids in school. "Subconsciously you're thinking this is going to come out in your report. It does change your mind set," shared Bell.

Principal Bell feels that QPA has influenced his practice by making him a coordinator, especially since he relies so much on committees to carry out QPA.

I try to delegate out as much responsibility as possible, but still somebody has to be there to pull it all together, and that's where I see my position.

I've got to get with the chairmen and make sure everything is meeting guidelines.

He further felt that he was the one that had to answer to the superintendent and serve as the contact person between the school and the state department.

Even with the additional delegation to staff, Principal Bell felt his relationship with his staff has not been changed by QPA. "I have an excellent staff, and they've been very receptive. The staff will come up to me and say I've got some time, how I can help you, or if I ask them to do something, they don't complain." Bell further added that QPA has made the staff come together and realize they are not bunch of individuals but rather a team. "We're attempting to do things cross curricularly and the biggest impact has been that QPA has

pulled everybody together." Bell concluded that he used to do a lot of things by himself, and now he realized that there was no way he could handle it. "I'm finding out that the staff likes responsibility. I'm getting more input where before I was isolated a little too much and tried to guess what other people were thinking. With the delegation and added responsibility, I know what they're thinking."

Principal Bell also shared that QPA has changed his record keeping and that anything that comes across his desk that he thinks he can use, he saves. "I have more of an awareness," concluded Bell.

We shifted the interview to the area of instructional leadership. As was the case with Mr. Storm, Principal Bell didn't have much to say about instructional leadership. Bell wasn't being deceptive, but he felt that QPA hasn't influenced his style of instructional leadership. "QPA hasn't changed that much in regard to where I'm coming from as an instructional leader," pointed out Bell. Principal Bell related that prior to QPA, the ideas of instructional leadership defined by Krug were already part of his practice.

Two areas identified by Krug and influenced by QPA are defining and communicating a mission and managing curriculum and instruction. In the area of defining and communicating a mission, Bell related, "QPA has helped us define our mission statement." The mission statement was developed by committee, then submitted for approval by the total faculty.

Managing curriculum and instruction has been influenced with the development of curriculum committees that resulted in the development of long range goals and a K-12 curriculum. "Once we got into outcomes based education we were focusing in on what do we want our students to know. QPA came along and added to that, asking 'What are our goals?'" added Bell.

Principal Bell remained poised behind his desk as we made the shift to the final section of the interview. This section dealt with the impact of QPA on the principal and the impact on the staff and students.

Principal Bell slowly turned around and reached behind his desk and pulled out yet another document. This gray, bound document, entitled "Striving for Better Education," was a collection of the QPA goals for Riverview High School. Two differently colored sections, canary and white, distinguished the different goals of the document. The canary pages represented the goals and prescriptions for improving student reading achievement while the white pages represented the prescriptions written for improving student mathematics achievement.

Principal Bell wasn't sure if the students have been effected by QPA, yet. "Next year is when we begin implementing our school improvement plan. Hopefully then QPA will have an effect on them." At that time the teachers will begin using the tactic developed and found in the "Striving for Better Education, QPA Goals."

Bell explained that he does not actively discuss QPA with the RVHS students. "If you were to ask our students what QPA was, they would go 'huh?'" chuckled Bell. "I do share with them that we are going to have an on-site visit or I will share with them when the on-site team complimented them on the way they acted."

"Our students are beginning to pick up on the different ways we are addressing our goal areas," explained Bell. "We've asked our students not to blow off our standardized testing and to do their best. We explained to the students that even though the testing was not for a letter grade, it was a reflection of their school and that they were being judged on it."

This spring the staff changed the way the sophomores assessments were administered. Instead of testing all of the students together in one room, they split the students up into groups of twenty. Principal Bell shared he noticed a completely different atmosphere. "I think the students realized that since we went to different areas for the test, they needed to take the test seriously. Our kids did a better job," smiled Bell.

This concluded my interview with Mr. Bell. We had previously decided that he would introduce me to the other two teachers to be interviewed and that I would come back on another day to conduct those interviews. As Principal Bell walked me down the hall to meet the other members of the leadership team, the students were changing class periods. The halls were not crowded nor were the students noisy or pushy. Principal Bell commented that he has good students at RVHS and that this type of conduct is normal.

After being introduced to the teachers, Principal Bell took me to the lunchroom where he needed to be on duty. We took the time to eat the school lunch consisting of traditional chili and cinnamon rolls.

I left after watching Principal Bell visit with teachers and walk around the lunchroom. Again the students were very organized and cooperative. From a brief observation of the halls and lunchroom, my assessment was that he did have good students.

Riverview High School Revisited

My second day at Riverview High began with my arrival during a pounding rain storm without an umbrella. With my satchel over my head, I entered the building by the front entrance and proceeded directly to the main office.

Principal Bell greeted me in the office. We had previously arranged to conduct the final two interviews during the planning periods of the teachers. Bell

walked me to the conference room that he had arranged for me to use. As we walked down the halls, I couldn't help but notice the silence and the attentive students in the classrooms.

The conference room was located down the hall and next to the teacher's lounge. The room was long and narrow with no windows and bare walls. Blue plastic backed chairs and a woodgrained folding table were the furniture of choice. The room was quiet as I sat there waiting for Mr. Fair who is a member of the OTE/QPA leadership team and a math teacher. Principal Bell had previously shared with me that Mr. Fair had been working with him for 11 years. He also shared that Mr. Storm had a masters degree in school administration and was a finalist for a principalship at a school 25 miles east of Riverview.

Mr. Fair

Mr. Fair slowly opened the door to the conference room and walked in as we exchanged pleasantries. In a small world, Mr. Fair was a good friend of my assistant principal, having coached wrestling against each other. This exchange added a relaxed atmosphere for the interview.

After the first two interviews, I was curious to see the perceptions of Mr. Storm and what he felt was the biggest influence QPA had on the thinking of Principal Bell. As was the case previously with Mr. Storm, he really didn't notice much change in the practice of Principal Bell. "Mr. Bell has always been good at getting people involved. He has always been big on committees and getting people off of the fence and involved." The biggest influence on the practice of Bell has been the documentation. According to Fair, "Everything is documented," said Fair. "We went through the OTE process, and we built a prescription model. We had to make sure we documented all of that." Fair concluded by adding that QPA had made a real paper work nightmare for Principal Bell.

Mr. Fair has also noted a lot of stress on Principal Bell. "QPA was nerve-racking at first because nobody knew what was going on. We didn't know what to expect or what exactly was going to happen when we had our first on-site visit." Fair continued, "Principal Bell is ultimately accountable for everything that happens here. He has to answer to the taxpayers and school board. They want to know what we're supposed to be doing." Fair felt that added a lot of work for him especially since they received poor direction from the state department early in the process and did a lot of extra work they didn't have to do.

Fair also added that certain teachers who were reluctant to get involved in QPA made it stressful for Principal Bell. "You always have a few teachers who have to be convinced this just isn't a fad and that in five years this will all be gone. That has to be stressful trying to get those people involved." Fair added that due to the leadership of Principal Bell, almost all of the staff has bought into QPA. "You always have one or two people who drag their heels. In our case we have two people. These same two people gripe about everything," added Storm. "They might have to change the lesson plans they've used for the last 20 years."

As the interview shifted towards instructional leadership, I could sense from the tone of voice of Mr. Fair that he had a large amount of respect for Principal Bell. "I'm sure Principal Bell has changed just because he's grown as an educator and a leader. Maybe it's been subtle, and I really haven't noticed."

I shared the indicators of effective instructional leadership with Mr. Fair, and he added, "As far as an instructional leader, he is now more focused about where we're really going. He has been there through the whole process and gave us assistance." In reference to managing curriculum, "Principal Bell has given us direction, but as far as checking to see if we're really teaching to the outcomes should be his role." Fair concluded, "I don't know how Principal Bell

could really get into the classroom every day or how he could personally test each student to see if they are really getting the outcomes from each course they are supposed to."

Fair also added that Principal Bell's attitude throughout the QPA process has been, "We need to do what's best for kids." "This attitude," according to Fair, "has motivated teachers to work harder and do a little something extra."

The final area of discussion in this interview was the area of effects on teachers and staff. Mr. Fair believed that the teachers have been affected by Principal Bell assigning each of them to committees and getting the total faculty involved in the process. "Principal Bell really does a good job of letting people express their opinions and then working from that. He lets you tell him what you're thinking, then he subtly shares how he perceives it. He then decides the common ground and what direction we need to take. He is really excellent at that."

I asked Mr. Fair if he had observed any impact on the students. He responded, "No, I haven't noticed anything at all on the students."

Mr. Fair concluded the interview by adding that Principal Bell was a "real cool", hard working, and caring guy. "I have been interviewing for principal jobs, and Principal Bell has been a good role model for me to learn from."

Mr. Fair graciously agreed to get the next respondent, Ms. Eagle. As he was leaving, Principal Bell stopped by and informed me that Ms. Eagle was still in class. Without a hesitation, Principal Bell volunteered to go cover the remainder of the class. "I need to get in a classroom anyway," offered Bell.

Ms. Eagle

Ms. Eagle entered the conference room going about 100 miles per hour. After taking a minute to catch her breath, we began the interview. Ms. Eagle has been teaching history at Riverview for eleven years and also has worked with

Principal Bell eleven years. She has been a member of the OTE/QPA leadership team for the past four years. Ms. Eagle has already accepted a teaching position at a different school for next year.

The interview began with a question about how QPA has influenced the practice of Principal Bell. Ms. Eagle, speaking as hurriedly as she did when she dashed into the room, stated she felt Principal Bell is providing a lot of leadership and guidance. She further added that she thinks of the word "facilitator" when she thinks of the influence on his role. "He has us meeting the mandate. Principal Bell understands that it's very effective if you get everybody to think that this is something that is going to work and that it's something worth all this extra time," remarked Eagle. The district gave the staff eleven days of in-service this past year. "We spent substantial hours on QPA with Principal Bell allowing us that much time and keeping us focused."

The delegation of duties by the administration has been made easier due to the example set by Bell. "Principal Bell is a believer in school improvement, and he has always set a good example," expresses Eagle. "He was very fair in dividing up the task." Principal Bell let the teachers decide what group they would like to work with by listing the categories on the chalkboard and letting them decide. He then set deadlines for each task to be completed.

It seems like on the big task, he has everybody involved, with ideas coming from everybody. The ownership of QPA comes from Principal Bell letting you pick your area then letting you work the way you want to.

We continued to breeze through the interview at a pace that would make your head spin. Sliding right into instructional leadership, Ms. Eagle observed that QPA has influenced the instructional leadership in the area of supporting teachers and staff improvement.

He is real supportive if we have a conference that we want to go to. He has us present those ideas to the staff. Prior to QPA we would go off to these things, get all excited, and just use it in our class. Now on in-services he brings us together and has us make a presentation and share ideas with the rest of the staff.

Ms. Eagle also felt this added to the accountability of QPA for the teachers.

Ms. Eagle also acknowledged that Principal Bell is now very understanding of different teaching styles. "He knows that not everyone has to do the same thing in order to achieve our outcomes. I don't see people backing away from QPA anymore." Eagle further stated that this added to the buy in to QPA by the staff. "Principal Bell presented this as a way to improve our school and also meet the state mandates."

Sensing that Mrs. Eagle needed to get back to class, we began to discuss QPA's effects on the thinking of Principal Bell and the effects on the staff and students. She again made reference to the delegation of the staff to different committees and of the buy in on the part of Bell. "Again, everybody is involved. We get fine tuning on the wording from the English department and the statistics from the math department."

Eagle added that Principal Bell is an accountability whiz. "We're accountable to the kids; we're accountable for their futures. Even without QPA, he would be this way."

Ms. Eagle concluded by speaking of the influences on the staff resulting from the leadership of Principal Bell.

I've heard of horror stories at other schools of principals who start out with their little blurb of 'here we go, another State mandate', Principal Bell has never done that. He has taken a real common sense approach to QPA. Regardless of the flavor of the year for school improvement - QPA has

been a good deal. Had we not had buy in from the top, I don't know how this whole thing would have gone.

As I thanked Ms. Eagle for her valuable time, I had to ask her why the hurry. "We're having a pizza party in my class for the graduating seniors. I want to get back." She did invite me down for pizza.

As I gathered up my tape recorder and other materials, I couldn't help but reflect on the loyalty and respect of the staff toward Principal Bell. Each respondent spoke with sincerity as he/she described the principal.

I ventured back into the hall to spend some time with Principal Bell observing his practice from my perspective. He met me in the hall as I was walking to the office. He asked me if I'd like to go get a piece of pizza; I declined.

As we walked around the building, Principal Bell explained that nothing he was going to do today was a result of QPA. "Rarely do I do anything daily that is influenced by QPA. On certain days I do spend enormous amounts of time organizing activities such as in-service or filling out forms. Today, I'm just being a normal principal!"

We continued to walk around the building observing the students and teachers in action. Evidently Principal Bell has been in these classes before. As we entered the classroom, never did we disrupt the lessons. We would get a quick glance, then the students would get back on task.

After a tour of the building and again the reassurance that today was not going to uncover anything special, I concluded the study of Riverview High School. I thanked Principal Bell for his cooperation, complimented him on the job he was doing and the warmness of his staff and students. I again left by the front door, feeling not like a visitor, but a welcomed guest.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The previous chapters explained the purpose of this study, gave an in-depth review of the relevant literature, presented the methodology that guided this study, and presented the data from each case. This chapter provides an analysis of the data with respect to the research questions, common themes that emerged, and related findings.

The analysis includes descriptions of consistencies and inconsistencies in the respondent perceptions as related to the research questions within each case. Common themes will then be discussed as they developed from the three cases. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the data with respect to the conceptual framework.

How has QPA influenced thinking about the role of the principal?

The Leithwood model suggests that external influences impact principals' mental processes. Leithwood (1988) stated that the model is intended to suggest that what principals do, or their practices, are most directly consequences of what they think. For the purpose of this study the external influence was limited to QPA, a state mandated school improvement project.

The purpose of question number one was to examine to what extent a state mandated school improvement program (QPA) influenced what principals do (practice), specifically in the area of instructional leadership.

Red Lane High School

Perceptions about the influence of QPA on thinking about the role of the principal were varied at Red Lane High School. Although Principal Rice felt that it would be fair to say that QPA had changed his thinking about the role, he thought that the educational training he had received prior to QPA was more of an influence. Prior to QPA, he was actively involved in Effective Schools

Training. Mr. Rice had attended a national Effective Schools Conference in Arizona and had some basic training with Dr. Bill Spady. Mr. Rice further commented that on several occasions he had heard Dr. Lezzotte speak. These experiences influenced his thinking about the role of principal. As Mr. Rice stated, "My prior training made QPA easy to swallow."

Along with the Effective Schools Training, Mr. Rice mentioned he had received training in the OBE (Outcomes Based Education) and TESA (Teacher Expectations of Student Achievement) programs. As QPA schools began to assess reading and math, he felt knowledgeable about what effective teachers should be doing, due to the additional training he had previously received.

The teachers interviewed felt that QPA had influenced Principal Rice's style of leadership which was affected by his thinking about his role as principal. Each commented that Principal Rice had developed a "hands off" approach to the process. Mrs. Rose stated that Rice had given the steering committee free rein in what they wanted to do. She felt that the hands-off approach enhanced teachers' perceptions of ownership. "The teachers feel more ownership of the process because it is based strictly on teacher input, student input, and parent input. Principal Rice hasn't tried to sway any side one way or the other," added Rose. Principal Rice related that he felt that this kind of leadership enables teachers to create their own vision and is a lot easier than trying to create it for them. Especially in the area of curriculum, Rice's administrative style relieves some of the concerns and issues because the ones in the leadership role are really the experts making decisions. Mr. Allen related that within some general guidelines, Rice let the committee members handle curriculum issues and do what they felt necessary. Mrs. Beal further commented that Principal Rice would come and look, but that the steering committee basically did all of the work. "He

didn't stand over us with a bull whip," according to Beal. "We know he is for QPA, and he pushes us. He keeps us headed in the right direction."

Even with the free rein, Rose, Allen, and Beal believe that Rice has been very supportive and very helpful. Beal spoke of the release time provided by Principal Rice and that he didn't expect the committee to do work after school or on the weekend. "He got subs for us," related Beal. Mrs. Rose added that Principal Rice was very helpful in that respect. "He knows it requires a lot of time and work and is willing to help you out in that area," concluded Rose. Mr. Allen further stated that if the committee got stuck, they could go to him and ask him what he thought about a certain topic, and he would make a recommendation. Mr. Allen commented that Principal Rice never gave up. "Sometimes I think he would like to, but you always know he is going to be there to back you up." Coincidentally, Principal Rice was also a member of the QPA/NCA team chaired by Mr. Allen. Allen reiterated that he was a very good member. He participated in discussions and did not try to run the group or sway committee decisions. "He is very good at being just a committee member. He was very willing to provide input when necessary," said Allen.

On another committee, the Site Council, where both Principal Rice and Mr. Allen are members, the opposite was perceived. The RLHS Site Council is a requirement of QPA. A site council must consist of teachers, business people, patrons, and parents. The principal is a member, but does not have a vote. The purpose of the site council is to serve as a liaison between the school and community and to provide input into decisions made within the school district. Allen felt that Principal Rice was having a harder time giving up the "reins" of this committee. It was Allen's understanding that the site council was to be self-governing and that the principal was not to be the person in charge. Allen felt Principal Rice was having a hard time separating himself from that role. Any

correspondence the council received came from Principal Rice. Allen perceived that Rice felt he needed to lead the site council, especially with the NCA process.

While two of the three members of the leadership committee spoke of a very cooperative group, Mrs. Beal spoke of dissension and the lack of a leader in her group. Early in the QPA process, it was decided that problem solving was an area to be improved. Initially problem solving meant nothing more than math, and this annoyed Mrs. Beal. She also felt since she was quite vocal, she was appointed chairperson of the committee by Principal Rice and that he was attempting to "get rid of her." She communicated that to him. In what she described as an "emotional display", she confronted Rice with her concerns. Later she realized this was not at all what he was trying to do. Instead, he wanted somebody opposed to problem solving as a member of his school's leadership team. Mrs. Beal later attempted to quit the committee because, as she put it, "Nobody else in the group (problem solving) would take charge. Somebody had to lead, take the reins or nothing gets done."

The lack of direction from the State Department of Education seemed to contribute to a sense of uncertainty regarding the teachers' perceptions of Principal Rice. Mrs. Rose commented that she felt that the lack of direction from the state led to uncertainty on the part of Mr. Rice. She said that he was receiving varying messages daily from the state. She felt it was hard to know whether their school was in compliance when the state didn't even know. Mr. Allen added that all schools were beginning from square one and knew little of the process, but that Principal Rice had helped pull them through. Mrs. Beal commented, "Most of us didn't have the foggiest idea of what we were doing."

The development of the school profile provided an additional influence on the thinking of the principal. The school profile contains Kansas Writing

Assessment Scores and the Kansas Math Assessment Scores for RLHS students. These scores were used to develop the target area goals for the school improvement plan for QPA/NCA. The document contains data that pertains to the attitudes and test scores of Red Lane High School students. Principal Rice and the teachers commented that they pay particular attention to the test scores and data in this document. Principal Rice commented that he is cognizant of the data and considers numbers when making decisions.

With the emphasis on data based decisions, Principal Rice said one begins to think about what is going to happen to the school profile. "As you look at areas like the drop-out rate, you're convinced at the same time that you need to boost test scores." He described it as walking a balance beam. "Do I get rid of this one student to help the others, or do I hold on to this one and drag the others down?" Principal Rice also felt that when it came time to suspend or expel a student, the impact on the school's profile was considered. At RLHS he said several alternatives are used in place of expulsions, such as in-school suspension. Principal Rice commented that the opening statement of the RLHS student handbook now contains the word "safe", a result of QPA emphasis on a safe and orderly environment. "Prior to QPA," said Rice, "I didn't used to do that."

The state also requires each school to send in the Quality Performance Accreditation Annual Report at the end of the year. The report asks for information in the following areas: graduates, average daily membership, student satisfaction, unduplicated and duplicated violent acts against students and staff, suspensions and expulsions, staff development, staff development levels of implementation, students with improvement plans, and advanced math, science and mastery of algebraic concepts.

Mr. Allen felt that QPA has influenced Mr. Rice's awareness to detail. Allen felt that Principal Rice was organized prior to QPA, but since the process began, he now has become better organized and the information he shares more relevant. "His insight to details has enabled him to see the important issues that need to be tackled," stated Allen.

Liberty High School

When asked how QPA had influenced the thinking of Principal Hill, Hill responded, "It has influenced maybe not what I do, but rather how I do it. I depend on a lot of my people" said Hill, "I delegate to a lot of them to do most of the research, to come up with conclusions and then present it in that way." Hill feels he is an overseer rather than being really involved. Mr. Clark made the same assessment.

Principal Hill acts as a coordinator, the organizer; he sets the agendas for our QPA days. He has always has been a delegator and in fact, delegation is probably the strength in his practice. Principal Hill has the ability to delegate the responsibility and to have staff buy into whatever it is that is the issue at the time. Principal Hill's ability to delegate has resulted in a new facility, restructuring the curriculum, an assertive discipline program, rewriting the policy handbook, and the initiation of a human sexuality curriculum.

Others that were interviewed also saw Principal Hill as a delegator. Mr. Clark further commented that Principal Hill attempted to delegate responsibilities with the QPA process between the building leadership team and the QPA team. Mrs. Terry related that she felt that QPA had influenced the thinking of the principal in two ways. First she feels that Principal Hill has moved from a "control freak" to a delegator. "Prior to QPA," stated Terry, "he was like me, cross every 'i' and dot every 't'." She now perceives him as an administrator who

is concerned with everyone working together and getting input from everyone. She noticed that he thinks QPA is a group endeavor not just one person calling the tune.

An additional influence Terry noted was the role of facilitator. She thinks Principal Hill has developed a facilitative relationship with his staff. "If we hit a snag, or weren't quite sure what we were doing, we could go to him and ask him if we were doing this correctly or what did you mean?" shared Terry.

Mr. Clark, who works closely with Principal Hill, commented that he observed an influence in the thinking of Principal Hill from QPA only during specific times of the year. Those times are when the staff is working on surveys or during faculty meetings. Principal Hill coordinates and plans these days.

Mrs. West commented that she felt that the only influence of QPA on the thinking of Principal Hill was wanting to look good on paper rather than facilitating school improvement. She stated that there are some principals who believe that, if the ship appears to be sailing very smoothly, then it must have "one hell of a captain". "Our school looks like it's sailing smoothly, but none of us are teaching to our capacity," concluded West.

Mrs. West expressed frustration at the early leadership from Principal Hill. "He got real excited when the students expressed a concern over a parking problem. He knew they were dissatisfied and knew that a remodeling project would result in a new parking lot." According to Mrs. West, Principal Hill thought this would look good because of everything he had read about QPA requiring documentation of changes. "The staff got real frustrated," confessed Hill. "We could have cared less where the students parked; we saw other needs for change." Mrs. Terry shared quite the opposite. "There has always been a good learning climate in this building. Principal Hill has always been wonderful for that," said Terry.

Mrs. West further stated that she felt the principal should approach staff in a way to prove that QPA is something that is going to be around awhile and not just something that is state mandated. She explained:

They [staff] need to be motivated and excited. We did not have that motivation and excitement. I honestly believe that Principal Hill felt if we stalled long enough the state would dissolve QPA and maybe there was a hope deep down in his heart that he wouldn't have to mess with it.

The time spent on QPA is also an external factor that has influenced the thinking of Principal Hill. He felt that QPA takes so much time that it takes away from other activities of the principal. Principal Hill related that he was doing the same thing as before, just a lot more of it. "I would say that QPA takes a lot of time and when you have only so many hours, then it takes away from something else. In my case it takes away from home," said Hill. Mr. Clark observed that the amount of time required to fill out QPA forms is very extensive even with the computerized disks. He felt that the time spent on paper work could be utilized in a more constructive manner.

Riverview High School

The perceived influence of Quality Performance Accreditation (QPA) at Riverview High School focused on the attitude, leadership abilities, and influence of the school profile. "He just didn't sit around and wait for things to happen. He took the bull by the horns and did what needed to be done to put things in motion" was how Mr. Storm described the thinking of Principal Bell towards QPA. "His attitude all along was to convince the staff that since we're going to have to do the process, let's do QPA in a way that is going to improve our school." Mrs. Eagle said, "Principal Bell is a believer in school improvement, and he always sets a good example." Mrs. Eagle further stated, "Principal Bell has taken a real common sense approach to QPA. Had we not had the buy-in

from the top, I don't know how this whole thing [QPA] would have gone." Mr. Fair related that the attitude of Principal Bell all through QPA has been one of needing to do what is best for kids." He continued, "This attitude has motivated teachers to work harder and do a little something extra." Mrs. Eagle concluded that Principal Bell was an accountability whiz. "We're accountable to the kids; we're accountable for their futures. Even without QPA, he would be this way." Mr. Fair noted, "I'm sure Principal Bell has changed just because he has grown as an educator and a leader. Maybe it's been subtle, but I really haven't noticed."

QPA also influenced Bell's attitude about delegation. Principal Bell shared, "I try to delegate out as much responsibility as possible. I'm finding out the staff likes responsibility. I'm getting more input where before I was a little too much isolated." Bell related that because of delegation and added responsibility he knows what the teachers are thinking.

Bell further describes his job as a coordinator. "Somebody has to pull it all together, and that's where I see my position. I get with the chairmen and make sure everything is meeting guidelines." He further added that he answers to the superintendent and serves as a contact person between the school and the state department. Mr. Storm related that Principal Bell has always included people in decision making and delegated responsibilities. "There are so many more decision making processes taking place," added Storm.

Mr. Storm concluded that, in his role as a delegator, Principal Bell has tried to involve everyone in the process to gain consensus in QPA. "Whether it is just doing clerical things or appointing members to the leadership team, he wanted everybody involved." Mrs. Eagle felt that the delegation of duties was made easier by the example set by Bell. "He's been very fair in dividing up the task. It seems like on the big task, he has everybody involved, with ideas

coming from everybody." Mrs. Eagle describes Principal Bell as the facilitator when she thinks of his role. "He has us meeting the mandate. Principal Bell understands that it is very effective if you get everybody to think that this is something that is going to work and that it's something worth all this extra time."

Principal Bell stated that the school profile, required by QPA, does influence his thinking. The example he shared was the large number of dropouts this year at RVHS. "We've commented several times that our profile was going to take a big hit. Subconsciously, in the back of your mind, you're thinking this is going to come out in your report." Bell further shared that prior to QPA he didn't use data for much of anything. The use of the data in the school profile has "opened our eyes to some different things and made us do things that we haven't done before."

Principal Bell felt that QPA has added a lot of extra responsibility, especially when developing the school profile. "You have to do a lot of background work," Bell stated. He also believes that QPA has made him become more structured. Mr. Fair commented that everything must be documented and QPA has made a paper work nightmare for Principal Bell. "He is ultimately accountable for everything that happens here, and it's just a lot of busy work a lot of the time."

Mr. Fair also added that Principal Bell has been more focused about where they are really going. Principal Bell added that QPA has helped them define their mission statement.

The following table (Table I) represents the terms and phrase provided from the respondents that describe the influence of QPA on the mental process of the principal. The items are listed according to site then arranged by principal, vice principal, and teacher comments. The information is then translated into common themes that resulted from the data.

TABLE I

Influence of QPA on thinking about the role of the principal

	RED LANE	LIBERTY	RIVERVIEW
<u>Principals</u>			
(Mr. Rice)	School Profile Prior Training Create own vision	(Mr. Hill) School Profile Delegator Coordinator Overseer Not what I do, but how I do it	(Mr. Bell) School profile Delegator Coordinator More structured Helped define mission statement
<u>Assistant Principals</u>		(Mr. Clark) Delegator Coordinator Organizer Specific times	(Mr. Storm) "Took the bull by the Horns" Shared decision making Involved everyone
<u>Teachers</u>			
(Mrs. Rose)	Free Rein Hands-off Helpful/supportive	(Mrs. West) Look good on paper Smooth sailing ship No motivation or excitement	(Mrs. Eagle) Delegator Facilitator "Accountability Whiz" Belief in school improvement
(Mrs. Beal)	Supportive Lacked Leadership	(Mrs. Terry) "Control Freak" to Facilitator Wonderful for learning climate	(Mr. Fair) Best for Kids More focused Grown as educator and leader
(Mr. Allen)	Good committee member Hard time giving up reigns Never gives up Awareness to detail		

Common Themes: Influence of QPA on thinking about the role of the principal

Three influences were identified as having direct impact on the mental processes of the principals. These influences were the attitude of the principal toward school improvement, the self-selected role of the principal in the QPA process, and the impact of the school profile on the decision-making processes of the principal.

While QPA did not constitute a new change in the mental processes of the principals, it did result in refinement of their previous thinking. Each principal indicated that the way he thought about the role of the principal prior to QPA was still apparent, but QPA had affected the ways he reacted in certain situations. The principals stated that QPA didn't necessarily change what they were doing but did change how they did it.

The attitude of the principal toward QPA represented a direct influence of QPA on the thinking of the principal. Contrary to the findings of Turner (1986) who stated that the degree of change among school systems appeared related to central office leadership, QPA and system change were associated directly with the attitude of the principal. This 1986 study indicated that the principal's attitude about QPA influenced the degree to which the schools became involved in the process. The teachers looked to the principals for motivation and leadership. Both the teachers and principals spoke of the principals' persuading the resisters to become involved in the process and of the total contributions of the staffs as a result of the principal's attitude towards change. The attitude of the principals towards school improvement dictated how the staffs proceeded with QPA process. The findings of Sergiovanni (1987) concluded that principals are the main characters in bringing about adoption and implementing goals while, according to Fullan (1991), principals have a major impact on the degree

of implementation of particular innovations. These findings were confirmed in this study. In this study, the principal at each site was the most influential person in the QPA process, and his attitude about QPA and school improvement influenced the involvement of the total staff.

The participating principals indicated that their previous training influenced their attitude about QPA and that they thought it might be a passing fad like school improvement programs of the past. Once the principals commitment to QPA was established, the teachers described their attitudes as "taking the bull by the horns, belief in school improvement, creating a wonderful climate for learning, and never gives up."

The second influence on the thinking of the principals was the role of the principal that evolved from QPA. Sergiovanni (1987) suggested that the principal's job is to coordinate, direct and support the work of others. Smith and Andrews (1989) identified the interactions that take place between the principal and instructional staff as a resource provider, instructional resource, communicator and visible presence. The respondents in this study conclude that the principal's role in QPA is delegator, overseer, coordinator and leader. These roles were confirmed by the principals.

As part of this role, the delegation of QPA responsibilities and the empowerment of teachers by the principals indicated a strong impact on the thinking of the principal. Furthermore, the use of delegation supports the findings of Sergiovanni (1987) who suggests that the principal's job is to coordinate, direct, and support the work of others.

Smith and Andrews (1989) identified four areas of interaction that take place between the school principal and instructional staff: resource provider, instructional resource, communicator, and visible presence. The respondents commented that the principals were delegators and included everybody in the

QPA process. At each site, the principals commented that teachers were assigned different responsibilities that relate to QPA. The principals commented that they expected the teachers to become knowledgeable on the use of data.

The respondents in this study also commented that the principals were overseers of the entire QPA process for the schools and made sure they met state mandates. The principals commented that they serve as a communication link between the school, the state department and the local board of education. The principals believe they coordinate the activities that are involved with QPA. The teachers and assistant principals commented that during different times of the year, the principals coordinate the QPA activities and develop agendas for QPA meetings.

Along with delegator, overseer, and coordinator, the principals were also referred to as leaders. Researchers stated that the role of leadership was the most important factor for principals in school improvement (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Sergiovanni, 1987; Smith & Andrews, 1989). Anderson (1989) acknowledged that "a principal's leadership was one of the most crucial elements necessary for school success" (p.53). Effective schools research focuses on the principal as the instructional leader (Lezzotte, 1993). According to Mace-Matluck (1986) leadership from either the principal, or another administrator, or a group of teachers is necessary to initiate and maintain the improvement process. Goldman and Conley (1993) and Turner (1986) wrote that school leadership, whether derived from principals or teachers, appeared to be an important factor in how school staffs respond to change. The respondents indicated that the leadership of the principals added to the involvement of the staff members. The principals were concerned how they were going to get total staff involvement. This study found that leadership of the principals was directly

responsible for the empowerment of the staff and for the total buy-in of the teachers into the QPA process.

The school profile, the document used as evidence of attainment for QPA, also influenced principals' thinking. At each site, the researcher was provided a copy of the school profiles. The principals, in their responses, made reference to the impact of the school profile on certain decisions.

The principals indicated that they were concerned about how people would view their schools as a result of certain data contained in the school profile. Fullan (1991) listed eight factors that affect the initiation of change. The factors include existence and quality of the innovation, access to innovations, advocacy from central office, teacher advocacy, external change agents, community pressure, new policy and funds and problem-solving and bureaucratic orientations. Fullan stated that "innovations get initiated from many different sources and for different reasons" (1991, p.51). Additional research indicates that pressure from external influences continues to be an obstacles that influences the role of the principal (Blase & Seay, 1992; Leithwood, 1988; Peterson & Valli, 1993).

This study found that the school profile has influenced the thinking of the principals. The principals are very aware of the pressures from external groups and the impact of the school profile on the thinking of internal and external groups. Because the principals want their schools to look good, they make decisions based upon how they want their schools to be perceived through the school profile. The school profile was originally intended to serve as an information source that reflects what is happening within the school. This study found that the school profile has influenced principals decision making concerning students and staff based upon how the data would appear in the school profile.

How has QPA influenced Principals' Practice?

For the purpose of this study, the framework for instructional leadership activities performed by the principal and affected by QPA were as follows: defining and communicating the school's mission, managing curriculum and instruction, supervising teaching, monitoring student progress, and promoting an instructional climate (Krug, 1993).

Red Lane High School

The influence of QPA on the instructional leadership activities of Mr. Rice began with defining and communicating the mission of the school. All of the persons interviewed commented that Principal Rice had a hands-off leadership style which allowed the teachers ownership in the curriculum and what takes place in the school. Principal Rice related that he encouraged teachers to make decisions on their own. Mrs. Rose remarked that at times she appreciated the hands off approach, but at other times she would like to "wring his neck." This frustration stemmed from the lack of answers about QPA either from Principal Rice or the state department. Mrs. Beal related that her problem solving committee experienced problems due to the lack of a leader in the group.

As part of the initial steps of QPA, RLHS developed a mission statement which states, "The mission of Red Lane High School is to provide a climate which will enable every individual to develop skills needed to make informed decisions required of a responsible member of society." Principal Rice stated that he makes reference to this statement as he listens to concerns and supervises the programs at the school.

As RLHS began implementing the target area goals, Principal Rice made it a point to communicate to students the importance of the QPA/NCA process. Mr. Allen commented that Principal Rice has conscientiously informed the faculty that the student body is aware of the goals the faculty is working toward. Mrs.

Rose made the comment that students are aware of the six trait writing process and any review of the traits is not necessary. Mrs. Beal related that the students are getting used to the terms and vocabulary but she was not sure the majority of them knew what QPA meant. Beal also added that he [Principal Rice] has had to promote the QPA process with parents because of a group that was "anti-QPA."

The management of curriculum has changed at RLHS as a result of QPA. Principal Rice commented that prior to QPA, the curriculum was driven by textbooks and what the textbooks included. "In recent years, the curriculum has been studied and designed by what we (RLHS staff) feel students should know. In turn, textbooks are purchased to fit our needs." Principal Rice felt that process of curriculum development and ensuing feeling of ownership has brought the administration and staff closer. Instead of just one person doing the work, the total district is involved. The Red Lane school district has written its scope and sequence for grades K-12. He felt with all of the publicity of QPA, the teachers realized they had better get on-board. Rice and Mrs. Rose agree that by developing curriculum studies which include K-12, there is a better understanding and a new respect for what is going on among the schools and improved communication between teachers and administrators.

As a result of QPA and the state's emphasis on reading and writing, the school has established the six trait writing model throughout the curriculum. It is Principal Rice's responsibility to insure teachers are using the model, and that once every semester each teacher has a writing sample to place in a student's portfolio. Principal Rice has the same responsibility in the identified area of problem solving. Teachers are asked to document in their lesson plans the use of the problem solving strategies. Rice files these reports so that he can provide the data if necessary. Principal Rice felt that his earlier training in TESA was

more of an influence on supervising teaching than QPA. He felt he had an advantage on some of the things that go into QPA due to TESA. This training allowed him to understand and identify what effective teachers should be doing. TESA allowed him to be exposed to great teaching strategies. Principal Rice further commented that QPA has forced teachers to look at learning styles. Mrs. Rose commented that Principal Rice was extremely cooperative if they needed time off for curriculum development or committee work. Allen and Beal supported Mrs. Rose's statements.

Interviewees made no reference to supervising teaching (Krug, 1993). Allen did comment that Principal Rice is always there to back them up or to say, "I understand how you feel, but this is why we have to do this."

Monitoring student progress was an instructional leadership activity strongly communicated in the majority of interviews. Principal Rice commented that because of QPA/NCA, he now studies test scores and expects his teachers to review and study test scores in their curriculum groups. "Prior to QPA, we'd get the scores and place them on a shelf" stated Rice, "I'm not afraid to point out to them and say, look at this and study this one a little bit." A direct result of this practice is a K-12 curriculum alignment. Rice concluded that he didn't think they did a good job of that before. "We weren't forced to look at data that closely. This is one thing that is good about QPA."

Mr. Allen relayed the RLHS North Central/QPA affective schools committee believed a student advisement program needed to be developed. Following a leadership committee recommendation, a target area goal for RLHS is to increase positive interaction among students, teachers, and staff. As part of this the school initiated a faculty advisor program that consists of a regularly scheduled meeting time to assist students with career planning, scheduling, making appropriate class choices and pre-enrollment. The committee members

perceived that the attitude of the students was very negative and that there wasn't enough positive reinforcement. Allen reported throughout this strategy implementation that Principal Rice welcomed everybody's input. He took the ideas that worked and rejected some that the staff didn't like.

Principal Rice felt his previous training contributed more to promoting an instructional climate than did QPA. He said he believes in praising and recognizing kids' efforts. As the QPA committee began talking about the affective domain, he found this area easy to recognize. During the researcher's first observation of Mr. Rice, he was signing honor roll acknowledgments for RLHS. He said this was a result of the QPA/NCA goal of student recognition and attempting to motivate school spirit. Although this was a direct result of QPA, Mr. Rice was quick to point out that prior to QPA, he had been emphasizing the recognition and reward of students.

Mr. Rice approved a problem solving day in which all students were involved in activities centered around the problem solving goal. Mrs. Beal, chairperson of this committee, commented that all of the scheduling for the day was done through Principal Rice. "We had to have his permission to have the day off. Some administrators would have been real leery about it because it could have been a zoo."

Liberty High School

Principal Hill believes that QPA has enabled his staff to realize that different instructional areas have a lot in common. He thinks QPA has required LHS to mold into a unit and strive for a common goal. Both Mrs. Terry and Mr. Clark commented that Principal Hill has become a facilitator in their eyes and must communicate the importance of the area goals to the students and staff. Mrs. West commented that one good function of QPA is that it has forced LHS to have more faculty meetings. "We used to have meetings on the first day of

school and the last; I could count on my fingers the number of faculty meetings during the past eight years." She continued by adding that the LHS staff now meets to talk about survey results and to evaluate what goals are being accomplished.

Mrs. Terry commented that Principal Hill established various committees and that he delegates more than in the past. Terry commented that Hill provided the staff training on the six-trait writing style and expects them to use it. "He did the sort of things that he needed to do, so that we could be successful," added Terry. Mrs. Terry commented that Principal Hill wants and expects them to use the six-trait writing style. Principal Hill uses an evaluation instrument developed by a committee to demonstrate the outcomes of QPA and make sure that teachers are teaching toward the outcomes. Hill commented that "we're not so much evaluating personalities, but we're evaluating what is being taught." Mrs. West commented that whenever they would hit a snag in the QPA process, they could go to Principal Hill and ask for his input. Neither Mrs. Terry or Mr. Clark commented on the supervision of teachers.

Principal Hill was the only respondent who referred to using data to monitor student performance. He related that in his early years of administration, there was no data collection. "Now we make it a point that every referral, every detention, goes into the computer." Hill continued to add that the only change he has made in his practice was the way he keeps records on discipline. He records everything that needs to come out on the final QPA report at the end of the year.

In response to a question on the QPA year-end report, each student's transcript is reviewed by Principal Hill and the counselor to determine which students have mastered an advanced math course. Although no respondent made reference to the school profile during the interviews, each informally

recognized this document as evidence noting student performance and attitudes. A copy of the profile was provided by Mr. Clark.

Promoting an instructional climate met with mixed messages from the respondents. Mrs. Terry and Mrs. West differed in their perceptions of the influence of QPA on the instructional leadership by Principal Hill. Mrs. Terry felt that Principal Hill promoted a wonderful atmosphere and that LHS has always had a good learning climate. Mrs. Terry commented that Hill had always been wonderful for that. "QPA," according to Terry, "has given us a little bit different way to approach what we've always done, just a little bit better way of getting at what we wanted educationally."

Mrs. West presented the opposite of Terry's perception. She felt that they have had no motivation or excitement from Principal Hill. "I honestly believe that our principal hoped that deep down in his heart he would not have to mess with this."

The training or in-services provided for teachers is supported by Principal Hill. Hill related that he attempts to provide in-services that motivate teachers and provide opportunities for teachers to go out, listen to their peers, and see others in the field. Mrs. Terry commented on the opportunity for the English Department to receive training in the six-trait writing model. Mrs. West also mentioned that the entire staff had received training in the model. Nothing was noted in the observations of Principal Hill that detected evidence of promoting an instructional climate.

Riverview High School

Mrs. Eagle perceives Principal Bell as a believer in school improvement and as always setting a good example. "He has presented QPA as a way to improve our school and also meet a state mandate." Mr. Fair also believes that Principal Bell knows what is best for students.

The leadership style of Principal Bell has been to include the staff in the QPA process. This strategy of instructional leadership was a concern of Principal Bell's at the beginning of the QPA cycle. "When we first talked about QPA, the state talked about how you had to have total faculty involvement. It was scary. I was thinking 'how am I going to get some of these people to buy into this'." Mr. Fair made a related observation. "There are like one or two teachers that drag their heels, but for the most part everybody has bought into QPA." Mr. Fair shared that Principal Bell has always been good about getting people involved. "We have always been big on committees and getting people off of the fence and involved with what is going on." Assistant Principal Storm said that Principal Bell has had to work with getting the faculty to buy-in to QPA, and from this he has learned about the process.

He didn't just sit around and wait for things to happen. he pretty much took the bull by the horns and did what needed to be done to put things in motion. He had to exert more of his leadership abilities to get QPA started.

According to Mr. Storm, the most important thing that Principal Bell had done to distinguish a purpose for QPA was to involve every one in the process some way. Mrs. Eagle thinks that Principal Bell had a lot to do with the buy-in of the faculty. "He understands that it's very effective if you get everyone to think that this is something worth all this effort." Both Assistant Principal Storm and Mr. Fair said that Principal Bell encourages group decision-making and has made a commitment to this strategy. "QPA is pretty much a group decision making process and that has been one thing that Principal Bell has tried to emphasize in the QPA meetings. He wants faculty input," stated Storm. Mr. Fair related that Principal Bell does a good job of letting people express their opinions and then establishing common ground. "He's really excellent at letting

people tell him what they're thinking and then subtly sharing the way he perceives it."

Principal Bell substantiated the perceptions of the other respondents by sharing that he attempts to delegate out as much responsibility as possible.

I drug my feet for the first 1-1/2 to 2 years. I finally started taking QPA to the faculty and explained that here is what has to be done. It is amazing that they were receptive. They have become more and more involved and now just think that QPA is something we have to do and it will benefit our school and will help us.

After reviewing the QPA goals of Riverview High School, it was concluded that goals and strategies have been written to improve student reading and to improve mathematics achievement. Principal Bell did say that QPA had added to what RVHS was doing in the area of curriculum and outcomes education. "Once we got into outcomes based education we were focusing in on what we wanted our students to know. QPA came along and added to that." Bell further added that the result was a K-12 scope and sequence which helped with the curriculum.

Supervising teachers was given minimal reference by any of the respondents. Mrs. Eagle stated that she has noticed a change in the support given to staff development. She mentioned that when members of the staff go to different workshops, Principal Bell has the teachers share the information as an in-service activity.

Principal Bell made the comment that he is the communication link between RVHS and the central office as well as the state department. He further stated, "I've got to get with the chairman and make sure that everything is meeting guidelines plus answer to the superintendent. He is going to say, 'Where are you at on this stage?'"

The best evidence monitoring student progress as an influence in this phase of instructional leadership is the document entitled "QPA Goals." This document, developed using the OTE (Onwards Towards Excellence) process, contains examples of goals, outcomes, and assessments used to improve the instruction and learning at RVHS. Each goal has a subtitle entitled Practice and a set of methods and techniques to implement the goal.

In the introduction of the RVHS School Profile, the OTE process is referred to as a project that will help prepare for the new Kansas accreditation process called Quality Performance Accreditation. It is further stated that OTE is expected to be a continuing, research-based improvement process.

The school profile was also a document required by QPA and referenced by Principal Bell. He said that he thinks of the impact on the profile when data indicate discrepancies. Principal Bell mentioned the impact of the high dropout rate and that "our profile is going to take a big hit." The RVHS school profile contains twelve sections. Sections seven through twelve include data about student behavior, student achievement, student-parent-faculty attitudes, and graduate survey.

Although each respondent mentioned the amount of work that went into developing these documents, nobody mentioned Principal Bell using these data for school improvement. Mr. Fair did mention that he perceived Principal Bell as "seeming more focused about where we really are going." He further mentioned that this focus was a result of the development of a district scope and sequence, the OTE process, and the writing of course outcomes. Mr. Fair also interjected that throughout the whole process, Principal Bell had been there and had given assistance in developing the course outcomes. Mr. Fair concluded, "I haven't seen a large change. The biggest change has been just that we make sure everything is documented."

Promoting an instructional climate is an area that Mr. Storm believes Principal Bell sees as a necessary process to improve RVHS. Mrs. Eagle stated that she felt Principal Bell had the attitude that "this can't hurt us." He has had a real common sense approach. If you can't have buy in from the top, then you don't know how this whole thing is going to go." Mr. Fair said that Principal Bell has always had the attitude that what we need to do is what is best for kids.

This has always been his style. He has always been a real cool, hard working, and a real caring guy. He doesn't show his emotions a whole lot or anything, but you can tell how he feels about things and that it all means a lot to him.

The following table (Table II) represents the terms and phrase provided from the respondents that describe the influence of QPA on the principal's practice. The items are listed according to site then arranged by principal, vice principal, and teacher comments. The information is then translated into common themes that resulted from the data.

TABLE II

Influence on Principals' Practice

	RED LANE	LIBERTY	RIVERVIEW
<u>Principals</u>			
(Mr. Rice)	Teachers make decisions Curriculum development Identify/monitor problem solving Study test scores Teacher expectations Data driven decisions Promote instructional climate	(Mr. Hill) Evaluation Instrument Data collection Information source Provide in-service	(Mr. Bell) Supervise curric. Communication link Monitor student progress
<u>Assistant Principals</u>			
		(Mr. Clark) Facilitator Communicate area goals	(Mr. Storm) Faculty buy in Encourage group decision making Promote instructional climate
<u>Teachers</u>			
(Mr. Allen)	Improved communication Promote positive reinforcement Provide support	(Mrs. Terry) Arrange six-trait training Gives less orders Monitor six-trait model Promote learning climate	(Mrs. Eagle) Set good example Promote staff buy in Attend workshops
(Mrs. Rose)	Allow time off Cooperative Improved communication	(Mrs. West) More faculty meetings Information resource Lacked motivation	(Mr. Fair) Total staff involvement Encourage group decision making Monitor curriculum
(Mrs. Beal)	Promote QPA with parents Provide days off		

Common Themes: Influence on Principals' Practice

The practices of the principals in this study have not changed from what they were doing before the implementation of QPA. Sergiovanni (1987) stated that the principal's job is to coordinate, direct, and support the work of others. These descriptors are revealed in the findings of the three case studies and typify the major emphasis of the principal's practice by QPA. However, only certain elements of principals' practices have had any influence as a result of this school improvement process. Research indicates that the principal's role is multifaceted (Dwyer, 1985; Krug, 1992; Leithwood and Montgomery, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1987; Smith and Andrews, 1989). However this study found that the practice of principal in QPA is centered solely around the task of instructional leadership.

Instructional leadership activities were the primary area effected by QPA. The literature suggests that instructional leadership encompasses five areas within the principal's practice: curriculum and supervision, vision and direction, supervising of teaching, monitoring student progress, and promoting an instructional climate (Hallinger, 1992; Krug, 1992; Niece, 1993). The five categories of Krug (1993) were used as framework for what principals do as instructional leaders in QPA.

The Kansas State Board of Education (1993) described in its model that QPA will commit to developing higher quality of instructional leadership. According to the responses of the principals and teachers in this study, much of the focus of the principal was in instructional leadership. The principals sent teachers to workshops, were supportive of teachers, provided teachers with free rein, and created positive learning climates.

The instructional leadership role of the principal is just one facet of the principal's practice, and QPA is a part of that practice. Respondents suggested

the principals were only involved in QPA during specific times of the year. This part of the principal's practice would support the notion of Leithwood (1992) that instructional leadership only describes a portion of the activities associated with effective schools and conveys only a part of what principals do in their practices. The principal's practice remains multifaceted even in the QPA schools, but the impact of QPA has influenced only the role of instructional leadership. What the principals in this study were doing in their practices prior to QPA has not changed as a result of QPA.

How have students and staff been influenced by principals' practice?

The Leithwood model suggests that what the principal thinks ultimately affects the students and staff. According to the conceptual framework, if QPA influences the thinking of the principal, the result will be indicated by the impact on the students and staffs.

Red Lane High School

Impact on Staff

The observations indicate that the staff at RLHS has been impacted by the thinking of Principal Rice as a result of QPA. Mr. Allen related that, as is the case with any new or different educational concept, the staff either shuts its ears, holds its breath, or runs screaming in the other direction. Principal Rice has had to deal with these attitudes and sway the thinking of some staff members. According to Allen and Beal, individuals unwilling to try different ways have been the biggest obstacle for Principal Rice. Mrs. Beal commented that a group of teachers had the attitude they didn't want to do QPA. Another group thought they had to do it so they did it; a final group found QPA neat and exciting. Principal Rice had to deal with all of these groups and make them work together. Mr. Allen also related that, "It doesn't matter what you do to try to make it palatable to people; some people just never buy-in."

Goals have been written for individual departments. Principal Rice stated that the teachers sat down as a department and made decisions. Rice shared that an example of this was the language arts group. The language arts committees of the high school and middle school got together and decided the six-trait writing model would be a great way to improve writing. They got the language arts committee to write goals and install the model into the curriculum for one year. After that year, the remainder of the staff was trained in the model. Today, every teacher at RLHS has at least one writing assignment a semester that is graded on the six-trait model.

Another example of the influence on teachers is problem solving across the curriculum. The teachers are required to do one problem solving activity during the year plus a school wide problem solving day. For the school wide problem solving day, RLHS took the day off from normal academics and did nothing but problem solving activities. All of the staff and students were involved in the problem solving day. "It was very successful," stated Mrs. Beal. "The teachers enjoyed it and the students enjoyed it."

Principal Rice feels that staff/administrative communication has improved. Each staff member at RLHS is required to write three goals. One personal goal, one school goal, and one course goal. This is one aspect of QPA that has forced the teachers to communicate with the administration. "I review the goals with the teachers, then I send them to the superintendent." The development of the activities for goals has also aided in improved communication. "The communication that resulted because of the integration and cross curricular activities would never have happened without QPA/NCA," pointed out Rice. The development of curriculum has changed at RLHS and also added to improved communication.

Since QPA, we study curriculum in the opposite way. We design our curriculum for what we feel students should know and then we match the textbooks as closely we can. The whole understanding of the curriculum of K-12 has improved a great deal, and it has caused administrators to have to talk curriculum development to teachers where before it seemed pretty theoretical. Whereas, today it is a lot more practical.

Principal Rice believes that the teachers feel some ownership for their subject areas. QPA/NCA has been very positive. He commented:

It comes back to teachers being held accountable for what they are teaching or not teaching. I encourage teachers to make decisions and recognition on their own. I am also not afraid to point out to them and tell them to look at this study.

Mrs. Rose stated that there is always some paperwork to do in connection with the process (QPA/NCA). She further stated, "At times it feels like you're beating your head against the wall. It's very frustrating." Principal Rice expressed that he feels the teachers are working harder than they have in the past. "Teachers work harder in different ways. They are conscious of trying to improve test scores. For the most part they have responded positively," said Rice.

The teachers also mentioned the time spent on QPA. They commented that Mr. Rice spends a lot of time at meetings both locally and at the state level. Mr. Rice summed up the amount of time spent on QPA as, "It seems like you never get away from it."

Impact on Students

Mr. Allen believes the students have been more positively affected than the staff. Allen felt the students either follow one of two ways. They're either just matter-of-fact, do-what-ever-is-asked, or they become very enthusiastic. Principal Allen has paid particular attention to making sure the students are

aware of QPA/NCA and the benefits of the process. Allen mentioned that from the beginning Principal Rice has been very conscious that students were aware of what the RLHS staff was doing and why it was important to take the process seriously. Mrs. Rose added, "After three years of hearing the faculty talk about NCA and QPA, our students are pretty knowledgeable about what is going on." Mr. Allen also commented that communication with the students has increased. "Principal Rice has been very conscientious with making sure that the student body is aware of things that they are supposed to be accomplishing."

The six-trait writing model has also affected the students at RLHS. "They have certainly been subjected to the six-trait writing model across the curriculum," said Mrs. Rose. "They may hate doing it, but they know the process now and what they are supposed to do." Each student is also expected to be knowledgeable in this model. Mrs. Rose made the comment that the students are familiar enough with the six traits that one really does not have to review all six with them. Mrs. Beal added that the students were getting used to the six-trait model. "Even though they do say, 'ugh' when you mention it, two years ago the students just went, 'huh'? Now they pretty much go 'okay' and know they have to do it."

The only comments about students and the problem solving activities centered around the comments of a student to the local paper. After the problem solving day, one of the student leaders wrote an editorial to the local newspaper criticizing the day saying he would rather have stayed at home and worked on his physics than come and play junior high games. Mrs. Beal said,

Truly, the ones that didn't like it were our seniors that are top notch, the straight A'ers. Other people came and took their places and they are not used to that. It was very hard on them because they are not used to taking second seat to some other kids.

Principal Rice made reference to the editorial and added, "The students at the lowest academic level are asking when they could do this again?"

The effective climate committee of the QPA/NCA team has implemented a Student of the Month. Nominations are submitted by faculty members, and the selection is made by this committee. At the end of the first semester, an academic pep assembly was held to recognize those students who had earned honor roll status. Principal Rice was observed signing certificates during the first visit to the RLHS campus.

A student forum was created that meets monthly with the principal and counselor. At these meetings, concerns of students are discussed. Teachers and administrators might also discuss concerns at this time.

An advisor/advisee program has also been developed. Groups meet once every three to four weeks. Each faculty member is responsible for ten to eleven students. Each group has one student who is a trained peer advisor. These students were identified by faculty members as students who could have some positive influence and act as a responsible role model.

Principal Rice noted that it is not uncommon to have a student at RLHS ask, "Are you doing this because of QPA?" During another conversation Rice had a student say, "You just do that to look good on your profile for QPA, don't you?" Rice observed that students hear about QPA so often, that they are probably getting sick of it.

Liberty High School

Impact on Staff

According to Principal Hill, "QPA has been good for my staff." He believes that the industrial arts department, the physical education department,

and the English department are still not far removed from each other in terms of what they do and what their goals are. Mrs. West added,

When we came together, we found out that we had a lot in common. QPA has required us to mold together and strive for a common goal. QPA did force us to come together as a staff and to work and talk about surveys and to evaluate the satisfaction or dissatisfaction from parents. QPA provided us a little bit of camaraderie."

It was noted by Mr. Clark that everyone in the building was assigned to a committee and that even with the total involvement, "the principals of each building are still the people in charge." Principal Hill said, "Everybody got involved and by doing so, we were able to get things going towards the goals we wanted." In the initial stages of QPA, Principal Hill asked for volunteers to serve on the leadership team. He ended up with seven people on the committee. Mr. Clark related that he eventually involved the entire staff. "Each member of the staff was assigned to one of the building leadership teams and they work in small groups on specific goals that we set for our QPA process."

Principal Hill further stated that QPA has given his staff a new direction with some new goals that they could shoot for especially with the QPA testing and the Kansas Assessments.

Everybody started pulling the same direction. QPA has added to the cohesiveness of the staff. It has given the staff some ownership that I think is so important. It is kind of hard to get that ownership with the staff until you get them involved in doing something.

Mr. Clark provided a copy of the subject area goals for each academic area at Liberty High School. Each goal lists essential skills and standards of excellence that are to be met by the LHS students. Each individual course within the department has written course outcomes. As the outcomes were

developed, Principal Hill observed that QPA affected the training needs of his staff. "We have to do Rubrick type grading, six-trait writing, and we also have to grade the math test, the writing test, and the reading test." Mrs. Terry said, "Principal Hill's role has been to get us to workshops for additional training. He got us training and did the sort of things that we needed to do so that we could be successful with it."

Mrs. West related that tests are now administered and the six-trait writing model has been implemented. "The English teachers are good with the training, and they do get the days off to grade the test. As far as a staff, we don't have any idea whether we have seen change over the past three years." Mrs. Terry added that she felt they wouldn't have used the six-trait model had it not been for his administration of the writing assessment. "The six-trait was simply something he wanted us to do."

Impact on the Students

"The impact on the students is minimal as compared to the staff," shared Principal Hill. He felt the impact on the students in was a different direction. "We are trying to teach to outcomes, and we've tried to post what our objectives are for the classes. The teachers also give those out to the students." The subject area goals, essential skills, and standards of excellence are listed in a document for the students.

Vice-principal Clark said that QPA has resulted in a change in the methods of enrolling students, identifying at-risk students, and setting up programs to help new students.

Mr. Clark shared that QPA and the practice of Principal Hill have had no effect on the students. "We take a look at what the students say, but really as far as the QPA process, the students remain relatively unaffected." One program that was initiated was a required reading program. "Students do not like the

reading program. We set aside time on a weekly basis for the students just to read. Some will and some won't."

Riverview High School

Impact on Staff

The thinking of Principal Bell, as influenced by QPA, has affected the staff at RVHS. Each respondent, as well as Principal Bell, made reference to the delegation of responsibilities and of the commitment to have a total staff involvement in the QPA process. Principal Bell commented that he wondered how he was going to get some of these teachers to buy into QPA. He commented that once he explained QPA to them, they were quite responsive and have become more and more involved. Assistant Principal Storm commented,

The most important thing Principal Bell has done is to try to involve everyone in some way. The faculty realizes that QPA is something that we're all going to have to confront and we're all going to deal with it. That has been the faculty's attitude and that's because Principal Bell has emphasized it.

Principal Bell shared, "I have an excellent staff. We're attempting to do things cross curricularly, and the biggest impact has been that QPA has pulled everyone together."

Mrs. Eagle also provided evidence on the perceptions of the thinking of Principal Bell and the effects on the staff. She said that Principal Bell is a believer in school improvement, and he has always set a good example. "The principal has to set the example of leading the whole process." Mrs. Eagle contributes the involvement of the staff to the leadership and guidance of Principal Bell. "We come up with the ways to basically meet the mandates, but I really think Principal Bell is a lot of the buy-in."

Mr. Fair talked about the staff being involved and documenting everything. He mentioned that when the staff built an OTE prescription model, they broke into teams that were the result of Principal Bell having always been strong at getting everybody involved and working together. Mrs. Eagle added, "Everybody is involved. We get fine tuning on the wording from the English department and the statistics from the math department."

Mrs. Eagle also related that Principal Bell is now very understanding of different teaching styles. "He knows that not everyone has to do the same thing in order to achieve our outcomes. I don't see people backing away from QPA anymore."

Impact of the Students

The effects of the thinking of Principal Bell in relationship to the students is minimal regarding QPA. Bell mentioned that he has neither spoken distinctly about QPA, nor have the teachers. "If you were to ask our students what QPA was, they would go 'huh'?" according to Principal Bell. He does share with the students when they're going to have an on-site visit or when the on-site team compliments them on the way they behave.

Principal Bell wasn't sure if they have been affected by QPA yet. "Next year is when we begin implementing our school improvement plan. Hopefully then QPA will have an effect on them." At that time the teachers will begin using the tactics developed and recorded in "Striving for Better Education, QPA Goals," a collection of the QPA goals for Riverview High School. Goals were written for improving student reading and mathematics achievement.

Principal Bell shared that during the testing that takes place during the spring, the RVHS teachers decided to change the strategy behind testing. "It's going to be very important that we emphasize standardized tests. I'll tell them even though this doesn't count for a grade, it does reflect on our school. We're

being judged on it. Please do your best." The sophomores were tested in groups of 20 rather than as a class. Principal Bell felt this was completely different and created a different atmosphere.

The following table (Table III) represents the terms and phrases provided from the respondents that describe the influence of QPA on the principal's mental process that impacted the staff. The items are listed according to site, then arranged by principal, vice principal, and teacher comments. The information is then translated into common themes that resulted from the data.

TABLE III

Impact on Staff

	RED LANE	LIBERTY	RIVERVIEW
<u>Principals</u> (Mr. Rice)	Departments make decisions Goals for independent Improved communication Development of curriculum Feel ownership Teachers accountable Work harder Six trait model	(Mr. Hill) Good for Staff Came together New direction Amount of training	(Mr. Bell) Quite responsive
<u>Assistant Principals</u>		(Mr. Clark) Everyone involved Subject area goals	(Mr. Storm) Everyone involved
<u>Teachers</u> (Mr. Allen)	Unwilling to try different way People never gave in	(Mrs. Terry) Additional workshops	(Mrs. Eagle) Fine tune English Dept Stats from math Dept. Understand different teaching styles Not backing away
(Mrs. Rose)	More ownership More paperwork	(Mrs. West) Forced to come together Camaraderie Six trait writing model	(Mr. Fair) Staff involved Built prescription model
(Mrs. Beal)	Problem solving day Didn't want to do QPA		

Common Themes: Impact on Staff

Leithwood (1988) identified teacher's willingness to initiate as an external variable that influences the mental processes of the principal. This variable has had a direct influence on the staff of each site as a result of the mental processes of the principal. The teachers at each site indicated they had resistance to the school improvement process, but for most each staff member was actively involved and, except for one respondent, provided valuable input into the process.

The data obtained from all three sites questions the findings of Seay and Blase (1992) who reported that the principal's ability to affect the choices made by teachers was the primary function of interactions with teachers. The data also question the findings of Spalding (1994) which concluded that principals went to great efforts to control the decision-making of teachers. Quite the opposite was observed with the principals and staff of the QPA schools in this study. The teachers and principals responded that QPA provided the staff more ownership, accountability, and involvement. No site indicated that the principal was making any effort to control the decisions of the teachers as reported by Spalding (1994). Furthermore, the relationship between the principals and staffs revolved around trust and empowerment. The principal's interactions with the staff did not indicate that he made any great effort to control the decision making options of the teachers.

At each of the sites the respondents spoke of developing goals which resulted in teacher accountability. Principal Rice stated that teachers have to feel some ownership for their subject areas. He shared that due to QPA, "You now have a group of teachers who really are experts in the field sharing in those decisions." Mrs. Rose believes that the teachers feel more ownership of the

QPA process because it is based strictly on teacher input, student input, and parent input.

At Liberty High School, Principal Hill related that QPA has been good for his staff.

The industrial arts department, the physical education department, and the English department are still not far removed from each other in terms of what they do and what their goals are. QPA has required us to mold together and strive for a common goal.

Mr. Clark, the assistant principal at Liberty High School, shared that the building leadership felt that from the beginning it was important for the staff to have ownership in the QPA process. Mrs. West also shared, "QPA did force us to come together as a staff and to work and talk about surveys and to evaluate the satisfaction or dissatisfaction from parents. QPA did provide us a little bit of camaraderie."

The findings of Gomez and Jamgochian (1989) showed that teachers reported seeing themselves as being influenced by the principal, but indicated that the principals perceived themselves as having more influence than attributed to them by the teachers. This conclusion also is indicated by the data from this study. The teachers indicated that they were influenced by the principals. The principals made sure that all of the staff members were involved in the QPA. Each site made reference to having certain teachers who did not get involved in the QPA process. These teachers were very resistant to the influence of the principals, thus confirming the findings of Gomez and Jamgochian (1989).

The following table (Table IV) represents the terms and phrases provided from the respondents that describe the influence of QPA on the principal's mental process that impacted the students. The items are listed according to

site, then arranged by principal, vice principal, and teacher comments. The information is then translated into common themes that resulted from the data.

TABLE IV

Impact on Students

	RED LANE	LIBERTY	RIVERVIEW
<u>Principals</u>			
(Mr. Rice)	Positively affected Positive student programs Doing because of QPA Look good on profile	(Mr. Hill) Impact minimal	(Mr. Bell) Unsure Minimal Goals written Improve student reading Test taking seriously Improve math achievement
<u>Assistant Principals</u>		(Mr. Clark) Change in enrollment Identify at-risk students New student programs Relatively unchanged Students do not like reading program	(Mr. Storm)
<u>Teachers</u>			
(Mr. Allen)	Communication increased	(Mrs. Terry) Student reading	(Mrs. Eagle)
(Mrs. Rose)	Six-trait writing model	(Mr. West)	(Mr. Fair)
(Mrs. Beal)	Problem solving activities Senior not responsive		

Common Themes: Impact on Students

The impact on the students was observed to be minimal at all sites. The results would indicate the finding of Flanigan, Richardson, and Lane (1992), when they observed that the state mandated school improvement programs in South Carolina were not the creative, innovative schools that were previously envisioned. The same was observed in the three sites of this study. Of the 12 individuals interviewed, four made no observations of impact on students, four recorded two responses, and one respondent recorded two responses. Only the two principals and an assistant principal made more than two references to impacts on students. This would indicate that at this time students are not being impacted by QPA.

Couch (1991) suggested that the degree to which a principal demonstrates instructional leadership had no effect on students' achievement scores. The same seems to be evident in the data from this study of QPA. The principals said that QPA has had minimal impact on the students, while the teachers failed to notice a change. Therefore, as with Couch (1991), the degree to which a principal demonstrates instructional leadership as a result of QPA has had minimal effect on the students.

The impact of QPA on the students was communicated the most by the person within the organization who has assumed the leadership role. Goldman and Conley (1993) said that school leadership, whether derived from the principals or teachers, appeared to be an important factor in how school staffs respond to change. Mace-Matluck (1986) wrote that leadership from either the principal, another administrator, or a group of teachers is necessary to initiate and maintain the improvement process. Furthermore, Andrews and Soders (1987) said that strong instructional leadership has been associated with school effectiveness. In the QPA document (1993), it is listed that schools will have

instructional leaders who pay particular attention to teaching and learning which results in improved student performance. In the three schools in this study, the instructional leader, not necessarily the principal, was the most knowledgeable about the impact of QPA on the students. In the case of Red Lane, Principal Rice was clearly the instructional leader in the QPA process. His teachers referred to him as the leader and acknowledged that he was the instructional leader. At Riverview High school, Principal Bell was the instructional leader. The responses of all the teachers indicated the leadership of the principal.

Only at Liberty High School was the principal not the instructional leader guiding QPA. At first look, the responses of Mrs. West were observed as an anomaly. She referred to Principal Hill as lacking motivation and excitement. Mrs. West referred to the QPA process as a sinking ship and that RVHS lacked leadership. She also stated that the leadership for QPA was provided from a counselor who had since left the district. The leadership for QPA was then absorbed by the assistant principal, Mr. Clark. In an off-the-record conversation, Mr. Clark confirmed the observations of Mrs. West.

At two of the sites, documents were presented that indicated goals and prescriptions that were developed for students. Although each of these documents is available for teachers, the answers of the respondents were limited. The findings of Flanigan, Richardson, and Lane (1992) noted that schools given the freedom and latitude were not the creative innovative schools that were previously envisioned. These findings are apparent in the impact of QPA on the students. In the schools studied, minimal responses were provided from the teachers on the impact on the students.

Summary

The lack of direction in the initial phases of QPA caused confusion, added work, and created stress in each of the three case study sites. At Red Lane High School, Principal Rice referred to the lack of direction from the State Department of Education as "the worst thing about QPA." He felt that the State Department of Education did not want to accept just one vision for school improvement, so they created a massive committee to design QPA. Principal Rice referred to QPA as a perversion of Outcomes Based Education. "The only reason I call it perversion is because the committees did not have enough guidance or direction." Mrs. Rose commented that they received differing communications from the state everyday, and she felt that this affected the leadership of Principal Rice. "I don't think he is sure from the state himself, what it is we are supposed to do." She also stated, "The state doesn't know what their plan is." Mr. Allen added that all schools were beginning from square one and knew little of the process, but that Principal Rice had helped pull them through. Mrs. Beal commented, "Most of us didn't have the foggiest idea of what we were doing."

At Riverview High School Principal Bell stated that in the beginning of QPA, they received a lot of incorrect information. "We thought we had to do all of these different things, and it was going to be a nightmare. We reluctantly approached it that way." Principal Rice stated that during the first couple of years, he felt like he was in the dark. Mr. Fair related that during the initial stages of QPA, the faculty created documents that were not functional. "We built a prescription model that we thought would be our goal sheet and our improvement plan." Mr. Fair added that he wasn't sure that the confusion was not common. Mr. Fair also felt that the lack of State Department guidance added

to stress. "It was nerve wracking at first because we didn't know what was going on. Nobody did really."

Principal Hill from Liberty High School stated he felt some of the things QPA is asking are unrealistic.

I know you have to set your goals higher than what you want in order to strive to reach them, but sometimes I think they wanted too much too quick. You know change is slow and actual improvement and documented improvement is not going to happen overnight.

Vice Principal Clark felt that the communication from the State Department was a problem with QPA. "The amount of time required to fill out the QPA forms is very time consuming even with the computerized disk that seemingly hasn't been working most of the time." Mrs. West shared that after they had been involved in the process for one year, they found out they had to have a math and reading goal.

No one had ever told us that. Our goals were things like improving my situation or improving grade point average. When we found out that we had to have a math and reading goal, it scared our administration to death so Principal Hill changed the committees a little bit.

QPA had affected the practice of Principal Hill. Mrs. Terry also commented on the stress she observed on Principal Hill because of a lack of direction.

There are so many different sets of inputs and regulations and things coming from the State Department. A lot of times I think he felt we were changing horses in the middle of the stream. We would be going in one direction and then get a letter and it would say no we want it another way.

A second reoccurring theme was the perception of cohesiveness, camaraderie, and ownership that developed between each staff as a result of

QPA. Principal Rice stated that teachers have to feel some ownership for their subject areas. He shared that due to QPA, "You now have a group of people who really are experts in the field sharing in those decisions." Mrs. Rose believes that the teachers feel more ownership of the QPA process because it is based strictly on teacher, student, and parent input.

At Liberty High School, Principal Hill related that QPA has been good for his staff. The industrial arts department, the physical education department, and the English department are still not far removed from each other in terms of what they do and what their goals are. QPA has required us to mold together and strive for a common goal.

Mr. Clark, the assistant principal at Liberty High School, shared that the building leadership felt that from the beginning it was important for the staff to have ownership in the QPA process. Mrs. West also shared, "QPA did force us to come together as a staff and to work and talk about surveys and to evaluate the satisfaction or dissatisfaction from parents. QPA did provide us a little bit of comraderie."

At the third site, the same perceptions were noted. Principal Bell added that QPA has made the staff come together and realize they are not just a bunch of individuals, but rather a team. "We're attempting to do things cross curricularly and the biggest impact has been that QPA has pulled everybody together." Principal Bell also added the he thinks the staff likes the responsibility delegated to them by QPA. Mrs. Eagle commented that everyone is involved, with ideas coming from everyone. Mrs. Eagle added that she doesn't see the staff at Riverview "backing away from QPA. Everybody is involved", stated Eagle.

This chapter filtered all of the information obtained at each site and concluded that three influences resulted from QPA that affected the mental

processes of the principal. These influences are the attitude of the principal about school improvement, the role of the principal that resulted from QPA, and the influence of the School Profile on the decisions made by the principal.

The study also found that the three areas of influence did result in awareness of the instructional leadership activities of the principal. The study also revealed that what the principal was doing prior to QPA was not changed.

The staff was impacted by the three identified influences. The principals involved the staffs by the use of delegation and shared responsibilities which resulted in staff unity and cohesiveness.

The students were the least impacted by the three influences. The teachers and assistant principals offered little information about the impact on the students while the principals stated the impact was minimal.

Chapter VI of this study will provide conclusions derived from the data along with the implications of the research. The chapter will also offer suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was designed to examine the influence of a state mandated school improvement program on the role of the principal. Specifically, this study proposed that how a principal thinks about Quality Performance Accreditation (QPA) should influence practice. In Chapter I an introduction to the study was presented along with the theoretical framework proposing that QPA should influence the mental processes of the principal, therefore impacting practice. The mental process was defined as what the principal thinks while practice was defined as what the principal does.

Chapter II served as an in-depth review of the relevant literature concerning the influence of the principal's practice and how these influences effect different aspects of the community. The review of literature revealed that the role of the principal is changing and that the principal needs to become aware of influences on practice. Furthermore, the review revealed that the principal does influence students and teachers.

Chapter III presented the methodology that guided this study. This chapter explained the rationale for the chosen method of study; the researcher's bias; the selection of sites; the selection of respondents; the method of data collection; data analysis procedures; and the reliability, validity, and generalizability of the study.

The fourth chapter presented the data gathered via field work conducted by the researcher and guided by these research questions:

How has QPA influenced thinking about the role of the principal?

How has the principal's practice been affected?

What is the perceived impact of the principals' practice on students and staff?

Chapter V analyzed the information obtained at each site and concluded that three influences resulted from QPA that impacted the mental processes of the principal. These influences are the attitude of the principal about school improvement, the role of the principal that resulted from QPA, and the influence of the School Profile on the decisions made by the principal.

This chapter presents the conclusions derived from the data, the implications for mandated school improvement models, and recommendations for further research.

Conclusions

The analysis of data in Chapter V provided a basis for the following conclusions. Since qualitative research is more descriptive and inductive rather than analytical and deductive, it is not reasonable to expect broad generalizations in a scientific sense. Rather, qualitative research was utilized based upon the problems and questions addressed in this research. Qualitative case study method was selected when the researcher decided to investigate the influence of QPA on the role of the principal. The conclusions to be discussed are: (1) the principal's thinking about QPA influenced the degree to which the schools became involved in the school improvement process, (2) QPA influenced the role of the principal in the QPA process, (3) the school profile impacted the decision-making process of the principal, (4) the principal's actions prior to QPA did not change as a result of QPA, (5) the principals established schools that allowed teachers to have ownership, responsibility, and accountability, as a result of QPA, (6) the impact of QPA on students was minimal in all of the sites involved in this study, (7) the degree of principal instructional leadership was reflected in responses pertaining to impact on students, and (8) the conceptual framework helped to explain the impact of QPA on the role of the principal.

It may be concluded from the data that the principals' thinking about QPA influenced the degree to which the schools became involved in the school improvement process. The teachers looked to the principals for motivation and leadership. Principal's thinking about school improvement influenced how the staff proceeded with the QPA process. The findings of Sergiovanni (1987) concluded that principals are the main characters in bringing about goal adoption and implementation while according to Fullan, (1991) principals have a major impact on the degree of implementation of particular innovations. These findings were confirmed in this study. The principals were the most influential persons in the QPA process, and their thinking about QPA influenced the process. The principals were most influential in school change, even though QPA is a teacher driven model.

The second conclusion derived from this study was that the role of the principal was influenced by QPA. Leithwood (1988) suggested that the role of the principal was influenced by their mental processes. The respondents concluded the principal's role in QPA is facilitator, overseer, and coordinator. Sergiovanni (1987) suggested that the principal's job is to coordinate, direct, and support the work of others. Smith and Andrews (1989) identified the interactions that take place between the principal and instructional staff as a resource provider, instructional resource, communicator and visible presence. Other researchers stated that the role of instructional leadership was the most important factor for principals in school improvement (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Sergiovanni, 1987; Smith & Andrews, 1989). Anderson (1989) acknowledged that "a principal's leadership was one of the most crucial elements necessary for school success" (p.53). Effective schools research focuses on the principal as the instructional leader (Lezzotte, 1993). According to Mace-Matluck (1986),

leadership from either the principal, another administrator, or a group of teachers is necessary to initiate and maintain the improvement process.

It can be concluded that delegation is a leadership role enabling the principals to direct the school improvement process. This finding confirms the study of Seay and Blase (1992) suggesting that the ability to effect choices made by teachers is a primary function of principals' interactions with teachers. The findings of Gomez and Jamgochian (1989) reported that teachers see themselves as influenced by principals.

The third conclusion derived from this study was that the school profile impacted the decision-making processes of principals. The school profile is a document that is described as a picture of what the school is like. The principals in this study were careful as to what kind of picture they wanted to paint of their schools. The principals are very aware of the pressures from external groups and the impact of the school profile on the thinking of internal and external groups. Because the principals want their schools to look good, they make decisions based upon how they want their schools to be perceived in the school profile. The principals stated that they think of how decisions will look in the school profile document before they make difficult decisions. Leithwood (1988) listed the characteristics of the school system and the community as two obstacles for the principal. Research indicates that external pressure from external influences continues to be an influence on the role of the principal (Blase & Seay, 1992; Leithwood, 1988; Peterson and Valli, 1993).

The fourth conclusion derived from this study is that what principals were doing prior to QPA had not changed as a result of QPA. Rather, only certain elements of their practices were influenced by the QPA school improvement process. Research indicates that the principal's role is multifaceted (Dwyer, 1985; Krug, 1992; Leithwood and Montgomery, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1987; Smith

and Andrews, 1989). The role of the principal in QPA is centered around the role of instructional leader. The instructional leadership role of the principal is just one facet of the principal's role. QPA is just one influence on part of the principal's practice. It was even suggested that the principals were only involved in QPA during specific times of the year. This part of the principal's practice would support the notion of Leithwood (1992) that instructional leadership only describes a portion of the activities associated with effective schools and conveys only a part of what principals do in their practices. Instructional leadership activities were the primary area effected by QPA. The literature suggests that instructional leadership encompasses five areas of the principal's practice: curriculum and supervision, vision and direction, supervising of teaching, monitoring student progress, and promoting an instructional climate (Hallinger, 1992; Krug, 1992; Niece, 1993). The five categories of Krug (1993) were used as an operational framework for what principals do as instructional leaders in QPA. Instructional leadership is an element of QPA and was evident at each of the sites. According to the responses of the principals and teachers, much of the focus of the principal was in instructional leadership. The principals sent teachers to workshops, were supportive of teachers, provided teachers with free reign, and created a conducive learning climate.

The fifth conclusion derived from this study is that as a result of QPA, the principals established schools that allowed teachers to have ownership, responsibility, and accountability. Research indicates that principals have influence with teachers (Gomez & Jamgochian, 1989; Seay & Blase, 1992; Spalding, 1994). The principals in this study included teachers in the QPA process and delegated responsibilities to others within the organization. The principals used their influence to assign teachers to committees and to persuade the teachers who were reluctant about QPA to become involved.

Peterson and Valli (1993) noted a change in the role of the principal in the area of building governance as more groups and individuals become involved. These researchers found that the role of principal includes new decision-making jurisdictions, more time at formal and informal meetings, and more time as a conflict mediator due to new governance structure. These findings also were observed in this study. The principals had to allow teachers time to meet, smooth hurt feelings, and sell QPA to the teachers. The principals felt that their role was to communicate to different groups involved in the QPA process.

Seay and Blase (1992) reported that the principals in their study listed the ability to affect the choices made by teachers as the primary function of interactions with teachers. Furthermore, external groups such as parents, students, system level administrators, boards of education, businesses, and other political groups greatly affect the nature of the interactions between principals and teachers. After conducting a case study of a principal in south central Texas, Spalding (1994) indicated that principals influence teachers decisions by manipulation of teacher suggestions, using voting techniques, planting information, exchange, and use of expert knowledge. Spalding further concluded that principals went to great efforts to control the decision-making of the teachers. In this study, the principals did not go to great efforts to control the decision-making of the teachers, but rather went to great lengths to ensure that the teachers were involved in the decision-making process.

Heck (1992) found favor and support were used as bargaining chips in the exchange between principals and teachers. Cunard (1990) suggested that the role of the principal as instructional leader should be shared with teachers. Cunard proposes that shared instructional leadership includes letting teachers become responsible for staff development, creating an instructional council,

constituting a position of instructional dean and recognizing the value of peer coaching. In the schools observed in this study, the teachers had the responsibility to develop goals and strategies without the input of the principal; however, the principals did have the final say in the implementation strategy. The principals in this study did allow the teachers to have ownership in the QPA process. By providing ownership, the principals created cohesive building environments, teachers' understanding of other subject areas, and shared decision-making processes related to QPA.

The sixth conclusion derived is that the impact of students was minimal in all of the sites involved in this study. Couch (1991) suggested that the degree to which a principal demonstrates instructional leadership had no effect on students' achievement scores. The principals and teachers in this study concluded that there has been minimal impact on the students. The effects of principal's instructional leadership are not strong on student outcomes, but the findings do suggest that by manipulating variables at the building level, principals can have a positive influence on student achievement. Findings indicated that the manner in which principals govern their buildings, build strong school climate, and organize and monitor the school's instructional programs are important predictors of academic achievement.

At the sites of this study, the principals rarely included students in the communication process regarding QPA. Only in certain instances were the students aware of the QPA process or of the outcomes. At two of the sites, documents were presented that indicated prescriptions and goals that were developed to improve student writing and problem solving. Although each of these documents is available to teachers, the responses of the teachers were limited or non-existent concerning the impact on students. In the schools

observed in this study, minimal responses were provided from the teachers on the impact on the students.

The seventh conclusion derived from this study is that the degree of principal instructional leadership was reflected in responses pertaining to impact on students. In this study two principals assumed the instructional leadership role. In these schools, the teachers spoke highly of the principal and the principal possessed abundant information about the school improvement process. In the school where the principal was not the instructional leader, the staff spoke negatively about the principal, and he was unable to provide information about the impact on students.

The final conclusion derived from this study revealed that the conceptual framework developed for this study, from Leithwood (1989), helps to explain the impact of QPA on the role of the principal. As suggested, QPA influences principals' mental processes (internal) which affects principals' practices and instructional leadership. The external influence used for this study was Quality Performance Accreditation and how QPA influences the mental process of the principal. The mental process of the principal is defined as what the principal thinks. The Leithwood model suggest that what principals do is most directly a consequence of what they think. The framework for this study proposes that the influence of QPA (external) affects mental processes (internal) which, in turn, impact principal's practice and instructional leadership.

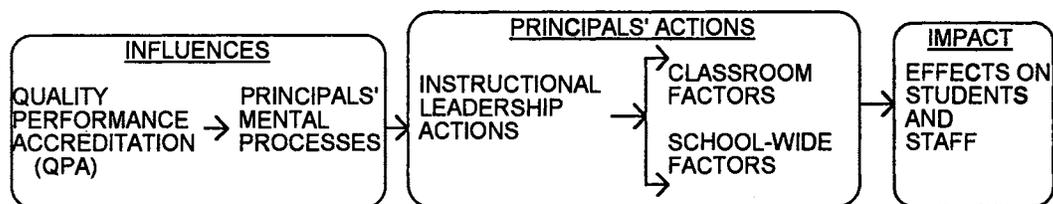


Figure 6.1 A framework to guide the study of the influence of QPA

After reviewing the data from all three sites, the conceptual framework model developed for this study does help to explain and illustrate how the impact of QPA on the mental process of the principal affects the staff and students. As suggested, QPA (external) influences mental processes (internal) which, in turn, affects principal's practice and instructional leadership. Certain instructional leadership activities of the principal have become affected resulting in minimal impact on the staff and students.

The framework offers a map to illustrate the impact of QPA on the practice of the principal. The three identified areas of influence; (1) attitude of principal, (2) role of principal, and (3) school profile all can be explained using this model.

The three identified factors effected the instructional leadership role of the principals. The school wide factors became the interventions that were developed for each building while the classroom factors resulted in ideas such as the six-trait writing model or problem solving strategies. The impact on the students and staff was the total staff involvement and the implementation of the strategies that resulted from QPA.

The impact on the staff seems to be more substantial than on the students. The principals reported that the teachers were now provided ownership and decision making empowerment. They also reported that the teachers worked in different ways and that the staffs were working on QPA cross curricularly. This provided for an improvement in the communication in each building. The teachers reported that they receive more training, continuing education and are more directly involved.

The students were affected minimally and only in certain situations. No teacher made any reference to the impact on the students while the principals reported they didn't observe any impact or that the impact was minimal.

It can be noted that QPA has influenced the thinking of the principal and resulted in the following conclusions: (1) the principal's thinking about QPA influenced the degree to which the schools became involved in the school improvement process, (2) QPA influenced the role of the principal in the QPA process, (3) the school profile impacted the decision-making process of the principal, (4) what principals were doing prior to QPA did not change as a result of QPA, (5) as a result of QPA, the principals established schools that allowed teachers to have ownership, responsibility, and accountability, (6) the impact of QPA on students was minimal in all of the sites involved in this study, (7) the degree of principal instructional leadership was reflected in responses pertaining to impact on students, and (8) the conceptual framework helps to explain the impact of QPA on the role of the principal.

Implications

As schools begin to prepare students for the 21st century, state legislatures and local school boards are faced with developing educational institutions that meet the needs of the learners. Furthermore, considering the ever changing world, school improvement models must be developed that meet the needs of diverse student populations and diverse communities of teachers and administrators. If the leadership of the principal has emerged as a primary factor in the success of school improvement projects, school improvement projects must prepare the individuals within the organization who are going to be the most influential players. In-service training and additional education are vital to successful school improvement programs. States that mandate improvement must pay particular attention to the role assigned to the players in the process. State mandated school improvement projects must be specific when addressing the formulation of guidelines. In QPA, the principal was never assigned a role, and this added to confusion and misdirection.

A theme that emerged from each site was the stress and pressure exerted by the State Department of Education. Persons in each building spoke of the frustration involved in the process due to lack of clear communication and direction, from the State Department of Education, the creators of the program. From whatever source the school improvement process is initiated, the writers must be aware of the individuals in the program and the ramifications of the lack of communication and direction, or the end result is confusion and frustration. Developers of school improvement programs must create improvement models that are well planned, manageable, and meet the needs of the learners.

The final implication is that the schools participating in this study found the experience to be favorable and admitted that a camaraderie or esprit de corps developed within the staff. The cohesiveness that resulted is a positive aspect that can be directly related to QPA. It contributed to a school community whose staff was knowledgeable about other subjects and of the goals for the school.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings and conclusions reached by this study, five recommendations for further research regarding the impact of school improvement programs on the role of the principal can be made. These recommendations are as follows:

1. A study should be conducted to see if mandated school improvement programs are meeting the original designs of the program. Future research would study if state mandated school improvement programs are creating the innovative schools envisioned by the authors of the improvement process and are meeting the needs of learners for the 21st century. For this study, the goal of QPA is to address school improvement, accountability, and school

performance at the building level. With the lack of responses concerning impact on students, were the schools meeting the QPA goals?

2. More research needs to be conducted that addresses accountability, ownership, and shared responsibility of a school improvement process that results in a cohesive educational community. This study would examine if other mandated school improvement projects resulted in the same cohesiveness. The schools in this study claimed that QPA resulted in cohesiveness and a sense of esprit de corps. Have other mandated school improvement programs accomplished the same results?

3. A study should be conducted that compares school improvement models in which someone other than the principal assumed the instructional leadership role. This study would examine if the response to the authority assigned this individual would be the same as a principal's. In the three schools involved in this project, one had a strong principal that was definitely the instructional leader, another had a principal that was an occasional instructional leader, and the final school had a principal that was not the instructional leader, instead the counselor assumed the instructional leadership role in the QPA process. At the two schools where the principals were the instructional leaders, the respondents spoke favorably about the principal. At the one school where the principal was not the instructional leader, the respondents spoke both favorably and negatively about the principal.

4. A study should be conducted examining the correlation between principal's knowledge of the impact on students of a school improvement project and the instructional leadership role assumed by the principal. The study would suggest if the instructional leadership role is assumed by the principal, shouldn't the principal be knowledgeable about the impact on the students? On the contrary, if the principal is not the instructional leader, can students be impacted by a

school improvement project? In this study the principals that were the instructional leaders behind QPA were knowledgeable about the impact on students. The only principal who was not the instructional leader provided no response to the impact on students.

5. Further, a study should be conducted to find out how important the role of the principal is in school improvement. If the leadership of the principal is the most important element for school improvement as the research indicates, can somebody else in the organization assume the most important role of in the school improvement process? Furthermore, if the principals are facilitators, overseers, and delegators, can they also assume leadership roles in order to make a school improvement program successful? The QPA process provides that somebody within the school should be the instructional leader. It does not say that this person must be the principal.

Summary

This chapter presented the conclusions, implications, and recommendations derived from a study of the impact of a state mandated school improvement program on the role of the principal. The analysis of data led to five major findings and categories; three areas of influence were observed that impacted the mental processes, what principals were doing prior to QPA has not changed, the thinking of the principal resulted in staff ownership, the thinking of the principal minimally impacted the students, and the conceptual framework does explain the principal's mental process. These findings led to eight conclusions enumerated in this chapter. The implications drawn from these conclusions have added to the body of knowledge about the role of the principal in school improvement.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

I understand that participation in this interview is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent and participation in this project at any time without penalty after notifying the project director/dissertation advisor.

I understand that the interview will be conducted according to commonly accepted research procedures and that information taken from the interview will be recorded in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. Each interview will be recorded and transcribed verbatim. All data collected, including the interview tapes, will be kept under lock and key. The tapes will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study and the data will be kept by the researcher for a minimum of two years following the study.

I understand the purpose of this study is to determine the effects of a state mandated school improvement program on the practices of the principal. I understand the interview will not cover topics that could reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject's financial standing or employability or deal with sensitive aspects of the subject's own behavior such as illegal conduct, drug use, sexual behavior, or use of alcohol.

I may contact the dissertation adviser, L. Nan Restine, Ph.D., Department of EAHD, College of Education, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK; Telephone: (405) 744-7244 should I wish further information about the research. I may also contact Jennifer Moore, University Research Services, 001 Life Science East, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078; Telephone: (405) 744-5700.

I have read and fully understand this consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

DATE: _____ TIME: _____ (A.M./P.M.)

SIGNED : _____

APPENDIX B

Letters

May 19, 1995

Dear

Thank you for taking the time from your busy schedule (especially at the end of May) to be a part of my dissertation.

The information you provide was extremely valuable and helpful

Once I get your interview written up, I will be providing you a copy of your information. If you find narratives needing changed or not representing a true picture of your perceptions, please let me know. I'll be providing more information later.

Again, thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

Brad Rahe

June 1, 1995

Dear

Your recent interview has been very helpful to me in researching my dissertation. Thanks for taking the time to visit with me.

I've attached a typed copy of the interview. Please check it to make sure it is an accurate representation of your opinions. If any changes need to be made, please contact me at 316-326-4320 or mail your changes to the junior high school. If I don't hear from you by June 23, I'll assume it is accurate.

Thanks again for your trouble.

Sincerely,

Brad Rahe

APPENDIX C

**Institutional Review Board
Human Subjects Review**

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 05-22-96

IRB#: ED-96-131

Proposal Title: THE INFLUENCE OF A MANDATED SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT ON SELECTED PRINCIPALS' PRACTICE.

Principal Investigator(s): L. Nan Restine, Bradley D. Rahe

Reviewed and Processed as: Exemption

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

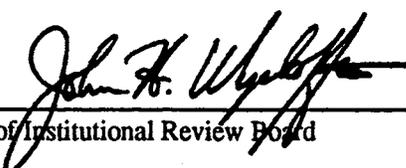
ALL APPROVALS MAY BE SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT NEXT MEETING.

APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR ONE CALENDAR YEAR AFTER WHICH A CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL.

ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reasons for Deferral or Disapproval are as follows:

Signature:



Chair of Institutional Review Board

Date: May 29, 1996

2
VITA

Bradley D. Rahe

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

**Thesis: THE INFLUENCE OF A MANDATED SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
PROJECT ON SELECTED PRINCIPALS' PRACTICE**

Major Field: School Administration

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Washington, Kansas, On December 25, 1957, the son of Leonard and Peggy Rahe.

Education: Graduated from Hiawatha High School, Hiawatha, Kansas in May 1976; received Associate of Arts degree in General Studies from Independence Community College, Independence, Kansas in May 1978; received Bachelor of Science degree in Education from Ottawa University, Ottawa, Kansas in May 1981; received Master of Science degree in School Administration from Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas in July, 1987; received Educational Specialist degree from Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas in May, 1990. Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Education with a major in Educational Administration at Oklahoma State University in May, 1997.

Experience: Upon graduation from Ottawa University; employed as an assistant coach at Ottawa University from 1980 to 1982; employed Unified School District 434, Great Bend, Kansas as a teacher from 1982 to 1987; employed by Unified School District 428, Independence, Kansas as a vice principal from 1987 to 1991; employed by Unified School District 326, Valley Center, Kansas as a principal from 1991 to 1993; employed by Unified School District 358, Wellington, Kansas as a principal from 1993 to present.

Professional Memberships: National Association for Secondary School Principals, United School Administrators, Kansas Association of Secondary School Principals, Kansas Association for Middle School Administrators