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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

FROM CONVENTIONAL SCHOOL TO DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL COMMUNITY: A CASE STUDY OF A PRINCIPAL'S PRACTICES, OBSTACLES, AND ACTION PLANS

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the

degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

By

Raúl Font Sánchez
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FROM CONVENTIONAL SCHOOL TO DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL COMMUNITY: A CASE STUDY OF A PRINCIPAL'S PRACTICES, OBSTACLES, AND ACTION PLANS

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION LEADERSHIP
AND POLICY STUDIES

By

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To Reyna Macias – for your support, friendship, and love

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine and document a principal's practices, obstacles, and action plans in facilitating a school's movement from a conventional school to a democratic school community. Specifically, the researcher examined 10 documented practices of high achieving schools in hopes to identify examples of how each practice was initiated and sustained in the school. In particular the role of the principal in the process; factors which kept the principal and school from engaging more completely in the practice; and how the principal and school worked to overcome obstacles and to develop plans of action were examined. While efforts to create democratic school communities are collaborative and inclusive, the discussion of the findings, conclusions, implications, and recommendations focused on the principal's role as facilitator of the movement.

The major question addressed in this study was, what practices, obstacles, and action plans does a principal engage in when facilitating a school's movement from bureaucratic to democratic? Qualitative case study inquiry was used to address the study's question. The case study used a single, within-sited case (one principal on her assigned campus) with a bounded system – bounded by time (6 months of data collection) and place (a single school campus). Triangulation of data from interviews, observations, document and record review, and field notes, combined with information from the literature review was used to increase the probability of objective conclusions as they emerged from the aforementioned sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Research identified five democratic school frameworks linked to movement from conventional to democratic. These were: IDEALS (O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug,

2000); conventional to democratic schooling continuum (O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000); successful high school restructuring practices (Lee & Smith, 1994); democratic schools framework (Glickman, 1993); and authentic achievement (Newmann, 1996). The inquiry revealed the following, as well as several other conclusions: the principal engaged in an intensive effort to establish democratic practices at Mireya High School (pseudonym); these democratic practices have positively affected the school by transporting student-learning responsibilities to the entire school community; and the obstacles and action plans resulting from the failure to implement democratic practices is a cohesive responsibility of the entire school community and not solely of the principal. The study concludes with recommendations and implications for future research.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction, Purpose and Rationale

One of the most important legacies of public education has been to provide students with the critical capacities, the knowledge, and the values to become active citizens striving to realize a vibrant democratic society. Within this tradition, Americans have defined schooling as a public good and a fundamental right. (Dewey, 1916; Giroux, 1988). However, two major reform pieces published in the last two decades, A Nation At Risk (1983) and Goals 2000 (1994), suggest that the boys and girls pursuing these fundamental constitutional rights of a quality education may attend schools which implement marginal and often unsuccessful practices.

During the past two decades, a number of standards and reform practices surfaced. Educational historians describe this simple and linear approach to educational reform as sinking under the weight of its own flaws (Brooks & Brooks, 1999). Improving education simply cannot be accomplished by mandates bestowed upon school administrators and teachers by legislators.

While an abundant amount of research exists supporting the move away from conventional schooling approaches to embracing democratic learning communities (Apple & Beane, 1995; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Fullan, 1993; Glickman, 1993, 1998; Lee & Smith, 1994; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; O'Hair, McLaughlin, & Reitzug, 2000; and Wood, 1992), we know very little about principal practices, obstacles, and action plans designed to facilitate the movement towards democratic learning communities and student achievement. How do principals help facilitate the movement? What specific

practices do they employ? What obstacles do they encounter? How do they overcome obstacles and develop plans of action?

Ronald Edmonds (1979) argues that seven correlates have been regularly identified as the basic characteristic of instructionally effective schools. The fourth of these seven correlates makes reference to an "instructional leader," pinpointing this role to the principal. Glickman (1993) refers to the "orchestrater" who supersedes the leadership concept previously mentioned by bestowing ownership to the entire school community; students, parents, school staff, community leaders, as well as site administrators. "The effective school framework has always recognized the centrality of the principal as the instructional leader of the school. Many years ago, Ronald Edmonds noted that we have never found an effective school that did not have an instructional leader (Lezotte, 1992).

Background of Problem

Many American schools continue to operate from a bureaucratic, factory model of schooling in which important decisions are made hierarchically by principals, superintendents, and school boards and are handed down to teachers in the form of rules, policies, and curriculum packages (O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000). In such schools teachers typically teach largely in isolation, rarely communicating, observing, or collaborating with each other. Students move from classroom to classroom with only marginal personal attention possible from their teachers who in some high schools teach 160 or more different students per day (O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000). The focus in these schools is frequently more on the control of student (and teacher) behavior than on the development of intellectual growth and achievement (Darling-Hammond,

1997). Additionally, Darling-Hammond (1997) stresses that instructional emphasis is frequently placed on teaching to state-mandated standardized tests designed to measure low-level cognitive skills, rather than on authentic teaching practices, which stimulate high-quality intellectual growth in students. This deskilling of teaching results in little emphasis being placed on teacher knowledge and expertise (Reitzug & O'Hair, 1998). Consequently, teachers frequently believe they are locked into a dysfunctional system that they are unsure of how to change and into teaching practices, which are dull and meaningless both for them and their students (O'Hair, et al., 2000).

In contrast to such bureaucratically-oriented "conventional" schools, we know from research and experience that schools also exist which appear to be grounded much more in conceptions of community (Kruse & Louis, 1995; Sergiovanni, 1994) and democracy (e.g. Apple & Beane, 1995; Meier, 1995, Wood, 1992) than in bureaucracy. Research finds that schools operating from a democratic school community philosophy focus on child-centered belief systems, tend to practice authentic teaching and learning, advocate active learning, eliminate tracking, encourage cooperative group activities, and seek collaboration while discouraging competition among students. Schools advocating democratic practices also incorporate portfolio assessment instead of the traditional paper-pencil test, discourage top-down management and teaching in isolation while encouraging shared decision-making, decentralization, school choice, flexible scheduling, creative thinking, and common goals, among other essential issues. Essentially, such schools tend to manifest a strong belief in democratic principles as the basis for school practices.

The Oklahoma Networks for Excellence in Education (O.N.E.) is a school renewal network founded in 1995 and is a partnership between the University of Oklahoma and 36 elementary, middle, and high schools serving over 25,000 Oklahoma students. Based on the educational renewal knowledge base and O.N.E.'s Rubric of High Achieving Schools (O'Hair & Reitzug, 1999), ten practices have been identified in facilitating the movement from conventional schooling to democratic school community. These practices include the following:

- Core learning principles consisting of a shared set of goals, commitments, and practices enacted throughout the school (Allen, Rogers, Hensley, Glanton, & Livingston, 1999; Glickman, 1993; 1998),
- Authentic teaching, learning, and assessment (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; Newmann and Associates, 1996),
- Shared decision-making (Darling-Hammond, 1997; O'Hair, McLaughlin, & Reitzug, 2000),
- Teachers collaborate and learn together (Lee & Smith, 1994),
- Critical study, action research, reflective practice (Glickman, 1993; Allen, Rogers, Hensley, Glanton, & Livingston, 1999),
- Supportive principal leadership (O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000; Reitzug, 1994),
- Caring and collective responsibility for students (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995),
- Connection to home and community (Cochran & Dean, 1991; Delpit, 1995; Epstein, 1995),
- Concern for equity (Delpit, 1995; Nieto, 1996),

- Access to external expertise (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995).

In Chapter 2, each practice is described with specific detail to the connection between the practice and student learning.

Statement of the Problem

After completing studies in over 1,500 schools, researchers found that students learn more when teachers:

- Pursue a clear, shared purpose for all students' learning,
- Engage in collaborative activities to achieve that purpose,
- Take collective responsibility for student learning. (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; Newmann & Associates, 1996).

To flourish, democratic school communities need strong leadership from the principal; broad-based support from teachers and parents; and engagement of and support from citizens who live in the immediate and surrounding communities. At the district and state levels, collaborative leadership is required of superintendents and other administrators, as well as from school board members and other policy makers who represent local and state government (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995).

In the over 1,500 schools studied, researchers believe the findings are a result of schools that are organized collaboratively as opposed to schools organized bureaucratically. According to the University of Michigan results, teachers in democratically organized schools "work collaboratively, often in teams that are formed across subjects. Instead of being governed by top-down directives, teachers have more input into decisions affecting their work. And instead of slotting students into different educational paths, (the school) would group students of diverse talents and interests

together for instruction. Schools with this form have more meaning for their members" (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995). Lee & Smith (1994) report that not only were students' achievement in the first two years significantly higher in democratic school communities but those gains were also distributed more equitably. That is, the achievement gap between students of lower socioeconomic status, or SES, and students of higher SES was narrower in democratic school communities. These findings support the effects of democratic school community on student success.

While empirical evidence and moral arguments suggest that student success in schools that function as democratic school communities is substantially higher than in traditional schools, most schools function from a traditional schools model (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Glickman, 1993, 1998; O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000). David Kearns (1988) in "An Education Recovery Plan for America" describes the task before us as "the restructuring of our entire public education system. I don't mean tinkering. I don't mean piecemeal changes or even well intentioned reforms. I mean the total restructuring of our schools . . . Successful firms have discarded the archaic, outmoded, and thoroughly discredited practices that are still in place in most of our large school districts. Those districts are organized like a factory of the late 19th century: top-down, command-control management, a system designed to stifle creativity and independent judgment" (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

Mireya High School (pseudonym) with the Yira Public Schools (pseudonym) was chosen for the study due to its strive towards restructuring and movement to a more democratic school community. The school holds membership in two restructuring organizations, The Oklahoma Networks For Excellence In Education (O.N.E) out of The

University Of Oklahoma and High Schools That Work, a national school-to-work reform effort. The principal at this school holds the longest administrative tenure of any of the membership O.N.E school administrators giving the study more reliable data on administrative impact. Finally, having to exclude other extremely involved O.N.E member high schools due to the investigator's employment relationship in these districts, Mireya High School becomes the school of choice for the study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine and document a principal's practices, obstacles, and action plans in facilitating a school's movement from a conventional school to a democratic school community. Specifically, the researcher will examine the 10 documented practices previously listed of high achieving schools in hopes to identify examples of how each practice is initiated and sustained in the school, in particular the role of the principal in the process; discover factors which keep the principal and school from engaging more completely in the practice; and explain how the principal and school work to overcome obstacles and to develop plans of action. While efforts to create democratic school communities are collaborative and inclusive, this study will focus mainly on the principal's role as facilitator of the movement.

There is no doubt were the "buck stops" in a school building; it is in the principal's office. Block (1996) makes that very clear in his book on stewardship. He continues this line of thinking by asserting the move away from a patriarchic system and more into a system of stewardship. Patriarchy expresses sovereignty – a form of intimate colonialism. This governance system believes top management is responsible for the success of the organization. Stewardship, however, promotes being accountable for

results without control or care taking. It is transferring responsibilities to those, 'closer and closer' to the bottom and edges of the organization." In other words, keeping leadership in the background.

Block's thoughts coincide with the whole site-based management philosophy (Iatarola & Stiefel, 1998); Moser, 1998; and Peternick & Sherman, 1998) which stresses the transfer of decision-making power from the central office to the site school. While site-based researchers believe in collaborative efforts, Phillips (1992) describes the role of a leader, in this case the principal, as the main artery through which the organism lives and thrives. But, he also cautions the leader to lead by being led. So, this study does not focus on the organization, a school's bureaucracy, or the recipients of empowerment, the teachers and school community members. Its only attempt is to zoom in on the principal as the agent of change.

The investigator clarifies that the aforementioned school community members are crucial in reform efforts. Nevertheless, research exists (O'Hair & Reitzug, 1994) documenting studies referencing their impact on school reform efforts. Very few studies, however, talk about the impact of a principal's practices, obstacles, and action plans in moving a school from a conventional to a democratic school community.

Equally important is the voice of students. Apple and Beane (1995) make the case of schools being child-centered and the importance of their voice in decision-making. The omission of this group as direct participants in the study is based on a study conducted by Dauway (1999). In the study, it is apparent the subjectivity students' offer in their responses as well as their volatility in liking or disliking school administrators

based on day-to-day school decisions impacts them personally. The investigator suggests a future follow up study with this group as primary subjects.

Research Questions

The major question to be addressed by this study is what practices, obstacles, and action plans does a principal engage in when facilitating a school's movement from bureaucratic to democratic? In an attempt to collect useful data, the following research questions were developed.

1. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she facilitates the development of core learning principles in the school?
2. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she facilitates authentic teaching, learning, and assessment in the school?
3. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she facilitates shared decision-making in the school?
4. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she facilitates teacher collaboration and learning in the school?
5. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she facilitates critical study, action research, and reflection in the school?
6. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she facilitates supportive principal leadership in the school?
7. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she facilitates the principle of caring and collective responsibility for all students in the school?

8. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal create and encounter as she facilitates close school connections to home and community?
9. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal create and encounter as she facilitates and expands concern for equity in the school?
10. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal create and encounter as she facilitates access to external expertise in the school?

While these are not intended to exhaust all existing practices, these are the ones on which the study plans to focus.

Definition of Terms

The following definition of terms will assist the reader in understanding concepts and terminology associated with the study:

1. Authentic teaching, learning and assessment - It is a "current practice and innovation that enhances the intellectual quality of student learning." Authentic teaching emphasizes teaching that requires students to think, to develop in-depth understanding, and to apply academic learning to important, realistic problems" (Newmann and Wehlage, 1996). Authentic learning promotes the students 'cognitive and emotional development, as well as an efficient management of personal affairs. Teachers help students produce authentic performance of high intellectual quality through the construction of knowledge (students who organize information and consider alternatives), discipline inquiry (elaborated communication), and value beyond school (addressing a problem likely to be encountered beyond the school and communicating findings or messages to an audience beyond the classroom).

2. Conventional schooling - It is a school district's practice revolving around a factory model that is a centralized, top-down, hierarchical, fragmented, standardized, and command-control management system, retarding the restructuring needed for effective change (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Other words used as synonyms when referring to a conventional school setting is Dewey's term 'traditional' and the popular word used among many democratic school practice supporters, 'bureaucratic.'

3. Critical Study - A process whereby teachers study and constructively critique their schools as well as each other. The nature of critical study can range from formal to informal. Critical study informs current and future practice. The process provides a systematic way of collecting and analyzing student data in order to set learning priorities (Glickman, 1993; O'Hair & Reitzug, 1996). The primary purpose of critical study is the improvement of teaching, learning and school practice in classrooms and the school. Other terms used interchangeably are action research and reflective practice.

4. Democratic school practices - These are practices, which depart from the conventional approaches of teaching and learning. Schools who built upon child-centered ideals practice collaboration as well as collegiality among the staff. Essentially, such schools tend to manifest a strong belief in democratic principles as the basis for school governance. (Apple & Beane, 1995; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Glickman, 1993; Meier, 1995; Newmann and Wehlage, 1995; and O'Hair, McLaughlin, Reitzug, 2000).

5. Shared Decision Making - Central to the notion of democratic schooling is full participation of all stakeholders. Shared decision making therefore aims to create community by honoring the diverse perspectives of those involved - teachers, administrators, parents, students, and community at-large. Thus, shared decision making

requires that all voices be heard, all opinions valued, all perspectives articulated. It creates a forum whereby all members of the school community act collectively to make decisions that affect teaching and learning (Collaborators, 1998).

6. Shared Leadership - "While traditional leadership is thought of as being the responsibility of someone in a particular position (for example, the principal), leadership in democratic schools is viewed as being embodied in acts that may come from anyone in the school community – teachers, support staff, students, parents, community members, principals, superintendents, and perhaps even university faculty. Rather than leadership being described as influencing or directing others to pursue the goals and direction identified by one individual or group of individuals, leadership in democratic schools involves facilitating processes that cause individuals or groups to examine, study and challenge goals, direction, and practices" (O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000).

7. O.N.E. - O.N.E. is an acronym for Oklahoma Networks for Excellence in Education (O.N.E.). O.N.E. was established in 1995 as a partnership among schools, community members, and The University of Oklahoma - a kind of think tank designated to enhance the quality of student learning. O.N.E. brings students, parents, teachers, school administrators, community members, business leaders, and university faculty together to share ideas, observe best practices, discuss concerns, and develop strategies to improve teaching and learning. The major objective of O.N.E. is to help schools move from conventional schools to democratic, community-oriented schools. Such schools are characterized by a respect for teaching and student knowledge and a collective sense of responsibility for student and teacher learning.

8. Principal - He/she is the designated site school administrator who "orchestrates" the teaching and learning activities in preparing productive citizens for a democracy. The principal is a critically important faculty member, with broad responsibility for overall coordination and articulation of school programs (Glickman, 1993). An ASCD article (Checkley, 2000) eloquently summarized the expectations of a contemporary principal by including a clip from a newspaper that read, "Wanted; exceptional school leader. Must know how to implement change that helps ensure the academic success of all students. Must be an instructional leader and have the ability to promote teacher growth. Must be dedicated to creating a shared vision of an outstanding school through collaboration with faculty, parents, and community members. Must have strong interpersonal skills, excellent communication skills."

9. School Community/Stakeholder - All committees, councils, and other school-wide decision making groups are included. Not only are professional educators a part of this governance body, but also young people, their parents, outside critical friends, and other members of the school community (Apple & Beane, 1995).

10. Site-Based Management - In schools practicing site-based management, "faculty members are not treated as subordinates, but instead are regarded as colleagues to administrators and others involved in decisions and actions" (Glickman, 1993). Teachers are the key participants in decisions. Autonomy from external agencies (districts, school boards, and state departments) is sought for decisions about teaching and learning. The faculty willingly decreases classroom autonomy (Glickman, 1993). Site-based management can also be construed as site-based decision making.

11. Restructuring - " Restructuring has no precise definition, but the term suggests that schooling needs to be comprehensively redesigned. Structural reforms include decentralization, shared decision-making, school choice, schools within schools, flexible scheduling, with longer classes, teacher teaming, common academic curriculum required for all students, reduction of tracking and ability grouping, external standards for school accountability, and new forms of assessment, such as portfolio" (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995).

Assumptions

The study intends to focus on the principal as an agent of change and utilize other school community members to confirm the level of impact she has on the movement towards a democratic community. "Ronald Edmonds noted that we have never found an effective school that did not have an instructional leader" (as quoted in Lezotte, 1992).

The study plans on including all members of the school community with the exception of students. For details see the section on The Purpose Of The Study.

The study will be conducted under the framework of the following assumptions: School-based decision making (SBDM) is "a mechanism for schools to increase decision making authority over curriculum, instruction, and budgeting" (Moser, 1998). That SBDM also preaches a site control decentralization movement from a district or central office to the school site (Peternick & Sherman, 1998). No impact can be made in SBDM unless the school community members, site administrators, teachers, and parents, closest to the students are directly involved (Iatarola & Stiefel, 1998).

Student achievement was measured by the site school's performance results on the national standardized norm referenced assessment instrument, Metropolitan

Achievement Test 7 - Form A, and the school district's criterion referenced tests from 1995/96 Fall semester to the Spring of the 1999/2000 school year.

The Lee and Smith 1994 study results were based on, basically, 840 high schools. The researcher assumes that results can apply to secondary schools anywhere in the country matching a similar sample of students and faculties.

Democratic schooling is a state that schools attain. It is a process rather than a product. School communities in pursuit of democratic communities arrive at the table with different stages of development, beliefs, resources, and education (O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000).

The researcher assumes that respondents will answer the interview questions truthfully.

The researcher believes that he did not lead respondents in answering the interview questions.

Limitations

The study was conducted under several limitations:

The study relies on the professional and unbiased views, opinions, and feelings of participants currently assigned to the study school. Therefore, objectivity reporting may show the presence of skewed information.

The study was limited to one school site. Results reported from this school study site do not necessarily reflect similar cultures at other schools. Readers of this study should consider very carefully the transferability of any findings, results, and conclusions before generalizing to include other schools.

This study site was chosen for two reasons. The first reason was the school's participation in two school restructuring efforts - the Oklahoma Networks for Excellence in Education (O.N.E.) and High Schools That Work. Reasons exist to believe that a pilgrimage towards a democratic community is in progress at the project site. Therefore, baseline data is more abundant than in other schools. The second reason is willingness to participate. The researcher acknowledges the tremendous commitment needed from the school administrator to successfully complete the study. A similar study took place several years ago in the researcher's school. The amount of time became challenging, but at the end, was worth the time invested.

The study expands on a pilot study completed by the researcher under the supervision of one of the researcher's dissertation committee members. It also responds to the professional challenge made by Dr. M.J. O'Hair and Dr. U.C. Reitzug in a study published in the Journal of School Leadership (1997). The authors requested an in-depth study of leadership in democratic schools by redirecting the traditional perspective of a school leader to a collective empowerment of its members.

Even though a school, on a journey towards a democratic community, cannot endorse one of its community member's work in isolation as the "cure for all," this study focuses on the principal, as the agent of change, and not on the school organization or the other school community members. Students were not involved in any direct feedback. However, the investigator did observe student behavior in curricular as well as extra-curricular settings.

The school principal chose the participants in the study based on conversations with the investigator. The investigator assumes that participants represent all voices in school community.

Researcher's Perspective

The 2000-2001 school year becomes my 27th year serving school-aged boys and girls in our public schools. Ten of these years were served as a classroom teacher while the remaining 17 were served in some administrative capacity. Regardless of the professional assignment, school district, grade level, community environment, and/or student body I have been affiliated with, my main goal has always been to welcome the participation of all members of the school community in the education, social, and civic formation of the students I serve.

Schools in which I attended and eventually worked replicated the conventional school philosophy. If it had not been for a personal interest in sports and a dedicated athletic coach to see me through, I too would have joined the increasing list of victims who never 'made it.' I committed to make subject content 'fun,' applicable to an individual's daily experiences, and consistently updated it based on school and community input. This belief has also transferred into my administrative management style.

The crusade to move educators away from conventional schooling and into democratic school communities reached a promising level of influence when professional assignments placed me in local, state, and national committees, task forces, and other groups. But, reality hit. The struggle became an uphill battle. So I decided to give credence to the phrase, "Do as you see and not as I say." And that is how I entered the ranks of school administration.

Strongly influenced by Dewey's progressive schools work, a consistent professional reader in school renewal, an active participant in democratic school reform;

i.e., O.N.E., a successful school principal in a for profit management company that implemented a site-based management design, in addition to being a subject in a doctoral study site researching principals who utilized students as stakeholders in school-wide decision-making, I may bring bias to this study.

Even though much has been written on democratic practices believed to influence a school climate, hence, student achievement, few if no research exists on how a principal institutionalizes democratic practices, copes with the day-to-day obstacles, and applies pre-planned strategies as well as improvised action plans.

Significance

This study helps us understand the journey from conventional schooling to democratic school community. In particular, the study helps us understand the journey from a principal's perspective, including the practices, obstacles encountered, and action plans the principal creates and encounters to help her facilitate the movement from conventional to democratic and high achieving. Specifically, the study will help us examine the 10 practices of democratic schools in the framework of the day-to-day, nuts and bolts, life of schools. With an understanding of the principal practices, obstacles encountered, and action plans designed to overcome obstacles, implications for future theory building and research, principal preparation programs, and school practices may be drawn.

For example, this study may help us develop authentic measures of a school's success. Democratic school communities believe that authentic assessment of students more accurately and thoroughly reflects student learning than solely relying on scores attained on standardized tests. However, it is not only students who are evaluated based

on standardized test scores. Schools too, are frequently evaluated based on the school's overall performance on standardized tests. As is the case with students, a school's overall performance on standardized test is a narrow measure of whether a school is successfully educating students for democratic citizenship. By having a better understanding of the journey from convention to democratic schooling, we might also understand how a school more authentically assesses its overall performance. Specifically, how might a school more authentically assess its progress and performance as a democratic school and its implementation of its core values and beliefs. By identifying principal practices, obstacles, and action plans, this research helps us begin the process of assessing a schools progress on the journey to become a democratic school community.

Summary

Chapter one provided an introduction and description of the need for the study, the statement of the problem, general background information, the purpose of the study, questions in need of answering, as well as terminology and assumptions under which the study was undertaken. Four additional chapters complete the dissertation.

Chapter two presents the review of the literature pertaining to the study.

Further research will be reviewed on concepts such as: conventional schools; beliefs and practices in democratic schools; leadership; as well as, restructuring and democratic rubrics. The rubrics discussed will be limited to: IDEALS (O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000); structural practices introduced by the Lee & Smith Study (1994); and the stages from conventional schooling to democratic community (O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug 2000).

Chapter three will introduce the procedures and explanations of the methodology. Of particular interest will be the interview protocol used in the study, school site information, and the design of the study.

Chapter four will present an in-depth background analysis of the identified school site. The targeted study group will be interviewed. The interviewees' questions and answers will be recorded and transcribed. Efforts will be made to aggregate, condense, and cluster answers by themes. School documents; i.e., building test scores, school bulletins, activity calendars, newsletters and agendas, will be collected, reviewed, and analyzed.

The final chapter will include the analysis of the interviewees' answers. Results of the document analysis and findings will be discussed. Conclusions, recommendations, and implications for future research, practices, and principal preparation programs will follow.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Literature

Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the literature related to this study. In the last decade, theory building and research have been undertaken on issues surrounding democratic school practices, obstacles, and action plans. Concurrently, researchers have sought to discover effective ways to facilitate the journey from conventional and bureaucratic schooling to democratic school community. Specifically, this chapter will compare and contrast conventional and democratic schooling practices; describe the historical views of educational renewal; examine democratic schooling frameworks linked directly to improved student learning; describe the democratic schooling practices framework used in this study; and examine the principal's role in facilitating the movement.

Conventional versus Democratic School Practices

Conventional Schooling

Conventional schooling practices revolve around a factory model, centralized, top-down, bureaucratic, hierarchical, fragmented, standardized, and command-control management system (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Traditional schemes implemented in schools supporting these conventional settings mainly impose from above and outside (Dewey, 1938). Conventional schools embrace legislated reform, standardization of work, external decisions for improving schools, authoritarian locus of control dictated by the building principal, and school governance manipulated by a hand-chosen group not representative of the school's culture. The one-room schoolhouse mentality - autonomy of teaching within four walls - popular during pioneer times, permeates throughout the buildings. Large school enrollments, lack of professional dialogue, restricted access to

communication, homogeneous grouping, tracking and ability grouping, biased testing, and drill and skill programs characterize their philosophies.

School buildings in bureaucratic school systems close their doors to the community after students are dismissed at the end of the instructional day. Walls contain no student work. Celebrating student success becomes a one-day event. Classrooms are organized the same way with all desks moving from front to back in a single line. Teacher desks seem to be at the front of the room. Rolling in audiovisual equipment appears to be a normal task, when available. Classrooms have no telephones. The teachers' lounge comes equipped with sofas, chairs, and pop machines, and lacks professional materials, journals, computers, as well as a work area.

Teachers in conventional schools have little or no voice in the decision making process. Teaching in isolation best describes the departmental approach. Meeting assessment expectations drives teachers to teach to the test. Staff development usually happens after school, in the evenings, and/or on the weekends. Opportunities for collegial exchange are basically none. New teachers are usually assigned to the largest, toughest groups, in ill-equipped classrooms, with substandard resources. Home contact often concerns negative reports regarding student behavior, attendance, and/or student achievement.

Community participation is limited or non-existent in conventional schools. Parents venture on school grounds for extra-curricular activities, parent/teacher conferences, and when their child is in trouble. Parent organizations - PTOs, councils, advisory boards - rarely convene. Parent seminars, workshops, and training sessions are rare. School administrators seldom supply parents with a weekly bulletin, monthly activity calendar, or any other source of information involving school life.

Students are silent members of this school community. Student leadership organizations feel restricted to manual labor activities, previously delineated by adults without student input. Few student representatives, if any, are included in school

governance committee. Teaching and learning techniques, methods, and approaches reflect the teachers understanding of what is desirable for the students and rarely reflects student input. Parent/teacher conferences happen without the participation of the student. Student assessment is restricted to paper - pencil exams, rarely considering non-traditional entries like the ones incorporated in portfolios; i.e., videos, cassettes, or group projects.

The bureaucratic way brought structure to organizations in times when these institutions struggled with inefficiencies, capriciousness behavior, and unfair treatment of employees (O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000). Timing and impact appeared beneficial for those adapting the principles at a needed stage in the development of this country. Arguments now surface questioning the application of the authority structure, hierarchical belief, personnel division, and policy development taken from this movement to the management of school communities. Emulating aforementioned bureaucratic principles created distress among educators who began searching for alternative structural ideas designed to enhance teaching, learning, and leading in schools. Democratic school practices developed as one of these alternatives.

Democratic Schools

"Tear down that wall." (Harvey, 1999) Ronald Reagan, President of the United States of America, urged Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party and Soviet leader, to end over twenty-five years of oppression by destroying the Berlin Wall. The concrete-and-steel wall barricaded freedom, autonomy, collaboration, collegiality, and networking, while advocating conventional, bureaucratic, centralized control over millions of people. Glickman (1993, 1998) also cries out for the tearing down of unsuccessful educational practices interfering with our founding fathers' dreams of democratic governance. These conventional beliefs have prevented generations of people from becoming productive citizens.

United States citizens and alien residents are guaranteed the inalienable rights of a free, equitable public education by virtue of the United States Constitution. Public, educational institutions charged with this commitment face the challenge of engaging students in understanding and practicing democratic principles, both rights and responsibilities. Schools in pursuit of democratic status, prepare students by modeling, organizing, and governing democratically. Promoting 'individual growth and participation in a democratic society' characterizes the belief system of several democratic school supporters who aligned their thoughts with Constitution founders such as Thomas Jefferson (O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000).

As O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug (2000) states, "democracy is a process rather than a product." Local communities moving away from the conventional, hierarchical, bureaucratic, top down, mandate approach in which the school community - students, parents, teachers, community leaders, and business partners - rarely participate in the decision making process, disparately seek alternative ways to incorporate realistic experiences in the classroom. These local communities arrive at the table with different stages of development, beliefs, resources, and education just like students starting school. Hence, reaching their goals as well as figuring out how to get there will vary from one school community to another.

Democratic schools, like democracy itself, do not happen by chance (Apple & Beane, 1995). The process requires putting in place a structure, which emulates the democratic philosophy without minimizing the importance of reflecting it through a curriculum that mirrors democratic experiences. Creating a decision making process to govern can only take place when all governed, including students, receive the right to participate. Segregating curriculum content from authentic concerns defeats the purpose of democracy by failing to savor the opportunity to practice and model it. Promoting a 'bottom up' movement stimulates involvement and empowers individuals and groups

rooted in the core of teaching and learning. The reciprocal exchange among stakeholders opens intellectual discourse resulting in positive feedback (Dewey, 1938).

Historical Views of Educational Renewal

Michael Fullan (1993) argues that the secret of growth and development is learning how to cope with change. He covers the last thirty years in education by discussing the paradigm shift in school renewal. Learning or self-renewing individuals and organizations have been around since the 1960s. Furthermore, the terms "renewal, reform, innovation, and change" seem to be used interchangeably. Educators who yearn for these changes in our traditional school settings sustain the existence of congruency with descriptors on democratic school practices.

Moving from an agrarian to an industrial to a highly technological society created a shift in educational attainment for school-aged children. During the agrarian era, school-aged populations composed a significant portion of the working force. Laboring on farms and in factories topped parent expectations. With the phasing out of the agrarian era, the transition to the industrialization, the creation of unions, and the decrease of an agrarian society, school enrollment flourished.

Influenced by Dewey's progressive concept (1938), school focus and responsibilities became the target of controversy among educators, politicians, and community stakeholders. Even when a cadre of educational researchers introduced alternative methods, techniques, and models to address the need of failing academic achievement among school-aged students, it was A Nation At Risk (1983) report that would deliver the rude awakening that schools were incompetent and incapable of delivering an effective education to all who sought it. Schools are supposed to advance a global economy and make the country competitive. Yet suggested literature supports that the current educational system fails in this regards (Kozol, 1991).

Transitions originate when the acknowledgement of a problem exists. Movement from conventional practices to democratic schooling cannot and will not take place in any

setting until the appropriate group realizes that what is in place is not working and needs modification. John Goodlad responds to a question posed while interviewing for an article in Educational Leadership (Tell, 1999) regarding his view on what is the fundamental mission of schooling. He referred readers to his book, A Place Called School and to his colleague, Ernie Boyer's writing in High Schools. Both books state what parents expect from schools systems - viable academic, social, civic, vocational, and character development programs.

The Eight-Year Study, introduced by Ralph Tyler, documented how 'progressive school' students reached higher successful academic experiences, were more practically resourceful, and socially responsible than their peers who enrolled in traditional schools (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Understanding that all schools participating in the journey toward democratic schooling begin at different stages of development, with some moving faster than others, helps in times of struggle. (O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000).

Dewey (1938), however, introduced the lucid analysis of both 'tradition' and 'progressive' education and its impact on school practices in his book written more than six decades ago. He strongly urged all teachers and educators to incorporate human experiences as the basis of curriculum development. The importance of staff-level input as well as authentic teaching and learning experiences may be considered the core belief of democratic school practices.

Glickman (1993) raised the most fundamental questions about the purpose of education, the role of schools, and the needed school-based application. He truly believed that the goal of American schools lay in producing citizens for our democracy. Therefore, he reasons, democratic principles need to form the basis for teaching and learning.

Apple and Beane (1995) mark their role in the restructuring of schools by asserting that, "Democratic schools are meant to be democratic places, so the idea of democracy also extends to the many roles adults play in the schools." They stress the

importance of involving the consent of the governed students and of equality of opportunity among them.

However, Wood (1992) highlights success stories all over the USA in which educational programs implementing democratic school practices accentuate academic attainment. The democratic movement draws many researchers' interest. The practices seem to have evolved as far back as the turn of the century, catching the attention of one of the most preeminent educational theorists of the twentieth century, John Dewey. Top-down, conventional management ideologies carry a little more momentum as we increasingly hear discussions on charters, magnet, and enterprise schools - all basically characterized by established curriculums and traditional administrative structures.

John Leddo (NASSP, 1997), president of Research Development Corporation, comments on the strong pressures for educational reform. Virtually every government agency, Institute of Higher Learning (IHE), educational consulting firm, as well as appointed commissions exert power bestowed to recommend tougher educational standards which pose greater challenges for schools than they have ever faced. Faced with an increasingly diverse population of students - from ethnic backgrounds to learning styles and needs, schools must have greater command not only of increasing content, but also of increasingly diverse pedagogical techniques (U. S. Department of Education, 1996).

Currently, school practices revolve around a factory model that is a centralized, top-down, hierarchical, fragmented, standardized, and command-control management system, retarding the restructuring needed for effective change (Darling-Hammond, 1997). This conventional bureaucratic approach is under attack by school reformers - Apple & Beane, (1995), Darling-Hammond (1997), Glickman, (1993), Newmann & Wehlage, (1997), and O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug (2000) due to failure in supporting the primary goal for American public schools: "to prepare its students to become productive citizens of our democracy" (Glickman, 1993).

In order to fulfill the aforementioned American public school goal, districts need to be promoting individual growth and participation in a democratic society through site-based management (O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000). Apple & Beane (1995) assert, "no one individual or interest group can claim sole ownership of possible knowledge and meaning." However, someone needs to facilitate this suggested process.

Edmond (1979) argued that seven factors have been regularly identified as the basic characteristics of instructionally effective schools. The fourth of these seven correlates makes reference to an "instructional leader," implying that this is a role for the principal. I prefer Glickman's term, an "orchestrater" when making reference to a person, not necessarily the principal, or a group of educational managers assigned to the task of monitoring a given activity. Leadership within a democratic ideal originates among any school community member, i.e., teachers, support staff, students, parents, community members, business partners, school administrators, central office staff, superintendents, and board members. Regardless of who facilitates shared vision or shared decision making, collaboration must prevail in each and every activity focusing all decisions on the "locus" of teaching and learning (Glickman, 1993).

Despite the paramount significance of establishing leadership in a democratic school, other factors play a vital role in creating the framework for teaching and learning in successful school restructuring. These leaders seeking to increase student achievement should first look to the school's environment, its climate. School climate, or environment, is a comprehensive structure made up of the culture, physical plant, organizational structure, social relationships, and individual behavior.

Our communities expect schools to provide a safe and secure environment (Garrity, Jens, Porter, Sager, & Short-Camilli, 1996). Review of the school plant, security systems, emergency procedures, internal and external communication, and medical emergencies may be the difference between life and death. Curtailing verbal abuse, psychological aggression, gang-related activity, possession and distribution of controlled

substances, possession of weapons, and physical violence can assist school administrators in structuring a safe campus. Other possible ideas that can reduce the chances of impeding the learning of students include: peer mediation groups, purchasing security paraphernalia, hiring enforcement officers, and enforcing a "no-nonsense" approach (bullies need to be confronted and told clearly that their behavior will not be tolerated). But the effective tool for keeping schools safe is to involve everyone in a caring culture and to instill the values of caring in the school community.

Schools adopting the Great Expectation's philosophy develop a creed statement. This statement is repeated every morning before class begins. All students learn it, know what it means, and can recite it on call. Posting it is encouraged in the classroom as well as throughout the building. School publication(s) are not disseminated without it. Therefore, "core beliefs," the school's vision and mission statements, goals, objectives, and strategies must be visible in every school building, classroom, and publication. Weekly bulletins, monthly calendars, newsletters, and the yearbook need to reflect the identified focus during the year.

Central Park East Secondary School, New York, asserts the importance of community input. Newmann & Wehlage (1997) refer to this same principle as building the school's capacity beyond their walls; i.e., external support. Effective schools permeate the whole concept by inviting student groups (StuCo & Leadership), parent organizations (PTSA), alumni members, Institutions Of Higher Learning, civic clubs (Lions Clubs), community leaders, business partners (mentors), and other interest groups to actively participate with school staff in an ongoing critical study (Glickman, 1993) of the school's curriculum, direction, practices, climate, demographics, staff development, academic, social, and extra-curricular programs, staffing, resources, and materials.

Great schools empower all members of the school community. The word 'empowering', however, needs to expand beyond the practical meaning given in conventional schools where the administrator disguises input with manipulation of his/her

own beliefs. True empowerment translates into a genuine sense of intrinsic worth. Teachers, students, parents, and the entire school community posses knowledge and experiences worth implementing for the enhancement of teaching and learning. They are full educational partners legitimately involved in school governance (Glickman, 1993). Input, engaging, decision-making, active, shared ownership, as well as shared responsibility, characterize schools fully practicing empowerment among community members. Of course, none of these parties run unstructured, randomly making changes as they please (O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000).

Great schools seek improvement, but they also share successes. U.S. News & World Report (January, 1999) dedicated an entire issue of its nationally known news magazine to highlighting outstanding American schools. Articles suggest ways to make schools great. Utilizing the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, performance devices identified several characteristics responsible for excellence in education. Nevertheless, none of the highlighted schools mentioned networking.

The University of Oklahoma recently pursued a network program, Oklahoma Networks for Excellence in Education (O.N.E.), promoting interaction, collaboration, and learning among schools. The idea behind this movement is to assist in the transition of participating schools from conventional schools to authentic, democratic schools (Conversations, Fall 1997). The stages which characterize this practice include: teaching in isolation, sharing best practices, establishing trust, critiquing struggles and practices, developing authentic practices and relationships, sharing leadership, examining of equity, and intentionally serving other communities.

Networking supplies the tools necessary to facilitate movement from a fragmented isolated approach to a collegial (Glickman, 1993) interaction focusing on the teaching and learning of students. So, planning meetings within the school day among staff, interacting with other schools on an equal basis to discuss concerns, ideas, and even accomplishments, offering staff retreats, peer teaching collaborations (Darling-

Hammond, 1997), and extended time for dialogue are just some examples of the benefits yielded when networking prevails in a democratic school.

The national school–to-work effort created a program identified as High Schools That Work (HSTW). Competitive grants funded nation-wide demonstration sites in 940 schools in 22 states to raise the academic and technical competencies of all students, particularly the career-bound students that are completing a general and career and technology program of study. Overseen by the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technology Education, the main goal is to close the achievement gap in mathematic, science, and reading between students pursuing a career and technology/concentration major and those completing a traditional college preparatory program of study. The challenge is to get 85 percent of the students at participating schools to meet the Southern Regional Board performance goals in reading, mathematics, and science.

HSTW challenges students into a program of study by involving teachers, parents, and community. This reform approach provides a strong foundation for refocusing on the high schools. Key educational practices sought for the program include: (a) higher expectations; (b) access to vocational studies; (c) access to academic studies; (d) a challenging program of study; (e) work-based learning; (f) teachers working together; (g) students actively engaged; (h) guidance with parental involvement; (i) extra help; and (j) keeping score.

The basic intent of the program is to move students from passive learning to active learning; from little effort to much effort; and from getting by to quality work. Teachers are expected to discontinue the traditional secondary practice of teaching in isolation and adopt a cross-curriculum team approach. The evaluation and assessment focus shies away from fixing blame to fixing the system.

President Clinton's, 1997 State of the Union Address stated, "To have the best schools, we must have the best teachers..." The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future under the direction of Linda Darling-Hammond prepared the report,

"Doing What Matters Most: Investing in Quality Teaching" (1997). This report, released in November, 1997, proposes an audacious goal.... By the year 2006, America will provide every student with what should be his/hers educational birthright: access to competent, caring, and quality teaching. Unconventional schools hire teachers that manage learner-centered classrooms, believe in clear shared purpose for all students, acknowledge diversity, incorporate learning modalities, teach for understanding, are sensitive to student ideas and actions, practice active learning, and stimulate higher-order thinking. These schools also pursue goal oriented learning, engage students in collaborative activity, teach young people to think well and independently, encourage problem-solving, believe in alternative assessment - performance assessment and portfolios, develop in-depth understanding, and apply academic learning to important, realistic problems.

President Bush set the White House educational agenda by stating how the federal role in education is not to serve the system but to serve the children. He further proposes four focus areas: increase accountability for student performance, focus on what works, reduce bureaucracy and increase flexibility, and empower parents. His plan supports comprehensive, statewide reading programs. He also proposes a high test-driven system.

Hardy (1999) states that a three-year study on reform is under way. Conducted for the U.S. Department of Education and sponsored by the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE), the interim report alerts educators that some "reconstituted" schools, referring to restructure, demonstrate improvements, however, many others regress or just appear as status quo as before "reconstitution." This pilot study referred to in the aforementioned document simply seeks to explore Oklahoma schools' framework within school reform. Parting from the premise that some modified school changes exist, to what extent can we link the implementation of democratic school practices among Oklahoma school administrators to successful schools?

The scholars, writers, and theorists mentioned above form a coalition of just a few educational leaders advocating change. Whether it is called renewal, paradigm shift, change, or a progressive democratic movement, they all seem to support a common core of beliefs - democratic practices. These are practices that depart from the conventional approaches of teaching and learning. Schools who built upon child-centered ideals practice collaboration as well as collegiality among the staff. Administrators in these schools also engage the entire school community - students, parents, external critical friends, business partners, and community leaders - to participate in voicing educational concerns. Further, these schools tend to practice authentic teaching and learning, advocate active learning, eliminate tracking, and encourage cooperation, group activities, and collaboration while discouraging competition among students. Schools advocating democratic principles also incorporate portfolio assessment instead of the traditional paper-pencil test, discourage top-down management and teaching in isolation while encouraging shared decision-making, decentralization, school choice, flexible scheduling, creative thinking, and common goals, among other issues. Essentially, such schools tend to manifest a strong belief in democratic principles as the basis for school practices.

Democratic Schooling Frameworks Linked to Student Learning

In this section, democratic schooling frameworks linked directly to student learning will be examined. Specific frameworks include: IDEALS (O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000); Conventional to Democratic Schooling Continuum (O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000); Successful High School Restructuring Practices (Lee & Smith, 1994); Democratic Schools Framework (Glickman, 1993); and Authentic Achievement (Newmann, 1996).

IDEALS

After completing a five-year study of restructuring schools striving to become democratic, O'Hair, McLaughlin, and Reitzug (2000) develop the IDEALS democratic

education framework consisting of six core ideals: inquiry, discourse, equity, authenticity, leadership, and service. Each ideal is linked directly to improved student learning through empirical research and practices (Conversations, 1999, 2000). These IDEALS are documented as key components in the movement from conventional to democratic.

The framework of democratic education stem from core IDEALS; inquire, discourse, equity, authenticity, leadership, and service. The IDEALS stand in unison but cannot survive in isolation. Intertwining all six core ideals heightens chances of moving closer towards fostering the collaborative ways of the democratic model. The Oklahoma Networks for Excellence in Education and The Center for School Renewal and Democratic Citizenship dedicated a portion of their newsletters, Conversations (1999, 2000) to expose readers to the six IDEALS. Summary statements highlight what they are all about.

> Inquire – The critical study of our practice by gathering and considering data, new knowledge, and others' perspectives.

Incorporating a new curriculum design, integrating technology into the curriculum, and supplementing teaching approaches with a research-based innovation (i.e., cooperative learning, whole-language, and interdisciplinary instruction) results from schools' self-studies. Nevertheless, Glickman (1993) cautions educators to make distinctions between implementing innovations and assessing students on how well it is used versus the effects and results the innovation may have on student learning.

Noted educators, Michael Fullan (1995) and Carl Glickman (1993, 1998), state that inquiry augments students' chances to learn. Schools constantly asking what decision

is best for students are the decision based on data rather than fads, or stating that teachers must be learning so students can learn, impact student learning.

Discourse – Conversations, discussions, and debates focused on teaching and learning issues.

Central Park East Secondary School (CPESS), an alternative high school enrolling students mostly residing in the neighborhood located in East Harlem, New York, approaches teaching and learning in a very unconventional way. Deborah Meier and Paul Schwarz, school leaders, envisioned learning as personal. No textbooks or standardized tests dictate curriculum taught. Consequently, re-creating the curriculum involved what they refer to as " critical friends." These are external colleagues, or as Newmann and Wehlage calls them, "independent developers" (1995), from universities, New York City staff in traditional schools, state department of education employees, foundation representatives, and outside experts. Together with CRESS staff, these "critical friends" embark in thought-provoking conversations, criticisms, and advice affecting the education structure of the school (Apple & Beane, 1995).

Any opportunity involving teachers in the engagement of professional discussion among themselves, where supportive feedback is obtained, impacts professional growth in addition to improving student achievement (as cited in Conversations, 2000).

Equity – Seeking fair and just practices both within the school and outside the school.

"Customizing teaching to each child's level..." (Darling-Hammond, 1997) best reflects equity and fair practices that transcend cultural uniqueness brought by each

student. In order for equity to exist, teaching must go beyond the dispensing of information. It needs to become more learner centered.

When equity appears to be at the forefront of a school community, student achievement is significantly higher and achievement gains are also distributed more equitably (Lee & Smith, 1994).

Authentic Achievement – Learning that is genuine and connected, rather than something that is fragmented.

Conventional practices seem to support the transmission of isolated facts and skills, while democratic followers connect teaching with in-depth understanding and complex problem solving which carries beyond the classroom and into every day living (Newmann, 1996). When students apply introduced facts to a "real-life" project, authentic learning is activated.

Newmann & Wehlage (1995) and Newmann & Associates (1996) found that when teachers teach authentically, their students learn more. Also, if teachers, " pursue a clear, shared purpose for all students' learning; engage in collaborative activities to achieve that purpose; and take collective responsibility for student learning," students will learn more (Conversations, 2000).

Leadership – The development of shared understanding that lead to a common direction and improve the school experience for all members of the school community (Lambert, 1995).

An ASCD article (Checkley, 2000) eloquently summarized the expectations of a contemporary principal by including a clip from a newspaper that read, "Wanted; exceptional school leader. Must know how to implement change that helps ensure the

academic success of all students. Must be an instructional leader and have the ability to promote teacher growth. Must be dedicated to creating a shared vision of an outstanding school through collaboration with faculty, parents, and community members. Must have strong interpersonal skills, excellent communication skills." However, the keystone that holds an organization together is the development of honesty and integrity among members (Phillips, 1992).

Research sustains (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995), that schools with strong, collaborative principal leaders, who have the support and backing of the entire school community – students, parents, building staff, district personnel, external friends, and citizens, find that student achievement is greater.

Service – The belief that making a difference in the lives of children and families requires serving the needs of the community as well as the school.

Teacher Katy Beck, Hubbard Woods Elementary, and her fourth and fifth graders engaged in a class project due to recent killings in Stockton, California. The letter-writing campaign promoting gun control became an issue of concern for this school community because of an earlier shooting at the school just didn't seem to go away. Despite being a class project, it had real meaning. Students realized that even they could make a difference. Reaching beyond the schoolhouse door connects instruction with the outside world (Wood, 1992).

Researchers (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; Lee & Smith, 1994) found through studies involving over 2,000 schools that students learn more in schools that function as professional communities. "Professional communities are characterized by practices that are grounded in democratic ideals" (Conversations, 2000).

Conventional to Democratic Continuum

School communities should experience progressive stages while transitioning from conventional schooling to a democratic community (O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000). Caution should be taken in that these suggested stages are not the one-and-only tools available to progress towards democratic schooling, but seem to be supported by empirical evidence as representative stages. The stages seem to progress from the conventional stage, to the middle stages - called professional communities, to the latter stages - referred to as democratic communities. Stages drag identifiers as they move from one stage to the other, accumulating all of them in some way or fashion. A clear separation can be made from the professional, middle stage, to the democratic communities' stage; conventional stage begins and ends with number 1, the professional stage moves from stage 2 to 5, and the democratic stage covers 6 through 10. These stages follow in a progressive manner from conventional to democratic:

1. Teaching in isolation,
2. Sharing best practices,
3. Establishing trust and cooperation,
4. Sharing leadership and no critical decisions,
5. Critiquing struggles and practices through critical study,
6. Developing authentic democratic practices,
7. Sharing power, authority, and critical decisions,
8. Moving from individual classroom concerns to collective school identity,
9. Examining and acting on equity issues,
10. Serving other learning communities.

A visual of these stages, broken down by levels, follow. Notice how each of these stages are worded so that schools pursuing the move see them as an ongoing and progressive movement that may even need to regressive in order to go forward.

A vertical continuum of practices moving from top to bottom indicating stages in the move from conventional schooling, through a professional community period, to seeking that ultimate goal of reaching the democratic community stage. Sequence through the continuum model cannot be predicted. Schools begin at different stages, progress further, regress at times, move faster through the continuum, or may just drag at a snails pace. Regardless of the journey, schools must begin somewhere on the continuum. The more stages schools experience, the closer to reaching the democratic community level.

Stages in the Move From Conventional to Democratic

Continuum practices in moving from conventional schooling to democratic community.

Conventional Schooling

* Teaching in isolation and other conventional practices

Professional Community

* Sharing best practices

* Sharing leadership and some decisions

* Establishing trust and cooperation

* Critiquing struggles and practices

Democratic Community

* Developing authentic and democratic practices

* Moving from individual classroom concerns to collective school identity

* Serving other learning communities

* Sharing power authority and critical decisions

* Examining and acting on issues of equity

Lee & Smith's Successful High School Restructuring Practices

Lee & Smith structuring categories (1994) support a correlation between restructuring practices and democratic communities with increased student achievement. Limited research was conducted pertaining to rubrics available that measure stages and practices of democratic schooling. Three studies were found that document stages and practices:

1. A criteria for successful school restructuring developed by the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools under researchers Chubbs and Moe (1990),
2. The National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) presenting compelling evidence that restructuring practices are linked to student achievement (Lee & Smith, 1994),
3. Evidence suggesting that the movement from conventional schooling to professional community to democratic community follows a ten stage continuum of practices (O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000).

The Chubb and Moe criteria appeared consistent with the Lee & Smith findings. Consequently, the NELS study merits the attention due to the more current data. O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug's rubric, even though observed, serve as appropriate measurement for the inquiry into the transition from conventional schooling to democratic community.

The diagram that follows reproduces the frequency of structural practices delineated in the NELS study. The study proposed that a 'communal' model of school structure enhances student achievement. The communal model beliefs match the democratic practice research. The study findings classified school practices into three

categories: traditional, moderate, and restructuring. Schools demonstrating implementation of three or more of the 12 practices listed farther away from the traditional category were defined as restructuring schools. These schools also adopted one or more practices from the traditional and moderate categories. Findings also imply that the number of sample schools in the restructuring category decreased significantly as practice demands increased.

Frequency of Structural Practices in the 820 Secondary Schools Studied, Classified as Traditional, Moderate, and Restructuring

Structural Practice	Probability
Traditional Practices	
Departmentalization with chairs	0.85
Common classes for same curricular track	0.76
Staff development focusing on adolescents	0.66
PTA or PTO	0.64
Parent-teacher conferences each semester	0.64
Focus on critical thinking in curriculum	0.64
Common classes for different curricular tracks	0.62
Increased graduation requirements	0.62
Recognition program for good teaching	0.56
Parents sent information on how to help kids study	0.56
Moderate Practices	
Parent workshops on adolescent problems	0.46
Student satisfaction with courses important	0.42
Strong emphasis on parental involvement	0.38
Strong emphasis on increasing academic requirements	0.35
Student evaluation of course content important	0.35
Outstanding teachers are recognized	0.34

Emphasis on staff stability	0.34
Emphasis on staff development activities	0.32
Restructuring Practices	
Students keep same homeroom throughout HS	0.3
Emphasis on staff solving school problems	0.29
Parents volunteer in the school	0.28
Interdisciplinary teaching teams	0.24
Independent study, English/social studies	0.23
Mixed-ability classes in math/science	0.21
Cooperative learning focus	0.21
Student evaluation of teachers important	0.2
Independent study in math/science	0.18
School-with-in-a-school	0.15
Teacher teams have common planning time	0.11
Flexible time for classes	0.09

Each figure in the "probability" column represents the probability that an average high school (one which reports that it has adopted 11 to 13 of the 30 reform practices listed here) engages in each practice.

Glickman's Democratic Schools Framework

Glickman (1993) raised the most fundamental questions about the purpose of education, the role of schools, and the needed school-based application. He truly believed that the goal of American schools lay in producing citizens for our democracy. Therefore, he reasons, democratic principles need to form the basis for teaching and learning.

Based on his work in the League of Professional Schools, Glickman presents a clear and sound foundation for school renewal. His work identifies a three-dimensional framework of successful schools: covenant, charter, and critical study. These sets of guidelines suggest for schools to pull away from legislative reform, bureaucratic control, standardization of work, and external decisions for improving schools and allowing schools to shift toward a site-based autonomy and responsibility.

Democratic schools have the obligation to the parents, students, teachers, and the rest of the education community to establish clear academic expectations. Glickman suggests "core beliefs" be developed that would hold individual members together in what he refers to as a covenant – a set of beliefs transcending any one person's self-interest. This core of the successful organization can also be called 'a cause beyond one self.' Establishing common principles, the school now counts with a framework for comparing desired learning in principle with current day-to-day practice.

Once the "core beliefs" are agreed upon and a vision, mission, goals, objectives, and/or strategies derived, an understanding of how decisions are to be made for the implementation of teaching and learning need to follow. The guiding rules of governance, better known as a charter, offer a level of participation among the school community membership. To be part of this democratic decision-making process, "sitting at the table," guarantees a voice. Otherwise, non-participation relinquishes your input bestowing authority on those that choose to participate.

Inquiry and discourse permeate in schools were democratic practices exist. If schools use its covenant as boundaries, and the charter as the vehicle that drives decision-making, then a critical-study process should set priorities for future actions. Self-study

raises critical questions about teaching and learning and assesses where the school's greatest priorities lie. Once the information is gathered, making the most out of it becomes the role of the governance body. Studying one's own school involves the participation of all members of the community.

Newmann's Authentic Achievement Model

It is a "current practice and innovation that enhances the intellectual quality of student learning." Authentic teaching emphasizes teaching that requires students to think, to develop in-depth understanding, and to apply academic learning to important, realistic problems." Newmann & Wehlage, 1997). Authentic learning promotes students' cognitive and emotional development, as well as an efficient management of personal affairs. Teachers help students produce authentic performance of high intellectual quality through the construction of knowledge (students who organize information and consider alternatives), discipline inquiry (elaborated communication), and value beyond school (addressing a problem likely to be encountered beyond the school and communicating findings or messages to an audience beyond the classroom).

Construction of Knowledge

"For high-quality achievement, students construction of knowledge must be based on a foundation of prior knowledge." Conventional schools practice teaching and learning activities honed on identification of definitions, searching for details, matching ideas, or simply regurgitating facts. What the curriculum should be encouraging is the cognitive development of the child through original projects challenging the child to apply learned skills. The assimilation of knowledge serves a purpose, but to reproduce

knowledge learned without connecting it to meaningful activities beyond the school life is not authentic in nature.

For instance, Mrs. White, a Science teacher, completed a unit focused on the planets. A conventional assessment activity would be to name the planets in chronological sequence based on distance from the sun. Another activity would require students to name physical characteristics unique to each planet. These activities definitely qualify as conventional in nature. Students just need to reproduce prior taught information without processing it.

Authentic activities demand students to utilize the introduced knowledge and apply it to a specific situation. For example, Mrs. White completes a lesson on the planets. She assesses knowledge by teaming up the students into case study groups. Group number one will create a scaled model of the planets. The task of group two would be to calculate the amount of time a space ship would need to travel from one planet to another by utilizing the new scaled down distances between the planets. And still a third group will take the responsibility of choosing a planet and reproducing its atmosphere by utilizing materials made available by the teacher.

Discipline Inquiry

Disciplined inquiry revolves around three main features: (a) the use of prior knowledge; (b) striving for in-depth understanding rather than superficial awareness; and (c) expressing one's ideas and findings through elaborated communication.

Prior knowledge often accumulates through the introduction of materials in the form of facts, vocabulary, concepts, and theories. When this knowledge is used and applied, the student achieves authentic learning. By contrast, if the goal of the teacher is

to expose the student to content expecting them to accept it, store it, and recognize it on a test, the teacher fails to move the student beyond such knowledge.

Knowledge cannot be superficial. It must penetrate and travel beyond the broadness of a problem. To simply familiarize the student with a topic or provide bits and pieces of it hinders the in-depth understanding. The student benefits from in-depth understanding when the teachings surpass the literacy stage and looks more into relationships among pieces of knowledge constructing a particular problem or issue.

Communicating elaborately elevates the student to scholar-level proficiency. To achieve constructive knowledge, the teacher must raise the level of oral and written sophistication of the student. This language proficiency development requires more than exposing students to item responses limited to one word answers, true or false and multiple choice, as well as filling blanks and writing short answers. It supports complex forms of communication; i.e., essay, expository writing, narrative, etc.

Value Beyond School

What teachers want to move away from is the conventional ways of documenting knowledge via the demonstration of competence or the assessment of knowledge. Conventional practices duplicate look-a-like activities similar to the ones previously discussed in class when testing students. Students react to spelling quizzes, laboratory exercises, and traditional final exams. Authentic achievement takes value when students sketch a drawing applying a technique taught in class, or conversing with a native speaker after a acquiring a foreign language at school for a semester, or even drafting a poem by incorporating a certain poetic style.

Democratic School Practices

The Oklahoma Networks for Excellence in Education (O.N.E.) is a school renewal network founded in 1995 and is a partnership between the University of Oklahoma and 36 elementary, middle, and high schools serving over 25,000 Oklahoma students. Based on the educational renewal knowledge and O.N.E.'s Rubric of High Achieving Schools (O'Hair & Reitzug, 1999), ten practices have been identified in facilitating the movement from conventional schooling to democratic school community. These practices include the following:

- Core learning principles consisting of a shared set of goals, commitments, and practices enacted throughout the school. (Allen, Rogers, Hensley, Glanton, & Livingston, 1999; Glickman, 1993; 1997),

Core learning principles in a school serve as a basis for decision making (i.e., "How does that decision fit with what we believe in?") and give individuals an enhanced sense of purpose. They make individuals part of a bigger cause – of a cause beyond one's self.

- Authentic teaching, learning, and assessment (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; Newmann & Associates, 1996),

Authentic pedagogy is practiced in the school. Students learn best when they are: (a) required to personally construct knowledge about the topics being addressed; (b) engaged in disciplined inquiry to gather more information and data about the topic; and (c) worked on tasks that have some value beyond the lesson and assignment.

- Shared decision-making (Darling-Hammond, 1997; O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000),

Shared decision-making structures are designed to involve teachers, administrators, parents and students in making critical decisions that impact teaching and learning. Decision-making structures emphasize the importance of hearing all voices in the school community and emphasizing decision-making based on critical study and data.

- Teachers collaborate and learn together (Lee & Smith, 1994),

  Teachers form study groups to examine research on successful teaching and learning. They set collective standards based on core learning principles, work to connect the curriculum both internally and externally, examine student work together, and supervise and guide one another.

- Critical study, action research, reflective practice (Glickman, 1993; Allen, Rogers, Hensley, Glanton, & Livingston, 1999),

  Critical Study is the study of practice by considering relevant perspectives, data, and knowledge. It involves asking questions such as:

  - On what basis are we doing what we are doing? What evidence or support do we have to justify our practice? How do we know whether what we are doing is effective?
  - What information, data, knowledge, and perspectives can we gather to assist us in studying our practice?
  - How does what we are doing fit with our values and beliefs as a school?
  - How does what we are doing serve the needs of the diverse individuals and groups who make up our community? Whose interests do our practices serve? Whose interests do they not serve?

The primary purpose of critical study is the improvement of teaching, learning, and school practice in the classrooms and schools that engage in it.

- Supportive principal leadership (O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000; Reitzug, 1994),

  Principal involvement in a school's efforts to become more democratic can range from being actively resistant to actively supportive of democratic efforts.

  Principal resistance involves placing obstacles in the way of teachers attempting to become more democratic (e.g., withholding financial or material support) or simply refusing to engage in certain practices (e.g., sharing decisions).

  Passive forms of principal support consist of neither blocking the efforts of teachers engaged in school renewal work, nor proactively supporting or becoming personally involved in such efforts.

  Active principal support includes regularly publicly and privately communicating support for democratic efforts, personally participating in such efforts, and providing time for discussing the school's movement toward democratic schooling.

- Caring and collective responsibility for students (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995),

  Unlike conventional schools where teachers feel responsible for their students only while the students are in their classrooms, in democratic schools teachers believe they are responsible for all students in the school all the time.

  In schools where collective responsibility for students exists, students feel cared about and important. In schools where collective responsibility for students does not exist, students often feel uncared for and disconnected from teachers.

- Connection to home and community (Cochran & Dean, 1991; Delpit, 1995; Epstein, 1995),

In order to be democratic, a school must connect itself with families and communities in various ways. On one level it should involve families and communities in the work of the school, which is educating students for democratic citizenship. On a second level the school should involve itself in the work of the family and community.

- Concern for equity (Delpit, 1995; Nieto, 1996),

Schools are concerned with issues of equity and justice not only within the school, but also in the local and global communities.

Some equity issues that a school might examine include:

- Why is there a disparity between races in achievement in our school?
- How can we provide less affluent students with equitable access to technology?
- Do our instructional practices legitimate the background and culture of some students at the expense of others?
- How do we group students? How does grouping affect different groups of students?
- How do our classroom (and school) discipline policies and practices affect students from non-dominant cultural groups?
- Do our classroom interactions and language subtly and subconsciously promote socially constructed gender roles and expectations to students?
- Do our shared decision making procedures ensure that the voices of all teachers, parents, and students get heard?

- Access to external expertise (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995).

In democratic schools teachers and others are regularly exposed to ideas and knowledge from sources external to the school. These schools are constantly participating in individual or collective staff development efforts. Ideas and knowledge brought in from external sources are not simply "adopted" and put into practice, but rather are discussed, debated, and subjected to critical study.

The ten practices previously mentioned connect the democratic school framework discussed in this chapter. Therefore, this instrument makes a usable and informative rubric to examine principal practices, obstacles, and action plans. See Appendix D for the rubric form.

Principal's Role in Facilitating the Movement from Conventional to Democratic

It has been previously established that movement from conventional to democratic schooling advocates moving away from imposing a top-down, bureaucratic, hierarchical, fragmented, standardized, and command-control management system (Darling-Hammond, 1997) and supporting shared decision-making, child-centered schools, and decentralization. Schools joining this journey are lead by principals that support three broad types of democratic practices: "expanding the scope of involvement in school decision-making and discourse; focusing attention on connections between beliefs, practices, individuals, and communities; and promoting inquiry around core beliefs" (O'Hair & Reitzug, 1997).

We all know intuitively, and the research on effective schools shows empirically, that quality schools require quality principals. But we also know that schools need leadership, both formal and informal. The school needs a leader who shares the decision-making process and administrative responsibilities among students, parents, staff, and

community; a leader who is based at the school instead of appointed by the district hierarchy (Morefield, 1994).

O'Hair & Reitzug (1997) studied a group of principals progressing into democratic practices. They concluded that identified practices contrast with traditional bureaucratic and hierarchical conceptions of leadership. Rather than limiting decision-making and discourse to the principal, the principal expanded the scope of involvement to include all members of the school community. Secondly, democratic principal practices involve focusing attention on connections between the school's core beliefs, school practices, individuals, and communities. This practice contrasts from the bureaucratic practice were the principal isolates school community members based on their level of influence and power. Finally, democratic principal practices encourage individual as well as collective inquiry, while bureaucratic concepts promote adherence to mandated policy.

Summary of Selected Literature

The literature review compared and contrasted conventional and democratic schooling practices; described the historical view of educational renewal; examined democratic schooling frameworks linked directly to improved student learning; described the democratic schooling practices framework used in this study; and examined the principal's role in facilitating the movement.

Chapter three will address information regarding case study inquiry, which forms the basis for the qualitative paradigm utilized in the study. It also will present an explanation of the population and the sampling selection. Details about the data collection – instrumentation, observation, and document and record review, data analysis,

credibility, and trustworthiness of the findings, as well as triangulation will be discussed. Chapter three will conclude with a summary statement of the chapter's content.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of the study, as presented in Chapter 1, was to examine and document a principal's practices, obstacles, and action plans in facilitating a school's movement from a conventional school to a democratic school community. Specifically, the researcher examined ten documented practices of high achieving schools in hopes to identify examples of how each practice is initiated and sustained in the school, in particular the role of the principal in the process; to discover factors which keep the principal and school from engaging more completely in the practice; and to explain how the principal and the school work to overcome obstacles and develop plans of action.

Chapter 2 detailed supporting literature on bureaucratic and conventional practices, reform efforts, associated research studies, and a more in depth look at the ten practices.

This chapter includes information regarding the case study inquiry that forms the basis for the qualitative paradigm utilized in the study. It also presents an explanation of the population and the sampling selection. Details about the data collection - instrumentation, observation, document and record review, data analysis, as well as credibility and trustworthiness of the findings. Chapter 3 concludes with a summary statement of the chapter's content.

Research Inquiry

Quantitative versus Qualitative Research

Two types of research inquiry prevail, quantitative and qualitative. These types of approaches help individuals to conduct inquiries so they may deliberately collect data for specific purposes. Qualitative inquiry refers to research paradigms that are field-based, non-manipulative, that collect data in the form of words, involves observation, and may even analyze documents (Gredler, 1996), while methods employing statistical calculations seem to better describe a quantitative focus. Qualitative research utilizes empirical practices. It studies qualities or entities and seeks to understand them in a particular context (Langenbach, Vaughn & Aagaard, 1994).

Given the substantive and methodological problems associated with discovering and communicating the perspectives of other people, a qualitative paradigm was best suited to address the problem, purpose, and method for this study. According to Patton (1990):

> Qualitative methods consist of three types of data collection: (a) in depth, open-ended interview; (b) direct observation; and (c) written documents. The data for qualitative analysis typically come from fieldwork... The researcher makes first hand observation of activities and interactions, sometimes engaging personally in those activities as a "participant observer" (p. 10).

Qualitative methods allow the results of the phenomena or event under study to be shaped by the participants rather than the researcher. A significant amount of information can be gained about the event or phenomena, as derived from a small number

of people or cases, without being constrained by predetermined categories (Patton, 1990). Qualitative inquiry allows for the important aspects of the identification process to emerge over the course of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Qualitative research traditions

Creswell (1998) introduces five different qualitative research traditions of inquiry; biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. Each tradition differs in form, terms, and focus. The following quote best resembles each tradition, "a detailed picture of an individual's life forms a biography; a description of the essence of the experience of the phenomenon becomes a phenomenology;

> A theory, often portrayed in a visual model, emerges in grounded theory; a holistic view of a social-cultural group or system results in an ethnography; and an in-depth study of a bounded system or a case (or several cases) becomes a case study" (p. 66).

After careful consideration of each of the aforementioned traditions, their history, variance, procedures involved in conducting a study, and potential challenges, case study theory appeared to be the type of tradition of inquiry that best matched the study. The researcher carried out an in-depth study of one principal in her assigned school building. Specifically, this case study was designed to examine how democratic practices are utilized, how obstacles are addressed, and how action plans are implemented and addressed at the identified school.

Creswell's (1998) definition of the case study strategy includes clear uniqueness bound to case studies. The definition is as follows, "A case study is an exploration of a

"bounded system" or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context."

This intrinsic study used a single, within-sited case (one principal on their assigned campus) with a "bounded system", bounded by time (6 months data collection) and place (a single campus). The researcher utilized multiple sources of information in data collection. Primarily, data was collected from documents and records, interviews, observations, completion of the rubric form, audio-visual material, and field notes as recommended by Yin (1989). The data storing took place in field notes, interview protocol forms, a rubric form developed by the Center for Educational and Community Renewal at The University of Oklahoma, transcriptions, and computer files. The rubric form will be discussed further along in the instrumentation section.

Research that asks questions about "how" and "why" lends itself to case study strategy (Yin, 1984, 1994; Borg & Gall, 1989). Inquiry in such a form results in narrative responses. These narrative responses need verification, which underscore the importance of validity. Stake (1995) recommends the use of another case study component as a tool for extensive verification: triangulation of information.

Case study inquiry was chosen because of the nature of restructuring and democratic school practices. The collection of opinions and viewpoints tend to evolve into theories. Therefore, an inductive approach was considered. Each respondent developed their understanding of the concepts being defined in the study. As data collection and analysis revealed patterns and categories of interest, the investigator gradually became more deductive, centering on clarifying and confirming the information that emerged.

Sampling Selection and the Population

Sampling selection

Any secondary school, which had recently experienced enrollment in a renewal network and was currently engaged in a journey toward a democratic community effort was considered suitable for this study. At the present time, school year 2000-2001, a large suburban school district, which was referred to as Independent School District 212, the Yira Public Schools (pseudonym), was actively involved in a renewal effort sponsored by a comprehensive Institution of Higher Education (IHE). Implementing one of the purposive sampling techniques, convenience, the investigator took advantage of the school district's endorsement of the study and the principal's willingness to be the primary subject of the research and identified Mireya High School, also a pseudonym, as the study site.

Selection of the school site was based on three sampling methods: convenience, typical, and extreme case sampling.

Convenience case sampling facilitated site selection due to the investigator's professional relationship with the school district and the IHE sponsoring institution. Site demographics, data, staff collaboration, and accessibility to sensitive information proved to yield expediency. The second case sampling method applied in the selection of the site was the typical case sampling. The high school was actively engaged in all school renewal activities sponsored by the IHE in a very similar manner as those network member schools throughout the country. Other member sites literally looked up to them for leadership and guidance. Democratic practices at the school and among staff epitomized the school renewal movement at its best.

Extreme case sampling was used in that the district selected was considered to be one of the largest and most diverse schools involved within the network. The school principal and several of the staff participated as presenters in the previous year's IHE Annual State-wide Winter Institute. Finally, during the 1999-2000 school year, the school served as one of three multi-site visit schools. These multi-site visits intended to highlight unique programs, best practices, and showcase collaboration efforts.

When the study sample was selected, purposeful selection of participants was the strategy the investigator used. Miles and Huberman (1994) created the most frequently used strategies in qualitative research for selecting study samples. They referred to these as the Typology of Sampling Strategies in Qualitative Inquiry. The 16 strategies identify the purpose for each sample option. Regardless of the five (5) traditions, all qualitative researchers appear fond of their use. Even though the primary investigator could have considered any one of the strategies, he chose 'maximum variation.' Case study investigators employ 'maximum variation' as a strategy to represent diverse as well as multiple perspectives (Creswell, 1998).

Population

When conducting face-to-face data collection, targeted participants evolved, primarily, from the school's improvement committee. The investigator received feedback from: one central office curriculum coordinator, two parents, one external friend, two administrators, 12 teachers, and three support staff members. Participating teachers were representing a cadre of school communities; i.e., co-curricular and extra-curricular sponsors, department chairs, and unions. A total of 21 school community

members participated in addition, the principal, who contributed information by accepting to be interviewed by the investigator.

The 21 participants were selected based on their tenure with the network, knowledge of the school culture, familiarity with the school district, and connection with the site school. The building principal provided a list of potential participants from which the investigator chose.

See Appendix A for a demographic breakdown of the principal and participants; ethnicity, gender, role, assignment, and tenure with the district.

Data Collection

This section provides an overview of the techniques of data collection used in this inquiry. The researcher analyzed records and documents; conducted a formal interview with the building administrator; aggregated and reported rubric results from data provided by school community members; and reacted to field notes and observation logs gathered through informal conversations and observations. Methods used to record and collect the data included: an audio cassette which taped an interview with the school principal; a rubric and protocol form completed by the principal and the other identified school community participants that measured the level of democratic practice with which the school was involved; handwritten notes in the form of field notes documenting informal observation and conversation with the school staff that corroborated or refuted data collected; and document review forms containing written verification of the participants' perception of the school's practices, obstacles, and action plans.

Towards the completion of the data collection process, concurrent with data analysis, the researcher began focusing more on patterned answers.

There are four basic types of information to collect when choosing qualitative methods in a research study: observation, interviews, documents, and audio-visual materials (Creswell, 1994). Yin (1989) recommends for those researchers interested in pursuing case study to apply multiple forms of data collection. He goes on to recommend six forms: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artifacts.

After looking into all the possibilities for data collection, the researcher opted to incorporate three types of data; interviews, direct observation, and documents. The use of archival records and physical artifacts were ruled out as data collection forms due to the type of information sought by the investigator. Information targeted through the aforementioned forms was not applicable or viable for the study design.

Instrumentation

The investigator requested the school principal as well as the district office permission to carry out the research study. Both the district and the school granted permission to pursue the study. (See Appendices B and C). The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at The University of Oklahoma reviewed and approved the application to perform the study at Mireya High School (pseudonym). (See Appendix D). Finally, the dissertation committee approved the prospectus on November 14, 2000.

The district and respondents were assigned pseudonyms for the case study write-up. Anonymity and confidentiality of the school district in the study and the participant were granted to the best of the investigator's control.

Prior to the interview, each participant was contacted by telephone or in person, briefed on the study, given an opportunity to discuss concerns, and made a verbal

commitment. A consent form was made available to each of the subjects requesting written commitment verification (See Appendix E). The forms was returned and secured in a safe, confidential place. Once the consent form was secured, all participants were gathered in the school's auditorium to complete the protocol form. Having all participants completing the form at once reduced conversations among them thus increasing objectivity and, at the same time, reducing influence and peer pressure. Data collection averaged nearly an hour.

An Interview protocol form containing ten interview questions and probing sub-questions appear in Appendix F. These questions were generated from an instrument piloted through the Center for Educational and Community Renewal at The University of Oklahoma. The instrument is entitled, "Rubric Of High Achieving Schools: Practices, Obstacles, and Action Plans" (See Appendix G). External evaluators working in conjunction with the O.N.E. staff developed the instrument.

The two main consultants identified for the development of the rubric were Dr. Ulrich C. Reitzug and Paul Schwarz. Dr. Reitzug is a professor at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and chair of the Department of Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations. His teaching and scholarly interests are concerned with issues of democratic education, school renewal, inquiry, and educational leadership. Mr. Schwarz is a former Principal-in-Resident with the United States Department of Education and Co-director, with Deborah Meier, of the famous Central Park East Secondary School (CPESS) - an alternative high school out of East Harlem, New York. CPESS has served as a framework for over 100 schools in New York City (Darling-Hammond, 1991). A reliable tracking system verifies that 97.3% of the students that attend this alternative

school graduate from high school and 90% of those graduates attended college (Apple and Beane, 1995).

Not only has the instrument helped to document and to facilitate change at O.N.E. member schools in Oklahoma, but it also served similar purposes with the League Of Professional Schools, a school improvement network consisting of over 100 schools in Georgia.

Once the data were collected, codes and categories began to develop providing the researcher with the opportunity to reduce the volume of the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Huberman & Miles, 1994; Wolcott, 1994b). Hence, time needed with participants decreased. If unclear statements were recorded, follow-up contacts with participants were scheduled. The use of the telephone and fax machine expedited information sought.

Interview

Creswell (1998) best described data collection methodology, "...as a series of interrelated activities aimed at gathering good information to answer emerging research questions." For this study, the researcher adapted the interview format of data collection to gather sought out information as one aspect of data collection. A qualitative, inductive method was proposed for the collection of data.

The difference between qualitative interviewing and quantitative survey interviewing is the simplistic generalization sought by the quantitative researcher versus the capturing of the richness and complexity of the subjects inherent in the qualitative work (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). In order to ensure that the results of the study become deep, detailed, and vivid, Rubin & Rubin suggest that the researcher seek depth (thoughtful answers, develop follow up questions, and plan for clarification sessions.)

Creswell platforms interviewing as a series of steps in a procedure. Seven steps are outlined: (a) Identify interviewees based on one of the purposeful sampling procedures (Miles & Huberman, 1994); (b) Determine what type of interview is practical and will net the most useful information to answer research questions; (c) Whether conducting one-on-one or focus group interviews, he recommends the use of adequate recording procedures; (d) Design an interview protocol form with approximately five open-ended questions; (e) Determine the place for conducting the interview; (f) After arriving at the interview site, obtain consent forms from the interviewees; and (g) During the interview, stick to the questions.

As mentioned in the sampling selection section, the researcher opted to use the "maximum variation" strategy to represent diverse as well as multiple perspectives. The one-on-one interview approach with the principal and the face-to-face data collection with participants matched the researcher's style better than other suggested approaches. It also lends itself to subjective responses. The focus group approach was looked at, however, interaction among participants could have created dominance by some participants hindering participation from others less vocal (Creswell).

The researcher secured adequate recording equipment. Back up recorders were taken. The interview protocol form was available with ten open-ended questions and sub-questions under each primary question to probe a more elaborate answer. Follow-up questions were used, when necessary, to clarify or suggest new lines of inquiry (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Dissertation committee members as well as study site staff screened the protocol form for appropriateness, clarity, readability, and design satisfaction. A private space was requested at the site school to conduct all study business in a confidential

manner. The consent form was developed and was provided to each participant prior to the interview or completion of the rubric form. Once the data collection began, the researcher guided conversations towards the information requested.

Twenty-one school community members participated in the study. The researcher collected information for about five months. Participants averaged no less than one-hour responses to the protocol form, rubric reaction, probing inquiry, and follow-up questioning. The average length of time required more than one contact time with each participant. The investigator recorded answers to the study questions on the proper forms.

Review of the information gathered was made available to the principal and participants. An opportunity to confirm, refute, and/or edit responses took place.

The rubric rating form was expected to be completed on the same day it was made available to the participant. No participants needed extra time to complete the instrument. The rubric form synthesized the participant's perception of school practices, obstacles, and action plans being implemented as well as rated each practice. Placing answers in three categories collected rubric form reactions: support evidence of school practices; list obstacles interfering with engaging in the practices; and describe ways to overcome the obstacles. The principal's interview comments, documents and record analysis, and informal observations and conversation results were categorized in the same manner. This categorization process assisted the investigator in developing a full description of the case when drafting Chapters 4 and 5.

A second shorter exchange occurred for clarification, verification, and the opportunity to delete, expand, or withdraw transcribed script or rubric categorization and

ratings. This process assured both the investigator and the respondent time for reflection. According to Lincoln & Guba (1985), the aim of purposive sampling is "... to maximize information, then sampling is terminated when information is no longer forthcoming from newly sampled units; thus redundancy is the primary criterion."

At the beginning of each interview or rubric rating, the principal or the participants were encouraged to ask questions they might have about the study. After the participants completed the interview or provided their perceptions on each practice, the rubric component of the form was rated. Content became the focus of questions asked and answers obtained. Conversations with the principal were tape recorded to facilitate transcribing into script. A site and subject form collected general information from each participant that was utilized to create a site culture. The form was provided to each participant on the same day the protocol form was completed. Follow-up calls were made to clarify concerns regarding content. Note taking also assisted in supplementing tape-recorded conversations.

Following the first phase of interviews and ratings, follow up sessions were scheduled for clarification and/or greater depth. In the second phase, the participants had more flexibility to go further into details and/or have questions answered which were generated by the interview or perception ratings (Erlandson, et al., 1993).

Observation

Two other data collection sources were utilized. One was centered on site observations. The other source completed the triangulation process by actually reviewing school-originated documents produced in the form of memos, school calendars, bulletins, committee minutes and other sources of communication deemed appropriate from the

school governance party. The investigator, being a former principal, maintained an objective role minimizing subjectivity in the data collected and sought out through observation.

Patton (1990) (as quoted in Moustakas, 1993) summarizes the value of observation research by making 6 general statements. His last concluding statement, however, forms the basis for the use of observation in this study. He asserts, "First hand observation and participation enables the researcher to gather data through direct experience and thus be able to understand and interpret the setting and participants being studied and evaluated."

Observations, superficially performed in this study, provided cultural descriptions (Van Maanen, 1982 as quoted in Moustakas, 1993). Nevertheless, they generated another layer of understanding of the environment in which the participants work and share activities. With this perspective, the investigator had a better perspective of the viewpoint from which the respondent arrived at his/her conclusion.

Non-verbal behaviors became of interest to the investigator as formal and informal interviews were conducted. An observation log recorded entries. Observations included log entries while visiting classrooms, reporting to lunch duty, and attending co- and extra- curricular activities; i.e., staff meetings, parent council gatherings, school social functions, athletic events, and others. The informal observation opportunities increased by spending time with office staff and building administrators. Visual evidence was sought on school property in the form of vision, mission, and goal statement postings, informational bulletin boards, student work, flyers, and displays. These informal observations and conversations served the investigator as confirmation to the

participant's responses or may have created concerns. Observations were used to compare interview responses.

Document and Record Review

The main purpose of the documentation and record review component was to link theory with practice. Lincoln and Guba (1985) (as cited in Teran, 1997) described documentation as "... any written or recorded material other than a record that was not prepared specifically in response to a request from the investigator." They described records as "... any written or recorded statement prepared by or for an individual or organization for the purpose of attesting to an event or providing an accounting ."

All records related to gatherings, informational tools, and communication releases, and data collection instruments were reviewed (See Appendix I). Items processed included: the staff handbook, North Central Association report; the school's last five years report cards; posted policies and procedures, staff as well as committee agendas and minutes; memos; newsletters; surveys; assembly programs; staff-generated items; and HSTW brochure. All information was compiled, aggregated, sorted, and clustered under topics of interest (Colaizzi, 1978). These collections were used to compare or contrast responses shared during data collection activities.

Data Analysis Procedure

Creswell (1998) shares some common features of qualitative analysis agreed upon by seven qualitative authors: Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Huberman & Miles, 1994; Wolcott, 1994b; and Strauss & Corbin, 1998). They recommend a general review of all information by utilizing a note-taking summary on the margin of the data collection instrument. Another significant approach to reducing the amount of data collected is

coding and categorizing of text. The other two techniques suggested include preliminary "counts" of data to determine the frequency of these codes appearance and the researcher relating categories and developing analytic frameworks.

Case study research consists of making a detailed description of the case and its settings (Creswell, 1998). Stake (1995) supports aggregating collected data into categories as the final study analysis is drafted. This categorical aggregation approach, as he refers to it, overlaps into data analysis methods practiced by ethnographers and grounded theory researchers. Strauss & Corbin (1998) discuss a significant process identified as coding used in conceptualizing data, categorizing it, developing categories in terms of their properties and dimensions, and how the three forms of coding - open, axial, and selective, can come together and built substantive level theory (Creswell). The outcome of the study is to generate a theory based on variables or categories from field-based data. Therefore, the investigator applied this coding process to the study. Empirical testing was recommended as further study.

Data collected was broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, and compared for similarities and differences building concepts. Strauss & Corbin (1998) refer to this process as "open coding." These concepts were then grouped using two criteria: concepts similar in nature or related in meaning. The results generated categories. Categories, closely examined, allow for fine discrimination and differentiation among major themes. Utilizing the "axial coding" process, statements about the nature of relationships among categories developed into hypotheses. During the "selective coding" process, developed statements were revised to trim off excess categories as well as to fill in poorly developed ones. This theoretical structure assisted

in the formation of new explanations about the nature of the phenomena studied. (Strauss & Corbin, 1998.

The data collected for this research resulted in written text generated by: (a) transcriptions from the principal's interview; (b) data received from the participants collected on the protocol form;(c) ratings averaged in the rubric form; (d) on site informal observations; and (e) document/record review. As the information was gathered, the investigator categorized the data by clustering it under the three main areas: practices, obstacles, and action plans.

The data collection replicated in the Interview Protocol Form and summarized in the rubric form facilitated the organization of the content by categorizing (Stake, 1995). This process is also known as unitizing - desegregating chunks of information into smaller pieces (Erlandson, et al., 1993).

The researcher anticipated patterns becoming obvious as notes were taken. The patterns were categorized after the unitizing process was completed. Grouping thematic categories for interpretation followed. The raw data was transcribed as close to verbatim as possible. Special attention to the derived transcriptions from the interviews accentuated each and every comment made by the principal. The question of evidentiary adequacy, a term used by Creswell (1998) to submit concerns of the amount of time invested in data gathering and extensiveness of the body of evidenced used as data, played a major role in the research study.

Data consisted of audio-taped conversations and typed pages of notes which documented interview time, follow-up conversations, and even edited script with the research study subjects over a period of a five months. Several subjects opted for faxed

responses. The data was reduced by eliminating duplicated information and clustered into themes. Visual representation in the form of tables displayed appropriate statements as well as other pertinent information. Sorting and comparison played a significant role as the researcher compiled the evidence. A theoretical explanation derived from this process. The investigator presented the theory to study participants for reactions and comments.

Final Description of the Case Study

The investigator implemented a data analysis by applying the recommended dynamic and fluid coding procedure (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). By implementing the open, axial, and selective coding process, data collected will theoretically structure new explanations about the nature of the phenomena studied.

The steps listed below define the data analysis process previously described. See Appendix H for diagram format.

Data Analysis Diagram

Open Coding

** Building Concepts

- Collected data broken down into discrete parts,
- Parts are closely examined for similarities and differences,
- Similarities and differences are grouped within properties.

Axial Coding

* Creating Categories and statements

- Assemble concepts around central phenomenon,
- Explore categorical conditions that influence the phenomena,

- Systematically develop and relate all categories.

Selective Coding

* Integrate the theory

- Organize major categories into explanatory statements of relationships,

- Trim off excess categories,

- Fill in poorly developed categories,

- Present developed theory to study participants for reactions and input,

- Incorporate the participants' input.

(See Appendix H for a Flow chart diagram of data analysis)

Concepts anticipated under the category of practices were: teaching, learning, assessment, and school environment. These same concepts were anticipated to evolve within the obstacles category. Under the action plans category, the investigator foresaw concepts like: using committees, developing strategic planning documents, applying school/district/state policy/procedures/mandates, making autocratic decisions, and implementing research-based information.

Once concepts were identified and categories developed, trimmed and edited, the hypotheses were presented to the participants. Any necessary drafting changes were incorporated. The study then derived some theories. Recommendations for further studies were made.

Credibility/Trustworthiness

Yin (1994) points out that, "People who have been critical of case studies often point to the fact that a case study investigator fails to develop a sufficient operational set of measures and that "subjective" judgment are used to collect the data."

In order to determine construct validity, three tactics were available; gathering multiple sources of evidence, establishing a chain of evidence and having the draft case study report reviewed by key informants (Yin). The case study under research in this thesis incorporated multiple sources of evidence. Interviews, observation, and document review form the triangulation suggested to augment validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Denzin, 1970). All participants had the opportunity to review their corresponding protocol and rubric completed form, the principal's responses, and the aggregated group responses. An audit trail was established in which raw data files, interview transcriptions, record and document review files, field journals, and logs were secured. Finally, a doctoral committee member versed in the methodology and topic study audited the coding, identification and development of categories, and themes.

In the proposed study, credibility was established through the application of triangulation of the data (Patton, 1990 as quoted in Moustakas, 1993). Three sources augmented the trustworthiness: data collection through open-ended interviews, site observations, and document and record review. The Epoche process described by Moustakas (1993) also added credence to this study. He describes the process as,

> ... a transcendental phenomenological approach engaging in disciplined and systematic efforts to set aside prejudgments regarding the phenomenon being investigated in order to launch the study as far as possible free of preconceptions, beliefs, and knowledge of the phenomenon from prior experience and professional study - to be completely open, receptive, and naive in listening to and hearing research

participants describe their experience of the phenomenon being investigated (p.22).

Time was spent in the classroom, sitting in staff meetings, participating in community gatherings, and attending committee meetings sponsored by staff and/or other community members. The investigator searched for concrete examples practiced in the classroom, library, cafeteria, gym, front office, and in the computer lab that embedded design characteristic identified in the interview responses.

To complete triangulation, school documents were revised. Access to school calendars, weekly bulletins, staff memos, and newsletters paved the way to verifying the degree of implementation of the school's practices. Sources that included minutes drafted in committees and staff meetings served as documents to ascertain the magnitude of applicability.

Summary

Case study inquiry was the qualitative methodology used in this study. A large suburban school district, referred to as Yira Independent School District - USD 212, specifically, Mireya High School was selected as the site for this study. Data collection procedures included interviews, observations, and document and record review. The school principal was interviewed. A protocol questionnaire was conducted with 21 school community members. Information gathered pertained to their perception on the effect of restructuring and democratic school practices, obstacles, and action plans and how these impacted their school.

On site observations were conducted during school time and after school hours in co-curricular as well as extra-curricular activities. Interviews were completed, ratings

recorded, and records reviewed and analyzed. Data analysis procedures consisted of transcribing the data, aggregating it, condensing it into significant statements, reducing the data by eliminating duplicated information, and clustering it into themes. Emerging categories from the data collection and analysis will lead the investigator to construct the findings, conclusions, and recommendations that will be stated in Chapter 5.

The results of the study will be presented in the next chapter. A historical view of the school will be presented. Interview information collected, observation data gathered, and document and record review obtained will be the main content of Chapter 4.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings of the Study

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine and document a principal's practices, obstacles, and action plans in facilitating a school's movement from bureaucratic to democratic practices. Specifically, the researcher examined the 10 documented practices previously listed, of high achieving schools in hopes to identify examples of how each practice was initiated and sustained in the school, in particular the role of the principal in the process; discover factors which keep the principal and school from engaging more completely in the practice, and explain how the principal and school work to overcome obstacles and to develop plans of action. This chapter presents a brief profile of the school referred to as Yira Public Schools, Mireya High School, and Ann Toy, principal at Mireya High School. Pseudonyms were used for all study participants, the principal, and locations.

The case study reported the responses of the principal to the interview protocol form questions as well as the ratings given to these questions. The perception of the participants concerning the ten practices and their ratings towards the practices was also recorded. School documents and records were processed through the Document Review Form. Data collected was completed by triangulating information through observations documented in the field notes. A summary of the data collection process completes Chapter 4.

Profiles

Mireya City

Mireya High School's (MHS) student population comes from the City of Mireya and a small portion of Oklahoma City south of Mireya City. The area is predominately a bedroom community providing housing for employees of an Air Force Base, an auto assembly plant, and a variety of other workplaces in the Yira City, Mireya City, and Oklahoma City area.

Developer George Epperly founded Mireya City in 1946 on 160 acres northeast of SE 29th and Dark Lane Road. The original houses were built near SE 29th and Epperly drive. A commercial center at the same location was developed and as the demand for additional housing was met, citizens of the community petitioned for incorporation. Mireya City was incorporated on October 11, 1948. The city was named after Delaphene Epperly, Mr. Epperly's eldest daughter.

The drawing area for MHS is the City of Yira, approximately 7.5 square miles and 2 square miles of Oklahoma City immediately south of Mireya City, south of 44th Street between Later Road and Ant Avenue. The population estimated for Mireya City in 1998 was 23,827. An estimate of the population within two squares south of SE 44th Street is 7,900. The total population base from which the student body is drawn is 31,727.

The ethnic breakdown of the City of the Mireya is: 78% white; 12.2% African American; 3.6% Hispanic American; 2% Asian American; and 4.2% other. Educational attainment for the City of Mireya centers around the following groups: 17.6% 9th-12th grade with no diploma; 33.2% high school graduate; 27% some college; 7% associate

degree; 7% bachelor's degree; and 3% graduate degree. The estimated average household income is $38,402.

The city is largely a blue-collar community with most workers employed in technical, sales, or service pursuits. Educationally, students from MHS engaged in a post-high school education may attend Flower State College for a variety of two-years, technical certificates or for two years of general education in preparation for advanced study at any one of the universities in the OKC area.

Yira Public Schools

MHS is one of 27 school sites within Yira Public Schools (YPS). The district maintains an enrollment of approximately 15,000 students. The students represent all five federally identified racial groups. The Caucasian student body dominates the district's enrollment by averaging close to 64.1%. African American students follow with 24.1%, Native Americans with 5.9%, Hispanics with 3.5%, and Asians with 2.4%. At least half of the students are transported, 45% qualify for free and reduced lunch and breakfast, a fifth of them live with parents or guardians employed by a federally funded agency, 2.2% annually drop out, and 17% carry a gifted designation. Even though 25 languages other than English are spoken in some of these students' homes, a very small percentage (2%) require English as a Second Language courses.

Based on a district fact sheet, YPS employees 1180 certified staff with an average of 13 years of experience and an annual average salary of $32,500 dollars. The support staff is comprised of 628 members. The district supports three high schools (10th through 12th grade), five junior highs (7th through 9th), 17 elementary schools, a vocational school,

one special services center, and an alternative site. The average age of the buildings is 39 years.

The district superintendent is working on her seventh year as the lead administrator. She was an assistant superintendent with this same district for many years prior to her promotion. During the last ten years, the board has lost one member. The only member that has rotated off the board happens to be from the MHS attendance area. Comments made by MHS's principal lead the investigator to conclude that a managerial status quo reigns in the district blocking any drastic change in school administration.

Mireya High School

School Demographics

MHS reflects the ethnic breakdown of the school district. With close to 1400 students and 100 staff members, MHS is the largest high school in the district. The school offers a variety of core courses as well as trades, vocations, and even Military Science through their 15 established departments. The school is recognized throughout the state for its consistent academic awards, strong athletic program, school reform efforts, and its leadership in implementing one of the first block schedules in the state.

School enrollment distributes close to 1400 students in grades tenth, eleventh, and twelfth. Prior to this school year, MHS has enjoyed a steady increase in student population. Due to the devastating tornado that came through last year causing extensive damages to the Mireya City housing community, enrollment saw a significant dive for the 1999-2000 school year. Female students out-numbered male students by 50. The senior class counts with the lowest enrollment while the junior class enrolls the largest.

A large proportion of the student body works on a part-time basis in addition to attending school. Grades, energy, and time for homework often suffer proportionally to the number of hours worked. Parents seem to support the student/worker situation as long as their child is making progress towards graduation. Overall, student attendance averages in the lower nineties. A steady increase in student attendance was affected as a result of the tornado.

Student Data

Dropout rates have remained consistent for the last five years averaging close to 8%. Long-term suspensions have tripled in the last five years from 14 suspensions to 43 suspensions. Short-term suspensions have stayed constant with a little over 200 per year. The in-house suspension numbers vary from year to year without giving a pattern or a trend.

Student academic performance trends look promising. The grade distribution remained fairly consistent over the past five years. Grades are naturally skewed towards the A's and B's because performance is based on course objectives and criteria established within the district's curriculum guides. The high percentage of F's (10%) is due to poor attendance problems with this group of students.

Data collected on ACT scores show a steady increase in the last five years. Scores averaged 20.2 during the 1995-1996 school year and increased to a 20.5 average in 1998-1999. The state's Criterion Reference Tests results targeted to 11th graders only, designed to measure content instruction performance, indicate flat scores in Math (average about 59%), Science (68%), Reading (69%), and Oklahoma History (56%) for the last five years. These scores have been close to the state average. The writing (up to

98% from 94%) and geography (up to 48% from 40%) test results show a steady growth throughout the years the data has been collected. The school's writing average (97%) has beaten the state's average (93%) every single year for the past five years.

Besides these two formal assessment indicators, YPS does not participate in any national norm reference test like the IOWA Test of Basic Skills or the Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT). Juniors are encouraged to participate in the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT). This test basically qualifies students competing for national merit scholar recognition. The Plan Test is administrated to all tenth graders. The Plan is a career assessment test focused on life transition choices. Neither one of these instruments are used to measure achievement at MHS.

The school collects other significant data that reflects student progress. The students' grade point average (GPA) has stayed at a 2.9 GPA average out of a possible 4.0 GPA throughout the last five years. This is considered a "B," the second highest letter grade a student can receive. Advanced placement (AP) test scores resulting in college credits have seen a tremendous increase. In the 1996-1997 school year, three students participated in taking the AP test and only one passed. However, in the 1998-1999 school year, 31 students participated in the AP test and12 students passed. In the 1995-1996 school year, 59% of the student body enrolled in a Vocational-Technical Occupational program. This figure has dwindled down to 39% in the 1998-1999 school year. Lastly, 42% of the student body completed a high school college-bound curriculum in 1995-1996. The school has seen an increase of 18.8%, moving to 60.8% from 42%, , during the 1998-1999 school year.

Networking

Two major reform efforts provide the MHS staff an ongoing self-study mode. Membership in O.N.E. and the acceptance to be a demonstration site with the school-to-work program, High Schools That Work committed the MHS community to the development of long-term systematic change. The binding practices governing these reform efforts provide a solid foundation for education, at all levels and settings, to meet the needs of all students. What these two reform efforts establish is a common dialogue among all active school partners. O.N.E. develops collaboration among the schools in the network so that best practices are shared. High Schools That Work seeks to close achievement gaps in mathematic, science, and reading between students pursuing a career and technology/concentration major.

Ann Toy, Principal

Mrs. Ann Toy has been an educator in Oklahoma for the past 28 years. Twenty of those years have been spent serving the MHS community. By motivating, challenging, encouraging, and promoting excellence among students and faculty, she strives to be effective by making every day count positively. Her effectiveness is based on the belief that, " teaching is the most important profession in the world and that students deserve motivated, knowledgeable, industrious, positive, and pupil-centered educators in their lives."

After eight years of teaching high school English and journalism, Mrs. Toy followed her dreams to become a high school counselor. Her pursuits of a counseling opportunity lead her to MHS 20 years ago. She never left. Her tenure as a counselor at MHS lasted for ten years concluding with a promotion to an assistant principal vacancy

in her building. While serving in this capacity, she was very instrumental in introducing block scheduling to Oklahoma, specifically, to MHS. There was no doubt that Mrs. Toy possessed the instructional leadership and the visionary skills sought in a principal. In 1994, YPS rewarded her by assigning her to lead MHS as the site principal.

During these last seven years, she has left a mark among students, parents, and school community members in the district, state, and nationally. From fulfilling the responsibility of attending a band concert, to rejoicing with a student after receiving the news of being selected as a National Merit Scholar, to spearheading a community drive for victims of a tornado disaster, Mrs. Toy has done it all.

She speaks on how privileged she is to lead a team of visionary teachers who invariably place students and instruction as the top priority in their collective decisions. She believes in collaborative leadership and depends on her entire school staff to contribute their particular strengths to make MHS even stronger. She describes her effectiveness as a school leader by promoting shared goals, carefully planning increments towards achieving those collective goals, and creating a sense of ownership in what the group intends to accomplish.

Placing student success at the top of the school's priority list, she has welcomed two reform efforts into her school: O.N.E. and High Schools That Work. During her tenure as principal, the Oklahoma Human Rights Commission recognized MHS for distinguish service in developing students who value diversity and celebrate unity. Outside the school, hangs a green flag reminding the community that in the building resides at least one student who has been recognized as a National Merit Scholar. This has been the case for the last five years. Also, as an indication of academic success, the

school has received the unique distinction of being awarded four Academic All Starters during the last five years.

A group of faculty members described Mrs. Toy as a leader who strives to maintain an atmosphere of a community. Her primary goal is to keep a safe, pleasant learning environment by practicing high behavioral as well as instructional expectations for all students and to be consistent with discipline strategies. She has motivated the implementation of school-wide goals in the areas of: (a) students' problem-solving skills; (b) improving test-taking skills; (c) increasing vocabulary; (d) teaching and modeling tolerance; (e) building character; and (f) promoting community service. She has created a school that responds to the needs of the community. She is empathetic, accessible, and a great communicator.

Data Sources

The investigator scheduled three formal visits with the school principal, Ann Toy, and many other drop-in visits. The first formal visit convened for the purpose of taping the face-to-face interview. It lasted for one hour and 15 minutes. Once recorded, it was transcribed and presented to the principal for review. This was accomplished during the second visit. The third formal visit brought the investigator and the principal together to discuss the participants' responses to the protocol form questions as well as their reactions to her answers. Feedback was needed on concluding statements regarding the Lee & Smith study and the stages in the continuum as they related to MHS. The investigator faxed Mrs. Toy the information and Mrs. Toy reviewed it for accuracy.

Twenty-one school community members gathered in the school's library to complete the protocol form, the participant information record document, and the consent

form. They were briefed on the intent of the data collection and instructed to complete all information within an hour. Probed questions were provided for any participant in need of clarification on any of the practices. The compiled information was aggregated, sorted, and listed under the three main categories - practices, obstacles, and action plans. This information was taken back to the group for consensus, censorship, and approval. Participants also had the opportunity to look over the principal's responses. The investigator then recorded the participants' reactions to principal responses not mentioned by them.

Record review as well as informal observations followed (See Appendix I and K). School records originating from the principal, staff, and community groups in the form of memos, calendars, reports, bulletins, agendas, and meeting minutes were collected and reviewed by the investigator. Summary statements written on the Document Review Form concluded practices, obstacles, and action plans derived from the documents. These were used to confirm or question the principal and/or participants' responses. Concerns were taken back to the appropriate parties for reactions.

The informal observations occurred at the school from September through January. Even though the informal observations were random in nature, the investigator purposely observed the principal and participants in search for confirmation on previous responses. The investigator attended staff meetings, sat in classrooms, walked the halls, observed at school co- and extra-curricular functions, and hung around the lobby, front office, teacher's lounge, and social areas of the school. All field notes were recorded and kept in a confidential file.

Principal Interview And Her Reaction To The Ten Practices And The Rubric Rating.

A face-to-face interview of approximately one hour and 15 minutes was recorded with the principal. She responded to ten questions linked to the rubric of high achieving schools developed by the Center for Educational and Community Renewal at The University of Oklahoma. Probing questions were made available and were discussed to facilitate the answers and avoid floundering. Once each question was answered, the principal rated the practice by marking one of the following choices: not present, beginning, developed, or well established.

The information that follows reflects answers stated by the principal. The answers were altered to meet grammar and sentence structure. However, the principal approved all statements listed below.

Reaction To The Ten Practices

The principal believes her strengths as an agent of change in moving MHS closer to a democratic school community consist of refining her already successful efforts in Practice 1: Core Learning Principles, Practice 6: Supportive Principal Leadership, and Practice 7: Caring and Collective Responsibility for Students. But equally vital is addressing the areas of weakness defined in Practice 4: Teachers Collaborate and Learn Together, Practice 5: Critical study, and Practice 8: Connection to Home and Community. The four remaining practices – Practice 2: Authentic Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, Practice 3: Shared Decision-Making, Practice 9: Concern for Equity, and Practice 10: Access to External Expertise, even though not considered strengths or weaknesses, become challenge areas. The idea is to avoid regression while promoting forward movement toward the journey.

Strengths

> The Core Learning Principles are visible all over the place. They are written. They are discussed. They are in the NCA report, the teacher handbook, on the classroom walls. But more importantly, they are alive in all we do in this building for the benefit of our kids.

A shared set of goals form the bases of the school's direction. How these principles originated, what school community members participated, and how often they are revised optimizes the level of purpose and determines the level of success. MHS acknowledges these components, and, approaches the challenge by giving every member of the school community an opportunity to voice his/her opinion. The school principal also incorporates researched-based practices when developing the core learning principles. Periodic review completes the cycle process.

At MHS, the principal encourages input through committees, surveys, and forums." We have all sorts of committees. You name one, we have it," acclaimed Mrs. Toy. She likes departments to meet and air concerns through their department heads. Committee appointments are not a practice at MHS. Committee meetings are posted and anyone interested in participating can attend the meetings. Multiple opportunities for input are provided during the school day and after school hours. When asked by the investigator if all school community members take advantage to voice their opinion, Mrs. Toy responded, "The only thing I can do is give them the opportunity. They are the ones that decide to take advantage of it or not."

The MHS core learning principles emulate researched-based practices. The school enjoys membership in two school restructuring efforts: O.N.E. and High Schools

That Work (HSTW). O.N.E. brings together schools seeking to move towards a democratic school community. HSTW clusters a nation-wide clientele in search of molding their preexisting high school into a student-centered, achievement driven institution. These two networks guide membership schools by established practices. Together with the North Central Accreditation visit, MHS has looked at past and present practices, assessed the existing practices impact level, gathered community member input, and created a shared set of goals, commitments, and practices that can be enacted throughout the school.

> I think our teachers feel supported. For one thing, I am very accessible. They know they can come in and talk to me, that I will take it seriously. They know I care what happens to them. And that I care about what they need so they can do a better job.

Supportive principal leadership describes the image Mrs. Toy replicates on a daily basis at MHS. Mrs. Toy likes to make collective decisions. "Sometimes staff and other community members feel I cannot make decisions. That I am afraid to do so just because I inquire about their views and beliefs in joint decisions," (See Blase, Blase, Anderson & Dungam, 1995.)" She feels she is always accessible, visible, and listens well. Mrs. Toy cares about what staff needs, and backs them up when decisions they make are challenged. She delegates responsibility empowering the staff with the authority to enforce the consequences. Discussion groups occur mainly through departments and trust advisories.

The best example observed regarding support from the leader came while waiting to interview Mrs. Toy. A parent demanded to circumvent the assistant principal's

authority by challenging a decision made by him and bringing it directly to Mrs. Toy. Very politely, Mrs. Toy let the parent know that any appeal concerning the student's consequence had to be discussed with the assistant principal and not with her.

The school's letterhead footnotes a phrase that states, "Where children come first." Every decision made at the school revolves around how a specific issue would benefit students. The principal believes that the only way students can be successful at school is by involving all members of the school community. She stated, "Four administrators cannot look out for all students in this building. It takes all of us to do so. And one thing I focus on over and over is being consistent."

MHS implements a program called Teachers As Guides (TAG). All staff members are assigned to a small group of students. They are responsible for their academic, social, and citizenship development. Home contact is expected when concerns surface in one of the aforementioned areas. Parent involvement is not preferred but expected.

Students are also held responsible for their own acts. Several years ago, a volatile incident happened at the school with racial ramifications. Tensions were flaring because a group of students displayed a confederate flag. Tensions escalated into a group fight. Under the school principal's supervision, the administrative staff decided to let the student group leaders themselves talk through the issues and come up with solutions to the problem. Eventually, a resolution was agreed upon. "Moments of tension followed for several weeks," said the principal. "But the kids held their end of the bargain. Maybe, just maybe, we were lucky. We just happened to identify the right kids," remarked Mrs. Toy.

Mrs. Toy believes in celebrating personal accomplishments by scheduling award assemblies and honor banquets. Additionally, she enhances student sensitivity in diversity matters, addresses age-relevant information, and supports academic achievement by planning assemblies, workshops, and study sessions during the school year.

Weaknesses

> We are really trying and we are not doing enough. We have open houses. We have parent-teacher conference days. We have all kinds of activities. We mail a newsletter. We have a school improvement committee that anyone that wants to be on can be on. We have booster clubs that do like 11 different activities. We still don't have enough connection.

MHS struggles with the thought that the school cannot convene a Parent Teacher Student Association. "We have not had one in memory," said Mrs. Toy. " There has never been one and I don't think there is one in any of the other schools." The parents dread to come to school. Ironically, attendance shines for athletic events, award assemblies, and other extra-curricular activities. When parents make visits to the school, the MHS staff treats them with respect. The principal makes every effort to greet them and make them feel welcome. She advocates supporting the district's pledge to contact every parent during the school year. "We don't do enough. I don't. Nobody does."

The connection to the community is better. The city experienced a huge natural disaster a year ago in the form of a tornado. Mrs. Toy inspired her staff and students to support the relief efforts in the community. Additionally, Mrs. Toy makes sure that the

school facilities are made available to the community for meetings and athletic practices. "You do public relations one person at a time."

Mrs. Toy accepts the need to work on being more collaborative. She insists on meeting with departments on their planning time. "I hate to meet in big groups," she admitted. The school convenes staff meetings twice a semester. Staff development meets once in a while by curriculum areas. Central office curriculum coordinators meet with their own subject areas teachers to talk about instruction, best practices, course offerings, and raising test scores. Regularly scheduled meetings of the whole staff are rare and far in between.

The building administrator encourages a few interdisciplinary activities. One of the ideas consists of teachers working together on a vocabulary word of the week. The majority of the teachers work it into their weekly lesson plans regardless of the subject area taught. Another practice that seems successful brings the entire staff to agree on a specific historical period. Once the period is agreed upon, thematic units are developed and presented in each classroom. Two other interdisciplinary activities proven to be of interest are the character trait of the month and the service learning programs.

The principal entices staff to collaborate in goal setting. "One thing that we did as a faculty was picking school goals." The entire faculty participated. All school members had the opportunity to be heard. Discussion garnered a variety of insights. A group consensus reduced goals to a manageable quantity. And the goals were set for the school year.

The school immersed itself in a serious critical study program just recently. Bridging school needs to outcome-based restructuring efforts has been the primary focus

of Mrs. Toy for the last two years. The NCA visit resulted in an in-depth study of every aspect of the school. Results were used to guide the school in determining restructuring focus areas to be addressed with the HSTW school plan. "There are ten practices and we have to make a plan on how we are going to accomplish every one of the practices, added Mrs. Toy. She continued by saying, "It is similar to the goals of O.N.E." Participation in O.N.E. paves the way to the scrutiny of teaching, learning, and assessment practices currently under way at MHS. "Rubbing shoulders with schools thriving to make appropriate changes that would benefit children can only transfer to something positive."

Developed

Four practices remain unmentioned – Practice 2: Authentic Teaching, Learning, and Assessment; Practice 3: Shared Decision-Making; Practice 9: Concern for Equity; and Practice 10: Access to External Expertise. The principal aspires forward movement of these practices, from developed to well-established practices, as HSTW and O.N.E. restructuring efforts fire up the school community members in these areas.

The principal prefaced Practice 2 by stating, " We practice student success." Better academic results were documented at the school when block scheduling was conceptualized. Bell-to-bell teaching revolutionized instructional methodology at MHS. Mrs. Toy stated, "We have 85 minute periods and what we realized is that no one can concentrate on a lecture type of environment for 85 minutes. So, encouragement from her office pushed teachers to change their method of presentation at least three times per period. With the variety of activities came the presentation of the material in different teaching and learning styles. Teachers introduced content by incorporating hands on type of learning demanding more active involvement from the students. The lecture-type

teaching method prevalent with high school students took a turn to more of a group work and pairing up of students. "Just maintain students engaged and you have part of the battle won," she said.

> We have a very important meeting to strategize and allocate the annual budget. All staff is involved. Once the budget is approved, the staff thinks I'm poor and they don't ask me for any more money. What they don't know is that I always hide a little for my special projects. Ha, ha, ha.

Shared decision-making is alive and well at MHS. Mrs. Toy creates all types of forums for school community members to voice their opinions. Every member has the opportunity to exercise the right to speak up. Committees meet periodically. These committee meetings are open membership gatherings. Another forum that characterizes MHS is the small department group meeting. Administrative staff meets with Mrs. Toy almost on a daily basis. Data collected through surveys, questionnaires, inventories, and pre-tests are used to set future school goals. The changes expected in the near future by Mrs. Toy will evolve from critical study data generated by restructuring efforts from HSTW, O.N.E., and studies like the one the investigator is pursuing at this time.

"Our high school really tries," Mrs. Toy asserted. "We make a big deal of multicultural activities. We have an organized multicultural group that is called Unison. With the fact that it is not in the academic and club meeting picture, they really do a good job of blending all the races."

Mrs. Toy mentioned a practice she really looks for when visiting teachers in the classroom; grouping. Grouping students compels them to interact with each other for a common purpose. You may have honor students teamed up with special education

student. You may assign an athlete to work with a gang member. "The beauty of it all," remarked Mrs. Toy, "they are all huddled working on a joint project. That has to be good. That makes them talk to each other in the halls and get to know each other better."

Mrs. Toy usually portrayed an upbeat temperament every time I saw her. But on one occasion, she was excited. She proceeded to tell me how excited she was because a group of 11 teachers from her school were accepted to a summer training sponsored by HSTW. "Once they come back from the training, I'll have 11 fired up teachers," she confirmed with a big smile. This is only one example of so many others referencing the use of external expertise by MHS staff.

Mrs. Toy makes every effort to entice her staff to pursue professional growth activities. She involved the school in membership with O.N.E. She also applied and became a demonstration site for HSTW. The principal uses staff development dollars to access external expertise. She encourages staff to become members of professional organizations in fields of interest. "I heard Ruby Payne, the poverty lady, last summer in a convention I attended," commented Mrs. Toy. "She was great! I sent several of my teachers to listen to her this past Fall."

Table 1 presents the raw data collected from the principal on the study category pertaining to practices.

Table 1

Data Collection - Principal's Practices

Principal's
• Re-evaluate the school's mission statement periodically,

Table 1 (cont.)

- Encourage formation of school committees for purposes of decision-making and/or input; i.e., improvement, steering, school-wide,
- Participation in school committees is voluntary,
- No school committee member is assigned by the principal,
- Input is obtained by utilizing surveys, forums, and/or piloting the practice prior to full implementation,
- Revise practices based on reactions/concerns expressed,
- Give all parties the opportunity for input,
- Bell-to-bell teaching,
- Engage students in active learning,
- Eclectic teaching and learning (T&L) activities,
- T&L activities change periodically to meet students learning styles,
- Apply hands-on learning,
- Identify learning styles,
- Promote group activities in every classroom,
- School committees are composed of parents, teachers, and other school community members,
- Other shared-decision teams include: department chairs, administrative team, school volunteers,
- Teachers work within their department,
- Teachers work with central office curriculum coordinators,
- School staff meet periodically to talk about T&L,

Table 1 (cont.)

- School-wide projects are undertaken; i.e., goal setting; character trait; vocabulary word of the day,
- The principal seeks professional membership in O.N.E. and High Schools That Work -Demonstration Site,
- The principal focuses on staff/professional development,
- The principal likes to make collective decisions, be accessible, listen, work through the department heads, work through trusted advisories, promote open communication, cares for kids, and let teachers and the community have more input,
- Involves all members of the school community in the decision-making process,
- She expects all school staff to be consistent with school policies and go through the correct change procedure when disagreeing with school policy,
- Students and parents are expected to be treated with respect,
- The principal plans for open house, parent-teacher conferences, mails newsletters, and encourages booster clubs,
- Multicultural activities are supported and planned,
- All racial groups are equally acknowledged,
- Group work is expected,
- Students try to solve their own problems with the supervision of the administration,
- Involve parents in all problems,
- Use staff development dollars to access external expertise,

Table 1 (cont.)

- Encourages staff to attend professional meetings and participate in professional organizations,
- The department heads meet each Spring to divide the instructional budget,
- The teachers work through their department heads to request instructional needs,
- The site's staff development plan activities are based on teacher input. These activities address the annual goals set by the building staff,
- The administrative staff meet informally to plan together for implementing school policy consistently,
- Very few staff development meetings are scheduled. Meetings are usually convened during planning periods.

Obstacles

A glimpse of Table 2 highlights obstacles faced by the principal primarily from the practices identified as weak areas in the previous section. Nevertheless, obstacles were also recognized from the developed and strength areas.

The most frustrating obstacle Mrs. Toy agonizes with appears to be the parent involvement piece. "I've tried everything. And I am willing to try whatever you suggest," she whispered. The school plans open houses and parent-teacher conferences before, during, and after school. An evening event was planned once with dismal results.

It was previously mentioned how Mrs. Toy hates to meet in big groups. Practice 4 suffers tremendously due to the lack of support in this area. Teachers meet mainly in department meetings isolating themselves from the rest of the faculty. Input flows

through the department heads as well as trusted advisory groups. Teachers count on department chairs to voice their opinions. Hence, the face-to-face discussion with the principal and other school community members decreases.

Federal, state, local, and school policies hurt the progress of critical study in the schools. MHS is no exception. "We are bound some way by district constraints," affirmed Mrs. Toy. When school staff realizes the importance of making regulatory changes that could benefit the students, they hesitate to pursue them because they know how difficult the struggle will be to get them approved.

A great example of this struggle was experienced when the MHS faculty wanted to add credit requirements to the graduating senior class. The school thought about raising expectations. The faculty voted to increase core courses. The thought behind it was that it would increase ACT scores and graduate more rounded students. District approval was needed. "We can only give our input," remarked Mrs. Toy. "But we are not going to get to decide that. Our teachers are expected to teach whatever is approved."

Other dilemmas this principal confronts on a daily basis include breaking through the comfort zone and teacher attrition. The building's average teacher experience is about 12.5 years. It has been hard to break through conventional ways. Many tenured teachers want to leave things alone. They fear change. However, once these teachers give in, many are lost to retirement, transfers to other schools, and movement destined out of state. New staff would need to be hired, trained, and sold on building beliefs. This takes time. In the meantime, many students suffer. "The cycle never ends," suggested Mrs. Toy.

Comments were made by the principal about her need to be more visible in the classrooms. She feels that many of her hours are invested in building management. She also expressed frustration with staff that act unprofessional. Specifically, she alluded to those teachers that plan lessons on the way to school. Mrs. Toy regrets the time wasted with building staff not enforcing the school practices agreed upon at the beginning of the school year. "This brings inconsistency and confusion among the students. Table 2 reports the exact obstacles mentioned by the principal.

Table 2

Data Collection - Principal's Obstacles

Principal's
• Breaking the conventional, traditional, and/or old ways of doing things,
• Wanting to leave things alone – if it isn't broken, then don't mess with it,
• Staying in the comfort zone,
• Fear of change and what it may bring,
• Losing trained staff,
• Re-training new staff,
• The need of professional time to prepare lesson plans,
• Teachers that make it up as they teach,
• School communities that prefer that someone make the decisions for them,
• School communities that believe that the principal cannot make a decision,
• School communities that want an autocratic way,
• School staff that meet only as departments,
• School communities bound to district constraints,

Table 2 (cont.)

- The principal being too busy to make time to contact staff in the building,
- Working with staff that don't want to accept their responsibilities,
- Applying school policies/practices in a consistent manner,
- No PTSA,
- Involving community,
- Secondary school parents dreading to come to school,
- How to work with student clicks,
- Finding good substitutes,
- Finding dollars for staff development.

Action Plans

Practices have been mentioned, obstacles outlined, and action plans now follow. How does this principal address the obstacles mentioned above? What plan of action drives her strategic planning?

MHS would like to find an answer for augmenting home and community involvement. "This is really a hard one," confirmed Mrs. Toy. She tries to stimulate encouragement to already disappointed staff and tells them not to give up on these most needed partners. The district pledge to contact every parent seems to be a solution. Mrs. Toy wants her staff to take this suggestion further and told them to find something positive to say while they are on the phone with the parents. "We have to treat those people with the utmost respect," stated Mrs. Toy. " Even if their kids are in trouble, we have to think that they are caring parents and that we appreciate that they are there."

MHS doesn't refrain from limiting involvement to parents. All members of the school community are sought as targets. The community utilizes the building for community programs and athletic events. Students reach out to the community while working on service learning projects. School issues are discussed through written and verbal modes during traditional and non-traditional school hours. Committees are formed with school community members' interest in mind. Members pick committees based on the issues at hand and not by appointments from the principal. Even students have the opportunity to voice their opinions through the Student Council and other student-driven school organizations.

To increase the quality of staff and address the issue of buy in, Mrs. Toy vacillates with the idea of assigning two mentor teachers to newly arrived staff. In addition to any college-assigned mentor, MHS supports the partner teacher concept. New building staff receives a department buddy and a staff from a different area of the building. One mentor works on content while the other introduces the staff member to the school's culture.

Observing colleagues is another practice supported by the school administration. It was incorporated into the professional development school goals to assist newly employed staff. "To share best practices as well as experiencing it first hand can do only good for teaching and learning at our school," confirmed Mrs. Toy. She expands the concept by referring teachers to observe neighboring departments. The idea of sharing best practices has impacted staff development workshops scheduled in the building. Master teachers demonstrate lessons in front of the entire staff. Once the lesson is complete, discussions about the presentation are entertained.

Mrs. Toy has worked hard to increase external expertise. Research-based practices infiltrated the building as she took over MHS. To address some of the instructional woes, she bridged the staff to other O.N.E. and HSTW communities. She also sophisticated the level of presenters at staff development workshops performed at the building. Before embracing any concept or program at the school, she makes sure the concepts or programs are researched and/or piloted. Staff development dollars are now being used to send staff to conferences they feel best match the school's focus. "If there are staff members that don't take advantage of conferences or staff development workshops, then they must not want to be progressive," she concluded.

Other actions taken by the principal to address obstacles present at the school were solved or are being solved by empowering members of the school community to take ownership. Even though she confirms being capable of making decisions when they are merited, she tries to let the appropriate parties come up with their own solutions. When teachers want to attend a professional growth activity, she wants them to find their own substitute. Students facing adjustment problems are guided to find a proper solution. Staff members are asked to approach colleagues not following school-approved policies and press on the importance of consistency and being a team player. "It is about ownership," she mentioned. "I'll support their decisions 100%!"

Table 3 details actual principal reactions related to action plans in place or being explored at MHS.

Table 3

Data Collection - Principal's Action Plans

Principal's
• Give school community members the opportunity to be involved,
• Encourage school community members to base their decisions on research,
• Develop "buy in" strategies with school community members,
• Utilize outside expertise and resources in the decision-making process,
• Pilot the practice, if possible, before implementing it at the school,
• Include "brainstorming" as a input strategy with all school members prior to making a decision,
• Match new teachers with strong mentors.
• New teachers need to have two mentors – one from their department and another from across campus,
• Have teachers observe each other,
• Share best practices at faculty meetings,
• The principal will make important decisions when needed,
• The principal will be supportive of decisions made by staff and that she will back them up as well,
• Stimulate interdisciplinary activities among departments,
• Encourage more thematic units,
• Provide the district office with research-based arguments when requesting change,

Table 3 (cont.)

- Make sure that needed staff is supported and visited by the principal and/or assigned mentors as much as possible during the year,
- Have peers and colleagues pressure those staff members not wanting to get "on board" with school-wide decisions,
- Let each staff member enforce school practices,
- Contact every parent during the year,
- Schedule school activities/meetings at convenient times,
- Promote collective learning,
- Let students solve their own problems with the supervision of an adult,
- Have teachers find their own substitutes,
- Encourage professional development throughout the year.

Reaction To The Rubric Rating

Rating her own performance was extremely difficult for Mrs. Toy. The ratings were not considered casually. She thought very hard before answering. The possible choices were: not present; beginning; developed; and well established. Seven practices received the top two democratic ratings. These practices obviously are on the journey path. The remaining three practices that rated beginning still need a shot in the arm. Refer to Table 4 for a breakdown of ratings per practice as designated by the principal.

Table 4

Principal's Ratings

- Practice #1 (Core Learning Principles) – Well established
- Practice #2 (Authentic Teaching, Learning, and Assessment) – Developed
- Practice #3 (Shared Decision-Making) – Developed
- Practice #4 (Teachers Collaborate and Learn Together) – Beginning
- Practice #5 (Critical Study) – Beginning
- Practice #6 (Supportive Principal Leadership) – Developed
- Practice #7 (Caring and Collective Responsibility for Students) – Developed
- Practice #8 (Connection to Home and Community) – Beginning
- Practice #9 (Concern for Equity) – Developed
- Practice #10 (Access to External Friends) – Developed

Participants' Reaction To The Ten Practices And The Rubric Rating

Under a blistery winter snow storm and a crucial district-wide election bond issue day, all identified MHS school community participants demonstrated their high sense of responsibility, dedication, and commitment by being present at the scheduled after school input meeting. All twenty-one participants acknowledged the importance of their voice in this study; hence, they stayed to complete the rubric of high achieving schools form. The rationale by which the investigator opted to bring the participants all at once under the same roof was to decrease influence in answering the questions as well as rating the practices and increase the return rate. The participants took between 45 minutes and an hour to complete all forms. The investigator previewed the participants with general

information about the study, the history concerning the instrument, the definitions for each practice, and the data collection schema.

The information in Table 5 reflects accumulative answers provided by the twenty-one participants. Not all participants commented on each of the practices. The practices not addressed received no ratings. The rating on each practice was averaged based on a simple majority – 50% of the votes plus one.

All comments were recorded on Tables 5 - 7. Underlined items were practices, obstacles, and action plans brought up by the participants and not the principal. The answers were altered to meet grammar and sentence structure. Once all gathered information was compiled, aggregated, and included in the appropriate category, the investigator disseminated the original responses listed on Table 5 - 7 to all the participants. Consensus from the total group was sought on each comment.

The participants' responsibility became very simple. They were to review the aggregated answers, mark the ones they felt were outliers – completely erroneous or extreme, and return to the investigator. The investigator received only 9 returns out of 21, 42.9%. Attempts were made to increase returns to no avail. The investigator even suggested reconvening all participants to discuss the aggregated results and reach consensus among a majority of the participants, however, it never solidified. Participants felt that time invested in the study was plenty.

Table 8 contains extrapolated items from the original aggregated data. Participants returning the aggregated results sheets (9 out 21, 42.9%) reached consensus (almost 100% agreed) on these items and felt the need to eliminate them because the items did not represent majority opinion. Notice that participants disagreed on items just

from the participants' obstacle category. No data was extrapolated from the participants' practice category or the action plan category. Participants made no changes nor disagreed on any of the principal's responses on any three categories.

The investigator encouraged every participant to send in their input, but what the investigator received was 8 returns. The principal informed me that an undetermined amount of participants convened to come up with the comments made. Therefore, the number of returns was hard to estimate. Some participants teamed up to review the responses without wanting to identify themselves. Previous assurances by the investigator guaranteed anonymity. Nevertheless, the investigator concluded through an estimated count that more than half of the participants returned their drafts.

Table 5

Data Collection - Participants' Practices

Participants'
• Shared set of goals are enacted when developing and discussing curriculum guidelines, O.N.E., North Central plan, and in different school committees,
• All school groups are involved in most major decisions,
• Bell-to-bell teaching and on task learning drives the teaching staff,
• Authentic teaching, learning, and assessment is reflected in good test scores, research papers, and field trips,
• The Teachers As Guides (TAG) program assist students to work out real personal problems, apply for jobs, and receive information for college,

Table 5 (cont.)

- The school community is involved in decision-making as reflected in parent participation in field trips, good working relations with local paper, outreach efforts with the Tornado Victim Impact Relief group, and others,
- Mentor teachers assist beginning teachers,
- Nationally certified teachers share best practices with their colleagues,
- Attendance to Advanced Placement workshops help teachers to be exposed to current best practices,
- The school does a great job of serving all students and their interests regardless of cultural and ethnic background,
- The building administrators are wonderful in working with the public and parents,
- Building administrators are very supportive of the staff,
- The school encourages freedom to teach,
- The school encourages a child-centered environment,
- The staff is caring and willing to listen and assist students,
- Students are recognized for their successes,
- Recruiting a diverse administrative team has been positive for the school,
- Administrators meet with staff several times during the year to address school direction and pass on information pertaining to school operations,
- Administrators meet with departments more often than with the total staff,
- Administrators meet one-on-one with teachers to evaluate and gather input,
- Teachers meet as a department, without the building administrators, to support and assist each other,

Table 5 (cont.)

- The school staff is aware of school needs,
- The school implements school-to-work efforts as well as the O.N.E. philosophy,
- Building administrators monitor the halls and are very visible around the school,
- The building administrators encourage outside learning and professional development,
- The staff assists in community projects,
- The staff invites parents to participate in school activities,
- The staff follows rules set by district and state law,
- The school works on interdisciplinary projects; i.e., problem solving, math, vocabulary,
- The staff works in unison on grants,
- The staff is encouraged to be creative with teaching and learning methods,
- The school does a good job of identifying students at risk and in need of financial assistance as well as academic support,
- The school tries to outreach parents by sponsoring parent-teacher nights,
- Equity is addressed by race and gender,
- The school's mission and goals are communicated in writing and expressed orally,
- The school connects students with the workforce through a shadowing program,
- Individualized instruction is performed as much as possible,
- Assessment results are incorporated into the teaching and learning plans,
- Students are introduced to service learning programs,

Table 5 (cont.)

- The school incorporates technology in all subject areas,
- Students are academically challenged,
- Parents have an open door policy,
- The school sends out/seeks out information through the mail, in surveys, and via a newsletter to the parents,
- Staff is always available to visit with parents and students before, during, and after school,
- Student exchange exists,
- Small groups work up problems as they surface,
- Administrators advocate input from the staff,
- The staff involves outside educators in planning, staff development, and implementation of best practices,
- Teachers are constantly seeking new ideas for teaching and learning,
- The school implemented block schedule as an instructional tool,
- Group assignments, questioning techniques, awareness of learning styles, and hands on activities are practiced by teachers,
- The school partners with surrounding businesses for summer internships,
- Teaching includes the responsibility of assisting students be successful in local, state, and national tests,
- The school encourages students to resolve their own problems; i.e., the peer mediation program,
- The school protects learning time,

Table 5 (cont.)

- The school partners with university staff to train student teachers,
- Curriculum and exams are constantly revised,
- Facilities are used by the community.

Table 6

Data Collection - Participants' Obstacles

Participants'

- MHS needs consistency in implementing study hall during the encore period for those students that are failing and/or tardy,
- Family members are not as involved as they need to be in school-related activities dealing with their kid's academic progress,
- Adequate funding for school materials/resources is needed for teachers,
- The school needs additional funding to purchase and upgrade school technology and phones,
- Teachers need to apply learned knowledge beyond the lesson and assignments,
- Teachers need to collaborate more,
- Administrators need to supervise and encourage collaboration among teachers,
- The administration needs to work on tenured teachers resisting change. They complain about the meetings and are not always willing to try what may be new,
- The building administrators are so involved in discipline and attendance that they alienate the staff,

Table 6 (cont.)

- Coaches should participate in all meetings and not be exempt,
- Local, state, and national policies dictate too much and cause interference with site progress,
- There is fear of legal repercussions when dealing with certain aspects of students,
- Community involvement is slim,
- Teachers cannot find qualified substitutes,
- Staff development is not always targeted to the majority of the staff,
- School staff needs time together as a unified group,
- There is a lack of time during the day to comply with all the demands,
- There needs to be more collaboration among staff members,
- Staff lacks understanding of the critical study concept,
- There should be more communication between the staff and the office about discipline matters,
- The staff should have more access to phones so that calls to parents can be made in a timely manner,
- Many family situations are difficult. Students travel from one parent to another making communication from the school to the home virtually impossible,
- Title IX equity issues exist in school sports,
- There seems to be preference for core subject areas over electives,
- The school needs to equally support all areas of intelligence,
- Attending professional development is very hard because there is a limited amount of time,

Table 6 (cont.)

- Sometimes goals become too lengthy,
- The student-teacher ratio needs to be narrowed,
- It is hard to work with students coming from such a diverse background and ability level,
- Some teachers feel unwelcome to join committees,
- There must be more time to breakdown and evaluate data,
- School staff is not motivated enough,
- The school needs more support staff,
- Not all teachers are dedicated,
- The faculty has not established core learning principles,
- Teachers are not given the opportunity for input nor are they encouraged,
- The faculty needs to know the results of things that happen in the building,
- There are too many interruptions during the school day; i.e., assemblies, testing;
- The school could benefit from more volunteers,
- There is apathy among school staff to learn the use and application of technology,
- Student attendance is a big problem,
- Some staff members do not support interdisciplinary activities,
- Counselors should communicate more with the staff regarding students in need of assistance,
- Student academic interest needs a boost,
- Teachers need to move out of their comfort zone,
- Not all students take school-related information home,

Table 6 (cont.)

- Some students come to class unprepared and negative to the class/teacher,
- Parents need to be more educated on information brought home,
- Staff works in isolation.

Table 7

Data Collection - Participants' Action Plans

Participants'

- The school needs to aggressively pursue grants to enhance technology in the school,
- Design instruments that chart improvement,
- Convene staff meetings to share progress,
- The staff needs to be cohesive,
- Tenured teachers need to be better trained on new programs and procedures,
- The school should consider separating the attendance office,
- The school should consider decreasing speakers and increasing staff development days,
- There needs to be a clear set of rules,
- The district needs to let each site manage their own building,
- Each department should send out a newsletter,
- The school needs to continue solving problems one at a time,
- The school should condense building goals,
- Class size needs to be reduced,
- Upcoming meetings agendas should be posted,

Table 7 (cont.)

- Tie core and elective classes together where one supports the other,
- Staff needs to be motivated,
- Consider increasing the technical support,
- The parents need to contact the school more often,
- The building administrators need to encourage more communication among all staff members,
- The administrators need to schedule more decision-making time,
- The principal should share with the faculty books that reinforces the school's focus,
- Teachers need to make a better effort of contacting parents,
- Teachers should consider assigning more homework and shorter lessons,
- Teachers need to do a better job of keeping students on task,
- The school needs to seek ways to get parents involved,
- All teachers need to attend workshop and spend time enhancing their knowledge,
- Senior teachers need to take the initiative and set an example on how to move the school forward,
- All staff should embrace students and know when to discipline,
- Building administrators should make teachers accountable for implementing school practices,
- The school should increase public relation efforts with the school community,
- All teachers should be named to at least one committee,
- Motivate teachers by increasing rewards,
- Encourage the parents to communicate more with their child,

Table 7 (cont.)

- The school should allocate a time where students and teachers address issues other than academics,
- The schools need to continue looking for things that work,
- The administrators need to continue supporting their staff and students,
- The school needs to offer a variety of ways to augment input from community members,
- The school should implement portfolios,
- When mailing surveys to parents, include return stamped envelops,
- The school needs to provide more time for staff to respond, prepare, and share ideas,
- The school needs to include diversity training within the staff development plan,
- The administrators need to be available to assist teachers,
- Staff needs to be reminded of duties in memos and announcements,
- The school needs to consider testing on Saturdays,
- The school needs to cut down on standardized tests the students take,
- The school needs to consider release time to meet and attend staff development

Table 8

Data Collection - Participants' Extrapolated Items

Participants'

- The building administrators are so involved in discipline and attendance that they alienate the staff,

Table 8 (cont.)

- Some teachers feel unwelcome to join committees,
- The faculty has not established core learning principles,
- Teachers are not given the opportunity for input nor are they encouraged,
- Staff works in isolation.

Rubric Rating

Participants submitted their ratings for each practice independently. Once each return was tabulated, the investigator approached both the principal and participants with the results. The principal made no changes. She expressed, "It is nice to know how they perceive the status of these practices at MHS. Who am I to say they are wrong or right. The participants agreed with the averages

Results support 80% (8 out of 10) of the practices were rated in either agreement with the principal's ratings or rated higher than she rated them. Only 20% (2 out of 10) were rated lower than the principal's rating.

Table 9 contains the participants' ratings by practice. The rating choices were: not present, beginning, developed, and well established. The ratings designated in the well established and developed were considered democratic or on the journey path. Beginning averages attached to any of the practices were classified as needing a shot in the arm, but beginning the journey. Those marked not present were considered conventional practices, however, no practice was identified as conventional or with the rating of not present.

Table 9

Participants' Ratings

- Practice #1 (Core Learning Principles) - Developed
- Practice #2 (Authentic Teaching, Learning, and Assessment) - Developed
- Practice #3 (Shared Decision-Making) – Well established
- Practice #4 (Teachers Collaborate and Learn Together) - Developed
- Practice #5 (Critical Study) - Developed
- Practice #6 (Supportive Principal Leadership) – Well Established
- Practice #7 (Caring and Collective Responsibility for Students) - Developed
- Practice #8 (Connection to Home and Community) - Beginning
- Practice #9 (Concern for Equity) - Beginning
- Practice #10 (Access to External Friends) - Developed

Table 10 displays democratic practices found in school-generated documents – teacher/student handbooks, NCA report, student assembly programs, parent/community/teacher agendas, staff-developed correspondence, bulletins, calendars, newsletters, and other communication. Table 11 presents practices observed at the school through classroom visitations, extra and co-curricular activities, and/or informal conversations with school community members. The practices exhibited in Tables 10 and 11 serve as confirmation and verification of previously aggregated information turned in by the principal and participants.

Table 10

Review Of Documents And Records

Records/Documents
• The principal seeks researched-based reform efforts to affiliate with whatever means that would guide her through the restructuring of her school – HSTW & O.N.E.,
• Clear expectations are available in printed documents originated at the principal's office – Teacher Handbook,
• Periodic self-study opportunities for the entire school community exists – NCA, HSTW, & O.N.E.,
• The school maintains achievement records – NCA report,
• The principal involves all community members in the decision making process – NCA report, school improvement committee, surveys, forums,
• Students are the center focus of the school – mission statement & school goals,
• Equity prevails at the school – Multicultural program, award assemblies,
• The principal promotes working in the community – Tornado disaster information,
• The principal is mindful of time-on-task – Activity schedule on assemblies,
• The principal seeks community involvement – assembly sponsors,
• The principal plans the celebration of student success – Annual letter jacket assembly,
• School communication exists from the principal to staff and students – Agendas,

Table 10 (cont.)

- Staff acknowledgements/celebrations are live and well – Welcome back to 2000-2001 school year,
- Establishing direction and expectations – Faculty meeting agendas,
- The principal works independently with school community groups – New Teachers' Agenda, Coaches Agenda, and Student Assembly Agenda,

Table 11

Observations And Field Notes

Observations/Informal Interviews

- The principal delegates authority to other school personnel,
- The principal involves parents in the education of students,
- The principal supervises the school from outside her office,
- The school promotes a student-centered environment,
- The staff has the opportunity to influence funding by participating in budget meetings,
- The school constantly assists the school community in areas of need,
- Students are involved in service learning projects in the community,
- The staff is strongly encouraged to participate in staff development and professional development activities,
- All voices are given the opportunity to be heard,
- The staff is very loyal to the school. They stayed under extreme winter conditions just to complete the study rubric,

Table 11 (cont.)

- It is okay to voice your concerns as a staff member even when it is not a popular view,
- The principal cares for the students. She acknowledges them by name,
- The principal celebrates the students' successes,
- The principal always acknowledges parents and community members,
- Input from the staff is encouraged and respected,
- The school maintains its focus by keeping students on task at all times,
- The majority of the teachers follow building policies and practices,
- Policies are applied equitably and consistently,
- The staff works very well with school administrators,
- Respect among all school community members permeates throughout the building,
- All staff members feel a sense of responsibility to the students, and therefore, monitor the building at all times,
- Students mix and mingle crossing racial and ethnic lines,
- The school staff cares for the students and their personal and academic well being,
- Teachers make themselves available to assist students that are struggling academically.
- The school has two major business contributors: Target and Harvest Bank.

Research Questions

Chapter four has so far presented a broad overview of the principal and participants' responses to the rubric instrument the study utilized for data collection. The investigator now intends to focus these responses by connecting them to the original ten research questions established in chapter one.

The major question to be addressed by this study is what practices, obstacles, and action plans does a principal engage in when facilitating a school's movement from bureaucratic to democratic? In an attempt to collect useful data, the following research questions were developed.

1. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she facilitates the development of core learning principles in the school?
2. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she facilitates authentic teaching, learning, and assessment in the school?
3. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she facilitates shared decision-making in the school?
4. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she facilitates teacher collaboration and learning in the school?
5. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she facilitates critical study, action research, and reflection in the school?
6. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she facilitates supportive principal leadership in the school?

7. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she facilitates the principle of caring and collective responsibility for all students in the school?
8. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal create and encounter as she facilitates close school connections to home and community?
9. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal create and encounter as she facilitates and expands concern for equity in the school?
10. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal create and encounter as she facilitates access to external expertise in the school?

Tables 12 through 21 display practices, obstacles, and action plans related to each of the ten rubrics of high achieving schools. Each table topic relates to one of the ten research questions listed above. The tables contain responses recorded from the principal's interview as well as from the participants' questionnaire. These responses appear under one of the ten practices desegregated by the study's main categories – practices, obstacles, and action plans. A discussion section follows each table.

Table 12

Core Learning Principles

Practices	Obstacles	Action Plans
Principal 1. Present in the NCA report 2. Approved by the steering committee 3. Adapted from HSTW 4. Adapted from O.N.E. 5. Discussed in the improvement committee Participants 1. Adapted from O.N.E. 2. Present in the NCA plan 3. Discussed in other committee meetings 4. Communicated in writing and expressed orally 5. Supported by the staff 6. Implemented in the block schedule as an instructional tool	Principal 1. Eliciting community participation 2. Breaking out of the traditional and conventional ways 3. Fearing change 4. Wanting the principal to make decisions Participants 1. None recorded	Principal 1. Give community members the opportunity for buy-in/discourse 2. Provide input access through multiple forums 3. Seek consensus versus majority vote Participants 1. Condense building goals 2. Search for things that work 3. Extend the time needed to respond, prepare, and share ideas on future school direction activities
Core Learning Principles Rating		
Principal __ Not Present __ Beginning __ Developed _X_ Well-established Participants __ Not Present __ Beginning _X_ Developed __ Well-established		

Discussion

Any successful organization establishes common principles of teaching and learning by agreeing to a set of core beliefs. These beliefs transcend any person in the organization as "a cause beyond one-self." Propelled by Glickman's view, MHS guides its direction under similar practices. The school's core beliefs were looked at carefully during the recent NCA accreditation visit. The school's improvement committee, with the endorsement of the entire school community, approved a four-year plan. Research-based practices grounded the document with practices censored by O.N.E. and HSTW. Periodical revisions, updates, and discussions to these guidelines are expected annually.

MHS's discussion forum asserts the participation of all affected but discourages autonomy of a chosen few. A collegial atmosphere surrounds inquiry as well as discourse on topics related to school issues. Once the principles of learning were agreed upon, student learning centered on an active process, goal-oriented curriculum, cooperative method, and personalized instruction. The administrative staff constantly monitors the progress of the school's covenant.

Both the principal and participants believed the principles behind the school's covenant are well in place. The rating for guideline number one of Glickman's three-dimensional framework, the covenant, was placed somewhere between the upper end of 'developed' and the lower end of 'well established.' Even though the participants rated the practice "developed," no obstacles were recorded.

Table 13

Authentic Teaching, Learning, and Assessment

Practices	Obstacles	Action Plans
Principal 1. Promote active learning 2. Plan on hands-on activities 3. Teach bell-to-bell 4. Change methods of teaching every 15 minutes 5. Assign group activities 6. Assign school-wide interdisciplinary projects	Principal 1. Replacing tenured and experienced teachers that leave 2. Training entry year teachers 3. Working with teachers wanting to continue instruction 4. Applying conventional ways 5. Training and staff development time	Principal 1. Match new teachers with strong mentors 2. Share best practices 3. Focus on formative versus summative evaluation 4. Incorporate peer coaching, peer review, and peer pressure
Participants 1. Teach bell-to-bell 2. Support good test scores, research papers, and field trips 3. Teach creatively 4. Individualize instruction 5. Incorporate assessment results into the daily lesson plans 6. Protect teaching time	Participants 1. Applying learned knowledge that goes beyond the lesson and assignments 2. Narrowing student-teacher ratio 3. Maintaining time-on-task 4. Breaking down and evaluating data 5. Cutting down on interruptions 6. Lacking technology skills	Participants 1. Design instruments that chart improvement 2. Reduce class size 3. Assign more homework and shorter lessons 4. Keep students on task 5. Make teachers accountable for implementing best practices 6. Implement student portfolios 7. Test students on Saturday

7. Practice group assignments, questioning techniques, awareness of learning styles, and hands on activities	7. Moving out of their comfort zone	8. Cut down on standardized testing
Authentic Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Rating		
Principal __ Not Present __ Beginning	_X_ Developed	__ Well-established
Participants __ Not Present __ Beginning	_X_ Developed	__ Well-established

Discussion

Newmann & Wehlage (1995) and Newmann & Associates (1996) found that when teachers teach authentically, their students learn more. Also, if teachers, " pursue a clear, shared purpose for all students' learning; engage in collaborative activities to achieve that purpose; and take collective responsibility for student learning," students will learn more (Conversations, 2000).

When the MHS staff moved to block scheduling, they accomplished two main goals (a) changed the teaching and learning methods, techniques, and approaches the staff utilized in presenting the curriculum and (b) offered a more rigorous curriculum to the student body. With 85 minutes of instruction, MHS teachers incorporated a variety of grouping options. They also changed instruction delivery approximately three times per period. Learning and teaching styles integrated active learning approaches building in visual, auditory, and kinesthetic stimuli.

Mounting pressure from the school community through principal leadership boosts interdisciplinary activities. The principal mentioned the use of thematic units to embrace the interdisciplinary concept. The vocabulary of the week also endorses a school-wide effort for cross-curriculum participation. There was no mention of constructing the curriculum or "value beyond school" (Newmann & Wehlage, 1995).

Authentic Achievement is moving forward at MHS. Insufficient documentation hinders conclusive evidence on teaching and learning activities related to tasks outside school-required work. Nevertheless, a 'developed' rating was obtained for this core ideal. It is interesting to point out how the administration places obstacles in training-related solutions while the participants feel the solution lies on administrative changes.

Table 14

Shared Decision-Making

Practices	Obstacles	Action Plans
Principal 1. Open membership in school committees 2. Multiple forums for input from all community members 3. Receive input through department meetings and administrative team meetings 4. Pilot new practices 5. Adapt research-based practices	Principal 1. Wanting the principal to make a decision 2. Thinking that the principal cannot make a decision 3. Wanting an autocratic way of governance 4. Voicing negative thoughts and creating a hostile environment	Principal 1. Empower decision-making 2. Support decisions made 3. Make decisions when need be 4. Make sure one person/group doesn't monopolize decisions made or school direction 5. Provide the "right" forum for input

6. Give the community members power along with the responsibility Participants 1. Involve all groups in most major decisions 2. Keep staff aware of school needs	Participants 1. Outside sources interfering with school decisions 2. Sharing with the entire staff	Participants 1. Update staff on relevant issues 2. Seek site based management from the central office 3. Post meeting agendas 4. Schedule more decision-making time 5. Name every teacher to a committee
Shared Decision-Making Rating		
Principal __ Not Present __ Beginning	_X_ Developed	__ Well-established
Participants __ Not Present __ Beginning	__ Developed	_X_ Well-established

Discussion

Practice #3, shared decision-making, scored well established on the participants' tally and developed on the principal's ratings. Mrs. Toy dispatches responsibilities and the authority attached to it. She empowers MHS staff to make decisions and she supports

them when they are exercised. These are not just meager classroom decisions, but crucial school decisions as well. The department heads, authorized by their department staff, voice their opinion on how the school's budget should be spent. Members of the school community are influential on setting the teaching and learning methods, approaches, and techniques governing the future of MHS students. The MHS community meets in committees to establish the school's vision, mission, goals, objectives, and strategies. All members have the opportunity to be involved if they so choose.

It is worth mentioning that participants, even when rating this practice as "well-established," were adamant about the need for more communication from administration, additional meeting time as a group, and less interference from the district's central office. The principal believes the solution to obstacles identified in this practice rests upon empowering community members to be more active in decision-making. She also believes this charge can be accomplished by bestowing the necessary authority and support required to carry out the task.

Table 15

Teachers Collaborate and Learn Together

Practices	Obstacles	Action Plans
Principal 1. Work by departments 2. Share best practices at school meetings 3. Select research-based practices; i.e., HSTW and O.N.E. 4. Encourage peer coaching	Principal 1. Meeting in departments – isolates teachers 2. Teaching in isolation – a negative high school practice 3. Dictating top-down instructional approaches from the central office	Principal 1. Create additional interdisciplinary activities 2. Encourage thematic units 3. Have teachers present best practices more often at faculty meetings

5. Implement school-wide interdisciplinary projects 6. Attend professional development activities Participants 1. Mentor teachers assist beginning teachers 2. Share best practices 3. Attend workshops that enhance their teaching assignment 4. Meet periodically as a staff	Participants 1. Being consistent on policy implementation 2. Expecting all staff to participate in meetings 3. Collaborating and communicating among staff 4. Boosting motivation among staff 5. Working in isolation	Participants 1. Have senior teachers take the lead in resolving some school challenges
Teachers Collaborate and Learn Together Rating		
Principal __ Not Present _X_ Beginning Participants __ Not Present __ Beginning	__ Developed _X_ Developed	__ Well-established __ Well-established

Discussion

Mrs. Toy revealed that many conventional practices prevalent in high schools across the United States also affect MHS. Lee & Smith (1994) associated large high schools, fragmented faculties, and emphasis on specialization as just a few of the characteristics customary to bureaucratic schools. Mrs. Toy has no control over the

amount of students enrolled in her school. However, she did confess her preference of meeting with school staff by departments instead of across curriculum areas. This practice definitely supports conventional ways by not only encouraging planning in isolation but also by making it more difficult to plan across disciplines.

Curiously enough, Mrs. Toy spoke to the investigator regarding practices currently being implementing at MHS supporting communal schools – practices countering the problem of bureaucracy (Lee & Smith, 1994). She mentioned her mentoring philosophy and how it matches new school staff with teachers from unrelated departments. Additionally, she stated how she pushed for the adoption of interdisciplinary thematic units and the vocabulary word of the week program. During the few group meetings and staff development workshop planned, she encouraged master teachers to share best practices to the full staff. The school's participation in O.N.E. and in HSTW surely contradicts keeping her staff in isolation.

The principal's endorsement to meet by departments to address curriculum and staff matters was construed by the participants as contributing to teaching in isolation. The staff meets consistently to address school policy as they also do to make school decisions. But what the study reveals is that sharing best practices, collaborating on instructional activities, and learning together as a staff can really use a boost.

The principal rated herself 'beginning.' In the mean time, participants agreed on a 'developed' rating. Glickman (1993) makes reference to this same thought process. School staff rush in the arrival of the journey. Principals, on the other hand, believe the process is ongoing and usually needs more development.

Table 16

Critical Study

Practices	Obstacles	Action Plans
Principal 1. Participate in the NCA steering committee 2. Make enrollment in HSTW and O.N.E. 3. Request information through multiple forums Participants 1. Revise curriculum and criterion reference exams 2. Implement school-to-work efforts as well as the O.N.E. philosophy	Principal 1. Complying with district constraints Participants 1. Lacking understanding of the critical study concept	Principal 1. Create credibility between the central office and school community 2. Provide the central office with research-based arguments to support change Participants 1. None recorded

Critical Study Rating		
Principal __ Not Present _X_ Beginning	__ Developed	__ Well-established
Participants __ Not Present __ Beginning	_X_ Developed	__ Well-established

Discussion

MHS has begun setting priorities at the school on the basis of self-study. With the NCA total school-wide study, the HSTW commitment to their ten practices, and by embracing the O.N.E. IDEALS, the school improvement committee created a standard

picture of the school, compiled data to serve as the basis for future discussion, and projected the school's direction.

Ongoing information travels to and from the school infusing outside influence. Mrs. Toy releases staff to attend professional growth activities outside the school, the district, and the state. She has just booked 11 of her staff to participate in the summer institute sponsored by HSTW. Many of the MHS staff share best practices with other O.N.E. members by attending on-site visits, presenting at the annual winter institute, and hosting school visits. Accessing information also takes place via invited credible guest speakers, discussion groups, and conference reports.

Guideline number three scored a little lower than the other three-dimensional framework guidelines. Study subjects agreed upon an upper end 'beginning' to a lower end 'developed' rating. By the lack of comments on the obstacles and action plans categories on Table 16 for both the principal and the participants, it is my conclusion that further work is needed with this school community to acquaint them with ways to address the practice. They recognize a problem exists, nevertheless, they don't know how to solve it.

Table 17

Supportive Principal Leadership

Practices	Obstacles	Action Plans
Principal 1. Encourages collective decision-making 2. Likes to make joint decisions	Principal 1. Juggling time 2. Making personal contact with community members often	Principal 1. Prioritize visits with community members by need 2. Voice publicly and privately support to community members

3. Listens 4. Is Accessible 5. Likes to work through department heads 6. Likes to work through trusted advisories 7. Stimulates school community input 8. Cares 9. Establishes an open communication policy		3. Designate school staff, administrators/mentors, to be seen as an extension of the principal's office for support purposes
Participants 1. Supports school staff 2. Monitors the halls and is very visible around the school	Participants 1. Supporting staff with materials, resources, and equipment 2. Advocating collaboration and unity among staff	Participants 1. Work on staff cohesiveness 2. Increase technical support

Supportive Principal Leadership Rating		
Principal __ Not Present __ Beginning	_X_Developed	__ Well-established
Participants __ Not Present __ Beginning	__ Developed	_X_ Well-established

Discussion

It has been previously established that movement from conventional to democratic schooling advocates moving away from imposing a top-down, bureaucratic, hierarchical, fragmented, standardized, and command-control management system (Darling-Hammond, 1997) to supporting shared decision-making, child-centered schools, and decentralization. Schools joining this journey are lead by principals that support three broad types of democratic practices: "expanding the scope of involvement in school decision-making and discourse; focusing attention on connections between beliefs, practices, individuals, and communities; and promoting inquiry around core beliefs" (O'Hair & Reitzug, 1997).

Lambert (1995) argues that leadership is the development of shared understanding that leads to a common direction and improves the school experience for all members of the school community. Shared understanding permeates in all activities at MHS. Thanks to the leadership role Mrs. Toy plays at MHS, the school community has a sense of direction. The participants' rating of well established and the principal's rating of developed for practice #3 – shared decision-making, backs this assertion.

Under Mrs. Toy's leadership, she has instituted two major reform efforts on school restructuring. These will prove beneficial as time goes on. She facilitates the opportunity for all school community members to participate at the level of involvement that best fits their style. She puts leadership in the background where it belongs (Block, 1996) by letting each member of the school community play his/her role. The community trusts and respects her, a sign of great leadership (Phillips, 1992). Trust was apparent when many expressed their feelings of wanting her to make decisions for them

at different times. Respect was obvious when 100% of the participant stayed after school to complete the rubric form even when the weather was inclement.

Leadership is truly active at MHS. This might be the strongest implemented practice in the building definitely attributed to efforts set forth by the principal. Ratings may vary from the upper end of 'developed' to the lower end of 'well established.'

Table 18

Caring and Collective Responsibility for Students

Practices	Obstacles	Action Plans
Principal 1. Empower all community members in the process 2. Treat all students with respect 3. Implement school rules, policies, and procedures consistently	Principal 1. Ignoring assigned roles 2. Applying consistently school rules, policies, and procedures	Principal 1. Let peers approach the violators 2. Empower and support staff once decisions have been made
Participants 1. Implement the Teachers As Guides (TAG) program 2. Serve all students regardless of cultural background 3. Promote a child-centered environment 4. Recognize student successes	Participants 1. Focusing efforts on involving parents in their students' academic, social, and personal life 2. Focusing on student attendance and academics need to be a priority	Participants 1. Embrace students and know when to discipline 2. Allocate time for staff-student interaction

5. Identify students that are at risk, in need of financial assistance, and academically challenged 6. Connect students to apprentice programs		
Caring and Collective Responsibility for Students Rating		
Principal __ Not Present __ Beginning	_X_ Developed	__ Well-established
Participants __ Not Present __ Beginning	_X_ Developed	__ Well-established

Discussion

Caring and collective responsibility for students and their learning becomes a little more complicated than, " building procedural rules and processes, school-wide disciplinary codes, detention policies, filling out forms and checklists, scheduling, etc.... (Meier, 1995). The so often quoted African proverb, "It takes a whole village to raise a child," better describes the target. Newmann and Wehlage (1995) designed the 'solution' to student learning by introducing the circles of support. Glickman (1993) expanded the Newmann and Wehlage's 'solution' by hinting that schools striving to better educate students move away from hierarchical status placing all members of the school community at the same level playing field.

The MHS community seems to feel in route towards a 'well-established' rating. There is no doubt the focus placed on students and the responsibility each and every

person affiliated to MHS has on the total development of the child. The principal and the participants admitted how this practice may be viewed as the strongest attribute toward a student-centered institution anyone can attest to. The primary action plans accentuate the need for increased staff ownership and quality time with the students.

Table 19

Connection to Home and Community

Practices	Obstacles	Action Plans
Principal	Principal	Principal
1. Plan open house	1. Creating a PTSA	1. Work on one parent at a time
2. Plan parent-teacher conferences	2. Increasing parents involvement	2. Embrace the district's concept regarding the contact of all parents on a yearly basis
3. Mail newsletters, bulletins, and surveys	3. Increasing community involvement	3. Plan school activities on non-traditional times
4. Treat parents with respect		
5. Form booster clubs		
6. Invite community members to participate in school committees		
Participants	Participants	Participants
1. Create service learning projects – Tornado Relief Group	1. Accessing phones to communicate with parents	1. Encourage the mailing of newsletters by department
2. Invite the community to all activities	2. Increasing efforts to communicate with the home	2. Make a better effort of contacting parents
3. Sponsor parent-teacher nights at school		3. Increase public relations efforts
4. Promote an open door policy for parents/community		4. Stimulate parenting skill

5. Seek out parent/community input through multiple sources 6. Partner with surrounding businesses for summer internships 7. Let the community utilize school facilities		5. Increase input strategies 6. Include return-stamped envelopes with school mail-outs
Connection to Home and Community Rating		
Principal __ Not Present _X_ Beginning	__ Developed	__ Well-established
Participants __ Not Present _X_ Beginning	__ Developed	__ Well-established

Discussion

School connections to families and the community deepen relationships that support the development of children. Not only do the connections enable child development in social, psychological, emotional, moral, linguistic, and cognitive areas, but they also enhance attitudes, values, and behaviors. Partnerships between home and school minimize disjuncture and development gaps that usually lead to failure at school. Establishing common grounds that bridge differences and create mutually supportive practices augment successful results with the students (Darling-Hammond, 1997).

Many schools mirror home-school-community practices after the belief that if parents/community members are represented on decision-making committees and involved in setting school direction positive results will yield automatically. MHS is no exception. Activities detailed above give proof to efforts maintaining this concept. The

school has moved from expecting parents/community members to engage in conventional ways; i.e., making copies, manning the concession stands, and accompanying teachers to fieldtrips. Nevertheless, rating results from both the principal and the participants, 'beginning,' as well as action plans proposed on Table 19 clearly indicate the struggle faced by school leaders to address this practice.

What Darling-Hammond (1997) recommends is a closer connection to the learning process. All parties must understand the intricacies of classroom work. The center of conversations needs to revolve around students and their work.

Table 20

Concern for Equity

Practices	Obstacles	Action Plans
Principal	Principal	Principal
1. Support and plan multicultural activities	1. Understanding student clicks and their cultural beliefs	1. Advocate for collective learning
2. Promote group work in the classroom	2. Dealing with the challenges brought by these clicks	2. Recommend an open forum for students
3. Let students solve their own problems		
4. Involve all parents		
Participants	Participants	Participants
1. Recruiting a diverse administrative team has been positive	1. Addressing Title IX equity issues that exist in school sports	1. Tie core and elective classes together where one supports the other
2. Address equity by race and gender	2. Equalizing funding and prestige between core subject areas and electives	2. Include diversity training in the school's staff development plan
	3. Supporting all areas of intelligence	

Concern for Equity Rating		
Principal		
__ Not Present __ Beginning	_X_ Developed	__ Well-established
Participants		
__ Not Present _X_ Beginning	__ Developed	__ Well-established

Discussion

Students bring from home a diversity of cultures and experiences which schools should utilize to enrich their curriculum. When the diversity value is tarnished due to the belief of a culture group being more superior than others, the so called superior group acts in a ethnocentric manner (O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000). Democratic schools "honor multiple cultures and provide equality of educational opportunity for all students." (Banks, 1994).

MHS strives to emulate the principal behind the core ideal of equity. Seeking fair and just practices both within the school and outside the school describes the school's goal. There is equity in funding all programs at MHS. School funding is an open discussion involving all members affected. The increased opportunity for all students to access post -secondary education moving away from the former emphasis on tracking demonstrates commitment to all students. Diversity issues are addressed by sensitizing the student body through cultural assemblies.

An equity issue the school continues to struggle with includes the hiring of staff representative of the student body. The other two main equity concerns are in

achievement gaps and leadership roles. Even though an in-depth study of student test scores and grades was not completed, empirical evidence supports a racial imbalance in student achievement. Leadership roles at the school tend to be skewed favoring the female staff.

The core ideal concerning equity may be the weakest area in the school. Nevertheless, the investigator sees it as an active forward movement. Taking under consideration the principal and participants' ratings, the ideal was scored low by both parties - in the lower level of the 'developed' category by the principal and 'beginning' by the participants.

Table 21

Access to External Expertise

Practices	Obstacles	Action Plans
Principal	Principal	Principal
1. Use staff development dollars to access external expertise	1. Finding qualified substitutes	1. Require teachers to find their own substitutes
2. Seek membership in HSTW and O.N.E.	2. Supplementing school funding	
3. Encourage membership in professional organizations		
4. Send teachers to conferences		
Participants	Participants	Participants
1. Encourage outside learning	1. Finding quality substitutes	1. Pursue grants
2. Assist in the school's staff development plan	2. Targeting staff development activities to the majority of the staff	2. Train teachers on best practices

3. Assist in training student teachers	3. Accessing more volunteers	3. Consider release time to attend staff development workshop
Access to External Expertise Rating		
Principal __ Not Present __ Beginning	_X_ Developed	__ Well-established
Participants __ Not Present __ Beginning	_X_ Developed	__ Well-established

Discussion

Schools in search of promoting student learning at a high intellectual quality need external support from beyond the school walls (Newmann & Wehlage, 1997). External agents, as Newmann & Wehlage refer to them, consist of state legislatures, district staff, universities, unions, professional organizations, foundations, courts, parents, and the federal government. These agents impact educational reform through four strategies: standard setting, staff development, deregulation, and support from parents. MHS addresses standard setting and staff development at a 'developed' rating, but stumbles through the strategies of deregulation and support from parents at a 'beginning' level.

High standards for student learning form the basis of a successful school-restructuring program at MHS. The identification, screening, and adopting of school-wide educational standards becomes a community affair. Research-based standards were influenced by professional organization such as O.N.E. and HSTW, and by management strategies brought about in block scheduling.

Professional development offered sustainability to school staff in areas related to teaching and learning. Staff participation in local, state, and national workshops document exposure to an array of external views resulting in the immersion of a significant school contingency in continuous and coordinated programs. The fragmentation of other staff remains a challenge. Logistics on how to cover colleagues that leave for training as well as to defray certain activity expenses need attention.

Comments from both the principal and study participants on the lack of parent support and issues with top down mandates affecting deregulation lead the investigator to understand the low rating these strategies received – 'beginning.' Even though future school effectiveness on high standards cannot assure the school progress or power by merely upgrading these two strategies, augmenting the quality may elevate the odds of reaching the expectations.

Summary

Chapter Four presented information gathered through the four data collection sources: (a) interview; (b) observation; (c) document and record review; and (d) field notes. Profile information on the referred Yira Public Schools, Mireya High School, and Ann Toy, principal was also included. All data collected was classified into three main categories: practices, obstacles, and action plans. The chapter ends by clustering all data collected under the corresponding study question. Chapter Five will summarize the data collected. Conclusions, recommendations, and implications for future research, practices, and principal preparation programs will complete study remarks.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Overview

This chapter presents a review of the study and a summary of the major findings. Next, the conclusions derived from the study are presented followed by recommendations for further research.

Review of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine and document a principal's practices, obstacles, and action plans in facilitating a school's movement from a conventional school to a democratic school community. Specifically, the researcher examined the 10 documented practices previously listed of high achieving schools in hopes to identify examples of how each practice was initiated and was sustained in the school, in particular the role of the principal in the process; discovered factors which kept the principal and school from engaging more completely in the practice; and explained how the principal and school worked to overcome obstacles and to develop plans of action. While efforts to create democratic school communities are collaborative and inclusive, the discussion of the findings, conclusions, implications, and recommendations in this chapter focused on the principal's role as facilitator of the movement.

Specific Research Questions

The major question addressed in this study was, what practices, obstacles, and action plans does a principal engage in when facilitating a school's movement from

bureaucratic to democratic? In an attempt to collect useful data, the following research questions were developed and asked to the principal and the participants:

1. What practices, obstacles, and action plan does the principal encounter as she facilitates the development of core learning principles in the school?
2. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she facilitates authentic teaching, learning, and assessment in the school?
3. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she facilitates shared decision-making in the school?
4. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she facilitates teacher collaboration and learning in the school?
5. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she facilitates critical study, action research, and reflection in the school?
6. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she facilitates supportive principal leadership in the school?
7. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she facilitates the principle of caring and collective responsibility for all students in the school?
8. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal create and encounter as she facilitates close school connections to home and community?
9. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal create and encounter as she facilitates and expands concern for equity in the school?
10. What practices, obstacle, and action plans does the principal create and encounter as she facilitates access to external expertise in the school?

While these were not intended to exhaust all existing practices, these were the ones the study planned to focus on.

Methodology

Qualitative case study inquiry was used to address the study's questions. The case study used a single, within-sited case (one principal on their assigned campus) with a bounded system – bounded by time (6 months of data collection) and place (a single school campus). Triangulation of data from interviews, observations, document and record review, and field notes, combined with information from the literature review was used to increase the probability of objective conclusions as they emerged from the aforementioned sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Selection of the school site was based on three sampling methods: convenience, typical, and extreme case sampling. The population of this study consisted of a public school principal employed with the Yira Public Schools (pseudonym) and assigned to Mireya High School (pseudonym). Twenty school community members also participated in the study. Participants included parents, administrative staff, teachers, support staff, external friends, and a central office representative.

The study instrument used contained ten interview questions and probing sub-questions. These questions were generated from an instrument piloted through the Center for Educational and Community Renewal at The University of Oklahoma. The instrument is entitled, "Rubric Of High Achieving Schools: Practices, Obstacles, and Action Plans." External evaluators working in conjunction with the O.N.E. staff developed the instrument. Not only has the instrument helped to document and to facilitate change at O.N.E. member schools in Oklahoma, but also it served similar

purposes with the League Of Professional Schools, a school improvement network consisting of over 100 schools in Georgia.

Data collected were analyzed by applying the recommended dynamic and fluid coding procedure (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). By implementing the open, axial, and selective coding procedure, the investigator processed the data from raw statements to developed theories. The principal and participants' statements were aggregated into concepts. The concepts were grouped into categories and presented to the principal and the participants for review of accuracy, agreement, and approval. Once a consensus was reached, the categories were organized into statements. These statements were then compared to the literature review in Chapter 2 and developed into theory. The investigator maintained an audit trail of collected data during the course of the study.

Summary

Practices

The principal believes her strengths as an agent of change in moving MHS closer to a democratic school community consist of refining her already successful efforts in Practice 1: Core Learning Principles, Practice 6: Supportive Principal Leadership, and Practice 7: Caring and Collective Responsibility for Students. But equally vital is addressing the areas of weakness defined in Practice 4: Teachers Collaborate and Learn Together, Practice 5: Critical study, and Practice 8: Connection to Home and Community. The four remaining practices – Practice 2: Authentic Teaching, Learning, and Assessment, Practice 3: Shared Decision-Making, Practice 9: Concern for Equity, and Practice 10: Access to External Expertise, are not considered strengths or

weaknesses, but challenge areas. The idea is to avoid regression while promoting forward movement toward the journey.

Strengths

> "The Core Learning Principles are visible all over the place. They are written. They are discussed. They are in the NCA report, the teacher handbook, on the classroom walls. But more importantly, they are alive in all we do in this building for the benefit of our kids."

A shared set of goals form the bases of the school's direction. How these principles originated, what school community members participated, and how often they are revised optimizes the level of purpose and determines the level of success. MHS acknowledges these components and approaches the challenge by giving every member of the school community an opportunity to voice their opinion. The school principal also incorporates research-based practices when developing the core learning principles. Periodic review completes the cycle process.

Weaknesses

> "We are really trying and we are not doing enough. We have open houses. We have parent-teacher conference days. We have all kinds of activities. We mail a newsletter. We have a school improvement committee that anyone that wants to be on can be on. We have booster clubs that do like 11 different activities. We still don't have enough connection."

MHS struggles with the thought that the school cannot convene a Parent Teacher Student Association. "We have not had one in memory," said Mrs. Toy. " There has never been one and I don't think there is one in none of the other schools." The parents dread to come to school. Ironically, attendance shines for athletic events, award assemblies, and other extra-curricular activities. When parents make visits to the school, the MHS staff treats them with respect. The principal makes every effort to greet them

and make them feel welcome. She advocates supporting the district's pledge to contact every parent during the school year. "We don't do enough. I don't. Nobody does."

Rubric Ratings

The principal and the participants see accomplishment of school goals differently. Accomplishment of set goals seems to arrive earlier for the school community than the school leader (Glickman, 1993). Table 22 presents the combined rubric results. The first rating represents the principal's ratings. The second rating, of course, presents the participants'. Glickman's observation appears to apply to this study. Only twice, Practice #1 and Practice # 9, does the principal rate a practice higher than the participants.

Table 22
Principal and Participants' Combine Ratings

- Practice #1 (Core Learning Principles) – Well established/Developed
- Practice #2 (Authentic Teaching, Learning, and Assessment) – Developed/Developed
- Practice #3 (Shared Decision-Making) – Developed/Well established
- Practice #4 (Teachers Collaborate and Learn Together) – Beginning/Developed
- Practice #5 (Critical Study) – Beginning/Developed
- Practice #6 (Supportive Principal Leadership) – Developed/Well Established
- Practice #7 (Caring and Collective Responsibility for Students) – Developed/Developed
- Practice #8 (Connection to Home and Community) - Beginning/Beginning
- Practice #9 (Concern for Equity) – Developed/Beginning
- Practice #10 (Access to External Friends) – Developed/Developed

Obstacles

A glimpse of Table 2 highlights obstacles faced by the principal primarily from the practices identified as weak areas in Chapter 4. Nevertheless, obstacles were also recognized from the developed and strength areas.

The most frustrating obstacle Mrs. Toy agonizes with appears to be the parent involvement piece. "I've tried everything. And I am willing to try whatever you suggest," she comments. The school plans open houses and parent-teacher conferences before, during, and after school . An evening event was planned once with the same dismal results.

It was previously mentioned how Mrs. Toy hates to meet in big groups. Well, Practice 4 suffers tremendously due to the lack of support in this area. Teachers meet mainly in department meetings isolating themselves from the rest of the faculty. Input flows through the department heads as well as trust advisory groups. Teachers count on department chairs to voice their opinions. Hence, the face-to-face discussion with the principal and other school community members decreases.

Federal, state, local, and school policies hurt the progress of critical study in the schools. MHS is no exception. "We are bound some way by district constraints," affirmed Mrs. Toy. When school staff realizes the importance of making regulatory changes that could benefit the students, they hesitate to pursue them because they know how difficult the struggle will be to get them approved.

A great example of this struggle was experienced when the MHS faculty wanted to add credit requirements to the graduating senior class. The school thought about raising expectations. The faculty voted to increase core courses. The thought behind it

was that it would increase ACT scores and graduate more rounded students. Well, district approval was needed. "We can only give our input," remarked Mrs. Toy. "But we are not going to get to decide that. Our teachers are expected to teach whatever is approved."

Other dilemmas this principal confronts on a daily basis include breaking through the comfort zone and teacher attrition. The building's average teacher experience is about 12.5 years. It has been hard to break through conventional ways. Many tenured teachers want to leave things alone. They fear change. However, once these teachers give in, many are lost to retirement, transfers to other schools, and movement destined out of state. New staff would need to be hired, trained, and sold to building beliefs. This takes time. In the meantime, many students suffer. "The cycle never ends," suggested Mrs. Toy.

Comments were made by the principal about her need to be more visible in the classrooms. She feels that many of her hours are invested in building management. She also expressed frustration with staff that acts unprofessional. Specifically, she alluded to those teachers that plan lessons on the way to school. Mrs. Toy regrets the time wasted with building staff not enforcing the school practices agreed upon at the beginning of the school year. "This brings inconsistency and confusion among the students."

Action Plans

The practices were discussed in Chapter 4, obstacles outlined, and action plans now follow. How does this principal address the obstacles mentioned above? What plan of action drives her strategic planning?

MHS would like to find an answer for augmenting home and community involvement. "This is really a hard one," confirmed Mrs. Toy. She tries to stimulate encouragement to already disappointed staff and tells them not to give up on these most needed partners. The district pledge to contact every parent seems to be a solution. Mrs. Toy wants her staff to take this suggestion further and told them to find something positive to say while they are on the phone with the parents. "We have to treat those people with the utmost respect," stated Mrs. Toy. "Even if their kids are in trouble, we have to think that they are caring parents and that we appreciate that they are there."

MHS doesn't refrain from limiting involvement to parents. All members of the school community are sought as targets. The community utilizes the building for community programs and athletic events. Students reach out to the community while working on service learning projects. School issues are discussed through written and verbal modes during traditional and non-traditional school hours. Committees are formed with school community members' interests in mind. Members pick committees based on the issues at hand and not by appointments from the principal. Even students have the opportunity to voice their opinions through the Student Council and other student-driven school organizations.

To increase the quality of staff and address the issue of buy-in, Mrs. Toy vacillates with the idea of assigning two mentor teachers to newly arrived staff. In addition to any college-assigned mentor, MHS supports the partner teacher concept. New building staff receives a department buddy and a staff from a different area of the building. One mentor works on content while the other introduces the staff member to the school's culture.

Observing colleagues is another practice supported by the school administration. It was incorporated into the professional development school goals to assist newly employed staff. "To share best practices as well as experiencing it first hand can do only good for teaching and learning at our school," confirmed Mrs. Toy. She expands the concept by referring teachers to observe neighboring departments. The idea of sharing best practices has impacted staff development workshops scheduled in the building. Master teachers demonstrate lessons in front of the entire staff. Once the lesson is complete, discussions about the presentation are entertained.

Mrs. Toy has worked hard to increase external expertise. Research-based practices infiltrated the building as she took over MHS. To address some of the instructional woes, she bridged the staff to other O.N.E. and HSTW communities. She also sophisticated the level of presenters at staff development workshops performed at the building. Before embracing any concept or program at the school, she makes sure the concepts or programs are researched and/or piloted. Staff development dollars are now being used to send staff to conferences they feel best match the school's focus. "If there are staff members that don't take advantage of conferences or staff development workshops, then they must not want to be progressive," she concluded.

Other actions taken by the principal to address obstacles present at the school were solved or are being solved by empowering members of the school community to take ownership. Even though she confirms being capable of making decisions when they are merited, she tries to let the appropriate parties come up with their own solutions. When teachers want to attend a professional growth activity, she wants them to find their own substitute. Students facing adjustment problems are guided to find a proper solution.

Staff members are asked to approach colleagues not following school-approved policies and press on the importance of consistency and being a team player. "It is about ownership," she mentioned. "I'll support their decisions 100%!"

IDEALS

After completing a five-year study of restructuring schools striving to become democratic, O'Hair, McLaughlin, and Reitzug (2000) developed the IDEALS democratic education framework consisting of six core ideals: inquiry, discourse, equity, authenticity, leadership, and service. Each ideal is linked directly to improved student learning through empirical research and practices (Conversations, 1999, 2000). These IDEALS are documented as key components in the movement from conventional to democratic.

Researchers (Lee & Smith, 1994; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995) found through studies involving over 2,000 schools that students learn more in schools that function as professional communities. "Professional communities are characterized by practices that are grounded in democratic ideals" (Conversations, 2000).

Judging by the principal and participants' responses, the six core IDEALS serve as a democratic education framework at MHS. A vertical as well as a horizontal trajectory movement from conventional schooling to a democratic community best describes practices pressed by the principal. The IDEALS move in a continuum – the lower end as will the upper end apply. The target is to reach a democratic community. However, each IDEALS is assigned a level of mastery contingent on the degree of implementation. Using the rubric categories, not present, beginning, developed, and well established, each IDEALS fall under one of the categories.

Four of the core IDEALS, inquiry, discourse, authenticity, and leadership, result in the 'developed' category while the remaining two, equity and service, fall within the upper end of 'beginning.' Equity issues needing to be addressed include: documenting grade gaps, balancing faculty leadership roles by gender, and recruiting building staff commensurate to the ethnic breakdown of the student body. Community and parent outreach continue to be a dilemma for the principal and the participants. None of the IDEALS received ratings categorized as 'not present.'

Stages in the Movement from Conventional to Democratic

School communities experience progressive stages while transitioning from conventional schooling to a democratic community (O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000). Caution should be taken in that these suggested stages are not the one-and-only tools available to progress towards democratic schooling, but seem to be supported by empirical evidence as representative stages. The stages seem to progress from the conventional stage, to the middle stages - called professional communities, to the latter stages - referred to as democratic communities. Stages drag identifiers as they move from one stage to the other, accumulating all of them in some way or fashion. A clear separation can be made from the professional, middle stage, to the democratic communities' stage; conventional stage begins and ends with number 1, the professional stage moves from stage 2 to 5, and the democratic stage covers 6 through 10. (Please refer back to the Continuum figure in Chapter 2).

Sequence through the continuum model cannot be predicted. Schools begin at different stages, progress further, regress at times, move faster through the continuum, or may just drag at a snail's pace. This makes the continuum nonlinear (O'Hair,

McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000). Regardless of the journey, schools must begin somewhere on the continuum. The more stages schools experience, the closer to reaching the democratic community level.

The principal and participants conveyed the school moving out of stage two, professional community, and into stage three, democratic community. All components in stage two emerge as 'developed' or higher according to the principal and the participants. Two components in stage three rated 'beginning' and low 'developed' respectively, moving from individual classroom concerns to collective school identity and examining and acting on issues of equity. The remaining three components, developing authentic and democratic practices, sharing power, authority, and critical decisions, and serving other learning communities rated 'developed.'

The only component in stage one, conventional community – teaching in isolation and other conventional practices, created backward movement. In other words, stages in the continuum may cause the school leaders to regress (O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000) as a community to a specific stage and address areas of need, even as the school moves forward into another stage in the continuum. MHS is not immune to this phenomenon. The MHS community experienced and continues to experience a pendulum movement to and from stage one. But the described movement does not take away the democratic emphasis the school has taken. It is normal occurrence among communities seeking advancement in the continuum. While the school works on this stage, the principal takes the leadership role and moves the school community into components of stage three, without neglecting components in stage one or two.

The ten stages follow. Notice the averaged ratings agreed upon by the principal and participants.

STAGES IN THE MOVE FROM CONVENTIONAL TO DEMOCRATIC

Continuum if practices in moving from conventional schooling to democratic community

STAGES	***SUBJECT RATINGS***
Conventional Schooling	
* Teaching in isolation and other conventional practices	High 'Beginning'
Professional Community	
* Sharing best practices	'Developed'
* Sharing leadership and some decisions	'Well established'
* Establishing trust and cooperation	'Developed'
* Critiquing struggles and practices	'Developed'
Democratic Community	
* Developing authentic and democratic practices	'Developed'
* Moving from individual classroom concerns to collective school identity	'Beginning'
* Serving other learning communities	'Developed'
* Sharing power authority and critical decisions	High 'Developed'
* Examining and acting on issues of equity	Low 'Developed'

Lee & Smith's Successful High School Restructuring Practices

Lee and Smith (1994) structuring categories support a correlation between restructuring practices and democratic communities with increased student achievement. The study analyzed more than 11,000 students enrolled in 820 secondary schools nationwide. Solid evidence leads the investigators to conclude that students learn more in restructuring schools. The findings were explained through contrasting schools organized bureaucratically versus schools organized communally.

The diagram that follows reproduces the frequency of structural practices delineated in the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS). The study proposed that a "communal" model of school structure enhances student achievement. The communal model beliefs match the democratic practice research. The study findings classified school practices into three categories: traditional, moderate, and restructuring. Schools demonstrating implementation of three or more of the 12 practices listed farther away from the traditional category were defined as restructuring schools. These schools also adopted one or more practices from the traditional and moderate categories. Findings also imply that the number of sample schools in the restructuring category decreased significantly as practice demands increased.

The investigator added a column to the original diagram. Marks were placed next to any practice resembling practices identified at MHS. Notice 20 marks were made; six in the traditional section, six in the moderate, and eight in the restructuring section.

Frequency of Structural Practices in the 820 Secondary Schools Studied, Classified as Traditional, Moderate, and Restructuring

Structural Practice	Probability	MHS
Traditional Practices		
Departmentalization with chairs	0.85	X
Common classes for same curricular track	0.76	
Staff development focusing on adolescents	0.66	
PTA or PTO	0.64	
Parent-teacher conferences each semester	0.64	X
Focus on critical thinking in curriculum	0.64	X
Common classes for different curricular tracks	0.62	X

Increased graduation requirements	0.62	X
Recognition program for good teaching	0.56	X
Parents sent information on how to help kids study	0.56	
Moderate Practices		
Parent workshops on adolescent problems	0.46	
Student satisfaction with courses important	0.42	
Strong emphasis on parental involvement	0.38	X
Strong emphasis on increasing academic requirements	0.35	X
Student evaluation of course content important	0.35	X
Outstanding teachers are recognized	0.34	X
Emphasis on staff stability	0.34	X
Emphasis on staff development activities	0.32	X
Restructuring Practices		
Students keep same homeroom throughout HS	0.3	X
Emphasis on staff solving school problems	0.29	X
Parents volunteer in the school	0.28	X
Interdisciplinary teaching teams	0.24	
Independent study, English/social studies	0.23	X
Mixed-ability classes in math/science	0.21	X
Cooperative learning focus	0.21	X
Student evaluation of teachers important	0.2	
Independent study in math/science	0.18	X
School with-in a school	0.15	
Teacher teams have common planning time	0.11	X
Flexible time for classes	0.09	

Each figure in the "probability" column represents the probability that an average high school (one which reports that it has adopted 11 to 13 of the 30 reform practices listed here) engages in each practice.

MHS reported eight out of the 12 practices, considered significant departures from conventional practices, as having in place. The Lee and Smith study defined any high school as restructuring if they identify three or more practices in the area farther from conventional practice. The study continues by asserting that as the number of restructuring practices being tried increased, the number of schools decreased. This implies the elite status of the MHS as a restructuring community if it had been one of the chosen high schools for the study.

Glickman's Democratic Schools Framework

Glickman (1993) raised the most fundamental questions about the purpose of education, the role of schools, and the needed school-based application. He truly believed that the goal of American schools lay in producing citizens for our democracy. Therefore, he reasons, democratic principles need to form the basis for teaching and learning.

Based on his work in the League of Professional Schools, Glickman presents a clear and sound foundation for school renewal. His work identifies a three-dimensional framework of successful schools: covenant, charter, and critical study. This set of guidelines suggest for schools to pull away from legislative reform, bureaucratic control, standardization of work, and external decisions for improving schools, thus allowing schools to shift toward a site-based autonomy and responsibility.

YPS is literally converging its school communities to a modified site-based autonomy. The principal at MHS takes this site-based philosophy a bit further. Mrs. Toy decided to transfer the acquired governance power to the school community members infusing a bottom up, democratic model of management.

The implementation of Glickman's three-dimensional framework of successful schools at MHS allowed the school principal to practice site-based autonomy and responsibility. The principal, in turn, trickled down the autonomy and responsibility to other members of the school community interested in accepting the challenge. Progress has been made in guidelines one and two, covenant and charter, since the arrival of Mrs. Toy. The third guideline, critical study, even when it is not at the advanced development stage of implementation as the other two, appears progressing in the same forward trajectory.

Newmann's Authentic Achievement Model

It is a "current practice and innovation that enhances the intellectual quality of student learning. Authentic teaching emphasizes teaching that requires students to think, to develop in-depth understanding, and to apply academic learning to important, realistic problems" (Newmann & Wehlage, 1997). Authentic learning promotes students' cognitive and emotional development, as well as an efficient management of personal affairs. Teachers help students produce authentic performance of high intellectual quality through the construction of knowledge (students who organize information and consider alternatives), discipline inquiry (elaborated communication), and value beyond school (addressing a problem likely to be encountered beyond the school and communicating findings or messages to an audience beyond the classroom).

The authentic teaching, learning, and assessment practice was rated 'developed' by the principal and the participants in the study. The data conveyed students exposed to curriculum information via eclectic approaches, methods, and techniques. Teachers presented the curriculum not only by being sensitive to each student's learning style, but by the reintroduction of learned concepts through thematic units and interdisciplinary lessons.

Introducing knowledge by recognizing styles of learning moves schools into democratic practices. However, these practices ought to connect intellectual performance with the use of it beyond the classroom. Newmann & Associates (1996) takes authentic achievement to another level by stirring instruction en route to applicability. Ratings germane to authenticity were set by the MHS principal and participants rooted on curriculum presentation; i.e., learning styles. Insufficient facts hinder conclusive evidence on teaching and learning activities performed at MHS substantiating school-required work linked to construction of knowledge, discipline inquiry, and value beyond school. As a result, ratings may not represent Newmann & Associate's view on authenticity.

Principal's Role in Facilitating the Movement from Conventional to Democratic

It has been previously established that movement from conventional to democratic schooling advocates moving away from imposing a top-down, bureaucratic, hierarchical, fragmented, standardized, and command-control management system (Darling-Hammond, 1997) and supporting shared decision-making, child-centered schools, and decentralization. Schools joining this journey are led by principals that support three broad types of democratic practices: "expanding the scope of involvement

in school decision-making and discourse; focusing attention on connections between beliefs, practices, individuals, and communities; and promoting inquiry around core beliefs" (O'Hair & Reitzug, 1997).

Previously documented data shows a strong correlation between established MHS practices and movement toward democratic schooling. The six core IDEALS (O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000) serve as a democratic education framework at MHS. Study data leads the investigator to conclude that MHS has moved out of the professional community stage and into the democratic community stage as measured by the ten stages in the continuum from conventional schooling to democratic community (O'Hair, McLaughlin & Reitzug, 2000). Data also indicates that MHS is a 'communal' model (Lee & Smith, 1994) of school structure. The 'communal' model beliefs match the democratic practice research.

Glickman's three-dimensional framework of successful schools presides over MHS's governance protocol. The school's improvement committee - composed of students, parents, external friends, teachers, and administrators - meets monthly. They enter into inquiry and discourse on issues related to school academics, climate, and security. With the open-committee policy, any school community member can attend, voice his or her concerns, and be a decision-making factor in the outcome of the issue at hand.

In summary, the principal played a crucial role in initiating, establishing, and fostering shared decision-making, core beliefs, and the connection of these beliefs to a cause beyond one self.

Conclusions

Six conclusions emerge as a result of this study:

1. The principal drives the forward movement toward a democratic school community. By apprising herself with the current research-based practices influencing student achievement, Mrs. Toy opens the door for community inquiry and discourse on teaching and learning practices.
2. A high degree of trust, respect, and support exists between the school community and the administrative leader – Mrs. Toy. These characteristics were epitomized when under severe weather conditions, the entire staff, at Mrs. Toy's request, made themselves available after school to complete study business. Her appeal to the staff was the fact that it could benefit the school.
3. Connection to home and community is the keen practice of concern for both the principal and study participants. Hence, the school is moving away from conventional practices, which utilized parents and community members as free labor and has entered into a shared-decision making approach where these partners assumed a more inclusive role in school governance.
4. Networks form the framework to teaching and learning practices at MHS. Membership in O.N.E. and HSTW provided the staff with research-based practices to consider prior to adopting their own charter. Additionally, these networks offered assessment tools to measure school progress.
5. The obstacles and action plans derived from school practices are the responsibility of the entire community and not solely of the principal.

6. Collaboration and teamwork transcends beyond gathering in committees and department meetings. School staff has shifted to convene for purposes of sharing best practices.

Recommendations

This section reports the recommendations from the study. The recommendations appear under three areas: recommendations for practice – in schools, recommendations for educational leadership preparation programs – universities, and recommendations for future research and theory building.

Based upon the findings and conclusions of this study, it is recommended that:

Recommendation for Practices – In Schools

1. Principals partner with professional networks for the purpose of defining research-based frameworks as the basis for inquiry and discourse in their schools' critical study process.
2. Schools progress toward collective educational responsibility by including parents in conversing about student work, focusing on learning, and asking the 'how to' question.
3. Staff meets periodically to discuss teaching and learning issues, share best practices, and keep abreast of school issues instead of focusing on informational-type meetings.
4. Professional development should be delivered by exercising a cadre of forums taking under consideration school needs and an equitable distribution of funds.

Recommendation for Educational Leadership Preparation Programs

1. Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) design, where needed, an entry year program for school administrators. The IHL would assign a mentor proficient in current leadership practices. Pending a satisfactory assessment, the entry year principal would be released from the program.
2. University professors assigned to an administrator preparation course/program who lack field experience should accumulate a designated number of contact hours at an identified school site. Building administrators exhibiting exceptional building leadership should lead these school sites.
3. Network efforts are developed in partnership with school districts to promote best practices among the entire school community.
4. Encourage educational leadership programs to include a curriculum focus designed to develop an understanding of practices, obstacles, and action plans for schools moving from bureaucratic to democratic practices.

Recommendation for Future Research and Theory Building

1. While this study sought participation of all school community members, student voices were absent. Future research could duplicate a similar study by equalizing community participation – less school staff, participation of the student body, and an increased participation in business partners.
2. Further studies should concentrate in-depth on a particular practice with its corresponding obstacles and action plans instead of gathering data on all ten practices.

3. Results of the study were based on a school culture – MHS. It would be fascinating to compare study results if key variables were to be changed; i.e., the principal's gender, the principal's tenure, school grade, or the school community – rural versus urban.
4. Recently, an increased interest in school of choice has impacted the educational field. With a different governance philosophy, future studies could target the impact of site-based community management versus a more centralized public school systems view.
5. This study collected information that could trigger future studies at other school sites. Generated data at these sites could complement or even expand on reported findings from this study.

Conventionally, the focus of the site-building principal consists of administrative tasks traditionally associated with managing a school. Contemporary principals, on the other hand, must fulfill the new profile demanded by search committees all over the country. These committees expect an exceptional school leader with a proven track record of: 1. implementing change that helps ensure the academic success of all students; 2. being an instructional leader and having the ability to promote teacher growth; 3. being dedicated to creating a shared vision of an outstanding school through collaboration with faculty, parents, and community members; and 4. having strong interpersonal skills and excellent communication skills (Checkley, 2000).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Subjects' Demographic Information

Appendix A

PARTICIPANTS BY ETHNICITY, GENDER, ROLE, ASSIGNMENT, AND TENURE WITH THE DISTRICT

TABLE 1 – Study Participations' Demographics

Pseudonym	Ethnicity	Gender	School Member	Assignment	Tenure
Ann Toy	EA	F	Administrator	Principal	Yes
Sam Adams	EA	M	Central Office	Curr. Coord.	Yes
Sophia Franklin	EA	F	Administrator	Ast. Princ.	Yes
Ann Smith	EA	F	Parent	NA	NA
Ms. Gas	EA	F	Teacher	Business	Yes
Kentkeo Mixay	Asian	M	Support	Maintenance	Yes
Nicole	EA	F	StuCo Sp.	Social Studies	No
Slim Harris	EA	F	Counselor	English	Yes
Paloma Picasso	EA	F	Honor Society Sp.	Visual Arts	Yes
Mark Owen	EA	M	Teacher	Visual Arts	Yes
Francine	EA	F	Support	Registrar	Yes
Demonique Dubois	AA	F	Teacher	Science	Yes
Martha Steward	EA	F	Teacher	PE/Health	Yes
Dixie Doo	EA	F	Union Rep.	History	Yes
Heathcliffe Barkabee	AA	M	Administrator	Ast. Princ.	Yes
Marilyn Monroe	AA	F	Parent	NA	No
Julia Roberts	EA	F	Teacher	Special Ed.	Yes
Jaclyn Smith	EA	F	Dept. Chair	Special Ed.	Yes
Bob Rock	N AM	M	External Friend	NA	NA
Darla Downs	EA	F	O.N.E./HSTW	Spanish	Yes
Corina	EA	F	Teacher	Fam. & Cons.	Yes
Lola Terry	EA	F	Teacher	Math	Yes

Note Interviewees designations: Curriculum (Curr.); Coordinator (Coord.); Assistant (Ast.); Principal (Princ.); None Applicable (NA); Sponsor (Sp.); Representative (Rep.); Education (Ed.); Department (Dept.); Family (Fam.); Consumer (Cons.). Race designation are: European American (EA); African American (AA); Native American (N AM). Gender identifiers are: Female (F) and Male (M).

APPENDIX B

Request For Permission

Appendix B

Request For Permission

August 10, 2000

Re: Permission to conduct study

Dear Sir:

My name is Raúl Font. I am currently completing a doctoral program with The University of Oklahoma in the field of Education Administration, Curriculum, and Supervision. Under the sponsorship of Dr. Mary John O'Hair, I have successfully fulfilled my course of study, written and defended my oral "comp." tests, and I am now considered a doctoral candidate. The final requirement is to enter into a comprehensive study leading to the writing of a dissertation thesis.

The area of interest chosen for this dissertation study relates to democratic practices, obstacles, and action plans implemented by principals. The specific topic is, "From Conventional School To Democratic School Community: A Case Study Of Democratic Principal Practices, Obstacles, and Action Plans." The principle investigator, myself, intends to select a practicing site administrator in the state that has exhibited the use of democratic practices in the management of his/her school. A rubric questionnaire will be developed in conjunction with an interview protocol form that would generate data sought. The investigator will also observe and interview school community members. The collection of records, i.e., memos, agendas, bulletins, school calendars, and other sources of information, completes the triangulation (validity and reliability verification) process. A study thesis will then be written. All personnel participating in the study, the district, and the school site will be kept anonymous by designating a pseudonym to each one.

Contact has been made with Ms. Ann Toy (pseudonym), principal at Mireya High School (pseudonym). She has been gracious to accept participation in the study pending written notification of approval from you. I as well need a written statement from you indicating approval of the study. You can reach me at 405\691-3885 if further information is needed.

I see no foreseeable risks for your district or Mireya High School to participate in this study. Participation will only enhance your knowledge in the most current educational practices being researched today.

Thank you for considering this study. Looking forward to hearing from you soon!

Sincerely,

Raúl Font, Principle Investigator

XC Dr. Mary John O'Hair, Advisor
Ms. Ann Toy, Principal

APPENDIX C

Permission Granted By District

Appendix C
Permission Request Granted by District

September 13, 2000

To: Whom It May Concern

Re: Raúl Font

I have received a request from Raúl Font, doctoral student at The University of Oklahoma, to visit XXXXXXXXX High School in the XXXXXXX School District to work on his doctoral dissertation survey.

I acknowledge and give my approval for Mr. Font to be on campus at XXXXXX High School to work with Mrs. XXXXXXX, principal, and her associates on this matter.

Sincerely,

Rick Bachman, Director
Secondary Instruction

APPENDIX D

IRB Approval

Appendix D

IRB Approval

APPENDIX E

Consent Form

Appendix E

"FROM CONVENTIONAL SCHOOL TO DEMOCRATIC SCHOOL COMMUNITY: A CASE STUDY OF A PRINCIPAL'S PRACTICES, OBSTACLES, AND ACTION PLANS

This study is being conducted under the auspices of The University of Oklahoma, Norman Campus and the endorsement of Yira Public Schools (pseudonym). The primary investigator is Raúl Font working under the supervision of Dr. Mary John O'Hair. This document serves as the consent to participate in a research study.

CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

The University of Oklahoma, Norman Campus requires all doctoral candidates to successfully complete a research study in which the student selects a field area of interest, drafts a thesis, and defends the findings to a selected committee of university professors. I am currently pursuing a doctorate in education (Ed. D.) with an area of specialization in Education Administration, Curriculum, and Supervision (EACS). Under the auspices of The University of Oklahoma, Norman Campus, the endorsement of Yira Public Schools (pseudonym), and the supervision of Dr. Mary John O'Hair, I intend to gather information on my research topic entitled, "From Conventional School To Democratic School Community: A Case Study of Democratic Principal Practices, Obstacles, and Action Plans."

The principle investigator, Raúl Font, believes that change and how it is viewed with the education system can become one of the most crucial forces in the search for student growth and achievement. The essential practices for maintaining consistent growth is persistent inquiry; the ongoing study, reflection, and analysis of one's own practices. Democratic school practices advocate and promote renewal traits as essential in this journey from conventional education practices to development of democratic school communities. Substantial research findings support the connection between schools pursuing democratic communities and increases in student achievement. While researchers are in the midst of examining the proper work for the teacher and the student within the contemporary school movement, lack of research continues to exist on the principal's role in a school's journey from conventional to democratic schooling.

A rubric containing ten (10) practices of high achieving schools - practices, obstacles, and action plans, has been developed. This instrument, in conjunction with, face-to-face interviews and a review of school documents and records will generate the data necessary to produce the aforementioned thesis. Mireya High School's (pseudonym) parents, school staff, and external friends will have the opportunity to respond to the questionnaire and/or be interviewed by the principle investigator in groups or one-on-one. Each session will be audio taped (if agreed upon) on your campus at your convenience for no longer than an hour. All participants must be 21 years of age or older. Results will be shared with the school community for the purpose of impacting short-and long-range strategic planning.

I see no foreseeable risks for you or your institution to participate in this research study. Your participation is strictly voluntary. Refusal to participate will carry no penalty

to you or the school you represent. You may even withdraw at any time without penalty as well. All gathered information would remain secure and confidential within the limits of the law. A pseudonym will substitute your name as well as your institution. Real names and locations remain anonymous. All completed documents will be kept in a locked file cabinet. After all university graduation requirements have been met and with the doctoral committee's endorsement, stored records will be destroyed.

If you have any questions regarding this study, feel free to contact me at 405/691-3885 or my University supervisor, Dr. Mary John O'Hair, at 405/325-4757 to inquire about your rights as research participant.

Consent Statement

I agree to take part in this research study. I acknowledge my role and my rights to discontinue at any time. Permission is granted to audiotape my interview.

Participant's Signature	Date	Principle Investigator	Date

APPENDIX F

Interview Protocol Form

Appendix F

Interview Protocol Form

From Conventional School To Democratic School Community: A Case Study Of Democratic Principal Practices, Obstacles, And Action Plans

General Interviewee Information

* Date of the interview:_____

* Time:_____

* Place:_____

* Interviewer:_____

* Interviewee:_____

* Position of the interviewee:_____

* Length of interview (Minutes):_____

* Project Description: The purpose of the study is to examine and document a principal's practices, obstacles, and action plans in facilitating a school's movement from bureaucratic to democratic. Specifically, the researcher will examine ten documented practices of high achieving democratic schools in hopes to identify examples of how each practice is initiated and sustained in the school, in particular the role of the principal in the process; discovery factors which keep the principal and school from engaging more completely in the practice, and explain how the principal and school work to overcome obstacles and to develop plans of actions.

A rubric containing ten (10) practices of high achieving schools: practice, evidence, obstacles, and action plans have been developed. This instrument, in conjunction with, face-to-face interviews, and a review of school documents will generate the data necessary to produce the aforementioned thesis. Mireya High School's parents, school staff, and external friends will have the opportunity to respond to the questionnaire and/or be interviewed by the principle investigator in groups or one-on-one. Each session will be audio taped (if agreed upon) on your campus at your convenience for no longer than an hour. All participants must be 21 years of age or older. Results will be shared with the school community for the purpose of impacting short-and long-range strategic planning.

Interview Questions:

1. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she/he facilitates the development of core learning principles in the school?

(a) What practices have been initiated to facilitate movement towards democratic schooling?

(b) What practices have been sustained? Which have not?

(c) What obstacles have been encountered during the journey?

(d) How did you deal with those obstacles?

(e) What action plans have you implemented? What were there results?

2. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she/he facilitates authentic teaching, learning, and assessment in the school?

(a) What practices have been initiated to facilitate movement towards authentic teaching, learning, and assessment?

(b) Which of these practices have been successful and which have not?

(c) What obstacles have you and the staff encountered when trying to implement authentic teaching strategies? Learning Strategies? Assessment Strategies?

(d) How did you and the staff handle the challenges?

(e) What formal and/or informal action plans are currently practiced at the school? How effective have they been?

3. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she/he facilitates shared decision-making in the school?

(a) What practices have been initiated to facilitate movement towards shared decision-making in the school?

(b) Who seem to be the major players in modeling shared decision-making?

(c) What obstacles come to mind that interfere in progressing to a more collaborative mode of decision-making in the school?

(d) What, if any, action plans have impacted the progress or stagnation of shared decision-making? Have they been successful?

4. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she/he facilitates teacher collaboration and learning in the school?

(a) What practices have been put in place to encourage movement towards teacher collaboration and learning in the school?

(b) How many of these practices have been continued? Expanded? To What level?

(c) Describe the obstacles faced by you in implementing collaboration at the high school level. Is the issue of secondary teachers working in isolation having any validity at your school?

(d) What types of strategies were used to correct these obstacles? What action plans were used to encourage moving towards a higher level of collaboration?

5. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she/he facilitates critical study, action research, and reflection in the school?

(a) What practices have been initiated to facilitate movement towards critical study, action research, and reflection in the school?

(b) Who has been the principle catalyst in continuing the conversation?

(c) What groups and/or individuals appear to resist critical study at your school?

(d) What have you done to overcome such obstacles?

(e) Do you have an action plan in place? How effective is it?

6. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she/he facilitates supportive principal leadership in the school?

(a) What practices have been modeled to ascertain leadership and support from your office? How were they initiated? How did you find out about them?

(b) What obstacles did you encounter when pursuing your goals? Who were your primary supporters? Adversaries?

(c) How did you persuade these adversaries to follow or give you the opportunity to fail/succeed?

(d) What action plans as well as time lines did you give yourself and the staff to "get on board"? Did it work? Why? Why not?

7. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she/he facilitates the principle of caring and collective responsibility for all students in the school?

(a) What practices best describe the principle of caring and responsibility for all students in the school?

(b) Who takes the major role/initiative? Who are the supporting cast(s)?

(c) What obstacles do you see affecting the advancement of this practice? By what parties? What is their rationale?

(d) What action plans address the flaws? Are they working?

8. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she/he facilitates close school connections to home and community?

(a) What practices are in place that facilitates home-community partnerships?

(b) How have these been revised over time?

(c) What type(s) of obstacles hinder the progress of closing the gap between school-home-community? What have you implemented to address these obstacles?

(d) What action plans seem to have worked? Have not? Why?

9. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she/he facilitates and expands concern for equity in the school?

(a) What practices exist at your school that addresses the issue of equity?

(b) Have these practices sufficed? Any modifications made? Why?

(c) What obstacles have been encountered? With what culture group?

(d) What action plans have been implemented? Did an outside agency intervene?

(e) Is there still an issue?

10. What practices, obstacles, and action plans does the principal encounter as she/he facilitates access to external expertise in the school?

(a) What practices have been initiated to facilitate conversations and interventions with external expertise? What sources?

(b) What obstacles have been encountered? From which parties?

(c) What action plans are currently in place to address these obstacles?

(d) Have they been successful?

APPENDIX G

Rubric Form

Appendix G

RUBRIC OF HIGH ACHIEVING O.N.E. SCHOOLS:
Practice, Evidence, Obstacles and Action Plans

Directions: *Please complete the rubric as a school community and return to your cluster Coordinator by May 1, 2000. THANKS.*

Practice 1: Core Learning Principles

A shared set of goals, commitments, and practices enacted throughout the school. Core learning principles in a school serve as a basis for decision making (i.e., "How does that decision fit with what we believe in?") and give individuals an enhanced sense of purpose. They make individuals part of a bigger cause – of a cause beyond one's self.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE	OBSTACLES	ACTION PLANS
(Provide examples of how the practice is enacted in your school. Please be specific.)	(List factors which keep you from engaging more completely in the practice.)	(Explain how you plan on overcoming obstacles.)

In my school core learning principles are:
(Please circle)

Not present Beginning Developed Well-established

Practice 2: Authentic Teaching, Learning, and Assessment

Authentic pedagogy is practiced in the school. Students learn best when they

1) are required to personally construct knowledge about the topics being addressed;
2) engage in disciplined inquiry to gather more information and data about the topic, and
3) work on tasks that have some value beyond the lesson and assignment.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE	OBSTACLES	ACTION PLANS
(Provide examples of how the practice is enacted in your school. Please be specific.)	(List factors which keep you from engaging more completely in the practice.)	(Explain how you plan on overcoming obstacles.)

In my school authentic pedagogy is:
(Please circle)

Not present Beginning Developed Well-established

Practice 3: Shared Decision-Making

Shared decision-making structures are designed to involve teachers, administrators, parents and students in making critical decisions that impact teaching and learning. Decision-making structures emphasize the importance of hearing all voices in the school community and emphasizing decision-making based on critical study and data.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE	OBSTACLES	ACTION PLANS
(Provide examples of how the practice is enacted in your school. Please be specific.)	(List factors which keep you from engaging more completely in the practice.)	(Explain how you plan on overcoming obstacles.)

In my school shared decision-making structures are:
(Please circle)

Not present Beginning Developed Well-established

Practice 4: Teachers Collaborate and Learn Together

Teachers form study groups to examine research on successful teaching and learning. They set collective standards based on core learning principles, work to connect the curriculum both internally and externally, examine student work together, and supervise and guide one another.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE	OBSTACLES	ACTION PLANS
(Provide examples of how the practice is enacted in your school. Please be specific.)	(List factors which keep you from engaging more completely in the practice.)	(Explain how you plan on overcoming obstacles.)

In my school collaboration is:
(Please circle)

Not present Beginning Developed Well-established

Practice 5: Critical Study

Critical Study is the study of practice by considering relevant perspectives, data, and knowledge. It involves asking questions such as:

- On what basis are we doing what we are doing? What evidence or support do we have to justify our practice? How do we know whether what we are doing is effective?
- What information, data, knowledge, and perspectives can we gather to assist us in studying our practice?
- How does what we are doing fit with our values and beliefs as a school?
- How does what we are doing serve the needs of the diverse individuals and groups who make up our community? Whose interests do our practices serve? Whose interests do they not serve?

The primary purpose of critical study is the improvement of teaching, learning, and school practice in the classrooms and schools that engage in it.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE	OBSTACLES	ACTION PLANS
(Provide examples of how the practice is enacted in your school. Please be specific.)	(List factors which keep you from engaging more completely in the practice.)	(Explain how you plan on overcoming obstacles.)

In my school critical study is:
(Please circle)

Not present Beginning Developed Well-established

Practice 6: Supportive Principal Leadership

Principal involvement in a school's efforts to become more democratic can range from being actively resistant to actively supportive of democratic efforts.

Principal resistance involves placing obstacles in the way of teachers attempting to become more democratic (e.g., withholding financial or material support) or simply refusing to engage in certain practices (e.g., sharing decisions).

Passive forms of principal support consist of neither blocking the efforts of teachers engaged in school renewal work, nor proactively supporting or becoming personally involved in such efforts.

Active principal support includes regularly publicly and privately communicating support for democratic efforts, personally participating in such efforts, and providing time for discussing the school's movement toward democratic schooling.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE	OBSTACLES	ACTION PLANS
(Provide examples of how the practice is enacted in your school. Please be specific.)	(List factors which keep you from engaging more completely in the practice.)	(Explain how you plan on overcoming obstacles.)

In my school supportive principal leadership is:
(Please circle)

Not present Beginning Developed Well-established

Practice 7: Caring and Collective Responsibility for Students

Unlike conventional schools where teachers feel responsible for their students only while the students are in their classrooms, in democratic schools teachers believe they are responsible for all students in the school all the time.

In schools where collective responsibility for students exists, students feel cared about and important.

In schools where collective responsibility for students does not exist, students often feel disconnected from teachers and uncared for.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE	OBSTACLES	ACTION PLANS
(Provide examples of how the practice is enacted in your school. Please be specific.)	(List factors which keep you from engaging more completely in the practice.)	(Explain how you plan on overcoming obstacles.)

In my school caring and collective responsibility for students is:
(Please circle)

Not present Beginning Developed Well-established

Practice 8: Connection to Home and Community

In order to be democratic, a school must connect itself with families and communities in various ways.

On one level it should involve families and communities in the work of the school, which is educating students for democratic citizenship.

On a second level the school should involve itself in the work of the family and community.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE	OBSTACLES	ACTION PLANS
(Provide examples of how the practice is enacted in your school. Please be specific.)	(List factors which keep you from engaging more completely in the practice.)	(Explain how you plan on overcoming obstacles.)

In my school the connection to home and community is:
(Please circle)

Not present Beginning Developed Well-established

Practice 9: Concern for Equity

Schools are concerned with issues of equity and justice not only within the school, but also in the local and global communities.

Some equity issues that a school might examine include:

- Why is there a disparity between races in achievement in our school?
- How can we provide less affluent students with equitable access to technology?
- Do our instructional practices legitimate the background and culture of some students at the expense of others?
- How doe we group students and how does this affect different groups of students?
- How do our classroom (and school) discipline policies and practices affect students from nondominate cultural groups?
- Do our classroom interactions and language subtly and subconsciously promote socially constructed gender roles and expectations to students?
- Do our shared decision making procedures ensure that the voices of all teachers, parents, and students get heard?

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE	OBSTACLES	ACTION PLANS
(Provide examples of how the practice is enacted in your school. Please be specific.)	(List factors which keep you from engaging more completely in the practice.)	(Explain how you plan on overcoming obstacles.)

In my school concern for equity is:
(Please circle)

Not present Beginning Developed Well-established

Practice 10: Access to External Expertise

In democratic schools teachers and others are regularly exposed to ideas and knowledge from sources external to the school. These schools are constantly participating in individual or collective staff development efforts. Ideas and knowledge brought in from external sources are not simply "adopted" and put into practice, but rather are discussed, debated, and subjected to critical study.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE	OBSTACLES	ACTION PLANS
(Provide examples of how the practice is enacted in your school. Please be specific.)	(List factors which keep you from engaging more completely in the practice.)	(Explain how you plan on overcoming obstacles.)

In my school access to external expertise is:
(Please circle)

Not present Beginning Developed Well-established

APPENDIX H

Data Analysis Flow Chart Diagram

Appendix H

Data Analysis Flow Chart Diagram

Data Collection
- Interviews
- Observations
- Documents/Records Review

Data Analysis - Concepts
- Teaching
- Learning
- Assessment
- School Environment
- Strategic Planning
- Policies/Procedures/Mandates
- Autocratic Decisions
- Research-based Information

Data Analysis - Statements
- Hypothesis
- Participant's Input/Review
- Study Findings
- Theories

Data Analysis - Categories

- Practices
- Obstacles
- Action Plans
- Others

APPENDIX I

Document Review Form

Appendix I

Document Review Form

Site: _____
Document/Record: _____
Date Received: _____
Review Date: _____
* Name and description of document/record:

* Event or contact with which document/record is associated:

* Brief summary of contents:

* Make a copy of document if crucial to a particular contact. Otherwise, put in document file.

Note: From Miles, M.B., & Huberman, A.M. (1994). Qualitative data analysis: An expanded source book (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. (As adapted from Teran, 1997).

APPENDIX J

Field Notes

Appendix J

Field Notes/Observations

9-27-00: I just had the opportunity to personally meet Ms. Ann Toy at a kick off activity that convened to discuss school renewal issues. Colleagues who were interested in her school's plan for the upcoming school year surrounded Ms.Toy. She rattled her school's plans, activities, and direction very confidently. Mention of school community members that people could call on if further information was needed was also provided.

This first impression left me craving for a visit to the school. To be so focused, enthusiastic, and knowledgeable of the school and its direction made me feel that the right site was chosen for the study.

Mrs. Toy saw this student walking down the hall. She knew the student and hinted the possibility of him being in trouble. Rather than intervening with the student, she trusted that the "system"- school practices, would take care of the situation. As we toured the building, she made her way to the assistant principal's office where we saw the student in question. The assistant had identified the problem and was taking care of business. This clearly indicated the hands-off attitude Mrs. Toy practices in her building.

10-11-00: I drove up to Mireya High School (pseudonym). It was about 1:30 p.m. You could not see a single student in the halls. The campus was extremely clean, especially, considering that lunch had just ended. I entered the front office. A very well mannered staff waited on me almost immediately. I asked for the principal. Of course, she was doing her rounds. The staff member commented, "She is never in her office. I'll get her on her a radio. She should be visiting with some students or observing a class."

As I waited for Ms. Toy, I proceeded to read the many awards the school has posted around the office. The one that caught my attention was a human relations award. Ms. Toy came in an invited into her office. She said to me, "I hope I don't disappoint you. What happens here at Mireya High School is nothing out of the ordinary. If you're looking to see how I round the building, you need to talk to the staff. They round this building. I am just part of the team."

Ms. Toy toured me around the building. In every corner of this huge building, she had a story to tell or history to share with me. Staff members as well as students greeted her. She would call each and every one of them by his/her first name. A student was coming down the hall and before she could say something to him, he pulled out a hall pass.

" Thought you caught me, Mrs. Toy. I would never be out here without one of these," he said.

The tour ended about 45 minutes later. She welcomed me to the school and told every adult who I was and my future work at the school. The majority of the staff was amazed that I chose their school. They really don't see themselves doing anything out of the ordinary.

11-20-00: I just interviewed Mrs. Toy. She asked why I didn't provide her with the interview questions before hand. We agreed to meet again on December1st at 9 a.m. I will bring the transcription of the interview and the rubric form completed as per her

answers. She will then have an opportunity to add or delete any information. She will have the names of the participants, copies of the NCA report, and other documents she identifies for my review.

Our interview was interrupted due to an emergency call from the central office. She told the source that she would get back with him.

12-1-00: While visiting with Mrs. Toy in her office, she received a phone call from one of her assistant principals. He was requesting her presence at a parent-student-assistant principal conference. She provided the assistant some advice and encouraged him to carry on the conference without her. " I trust you will handle it well," she responded. "I'll be here if you need me."

Today, Mrs. Toy and I went over her interview. I left the transcribed text as well as my general statements on practices, obstacles, and action plans I derived from her interview for her to look over. We identified the participants I needed to give the rubric instrument and set December 12 at 2:45 p.m. as the day to complete the form. Having them complete the form in the same room and at the same time would increase the percentage of returns, reduce group consensus and peer influence, receive a more reliable and subjective responses based on a spontaneous answers.

12-12-00: I just arrived at the school. Several parents were in the office waiting for one of the assistant principals. While waiting, Mrs. Toy was visiting with the parents and the students. There was no doubt that the students were in some trouble. However, the conversation occurred in a very normal tone. The disciplinary issues were not discussed. It was more like a casual conversation. Maybe the idea was to calm "the waters" before the storm. Mrs. Toy had once told me how she would keep parents in the front office a little longer when she observed the tempers were out of control. She would give them enough time to cool down and be objective.

This was the first time I had entered MHS and found Mrs. Toy in the front office. Usually, the staff would have to hunt her down by calling her on the walkie-talkie. Being visible in the school seems extremely important for Mrs. Toy.

As she welcomed me into her office, I saw many boxes wrapped like Christmas presents in a corner. She told me that the school improvement committee had collected these presents and were preparing to take them to the Veteran Administration Hospital. She was also excited about completing registration forms for 11 of her staff. They agreed to attend a summer conference sponsored by High Schools That Work. She said, "When they come back, I'll have 11 fired up teachers."

I asked her about staff agendas. She smiled and said, "I'm not a meeting person. I just cannot meet for the sake of meeting." She meets in small groups during planning periods. The staff meets about two to three times a semester. Rarely are agendas drafted. It is open discussion. People bring in concerns and they are discussed. Once they are all addressed, the meeting is over. She meets with her administrative team the same way. No pre-determined time, just when needed. But they meet almost every day to discuss school-related business anywhere they see each other on school grounds.

"We have a very important meeting to strategize and allocate the budget. All staff is involved. Once the budget is approved, the staff thinks I'm poor and they don't ask me

for any more money. What they don't know is that I always hide a little for my things. Ha, ha, ha."

I was also very impressed with the participants' dedication and commitment. A big winter storm was anticipated today. The district also had an extremely important bond issue vote. Nevertheless, 100 percent of the identified participants, made their way to the auditorium to voice their opinion on the rubric form. After working all day, with snow and sleet coming down with a vengeance, and some of them still needing to vote, they invested close to an hour of their time to complete all forms related to the study. As they parted, Mrs. Toy greeted them with a candy bar and told them to be careful as they drove home.

As I was leaving, Mrs. Toy mentioned that not all the participants were proponents of her administrative style. About a fifth of them clashed with her style and were always "bumping heads" with her. However, she felt that those voices needed to be heard. That's why they were selected. So she apologized for any inappropriateness written in the forms from any of those participants.

12-21-00: Today marks the last day of the semester and the day before a long break. As a former principal, these were the days you dread to get out of bed. Not Mrs. Toy! As I walked in the building at about 2 p.m., the front office was busy. Several students were requesting information, a parent was with her son waiting to see the assistant principal, and the secretaries were typing away. It was just business as usual at MHS.

Enjoying a rare serene moment in her office was Mrs. Toy. As soon as she saw me, she made her way to the reception area to greet me. Before inviting me in, she acknowledged the parent and her son whom were standing next to the counter. "Hi, said Mrs. Toy. How are you doing today? Have you been taken care of? "Yes, thank you," responded the parent. "Well, you have a Merry Christmas!"

She invited me into her office. Three plaques were lying on her round conference table. She told me that the plaques were for students with perfect attendance. She was not giving them to the students until after the break because names were misspelled.

Mrs. Toy took a pile off her desk and handed them back to me. These were the aggregated responses from the principal and the participants. They had the task of reviewing the responses and add practices, obstacles, and/or action plans they felt were missing as well as delete the ones they disagreed with. She apologized because not everyone turned them in, but stated that some teamed up to look at the responses. Those that teamed up returned only one draft.

She wanted me to walk with her to the assistant principal's office. As we went down the halls, I commended her and the staff for keeping the building focused and students on task. Her response was, "It could be better. There are still too many kids out in the halls." Every student we saw in the hall, she acknowledged by addressing them by their name and asking them what they were doing in the halls. She knows them all.

The assistant was busy, so we left his office. The bell rang, the day had finally come to an end without any major incident. The students walked out of the building in an orderly manner. Teachers walked out with the students wishing them a safe break.

1-11-01: I just arrived at MHS. It is about 9:50 a.m. I parked in the visitor's area. I have taken for granted the availability of parking at this school. Every time I have been on

campus, I have been able to park without any problem. It just crossed my mind the positive message sent to the community knowing how convenient it is to enter and exit the school.

Today, the main purpose of my visit falls on student life. Specifically, the focus is on the atmosphere created by the MHS staff for the students enrolled in the building.

The first thing I noticed was the multiple banners posted around the enclosed student courtyard. The banners display positive messages targeted to boost self-esteem. Some banner content read as follows: Attitude is everything, Pride – We've got it, Future leaders learn here!, Strive for excellence in education – educators, parents, students, and community, Best students, best teachers, best school, You miss school, you miss out, Never. Never. Quit.

Very few students were roaming the halls. The ones that were in the halls brought a hall pass. I had permission to enter any classroom. All the classrooms I entered seemed to be on task. Some classrooms had students actively involved while others had teachers at the chalkboard going over curricular material. Students appeared actively working on assigned tasks. Not a single student had their head down on the desk or distracted.

At 10:40 a.m., students were dismissed for lunch. MHS has established an encore period. The purpose of the period is to offer tutoring and support to any student struggling in an academic subject area. The administration also utilize the period as reward time. Students with good attendance, making grades above a "D," and up-to-date in assignments may take a longer lunch break; from 40 minutes to 60 minutes. Because the school has an open-campus policy, it is very enticing to the students to count with the extra 20 minutes. Students not fulfilling the school's attendance and academic expectations must attend encore.

I had the opportunity to observe the lunch periods. I saw many teachers and administrators monitoring, interacting, and supervising students. A group of teachers stayed in their classrooms assisting students. Student behavior in the courtyard was really encouraging. Cross-racial grouping was observed. The students were having a good time.

APPENDIX K

Participant Information Record

Appendix K

Participant Information Record

Pseudonym _____ Date _____
Gender: _____ Ethnicity: _____ Tenure: _____
Location _____ Time _____

Participant's Historical Background

School Community Status (circle one): Teacher Staff Parent External Friend

Degree: _____ College Major: _____ Minor: _____

Subject Taught/School Assignment: _____ How long? : _____

What school group are you associated with? _____

Do you chair any of them? Which? _____

Do you subscribe to any educational journal(s)? Which? _____

Are you affiliated to any professional group? Which? _____

Name any awards received affiliated to the school/community: _____

_____

_____

What is the primary strength of the school? _____

What is the primary weakness? _____

Additional Comments: _____

_____