ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: AN EXAMINATION OF ENGLISH TEACHERS',

ENGLISH RESOURCE TEACHERS', AND

PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF LEADERSHIP

CAPACITY IN THE 7TH AND 8TH GRADES OF

MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Education

School improvement no longer rests solely on the shoulders of the principal, but rather takes the collaborative effort of the entire school community to increase achievement levels of all students. Vital parts of that community are the teachers that teach content areas, including resource and regular classroom teachers. Leadership is critical for organizational improvement: more specifically, it is the driving force for instituting agreed-upon and worthwhile directions for the organization in question, and doing whatever it takes to inspire people to move in those directions (DeFlaminis, 2011). This study was designed to investigate the perceptions of leadership capacity among teachers, resource teachers, and principals in middle schools and the role these perceptions play in supporting organizational improvement.

This mixed-methods study, examined the perceptions of leadership capacity using the conceptual framework of Lambert's (2003a) Leadership Capacity School Survey (LCSS) and its six clustered domains. Data for this study were collected by way of survey responses and interview probes with focus groups of English teachers, English resource

teachers, and principals. In the quantitative phase of the study, 36 middle schools from a single school district in the mid-Atlantic United States were identified.

The results from the quantitative phase of the study found that there was more agreement about the principal's leadership capacity among the three professional groups in the schools meeting state standards. Whereas, this was not observed in schools not meeting state standards. Examination of the focus group responses revealed that the staff in both categories of schools looked at data to make informed decisions regarding reading curriculum and instruction for those students who did not do well on standardized tests. However, the schools that did not meet state standards had to provide more interventions, motivate more students, and expend additional time and energy to support their students.

Leadership capacity is essential for promoting successful school improvement. It plays a pivotal part in school reform. Further research is recommended with larger samples of participants in rural and urban settings. In addition, future research should examine the ongoing professional development in coaching communication and reflection practices.

AN EXAMINATION OF ENGLISH TEACHERS', ENGLISH RESOURCE

TEACHERS', AND PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF LEADERSHIP

CAPACITY IN THE 7TH AND 8TH GRADES OF MIDDLE SCHOOL

by

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents: my father, Milton Wallace Epps, who always valued the importance of an education and knew that once achieved it could never be taken away; and my mother, Alice Vanilla Sims Epps, who inspires me every day with her courage to try new ideas and has always believed that I could do or be anything I wanted to be in life. Last, but not least, this dissertation is dedicated to my best friend and husband, Kirby Jerome Rowe, whose love has sustained me. For the past six years, you have urged me to "do my homework" and "get the job done". You quoted Juan Williams constantly telling me to "Keep your eyes on the prize". You reminded me to never give up even when things seemed insurmountable. I extend my love and sincere appreciation of your unwavering support, commitment, and patience.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

"Outstanding leadership is not just the province of individual icons and heroes. In a complex, fast-paced world, leadership cannot rest on the shoulders of a few. The burden is too great" (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003, p. 696)

School improvement no longer rests on the shoulders of the principal, but rather is the collaborative effort of the school community to increase achievement levels of all students. Included in that community are the teachers that teach content areas, including resource and regular classroom teachers. School improvement through reform efforts has been in place for many years and includes the changing roles of principals and teachers. There is an ample body of research which reveals that principals have a good deal to do with organizational performance in general and the success of change initiatives such as teacher leadership in particular. Traditionally, principals served as managers and then became instructional leaders (Berube, Laramie, Gaston, & Stepans, 2004); now they are to become the team leader.

There is renewed interest in the power of leadership to generate and sustain school improvement, according to Harris and Muijs (2003). What this means is that for many principals, especially for those in the position for some length of time, there is an opportunity for supporting teacher leadership. This necessitates a modification in understanding leadership and in the ways principals assume their leadership roles (Murphy et al., 2009). First, according to Frost and Durrant (2003), principals are in the right position and have the potential influence to create school structures conducive to teacher leadership. Second, principal leadership is critical for teacher leadership (Moller and Katzenmeyer, 1996; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). If teacher leadership is to blossom, principals need to be emphatic in reshaping structures allowing for a deeper pool of leadership components.

The starting point is to craft opportunities for teachers to exercise leadership (Spillane et al., 2001), including providing them with the space and the authority to engage in the work of teaching and learning. According to Lambert (2003b), this work emphasizes fostering broad-based participation, creating a shared vision in program coherence, exercising inquiry-based use of information to inform decisions and practice, determining roles and actions that reflect broad involvement and collaboration, employing reflective practice consistently leading to innovation, and fostering high or steadily improving student achievement and development.

As roles of teacher leaders and principals intensify and strengthen, successful school improvement grows into a sustainable capacity-building process. This capacity-building process includes creating a shared vision, using reflective practice, promoting instructional change, and exercising collaboration. Instructional change requires that teachers and principals work together and create repetitive patterns for school improvement. For many principals a personal transformation in leadership must accompany the pursuit to rebuild schooling, to cultivate teacher leadership, and to nurture the growth of teacher leaders (Murphy et al., 2009).

Leadership is all about organizational improvement; more specifically, it is about instituting agreed-upon and worthwhile directions for the schools and doing whatever it takes to nudge and support people to move in those directions (DeFlaminis, 2011). Teachers and principals are collaborating more to provide instructional leadership (Burke, 2009) and, thereby, doing what is needed to move the school in the right direction. They are invoking leadership capacity where the organization is able to lead itself and to sustain shared vision, inquiry-based use of data, broad involvement and collaboration, reflective practice, and high or steadily improving student achievement (Lambert, 2003a).

Conceptual Framework

Lambert's (2003a) model of leadership maintains that for the organization (school) to lead itself and to sustain that effort when key individuals leave, certain parameters must be maintained. There has to be a combination of extensiveness of participation and intensity of skillfulness which creates a matrix of leadership capacity. Primary is the concurrence of high degree of participation and a high degree of skill on the part of school leaders (Lambert, 2003a). When there is a high degree of participation and skill, then principals and teachers are skillful leaders. They share vision resulting in program coherence; have inquiry-based use of data to inform decisions; engage in broad involvement, collaboration, and collective responsibility reflected in roles and actions; exhibit reflective practice that leads consistently to innovation; and display high or steadily improving student achievement (p. 6).

According to Lambert (2003b), professional development undergirds the surfacing of ideas and prior knowledge. It uses inquiry to examine the work; enters into dialogue and reflection to understand prior assumptions and practice; and then reframes those actions and plans to improve the school plan. Lambert's (2003a) model ascribes to the tenets of using strategies and benchmarks to build leadership capacity. The teacher benchmarks, according to Lambert (2003b), happen when teachers are initiating new actions, solving problems, volunteering to take responsibility, listening to each other, admitting to mistakes, talking about children and becoming more skillful using inquiry questions. Based on Lambert's (2003b) model, principals use strategies such as the following to encourage teacher leadership: creating opportunities, shifting to consistent problem-solving, surfacing issues, continually indicating that time is available for shared work, modeling respectful listening, admitting mistakes, modeling by using probing questions, and becoming more skillful at facilitating conversations (see Figure 1). Figure 1 presents the six critical features of leadership capacity based on Lambert's (2003a) framework.
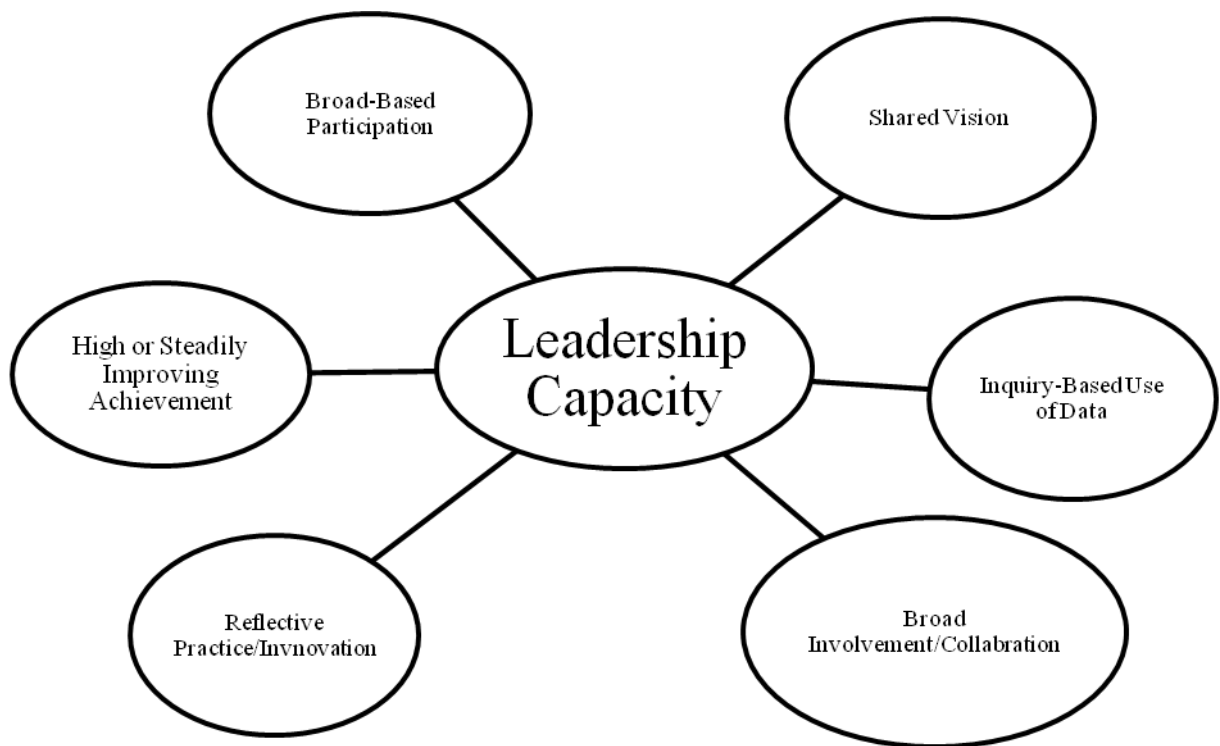
Figure 1. Lambert (2003a) identified six critical features of leadership capacity.

The conceptual framework of this study was focused upon the perspective that the leadership behaviors and practices of principals and teachers influence the learning community of the school and are grounded in effective school leadership behaviors. The Lambert theory asserts that six critical features of leadership are necessary in order to attain a high level of leadership capacity (Lambert, 2003a). The complexity of the principal's role affirms the need to engage a significant number of classroom teachers as instructional leaders.

The traditional model on a one-person leadership (principal) leaves the substantial talents of teachers largely untapped. Improvement achieved under this old model is not easily sustainable; when the principal leaves, promising programs often lose momentum and fade away (DeFlaminis, 2011). The elements of emerging teacher leadership, according to Lambert (2003a), are based on a continuum of dependent, independent, and interdependent relationships toward leadership. The leadership categories are adult

development, dialogue, collaboration and organizational change (p. 35). Building on that leadership capacity takes commitment and the benchmarks include initiating new actions, solving problems, volunteering to take responsibility for issues or tasks, inviting other teachers to participate, listening to each other, admitting to mistakes and unsolved instructional issues, discussing children as if all children can learn, and becoming more skillful in conversations, facilitation, asking inquiry questions, and teaching (p.37).

Changing Role of the Principal

Initially, the role of the principal was manager, an assertive individual; today the principal has a much deeper involvement in teaching and learning. As school districts assess their organizational settings, they are rethinking the roles and relationships of all school personnel. It has been seen that resilient, effective principals are those who inspire teachers and participate with them in planning and implementing research-based improvements; this becomes part of the school improvement framework (Southern Regional Education Board, 2006).

Although effective educational leadership may improve learning, it is more challenging to understand just how effective leadership is in promoting the learning of all children and what the essential ingredients of successful leadership are (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004, p. 3). Success as a principal lies in one's ability to evaluate teacher strengths in context, to build on these strengths, and to inspire teachers to exercise them publicly. Add to this list the ability to know when to step aside and let others lead. The principal should be ready to take an organization to a level where teachers focus on instructional improvement, support the vision, and rally the staff to come together around a common goal of improving student learning. It is exactly this type of leadership that promotes sustainability of school mission and vision over time (Giles & Hargreaves, 2006; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006).

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As noted by Donaldson (2006), principals are expected to carry the torch for whole-school concerns—establishing a vision, assuring smooth management, making the school responsive to school board or state requirements, supporting change on the part of staff and students. They are considered the true middle managers, often caught between a faculty who are intent on their students and their teaching obligations and an outside world that increasingly seeks to change what those teachers do and produce. These principals are not able to do the work in isolation. It is further noted that with respect to advancing student outcomes and teacher professional learning, it is extremely important that teachers connect with one another and the principal. McLaughlin and Talbert (2006) have noted that principals should provide high quality professional development resources. However, those resources will not succeed unless teachers can work together on new ideas and reflect on practices and their implications for students' learning McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006). Still, principals, in creating change, must further support teacher leadership capacity in order to promote school improvement and success.

Teacher Leadership

The involvement of teachers in the decision-making process is critical to schools of the 21st century. Recent research states that "schools where teachers are given a greater voice in making decisions that affect their jobs have significantly less turnover" (Ingersoll, 2002, p. 27). Highly successful schools are more likely to have teachers exercising leadership beyond the classroom (Petzko, 2004).

Teacher leaders are recognized by administrators to work on school leadership teams that practice shared decision-making. They serve on leadership teams, act as team leaders, assist in the selection of their teammates, share in multiple and complex decision-making, and participate in the school improvement process (Petzko, 2004). The effective professional development for these teacher leaders is grounded in a vision of the learner, as well as a teacher who binds together knowledge about reading strategies,

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students' development, and classroom context (Hoffman et al., 2005). At the same time, effective professional development emphasizes teacher leaders as doing, as well as knowing (Risco et al., 2008).

In order for teacher leaders to be effective in shared decision-making, they must demonstrate credibility, expertise, and relationship building (Patterson & Patterson, 2004). This is effective or purposeful leadership, according to Muijs and Harris (2007), and it is central in securing and sustaining school improvement. Corder, Marshall, Lineweaver, and McIntyre (2008) have noted that administrators can trust most teachers to act as instructional leaders. As argued by Pounder (2006), this trust lends itself to theories of transformational leadership qualities in the classroom that lead to the perception that teachers are exemplary. There is literature that strongly suggests the need to engage a significant number of classroom teachers to aid as instructional leaders, as one administrator cannot adequately serve as an impactful instructional leader for an entire school without that support (Elmore, 2000; Lambert, 2003b; Olsen, 2000; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001).

Collaborative leadership strategies are the foundation of successful school reform and improvement (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2006). In order to achieve expected results, many principals understand they must broaden their leadership base and reach out to teachers, the true experts of classroom instruction. Thus, building teacher leadership capacity is a vital component of achieving sustainable results (Crowther et al., 2002; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Lambert, 1998; Smylie, 1995; Murphy, 2005).

Middle School Reading

A middle school has unique organizational elements which lend it to teaching the adolescent. According to Juvonen (2007), middle schools have been the targets of active reform since they first were established. Teachers in middle schools, much like high

schools, often instruct 150 to 180 students per day with different sets of classmates from one period to the next (Juvonen, 2007). There are several different ways, including subject teams, grade level teams and other models that make up the middle school environment. This mid-Atlantic county uses the team approach based on grade level with a team leader in every grade. Middle school teachers and principals have responsibility for leading instruction in a wide variety of specific subjects (Kilpatrick et al., 2001). Among those subjects, reading has undoubtedly received as much professional and public inspection as any. Thus this discipline is a particularly interesting place for studying the effects of leadership capacity in schools that meet "adequate yearly progress" (AYP) through the Middle School Assessment (MSA) compared with leadership in schools that do not meet AYP.

The global information economy requires today's American youth to have far more advanced reading skills than those required of any previous generation as noted by Kamil et al. (2008). However, improvements in the reading skills of older students have not kept pace with the swelling demands for literacy in the workplace (ACT, 2006). According to Guthrie, Wigfield, and Klauda (2012), while dedication is a primary driver of achievement, interest in reading information books is shockingly low in the middle school population. Data from the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in reading report that 69% of 8th grade students fall below the proficient level in their ability to comprehend the meaning of text at their grade level as reported by Lee, Griggs, and Donahue (2007). To acquire the skills they need students must work hard to refine and build upon their initial reading skills, and teachers in upper elementary grades and in middle and high school classes must help students acquire more advanced skills once they understand the demands that content area tasks actually present, especially to students who struggle with reading (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007).

Adolescent literacy, which involves reading, is a multifaceted concept because it entails more than the scores that students achieve on standardized reading tests (Kamil et al., 2008). Student need to be able to build knowledge by comprehending different kinds of texts, mastering new vocabulary, and sharing ideas with others. Test score data and research continually confirm that many adolescents first need to improve their reading comprehension skills before they can take full advantage of content-area instruction. The revised framework for the NAEP indicates that 8th graders who read at the proficient level should be able to "summarize major ideas, provide evidence in support of an argument, and analyze and interpret implicit causal relations" according to the National Assessment Governing Board (2007, p. 46).

Statement of the Problem

Leadership behavior practices have changed in order to successfully lead the quickly changing middle schools of this era. These changes are matching the societal and school demographics that have also changed in recent decades. The reform era projected to be 1970–2020 holds schools accountable for student performance. In the era of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), failing schools are those schools that do not meet the accountability standards set by the state (Public Law 107-110). Among those subjects, reading is a particularly essential subject to study because of our nation's poor results in state accountability measures. In the state where this study was conducted, all middle schools must meet "Adequate Yearly Progress" (AYP) by the 2013–2014 academic year in reading. Students must be tested at least once in reading proficiency in grades 6–8. Therefore, the research from middle school reading can provide an important path for increasing success in rigorous high school curricula and post-secondary experiences.

The leadership practices of the teacher and principal play a fundamental part in student achievement. Understanding leadership capacity practices employed by teachers and principals and whether or not those practices are seen in schools meeting with

success can create a knowledge base to enhance our understanding of this relationship and provide the ability to increase student achievement, thus furthering state accountability efforts.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this mixed method study was to examine the English teachers' (including resource teachers) and principals' perceptions of leadership capacity in two groups of middle schools. One group of schools successfully attained AYP and the other group did not. The results can provide practitioners with a framework for creating organizational conditions that allow for sustainable, effective principal and teacher leadership practices. Using Lambert's model (2003a), the purpose of this mixed method study was two-fold. Quantitatively, the primary purpose was to measure the phenomenon of leadership capacity in a mixed urban school district with 38 middle schools. Qualitatively, the secondary purpose was to interview English teachers, English resource teachers and principals about their perceptions and characteristics exhibited through individual leadership capacity skills. These included use of broad-based participation, creation of shared vision in program coherence, exercise inquiry-based use of information to inform decisions and practice, determining roles and actions that reflect broad involvement and collaboration, employing reflective practice consistently leading to innovation, and applying high or steadily improving student achievement and development.

This mixed method study centered on leadership capacity and whether or not that leadership capacity translates to proficient and advanced Middle School Assessments (MSA) scores. The study focused on how middle schools build capacity for improvement by sharing leadership responsibilities between principals and teachers. In secondary schools, teachers are uniquely placed to influence the quality of teaching and learning, and they are important gatekeepers to development and change (Muijs & Harris, 2007).

Research Questions and Statistical Hypotheses

Prior to beginning the research, the following research questions were developed to provide the structure for data collection and analysis.

Research Question 1

From the perspective of middle school (Grades 7, 8) English teachers, are there differences in their perceptions regarding the six leadership domains between those middle schools identified as at risk of not meeting state standards in reading and schools identified as meeting state standards in reading?

Statistical Hypothesis 1

From the perspective of middle school (Grades 7, 8) English teachers, there are no statistically significant mean differences in their perceptions regarding the six leadership domains between those middle schools identified as at risk of not meeting state standards in reading and schools identified as meeting state standards in reading?

Research Question 2

From the perspective of middle school English resource teachers, are there differences in their perceptions regarding the six leadership domains between those middle schools identified as at risk of not meeting state standards in reading and schools identified as meeting state standards in reading?

Statistical Hypothesis 2

From the perspective of middle school English resource teachers, there are no statistically significant mean differences in their perceptions regarding the six leadership domains between those middle schools identified as at risk of not meeting state standards in reading and schools identified as meeting state standards in reading?

Research Question 3

From the perspective of middle school principals, are there differences in the perceptions of principals regarding the six leadership domains between those middle schools identified as at risk of not meeting state standards in reading and schools identified as meeting state standards in reading?

Statistical Hypothesis 3

From the perspective of middle school principals, there are no statistically significant mean difference regarding the six leadership domains between those middle schools identified as at risk of not meeting state standards in reading and schools identified as meeting state standards in reading?

Research Question 4

What are the curriculum and instructional issues faced daily by middle school principals, English resource teachers, or English teachers, who are concerned with providing leadership to students in English? Are there differences in these curricular and instructional issues between successful middle schools and those middle schools identified as not meeting state standards?

Potential Significance of the Study

This study supported the research finding of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (2006) that collaborative, inclusive leadership is essential to any reform efforts. The report noted that leaders throughout the school (including team and teacher leaders) refocus their work on what will successfully support all students in their middle school experience (p. 16). This study has a practical application, for if individual leadership capacity skills are high in those schools which have proficient or advanced scores on achievement tests, then replication of those practices might be advantageous for those schools which have basic scores on achievement tests. However,

it is not clear how leadership capacity skills encourage the teacher leader and principal to increase their collaboration, to engage in shared decision making, and to use reflective practice. This is what this study hoped to learn. Lambert (2003a) developed a survey, Leadership Capacity School Survey (LCSS), based on six clustered elements. The clustered elements include: (1) using broad-based participation, (2) creating shared vision in program coherence, (3) exercising inquiry-based use of information to inform decisions and practice, (4) determining roles and actions that reflect broad involvement and collaboration, (5) employing reflective practice consistently leading to innovation, and (6) applying high or steadily improving student achievement and development.

Lambert's (2003a) survey provides an assessment of dispositions, knowledge, and skills needed to build leadership capacity in schools. It is a self-assessment using five scale ratings of: not observed (NO); infrequently performed (IP); frequently performed (FP); consistently performed (CP); and can teach to others (CTO).

By identifying the leadership practices of middle school principals, English teachers, and English resource teachers that may affect student reading achievement in middle schools, it may lead to the creation of professional learning communities. In these communities, principals', English teachers' and English resource teachers' teacher leaders refocus their work on what will successfully support all students in their middle level experience. The middle school level is of particular interest because of the shared ownership of goal setting and decision making along with shared responsibility (Cassellius, 2006). The Lambert (2003a) model states that "leadership capacity is broad-based, skillful participation in the work of leadership" and that it is central to school improvement.

This study hoped to contribute to the research on middle school leadership as it relates to the role of the teacher as an instructional leader. The study attempted to provide in-depth information on middle school English teachers and English resource teachers'

understanding of this role and the behaviors needed by a teacher leader to influence school success. The study results informed the process by which local principals and teacher leaders select and identify practices which promote school improvement and student achievement.

Collective leadership has a stronger influence on student learning than any individual source of leadership (Wahlstrom, Louis, Leithwood, & Anderson, 2010). The push to improve student learning is too large a problem for any single leader to handle alone (Webb, Neumann, & Jones, 2004). Therefore, teacher leadership is gaining increasing attention from both educators and researchers. It is seen as the lynchpin for school improvement and renewal (Muijs & Harris, 2006).

Research Design

This mixed method study used both quantitative and qualitative research methods as a means to provide relevant insights and potential solutions to the research questions. The researcher used 20 middle schools that met AYP status in reading and 16 middle schools that did not achieve AYP status in reading. A total of 36 principals, 36 English resource teachers and 130 teachers will be invited to participate in this study.

Middle schools were selected for this study for a variety of reasons. The primary reason for choosing middle schools is because the accountability of No Child Left Behind has the greatest impact on middle school leaders. This is because the cornerstone of the testing happens to all students in grades 3-8 and impacts all middle school grades (McLeod, 2008). Also, as middle school students focus on academic performance, principals must also focus on "meeting the unique developmental needs of young adolescents who are undergoing tremendous cognitive, emotional, physical, and social change" (Valentine et al., 2004, p.1). These factors made middle schools an important and intriguing population for this study on school leadership.

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For the quantitative portion of the study, the Leadership Capacity School Survey (LCSS) noted by Lambert (2003a) was administered to English resource teachers, English teachers, and principals. The instrument was designed to confirm or disconfirm faculty perceptions regarding the existence of leadership capacity in schools and see if those theories are practiced. There are 30 questions on the survey: 7 questions addressed broad-based skillful participation in the work of leadership. There were four questions regarding shared vision results in program coherence; five questions on inquiry–based use of information to inform decisions and practice; four questions about the roles and actions that reflect broad involvement, collaboration, and collective responsibility; five questions on reflective practice that consistently leads to innovation; and five questions related to high or steadily improving student achievement and development.

For the qualitative design, focus group interviews were utilized. The ancillary qualitative investigation proceeded with one or more focus groups to include middle school English teachers, English resource teachers, and principals. The sessions were tape-recorded. An open-ended semi-structured moderator guide was used to facilitate the discussion of the research questions. The researcher used Lambert's conceptual framework as a lens for analysis. The data were transcribed and the transcripts were shared with the study participants to check for accuracy and verification. The reporting of the focus group material did not identify names of persons or individual schools.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined to provide the reader with a common language regarding the research study.

Adequate Yearly Progress

Adequate Yearly Progress is a provision of the No Child Left Behind Act that categorizes the annual academic performance in reading and mathematics that each school must reach. According to the law, all students must be proficient by the 2013 – 2014 school year.

Broad-Based Skillful Participation

Broad-based, skillful participation refers to the shared leadership of principals, teachers, parents, and students working together cooperatively and constructively towards a shared sense of purpose (Lambert, 2003a).

Capacity-building

Capacity building is defined as investing in and training individuals to work together in order to sustain a culture of success in spite of transitions, challenges, changes in leadership (Lambert, 2003a).

English Resource Teacher

An English Resource Teacher is certified in English and supervises the English department, serves as a curriculum liaison to the principal, and conducts teacher observations. For the purpose of this study, English Resource Teachers teach reading and writing. The resource teacher meets regularly with the school leadership team to discuss interests involving strategic priorities of the school and strategies that should be implemented to ensure that all groups of students meet success.

English Teacher

An English Teacher is certified in English and teaches reading and writing. This individual plans learning experiences for students and prepares instructional plans and materials to meet the needs of all students in the English class.

High Leadership Capacity

High leadership capacity is a term used to describe those schools that are characterized by collaborative, skillful work that results in high or steadily improving levels of student achievement. The descriptors of a school with "high" leadership capacity composed the six critical features (subscales) measured by the LCSS (Lambert, 2003a).

Lambert Model

This model is identified as having effective school leadership capacity behaviors *and labeling them as critical features. The six clustered features include: (1) using broad-based participation, (2) creating shared vision in program coherence, (3) exercising inquiry-based use of information to inform decisions and practice, (4) determining roles and actions that reflect broad involvement and collaboration, (5) employing reflective practice consistently leading to innovation, and (6) applying high or steadily improving student achievement and development.

Leadership

"Leadership involves the identification, acquisition, allocation, coordination, and use of the social, material, and cultural resources necessary to establish the conditions for the possibility of teaching and learning," according to Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2001, p.24).

Leadership Capacity

Leadership capacity is the broad-based skillful participation in the work of leadership and refers to the organization that has the capacity to lead itself and to sustain that effort when key individuals leave.

Leadership Capacity School Survey (LCSS)

The LCSS is a survey developed by Lambert in 1998 and revised in 2003 for the purpose of measuring the leadership capacity present in a school.

Low Leadership Capacity

This term is used to describe those schools characterized by low degrees of participation, functioning with low degrees of skill, resulting in poor or short-lived student achievement.

Meet Standards

Meets standards is when middle schools make adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years in reading.

Middle School

Middle Schools are schools with a configuration of grades six through eight that are separated administratively from elementary and high schools.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)

This is the legislation that reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) also known as Public Law 107-87 (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). NCLB focuses on (1) testing and achievement of all students, (2) adequate yearly progress, and (3) highly qualified teachers.

Principal

The principal is the chief executive officer of a school site who manages the instructional program.

Teacher Leadership

Teacher Leadership is the "process by which teachers, individually or collectively, influence their colleagues, principals and other members of the school community to improve teaching and learning practices with the aim of increased student learning and achievement" (York-Barr & Duke, 2004, p. 260).

Vision

Vision is defined as the unifying force that provides direction and gives focus for participants who work collaboratively for a common good (Lambert, 2003a).

Limitations and Assumptions

1. Parents, students, or supporting service personnel were not surveyed in ascertaining leadership capacity.

2. Though there is evidence that a professional community may reflect the creation of a supportive school climate that encourages student effort above and beyond (Wahlstrom, Louis, Leithwood, & Anderson, 2010), professional learning communities were not investigated in this study.

3. This study was limited to one selected school district in the mid-Atlantic states.

4. Participants in the study were restricted to English teachers and administrators in middle schools, grades 7 and 8. Participation in the study was voluntary and contingent upon the willingness of participants to complete and return a coded digital survey. All participants had district-

issued and controlled email addresses and, therefore, it was assumed that all participants would have access to the survey.

5.   It was also assumed that leadership capacity is present on all school leadership teams to some degree.

6.   It was assumed that participants would respond honestly to survey questions and that those responses would be true representations of the leadership capacity present on their school leadership teams.

7.   This study would be bound by time. Respondents were given two weeks to respond to the survey.

Delimitations of the Study

1.   The study was bound only to those leadership practices detailed in the conceptual framework.

2.   The study concentrated only on the leadership practices of middle school teachers and principals in a mid-Atlantic county. This study did not focus on elementary schools, high schools, or non-public schools.

3.   It should be noted that the researcher is a former middle school English teacher in the mid-Atlantic county where this study was conducted. Therefore, there might be a concern for the potential of researcher bias. To limit such bias, the researcher used multiple methods of collecting data.

This mixed method study focused on leadership exercised by those most directly responsible for student learning—principals and teachers. With Race to the Top (RTTT) legislation, it is understood that the principal is not able to focus on sustaining school leadership alone. Principals in the past have been central in providing leadership, but today principals have issues and duties that far exceed the time in school.

In short, the contribution of principal leadership to school effectiveness and school improvement is significant, but equally significant is that of teacher leadership

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(Wallace, 2002). Sharing goals and purpose requires a shift in thinking where leadership is concerned, according to Angelle (2010). Leadership capacity is essential for promoting successful school improvement and plays a part in school reform.

The middle school assessment (MSA) is a test of reading and math achievement that meets the testing requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind Act. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002) reform was created to hold educational agencies and states responsible for improving the quality of education for all students. These accountability provisions aimed to close the achievement gap between high- and low-achieving students, and attain equity in the achievement gaps between minority and non-minority students. The goal is for all students to achieve proficiency in mathematics and reading/language arts by the year 2014. The MSA test is given each year in early March and includes multiple-choice questions and questions requiring written responses. The MSA score is designed to show how well students learn reading and mathematics skills in the state curriculum.

The Leadership Capacity School Survey (LCSS) developed by Lambert (2003a) is used nationally and internationally as an assessment tool to measure the perceived presence of leadership capacity in schools. The study examined the teacher leaders and principals in 16 middle schools that did not achieve AYP status in reading. Also investigated were the 20 middle schools that met AYP status in reading.

Organization of Study

This mixed-method proposal is organized in five chapters. In chapter one, the overview, problem, and significance of the problem to be studied are introduced. Chapter two presents discussion of the relevant research that parallels the work of Lambert (2003a) on leadership capacity using the six critical elements. The literature review emphasizes research that resonates with leadership capacity and the characteristics that are embedded. Chapter three includes information about the mixed-method approach to

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the study, the selection of participants for the study, the survey instrument, the interview questions and the methods of data collection and analysis. The fourth chapter presents the results of the data analysis. The fifth chapter includes the conclusions and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The demands on school leaders have increased noticeably in recent years. There is growing recognition that the principal cannot lead alone (Smylie, Conley, & Marks, 2002). There is literature that strongly suggests the need to engage a significant number of classroom teachers to aid in instructional leadership, as one administrator cannot adequately serve as an impactful instructional leader for an entire school without that support (Elmore, 2000; Lambert, 2003a; Olsen, 2000; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001). School leaders today can no longer afford to serve as sole decision makers and holders of power. Models and practices of leadership that facilitate the leadership capacities of others must be developed.

Studies in England (Harris, 2002), Norway, and Australia (Gurr et al., 2005) have shown that improvement at the school level was achieved by involving a wide array of stakeholders in decision-making and leadership. Leaders must engage more effectively in wider collaboration with larger groups of people, even as greater internal responsibilities and problems continue to surface within schools (Beachum & Dentith, 2004). School leaders have to build more collaborative and democratic arrangements with teachers and others to achieve the enormous goals of schooling and respond to students' diverse needs. Research indicates that theories and models of teacher leadership could significantly add to school improvement (Beachum & Dentith, 2004).

This review of literature presents several concepts that invoke authors such as Lambert, Harris, Murphy, Spillane, Muijs and others who will attest to the multifaceted phenomenon of teacher leadership capacity and six features of leadership capacity identified by Lambert (2003a). Lambert (2003a) was used as the conceptual framework

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of this review to gather perspectives of behaviors and practices of teacher leaders and how they influence and help create a learning community in the school.

Lambert (2003a) identified six critical features of leadership capacity: (1) broad-based participation, (2) shared vision, (3) inquiry-based use of data, (4) broad involvement/collaboration, (5) reflective practice/innovation, and (6) high or steadily improving achievement. According to Lambert (2003a), principals who seek and value teachers' points of view; structure the concept of leadership to challenge teachers' belief systems; construct meaning through reflection and dialogue; build the life of the school around the Big Picture; and assess teacher learning in the context of the complexity of the learning organization have exemplary leadership capacity.

The leadership view of Lambert et al. (1995) is closely related to transformational leadership theory (Fullan, 2002; Sergiovanni, 1992). The term transformational leadership is used to represent leaders who influence, change, and promote the goals of the institutional members (Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership emphasizes communicating a convincing vision, expressing high performance expectations, envisioning self-confidence and articulating assurance that followers have the ability to achieve goals for the collective purpose (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006).

This review of research highlights the literature related to leadership capacity; teacher leadership; and the evolving role of principals and teacher leaders. The inquiry sought to ascertain to what extent students in grade 7 and 8 of middle school identified as at risk of not meeting state standards in reading differ from those in schools identified as meeting state standards in reading. The research explored theorists that agree and disagree with the various components of leadership capacity identified by Lambert (2003a) as depicted in Figure 2 (p.33). These areas of research form a compilation of characteristics and perceptions that teacher leaders will incur and drive the concept of

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whether good teacher leaders indirectly impact student achievement scores, as perceived by 7th and 8th grade English teachers, resource teachers and principals.

The Role of the Principal

The lines of traditional leadership (principals) roles and teacher roles are unclear. The complexity and size of school systems today are such that one leader cannot meet the pressures of daily tasks and difficulties (Angelle, 2010). Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) argue that the complexity of the task and the range of leadership skills required are substantial and beyond the scope of one individual to master. There is a fundamental link between the role of the principal and teacher leadership to bring consistency to reform and improve achievement (Chrispeels, Burke, Johnson, & Daly, 2008). The literature points to the school as being the unit of change (Harris & Chrispeels, 2006) and the principal creating teacher leaders who work collaboratively to carry out the multidimensional leadership roles.

The roles that administrators must complete are varied and include conceptual designs that have begun to emerge in the area of distributed leadership (Spillane, 2006). For example, Murphy (2006) partitions actions of administrators in the service of distributed leadership into the following categories: building strong relationships with teachers, rethinking conceptions of power, and fashioning organizational structures. It is also important to acknowledge that administrative leadership in schools has been shaped and hardened over the years in forms that are hardly conducive to shared conceptions of leadership (Crowther et al., 2002). Likewise, cultivating distributed leadership in a school is problematic at best. New conceptions of organizations provide the foundations for developing the skills to foster teacher leadership (Louis, Kruse, & Bryk, 1995).

Broad-Based Participation	Shared Vision	Inquiry-Based Use of Data	Broad Involvement Collaboration	Reflective Practice Innovation	High/Steadily Improving Achievement
Frost & Harris (2003)	Chrispeels, Burke, Johnson & Daly (2008)	Leithwood et al. (2007)	Katzenmeyer & Moller (2001)	Donaldson (2006)	Gabriel (2005)
DeFlaminis (2011)	Muijs & Harris (2007)	Teacher Leadership Standards (2010) Domain II	Little (2003)	Teacher Leadership Standards (2010) Domain III	Waters, Marzano, McNulty (2008)
Spillane (2001, 2004, 2006)	Crowther, Ferguson & Hann (2009)	Teacher Leadership Standards (2010) Domain V	Muijs & Harris (2007)	Wynne (2001)	Muijs & Harris (2007)
Pounder (2006)	Katzenmeyer & Moller (2001)	Elmore (2000)	Teacher Leadership Standards (2010) Domain I	Odell (1997)	Teacher Leadership Standards (2010) Domains IV & VII
Murphy (2005)	Angelle (2010)	Newman, King, & Young (2000)	Teacher Leadership Standards (2010) Domain VI	Johnson & Hynes (1997)	Blankstein (2004)
Lambert (2003)	Lambert (2003)	Lambert (2003)	Lambert (2003)	Lambert (2003)	Lambert (2003)

Figure 2. Research Supporting Lambert's Six Domains

There is also abundant evidence that the well-established structures of schooling are ribboned with barriers to distributed conceptions of leadership (Chrispeels, 1992); impediments, not surprisingly, that have a dampening effect on the emergence of shared leadership (Duke, 1994; Smylie et al., 2002). The consequence of this reality is that it is often difficult for administrators to see teachers as leaders and teachers to view themselves or their colleagues as leaders (Coyle, 1997). Administrators have to provide leadership on many levels, such as directive, laissez-faire, collaborative, and capacity-building, according to Lambert (2003b). As stated by Harris and Muijs (2003), capacity building is concerned with creating the conditions, opportunities and experiences for development and mutual learning. The theoretical constructs of Leithwood et al. (2004) differ slightly from Lambert's model of leadership capacity. Leithwood uses four primary tasks of leadership whereas Lambert's model has six elements. The two features that they both have in common are setting direction and developing people to build organizational capacity. In setting direction, Leithwood et al. (2004, p. 9) use two subthemes of shared purpose and goal setting and serving as communicators. These subthemes incorporate creating high performance expectations, monitoring organizational performance, and promoting effective communication.

In the Lambert model, the principal facilitates communication among all about the shared vision of the school; and within that continually creates, reinterprets, and deepens the indicators of progress toward that vision (Lambert, 2003a). In the Lambert model there resonates the same understanding that is seen in the Leithwood construct which points to broadening and reinforcing roles that involve multiple levels of responsibility. Where the Leithwood model focuses on the tasks that a principal should adhere to, Lambert has designed a model that provides essential behaviors for principals and teachers. Lambert's (2003a) model notes examples of teacher characteristics that engage others in visionary thinking and planning, promote collaborative decision making,

facilitate effective dialogue, and help colleagues to express confidence and shared values (Lambert, 2003a).

The principal is crucial in decision-making; however, teacher leaders in Lambert's (2003a) model promote consensus building as decisions are made. Other research suggests that a failure to reach agreement on decision-making roles can have negative consequences (Chrispeels, 2004; Martin & Chrispeels, 2004). The role of the principal is to develop leadership through providing opportunities, developing skills, and enhancing the desire to lead (Angelle, 2010). This also produces a joint responsibility of leadership for the purpose of the organization.

According to Silva, White, and Yoshida (2011), the trends in the research showed that the effects of principal leadership were stronger on in-school process than student achievement gains. Student achievement research before NCLB supported the view that a principal's leadership had a significant yet indirect effect on the success of individual students when the principal provided instructional leadership (Silva, White, & Yoshida 2011).

Another key mediating factor was the teacher perception of principal leadership (p. 776). As noted by Silva, White, and Yoshida (2011), there are significant correlations between higher levels of student motivation and teacher perceptions of principals as effective communicators of school goals and active supervisors of instruction. In short, according to Schoen and Fusarelli (2008), teachers' perceptions of their principal as an instructional leader were highly correlated with the reading achievement gains of students. According to Hallinger's (2005) review of empirical studies, the greatest principal effect on student achievement occurred when principals acted as instructional leaders in which they focused on defining school mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school learning climate. These findings resonate with the critical features of Lambert's (2003a) leadership capacity model.

Teacher Leadership

The notion of teacher leadership has come to prominence in educational literature primarily within the last two decades (Little, 2003). Teacher leadership theory has evolved over time with the literature speaking to the evolution in waves of leadership. According to Silva, Gimbert, and Nolan (2000) there are three waves and the first wave consists of teachers who serve in formal roles, basically managers (e.g., department heads, resource teachers), and they further the competence of the organization. Historically, Frymier (1987) also speaks to this wave with the department head being the archetypical teacher leader.

The second wave, as posited by Silva, Gimbert, and Nolan (2000), was for teacher leadership to capitalize more fully on instructional expertise by appointing teachers to roles such as curriculum leaders and staff developers. Currently, the third wave is emerging which recognizes teachers as essential to the process of reorganizing schools and maximizing teachers' instructional expertise. This third wave highlights a school culture that promotes collaboration and continuous learning among the school community. That same culture recognizes teachers as primary creators of school improvement with teacher leader involvement within and outside of the classroom (Ash & Persall, 2000).

This third wave is also the current view of teacher leadership and integrates both concepts of teaching and leadership, according to Pounder (2006). It is a process rather than a positional concept and recognizes that teachers, in the process of carrying out their duties, should be given the opportunity to express their leadership capabilities (p. 534). Furthermore, according to Sherrill (1999), the teacher leader should possess research-based knowledge about teaching and learning. This concept resonates with Lambert's model and critical features of reflective practice/innovation and as such the teacher leader is then able to cultivate desired dispositions in colleagues by engaging in reflective inquiry (Pounder, 2006). Other researchers also embrace this lens of focusing on

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improving learning and that this leadership stems from professional collaboration and development and growth (Frost & Harris, 2003; Harris & Muijs, 2003; Nettles & Herrington, 2007). Crowther's (1996) study of teacher leadership also describes teacher leaders as "individuals acclaimed not only for their pedagogical excellence, but also for their influence in stimulating change and creating improvement in schools" which is aligned with Lambert's (2003a) critical elements of reflective practice/innovation; and high or steadily improving achievement.

According to York-Barr and Duke (2004), this teacher leadership theory is situated in other conceptions of leadership including participative leadership, distributive leadership, leadership as an organizational quality, and parallel leadership. Teacher leadership is an expanded notion of leadership beyond traditional classroom boundaries according to various definitions (Beachum & Dentith, 2004). In agreement with Lambert's (2003a) model, some theorists state that teachers take more responsibility for decision making and activities outside of their classrooms (Blase & Blase, 2000; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996). Teacher leaders are those who are willing to work alongside building principals to imagine a better future, nurture hope and honesty, confront obstacles and impediments, and build community while improving the educational environment (Cranston, 2000). All of this research agrees with the critical features of Lambert's model which speak to shared vision, inquiry-based use of data, and broad involvement/collaboration.

There is data that suggests three central themes of teacher leadership (Beachum & Dentith, 2004). The themes that appeared are specific types of school structures and organizational patterns, particular process and identities practiced and shared among teachers, and thoughtful use of outside resources along with consistent, strong community relationships (p.279). These topics are consistent with Lambert's (2003a) model in the areas of broad involvement, collaboration, collective responsibility being

reflected in roles and actions. In addition, teachers in the emergent theories are urged to engage in risk-taking. The principal wants to showcase the talents of the faculty and support staff and is willing to share the school's successes with them. This philosophy is indicative of what is best for students and is seldom challenged (Beachum & Dentith, 2004). This research suggests several implications for educational administrators and is in agreement with Lambert's model (2003a).

According to Beachum and Dentith (2004), teacher leadership contributes to the practical knowledge of work on new theories of leadership in education. Developing theories of leadership urge school administrators to abandon ideologies and practices of linear management and control, and instead implement broader and more encompassing notions of leadership (Beachum & Dentith, 2004). The researchers agree with the theory that teacher leaders are guides in the development of sense making, inquiry, participation, and reflection among people (Lambert, 2002). Teacher leadership also may help dissolve the dichotomous debate that has placed management and leadership in opposition to one another (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 1996). Schools that promote teacher leadership do not isolate leadership and management (DeMaeyer, 2007). Both functions are performed by all and defined in a way that promotes shared responsibility and action which correlates with Lambert's (2003a) critical features of broad-based participation; shared vision; and broad involvement/collaboration. As Leithwood et al. (2004) argue, "The chance of any reform improving student learning is remote unless district and school leaders agree with its purposes and appreciate what is required to make it work" (p. 7).

Also on the forefront of the school leadership literature is the concept of distributed leadership. Unlike the study of leadership, focusing on the individual, distributed leadership examines the construct as an emergent property of interacting individuals (Bennett, Wise, Woods, & Harvey, 2003). Distributed leadership is "the

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sharing, the spreading, and the distributing of leadership work across individuals and roles across the school organization" (Smylie, Mayrowetz, Murphy, & Louis, 2007, p. 470). Lambert's (2003a) leadership capacity model follows the distributed leadership framework through the critical features of broad-based participation; shared vision; and broad involvement/collaboration. In harmony with this model, distributed leadership focuses on the goals of the group, rather than the actions of one (Copeland, 2003; Gronn, 1996). Teacher leadership in middle school has roots in collegiality, trust, and strong relationships and as such creates a climate where there are elements of success (Angelle, 2010). By developing leadership capacity there is an enhancement of providing leadership opportunities, developing skills and increasing the desire to lead for the joint responsibility and the shared vision of the organization. All this meshes with Lambert's (2003a) model of leadership capacity and the critical features of: (1) broad-based participation, (2) shared vision, (3) inquiry-based use of data, (4) broad involvement/collaboration, (5) reflective practice/innovation, and (6) high or steadily improving achievement.

Middle School Reading

The middle school concept was articulated in *Turning Points 2000: Educating adolescents in the 21st century* (Jackson & Davis, 2000) and provides a necessary lens for viewing middle school reading. There were several recommendations from this study and they centered on eight principles: (a) small learning communities, (b) a core of common knowledge, (c) an organizational structure for success, (d) teacher and principal responsibility for decision making (e) expert teachers for this age group, (f) promotion of adolescent health, (g) alliance with families, and (h) partnerships between school and community (Jackson & Davis, 2000). Strong evidence shows that achievement, as measured by grades for seventh graders, was predicted by internal motivations (intrinsic self-regulation) and by anxiety, even while literacy skills of reading and writing were

controlled statistically (Snow, Porche, Tabors, & Harris, 2007). The students with intrinsic goals recalled the text more fully and reported more involvement in reading than students with the extrinsic goals (Vansteenkiste et al., 2006).

According to Guthrie, Wigfield, and Klauda (2012), dedication to reading does not appear out of nowhere nor does it come merely from home. Dedication is highly connected to classroom experiences. These classroom experiences draw upon informational texts that contain disciplinary knowledge that is fundamental to the curriculum goals of a school district and state (p. 3). As noted by Guthrie, Wigfield, and Klauda (2012), these materials may embrace textbooks, other trade books, Web sites, and informational documents circulated by teachers. Dedication is part of the field of motivation as applied to the achievement in reading in schools. As shown by multiple researchers (Legault, Green-Demers, & Pelletier, 2006; Otis, Grouzet, & Pelletetier, 2005), school achievement is propelled by the motivations of identification and intrinsic motivation. Students who read because they identify with being a good student tend to be high achievers, and students who read widely for the pure pleasure of the process tend to be high achievers (p. 4). As stated by Guthrie, Wigfield, Klauda (2012), highly dedicated students are high achievers and the less dedicated students are lower achievers. In understanding informational text, Guthrie, Wigfield, Klauda (2012) noted that although high achievers like reading literature and fiction more than low achievers, simultaneously, high achievers dislike information books more than low achievers (p. 157).

Although this example highlights elementary school students, the same tenet can be applied. The principal's role in the implementation of the Reading First program and the reading achievement of 34,000 first graders in Florida sheds light on the direct effect of the behaviors of 388 principals on student achievement (Nettles, 2005). It was found that with increased implementation of effective reading intervention practices by

principals, there was a correlation with students' gains in additional words per minute and accelerated rates of fluency (Nettles, 2005). These results encourage the use of targeted interventions and might be the best strategy for achieving AYP.

The model of leadership capacity is framed within the middle school concept. According to Angelle (2010), part of the emphasis is on collegiality and a climate of trust and strong relationships, and also the members of the organization negotiate meanings and understandings. This is very evident among teachers that teach reading throughout the content areas. These members become empowered through their social participation in the organization (p.13).

In middle school the new challenge in reading is the length of the text. The words and sentences students read typically become longer and more difficult (Carnegie Council on Advancing Adolescent Literacy [CCAAL], 2010; Snow, 2012). In terms of vocabulary complexity alone, the most advanced words a 4th grade student might encounter are *reproduce* and *examples*, but a 7th grade student must cope with words like *ancestors* and *characteristics* (Biancarosa, 2012). These longer words also refer to more complicated, specific concepts. Simple sentences are replaced by complex compound sentences in more advanced textbooks (p. 24). In addition, the way that text incorporates and uses graphical representations changes as students enter middle school (Lee & Spratley, 2010).

Texts that students read vary as the content in each class varies (CCAAL, 2010; Heller & Greenleaf, 2007; Lee & Spratley, 2010). Reading comprehension expectations become more specialized (Greenleaf, Schoenbach, Cziko, & Mueller, 2001; Lee & Spratley, 2010; Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008). Teachers are also beginning to understand the distinct demands that digital reading places on students. According to Biancarosa (2012), digital reading should be positioned not as an extremity to already overwhelming teaching duties, but as integral to learning across all domains.

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In middle schools, the literature maintains that principals who provide a clear mission, involve stakeholders, and hold high expectations for student performance have the best chance of affecting reading achievement (Silva et al., 2011). The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were established so that there would be consistent learning goals for all students especially in English/Language Arts. Using that roadmap of clear expectations, English teachers, English resource teachers, and principals will have to focus on reading and writing grounded in evidence from the text. These standards will encourage teachers to build knowledge through content-rich nonfiction and informational texts in addition to supplying rigorous and complex literature to all students. The CCSS learning goals encourage all teachers and principals to improve student achievement and meet state accountability targets. These critical goals enable all staff to focus on student achievement as the school's primary work.

The eighth graders in Gentilucci and Muta's (2007) study reported higher levels of efforts and achieved better outcomes in reading regardless of their ethnicity, SES, or academic ability. By having achievement-based discussions this might be the effective approach that will help refocus teacher leaders' and principals' work in promoting reading achievement (p.791). This resonates with Lambert's (2003a) model of leadership capacity and the critical features of: (1) broad-based participation, (2) shared vision, (3) inquiry-based use of data, (4) broad involvement/collaboration, (5) reflective practice/innovation, and (6) high or steadily improving achievement.

While similar in some aspects, the learning-focused leadership framework speaks to five leadership support activities. Those activities include (1) Providing resources to enable leaders to sustain their instructional improvement work; (2) Creating and facilitating regular opportunities for leaders' professional learning; (3) Brokering relations with leaders' peers and colleagues engaged in similar work; (4) Responding in a coordinated and timely way to administrative, legal, political, or logistical issues facing

the school administrators; and (5) Sponsoring and legitimizing learning-focused leadership (Knapp, Copland, Honig, Plecki, and Portin, 2010). The difference between this leadership model and Lambert's (2003b) model is the idea of providing material and financial support, operational support (trouble-shooting or crisis management) and political support. Lambert (2003b) notes that leadership capacity takes on the ideas of modeling, coaching, scaffolding (which are content bridges), articulation, reflection, and shared decision-making. This framework is more akin to distributive leadership and shared decision-making models.

<div align="center">Leadership Capacity</div>

Looking at the leadership literature, the major theoretical principle driving this research is Lambert's (2003a) model of leadership capacity. The powerful principle behind leadership capacity research is the fact that leadership is the professional work of everyone (Lambert, 2003a). Leadership capacity, as defined by Lambert, evolved over time to redefine leadership as capacity-building (Lambert, 1998). Capacity building gives principals the ability to build teacher leaders; it is about ensuring that the school is a "self-developing force" (Senge, 1990), whereas, according to Lambert (2003a), leadership capacity is "broad-based, skillful participation in the work of leadership." This theory asserts that six vital features of leadership are necessary in order to attain a high level of leadership capacity (Pierce, 2007).

According to Pounder (2006), literature spanning 20 years studied by York-Barr and Duke (2004) suggests that the respect given to teacher leaders in their leadership roles is grounded solidly on their reputations as excellent classroom performers. Arguably, it is this respect that creates the atmosphere conducive to teacher leaders' exercise of their transformational qualities. In this context, inspection of teacher leaders' classroom behaviors using transformational leadership as a frame of reference could go some way to clarifying why excellent teachers tend to become teacher leaders (Snell &

Swanson, 2000) and, equally, why teacher leaders are generally excellent teachers. It is possible that these individuals possess transformational leadership qualities that lend themselves to effective performance in both the teaching and leadership areas.

Cultural change theory as stated by Harris and Muijs (2005) reinforces teachers' norms of excellence in their own work; helps clarify shared beliefs and values; encourages teacher collaboration; increases teacher motivation; and improves teachers' self-efficacy. Drawing on Lambert (2003a), leadership capacity is a shared purpose and builds on the foundation of constructivist leading. The complexity of the principals' role affirms the need to engage a significant number of classroom teachers as a team of instructional leaders. The traditional model of a one-person leadership (principal) leaves the substantial talents of teachers largely untapped. Improvement achieved under top-down leadership model is not easily sustainable; when the principal leaves, promising programs often lose momentum and fade away (DeFlaminis, 2011). This study maintains that teacher leadership has to encompass leadership capacity, whether or not teacher leaders have the opportunities to participate in broad-based decision making, to add to shared vision, to be collaborative and to reflect on beliefs and classroom practices. There is an underlying need to "distribute" the decisions and tasks within the middle school. The question remains that when good teachers do this, will higher achievement be noted on standardized tests?

Therefore, in the distributed view of leadership, schools are required to "decenter" the leader (Gronn, 2003) and to subscribe to the view that leadership resides not exclusively in the individual at the top, but in every person at entry level who in one way or another acts as a leader (Wahlstrom and Louis, 2008). According to Wahlstrom and Louis (2008), leadership practices that share power are believed to create greater motivation, increase trust and risk taking, and build a sense of community and efficacy among its members. Distributed leadership, therefore, means multiple sources of

guidance and direction, "following the contours of expertise in an organization, made coherent through a common culture," argues DeFlaminis (2011). It is the glue of a common task or goal—improvement of instruction—and a common frame of values for how to approach that task (Elmore, 2000). A linear, hierarchical model of leadership gives way to a model of leadership built on task expertise and the concept of the problem at hand. Thus, distributed leadership focuses on the goals of the group, rather than the actions of one (Copeland, 2003; Gronn, 1996) and this resonates with Lambert's (2003a) model of leadership capacity.

The elements of emerging teacher leadership, according to Lambert (2003a), are based on a continuum of dependent, independent, interdependent relationships toward leadership (which are the different stages of leadership capacity development). The leadership categories are adult development, dialogue, collaboration and organizational change (p. 35). Building on that leadership capacity takes commitment and the benchmarks include initiating new actions, solving problems, volunteering to take responsibility for issues or tasks, inviting other teachers to participate, listening to each other, admitting to mistakes and unsolved instructional issues, talking about children in a way that suggests that all can learn, and becoming more skillful in conversations, facilitation, asking inquiry questions, and teaching (p.37).

The idea of teacher leadership is now widely accepted by practitioners and researchers equally (Court, 2002; Gronn, 2000; Smylie, 1995). The assistance of teacher leaders changes instruction and learning in schools. Believing in whole-school success, Crowther, Kaagen, Ferguson and Hahn (2002) state that teacher leadership contributions alter teaching and learning in a school environment. In teacher leadership voices, Spillane (2006), Darling-Hammond (1996, 1998), Barth (2001), and others discuss the general trends of leadership. These trends include good practices such as reflection, collaboration,

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shared vision, and innovation and are used to create patterns of excellence in schools and are synonymous with Lambert's (2003b) model.

<div align="center">Models of Leadership Capacity</div>

Broad-Based Participation

Broad-based, skillful participation, in the view of Lambert (2003a), refers to the shared leadership of principals, teachers, parents, and students working together cooperatively and constructively towards a shared sense of purpose. In confronting broad-based participation, Frost and Harris (2003) suggest that enabling others to exercise leadership is an indispensable dimension of "capacity building" in which to cultivate learning and achievement at all levels of the organization (p. 479). The theoretical perspectives discussed by these researchers center on shared or distributive leadership. As indicated by DeFlaminis (2011), distributive leadership means multiple sources of guidance and direction. According to Spillane (2001, 2004, 2006), distributive leadership refers to events that are either understood by, and/or designed by, the members of the organization to influence impetus, knowledge, effect, and practice of other members of the group as they strive to do the core work of the organization. Both of these definitions are the underpinning of broad-based participation that Lambert denotes in her model of leadership capacity. This study encompasses the perception that teachers who are good teachers strive to work in broad-based participation on school leadership teams. The concept of teacher leadership is part of the broad-based participation and is acknowledged by several theorists.

Silva et al. (2000) reports how teacher leadership developed over time and in waves. Pounder (2006) suggests also that teacher leadership has developed over time and describes how some theorists maintain that this phenomenon includes three stages or "waves" (p. 533). In the beginning, the department head was the standard teacher leader

and then that role evolved (p.534). This model of the first wave maintained that these teacher leaders were viewed as executing someone else's decisions. The second wave of teacher leadership placed more emphasis on the instructional dimension of teaching and gave rise to positions such as team leader and curriculum developer, which separated teaching from leadership and had to do with "remote controlling of teachers" (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Shulman, 1987). According to Pounder (2006), the third wave relies on the process rather than a positional belief and recognizes that teachers, in the process of carrying out their duties, should have the opportunity to express their leadership tendencies. This argument, the third wave, coincides with Lambert's beliefs in broad involvement, collaboration and collective responsibility which hint to a focus on professionalism and collegiality (Lambert, 2003a p. 7).

Murphy (2005) also connects with this claim by advocating for essential ingredients needed in order for teacher leadership to function effectively. The features that the theorists attest to are structured under broad-based participation with all in the school working for the shared purpose. The Teacher Leadership Standards (2010) serve as a foundation of standards created to focus on the professional discussion about what constitutes the competencies that teacher leaders should possess and how teachers can support good teaching and promote student learning (Teacher Leadership Standards, 2010). The Teacher Leadership Standard (2010) that focuses on broad-based participation is Domain 1: Fostering a Collaborative Culture to Support Educator Development and Student Learning. This domain looks at developing a collaborative culture of collective responsibility in the school while promoting an environment of collegiality, trust, and respect that focuses on continuous improvement in instruction and student learning (p. 14). This description resonates with Lambert's (2003a) features of leadership capacity. Schools must use broad-based participation as they move on to involve teacher leaders in the decision-making process. By doing so, teachers are able to model leadership skills,

thereby providing for succession when the principal leaves. Teachers are able to work collaboratively in teams (large and small), attend to the learning of the entire school community and engage each other in prospects to lead.

Shared Vision

Shared vision is noted as having a presence on effective teams (Larson & LaFasto, 1989); however, a shared vision is critical in raising achievement (Chrispeels, Burke, Johnson, & Daly, 2008). Lambert (2003a) describes shared vision as the core values of participants and the hopes that they have for the school. As indicated by Lambert's research, a shared vision or purpose is an energizing experience and unifying force for participants. The factors that support shared vision in school improvement and reform are many in teacher leadership. The case study from Muijs and Harris (2007) states that school culture is considered a key element in securing increased levels of teacher leadership. Teachers must share best practices, work together in a collegial unit, and have a shared vision.

Shared decision-making is the impetus that principals and teacher leaders must embrace. Crowther, Ferguson and Hann (2009) state that shared leadership is necessary to have and that the development and sustainability is indivisible from strong principalship and supportive systemic frameworks. Murphy (2005) cites Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) in arguing that where teacher leadership thrives, administrators have teacher leadership take precedence and they also take risks to provide teacher leaders what they need. Shared decision-making is synonymous with parallel and distributed leadership skills. Crowther, Ferguson and Hann (2009) believe that shared leadership is a generic term, yet they do use it. The researchers prefer the term parallel leadership and believe that it builds school capacity (p. 67). The three essential characteristics of parallel leadership are mutual trust, a sense of shared purpose, and an allowance for individual expression. All of this allows discrepant and diverse voices to weigh in on matters of

importance in facilitating and creating organizational problem solving and school reform. When principals allow for this voice, they recognize the value (p. 57).

The research, especially by Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) and Frost and Harris (2003), points to cross-cultural leadership in schools and distributed leadership that will happen and allowing teachers to have the "capacity to exercise leadership." Shared vision is also seen in leadership as it strengthens professional community and teachers' involvement in the professional community, and in turn that fosters the use of instructional practices that are associated with student achievement (DeFlaminis, 2011). Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) argue that teacher leaders are those who, within and outside the classroom, associate with and add to a populace of teacher learners and leaders, and hearten others toward improved educational practice. This definition is one that they use after reviewing the literature, speaking to teacher leaders, and considering their wide experiences in the field of teacher leadership (p. 5).

Murphy (2005) suggests that defining teacher leadership is complex and problematic. He poses that leadership encompasses a vision. Yet Murphy asks, what is the work that teacher leaders need to accomplish in order to move the organization to that end (p. 15)? Murphy (2005) notes the various elements in teacher leadership and states that it is an evolving concept which is in the reform mode. Leadership must build on the collective capacity of school faculties to learn and work together towards a shared sense of purpose (Blankstein, 2004; DuFour & Eaker, 1998).

Leadership as capacity building has been researched for several years (Conzemius and O'Neill, 2001; Forbes, 2004; Philippon, 2001). Popular terms such as shared leadership, collective leadership, leadership density, participatory leadership, and distributed leadership were all terms that implied that leadership was no longer an individual matter, but rather, leadership was spread throughout an organization, according to Pierce (2007). The LCSS (Lambert, 2003a) is used to confirm or disconfirm

faulty perceptions regarding the presence of leadership capacity in schools to see if espoused theories are actually theories of practice.

Along with leadership capacity, Harris (2005) noted that leadership "resides in the human potential available to be released in an organization" (p. 256). As stated by Angelle (2010), those placed in positions of leadership require three elements for success: the desire to lead others, the skills necessary to lead others, and the opportunity to be in a position to lead. These ideas resonate with the argument that Lambert (2003a) asserts in leadership capacity. According to Angelle (2010), developing leadership through providing opportunities, developing skills, and enhancing the desire to lead also engenders a joint responsibility for the purpose of the organization. This purpose of the organization is the shared vision and brings coherence to programs, instruction, and learning habits. This shared purpose allows leadership to provide equitable learning experiences to *all* children and builds the capacity of all to nourish the best instructional practices.

Inquiry-Based Use of Data

Use of data over the last two decades has had many implications for accountability and teacher leadership. Research has well established that focusing on instructional leadership is a key strategy for school improvement and that supporting school-based leaders plays a crucial role in improving lower achieving schools (Elmore, 2000; Newman, King, & Youngs, 2000). Middle school data through the Middle School Assessment (MSA) in a mid-Atlantic state is paramount and more influential given the Race to the Top initiatives. Leithwood and his colleagues (2007) likewise found that school leadership has a greater influence on schools and students when it is widely distributed and schools with the highest student achievement attributed it, in part, to distributed sources of leadership (i.e., school teams, parents, and students). The Teacher Leadership Standard (2010) that focuses on inquiry-based data would be Domain II:

Accessing and Using Research to Improve Practice and Student Learning and Domain V: Promoting the Use of Assessments and Data for School and District Improvement.

Teacher leaders in Domain II would access and use research to select appropriate strategies to improve learning. These teacher leaders would also analyze student learning data and interpret the results. Teacher leaders would support colleagues to collect, analyze, and communicate data from their classrooms to improve teaching and learning. Incorporating Domain V, teacher leaders would advance to identifying and using multiple assessment tools that are aligned to state and local standards (p. 18). In this study the MSA would be the state standard to be used in Reading and Math. Those teacher leaders would be measured as to the implementation, scoring, and interpretation of student data along with critical reflection that would engage all colleagues at the school level.

Broad Involvement/Collaboration

Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) report that asking teachers to become leaders is paramount and essential; they are the largest entity to touch teaching and learning in the school, and the closest to students. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) maintain that teacher leadership has three major facets: leadership of students or other teachers; leadership of operational tasks; and leadership through decision-making or partnership. While Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) state that teacher leadership can be conceptualized as a set of behaviors and practices that are undertaken collectively, Muijs and Harris (2007) define teacher leadership as the formal leadership roles that teachers undertake that have both management and pedagogical responsibilities. These roles include department and subject coordinator. The informal roles tend to be team leaders or developers of action research groups (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001).

In the United States, teacher leadership, formally and informally, is not uniform in the tradition of inspiring collaboration, innovation, or promoting professional development (Little, 2003). While infrequent in practice, Little (2003) asserts to the

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several characteristics of effective schools. Little (2003) reports of staff consistently devoted to having mutual planning time to discuss issues of teaching and learning. Teacher leaders are explicit and consistent in stating the value of working together on educational issues and groups, implementing precise practices and routines to correct reform goals and problems (p. 415). Also reported was that teachers needed to maintain relationships with professional organizations that would supply the resources needed for their work (p. 416).

Many factors described by Muijs and Harris (2007) support the development of teacher leadership. These factors include instituting structural changes such as providing time and ensuring plentiful and diverse opportunities for continuous professional development. Improving teachers' self-confidence to act as leaders in their schools is another important factor (Clemson-Ingram & Fessler, 1997; Gehrke, 1991). Collaborating with other teachers helps to develop teachers' confidence and reflection on their practice (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). Improvement of school teacher leadership also means incorporating and cultivating a number of interpersonal factors such as relationships with other teachers and school management (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001).

Teacher leadership, in embracing school reform, includes the theories of professionalism and collegiality where teachers improve the educational climate in the school. According to Silva et al. (2000), it is the ability of a teacher leader to "navigate the structures of schools, nurture relationships, model professional growth, encourage change, and challenge the status quo" (p.22). The domains from the Teacher Leadership Standards (2010) that resonate with this concept are Domain VI: Improving Outreach and Collaboration with Families and Community and Domain I: Fostering a Collaborative Culture to Support Educator Development and Student Learning. These domains embrace Lambert's (2003a) critical element by including having a working understanding of different backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures, and languages in the school community (p.

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19). Collaboration with those families is also underscored in this domain to develop the strategies to improve learning for all students. In Domain I the teacher leader is modeling several effective skills such as listening, using group processes, managing conflict and creating an inclusive culture that supports student learning (p. 14). Other testaments of this broad collaboration are noted in the research.

1. Teacher leadership is collaborative work (Lieberman, 1987; Suleiman & Moore, 1997). "Teachers are interested in leadership opportunities that allow them to collaborate with their colleagues" (Wasley, 1992, p. 54) and they "thrive best in an atmosphere of cooperation and collaboration" (Fay, 1992, p. 59).

2. Teacher leadership is co-constructed. It is a co-learning process (Kilcher, 1992). "For teacher leadership to work, the source of power and authority [has] to be granted to the leaders by their colleagues—those they wish to lead" (Wasley, 1992, pp. 52-53). "Only with such authorization will the leaders actually have the potential to change practice" (p. 54).

Reflective Practice/Innovation

Donaldson (2006) speaks to reflective practice in the form of creating relationships and stating that these conversations among colleagues are extremely important as they emerge from teacher leaders. This informal engagement in practice is a vital and energetic asset to the leadership of schools and agrees with Lambert's (2003b) tenets of collaborative planning, network building, and process accountability. Donaldson (2006) attests to teacher leaders' engagement in the classroom work that places them both to see the teaching portion of the school's field and also to shape collegial norms by representing and advocating. In addition, teacher leaders are often influential professional models for their peers. Teacher leaders are exceptionally positioned to name key

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challenges to the school's instructional improvement and to engage others in exploring

practice and committing to improvement (p.100).

Teacher leaders can be dismissed or openly resisted by colleagues, often with

little apparent consequence for those colleagues, but with great consequence to staff

commitment and collective purpose, (Donaldson, 2006). The challenge for teacher

leaders is to make room in the leadership relationship for colleagues who doubt or hold

different opinions (p. 102). This is part of the reflective practice that leads to innovation.

Reflective in nature is effective teaching and it is a prelude to teacher leadership.

"One cannot be an effective teacher leader if one is not first an accomplished teacher"

(Odell, 1997, p. 122) and "teaching, learning, and leadership are inextricably linked"

(p.122). Teacher leadership makes a difference. Teacher leaders are more likely to

change classroom practices than other teachers (Johnson & Hynes, 1997, p. 108).

Creighton (1997, p. 3) asserts that while improving instruction, teacher leaders improve

student achievement; while they are improving their practices, teacher leaders are bent on

continuous improvement. This is noted also in the Teacher Leadership Standards (2010)

through Domain III: Promoting Professional Learning for Continuous Improvement. This

domain has the teacher leader functioning in a collaborative basis which is job-embedded

and sustained over time. It also uses the reflective stance by asking the teacher leader to

provide constructive feedback to colleagues and to analyze and disseminate their own

work and data. Other researchers pose the same statements for continued learning and

reflection.

The qualities that Wynne (2001) states that are necessary for teacher leadership

include: (1) exhibiting expertise in their instruction, (2) consistently moving on a

professional learning curve, and (3) reflecting on their work. Along with those

characteristics it is important for teacher leaders to engage in uninterrupted action

research; collaborate with their peers, parents, and communities; become socially

conscious and politically involved; mentor teachers; become more involved at universities in the preparation of pre-service teachers; and become risk-takers who participate in school decisions (p. 6). The professional learning curve is a part of the career lattice phenomenon of moving ahead, yet staying in the classroom.

High or Steadily Improving Achievement

According to Gabriel (2005, p. 20) a powerful strategy for improving achievement is nurturing teacher leadership. Inviting teachers to participate in the decision-making process by elevating them to leadership roles should be viewed as a means to accomplish significant change in the field of education (p. 156). It is now widely accepted that to improve schools, invest in teacher leadership and build the capacity for improvement by distributing leadership tasks to teachers (Leech & Fulton, 2008).

The development of leadership capacity leads to school improvement and student achievement (Blankstein, 2004; Collins, 2001; Lambert, 1995, 1998, 2003a). If this is true, then it is important to assess the presence of leadership capacity among resource teachers that sit on school leadership teams. This becomes an indicator of school improvement potential. The Leadership Capacity School Survey (LCSS, 2003) will measure specifically the phenomenon of leadership capacity. High or steadily improving student achievement is one of the six critical features of a school with high leadership capacity (Lambert, 2003a). The concept of leadership capacity is linked to improved and sustained student performance (Newmann & Wehlege, 1995). Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2008) attested to the fact that leadership had a high predictive influence on the academic success of students. Elmore (2000) states that it is the glue of the common task or goal that helps to improve achievement.

The Teacher Leadership Standards (2010) use Domain IV: Facilitating Improvements in Instruction and Student Learning and Domain VII: Advocating for

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Student Learning and the Profession. These domains again look at student data to improve instruction and make connections to research-based effective practices. The teacher leaders address the student learning needs and promote instructional strategies that ensure that individual student learning is the central focus. In order to promote high achievement these educators are advocates for access to all assets, whether financial or human resources. Although Lambert (2003a) does not include distributive leadership by name in her critical elements, there is a body of research that states it is necessary to provide positive student outcomes.

Harris and Muijs (2003) state that distributive leadership was more likely to have an effect on the positive achievement of student outcomes than leadership that was largely, or exclusively, "top-down." Work by Silins and Mulford (2002) similarly suggests that student outcomes are more likely to improve where leadership sources are distributed throughout the school community and where teachers are in areas of importance to them (p. 6). It is also known that high-performing countries systemically identify and nurture leadership talent. A 2008 report from the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) states:

> High-performing and improving systems provide teachers regular and effective professional development that directly addresses the instructional challenges where they teach. Systematically seek out leadership talent and provide effective training that will enable prospective school principals to lead schools to higher achievement (p. 10).

Other researchers also espoused to having teacher leadership and that by having high quality teacher leadership it is implied that achievement will increase. Teacher leadership is grounded in classrooms (Fay, 1992; McLaughlin & Yee, 1988; Wasley, 1991). Little (1988) noted that teachers who aspire to lead must be able to exhibit their own mastery of classroom challenges. Teacher leadership is powerful because it has the

potential to contribute to the improvement of school effectiveness and the improvement of teachers' morale and the quality of their work. It also can be conducive to breathing new life into the teaching profession. The research aim that Frost and Harris (2003) prescribe to is identifying and evaluating the strategies for encouraging and "scaffolding" teacher leadership (p.494). Lambert (2003a) argues about a new definition of teacher leadership that allows teachers to consider themselves as leaders using a reflection and dialogue leadership posit (p. 2). According to Muijs and Harris (2007) teacher leadership seems to operate best when there are high degrees of trust. As argued by Pounder (2006), this trust lends itself to theories of transformational leadership qualities in the classroom that lead to the perception that they are exemplary teachers.

At the crux of leadership, teacher leadership, and leadership capacity is the understanding that it will lead to school improvement and reform. Teacher leadership often is connected to more effective schools (Smylie et al., 2002) and there is a belief that shared leadership "should produce youngsters that learn more" (Copland, 2003).

Case studies from Muijs and Harris (2007) suggest that for teacher leadership to be successful it has to be carefully orchestrated and become a deliberate process in the school. They also maintain there needs to be a deep-seated cultural shift in the vision and values of the organization and the culture of the school needs to be deeply embedded in the work to be done. For teacher leadership to become a reality, teachers must be given real support for their work. It is important that teachers are both willing and sufficiently skilled to take on leadership roles (p.130). These leadership skills are learned and developed, according to Muijs and Harris (2003); however, teachers need strong support and specific forms of professional development of staff for success to occur in the classroom (p.130).

Another key factor is the support from school management, whether executive staff or departmental (p.124). The researchers state that there are opportunities for

teachers to take the initiative and lead the school improvement movement. It could be argued that in order to meet the challenges of leading today's schools, leaders must rely more on applying elements from research of cultural, transformational, participatory leadership. To this end, Sergiovanni (1992) proposed that the traditional view of schools as formal organizations is a constraint on school improvement.

<div align="center">Limitations in the Research</div>

Teacher leadership theory has several threads that researchers have written about over the years. Morale is one of the lynchpins that researchers focus on. Thomas (1997) states the principal is the key to change. Moreover, studies have found that staff morale is one of the three criteria of principal's effectiveness (p. 18). Research states that administrative leadership style is often a key factor and that attitudes and beliefs can positively or negatively affect faculty morale (p.25). With this leadership style identified by Thomas (1997), it has resulted in teachers accepting more responsibility for leadership within the school.

According to Leithwood et al. (1999), the key factors that the researchers take into account are: construction of the professional role of teachers, organizational environment that includes structures, culture and social capital, and the element of personal capacity (p. 488). These categories play a part in the framework of the investigation of teacher leadership. The personal capacity includes authority, knowledge, situational understanding, and interpersonal skills. The particular areas of research that influence this study are: leadership, teacher leadership, leadership capacity inclusive of Lambert's (2003a) survey, collective capacity, empowerment, and principals/teacher leader perceptions and school improvement.

In summary, the researchers maintain that there is a consensus in the literature about leadership even though the concept is an intangible concept. Practitioner inquiry regarding teacher leadership has moved toward a research agenda. Frost and Harris

(2003) investigate the emerging discourse of teacher leadership in the U.K. They hold

that teacher leadership is influencing (Leithwood et al., 1999).

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

As roles of teacher leaders and principals deepen and strengthen, successful school improvement evolves into a sustainable capacity-building process. Instructional change requires that teachers and principals work together and create recurring patterns for school improvement. Middle school English teachers, English resource teachers and principals can play a role in creating high-quality reading instruction; Youngs and King (2002) report that although individual teacher knowledge of content, process, and pedagogy is necessary for effective classroom practice, to promote achievement among all students, teachers must employ their individual talents to advance the collective work of their schools (p. 645). Conversely, a better understanding of the leadership capacity practices of the team in middle schools is needed to support those schools in their efforts to improve student reading achievement.

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the procedures used to examine the extent to which leadership practices differ in middle schools identified as at risk for not meeting state standards in reading and those meeting state standards. This chapter presented the methodology for this study. It includes the research questions and overview of the research design, a description of the study population, a discussion of the instrumentation, and the methods and procedures used for collecting and analyzing the data.

Overview of Research Methods

For this research study, the data were collected using a mixed-method approach that included both quantitative and qualitative methods. The data were gathered through the use of a survey and focus groups to answer the research questions.

The first stage of this research concentrated on quantitative methods. This quantitative section of the study included the administration and collection of survey results. Lambert (2003a) developed a survey, Leadership Capacity School Survey (LCSS), based on six clustered elements. The clustered elements include: (1) using broad-based participation, (2) creating shared vision in program coherence, (3) exercising inquiry-based use of information to inform decisions and practice, (4) determining roles and actions that reflect broad involvement and collaboration, (5) employing reflective practice consistently leading to innovation, and (6) applying high or steadily improving student achievement and development. For this study, this survey was used to measure school leadership practices and behaviors from the viewpoints of two different sets of middle school English teachers, English resource teachers, and principals. The data from the survey were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

The second source for data collection was focus group interviews of English teachers, English resource teachers, and principals. Focus groups were used to obtain participants' perceptions of middle school reading and school leadership. According to Merriam (1998), focus groups allow for the opportunity to collect data about a lived experience and the ability to explore topics and generate hypotheses from the participants' perspective as compared to other forms of qualitative research (Morgan, 1988). Using Moustakas' (1994) approach this phase of the research focused on the qualitative methods. This approach uses analysis of significant statements and develops what Moustakas (1994) calls an essence description. This essence description looks to develop patterns and relationships of meaning (Creswell, 2009). There were statements, meanings, and clusters of themes among English teachers, English resource teachers, and

principals in middle schools with the following headings: Broad-Based Participation, Shared Vision, Inquiry-Based Use of Data, Broad Involvement/ Collaboration, Reflective Practice/Innovation and High or Steadily Improving Achievement. In order to describe persons' stories, behavior, organizational function, or interactional relationships, the use of qualitative analysis is warranted (Creswell, 2009; LeCompte & Pressle, 1993; Merriam, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Research Design

The design used in this study is a mixed-method procedure in which quantitative and qualitative data are collected. The researcher used the static-group comparison strategy, one of the most common mixed method designs that utilizes "two different groups in an attempt to confirm, cross validate, or corroborate findings within a single study," and where data "collection is concurrent, happening in one phase of the research study" (Creswell, 2003).

Campbell and Stanley (1963), in their article *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for research,* said that eight sources of internal validity are of concern in all designs. They said that in terms of static-group comparison, the design controls for the following threats to internal validity: history, testing, instrumentation, and regression. It does not control for selection, mortality, and interaction of selection and maturation. They are uncertain whether it controls for maturation itself. This design does not control for one threat to external validity, interaction of selection and x. The other three—interaction of testing and x, reactive rearrangements, and multiple x interference—are not relevant. This formative study was primarily concerned with internal generalizability to the school district in which it was conducted. Therefore, the threats to external validity are of less concern. In terms of internal validity, Campbell and Stanley said that it does not control for selection. The researcher believed that it may do so, because all of the participants for this study came from very similar backgrounds

((i.e., they are all educators and are English teachers, English resource teachers, or principals).

Creswell (2003) states that this traditional mixed - methods model is advantageous because it is familiar to most researchers and results in well-validated and substantiated findings. In addition, the concurrent data collection results in a shorter data collections time period as compared to one of the sequential approaches (p. 217).

In *Qualitative research in the study of leadership*, Klenke (2008) writes that mixed method designs often eliminate some of the problems associated with single methods. She writes, "By utilizing quantitative and qualitative methods within the same study, mixed methods research in leadership can incorporate the strength of both methodologies" (p. 160). Klenke proposes the following reasons for considering mixed method design:

1. Triangulation – focusing on how one design complements the other,
2. Preparation – using qualitative research in order to "pave the way" for quantitative research,
3. Complementarity – seeking further development of the results of one research method with the research results of the other,
4. Expansion – combining data in order to develop other data sets,
5. Initiation – discovering contradictions within methods, and
6. Development – using the outcomes from one method to develop results for the second method. (Klenke, 2008, p. 157)

Study Setting

Sims County* has a population of 971,777 (according to the 2011estimate) and a landmass of 497 square miles. In the mid-Atlantic section of the United States, this county is diverse, but affluent. The population composition is 64.0% white, 18.0% Hispanic, 18.0% African American, and 14.0% Asian. According to the 2010 Census the

county grew in population by 11.0% since 2000. The minority and immigrant population grew from 19% of the total population in 1990 to over 40% in 2001. In Sims County, the black or African American community is slightly larger with 18.0% of the population compared to the Hispanic population of 18.0%.

A nine-member Board of Education is the county's educational policymaking body. The Sims County residents elect seven county residents for a four-year term and secondary school students elect a student member. The Board of Education directs the operation of the school system and oversees local education expenditures from the county's state and federal sources. It also monitors the implementation of the school system's strategic plan, reviews the work of the superintendent of schools, and grants applications, purchases, land acquisitions, and school construction repairs and alterations.

The Sims County school district serves a diverse student body. Over 32.3% of the students receive free and reduced-price meals (FARMS) with 13.1% in English programs for speakers of other languages (ESOL). There are 11.9% of students receiving special education services. In FY12 Sims County school district had 11,593 teachers, one of the largest 20 school districts in the United States with 146,497 students. There are 86.9% of teachers who have a master's degree or equivalent. The student demographics for 2011-2012 were African American, 21.2%; American Indian, 0.2%; Asian American, 14.3%; Hispanic, 26.0%; and White, 33.7%. As Sims County looks to the future, the projected enrollment in 2013 will be 145,622 students. Organizationally, the school district is divided into six regions—two rural, three suburban and one urban. Each region is comprised of a cluster of high schools with feeder middle and elementary schools.

During the 2011-2012 school year the system had 200 schools which included 38 middle schools (grades 6–8) and a school leadership team in each school. The school leadership teams are generally defined as those groups that make instructional decisions in the school for the humane caring, and multicultural democracy of all students. The

leadership team is the core group that has primary responsibility for collaborative decision making with the administration on the instructional program. The populations that answered the survey questions were grade 7 and 8 English teachers, English resource teachers and principals of 36 middle schools in Sims County. Two middle schools were not included in the study due to reorganization and restructuring of these schools; they had not met state AYP standards of proficient for several years.

The researcher identified 36 middle schools to study, 20 of which met state standards and 16 that did not meet state standards. The response rate was 38.5% for English teachers; 55.5% for English resource teachers; and 69.4% for principals. The researcher concluded that this was an acceptable rate, given the fact that the study was conducted in November while middle schools were nearing vacation breaks.

Chapter IV presents the results of the data analysis. This mixed-method study was designed to investigate the extent to which leadership practices differ in middle schools identified as at risk of not meeting state standards in reading and in middle schools identified as meeting state standards in reading. The conceptual framework of this study is built on the assumption that the practices of English teachers, English resource teachers, and principals have a significant influence on the learning community of a school.

<div align="center">Research Questions and Statistical Hypotheses</div>

Prior to beginning the research, the following research questions were developed to provide the structure for data collection and analysis.

Research Question 1

From the perspective of middle school (Grades 7, 8) English teachers, are there differences in their perceptions regarding the six leadership domains between those

middle schools identified as at risk of not meeting state standards in reading and schools identified as meeting state standards in reading?

Statistical Hypothesis 1

From the perspective of middle school (Grades 7, 8) English teachers, there are no statistically significant mean differences in their perceptions regarding the six leadership domains between those middle schools identified as at risk of not meeting state standards in reading and schools identified as meeting state standards in reading?

Research Question 2

From the perspective of middle school English resource teachers, are there differences in their perceptions regarding the six leadership domains between those middle schools identified as at risk of not meeting state standards in reading and schools identified as meeting state standards in reading?

Statistical Hypothesis 2

From the perspective of middle school English resource teachers, there are no statistically significant mean differences in their perceptions regarding the six leadership domains between those middle schools identified as at risk of not meeting state standards in reading and schools identified as meeting state standards in reading?

Research Question 3

From the perspective of middle school principals, are there differences in the perceptions of principals regarding the six leadership domains between those middle schools identified as at risk of not meeting state standards in reading and schools identified as meeting state standards in reading?

Statistical Hypothesis 3

From the perspective of middle school principals, there are no statistically significant mean difference regarding the six leadership domains between those middle schools identified as at risk of not meeting state standards in reading and schools identified as meeting state standards in reading?

Research Question 4

What are the curriculum and instructional issues faced daily by middle school principals, English resource teachers, or English teachers, who are concerned with providing leadership to students in English? Are there differences in these curricular and instructional issues between successful middle schools and those middle schools identified as not meeting state standards?

Procedures

Following the approval of the dissertation proposal by the research committee and the University's Human Subjects Review Board, the researcher requested permission from the school system's research division to conduct the study. This research venture was conducted in a school system within a mid-Atlantic state. Thirty-six middle schools were solicited from the Sims County* School System—20 schools that met state standards in reading and 16 schools that were at risk for not meeting state standards in reading (AYP) based upon state website records.

The research topic was chosen for two reasons. First, there is very little research on school leadership at the middle school level. Second, there is even less research on leadership in teaching reading at the middle school level, although success in reading is considered a marker for success in high school or for graduation.

The selection of the 36 middle schools occurred after consultation with the school system's Applied Research Unit section of the Office of Shared Accountability. One hundred thirty English teachers, 36 English resource teachers, and 36 principals provided

an adequate sample size for the quantitative survey portion of this study. The larger number of English teachers was included to ensure a better representation of the perceptions of teachers within the school sample.

Three English teachers, three English resource teachers, and three principals from each of the two school groups (those that met state standards in reading and those that are at risk for not meeting state standards in reading) were chosen for the focus group interviews. Three focus groups were formed—one for English teachers, one for English resource teachers, and one for principals.

Instrumentation

Lambert's (2003a) survey instrument was designed to measure the extent that teachers and staff in schools exhibit leadership capacity behaviors in the following six critical elements: broad-based participation; shared vision; inquiry-based use of information to inform decisions and practice; roles that reflect broad involvement, collaboration, and collective responsibility; reflective practice that leads to innovation; and high steadily improving student achievement.

The survey that Lambert (2003a) developed uses a five-point Likert scale which consists of thirty questions. A survey using a Likert scale "states the issue or opinion and obtains the respondents' degree of agreement or disagreement. The Likert scale provides answers to the survey in the form of coded data that are comparable and can readily be manipulated," according to Alreck and Settle (1995, p. 117). The answers on the 1-5 scale are noted below.

    1 = We do not do this at our school.

    2 = We are starting to move in this direction.

    3 = We are making good progress here.

    4 = We have this condition well established.

    5 = We are refining our practice in this area.

According to the survey information sheet, respondents were asked to indicate their perspective about leadership capacity and depict the needs of the English teachers, English resource teachers and principals at the middle schools. The survey also included items requesting demographic information from the participants. Of the 30 questions on the survey, 7 questions addressed broad-based skillful participation in the work of leadership, four questions addressed shared vision results in program coherence; five questions asked about inquiry–based use of information to inform decisions and practice; four questions were about the roles and actions that reflect broad involvement, collaboration, and collective responsibility; five questions asked about reflective practice that consistently leads to innovation; and five questions were related to high or steadily improving student achievement and development.

Pierce (2007) verified the reliability, construct validity, and internal consistency overall that was seen in this instrument. This researcher chose this instrument because it has been nationally/internationally applied. Pierce (2007) advocated that the survey serve as a springboard to examine whether there is truly a relationship between leadership capacities and improved or continued high levels of student achievement (p. 108). Her analysis led to the reporting of the results of item-total analysis and Cronbach's alpha, which included item total correlations and internal consistency results. Pierce (2007) concluded that findings from the calculation of Cronbach's alpha indicated that the LCSS (Lambert, 2003a) overall had a reliability factor of .97 which represented a very high level of internal consistency. The reliability factors for all six original subscales of the LCSS (Lambert, 2003a) were also found to be very high, ranging from .867 to .919 as reported by Pierce (2007). All results were reported overall and subscale of the original LCSS (Lambert, 2003a). Results of a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) examined the mean differences overall and subscale of the LCSS (Lambert) by faculty status. The

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analysis of data ended with the results of a Tukey HSD post-hoc multiple comparison analysis (Pierce, 2007).

The summary of findings displayed that the LCSS (Lambert, 2003) in its original form was a highly reliable instrument and 29 of the 30 items of the LCSS were valid at 0.4 level (Pierce, 2007). It is a highly reliable instrument if used for the purpose designed by Lambert (2003a), specifically that it is a tool to be used for self-assessment and collaborative reflection (Pierce, 2007, p. 105). The results from this assessment can be used to open conversations and dialogue about whole-school improvement and identify the professional development needs of the school as a whole (Pierce, 2007).

Data Collection

After receiving approval of the dissertation proposal by the research committee and the University's Human Subjects Review Board, the researcher requested permission from the school system's research division to conduct the study. After written consent to conduct the study was obtained from the school system, a letter with a request for participation (Appendix A) was mailed to all identified subjects. This letter, which included an invitation to respond to the survey, was sent to 130 English teachers, 36 English resource teachers, and 36 principals. Subjects were asked to sign the additional informed consent document prior to responding to the survey (Appendix B). By using a survey the researcher had the economy of design and the speedy turnaround of data collection (Creswell, 2003 p. 154). The digital survey enabled teacher leaders to self-report their leadership capabilities. It queried teacher leaders and principals as to their perceptions of current practices within their schools. The researcher's intent in the survey was to discover the connection between leadership capacity and advanced/proficient scores in Reading on the Middle School Assessment as per discussion with the survey's author (L. Lambert, Personal Communication, August 2, 2011). The researcher maintained that if four out of six domains displayed a significant statistical difference

then the quantitative analysis findings would be viewed statistically significant for each group and category.

The sample of English teachers, English resource teachers and middle school principals representing both groups of schools was asked to participate in a focus group discussion. An initial request for participation in a focus group (Appendix C) was emailed to all identified subjects. The invitation to the focus groups was sent to six English teachers, six English resource teachers and six principals inviting them to participate in the focus groups. Subjects (18) were asked to sign the informed consent to agree to respond to the focus group questions (Appendix D).

The qualitative discussion with focus groups was taped and transcribed. Focus group interviews were arranged at a time and location convenient to the participants and were conducted by the researcher. Each focus group lasted one hour. The responses were coded, based upon the questions they addressed and the variables of the individual respondents in the groups. Focus group data were analyzed by the researcher and sorted by topics, clusters, and patterns.

The following are statements from the survey that were addressed in the focus groups.

A. Broad-based participation in the work of leadership.

In our school, we:

- Perform collaborative work in large and small teams
- Model leadership skills

B. Shared vision results in program coherence.

In our school, we:

- Develop our school vision jointly
- Ask each other questions that keep us on track with our vision

C. Inquiry-based use of information to inform decisions and practice.

In our school, we:

- Make time available for this learning to occur (e.g., faculty meetings, ad hoc groups, teams)

- Focus on student learning

The following questions guided this research:

1. Based on correlational analyses, which of Lambert's (2003a) six critical elements are most commonly practiced among schools in which there are advanced or proficient scores on the MSAs as perceived by teacher leaders?

2. Which of Lambert's (2003a) six critical elements are most commonly practiced among schools in which there are advanced or proficient scores on the MSAs as perceived by principals?

3. To what extent is there agreement between the perceptions of principals and teacher leaders of the same district on the six critical elements of leadership capacity and do those middle schools have advanced or proficient scores on the MSAs?

Anticipated Ethical Issues in the Study

During the qualitative focus groups, the researcher was open to questioning and provided explanations of the process, so that the intentions were clearly understood by all involved. Information which could be harmful to the participants was not reported for the study (Valli & Buese, 2007). The researcher solicited questions in a manner that none of the collected information was identified with a particular individual, school, or whether or not AYP standards were met. University and school district ethical protocols were respected throughout the project. The ethical issue was to protect the respondents' confidentiality through their answers on paper digitally. Questions that will need to be answered in the future are:

1.   How do principals solicit teachers to participate on leadership teams?

2.   What characteristics do principals look for in teacher leaders in general?

Summary

In summary, this chapter has outlined the procedures of inquiry that were used to investigate the extent to which differences in leadership practices and behaviors exist in middle schools identified as at risk for not meeting state standard in reading and in schools identified as meeting state standards in reading. This chapter described the research design, and the methods and procedures to be used for collecting and analyzing the data. The results of the data were used to confirm or disprove the study's hypotheses and to draw conclusions about the behaviors and practices of middle school English teachers, English resource teachers and principals in schools identified as at risk for not meeting state standards in reading and in schools identified as meeting state standards in reading.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

Just as school improvement strategies have changed in recent decades, so has the type of leadership in the middle schools. School improvement no longer relies on just the principal's agenda, but rather is the collaborative effort of the school community to increase achievement levels of all students. Included in that community are the English teachers and principals. Middle school improvement through reform efforts has been in place for many years and includes the changing roles of principals and teachers. Traditionally, principals served as managers and then became instructional leaders (Berube, Laramie, Gaston, & Stepans, 2004); now they are to become team leaders. There is a fundamental link between the role of the principal and teacher leadership to bring consistency to reform and improve achievement (Chrispeels, Burke, Johnson, & Daly, 2008).

Middle school English teachers, English resource teachers, and principals have responsibility for leading instruction in a wide variety of specific subjects. Reading is a particularly important venue to study because of the persistently poor results in student accountability measures. In the state where this study was conducted, all middle schools must meet "adequate yearly progress" (AYP) in reading by the 2013-2014 academic year. Students must be tested in reading proficiency at least once each year in grades 6 through 8. Because of the important role of reading in preparing students for successful performance in high school, research on middle school reading provides important data for building a foundation for success in rigorous high school curricula and post-secondary experiences.

School leaders must effectively employ their knowledge, skills, theories, and values in an effort to improve student learning and meet state standards in reading. The

leadership of English teachers, resource teachers, and principals as a team plays an integral part in student achievement. Understanding leadership practices of this team and their effect on student performance in middle school reading can enhance our understanding of this relationship and the potential to increase student achievement.

The first phase of this research focused on quantitative methods. Thirty-six middle schools were selected to participate in this study. Twenty schools were identified as meeting state standards in reading and 16 schools were identified as at risk of not meeting state standards in reading. During the fall of 2012, English teachers, English resource teachers, and principals from the 36 middle schools completed the Leadership Capacity School Survey developed by Lambert (2003). Lambert constructed the survey based on the results of her research on school leadership, as well as a comprehensive review of the literature on leadership.

The second phase of this research involved a qualitative methodology. Data collection included focus group interviews of a small number of English teachers, English resource teachers, and principals. Three separate focus groups were used to obtain participants' perceptions of middle school reading and school leadership.

Procedures

After receiving approval of the dissertation proposal by the research committee and the University's Human Subjects Review Board, the researcher requested permission from the school system's research division to conduct the study. After written consent to conduct the study was obtained from the school system, a letter with a request for participation (Appendix A) was mailed to all identified subjects. This letter was sent to 130 English teachers, 36 English resource teachers, and 36 principals. Subjects were asked to sign the informed consent document prior to responding to the survey (Appendix B). The researcher's intent in the survey was to discover the connection between leadership capacity and advanced/proficient scores in Reading on the Middle School

Assessment as per discussion with the survey's author (L. Lambert, Personal Communication, August 2, 2011).

Data Collection

Data collection activities included the administration of a survey and three focus group discussions. Six English teachers, six English resource teachers, and six principals from each of the two school groups (those that met state standards in reading and those that are at risk for not meeting state standards in reading) were chosen for the focus group interviews.

The data in Table 1 indicate that for English teachers, 38.5% responded to the survey, both for schools meeting AYP state standards and those not meeting AYP standards. The researcher had sent 130 requests and received 50 responses. For English resource teachers, the overall response rate was 55.5% for both groups. Of the 36 resource teachers invited to participate, 20 responded. For principals, the response rate was 69.4%. Thirty-six principals were invited to participate and 25 responded. It should be noted that although the English teachers' response rate was lower than that of the other two groups, the researcher had invited 130 to respond, a much larger number with which to work.

Table 1

Response Rates of English Teachers, English Resource Teachers, and Principals

English Teachers	Number of Surveys Sent	Number of Surveys Received	Response Rate (%)
Schools Meeting AYP Standards	76	26	34.2
Schools Not Meeting AYP Standards	54	24	44.4
Total	130	50	38.5

English Resource Teachers	Number of Surveys Sent	Number of Surveys Received	Response Rate (%)
Schools Meeting AYP Standards	20	14	70.0
Schools Not Meeting AYP Standards	16	6	37.5
Total	36	20	55.5

Principals	Number of Surveys Sent	Number of Surveys Received	Response Rate (%)
Schools Meeting AYP Standards	20	14	70.0
Schools Not Meeting AYP Standards	16	11	68.8
Total	36	25	69.4

Reliability

Cronbach alphas were used to compute reliability of the Leadership Capacity School Survey (Lambert, 2003) (Table 2). Cronbach alphas measure inter-item reliability and consistency of the survey instrument. They are used when no pretest-posttest

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reliability measures are available. Cronbach alphas were computed on all six domains and were checked for internal consistency. According to Gall, Borg and Gall (2006),

> If a scale has a high alpha coefficient [typically, .60 or higher, with the highest possible coefficient being 1.00], it means that individuals who respond in a certain way to one item on the scale are likely to respond in the same way to the other items on that scale. (p. 196)

Table 2

Cronbach Alphas for Lambert's Six Leadership Domains for Middle Schools Meeting AYP Standards and Those Not Meeting AYP Standards

Domain	Meeting AYP Standards			Not Meeting AYP Standards		
	English Teachers	Resource Teachers	Principals	English Teachers	Resource Teachers	Principals
Domain 1: Broad-Based Leadership	.92	.62	.82	.77	.95	.21
Domain 2: Shared Vision	.89	.51	.94	.87	.93	.92
Domain 3: Inquiry-Based	.94	.91	.88	.74	.98	.52
Domain 4: Broad Involve-ment	.91	.23	.86	.92	.96	.87
Domain 5: Reflective Practice	.89	.04	.77	.90	.85	.51
Domain 6: Improving Student Achieve-ment	.60	.16	.87	.73	.80	.71

The data displayed in Table 2 show that most of the Cronbach alphas computed are well above .60, indicating that the survey was generally reliable. The exception to that statement is Domain 1 for principals in schools not meeting state standards. For schools meeting state standards, the reliability of Domains 4, 5, and 6 is rather poor for resource teachers.

Correlation Coefficients

The researcher next computed Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficients to describe the magnitude of the relationship between the six domains both for schools that met and those that did not meet AYP standards. A correlation coefficient can range from -1.00 to +1.00. The results are displayed in Tables 3, 4 and 5. In interpreting these data, the researcher used an established set of criteria to make judgments about the significance of the correlations (Gliner & Morgan, 2000). If a correlation was between 0.0 and .30, it was considered to be weak; if it were between .31 and .70 it was considered modest; and if it were .71 or above, it was considered to be strong (Gliner & Morgan, 2000). The .05 level was used to identify those correlations that were statistically significant.

The data in Table 3 for English teachers meeting AYP standards are all in the strong range, that is, above .71, and all are statistically significant at the .001 level. In Table 4, for resource teachers meeting AYP standards, the correlations are considerably lower. This may be due, at least in part, to the small number of resource teachers, 14. It also can reflect lower inter-item agreement between domains for English resource teachers. The data in Table 5 for principals in schools meeting AYP standards indicate that most correlations are strong, meaning they are above .71. This is true even though there are only 14 principals in this group. All of the correlations are statistically significant below the .05 level.

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Table 3

Correlation Coefficients for Domains 1 – 6 for English Teachers of Schools Meeting

AYP Standards

	Domain 1	Domain 2	Domain 3	Domain 4	Domain 5	Domain 6
DOMAIN 1	1.00 (26)	.756 (26) P=.001***	.821 (26) P=.001***	.786 (26) P=.001***	.806 (26) P=.001***	.755 (26) P=.001***
DOMAIN 2		1.00 (26)	.819 (26) P=.001***	.802 (26) P=.001***	.741 (26) P=.001***	.728 (26) P=.001***
DOMAIN 3			1.00 (26)	.910 (26) P=.001***	.851 (26) P=.001***	.866 (26) P=.001***
DOMAIN 4				1.00 (26)	.927 (26) P=.001***	.906 (26) P=.001***
DOMAIN 5					1.00 (26)	.860 (26) P=.001***
DOMAIN 6						1.00 (26)

P = < .05*; <.01**; <.001***
Domain 1 – Broad-based, Skillful Participation in the Work of Leadership; Domain 2 - Shared Vision Results in Program Coherence; Domain 3 – Inquiry-based Use of Information to Inform Decisions and Practice; Domain 4 – Roles and Actions Reflect Broad Involvement, Collaboration, and Collective Responsibility; Domain 5 – Reflective Practice Consistently Leads to Innovation; Domain 6 – High or Steadily Improving Student Achievement and Development

Table 4

Correlation Coefficients for Domains 1 – 6 for Resource Teachers of Schools Meeting

AYP Standards

	Domain 1	Domain 2	Domain 3	Domain 4	Domain 5	Domain 6
DOMAIN 1	1.00 (14)	.326 (14) P=.056	.431 (14) P=.124	.018 (14) P=.956	.097 (14) P=.765	.432 (14) P=.123
DOMAIN 2		1.00 (14)	.959 (14) P=.001***	.184 (14) P=.567	.526 (14) P=.079	.238 (14) P=.413
DOMAIN 3			1.00 (14)	.328 (14) P=.297	.560 (14) P=.058	.367 (14) P=.197
DOMAIN 4				1.00 (14)	.470 (14) P=.123	.169 (14) P=.599
DOMAIN 5					1.00 (14)	.080 (14) P=.806
DOMAIN 6						1.00 (14)

P = < .05*; <.01**; <.001***
Domain 1 – Broad-based, Skillful Participation in the Work of Leadership; Domain 2 - Shared Vision Results in Program Coherence; Domain 3 – Inquiry-based Use of Information to Inform Decisions and Practice; Domain 4 – Roles and Actions Reflect Broad Involvement, Collaboration, and Collective Responsibility; Domain 5 – Reflective Practice Consistently Leads to Innovation; Domain 6 – High or Steadily Improving Student Achievement and Development

Table 5

Correlation Coefficients for Domains 1 – 6 for Principals of Schools Meeting AYP

Standards

	Domain 1	Domain 2	Domain 3	Domain 4	Domain 5	Domain 6
DOMAIN 1	1.00 (14)	.590 (14) P=.026*	.879 (14) P=.001***	.855 (14) P=.001***	.922 (14) P=.001***	.827 (14) P=.001***
DOMAIN 2		1.00 (14)	.640 (14) P=.014*	.690 (14) P=.01**	.629 (14) P=.01**	.728 (14) P=.01**
DOMAIN 3			1.00 (14)	.863 (14) P=.001***	.790 (14) P=.001***	.669 (14) P=.01**
DOMAIN 4				1.00 (14)	.882 (14) P=.001***	.834 (14) P=.001***
DOMAIN 5					1.00 (14)	.946 (14) P=.001***
DOMAIN 6						1.00 (14)

P = < .05*; <.01**; <.001***
Domain 1 – Broad-based, Skillful Participation in the Work of Leadership; Domain 2 - Shared Vision Results in Program Coherence; Domain 3 – Inquiry-based Use of Information to Inform Decisions and Practice; Domain 4 – Roles and Actions Reflect Broad Involvement, Collaboration, and Collective Responsibility; Domain 5 – Reflective Practice Consistently Leads to Innovation; Domain 6 – High or Steadily Improving Student Achievement and Development

In Tables 6, 7, and 8, the correlation coefficients are presented for schools not meeting AYP state standards. For Table 6, English teachers not meeting AYP standards, the correlation coefficients are in the modest range, meaning they vary between .31 and .70. Most of the correlations in Table 6 are statistically significant at the .001 level even though they are in the modest range. In Domains 1, 2, and 3 in column 6, none of the correlations are statistically significant.

Table 6

Correlation Coefficients for Domains 1 – 6 for English Teachers of Schools Not Meeting

AYP Standards

	Domain 1	Domain 2	Domain 3	Domain 4	Domain 5	Domain 6
DOMAIN 1	1.00 (24)	.651 (24) P=.001***	.684 (24) P=.001***	.759 (24) P=.001***	.501 (24) P=.01**	.170 (24) P=.473
DOMAIN 2		1.00 (24)	.827 (24) P=.001***	.849 (24) P=.001***	.791 (24) P=.001***	.431 (24) P=.058
DOMAIN 3			1.00 (24)	.712 (24) P=.001***	.478 (24) P=.03*	.276 (24) P=.267
DOMAIN 4				1.00 (24)	.799 (24) P=.001***	.591 (24) P=.01**
DOMAIN 5					1.00 (24)	.784 (24) P=.001***
DOMAIN 6						1.00 (24)

P = < .05*; <.01**; <.001***
Domain 1 – Broad-based, Skillful Participation in the Work of Leadership; Domain 2 - Shared Vision Results in Program Coherence; Domain 3 – Inquiry-based Use of Information to Inform Decisions and Practice; Domain 4 – Roles and Actions Reflect Broad Involvement, Collaboration, and Collective Responsibility; Domain 5 – Reflective Practice Consistently Leads to Innovation; Domain 6 – High or Steadily Improving Student Achievement and Development

Table 7 displays the correlation coefficients for resource teachers in schools not meeting AYP standards. Most of the correlation coefficients are in the strong range, meaning they are above .71. Almost all are statistically significant at the .01 level or lower. The correlations between Domain 3, Domain 5, and Domain 6 in column 6 are not statistically significant.

Table 7

Correlation Coefficients for Domains 1 – 6 for Resource Teachers of Schools Not

Meeting AYP Standards

	Domain 1	Domain 2	Domain 3	Domain 4	Domain 5	Domain 6
DOMAIN 1	1.00 (6)	.976 (6) P=.001***	.907 (6) P=.01**	.947 (6) P=.001***	.786 (6) P=.064	.826 (6) P=.04*
DOMAIN 2		1.00 (6)	.977 (6) P=.001***	.938 (6) P=.001***	.901 (6) P=.01**	.684 (6) P=.134
DOMAIN 3			1.00 (6)	.972 (6) P=.001***	.973 (6) P=.001***	.512 (6) P=.300
DOMAIN 4				1.00 (6)	.926 (6) P=.001***	.932 (6) P=.001***
DOMAIN 5					1.00 (6)	.300 (6) P=.563
DOMAIN 6						1.00 (6)

$P = < .05*; <.01**; <.001***$
Domain 1 – Broad-based, Skillful Participation in the Work of Leadership; Domain 2 - Shared Vision Results in Program Coherence; Domain 3 – Inquiry-based Use of Information to Inform Decisions and Practice; Domain 4 – Roles and Actions Reflect Broad Involvement, Collaboration, and Collective Responsibility; Domain 5 – Reflective Practice Consistently Leads to Innovation; Domain 6 – High or Steadily Improving Student Achievement and Development

The correlation coefficients presented in Table 8 for principals in schools not

meeting AYP standards are in the weak (.00 to .30) to modest (.31 to .70) range. This is

probably due to two reasons. First, there was a low number of principals (11), and there

was a lack of agreement among the principals of these schools not meeting state

standards.

The general conclusion from the data for correlation coefficients is that schools

meeting state standards had higher correlations.

Table 8

Correlation Coefficients for Domains 1 – 6 for Principals of Schools Not Meeting AYP

Standards

	Domain 1	Domain 2	Domain 3	Domain 4	Domain 5	Domain 6
DOMAIN 1	1.00 (11)	.3116 (11) P=.257	.355 (11) P=.314	.524 (11) P=.120	.1115 (11) P=.651	.2112 (11) P=.413
DOMAIN 2		1.00 (11)	.655 (11) P=.040*	.788 (11) P=.01**	.363 (11) P=.337	.115 (11) P=.772
DOMAIN 3			1.00 (11)	.374 (11) P=.287	.747 (11) P=.02*	.5113 (11) P=.071
DOMAIN 4				1.00 (11)	.064 (11) P=.8611	.117 (11) P=.748
DOMAIN 5					1.00 (11)	.418 (11) P=.263
DOMAIN 6						1.00 (11

P = < .05*; <.01**; <.001***
Domain 1 – Broad-based, Skillful Participation in the Work of Leadership; Domain 2 - Shared Vision Results in Program Coherence; Domain 3 – Inquiry-based Use of Information to Inform Decisions and Practice; Domain 4 – Roles and Actions Reflect Broad Involvement, Collaboration, and Collective Responsibility; Domain 5 – Reflective Practice Consistently Leads to Innovation; Domain 6 – High or Steadily Improving Student Achievement and Development

<div align="center">Research Questions and Statistical Hypotheses</div>

Research Question 1

From the perspective of middle school (Grades 7, 8) English teachers, are there differences in their perceptions regarding the six leadership domains identified by Lambert's (2003a) model between those middle schools identified as at risk of not

meeting state standards in reading and schools identified as meeting state standards in reading?

Statistical Hypothesis 1

From the perspective of middle school (Grades 7, 8) English teachers, there are no statistically significant mean differences in their perceptions regarding the six leadership domains identified by Lambert's (2003a) model between those middle schools identified as at risk of not meeting state standards in reading and schools identified as meeting state standards in reading.

The data presented in Table 9 for English teachers' perceptions indicates that the statistical hypothesis was accepted in all cases except for Domain 3, where it was rejected. For the mean in Domain 3 for inquiry-based use of information to inform decisions, the non-AYP English teachers had a statistically significantly higher mean than did the AYP teachers.

Table 9

English Teachers' Differences in Perceptions of Six Leadership Domains Between Schools Meeting AYP Standards and Schools Not Meeting AYP Standards

Broad-based Participation in Leadership – Domain 1

	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	D.F.	2-Tail Sig.
AYP	26	21.67	7.23			
				.52	28	.60
No AYP	24	22.58	4.60			

Shared Vision Results in Program Coherence – Domain 2

	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	D.F.	2-Tail Sig.
AYP	26	12.83	4.88			
				.22	28	.83
No AYP	24	12.55	4.03			

Table 9 (continued)

English Teachers' Differences in Perceptions of Six Leadership Domains Between

Schools Meeting AYP Standards and Schools Not Meeting AYP Standards

Inquiry-Based Use of Information to Inform Decisions - Domain 3

	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	D.F.	2-Tail Sig.
AYP	26	15.67	5.30			
				2.46	28	.02*
No AYP	24	18.70	2.64			

Roles and Actions Reflect Broad Involvement – Domain 4

	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	D.F.	2-Tail Sig.
AYP	26	10.66	3.96			
				1.52	28	.14
No AYP	24	12.54	4.42			

Reflective Practice Leads to Innovation – Domain 5

	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	D.F.	2-Tail Sig.
AYP	26	12.66	4.80			
				.84	28	.41
No AYP	24	13.81	4.51			

High or Steadily Improving Student Achievement – Domain 6

	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	D.F.	2-Tail Sig.
AYP	26	18.08	4.56			
				.20	28	.84
No AYP	24	18.30	2.60			

$P = < .05*; <.01**; <.001***$
Domain 1 – Broad-based, Skillful Participation in the Work of Leadership; Domain 2 - Shared Vision Results in Program Coherence; Domain 3 – Inquiry-based Use of Information to Inform Decisions and Practice; Domain 4 – Roles and Actions Reflect Broad Involvement, Collaboration, and Collective Responsibility; Domain 5 – Reflective Practice Consistently Leads to Innovation; Domain 6 – High or Steadily Improving Student Achievement and Development

Research Question 2

　　From the perspective of middle school English resource teachers, are there

differences in their perceptions regarding the six leadership domains identified by

Lambert's (2003a) model between those middle schools identified as at risk of not

meeting state standards in reading and schools identified as meeting state standards in reading?

Statistical Hypothesis 2

From the perspective of middle school English resource teachers, there are no statistically significant mean differences in their perceptions regarding the six leadership domains identified by Lambert's (2003a) model between those middle schools identified as at risk of not meeting state standards in reading and schools identified as meeting state standards in reading.

The data in Table 10 for resource teachers' perceptions show that the statistical hypothesis was accepted for Domains 3, 4, 5, and 6. It was rejected for Domains 1 and 2 because the resource teachers in the AYP schools had a higher mean than did the non-AYP resource teachers.

Table 10

Resource Teachers' Differences in Perceptions of Six Leadership Domains Between Schools Meeting AYP Standards and Schools Not Meeting AYP Standards

Broad-based Participation in Leadership – Domain 1

	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	D.F.	2-Tail Sig.
AYP	14	23.86	3.43			
				2.26	18	.03*
No AYP	6	19.33	5.47			

Shared Vision Results in Program Coherence – Domain 2

	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	D.F.	2-Tail Sig.
AYP	14	15.14	2.18			
				3.07	18	.01**
No AYP	6	11.00	3.90			

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Table 10 (continued)

Resource Teachers' Differences in Perceptions of Six Leadership Domains Between

Schools Meeting AYP Standards and Schools Not Meeting AYP Standards

<u>Inquiry-Based Use of Information to Inform Decisions - Domain 3</u>

	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	D.F.	2-Tail Sig.
AYP	14	18.43	7.80			
				2.11	18	.05
No AYP	6	14.33	4.41			

<u>Roles and Actions Reflect Broad Involvement – Domain 4</u>

	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	D.F.	2-Tail Sig.
AYP	14	11.50	1.57			
				.34	18	.74
No AYP	6	11.00	4.62			

<u>Reflective Practice Leads to Innovation – Domain 5</u>

	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	D.F.	2-Tail Sig.
AYP	14	13.83	1.85			
				2.06	18	.06
No AYP	6	11.00	4.10			

<u>High or Steadily Improving Student Achievement – Domain 6</u>

	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	D.F.	2-Tail Sig.
AYP	26	17.57	1.91			
				2.01	18	.06
No AYP	24	15.00	3.90			

$P = < .05^*; <.01^{**}; <.001^{***}$
Domain 1 – Broad-based, Skillful Participation in the Work of Leadership; Domain 2 - Shared Vision Results in Program Coherence; Domain 3 – Inquiry-based Use of Information to Inform Decisions and Practice; Domain 4 – Roles and Actions Reflect Broad Involvement, Collaboration, and Collective Responsibility; Domain 5 – Reflective Practice Consistently Leads to Innovation; Domain 6 – High or Steadily Improving Student Achievement and Development

Research Question 3

From the perspective of middle school principals, are there differences in the

perceptions of principals regarding the six leadership domains identified by Lambert's

(2003a) model between middle schools identified as at risk of not meeting state standards in reading and schools identified as meeting state standards in reading?

Statistical Hypothesis 3

From the perspective of middle school principals, there are no statistically significant mean difference regarding the six leadership domains identified by Lambert's (2003a) model between middle schools identified as at risk of not meeting state standards in reading and schools identified as meeting state standards in reading.

The data shown in Table 11 concerned with the perceptions of principals on the six leadership domains indicate that the statistical hypothesis of no difference was accepted in all cases.

Table 11

Principals' Differences in Perceptions of Six Leadership Domains Between Schools Meeting AYP Standards and Schools Not Meeting AYP Standards

Broad-based Participation in Leadership – Domain 1

	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	D.F.	2-Tail Sig.
AYP	14	27.43	3.46			
				1.60	23	.13
No AYP	11	25.50	1.90			

Shared Vision Results in Program Coherence – Domain 2

	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	D.F.	2-Tail Sig.
AYP	14	14.43	3.67			
				.59	23	.56
No AYP	11	13.60	2.95			

Inquiry-Based Use of Information to Inform Decisions - Domain 3

	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	D.F.	2-Tail Sig.
AYP	14	19.14	3.57			
				1.15	23	.27
No AYP	11	17.70	2.06			

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Table 11 (continued)

Principals' Differences in Perceptions of Six Leadership Domains Between Schools

Meeting AYP Standards and Schools Not Meeting AYP Standards

<u>Roles and Actions Reflect Broad Involvement – Domain 4</u>

	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	D.F.	2-Tail Sig.
AYP	14	13.86	3.30			
				.74	23	.47
No AYP	11	12.90	2.84			

<u>Reflective Practice Leads to Innovation – Domain 5</u>

	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	D.F.	2-Tail Sig.
AYP	14	18.00	3.33			
				1.52	23	.13
No AYP	11	16.00	2.65			

<u>High or Steadily Improving Student Achievement – Domain 6</u>

	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	t-Value	D.F.	2-Tail Sig.
AYP	14	18.43	3.32			
				1.55	24	.12
No AYP	11	16.50	2.50			

$P = < .05^*; <.01^{**}; <.001^{***}$
Domain 1 – Broad-based, Skillful Participation in the Work of Leadership; Domain 2 - Shared Vision Results in Program Coherence; Domain 3 – Inquiry-based Use of Information to Inform Decisions and Practice; Domain 4 – Roles and Actions Reflect Broad Involvement, Collaboration, and Collective Responsibility; Domain 5 – Reflective Practice Consistently Leads to Innovation; Domain 6 – High or Steadily Improving Student Achievement and Development

Additional Analysis

When the researcher completed the analysis on research questions 1 through 3, she was curious whether there were any statistically significant differences among the three groups of educators—English teachers, resource teachers, and principals—in the two groups of schools. The researcher decided to do an analysis of variance across the three groups and the two types of schools. The results of that analysis are presented in Table 12 for all three groups that met AYP standards. They indicate a statistically

significant difference at the .01 level for Domain 1 and for Domains 4 and 5. The differences in all cases lay between the English teachers and the principals, with the principals having the higher mean.

Table 12

One-Way Analysis of Variance of Differences in Perception of Six Leadership Domains Among English Teachers, English Resource Teachers, and Principals in Schools That Met AYP Standards

Broad-based Participation in Leadership – Domain 1

	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2	293.60	146.80		
				4.76	.013*
Within Groups	49	1,510.48	30.83		

Shared Vision Results in Program Coherence – Domain 2

	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2	52.83	26.42		
				1.65	.203
Within Groups	49	784.48	16.01		

Inquiry-Based Use of Information to Inform Decisions – Domain 3

	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2	129.29	64.65		
				3.17	.051
Within Groups	49	998.48	20.38		

Table 12 (continued)

One-Way Analysis of Variance of Differences in Perception of Six Leadership Domains

Among English Teachers, English Resource Teachers, and Principals in Schools That

Met AYP Standards

<u>Roles and Actions Reflect Broad Involvement – Domain 4</u>

	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2	91.07	45.54		
				4.04	.024*
Within Groups	47	530.05	11.28		

<u>Reflective Practice Leads to Innovation – Domain 5</u>

	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2	257.32	128.66		
				8.51	.001***
Within Groups	47	711.00	15.13		

<u>High or Steadily Improving Student Achievement – Domain 6</u>

	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2	5.23	2.62		
				.192	.826
Within Groups	49	668.90	13.65		

$P = < .05$*; $<.01$**; $<.001$***
Domain 1 – Broad-based, Skillful Participation in the Work of Leadership; Domain 2 - Shared Vision Results in Program Coherence; Domain 3 – Inquiry-based Use of Information to Inform Decisions and Practice; Domain 4 – Roles and Actions Reflect Broad Involvement, Collaboration, and Collective Responsibility; Domain 5 – Reflective Practice Consistently Leads to Innovation; Domain 6 – High or Steadily Improving Student Achievement and Development

In Table 13 is displayed the results of a one-way analysis of variance among

English teachers, resource teachers, and principals in schools that did not meet AYP.

Table 13

One-Way Analysis of Variance of Differences in Perception of Six Leadership Domains

Among English Teachers, English Resource Teachers, and Principals in Schools That

Did Not Meet AYP Standards

Broad-based Participation in Leadership – Domain 1

	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2	146.11	73.05		
				4.05	.026*
Within Groups	37	667.67	18.05		

Shared Vision Results in Program Coherence – Domain 2

	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2	25.41	12.70		
				.90	.417
Within Groups	35	495.86	14.17		

Inquiry-Based Use of Information to Inform Decisions – Domain 3

	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2	88.01	44.00		
				5.43	.01**
Within Groups	33	267.63	8.11		

Roles and Actions Reflect Broad Involvement – Domain 4

	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2	10.62	5.31		
				.321	.728
Within Groups	33	546.36	16.56		

Table 13 (continued)

One-Way Analysis of Variance of Differences in Perception of Six Leadership Domains

Among English Teachers, English Resource Teachers, and Principals in Schools That

Met AYP Standards

Reflective Practice Leads to Innovation – Domain 5

	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2	90.30	45.15		
				2.71	.081
Within Groups	34	567.27	16.68		

High or Steadily Improving Student Achievement – Domain 6

	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2	58.05	29.03		
				3.67	.036*
Within Groups	33	260.70	7.90		

P = < .05*; <.01**; <.001***
Domain 1 – Broad-based, Skillful Participation in the Work of Leadership; Domain 2 - Shared Vision Results in Program Coherence; Domain 3 – Inquiry-based Use of Information to Inform Decisions and Practice; Domain 4 – Roles and Actions Reflect Broad Involvement, Collaboration, and Collective Responsibility; Domain 5 – Reflective Practice Consistently Leads to Innovation; Domain 6 – High or Steadily Improving Student Achievement and Development

These data indicate a statistically significant difference between the three groups

in terms of Domain 1, Domain 3, and Domain 6. Multiple analyses show that the

difference in Domain 1 lay between the principal and the resource teacher. The principal

had the higher mean score. In Domain 3 the difference lay between the resource teacher

and the English teacher. The mean was higher for the English teacher. The difference in

Domain 6 proved to be not statistically significant in subsequent analysis.

Sample Demographics

Tables 14 through 16 present the demographics for the three sets of respondents. The response totals on the demographic items indicate that of the total number who responded to the survey, not all responded to all items on the demographic section. Therefore, the numbers are lower than the total invited to participate. Demographic information on English teachers in the two types of schools is presented in Table 14.

Table 14

Demographics of English Teachers in Two School Types (Those That Met AYP Standards and Those That Did Not Meet AYP Standards)

	Group	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)
Gender						
Male	AYP	2 (08.3)				
	Not AYP	2 (09.1)				
Female	AYP	22 (91.7)				
	Not AYP	20 (90.9)				
Years in Education		1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21+
	AYP	0	6 (25.0)	6 (25.0)	6 (25.0)	6 (25.0)
	Not AYP	6 (27.3)	10 (45.5)	6 (27.3)	0	0
Years at This School		1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21+
	AYP	6 (25.0)	10 (41.7)	6 (25.0)	0	2 (08.3)
	Not AYP	18 (81.8)	2 (09.1)	2 (09.1)	0	0
Educational Level		BA/BS	MA	MA+30	Ph.D/ Ed.D	
	AYP	0	10 (41.7)	12 (50.0)	2 (08.3)	
	Not AYP	4 (18.2)	14 (63.6)	2 (09.1)	2 (09.1)	
Age		21-30	31-40	41-50	51+	
	AYP	6 (25.0)	4 (16.7)	8 (33.3)	6 (25.0)	
	Not AYP	6 (25.0)	12 (54.5)	2 (09.1)	2 (09.1)	

The information on gender shows that over 90% of the English teachers are female. The English teachers in the AYP schools have more years in education, but had been in their current school for a shorter period of time. The non-AYP English teachers have fewer advanced degrees and are generally younger than their AYP counterparts.

Information in Table 15 about English resource teachers shows that the vast majority are female, more than 80%. The AYP resource teachers have many more years in education than do the non-AYP resource teachers.

Table 15

Demographics of English Resource Teachers in Two School Types (Those That Met AYP Standards and Those That Did Not Meet AYP Standards)

	Group	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)
Gender						
Male	AYP	2 (16.7)				
	Not AYP	0				
Female	AYP	10 (83.3)				
	Not AYP	6 (100)				
Years in Education		1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21+
	AYP	0	0	4 (33.3)	2 (16.7)	6 (50.0)
	Not AYP	0	2 (33.3)	2 (33.3)	2 (33.3)	0
Years at This School		1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21+
	AYP	2 (16.7)	6 (50.0)	2 (16.7)	2 (16.7)	0
	Not AYP	2 (33.3)	4 (66.7)	0	0	0
Educational Level		BA/BS	MA	MA+30	Ph.D/ Ed.D	
	AYP	0	2 (16.7)	4 (33.3)	6 (50.9)	
	Not AYP	0	0	4 (66.7)	2 (33.3)	
Age		21-30	31-40	41-50	51+	
	AYP	0	4 (33.3)	4 (33.3)	4 (33.3)	
	Not AYP	2 (33.3)	2 (33.3)	0	2 (33.3)	

The AYP resource teachers have been at their schools for longer periods of time than have the non-AYP teachers. Overall, AYP resource teachers have more advanced levels of education than do non-AYP resource teachers. In general, AYP resource teachers are older than their non-AYP counterparts.

Table 16

Demographics of Principals in Two School Types (Those That Met AYP Standards and Those That Did Not Meet AYP Standards)

	Group	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)
Gender						
Male	AYP	8 (57.1)				
	Not AYP	2 (20.0)				
Female	AYP	6 (42.9)				
	Not AYP	8 (80.00)				
Years in Education		1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21+
	AYP	0	0	2 (14.3)	4 (28.6	8 (57.1)
	Not AYP	0	0	2 (20.0)	2 (20.0)	6 (60.0)
Years at This School		1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21+
	AYP	10 (71.4)	2 (14.3)	2 (14.3)	0	0
	Not AYP	5 (50.0)	4 (40.0)	1 (10.0)	0	0
Educational Level		BA/BS	MA	MA+30	Ph.D/ Ed.D	
	AYP	0	2 (14.3)	2 (14.3)	10 (71.4)	
	Not AYP	0	2 (20.0)	3 (30.0)	5 (50.0)	
Age		21-30	31-40	41-50	51+	
	AYP	0	4 (28.6)	4 (40.0)	4 (28.6)	
	Not AYP	0	3 (30.0)	4 (40.0)	3 (30.0)	

The numbers of male and female principals in AYP and non-AYP schools are quite similar, as the data in Table 16 show. The number of years in education favors AYP

principals over non-AYP principals. This is also true in terms of "years at this school," level of education and age.

<div align="center">Overview of Qualitative Design</div>

For the qualitative portion of this study, three separate focus group interviews were conducted between December 2012 and January 2013 to primarily address Research Question 4. As well, the focus groups were designed to provide some additional information regarding Research Questions 1-3.

Research Question 4

What are the curriculum and instructional issues faced daily by middle school English teachers, English resource teachers, or, principals who are concerned with providing leadership to students in English? Are there differences in these curricular and instructional issues between successful middle schools and those middle schools identified as not meeting state standards?

An initial request for participation was inserted in the digital survey and a total of 18 participants responded. Six principals, five English teachers and two English Resource teachers actually came to the focus group sessions. Table 17 delineates the response rate by type of school and professional role. It should be noted that the initial request for participation was emailed just before the winter break and this timing may have accounted for the low response rate for the English resource teachers.

Table 17

Focus Group Participation Rates

	No. of Schools Represented	Number Participating	Response Rate (%)
Principals-Schools Meeting Standards	3	3	100
Principals-Schools Not Meeting Standards	3	3	100
Total Principals	6	6	100
Resource Teachers-Schools Meeting Standards	3	1	33.3
Resource Teachers-Schools Not Meeting Standards	3	1	33.3
Total Resource Teachers	6	2	33.3
Teachers-Schools Meeting Standards	3	2	66.6
Teachers-Schools Not Meeting Standards	3	3	100
Total Teachers	6	5	83.3

A focus group Moderator's Guide was developed using Lambert's elements as a framework to elicit detailed descriptions regarding teacher, resource teacher, and principal leadership behaviors. The guide encouraged the use of probes to increase clarification regarding leadership capacity issues faced by middle school English teachers, English resource teachers, and principals. The Moderator's Guide was field tested first with subjects who had retired from schools in the same county.

The research probe questions were piloted with recently retired (within the past two years) middle school principals, English resource teachers, and English teachers. In addition, "sitting" middle school principals, English resource teachers, and English teachers in adjacent school systems were part of the pilot questioning. The total group consisted of two retired local school system principals and four principals in adjacent school systems; three retired local school system resource teachers and four "lead" English teachers in adjacent counties; three retired local school system English teachers and seven English teachers in adjacent counties. Eighteen pilot studies were given orally; five responses were over the internet.

With only one exception, the responses to the questions verified the researcher's intent of questioning. Answers were thorough and thoughtful. The one question that the principals in adjacent counties asked for clarification on was "What do you do in order to collaborate and have broader involvement outside of your traditional role?" The principals requested a definition of "traditional." However, when no definition was given, each was able to respond to the question with specific details. None of the questions were revised. The Moderator's Guide (Appendix D) incorporates Yin's (1984) and Merriam's (1988) recommendations by including open-ended questions, using probes, etc. (Table 18).

Table 18

Focus Group Questions

Group	Focus Area	Question
All Groups	Shared Decision Making	Are there shared decision making concepts embedded in the school leadership team?
	Vision	What is your vision for the school and how does it influence your school culture?
	Collaboration and Shared Leadership	Describe collaboration and shared leadership in your school.
	Reflection	What type of ongoing reflection do you engage in (e.g., journaling, peer coaching, collaborative planning)?
English Teachers	Collaboration and Shared Leadership	In what ways do you engage in opportunities to lead?
English Resource Teachers	Curriculum and Instructional Issues	Once you have your data from MSA in Reading what decisions do you become involved in?
	Collaboration and Shared Leadership	In what ways do you engage in opportunities to lead?
Principals	Curriculum and Instructional Issues	Once you have your data from MSA in Reading what decisions do you become involved in?
	Collaboration and Shared Leadership	What do you do in order to collaborate and have broader involvement outside of your traditional role?

All focus group discussions were audio taped and transcribed. The data was categorized using the conceptual framework outlined in Chapter I into the domains associated with the leadership capacity practices. Codes were developed to capture the data. The transcripts were reviewed using a data analysis template and were color coded for descriptors. The descriptors were then categorized into themes (Table 19).

Table 19

Focus Group Themes

Focus Group Areas	Themes
Shared Decision Making	1. Empowerment
	2. Collegiality
Vision	1. Student Achievement
	2. Student Attitudes, Emotions, Relationships
Collaboration and Shared Leadership	1. Transparency/Communication
	2. Teacher Leadership
Reflections	1. Collaborative Planning
	2. Peer Coaching
Curriculum and Instructional Issues	1. Data

The results of the data analysis are described for each focus group area. Abridged forms of the interview questions serve as subheadings.

Shared Decision Making

The first interview question focused on shared decision making: Are there shared decision making concepts embedded in the school leadership team? Two themes surfaced among the three groups interviewed. First, the responses indicated that shared decision making involved empowering or not empowering members of the school community. Second, the responses spoke to collegiality and whether or not groups felt comfortable lifting their voices and taking risks to offer suggestions.

Theme #1: Empowerment (Schools That Met Reading Standards)

In the empowerment theme, principals from schools that met standards felt it was important that staff from all departments and levels have input on decisions, and they encouraged it. One principal shared,

> We have built-in processes so that we have the input to the maximum extent possible of the teachers who ultimately have to implement any action items that we decide upon. At the actual leadership team table, when there's decisions to be made most of the talking is done by the teachers around the table.

Another principal reported,

> As a matter of fact I look upon the various teachers and the team leaders whenever we're making a decision that's going to impact students and their learning.

The third principal stated,

> We attempt to determine the highest level of involvement for each decision. So some decisions are put to a vote to the staff; some are determined just by the group of people that will be locally affected; many are determined through a discussion and vote at the leadership team; and some are determined at the admin [administrative] level. But we do try to figure out how we can have the most voices heard.

An English resource teacher indicated that the use of a certain models of leadership can drive shared decision making. He stated that,

> For example, facilitative leadership is really a good model for working on a task. If you have a task to solve, the facilitate leadership works very, very well.

Another English teacher in this same school related,

> I think there certainly are times when individual teachers are allowed
> input. I think it is more informal than formally. Certainly during team
> meetings, teacher ideas are given to team leaders. Which is then, I believe,
> reflected at ILT [Instructional Leadership Team] meetings on a weekly
> basis.

While there was empowerment in these schools, teachers indicated that it was at the informal rather than formal level.

Theme #1: Empowerment (Schools At Risk for Not Meeting Reading Standards)

Principals from schools at risk for not meeting standards in reading echoed the view all voices needed to be heard—however the voices were primarily administrative. A principal conveyed,

> The way that we make the vast majority of our decisions here definitely
> includes a lot of members, a lot of different members of *leadership*. There
> are very few times where I as the principal make a decision in isolation.

Another principal did not empower all but only heard the voices of the administrative team; she remarked,

> I've changed staff developers but tried to keep a consistency in how they
> help me work through this. She will ask me questions, such as: how do I
> want this decision to be made? Am I prepared to give it, give the decision
> to the group? How do we want to handle it? I'm very cognizant of the
> approach going in. I do my best to avoid the situations where I just go in
> and lay down an edict, but it does happen.

A resource teacher felt that that there was a process for empowerment, but the opinions of all were not necessarily heard. She related,

I think at times it is frustrating because when we think a decision has been made it gets changed by the principal or another administrator. For example, I'm on the testing committee, and we have practice tests that are done, and we had determined that we wanted two practice tests to take place, and all of a sudden at the next meeting we were told that there was only one practice test that was going to take place, and we were not previously notified so that was a little bit frustrating.

A teacher echoed the same frustration,

Many times when the decisions are asked in this school it's just being asked because they know it's the politically correct thing to do.

Theme #2: Collegiality (Schools That Met Reading Standards)

In the collegiality theme, principals from schools that met standards viewed collegiality as all of the staff pulling together, having consensus in decisions, and working through problems.

One principal reported,

These are the teacher leaders, such as the team leaders, the department chairs, media specialists, reading specialists, the elected faculty representative of the teachers, the elected representative for the support staff. We [Leadership Team] make decisions based on a shared consensus. If we need more information from the teachers we will bin the item, ask that the teams (if it's appropriate for teams to talk about it) or the departments (if it's appropriate for the departments to talk about it) and come back with their input the next meeting or the meeting after.

Another principal stated,

So yeah, [decisions are made] mostly through consensus, sometimes through straight votes. And another thing that I would say we've done is,

when we've felt like the group has been split we've returned and gotten

additional feedback, so we didn't just eek out a decision by a 51%

majority. And we do try to abide by one of our ground rules that we leave

with a shared decision even if we're split in the discussion; that we accept

that as a leadership body we're going to support the decision that we make

there.

Teachers often saw things differently. For example, an English resource teacher

felt that they use consensus but sometimes the process does not result in shared decision

making. He stated,

I would say there are times when we are at an impasse with some of our

decisions simply because [of] the leadership capacity of members on the

instructional council (which actually is pretty high). Sometimes the

leadership capacity breaks down a little bit because we don't actually use a

model that digs deeply enough.

Theme #2: Collegiality (Schools At Risk for Not Meeting Reading Standards)

In the collegiality theme, principals, resource teachers, and teachers all viewed

collegiality as working together for the good of the students and being able to voice

opinions and take risks. One principal stated,

They [the staff] felt comfortable and open to take risks and to make

suggestions. And I would think that it had already been established that

whatever someone said, their opinion or their statements were respected,

even though there might have been differences within the group.

Another principal reported,

We use that time, whether it's the instructional leadership team time that's

dedicated on Thursday afternoons, or we even use technology (sometimes

in terms of email) to share the issue, the different options and for everyone

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to share their voice so to speak, and then we come to consensus to make

decisions.

However, some principals stated that it was consensus, but a majority vote. A

third principal described,

So I would say to them, "This decision is yours to make, I'm not voting or

I am voting, whatever the case may be, but it'll be majority rules." We

typically avoid trying to do anything unanimously because it just doesn't

happen.

Within schools that did not meet AYP there was an indication that decisions were

between smaller groups of people and not broad-based. One resource teacher reported,

Members of this inner circle include the principal, the staff development

teacher, and a few of the RTs that the principal has identified as sort of his

chosen few, if I could say that. And those outside of the circle are not

called upon as much for input, often feel a bit on the outside, and don't

feel that they can make as valuable contributions to the team as they

would like to.

Vision

Within vision two themes emerged among the categories and groups of schools.

Among schools that met AYP standards in reading, the vision concentrated on student

achievement first and student attitudes second. The opposite was true among schools that

did not meet AYP in reading. Those schools spoke to attitudes of students and safety

first; they concentrated on student achievement second.

Theme #1: Student Achievement (Schools That Met Reading Standards)

In student achievement theme, principals from schools that met standards viewed

the vision of the school as forwarding excellence and making sure that students excelled

in achievement. One principal shared,

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In a nutshell, my vision for the school is that all students experience

excellence. And that's our vision statement: experience excellence.

Another principal stated,

My personal vision for the school is that all students will exceed at high

levels….

The third principal disclosed,

My vision for the school is to have students engage with material that is

provocative, causes them curiosity, makes them construct knowledge, has

them analyze and make judgments about things.

An English teacher responded,

It really focuses on having every student excel in whatever their strengths

are, and that we work collaboratively as a school and build a community

of learners…

Theme #1: Student Achievement (Schools At Risk for Not Meeting Reading

Standards)

In student achievement theme, principals from schools that were at risk for not

meeting standards described the vision as all having positive attitudes and all students

learning in a safe environment first. One principal acknowledged the part the learning

environment (diversity) played in the vision. He stated,

The vision is that we bring our diverse school population together in a way

that creates a learning environment where people (students and staff) value

each other and value their own learning.

The resource teacher declared,

My personal vision for the school is one where kids are excited to learn,

they want to be the best people they can be, and they want to be twenty-

first century citizens and learners.

Another teacher stated,

> The students come first, so let them be on the top. That's my vision for
> the school.

Theme #2: Student Attitudes, Emotions (Schools That Met Reading Standards)

Principals and teachers felt that students should think well of themselves and have character. The vision is to make sure that they are having good attitudes about school. The principal responded by saying,

> [Students should] experience excellence in everything they do, not just the
> academic piece, because in a middle school one of the greatest concerns of
> students is making friends and how they are viewed and accepted by their
> peers.

Another principal declared,

> I think what makes us unique is that we truly care about the happiness of
> our students, and we want to have them well-rounded because so many of
> us are parents ourselves or have grown children.

A third principal acknowledged,

> We're building kids to be active and responsible citizens and stewards.

A teacher pointed to challenges as part of student attitudes by saying,

> I think my vision that I've had since I began teaching has sort of met up
> now with the new vision, of not just my school but also all county schools
> to challenge the students more, to be more rigorous, to be more creative, to
> let the students express themselves on an individual basis rather than on a
> standardized basis.

Another teacher stated,

> So our vision truly is that we want every child to benefit from instruction,
> and however we can make them be the best person he or she could be.

Theme #2: Student Attitudes, Emotions (Schools At Risk for Not Meeting Reading Standards)

Principals felt very strongly that their vision had to include the well-being of their students, not just emphasize the academic skills that were needed. One principal summarized this notion by saying,

> I want every student to not worry a second about what may happen to them coming to school that day, student or staff for that matter. We want our school to feel safe for all.

Another principal emphasized,

> Student achievement and success, not only academics, but I'm also talking about social-emotional.

A teacher in another focus group echoed this vision and stated,

> So regardless of socio-economic status, regardless of culture or background or ethnicity or race, there's somebody here in the building who can connect very personally with them.

A resource teacher confirmed what the previous teacher had expressed,

> I think my vision is such that we bend over backwards to be there for students and be resources and mentors for them in any way possible. And I see that, my vision being a very positive one, being one that's looking towards the future where the kids will have all the opportunities they want to have, where doors will be open for them. They will go to college. They'll have wonderful opportunities for careers, and they'll represent the [our] community well even outside of the school, because you can't be a good person if you don't treat others respectfully and kindly, and that's very important.

Collaboration and Shared Leadership

The major theme that surfaced from collaboration and shared leadership was transparency and communication.

Theme #1: Transparency-Communication (Schools That Met Reading Standards)

Principals identified themselves as being open and fair (transparent) to the input of stakeholders and included how they communicated to all. One principal shared (after giving an example of a decision made),

> Certainly, I could have just taken the reins and said, "Okay, this is going to be the policy" but that's not how we operate. We operate with a climate of shared leadership and collaboration and input and thoughtfulness.

Another principal offered,

> The collaboration is on many different levels…There's a lot of dialogue, and what I mean by dialogue is it's not me giving direction, its two way communication.

According to an English resource teacher, it was evident that collaboration was taking place at the teacher level. He stated,

> When I came in and started working with my teachers at the different grade levels what I saw was a great deal of sharing of information, common cohort planning, common sharing of all types of instructional materials.

An English teacher responded,

> I think in each department, we actually collaborate a great deal. I'm very proud in English how we work as teams (grade level teams, cross grade level teams) I think communication is a very important piece of that.

Theme #1: Transparency-Communication (Schools At Risk for Not Meeting Reading Standards)

Principals identified themselves as being transparent in delegating tasks among administrators and sharing leadership. The teaching staff was not necessarily mentioned in the discussion of collaboration and shared leadership. A principal revealed,

> We, as most principals do, we delineate those larger tasks, …We try to get down to the nitty-gritty tasks at the beginning of each year and delegate out who is the point person, whether it be surveys or testing or scheduling or…who's responsible for grade levels, who's responsible for different departments, etc. And then I am very fortunate that I have a leadership team, an administrative team that takes those responsibilities very seriously and follows through as needed. So that shared leadership is: trusting other leaders to do their job.

Another principal stated that it (shared leadership) was the job of everyone,

> Everyone owns a piece of this school, no matter what their role is. I think people take that very seriously. Any time there's a decision that needs to be made I do my best to make sure that the people who are affected by the decision have a part in making that decision. I also see on a regular basis people taking ownership of their areas of responsibility.

Another principal described ongoing transparency and communication.

> Our instructional leadership team is really the hub of our school and it is an open process. Anyone can observe or attend a meeting if they choose to but I think a lot of the time the teachers are busy and they don't get involved in that. I think that there's also trust, from the teachers in terms of their department chairs and their team leaders that their opinions and other areas of concern will be discussed in the ILT [Instructional

Leadership Team] meetings. Their opinions will be considered and shared. One of the things that we do is we post minutes from each meeting on our email.

An English resource teacher indicated that collaboration and shared leadership took place. She acknowledged,

I think there's lots of different levels of collaboration that happen. There's collaboration with the IFT [Instructional Focus Teacher] and IMT [Instructional Math Teacher], there's collaboration with the departments and cohorts, and there's collaboration even across the subject areas. We have rotating facilitators for each meeting and rotating jobs that happen. I really want that collective, shared leadership to be modeled and realized, and I think that increases buy-in, increases participation and members' willingness to be fully present, not only physically but mentally, and really promotes that idea that your idea's valuable, we want you here, we want you sharing what did work in your classroom, what didn't work, and how can we move forward and learn from one another.

The English teachers also stated the collaboration that takes place within the school. A teacher shared,

Collaboration happens in a lot of different ways. In the humanity program, which is where the majority of my teaching day is, it fills in— it's designed to be collaborative and so that happens a lot, although there's not a lot of vertical collaboration. There's not a lot of collaboration between the grade levels: it's across content areas.

Another English teacher responded by saying,

At [our school] we do a really good job of collaborating to plan. And so the three seventh grade English teachers, rather than all of us doing our

own thing and teaching in our own style, we'll actually collaborate and plan entire units using student data to inform planning. But also really collaborating to kind of fill in the gaps in each other's thinking. Even really big, school-wide decisions are all made in collaboration with each other.

Reflection

The focus groups were all asked about their personal reflection techniques. The main themes that arose were collaborative planning and peer coaching to manage curricular and instructional challenges.

Theme #1: Collaborative Planning (Schools That Met Reading Standards)

Principals insinuated collaborative planning while not necessarily stating it explicitly. One principal indicated,

So, despite the administrative team being brand new to this school, I find it to be a very supportive, safe place to talk about practices and get honest feedback. Never feeling like I have to have the answers, I turn to them all the time. We try to make a lot of decisions with four minds.

Another principal acknowledged,

I would say it [my reflection technique] would have to be collaborative planning. Each week I'm scheduled to meet with my administrative team. We meet on Mondays, and we look back, we reflect back on the previous week in terms of any ah-ha moments or things we've learned or things we need to improve upon. And then we also look forward in terms of whether it's planning for the next week, or the next month, or even the next school year.

An English resource teacher stated,

> [My reflection technique is] collaborative planning: very, very heavily. In my own department I would say I meet with my co-teachers (there's three teachers at the seventh grade level), we meet at least three times a day. Every morning when we come in we look at what we've got, by the time we get halfway through the day either I or one of the other teachers has worked on or polished something for, well it could be the next day's instruction, but even two or three weeks ahead.

An English teacher remarked,

> I think on an individual level, many teachers work with their co-curricular planners very closely. So collaboration, I think, is a key factor, particularly for me individually and for many teachers at my school.

Another English teacher described,

> Well, certainly collaborative planning's high. We collaborate on the plans that we're going to do.

Theme #1: Collaborative Planning (Schools At Risk for Not Meeting Reading Standards)

Several educators mentioned that collaborative planning was part of their reflective technique however the principals had a difficult time answering the reflection probe. A principal acknowledged,

> I would definitely say collaborative planning [is my reflective technique]. There are a couple of principals that I'm very close with. Some of them, we have schools that are extremely similar in terms of demographics, and then others have the type of schools that I want us to continue moving our students towards becoming. So all of those conversations and planning that we do (because we talk about math together, we talk about reading

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and English together), all of that is very helpful I think for our students

and also helpful for us as a group.

One principal stated that no reflection was actually done. She said,

None. None where I am strategic or probably consistent about it.

An English teacher remarked,

All of the three [reflective examples], collaboratively planning probably is

the big focus of the reflection and that's one of the best parts of the

collaborative planning process is the opportunity to not only plan what

you're going to do, but then after you've done it, go back and reflect on

what's working, what's not working, what are we going to do different

next time, next year, next unit.

Another English teacher acknowledged,

Collaborative planning I think is really important, and that's how I

typically tend to reflect on my lessons.

Theme #2: Peer Coaching (Schools That Met Reading Standards)

Peer coaching either with assistant principals or principals from other schools was

noted. In addition, it appeared to be strategic in these schools. One principal stated,

I mean it's not peer coaching but reaching out for peer support. So, I'm

never shy to post questions to my principal colleagues and then to follow

up with them. So that's more about me just trying to not reinvent the

wheel: that I can take someone's practice and refine it for [my school].

I've been interested in getting connected with a peer coach or critical

friend, and I do sense that that would be within the realm of our

superintendent's vision for us.

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Another principal stated,

> This is my third year of being in a doctoral program, and that has been
> extremely beneficial to my own reflection because I'm keeping current.
> And I'm revisiting some ideas that were deeply embedded in me and just
> learning how to improve, learning from other principals that are in the
> program, learning from the professor who's been there-done that.

An English resource teacher stated,

> I myself, I would say definitely peer coaching. We have a staff
> development teacher here who is very strong with that, and she really
> works with the instructional council on getting us to be coaches. We
> actually practice coaching techniques as an instructional council.

An English teacher said,

> Peer coaching is supposed to be a part of when we go and observe each
> other: I'm not sure how true we are to that particular idea.

Theme #2: Peer Coaching (Schools At Risk for Not Meeting Reading Standards)

Peer coaching either with school administrators or principals from other schools
was noted, but not necessarily strategic in these schools. Peer coaching played a role for
teachers and was similar to those teachers in schools that met AYP in reading. A
principal stated,

> I'm fortunate this year to have an intern, so we talk almost every day
> about what did she learn…that is I think a powerful form of reflection
> because you can't have that conversation without reflecting yourself.

An English resource teacher acknowledged,

> Peer coaching has been huge, a huge part of my job as RT and also one of
> my personal goals because I really value those meetings I can have with

teachers—coaching them to the next level, talking about what's working,

what's not working and how do we move forward.

An English teacher stated,

Well I think you just heard me talk about peer coaching in terms of having

younger teachers go ahead, and collaborative planning is always excellent.

It works with me.

Another English teacher described,

I would say the peer coaching comes into play with that [Reading

instruction] a lot.

Additional Qualitative Questions

In order to provide more data to answer the questions of curricular and

instructional issues, more questions were asked of English teachers, English resource

teachers, and principals.

Collaboration and Shared Leadership

The same themes of transparency and communication surfaced from an additional

question probing principals about collaboration and shared leadership.

Theme: Transparency-Communication (Schools That Met Reading Standards)

One principal remarked,

I'm very religious, every two weeks I meet with the Elected Faculty

Representative (EFR) and the Elected Support Representative (ESR), so

we have a standing meeting. We publish notes from our meeting, and it's a

structure that's supported by the school system at large. I feel like its very

important as a new principal here for people to feel like they have a way to

provide an anonymous voice to someone who can then bring their

concerns to me. We always either come away with an action or we're

going to get back to this issue, so at a minimum people understand that

they are being heard.

Another principal linked his actions to the collaboration with students by saying,

Well, we have some processes in place whereby we collaborate, and we

meet on a weekly basis. We have a climate whereby we question the

norm. We don't rely on what we used to do. We're always looking for

ways to improve, always looking for ways to meet the needs of our

individual students because we know that students learn at different paces.

Theme: Transparency-Communication (Schools At Risk for Not Meeting Reading

Standards)

Principals in schools that met reading standards answered by acknowledging

transparency and over communicating. The difference was that these principals

emphasized relationship building. One principal remarked,

I think the biggest thing or the first thing is to really develop close trusting

relationships with others, to not only have an open door in name or in

theory, but to really have an open door where everyone feels welcome that

they can come and share the concern, the idea, the suggestion, the good

news, without judgment. And then the other thing that we do, or that I

make sure that I do beyond having good relationships, is to really

communicate—have a lot of open communication, a lot of transparency.

Another principal echoed the need for communication by saying,

I believe that in order to have a successful Instructional Leadership Team

(ILT), and to also have good collaboration among the group, is the

development and maintenance of relationships with the group.

The third principal saw communication in terms of meetings with administrative

level staff. She said,

There no surprises throughout the week. I meet weekly with the leadership

team. I meet weekly with the administrative team, which would include

my two APs, my magnet coordinator, my admin secretary, and my staff

development teacher.

Curriculum and Instructional Issues

Theme: Data (Schools That Met Reading Standards)

All administrators, in schools that met reading standards, were involved in some

way and the percentage of students who needed interventions were small. There was

always a sharp focus on the data available. One principal stated,

Now that the index is changing I think I'll be looking much more at

growth, or lack thereof, [such as] kids that were high proficient last year

and slipped to mid proficient. I mean, I think that's the kind of thing that

this school can and should do: that it's [about] kids that were high

advanced and now low advanced or high proficient. I mean, it's more

about personal student movement as much as it is about the subgroups,

because all of our subgroups are meeting AYP.

Another principal remarked,

MSA reading data is very important. It plays an important part, an

important data point, to make a decision in the best interest of students.

A third principal noted,

We're looking at individual students. I'm not presenting that data. The

English department chair in conjunction with the reading specialist

presents the data to the leadership team, then we dialog about individual

students or where there's some gaps in general.

An English resource teacher summarized many of the sentiments of the principals.

He remarked,

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Now actually we have an interesting situation here, our student, our MSA reading scores are like in the 99th percentile. So for us it gets really, really challenging because now you're drilling down to 15 kids, out of the entire building—like 15 kids. No, when you get down to the individual student sometimes you're working on situations that are much more complex than just the instructional piece… So those students really do get quite the microscopic effect from what we do.

Theme: Data (Schools At Risk for Not Meeting Reading Standards)

These administrators were involved in some way with testing, especially state reading tests. The number of students who needed interventions among these schools was eight times the number of students that needed interventions in schools that met AYP. There was always a sharp focus on the available data; however they had to look at groups rather than individual students. One principal noted,

One of the first things that I do when I get the data before teachers is start to comb through that data and identity trends, patterns, and really dig down deeper. Who are the students? I do a comparison between what we expected with the students that we worked with versus what the actual results were. In terms of the decisions I make, I make the decisions to share the data. I make the decisions that we're going to sit down as a group to review it. I provide some input into the next steps; although I do not dominate that process…I make the decisions about resources. I make decisions about allocation of time. I make decisions about student support.

Another principal stated,

After I receive the data the ESIT [Enhanced School Improvement Team] team looks at the data, analyzes the data, does drill-down data in terms of the targeted students, plan programs for those students, monitor the

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students, and then come back to the table with information in terms of

academic progress, or lack thereof.

A third principal had a different focus and he stated,

So I would say MSA for me really has to do with, what does that tell us

about what our kids can and can't do, or do we need to do differently to

support them through the schedule?

An English resource teacher stated the enormity and complexity of the issue by

saying,

We have easily over 120 students that need specific interventions. We

sort of looked at our cusp kids, who were either 10 points above or below

the proficiency level, and are doing pull-outs with them right now where

we actually work with a small group of them. We pull them out from their

English classes for the first 15 – 20 minutes, when the kids are doing silent

reading in their warm-up, to work on test taking strategies, reading in

context, vocabulary, MSA coachable kinds of questions. The reading

teachers are really good about going over test taking strategies. As English

teachers we do that as well. But yeah, there's quite a few students, and it's

a question of where do you put your energy because you can't provide

effective interventions for all of them individually; but you can provide a

lot through quality instruction and looking at those kids that you get your

bang for your buck for.

Collaboration and Shared Leadership

Theme: Teacher Leadership (Schools That Met Reading Standards)

An additional question was asked of English teachers and resource teachers to obtain a sense of their individual roles in teacher leadership. A resource teacher stated,

I take on a variety of roles throughout the year, not only as an English department chair, but I also serve as a co-team leader, so I am pretty involved with the day to day decisions that are made at the team level and obviously at the department level…I also do a lot of work with actually new teachers, just really not officially.

A teacher stated,

Because one of my strengths, as our school sees it, is in training, they've asked me and I've had the opportunity to develop training for our school, and not just for English but then for the entire school to take on.

Another teacher remarked,

I really like to be able to be there if those first year teachers require assistance. I will work a lot with the technology in the building just because I happen to know a lot and can solve a lot of tiny issues that come up on any given day, and I think I've sort of gained respect from that engagement.

Theme: Teacher Leadership (Schools At Risk for Not Meeting Reading Standards)

These teachers used opportunities to increase their leadership roles and captured instances to develop leadership skills. A resource teacher stated,

I have the largest department in the school, 15 teachers, and I have both English and reading teachers, and I work to empower every member of my department by leading through modeling and coaching…I see myself as a literacy leader in the building because as my position dictates literacy

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resource teacher that really means I'm an English department chair, a

reading specialist, and a literacy coach here.

One English teacher said,

A couple of times I've volunteered to say let me speak on behalf of the

entire department and share this concept and offer up new teaching

strategies to the whole rest of the faculty at our large faculty meetings that

are once a month.

Another teacher noted,

I'm very interested in instructional technology and so I make it a point to

have one-on-one contacts with a lot of teachers where I see either a need

or see how I can help them use technology in their instruction. I also took

on the role of Edline Super User for that purpose as well so I can develop

training for the staff on Edline.

A third teacher stated,

I am more of a behind-the-scenes [leader]. I find myself asking other

people and directing other people (meaning younger teachers in terms of

tenure as well as chronological years) to step forward and become leaders.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings associated with the study. Quantitative

methods were used to address the four research questions. A number of recommendations

for practice and for further research were drawn from these findings and are presented in

Chapter V, as are conclusions reached as an outcome of this study.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter consists of four sections: research summary, findings of the study, conclusions, and recommendations. The research summary frames the major issues that led to this research endeavor. It includes the purpose of the study, the problem statement, research questions, and methodology. An analysis of the data can be found in the findings section. Based on the findings, the researcher includes recommendations for further leadership capacity development for principals, teacher leaders, and for extended research.

This study examined the leadership practices of the teacher and principal; they play a fundamental part in student achievement. The purpose of the study was to identify, compare, and contrast the leadership capacity practices of English teachers, English resource teachers, and principals in two types of middle schools: those identified as meeting the state standards in reading and those identified as at risk of not meeting the state standards in reading.

The conceptual framework of this study was focused upon the perspective that the leadership behaviors and practices of principals and teachers influence the learning community of the school and are grounded in effective school leadership behaviors. The Lambert theory asserts that six critical features of leadership are necessary in order to attain a high level of leadership capacity (Lambert, 2003a). The complexity of the principal's role affirms the need to engage a significant number of classroom teachers as instructional leaders.

This mixed method study used both quantitative and qualitative research methods to obtain pertinent insights and possible solutions to the research questions. Thirty-six middle schools were selected from one county in a mid-Atlantic state. The researcher looked at 20 middle schools making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in reading and 16

middle schools at risk of not making AYP in reading. A total of 36 principals, 36 English resource teachers, and 130 English teachers were invited to participate in the study.

The researcher used Lambert's (2003) Leadership Capacity School Survey (LCSS), based on its six critical domains, as lenses to view the leadership capacity of the three groups. The study also used qualitative methodology (focus group interviews) as a non-directive method for obtaining information about leadership capacity behavior and practices not available through general quantitative research methods. Using a moderator's guide, the researcher prepared a series of questions to guide the focus group discussions. The researcher recorded, transcribed, and analyzed the focus group interviews, looking for themes and patterns in the qualitative data. The transcripts did not identify names of persons or individual schools.

<div align="center">Research Questions</div>

Prior to beginning the research, the following research questions were developed to provide the structure for data collection and analysis.

Research Question 1

From the perspective of middle school English teachers, are there differences in the perceptions of the six leadership domains those middle schools identified as at risk of not meeting the state standards in reading and those middle schools identified as meeting the state standards in reading?

Research Question 2

From the perspective of middle school English resource teachers, are there differences in the perceptions of the six leadership domains between those middle schools identified as at risk of not meeting the state standards in reading and those middle schools identified as meeting the state standards in reading?

Research Question 3

From the perspective of middle school principals, are there differences in the perceptions of the six leadership domains between middle schools identified as at risk of not meeting the state standards in reading and those middle schools identified as meeting the state standards in reading?

Research Question 4

What are the curriculum and instructional issues faced daily by middle school principals, English resource teachers, and English teachers who are concerned with providing interventions to students in English? Are there differences in the curricular and instructional issues between successful middle schools and those middle schools identified as not meeting the state standards?

Summary of Quantitative Survey Findings

Overall, survey findings indicated that Lambert's survey instrument had a strong degree of inter-item reliability, based on the computation of Cronbach alphas on the six critical elements. Cronbach alphas measured inter-item reliability and the consistency of the survey instrument.

Finding #1: The researcher found that the instrument had a high degree of reliability across the six critical elements (domains) indicating that the survey was generally reliable.

Finding #2: The researcher determined that the correlation coefficients for most of the domains in schools identified as meeting state standards were in the strong range, above .71. All were statistically significant at the .001 level for English teachers. The correlations were considerably lower for resource teachers. For principals, most correlations were strong, above .71. This was true even though there were only 14 principals in this group.

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Finding #3: The correlation coefficients for schools identified as at risk for not meeting state standards were in the modest range.

Finding #4: An independent t-test of teachers' differences in perceptions of the six leadership domains between schools meeting state standards and schools at risk of not meeting state standards did not show any statistically significant mean differences between the two groups of English teachers.

Finding #5: An independent t-test of resource teachers' differences in perceptions of six leadership domains between schools meeting state standards and schools at risk of not meeting state standards did not show any statistically significant mean differences between the two groups of resource teachers.

Finding #6: An independent t-test of principals' differences in perceptions of the six leadership domains between schools meeting state standards and schools at risk of not meeting state standards did not show any statistically significant mean differences between the two groups of principals.

Additional Analysis

Based on Findings 4, 5, and 6, the researcher found that the Lambert survey instrument was not as sensitive as hoped in isolating differences between the two types of schools and the six domains. As mentioned in Chapter IV, the researcher observed that in most cases both groups of principals had higher mean scores (although not statistically significantly different) than the English resource teachers and the English teachers. Therefore, the researcher sought to determine through additional analysis if there were statistically significant differences among the three groups of educators—teachers, resource teachers, and principals—in each group of schools.

Finding #7: The one-way analysis of variance across the three groups and the two types of schools comparing English teachers', English resource teachers', and principals' perceptions of the six leadership domains in schools meeting state standards did not

indicate any statistically significant differences in Domains 2, 3, and 6. There was a statistically significant difference at the .01 level for Domain 1 (Broad-based Participation), Domain 4 (Roles and Actions Reflect Broad Involvement) and Domain 5 (Reflective Practices Leads to Innovation). The differences in all cases were between the English teachers and the principals, with the principals having the higher mean.

Finding #8: The one-way analysis of variance across the three groups and the two types of schools comparing English teachers', English resource teachers', and principals' perceptions of the six leadership domains in schools at risk for not meeting state standards indicated a statistically significant difference between the three groups in terms of Domain 1(Broad-based Participation), Domain 3 (Inquiry-Based Use of Information to Inform Decisions), and Domain 6 (High or Steadily Improving Student Achievement). Multiple analyses showed that the difference in Domain 1 was between the principal and the resource teacher. The principal had the higher mean score. In Domain 3 the difference was between the resource teacher and the English teacher; the mean was higher for the English teacher. The difference in Domain 6 was not statistically significant in subsequent analysis.

<div align="center">Conclusions Based on Quantitative Results</div>

Among the three professional groups in the schools meeting state standards the researcher concluded that there was more agreement about the principal's leadership capacity in schools, whereas this was not observed in schools not meeting state standards. This difference is particularly important in light of the fact that all three groups in the poorer performing schools had statistically significant differences in Domain 1 (Broad-based Participation), Domain 3 (Inquiry-Based Use of Information to Inform Decisions), and Domain 6 (High or Steadily Improving Student Achievement). Whereas, in successful schools the three groups also had a statistically significant difference in Domain 1(Broad-based Participation). In Domain 3, the researcher concluded that

teachers in successful schools had the luxury of highly motivated students. Their students generally perform well and succeeded, and thus these educators didn't have to give attention to behavioral challenges, but could focus on the academics.

In finding that there were no statistically significant differences in Domain 2 (Shared Vision Results in Program Coherence) between both groups of schools the researcher concluded that basically the school district had a vision that was universal. The researcher maintained because four out of six domains did not display a significant statistical difference then the quantitative analysis findings would not be viewed statistically significant for each group and category.

<center>Summary of Focus Group Findings</center>

The following findings were based on the focus group discussions.

Finding #1: While both categories of schools believed in shared decision making and the theme of empowerment, the comments of the principals in the schools that met AYP strongly supported shared decision making at all levels throughout the entire staff. In schools that did not make AYP the principals mainly shared decisions among their leadership teams, predominately their assistant principals. In schools that did not meet AYP, the voices of the administrative level were heard, but the whole staff was not empowered to speak.

Finding #2: The researcher found that in schools that met AYP, there was shared decision making through the theme of collegiality. Those schools believed in the entire staff reaching consensus, having core values, and collaborating to work through problems. In schools that did not meet AYP, the shared decision making did not look the same. The entire staff was not included in decision making. Some staff members felt disenfranchised and did not have a voice. Some felt that they had been listened to because it was the politically correct thing to do, but they really did not have any say in major decisions.

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Finding #3: In schools that met state reading standards, the vision was primarily for students to achieve academic excellence and have high achievement scores. Secondarily, students were expected to be well-rounded; and third, to be responsible citizens.

Finding #4: In schools that did not meet state standards in reading the school vision was mainly focused on students reaching their maximum potential, and feeling safe. The second part of the vision was for students to be successful academically.

Finding #5: In both categories of schools, all groups identified collaboration as a method of reflection. However, within schools that did not meet AYP standards, the principals were much less likely to engage in any other form of reflection and didn't feel that reflection was necessary for their leadership practice.

Finding #6: Both categories of English teachers and resource teachers valued and used collaborative planning to aid their reflection. Teachers also felt more at ease using peer coaching as a reflection tool.

Finding #7: Principals identified themselves as being open, fair, and looking for input from all stakeholders in schools that met AYP. In schools that did not meet AYP, principals identified themselves as being transparent in delegating tasks. However these principals only delegated tasks among other administrators and did not involve the teacher leaders in their schools.

Finding #8: In both categories of schools the favored instrument of reflection was collaborative planning. Peer coaching was the next strategy used often in both categories of schools by all three groups of educators. Additional forms of reflection included journaling and blogs, but the researcher found that these were outliers.

Finding #9: The researcher found that the number of students needing interventions varied widely between the two groups of schools. In the met AYP schools

there were approximately 15 – 20 students needing additional interventions; the number of students needing interventions in a school that did not make AYP was 110 – 120.

Conclusions Based on Qualitative Results

Based on the focus group interviews, the researcher reached the following conclusions. The researcher concluded that all schools used shared decision making concepts which were anchored in themes of empowerment and collegiality. However, in those schools that met AYP shared decision making reached the entire staff. In schools that did not meet AYP, the researcher determined that the sharing of decisions only went as far as the administrative team. The teachers and resource teachers in those schools related that they did not feel that their voice was heard. They were not invited to participate or witness the school leadership team in action, whereas in schools that met AYP anyone was invited to listen to the school leadership discussion.

All of the schools had a school vision which resonated with student achievement and uplifting student attitudes and emotions. However, the researcher established that in the schools that met AYP, the vision was articulated as excelling in achievement first and foremost. There was no need to focus on a vision that encompassed safety for all or to promote a vision that would improve the character of students. The researcher concluded that in schools that did not meet AYP, the vision was mandated for the successful student to have a positive, safe learning environment. These schools had an external element that was characterized by high poverty and therefore the staff faced unique challenges. It was evident that a safe environment was already assumed in the schools where AYP was met.

The researcher concluded that both categories of schools looked at data to make informed decisions regarding reading curriculum and instruction for those students who did not do well on standardized tests. However, it was noted by the researcher that it was more difficult for the schools that did not meet AYP standards because they had to provide more interventions, motivate more students, and expend additional time and

energies to support their students. Schools with met AYP scores had the luxury of highly motivated students and those teachers could work mainly on the academic skills of critical inquiry rather than emphasize interventions.

From the opinions expressed in the focus groups, the researcher concluded that all principals tried to promote collaboration, shared leadership, and sought consensus to solve problems. However, from comments made in the focus groups, the researcher determined that some principals in non-met schools relied heavily on other administrative level staff to make instructional decisions, push agendas, and solve problems, whereas in met schools, the principals wanted input from all stakeholders and maintained an open door policy.

From the focus group discussions of disaggregating reading data, the researcher determined that the principals in schools where AYP was met were part of a group that made the decisions about the few students who needed interventions. These findings indicated that principals gathered information from others and found out what was needed in order to improve instruction. In schools where AYP was not met, the researcher concluded that the principals took on a more directive role (e.g. scheduling, analyzing data alone, and assigning data analytical tasks to other administrators). They saw themselves as the leader rather than as a member of the group of educators trying to provide interventions and use best practices in reading.

<div align="center">Recommendations for Practice</div>

As roles of teacher leaders and principals intensify and strengthen, successful school improvement grows into a sustainable capacity-building process. This capacity-building process includes creating a shared vision, using reflective practice, promoting instructional change, and exercising collaboration. Instructional change requires that teachers and principals work together and create professional learning communities for school improvement. For many principals, a personal transformation in leadership must

accompany the pursuit to rebuild schooling, to cultivate teacher leadership, and to nurture the growth of teacher leaders (Murphy et al., 2009). Understanding leadership capacity practices will improve relationships and create collaborative, shared decision making units.

Sharing goals and purpose requires a shift in thinking where leadership is concerned, according to Angelle (2010). Leadership capacity is essential for promoting successful school improvement as well as playing a pivotal part in school reform. In addition, principals need to be capable and believe in their capabilities when exercising instructional leadership, managerial leadership, and moral leadership (Virga, 2012). The results of this study would be beneficial to school districts, principals, teachers, teacher unions and schools of education in their efforts to improve student achievement and further state accountability efforts. Specifically, the implications for practice from this study include:

Recommendation #1

Based on focus group data, the researcher recommends that the county government should be a strong advocate for staff development. This professional development would enhance the skills of principals, resource teachers, and classroom teachers in several areas including: teacher leadership, leadership capacity building, and reflection techniques. It is important that middle school principals use the practice of shared leadership to get input from stakeholders and build capacity in order to support school achievement goals. It is not enough for shared leadership to reach administrative level staff: all staff must participate, as demonstrated by principals in schools that met AYP.

Recommendation #2

The researcher advocates that middle school principals in at-risk schools practice reflective strategies. Principals should engage in peer coaching among veteran and novice

administrators. Teachers should use collaborative planning and in doing so, educators could turn their concentration to classroom practice rather than just to the collection of data and knowledge. Schools should engage teachers in collaboration: that shared sense of purpose which encourages risk taking, increases diversity in teaching methods, and provides an improved sense of efficacy among teachers (Harris & Muijs, 2005).

Recommendation #3

This researcher recommends to school systems and teacher unions that at-risk middle schools receive ongoing professional development in principal-coach communication. Such professional development could be underwritten by Title II grants that request local school districts to supplement rather than supplant initiatives. This plan could be delivered in mixed team sessions with listening assessments and activities, feedback coaching stems, and role-playing strategies. Master teachers would be the consultants in this professional development activity, providing a teacher leadership career lattice pathway. The career lattice pathway would provide structure for achieving teacher leader status and would emphasize Teacher Leader Model Standards. This would support comments and concerns raised in focus groups about shared decision making and the empowerment of all stakeholders.

Recommendations for Policy

Recommendation #1

In order to create organizational structures and learning environments that provide more opportunities for teachers and principals to exercise leadership roles use funding made available at the federal, state, and local levels to support training for leadership capacity.

Recommendation #2

In order to prepare and encourage principals to actively engage in leadership capacity use the Advancing Secondary School Reform in Investing in Innovation (i#)

grants to develop practices of reflection. This would support turnaround efforts at the secondary school level.

Recommendation #3

In order to implement and sustain teacher leadership capacity initiatives over time, engage institutions of higher learning to create programs in the Masters and Doctorate level of School Administration to focus on courses on leadership capacity.

Recommendation #4

This researcher recommends to school systems, teacher unions, and schools of education (especially partnerships) the incorporation of the Teacher Leader Model Standards to improve leadership capacity. Based on quantitative data, this would focus especially on Domain 1 (Broad-based Participation), Domain 4 (Roles and Actions Reflect Broad Involvement), and Domain 5 (Reflective Practices Lead to Innovation). The teacher leader model standards could be used to guide the preparation of experienced teachers to assume leadership roles such as resource providers, instructional specialists, curriculum specialists, classroom supporters, learning facilitators, mentors, school team leaders, and data coaches (Harrison & Killion, 2007).

Recommendations for Further Research

The results of this study provided extensive, detailed descriptions of leadership capacity practices of English teachers, English resource teachers, and principals. Though the data provided some details and answers regarding leadership capacity practices of the three groups, it raised recommendations for further research. Recommendations for further study are as follows:

Recommendation #1

This study should be replicated with other people who work closely with the principals such as assistant principals, and department leaders. They should be surveyed

to ascertain principals' leadership capacity practices in relationship to their work and tasks required.

Recommendation #2

The study should be replicated in a different setting such as rural and metropolitan.

Recommendation #3

The study should be replicated with different student demographics (such as high and low poverty areas). The insights gained from such a study would ascertain if those schools that don't meet standards and have a high FARM rates would need more resources and professional development to narrow the student achievement gap.

Recommendation #4

A case study should be conducted with a middle school that is considered successful and has met standards in reading for over three years. This qualitative research project would provide a rich and comprehensive understanding of the leadership capacity practices within a successful school environment.

Recommendation #5

This study was limited by the size of the sample and by the focus on a single school district. A similar study should be completed using the Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning (TELL) Survey data to see if the same conclusions are drawn throughout the state. The TELL survey would also be analyzed in schools that are at risk to determine what teacher/school leadership characteristics, professional development strategies, and instructional practices and support could be used to assess the positive teaching and learning conditions that are essential to student success and school improvement.

APPENDIX A

Invitation to Participate

Recruitment Letter – English Teacher (Survey)

Dear English Teacher:

I would like to invite you to participate in a study of Leadership Capacity Practices of Middle School teachers. The study, which is being conducted as part of my doctoral program, will examine the relationship between school leadership capacity practices and middle school reading achievement.

Participants will be asked to complete the Lambert Capacity School Survey. This survey asks you to give your perception about school leadership capacity practices. The survey also asks about your background and experience. Participation in the survey should take approximately twenty minutes.

All responses will be kept confidential. All identifying information will be removed and survey data will be maintained in secure files and will be accessible only to me. Reports and other communications related to the study will not identify respondents by name, nor will they identify any schools. Study results will be available in a summary report, which will be given to Montgomery County Public Schools. Approximately 3% of survey participants will be asked to participate in a follow-up focus group interview of approximately one (1) hour in length.

If you are willing to participate please complete the enclosed survey consent form and return it in the attached envelope by Friday, September 28, 2012. Participants will be sent a copy of the consent form and a link to the survey on Survey Monkey.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact me by calling 301-217-5137 (work) or you may send me an e-mail at Gail_Epps@mcpsmd.org You may also contact Dr. Carol Parham, chairperson of my committee, by directly calling the university at 301-405-3580.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Gail A. Epps

Recruitment Letter – English Resource Teacher (Survey)

Dear English Resource Teacher:

I would like to invite you to participate in a study of Leadership Capacity Practices of Middle School teachers. The study, which is being conducted as part of my doctoral program, will examine the relationship between school leadership capacity practices and middle school reading achievement.

Participants will be asked to complete the Lambert Capacity School Survey. This survey asks you to give your perception about school leadership capacity practices. The survey also asks about your background and experience. Participation in the survey should take approximately twenty minutes.

All responses will be kept confidential. All identifying information will be removed and survey data will be maintained in secure files and will be accessible only to me. Reports and other communications related to the study will not identify respondents by name, nor will they identify any schools. Study results will be available in a summary report, which will be given to Montgomery County Public Schools. Approximately 15% of survey participants will be asked to participate in a follow-up focus group interview of approximately one (1) hour in length.

If you are willing to participate please complete the enclosed survey consent form and return it in the attached envelope by Friday, September 28, 2012. Participants will be sent a copy of the consent form and a link to the survey on Survey Monkey.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact me by calling 301-217-5137 (work) or you may send me an e-mail at Gail_Epps@mcpsmd.org   You may also contact Dr. Carol Parham, chairperson of my committee, by directly calling the university at 301-405-3580.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Gail A. Epps

Recruitment Letter – Principals (Survey)

Dear Principal:

I would like to invite you to participate in a study of Leadership Capacity Practices of Middle School principals. The study, which is being conducted as part of my doctoral program, will examine the relationship between school leadership capacity practices and middle school reading achievement.

Participants will be asked to complete the Lambert Capacity School Survey. This survey asks you to give your perception about school leadership capacity practices. The survey also asks about your background and experience. Participation in the survey should take approximately twenty minutes.

All responses will be kept confidential. All identifying information will be removed and survey data will be maintained in secure files and will be accessible only to me. Reports and other communications related to the study will not identify respondents by name, nor will they identify any schools. Study results will be available in a summary report, which will be given to Montgomery County Public Schools. Approximately 15% of survey participants will be asked to participate in a follow-up focus group interview of approximately one (1) hour in length.

If you are willing to participate please complete the enclosed survey consent form and return it in the attached envelope by Friday, September 28, 2012. Participants will be sent a copy of the consent form and a link to the survey on Survey Monkey.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact me by calling 301-217-5137 (work) or you may send me an e-mail at Gail_Epps@mcpsmd.org You may also contact Dr. Carol Parham, chairperson of my committee, by directly calling the university at 301-405-3580.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Gail A. Epps

APPENDIX B

Survey

English Teachers

This school survey is designed to assess the leadership capacity of your school. Once you have completed the survey, please complete the background section. The numbers on the 1 – 5 scale represent the following:

1 = We do not do this at our school.
2 = We are starting to move in this direction.
3 = We are making good progress here.
4 = We have this condition well established.
5 = We are refining our practice in this area.

Circle the rating for each item

A. **Broad-based, skillful participation in the work of leadership.**
In our school, we:

1.	Have established representative governance groups	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Perform collaborative work in large and small teams.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Model leadership skills	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Organize for maximum interaction among adults and children.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Share authority and resources	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Express our leadership by attending to the learning of the entire school community.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Engage each other in opportunities to lead.	1	2	3	4	5

B. **Shared vision results in program coherence.**
In our school we:

8.	Develop our school vision jointly.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Ask each other questions that keep us on track with our vision.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Think together about how to align our standards, instruction assessment, and programs with our vision	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Keep our vision alive by reviewing it regularly.	1	2	3	4	5

C. Inquiry-based use of information to inform decisions and practice
In our school we:

12. Use a learning cycle that involves reflection, dialogue, inquiry and action.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Make time available for this learning to occur (e.g., faculty meetings, ad hoc groups, teams)	1	2	3	4	5
14. Focus on student learning.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Use data/evidence to inform our decisions and teaching practices.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Have designed a comprehensive information system that keeps everyone informed and involved.	1	2	3	4	5

D. Roles and actions reflect broad involvement, collaboration, and collective responsibility.
In our school, we:

17. Have designed our roles to include attention to our classrooms, school, community, and profession.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Seek to perform outside of traditional roles	1	2	3	4	5
19. Have developed new ways to work together.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Have developed a plan for sharing responsibilities in the implementation of our decisions and agreements.	1	2	3	4	5

E. Reflective practice consistently leads to innovation.
In our school, we:

21. Make time for ongoing reflection (e.g., journaling, peer coaching, collaborative planning.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Encourage individual and group initiative by providing access to resources, personnel, and time.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Have joined with networks of other schools and programs, both inside and outside the district, to secure feedback on our work.	1	2	3	4	5

24.	Practice and support new ways of doing things.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	Develop our own criteria for accountability regarding individual and shared work.	1	2	3	4	5

F. High or steadily improving student achievement and development
In our school, we:

26.	Work with members of the school community to establish and implement expectations and standards.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	Teach and assess so that all children learn.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	Provide feedback to children and families about student progress.	1	2	3	4	5
29.	Talk with families about student performance and school programs.	1	2	3	4	5
30.	Have redesigned roles and structures to develop resiliency in children (e.g., teacher as coach/advisor/mentor, school-wide guidance programs, community service?	1	2	3	4	5

BACKGROUND – ENGLISH TEACHERS

Please provide the following background information:

31.   Are you: 1. Male ____   2. Female ___

32.   How many years have you been in education, including the years at your current
       school?

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
0 – 5	6 – 10	11 – 15	16 – 20	21+

33.   How many years have you been teaching at this school?

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
0 – 5	6 – 10	11 – 15	16 – 20	21+

34.   What is your education level?

1.	2.	3.	4.
BA/BS	MA	MA+30	Doctorate

35.   What is your area(s) of certification?

1.	2.	3.
Elementary -5th grade	English	Reading

36.   To what age group do you belong?

1.	2.	3.	4.
22 – 30	31 – 40	41 – 50	51+

Would you be willing to participate in a focus group as part of this study? If so, please
sign below and sign your name and school.

_____

Name   School

English Resource Teachers

This school survey is designed to assess the leadership capacity of your school. Once you have completed the survey, please complete the background section. The numbers on the 1 – 5 scale represent the following:

> 1 = We do not do this at our school.
> 2 = We are starting to move in this direction.
> 3 = We are making good progress here.
> 4 = We have this condition well established.
> 5 = We are refining our practice in this area.

Circle the rating for each item

A. **Broad-based, skillful participation in the work of leadership.**
In our school, we:

1.	Have established representative governance groups	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Perform collaborative work in large and small teams.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Model leadership skills	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Organize for maximum interaction among adults and children.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Share authority and resources	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Express our leadership by attending to the learning of the entire school community.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Engage each other in opportunities to lead.	1	2	3	4	5

B. **Shared vision results in program coherence.**
In our school we:

8.	Develop our school vision jointly.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Ask each other questions that keep us on track with our vision.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Think together about how to align our standards, instruction assessment, and programs with our vision	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Keep our vision alive by reviewing it regularly.	1	2	3	4	5

C. Inquiry-based use of information to inform decisions and practice
In our school we:

12. Use a learning cycle that involves reflection, dialogue, inquiry and action.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Make time available for this learning to occur (e.g., faculty meetings, ad hoc groups, teams)	1	2	3	4	5
14. Focus on student learning.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Use data/evidence to inform our decisions and teaching practices.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Have designed a comprehensive information system that keeps everyone informed and involved.	1	2	3	4	5

D. Roles and actions reflect broad involvement, collaboration, and collective responsibility.
In our school, we:

17. Have designed our roles to include attention to our classrooms, school, community, and profession.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Seek to perform outside of traditional roles	1	2	3	4	5
19. Have developed new ways to work together.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Have developed a plan for sharing responsibilities in the implementation of our decisions and agreements.	1	2	3	4	5

E. Reflective practice consistently leads to innovation.
In our school, we:

21. Make time for ongoing reflection (e.g., journaling, peer coaching, collaborative planning.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Encourage individual and group initiative by providing access to resources, personnel, and time.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Have joined with networks of other schools and programs, both inside and outside the district, to secure feedback on our work.	1	2	3	4	5

24. Practice and support new ways of doing things.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Develop our own criteria for accountability regarding individual and shared work.	1	2	3	4	5

F. High or steadily improving student achievement and development
In our school, we:

26. Work with members of the school community to establish and implement expectations and standards.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Teach and assess so that all children learn.	1	2	3	4	5
28. Provide feedback to children and families about student progress.	1	2	3	4	5
29. Talk with families about student performance and school programs.	1	2	3	4	5
30. Have redesigned roles and structures to develop resiliency in children (e.g., teacher as coach/advisor/mentor, school-wide guidance programs, community service?	1	2	3	4	5

BACKGROUND – ENGLISH RESOURCE TEACHERS

Please provide the following background information:

31.   Are you: 1. Male ____   2. Female ___

32.   How many years have you been in education, including the years at your current
       school?

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
0 – 5	6 – 10	11 – 15	16 – 20	21+

33.   How many years have you been teaching at this school?

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
0 – 5	6 – 10	11 – 15	16 – 20	21+

34.   What is your education level?

1.	2.	3.	4.
BA/BS	MA	MA+30	Doctorate

35.   What is your area(s) of certification?

1.	2.	3.
Elementary -5th grade	English	Reading

36.   To what age group do you belong?

1.	2.	3.	4.
22 – 30	31 – 40	41 – 50	51+

Would you be willing to participate in a focus group as part of this study? If so, please
sign below and sign your name and school.

_____

Name   School

Principals

This school survey is designed to assess the leadership capacity of your school. Once you have completed the survey, please complete the background section. The numbers on the 1 – 5 scale represent the following:

1 = We do not do this at our school.
2 = We are starting to move in this direction.
3 = We are making good progress here.
4 = We have this condition well established.
5 = We are refining our practice in this area.

Circle the rating for each item

A. **Broad-based, skillful participation in the work of leadership.**
In our school, we:

1.	Have established representative governance groups	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Perform collaborative work in large and small teams.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Model leadership skills	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Organize for maximum interaction among adults and children.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Share authority and resources	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Express our leadership by attending to the learning of the entire school community.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Engage each other in opportunities to lead.	1	2	3	4	5

B. **Shared vision results in program coherence.**
In our school we:

8.	Develop our school vision jointly.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Ask each other questions that keep us on track with our vision.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Think together about how to align our standards, instruction assessment, and programs with our vision	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Keep our vision alive by reviewing it regularly.	1	2	3	4	5

C. Inquiry-based use of information to inform decisions and practice
In our school we:

12. Use a learning cycle that involves reflection, dialogue, inquiry and action.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Make time available for this learning to occur (e.g., faculty meetings, ad hoc groups, teams)	1	2	3	4	5
14. Focus on student learning.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Use data/evidence to inform our decisions and teaching practices.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Have designed a comprehensive information system that keeps everyone informed and involved.	1	2	3	4	5

D. Roles and actions reflect broad involvement, collaboration, and collective responsibility.
In our school, we:

17. Have designed our roles to include attention to our classrooms, school, community, and profession.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Seek to perform outside of traditional roles	1	2	3	4	5
19. Have developed new ways to work together.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Have developed a plan for sharing responsibilities in the implementation of our decisions and agreements.	1	2	3	4	5

E. Reflective practice consistently leads to innovation.
In our school, we:

21. Make time for ongoing reflection (e.g., journaling, peer coaching, collaborative planning.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Encourage individual and group initiative by providing access to resources, personnel, and time.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Have joined with networks of other schools and programs, both inside and outside the district, to secure feedback on our work.	1	2	3	4	5

24. Practice and support new ways of doing things.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Develop our own criteria for accountability regarding individual and shared work.	1	2	3	4	5

F. High or steadily improving student achievement and development
In our school, we:

26. Work with members of the school community to establish and implement expectations and standards.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Teach and assess so that all children learn.	1	2	3	4	5
28. Provide feedback to children and families about student progress.	1	2	3	4	5
29. Talk with families about student performance and school programs.	1	2	3	4	5
30. Have redesigned roles and structures to develop resiliency in children (e.g., teacher as coach/advisor/mentor, school-wide guidance programs, community service?	1	2	3	4	5

BACKGROUND – PRINCIPALS

Please provide the following background information:

31.   Are you: 1. Male ____   2. Female ___

32.   How many years have you been in education, including the years at your current school?

   1.   2.   3.   4.   5.

   0 – 5   6 – 10   11 – 15   16 – 20   21+

33.   How many years have you been teaching at this school?

   1.   2.   3.   4.   5.

   0 – 5   6 – 10   11 – 15   16 – 20   21+

34.   What is your education level?

   1.   2.   3.   4.

   BA/BS   MA   MA+30   Doctorate

35.   What is your area(s) of certification?
   1.   2.   3.

Elementary -5th grade   English   Reading

36.   To what age group do you belong?

   1.   2.   3.   4.

   22 – 30   31 – 40   41 – 50   51+

Would you be willing to participate in a focus group as part of this study? If so, please sign below and sign your name and school.

_____

Name   School

APPENDIX C

Recruitment Letter For English Teachers, English Resource Teachers,
And Principals (Focus Groups)

Dear English Teacher:

As a teacher, who recently participated in a study of leadership capacity practice of middle school English teachers, you are cordially invited to participate in a focus group interview for the study. These interviews will run approximately one hour in length and scheduled at a time and location convenient to the participants. The researcher will conduct the focus groups.

All responses will be kept confidential, and the participants will not be identified by name. Participants will be referenced according to their positions. Only the members of my dissertation committee and I will have access to the records of information obtained directly from the interview. By participating in this study you will help in the development of research regarding leadership practices of highly successful middle schools. The results of this study will be provided in the form of an executive summary and made available to the institution and the participants upon request.

If you are willing to participate in the focus group interview please complete the attached consent form and return in the enclosed envelope by Friday, October 12, 2012.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact me by calling 301-217-5137, or you may send me an email at Gail_Epps@mcpsmd.org. You may also contact Dr. Carol Parham, chairperson of my committee, by directly calling the university at 301-405-3580.
Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Gail A. Epps

Dear English Resource Teacher:

As a resource teacher, who recently participated in a study of leadership capacity practice of middle school English Resource teachers, you are cordially invited to participate in a focus group interview for the study. These interviews will run approximately one hour in length and scheduled at a time and location convenient to the participants. The researcher will conduct the focus groups.

All responses will be kept confidential, and the participants will not be identified by name. Participants will be referenced according to their positions. Only the members of my dissertation committee and I will have access to the records of information obtained directly from the interview. By participating in this study you will help in the development of research regarding leadership practices of highly successful middle schools. The results of this study will be provided in the form of an executive summary and made available to the institution and the participants upon request.

If you are willing to participate in the focus group interview please complete the attached consent form and return in the enclosed envelope by Friday, October 12, 2012.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact me by calling 301-217-5137, or you may send me an email at Gail_Epps@mcpsmd.org. You may also contact Dr. Carol Parham, chairperson of my committee, by directly calling the university at 301-405-3580.
Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Gail A. Epps

Dear Principal:

As a principal, who recently participated in a study of leadership capacity practice of middle school principals, you are cordially invited to participate in a focus group interview for the study. These interviews will run approximately one hour in length and scheduled at a time and location convenient to the participants. The researcher will conduct the focus groups.

All responses will be kept confidential, and the participants will not be identified by name. Participants will be referenced according to their positions. Only the members of my dissertation committee and I will have access to the records of information obtained directly from the interview. By participating in this study you will help in the development of research regarding leadership practices of highly successful middle schools. The results of this study will be provided in the form of an executive summary and made available to the institution and the participants upon request.

If you are willing to participate in the focus group interview please complete the attached consent form and return in the enclosed envelope by Friday, October 12, 2012.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact me by calling 301-217-5137, or you may send me an email at Gail_Epps@mcpsmd.org. You may also contact Dr. Carol Parham, chairperson of my committee, by directly calling the university at 301-405-3580.
Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Gail A. Epps

APPENDIX D

Qualitative Focus Moderator Guide

FOCUS GROUP MODERATOR GUIDE

Group	Focus Area	Question
English Teachers	Broad-based participation in the work of leadership	Are there shared decision making tenets embedded in the school leadership teams? In what ways do you engage in opportunities to lead?
	Shared Vision	What is your vision for the school and how does it influence your school culture?
	Roles/Action Reflecting Broad Involvement, Collaboration and Collective Responsibility	Describe collaboration and shared leadership in your school.
	Reflective Practice Leading to Innovation	What type of ongoing reflection do you engage in (e.g. journaling, peer coaching, collaborative planning)?
English Resource Teachers	Broad-based participation in the work of leadership	Are there shared decision making tenets embedded in the school leadership teams? In what ways do you engage in opportunities to lead?
	Shared Vision	What is your vision for the school and how does it influence your school culture?

FOCUS GROUP MODERATOR GUIDE (cont.)

	Roles/Action Reflecting Broad Involvement, Collaboration and Collective Responsibility	Describe collaboration and shared leadership in your school.
	Reflective Practice Leading to Innovation	What type of ongoing reflection do you engage in (e.g. journaling, peer coaching, collaborative planning)? Once you have your data from MSA in Reading what decisions do you become involved in?
Principals	Broad-based participation in the work of leadership	Are there shared decision making tenets embedded in the school leadership teams? What do you do in order to collaborate and have broader involvement outside of your traditional role?
	Shared Vision	What is your vision for the school and how does it influence your school culture?
	Roles/Action Reflecting Broad Involvement, Collaboration and Collective Responsibility	Describe collaboration and shared leadership in your school. Once you have your data from MSA in Reading what decisions do you become involved in?
	Reflective Practice Leading to Innovation	What type of ongoing reflection do you engage in (e.g. journaling, peer coaching, collaborative planning)?

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