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The Efficacy Actions of Priority School Leaders during the Dynamic Change of School Reform

Micole D. Dyson
Western Michigan University, micoledyson@yahoo.com

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THE EFFICACY ACTIONS OF PRIORITY SCHOOL LEADERS DURING THE DYNAMIC
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by

Micole D. Dyson

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Doctoral Committee:

Louann Bierlein Palmer, Ed.D., Chair
Brett A. Geier, Ed.D.
Joseph R. Morris, Ph.D.

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Micole D. Dyson, Ph.D.

Western Michigan University, 2019

There are increasing demands and challenges from the state and federal government for continual academic improvement for all schools. Each year, the Michigan Department of Education creates a "Top to Bottom" list of schools, with the lowest-performing schools designated as priority schools. This priority designation invariably creates the need for principals to examine their own self-efficacy beliefs as they work with teachers to improve these schools.

The purpose of this basic qualitative study is to identify and describe principals' beliefs in their abilities to organize and execute complex actions to achieve changes within priority schools. Identifying and naming a leader's self-efficacious beliefs, and how the leader fosters collective efficacy, is one way to bring attention to the effects, if any, that self-efficacy plays in principal leadership during school reform efforts.

This study was conducted using a semi-structured, open-ended interview protocol to interview 10 principals of priority-labeled schools. In an effort to capture the self-efficacy of these principals, they were asked 16 questions about four action areas of their leadership: (1) setting direction, (2) redesigning the organization, (3) managing the instructional program, and (4) developing people. The results of the constant comparative data analysis resulted in 10 major themes and eight subthemes. Taking my analysis one step further, I categorized these themes and subthemes regarding the dominant beliefs and actions of these principals into three foundational

themes: (1) data driving everything, (2) creating and supporting, and (3) culture and climate attentiveness. As part of their self-efficacy beliefs, these principals manage in such a way that they build on their successes before remediating their weakness. They work on what is strong and this in turn grows what is weak.

Prior to this study, most previous related research on efficacy used assessment instruments to measure quantitatively self and/or collective efficacy. The value of this study is the descriptive richness of how a leader organizes, plans, and executes their efficacious beliefs to help themselves and to foster collective efficacy. Overall, principals in priority schools use their self-efficacious beliefs and foster collective efficacy by modeling their courage in looking at data, supporting their staff, and attending to the culture and climate of their schools. As a result, the literature has been expanded to include the results of these principals describing their leadership actions as related to self-efficacy.

These results suggest that school districts continue to model and promote data use with principals to increase their knowledge and understanding around presenting data to their staff. These results also suggest that school districts provide the needed autonomy to principals in making decisions on what professional development will best support the culture and climate needs within their schools as they address the learning needs of both the students and staff.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) defines priority schools as, "those schools in the bottom 5% of a complete 'top to bottom' list of schools that are now published every August" (MDE, 2011-12 Priority School). In 2016, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) designated 184 primary and secondary schools throughout the state as priority schools (MDE, 2016 Current Priority List). Despite a large number of schools labeled lower performing schools, little is known about the principals in priority schools and their efforts to lead their schools to a higher level of performance. Thus, the research presented in this dissertation will address the efforts of principals in low performing schools in leading their schools through the required transformative process of school reform.

Background

Priority schools in Michigan must develop a reform plan that results in a rapid turnaround in student achievement and improvement in student performance on the state assessment instruments over a three-year period. The MDE requires the school principal to select one of four school reform models: (a) closure, (b) restart, (c) turn-around, or (d) transformation (MDE, 2013). The first two reform models, closure and restart require closing a school. Closure, as the name implies, means permanently closing a school and restart includes closing the school but reopening it under new leadership. The third reform model, turn-around, requires replacing the principal and 50% of the staff (MDE, 2013 Priority Schools: Reaching for Excellence). One could argue that the most desirable option of the four is the transformation model because the staff remains intact, is given opportunities to grow professionally, improve their teaching, and

the school district might avoid possible political repercussions associated with the other three models. During the first years implementing this school reform model, "58 schools chose the transformation model, 29 schools chose the turnaround model, and 5 schools chose the closure model. The restart model was not selected by any district" (MDE, 2011, p. 1).

Leaders are charged to manage state requirements under the very public, negative label of low performing and, in many cases, high poverty school. Accountability for leaders, teachers and students is necessary, and yet the inherent challenges associated with schools designated as priority are enhanced for the principals in such schools. Indeed, given the options available from the state, the priority label has implied negative connotations regarding the capabilities of the communities, students, teaching faculty and administrators (Saw, Schneider, Frank, Chen, Keesler, & Martineau, 2017). Assumptions regarding students' academic abilities, the community's cultural conditions, and ideological beliefs about teaching and learning must first be identified, named, acknowledged, and analyzed, before any long-term move toward the desired state of increased student achievement can take place. Since leaders shape and adapt to cultures (Witziers, Bosker, & Kruger, 2003), this added challenge emphasizes the importance of the leader's role within the context of school reform.

School improvement is conceptually what it implies, improving schools. The MDE depicts school improvement in terms of a continuous cycle with no starting or stopping point, including changes that may occur daily or over time (MDE, 2014). For the priority school, increased student achievement, increased learning time for students, and data associated with leadership, professional learning, and the schools needs, including the environment are part of school improvement. The state's continuous school improvement cycle is instituted for all schools, but for priority schools, improvement is required at a much greater level of intensity,

which may also include sanctions associated with not meeting timelines for improvement (MDE, 2013 Priority Schools: Reaching for Excellence).

Indeed, all principals in the K-12 school settings today experience a deep sense of responsibility for increased student achievement. Witziers et al.'s (2003) meta-analysis of the continued debate around the question of whether school leadership matters took a close look at effect size, and differences between groups of leaders on student achievement. Their results suggest that there is an indirect effect of leadership on achievement. Leithwood and Riehl (2003) claim that "school leadership is most successful when it is focused on teaching and learning" (p. 7). Specifically, the principal leader has an influence on the teachers, who in turn have an influence on students and their achievement. In addition, Marzano, Waters, and McNulty's (2005) subsequent meta-analysis indicates that leadership behaviors for administrators do in fact have effects on student achievement. Hallinger and Heck's (2010) longitudinal study extended the knowledge to include the postive impact of collaborative leadership on student achievement, particularly in the content area of reading. While the dynamic processes of school improvement are apparent, Hallinger and Heck propose a model of change with three areas of impact: collaborative leadership, academic capacity, and student learning (p. 659). Their findings support previous research regarding the positive impacts leadership can have on student growth and learning (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008).

As key leaders in the school improvement process, principal self-efficacy plays an important role within a continuous cycle of school reform (Ketelle, 2005). Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as the "belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3). Simply put, self-efficacy is the belief that

individuals hold that they possess the skills needed to arrive at their goals. Bandura describes attributes of an efficacious person as one who will take "advantage of opportunity structures and figure out ways to circumvent institutional constraints or change them by collective action" (p. 6). He described this "collective action," which is an offspring of self-efficacy, as an extension of the belief in one's capabilities to include joint or collective efficacy, which encapsulates a group's shared beliefs in their capabilities. As a social cognitive theorist, Bandura (1978) believes that humans operate in a three-way dynamic among behavioral patterns, personal factors, and environmental events, with all three factors reciprocally interacting to influence one another. It is important to note that self-efficacy should not be confused with terms such as self-esteem or self-concept because self-efficacy is concerned with the judgments of one's capabilities, not judgments of one's self-worth or value.

Problem Statement

There are increasing demands and challenges from the state and federal government for continual academic improvement for all schools (Mintrop & Sunderman, 2009; Pas, Bradshaw, Hershfeldt, & Leaf, 2010). For example, the federal government's Race to the Top (RTTT) required states who applied for these grant funds to enact school reform laws related to student improvement in student academic performance. Framers of the RTTT initiative believed that model schools would help trail-blaze effective reforms by providing cases for others to witness the work of reform and transformation (Department of Education, 2009). Although Michigan was not funded through the federal RTTT incentive grant programs, the laws enacted at that time remain in place. One such law results is a yearly "Top to Bottom" list, which is the product of a single state assessment instrument; those at the bottom are designated priority schools. Michigan law Section 380.1280c (1) requires:

Beginning in 2010, not later than September 1 of each year, the superintendent of public instruction shall publish a list identifying the public schools in this state that the department has determined to be among the lowest achieving 5% of all public schools in this state, as defined for the purposes of the federal incentive grant program.

Mason and Reckhow (2016) recognized that the accountability provisions associated with the RTTT requirements promoted states to engage in school reform. Their study examined schools in both Michigan and Tennessee and how the states were supporting their schools' turnaround efforts. In Michigan, Mason and Reckhow reported, "All of the lowest-achieving 5% of schools are placed under the supervision of the School Reform Office and are required to submit a redesign plan" (p. 68). The School Reform Office (SRO) was designed to oversee the schools in Michigan that are low achieving and labeled as priority schools. A principal's challenges while under the SRO supervision include, but are not limited to, succumbing to the demands and structures associated with school reform as required by the state of Michigan.

Although the SRO is now within the Michigan Department of Education, the expectations for priority schools and their leaders have not changed, as it is now understood as partnership agreements (MDE, Partnership, 2017). The priority school principals' capabilities are still scrutinized. Given the underlying pressure for the building principal coming into this type of leadership setting, or for the principal whose school has been added to the list, the priority designation invariably creates the need for principals to examine their own self-efficacy beliefs (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008, p. 502). Additionally, if the school reform efforts prove to be unsuccessful, their self-efficacy beliefs may be once again called into question (Daly, Der-Martirosian, Ong-Dean, Park, & Wishard-Guerra, 2011).

A leader's self-efficacy, and a leader's role in nurturing collective efficacy among all staff within a school, are interrelated, yet distinct. Bandura (1997) noted that self-efficacy can either be positive or negative, that is, individuals with positive self-efficacy believe that they can do one thing or another, while individuals with negative self-efficacy do not have the opposite perception. Diseth (2011) proposed that there is a positive correlation between self-efficacy and goal mastery and, in some cases, with a performance approach. This correlation is countered by the negative correlation demonstrated in performance avoidance. In their recent single study of a rural middle school, Versland and Erikson (2017) sought to understand from the teachers' perspectives how principal self-efficacy beliefs and actions during the school improvement process influenced student expectations and teacher motivation (collective efficacy).

Bandura (1997) defined collective efficacy as "a group's shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment" (p. 477). In other words, collective efficacy is experienced by a group of people who share a common belief in their abilities to work together to accomplish certain tasks or goals. To put it another way, Anderson, Sanchez, and Kupfer (2011) noted that collective efficacy aides in the combined effort of the members within an organization in accomplishing their goals. Like self-efficacy, collective efficacy is determined by environmental influences. Calik, Sezgin, Kavgaci, and Kilinc's (2012) study results noted that "self and collective efficacy of teachers increase depending on the instructional leadership they perceive" (p. 2500).

There has been some research conducted on principals' self efficacy, as well as the collective efficacy of those in the school. For example, Nir and Kranot (2006) explored how a principal's leadership style affected teachers' self and collective efficacy. They found that when transformational leadership is involved, experiences on the job for teachers will promote their

self-efficacy and its development. Hannah, Avolio, Luthans, and Harms' (2008) outlined the differences between leader efficacy and leadership efficacy, with the first being the belief held by the leader, and the second representing the leader's influence within the organization; in other words, a leader's positive self-efficacy acts as a factor influencing leadership efficacy for the group.

In Hattie's (2012) meta-analysis work, he revealed that collective teacher efficacy influenced student achievement, with an effect size of 1.57. When considering an effect size of 0.2 being small and 0.6 being large, an effect size of 1.57 has substantial impact. Sinek (2009) noted that teachers in school have or develop collective efficacy when they have a sense of common purpose, a feeling as if they belong together, and an understanding that they are part of something bigger than the job that they are doing.

Tschannen-Moran, Salloum, and Goddard (2014) discovered that collective efficacy has the power to influence the beliefs and perceptions of one's experiences. In addition, they found that a leader also possesses the power to influence the levels of collective efficacy, whether that be positive or negative. These leaders demonstrate flexibility, which allows for increased levels of collective efficacy. Similarly, McCormick (2001) maintained that individuals functioning in leadership roles must have a positive belief that they are effective as leaders in order for collective efficacy to increase. McCormick's application of the social cognitive theory to leadership includes looking at the relationship between leader self-confidence and leadership success. This perspective is grounded in Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory that provides a theoretical explanation for the relationship between a leaders' self-confidence and successful leadership. McCormick included a definition of self-confidence as "people's self-judgement of their capabilities and skill, or their perceived competence to deal successfully with the demands

of a variety of situations" (p. 23), substituting self-efficacy for self-confidence, since one appears to be a determinate of the other (i.e., self-confidence determining self-efficacy), making the two close associates.

Bandura (1993) thought that collective teacher efficacy was a stronger predictor of student achievement than SES. Although, Fancera and Bliss (2011) found the exact opposite, whereby SES is a stronger predictor of school achievement than school leadership or teachers' collective efficacy (at the high school level), Goddard and Sollum's (2011) research seems to support Bandura's earlier study. They identified collective teacher efficacy as reducing the effects of socio-economic status on student achievement as a result of both teacher effort and their beliefs regarding how students' abilities to influence teachers' behaviors, such as persistency, when achievement is not met. Goddard and Sollum note, "Although socioeconomic status (SES) has a powerful effect on student achievement, these studies have demonstrated that when collective efficacy is taken into account, the impact of student characteristics such as SES on achievement is reduced" (p. 2). Tschannen-Moran et al. (2014) also found that educators who possessed a sense of collective efficacy tend to take ownership of students' successes and not blame students' lack of increased performance on their economic circumstances (p. 3). Character traits demonstrated within a collective group, such as commitment, creativity and resilience, are apparent as leaders reach their goals.

There is a paucity of research that exists on descriptions of self-efficacy actions of principal's in priority schools. Overall, there is abundant research about leader and teaching self-efficacy and collective efficacy (e.g., Anderson et al., 2011; Bandura, 1997; Calik et al., 2012; Fancera & Bliss, 2011; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Hannah et al., 2008; Hattie, 2016; Ketelle, 2005; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; McCormick, 2001; Nir & Kranot, 2006; Saw et al.,

2017; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2006; Tschannen-Moran et al., 2014; Witziers et al., 2003). This study focuses on the descriptions of priority school leaders' beliefs around their own self-efficacy and their school's collective efficacy during a time of school reform.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of my qualitative study is to identify and describe priority school principals' beliefs in their abilities to organize and execute complex actions to achieve their goals within schools labeled as low performing, priority schools in one Midwestern state. Identifying and naming a leader's self-efficacious beliefs, and how the leader fosters collective efficacy, is one way to bring attention to the effects, if any, that self-efficacy plays in principal leadership during school reform efforts. This study will provide a description of what leaders of priority schools (as identified by the state of Michigan) believe about nurturing their individual or personal self-efficacy and fostering collective efficacy for the group or their staff, amidst many challenges. These leaders are juggling the state demands for quick turnaround, their own districts' requirements of increased student achievement, along with their own desire for improvement. These leaders' stories, the themes identified, and the artifacts identified in the data all signal evidence to their testimony.

The overarching research question guiding the study is: What are the self-efficacy beliefs of school principals within priority schools in one midwestern state? My two specific research questions are:

1. How do principals in priority schools in one midwestern state navigate the demands of state-mandated school improvement and school reform, and describe their self-efficacy in relation to leading their school through a transformation process?

2. How do principals in priority schools maintain their own self-efficacy and foster

collective efficacy within that school?

The findings from this study could make an important contribution as district and state

leaders need to know more about the beliefs of principals at priority designated schools, as they

engage in necessary school reform work. Another contribution is how self-efficacy beliefs are

exemplified in principal behaviors as they influence their staff and students towards increased

achievement. Finally, this study raises the importance for districts and states to have a greater

understanding of teachers' beliefs in their collective work, as they also play an important role in

the transformation processes of their respective schools.

Conceptual Framework and Narrative

The conceptual framework for my study is depicted in Figure 1. It was developed based

on previous research that reveals principal self-efficacy is especially important during the school

improvement process because principals with strong self-efficacy are more likely to accept and

persevere through the challenges of the school improvement processes (Louis et al., 2010), as

well as develop and promote collective efficacy throughout their schools in ways that positively

affect teaching and learning (Louis et al., 2010). In the state of Michigan, schools designated

priority are not only required to significantly improve student achievement, but they must also

meet state and district demands during the reform process. Therefore, principal self-efficacy is

paramount to school improvement because it affects the ways in which principals respond to

challenges, as well as the activities they elect to engage in (Louis et al, 2010).

The first box of my model shows that leaders who have self-efficacy, or the belief that

they can organize and execute actions (Bandura, 1982, 1984), are able to focus on the critical

instructional leadership practices of (a) setting a direction, (b) redesigning the organization, (c) managing the instructional program, and (d) developing their people (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) describe *setting direction* as having a clear vision, engaging in effective communication and collaboration, and monitoring the performance of the organization. The second area, *redesigning the organization,* is described as strengthening the culture, promoting collaboration, and adjusting organizational structure where needed. The third area, *managing the instructional program*, requires routines, structures, and procedures. The fourth and final area, *developing people*, involves professional development and more, such as individualized support, intellectually stimulating experiences, and modeling (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008).

Priority School Leader Self-Efficacy Beliefs in Ability to: Organize & Execute Actions such as:

a) Setting the
   Direction
b) Redesigning the
   Organization
c) Managing Inst.
   Program
d) Developing the
   People
(Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008)

→

Priority School Leaders foster Collective Efficacy by providing:

a) Mastery
   Experiences
b) Vicarious
   Learning
c) Verbal
   Persuasion
(Bandura, 1977, 1982, 1997)

→

Priority School Individual and Collective Efficacy leads to:

a) Initiation
b) Effort
c) Persistence
d) Goal Setting
(Bandura, 1982, 1984; Schyns, 2004)

→

Priority School Improvements

Figure 1. "Priority" Principal Efficacy Conceptual Framework for Dyson (2019) study.

Next, in this process, Figure 1 shows that the leader fosters collective efficacy in the staff that they lead. A significant piece of developing people is fostering individual and collective efficacy by providing (a) mastery experiences, (b) vicarious learning, and (c) verbal persuasions (Bandura, 1977, 1982, 1997), which leads to collective efficacy, as shown in the second box of the diagram. *Mastery experiences* can be summarized as those experiences where difficulty arises, individuals and groups that become persistent and overcome them. *Vicarious learning* is where shared stories of success, research supporting their work, and modeling are apparent. The third source of self-efficacy is *verbal persuasion,* which includes professional development opportunities and dialoging about achievement. In my conceptual model, the existence of these three sources of efficacy would then lead to individual and collective efficacy within a school. Versland (2013) defines these in simple terms when stating, "mastery experiences - successfully completing a task, vicarious experience - learning by watching others, and social persuasion - influential mentors persuading people to believe they can successfully complete a task" (p. 2). Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy (2000) identify such sources of self-efficacy as "fundamental in the development of collective teacher efficacy" (p. 484). Others agree that these sources are key when developing collective efficacy (Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Versland & Erikson, 2017). There is also a potential fourth source of self-efficacy, psychological and emotional states, which are the degree to which people dread or welcome a specific task, although neither Schyns (2004), nor I, have included it in our models.

Within these sources of self-efficacy, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007) describe mastery experiences as one with "Outcomes interpreted as successful raise self-efficacy, whereas those interpreted as failures undermine it" (p. 612). As shown in the third box within Figure 1, when there is individual and collective efficacy, teachers and staff are more likely to (a) initiate

behaviors, (b) expend effort, (c) persist in behavior in the face of obstacles (Bandura, 1982, 1984), and (d) set goals for themselves (Schyns, 2004).

Overall, during times of reform, Burns (1978) notes that the transformational school leader creates an environment where learning, high achievement, and innovation thrive. Such an environment is a place where people are able to reach higher levels of their own potential and at the center the catalyzing force of this environment is the self-efficacious leader. The leaders' belief in their abilities to influence a set of outcomes illustrates their self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). This self-efficacy models and transfers over to influence their followers' beliefs in their collective ability. This influence creates the observable phenomena of collective efficacy, perhaps leading to overall improvements in a given school. According to Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007), teachers' collective efficacy cannot merely be examined or derived from the teachers' perception of their own self-efficacy. A major reason found a teacher's self-efficacious beliefs are related to their individual instructional tasks, and these are quieted in the various classrooms.

Consequently, it is important that the principals serve the catalyzing force, because the collective goals of a priority school require outcomes beyond individual instructional tasks (Copeland, 2003). In order to accomplish this, principal leaders must first assess their self-efficacy and acknowledge how they promote and nurture the collective efficacy in their schools. Versland and Erickson (2017) point out the need to know more about the highly efficacious principal and the outcomes within an organization. We know that collective efficacy additionally plays a role in student achievement outcomes as does the principal leader, and my findings may provide insight on how the principal's leadership practices support their work during a time of school change or reform.

Such reform work, or more appropriately referred to by the state as transformation, is positioned at the center of the expected outcome, which is increased student achievement (the last box in my diagram). It is therefore, important to seek to understand the beliefs of the efficacious principal leader in priority schools as they seek to bring about reform resulting in increased student achievement. My study sought to illuminate the influence of a school leader self-efficacy on collective efficacy, but from the principals' perspective and in the unique context of Michigan priority schools. Specifically, in how principals nurture their own self-efficacy and foster collective efficacy throughout their schools in their efforts to influence the level of student achievement improvement needed to rise above their priority school designation.

Methods and Procedures

This is a basic qualitative study of 10 priority schools in one Midwestern state. Data was collected via an interview with each principal. This study used Bandura's (1997) definition of self-efficacy applied to the school leader belief of his/her capabilities to reach desired goals, increased student achievement. This approach captured the nuances and rich description needed for a more in depth view of the beliefs of the leaders, rather than a mere survey to highlight quick answers. This basic qualitative design gave principals in priority schools an opportunity to share the complex activities that cannot be reduced to rote tasks, and require a self-efficacious leader to complete the given tasks. This study gives voice to the people that are at the ground level of the "priority" school designation, helping them to provide descriptions of the complex issues they face every day.

Chapter One Summary

Chapter One began with an overview of schools designated priority in the state of Michigan. This led to the definitions of both self-efficacy and collective efficacy and its

association with the priority school leader. ChapterTwo will provide a critical review of the

literature. Chapter Three describes the methodology, including the research design, population

sample, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and limitations and delimitations. Chapter

Four provides the participant profiles. Chapter Five analyzes the data relative to the research

question. Chapter Six presents the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further

research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The leader of a priority school is required to manage school improvements mandated by the state, including prescribed state directives. One of these directives requires that priority schools have a state representative monitor the improvement processes with quarterly reports and data submissions based on progress monitoring. The leader's ability to navigate the demands and constraints of the state and their district will support his or her role in the school improvement processes. A key factor in a school leader's success is their own self-efficacy and their ability to foster collective efficacy in others. This chapter provides a) an overview of the school accountability movement, b) review of research regarding priority schools, and c) explores significant self-efficacy literature, specifically principal self-efficacy, collective efficacy, and their impacts on the learning context.

School Accountability Movement

To better understand the increased pressures associated with being a school leader in a failing Michigan school with a priority designation, it is important to understand the history of the school accountability movement. The following provides a brief overview of the shifts in federal educational acts (e.g., Elementary and Secondary Education Act, No Child Left Behind and Every Student Succeeds Act), rather than an in-depth history of accountability and student achievement, because the purpose of this study is to view the role of the school leader within the dynamics of transformational school reform in the state of Michigan.

Principals in the K-12 schools have an obligation to increase student achievement. Increased accountability for teacher and administrators to promote student achievement, thus

reaching proficiency is apparent (Geier, 2016). The achievement gap present among race and poverty in our country was examined resulting in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965. This act included educator accountability and provided for allocations, through federal funding, to support closing the educational achievement gap. Johnson "strongly contended improving education for all students as a path to prosperity" (Geier, 2016, p. 57).

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, enacted on January 8, 2002 under President George W. Bush, built upon ESEA and included increased responsibility in the form of funding for poorer school districts and introduced standardized testing for students in grade three through eight (Council of Exceptional Children, 2002). Through NCLB, accountability was increased for educators as they were required to meet the demands of increased student achievement based on standards that were set by the states. This attention from the federal government was intended to support quality education for and was also meant to ensure equity in public education for all students. However, Geier (2016) reported, "policy adjustments never before seen in education, combined with a massive infusion of federal monetary resources, have put the Nation's education system in a position to substantially reform or remain at the precipice of complete disaster" (p. 54). He notes that this cohersion of the use of federal funds, given the fact that the federal funds required use on those who are economically disadvantaged indicated the misuse of those federal funds. The misuse of funds was highlighted in the 1977 study, national compensatory education report, which claimed that over half of the funds intended to educate those in poverty were not used in this manner. We now see the behaviors of presidents continuing "the tradition of manipulating policy through financial incentives" (Geier, 2016, p. 61).

The seminal report, *A Nation At Risk* in 1983 notes, "The people of the United States need to know that individuals in our society who do not possess the levels of skill, literacy, and training essential to this new era will be effectively disenfranchised, not simply from the material rewards that accompany competent performance, but also from the chance to participate fully in our national life" (Bell, 1983, p. 4). This report promoted a surge for reform in education as the charge and claims called for (Peterson, 2016). Geier (2016) argues "the report served more as a symbolism rather than quality empicical research" (p. 62). It is at this point where student performance data was analyzed longitundinally to show increased growth in achievement.

Under the Bush administration, reforms including accountability and standard-based reform took center stage. Wong and Sunderman (2007) put it this way, "As the U.S. Congress enacted NCLB in 2001, President George W. Bush broadened federal involvement toward educational accountability for all children." They continue, "Indeed, states were moving toward standards-based reform" (p. 4).

More recently, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed by President Barack Obama on December 10, 2015, included goals that extended the previous acts to also include preparing all students for success in college. Klein (2016) describes this change as, "On the one side, it moved away from what they saw as the worst aspects of the No Child Left Behind Act—the previous version of the landmark Elementary and Secondary Education Act—including what many deemed an overemphasis on standardized tests and a too-heavy federal footprint" (p. 1). Durant, Dahlin, and Cronin, (2011) describe it as such, "loosening the 100% accountability requirements of NCLB in order that states might focus their energies on turnarounds for the lowest performing schools, placing less emphasis on the measurement of proficiency and more

emphasis on the establishment of "college and career ready" standards, and greater emphasis on measuring growth over time" (p. 27).

The emphasis on college-readiness was meant to ensure that all students are ready for the academic challenges of higher education (MDE, 2017), whereas the previous acts centered on closing the student achievement gap and increasing accountability. However, rather than closing the gap, the disparities between economic, racial and social equities have only increased in public education over the last 50 years (Bishop & Jackson, 2015).

As part of the K-12 school districts accountability processes under ESSA, report cards are given out to the public schools within their respective districts that provide a snapshot of a given school's overall progress, or Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). AYP is based on a trajectory of continuous improvement in terms of student achievement on standardized tests. This snapshot illustrates a given district's progress towards continuous improvement/AYP at a glance. Report cards, or score cards as they were often referred to, are accessible to anyone and can be found on the internet. The website containing this information has now been reorganized to include a parent dashboard with graphs and labels to provide clarity, or transparency of Michigan public schools. This web-based monitoring approach for parents and all to see is now renamed and is recognized as the Michigan School Index System. This user-friendly website affords families and others the opportunity to view any school in the state with the click of a button the current and past "key performance indicators" of any given school. This parent dashboard includes school level information and data ranging from performance data to attendance data. The numeric rate of progress also provides evidence to the public of a school that may be experiencing increased growth to meet the state standards.

Those schools in the state of Michigan that fail to make the necessary improvements are faced with labels, such as priority or focus, and are given a timeframe to demonstrate increased achievement or additional consequences are imputed. These consequences could range from additional requirements, such as assigned by the state extending to a state takeover, depending on how long the school has been identified by the state as priority. It is important to note that this designation of priority has now taken on another nomenclature to include terms such as Comprehensive Support and Improvement (MDE, CSI School Policy, Revised 2019). This would indicate a school that is among the lowest 5% performing of schools in Michigan, or formerly known as priority. Given the alternative expressions associated with these two designations, this study will continue to refer to those schools as priority. Principals of priority schools must show increased student achievement in a quick manner. The desire to increase student achievement is apparent and on the frontline for leaders. Yet, the additional pressure and timelines associated with increasing achievement quickly for the priority schools compound the challenge.

Priority Schools

The largest percentage of the schools performing at the bottom 5% level are schools that overwhelmingly serve low income families. Rather than measuring academic achievement, standardized tests actually measure poverty (Dotson & Foley, 2016). Approximately 95% of the schools named on the Michigan priority list are schools that are also designated Title I (MDE, Top to Bottom List, August 6, 2014). As defined by the United States Department of Education (2015) a school designated Title I meets the following criteria:

Title I, Part A (Title I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended (ESEA) provides financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools

with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help

ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards. (para. 2)

One effort by the state to level the playing field is to provide additional discretionary funds.

However, there are additional facets that should be considered when initiating support for low-achieving, high-poverty schools. Jensen (2009) points out in his book, *Teaching with Poverty in Mind*, that rather than exploring their world, children living in poverty tend to struggle to survive in the world that they live in. In addition, he notes that there is a lack of development in the areas of "self-determination and self-efficacy" for some (p. 8). He contends that a result of NCLB extension acts was to ensure that schools that do not make AYP will receive additional services, however as few as 20% are receiving the services, due in part to a "lack of quality programs" (p. 129).

Standardized Testing

The Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) had been the single common assessment administered yearly in the state of Michigan to students in grades three through eight for many years. It served as a measure of accountability for Michigan schools (i.e., the data that comprised and contributed to each school's AYP score). The understanding is that all students should know and be able to achieve proficient and advanced proficient in five content areas: mathematics, reading, science, social studies, and writing, as identified in the top two levels. The test results were intended to paint a picture of how well Michigan students and schools are doing when compared to standards established by the Michigan Department of Education. The MEAP test was the only common measure given statewide to students in the elementary grades and, until very recently, had served as a measure of accountability for Michigan schools.

In the fall of 2011, new MEAP cut scores came into effect (Arellano, Lenhoff, & Jacobs, 2012). A cut score, or cutoff score, is the point on the scale that separates one performance level from the next. Cut scores separate test takers into several achievement categories, such as advanced, proficient, partially proficient, and not proficient, according to the MEAP Guide to Reports produced in 2011 (MDE, Guide to Reports, 2011). The new cut scores represented a significantly higher standard for student achievement than the previous scores and were intended to more accurately reflect a student's progress toward college and career readiness. On some tests, students previously could have answered fewer questions correctly to be considered proficient. With the new cut scores, students must answer a much higher percentage of questions (MDE, Career-and College-Ready Cut Scores FAQ, 2011; Kannan, 2016).

In the fall of 2013, the MEAP was administered for the last time to students across the state of Michigan because the Michigan state legislature required the development of a new test to be given in spring of 2015. This new test, the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP), is a compilation of: (a) Michigan-educator developed content specific subjects such as science, social studies, and English Language Arts, (b) Mathematics and English Language Arts content developed by the Smater Balanced Assessment Consortium, and (c) is said to align with the state standards (MDE, M STEP Fact Sheet, 2015). This computer-adaptive test required school districts across the state to be prepared to assess all testing grade students online by spring of 2016, with the understanding that the first year would be used to collect baseline data for comparing future year test scores (MDE, Assessment Systems, 2017). Since then, priority schools in Michigan must perform above the bottom 5% on the M-STEP for three consecutive years, depending on the performance percentage in order to have the "priority" designation removed (MDE, FAQ Michigan Priority Schools, 2011-2012). The M-STEP guide to reports

(MDE, 2016) speaks further of the scoring guidelines, as the goal is to become more objective in scoring.

Critics of systems of educational accountability, where learning objectives are measured by high-stakes testing, found that the results of standardized tests merely promote external, not internal control (Au, 2014). Moreover, the standards for achievement only marginally account for the demographic variance and preconditions for achievement within and between school districts (Marchant, Paulson, & Shunk, 2006). Pas, Bradshaw, Hershfeldt, and Leaf (2010) noted that the achievement standard, which does not take into consideration the varying starting lines, sets a context for polarization among many in K-12 education because communities that begin with historical and social privilege have more of an advantage over communities without similar social and monetary capital. However, students at schools with insufficient resources and significant pre-existing social, political, and environmental challenges are being assessed and judged along with schools that have seemingly endless financial resources, historic privilege and access.

Indeed, Cybulski, Hoy, and Sweetland's (2005) study merged both economic and organizational theories in the examination of effects on student achievement. Participants were drawn from 146 elementary schools in the state of Ohio, covering rural, suburban, and urban schools. Teacher collective efficacy surveys were administered during staff meetings. Cybulski et al. found that "teachers who perceive their students are lagging behind in a resource-deprived learning environment that lacks the necessary tools to assist their students (e.g. low student socioeconomic status) tend to have lower levels of group efficacy" (p. 446).

Hammond (2015) writes of the importance of teachers strengthening student's self-efficacy in her book. She argues that the belief of "I think I can" is fundamental for one having a

positive academic mindset (p. 114). Muhammad and Hollie (2011) emphasized this point in their reference to Hoy and Hoy's (2000) research on teacher belief and student achievement. The results of Hoy and Hoy's study provide a positive correlation between teacher belief and improved student achievement. These findings accentuate the need for the leader to examine his or her own self-efficacy as increased academic achievement is the desired outcome.

Transformational Leaders and Schools

The transformation model at its core implies the expectation that the leader will change the form of what has been at the school, resulting in improved student achievement. Importantly, some might assume that the schools or districts that have selected the transformation model actually have *transformational* leaders leading the school improvement plan. It is important to note that a transformational leader, as described by Carlson (1996), is one who "moves the sense of power or ability to influence the course of events to the followers" (p. 93). Transformational leader's hopeful, if not optimistic, outlook is transferred to the group in an infectious way that generates new sources of energy. According to Carlson, transformational leaders possess an efficacy that influences their followers' expectations and thus creates desired outcomes and, in some cases, unintended positive outcomes. Burns (1978) believed that there must be a distinction from previous notions and expectations of leaders that include behaviors of power, coercion, and manipulation to those modified notions of collective leadership. A recognition that followers must engage, allows the leader to attain the true secret of a transformational leader, who Burns identified as one to "lift people into their better selves" (p. 462).

Walumbwa and Hartnell (2011) found that transformational leaders "increase the emotional connections" (p. 166), which results in improved confidence to exceed expectations. Similarly, Avolio (1999) asserted that "we expect followers who relationally identify with

transformational leaders to be highly efficacious, because such leaders not only set clearly

defined expectations, but also challenge their followers to be the best" (p. 159). By focusing on

the big picture goals, the transformational leader is better able to effect internal and external

changes within the organization by creating new energy inspired by vision. This approach to

leadership develops the organization by growing its followers who are then transformed into

leaders. Stone and Patterson (2005) believe that a transformational leader will have the respect

and trust of the followers to the extent that those followers' values will conform to that of the

leader. The transformational leader has the responsibility of having a clear vision to aid in setting

the course or direction, providing professional development opportunities for the teachers,

managing the instructional program, and redesigning the organization. Soehner and Ryan (2004)

closely examine the interdependence of school leaders and student achievement. Their meta-

analysis review of the literature included the background and roles and responsibilities of the

principal, and examined four areas of leadership: leadership and democratic leadership,

improvement plans, principal behaviors, and principal effectiveness of leadership. Their findings

suggest that principals do in fact "have an indirect influence on student achievement…and are

foundation for instructional leadership at the school level" (p. 286).

Principal Self-efficacy

Within the context of transforming a school's current academic performance status, the

self-efficacious beliefs of the transformational leader are also important and should be taken into

account. Hillman (1984) examined self-efficacy and expectations and their relationship to

student achievement. In this study, the school was the unit of analysis with the subjects

evaluated including students, teachers, and principals. Two samples of 10 high-achieving

schools and 10 low-achieving schools in Michigan according to the MEAP state assessment at

that time were randomly selected. The study's questionaires were administered to all of the groups, separately, across, and within groups. These questionnaires had two distinct parts: one measuring expectations and the other efficacy. Data analysis included the use of the chi-square as the differences between groups were examined. The demographic factors showed no significant differences, whereas teacher expectations and student efficacy differed across the high and low achieving schools.

Further analysis showed the multiple correlations of the expectations, self-efficacy, and achievement among and between the students, teachers, and principals. Hillman (1984) states, "…a trend emerged indicating that as more than one group within a school evidenced an above average level of expectations, self-efficacy, or both, the greater the likelihood that the school being examined was high achieving" (p. 17). In other words, the staff and students in high achieving schools believed that they could impact their achievement thus showing a greater sense of self-efficacy. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis' (2004) study of principal self-efficacy findings echo the work of Bandura (2000) with individuals redoubling their efforts when faced with challenges, rather than folding and having doubt in their own capabilities. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis concluded, "With the role of the school principal being increasingly defined in terms of academic achievement and success as measured by high-stakes assessment results, a principal's sense of efficacy plays a critical role in meeting the expectations and demands of the position" (p. 582).

An overview of the literature surrounding the seven strong claims of successful school leaders was studied by Leithwood and Hopkins (2008). Their findings indicated that leadership plays an important role in the school and student learning. As revealed by Leithwood and Hopkins (2008), "As far as we are aware, there is not a single documented case of a school

successfully turning around its pupil achievement trajectory in the absence of talented leadership" (p. 29). With regard to my present proposed study, the added layer of the priority designation signals a sense of failure for some; after all, the achievement data resulting from a single state assessment results showed school performance in the bottom 5% in the state (MDE, Top to Bottom List, 2011). In addition to one's knowledge of their school's ranking in the state, this information is readily available for all to see, even as the leader engages in the transformation process during this time of school reform.

In another study on principal efficacy, Versland's (2013) examined "aspiring principals' efficacy beliefs and identify the conditions that surrounded loss of efficacy, as well as how preparation programs and rural districts might work together in better meeting the needs of rural principals" (p. 5). The principals in Versland's qualitative study completed a questionnaire that included 54 items. She found four out of 10 principals were in the "grow your own" program and, of those four, three principals experienced a loss in self-efficacy. The findings noted that a lack of experience in leadership as well as relationships were influential in the loss of efficacy. More specifically, the principal in a priority school with the added pressure of the label priority, may too experience a loss of self-efficacy if this leader lacks experience.

Ketelle's (2005) study was another qualitative look at leadership efficacy. The participants consisted of 12 students in an administrative class setting where the assignment or task included the students asking their friends and relatives for artifacts that illustrate their leadership abilities. This informal qualitative study results showed the students how their life experiences relate to how they lead. Ketelle proposes, "We might predict that cognitive belief in one's ability to accomplish leadership tasks coupled with personal beliefs about one's capacity to lead could enhance one's ability to take on the complexity of school change in order to innovate"

(p. 6). Likewise, the priority school principal leader is engaged in "school change" or the reform work required to change from a low performing school, to one that is at minimum, achieveing above 5% from the bottom on the state assessment. The efficacious leader, according to Bandura (1994, 1997) views these difficult tasks as challenges rather than threats. Therefore it is important for the principals in priority schools to examine their own self-efficacy and nurture the collective efficacy of their teachers.

Leaders Influence on Collective Efficacy

Bandura (1997) defines collective efficacy as "a group's shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment" (p. 477). Research has revealed that the leader influences individual self-efficacy as well as collective efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Schyns, 2004). For example, their organization and execution of the work are examples of the leader influencing collective efficacy. Ross and Gray (2006) looked at relationships between leader and teacher efficacy of 3,074 teachers from 218 randomly assigned elementary schools. They found that (a) the transformational leaders have an impact on the collective teacher efficacy of the school and (b) collective teaching efficacy predicts the commitment to the community partnerships. Ross and Gray concluded that "collective teacher efficacy is a partial rather than a complete mediator of the effects of transformational leadership on teacher commitment to organizational values" (p. 191).

In a similar study, Demir (2008) studied the relationship between the transformational leaders, collective teacher efficacy, and the school culture. This study included 218 teachers with an average of over 10 years of teaching experience from 66 elementary schools. Demir found that "the transformational leadership behaviors of principals had a moderate positive relationship to collective teacher efficacy, the self-efficacy of teachers, and collaborative school

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culture" (p. 103). These findings support the idea that collective teacher efficacy is influenced, both directly and indirectly, by the transformational leader.

Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) built on this thinking, as their study compared school leader's ability to influence a school's collective efficacy and the working conditions. Their study examined leader efficacy and its indirect effects on the learning environment as well as student performance. The researchers examined collective efficacy and self-efficacy and determined possible impacts in the organization. The sample was a random selection of 180 schools in 45 districts within nine states. The participants included 96 principals with an 83% response rate, and 2,764 teachers with a 66% response rate. Their study evaluated five independent variables: district conditions, district leader, school leader, school conditions and classroom conditions. There were two dependent variables: Leader Self-Efficacy and Leader Collective Efficacy. Student achievement data was also included in both mathematics and language arts over the course of three years. The surveys were completed in two rounds over the course of two years. Leithwood and Jantzi found that "The efficacy of school leaders, it would seem, arises less from direction and inspiration and more from the aligned and supportive nature of their working conditions" (p. 521). Similarly, the principal in a priority school must have an understanding of their own self-efficacy and how they influence the self-efficacy and collective efficacy of their teachers.

In another study, Calik, Sezgin, Kavgaci, and Kilinc (2012) studied the relationships between and among the leader behaviors and teacher self, and collective efficacy. This study examined the relationships between instructional leadership of school principals and self-efficacy of teachers and collective teacher efficacy using the *Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale* developed by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001), as well as a second scale developed by Goddard et al.

(2000) *Collective Efficacy Scale*. They found that "the highest correlation was observed between collective efficacy and supporting and developing teachers" (p. 2500).

Importantly, Federici and Skaalvik (2012) found that principals with low levels of self-efficacy may experience more uncertainty and doubt that they will be able to conduct important tasks than principals with higher levels of self-efficacy. Furthermore, their research indicates the importance of positive efficacy for the leader to obtain success, as it is a determinate of the energy associated with and the diligence given to various tasks, including the ambition to meet those organizational goals. The leader with high levels of self-efficacy will be able to model this belief for their staff, thus aiding in fostering collective efficacy among those that they lead.

Finally, Tschannen-Moran and Gareis' (2004) study aimed to identify the best measurement for assessing principal self-efficacy. Their sample consisted of 104 high school principals and assistant principals in Ohio, primarily white males, who were invited to participate in a principal efficacy survey via telephone. They found that there must be great importance placed on hiring individuals who believe they can be effective leaders, over those that appear to be competent or skilled principals.

Schyns (2004) argued that "leaders influence employees' self-efficacy" (p. 253). This influence is seen through initiation, effort and persistency on tasks. By providing difficult tasks with varying levels of difficulty, modeling for employees, and verbally motivating employees, leaders can influence their employees' self-efficacy. Priority schools are schools that must undergo change. This change includes reforming to become schools that are no longer classified in the bottom 5% performing in the state. As noted in Schyns' model, organizational change includes self-efficacy preparation prior to change. Principals in priority schools must maintain

their own self-efficacy while nurturing the collective efficacy of their teaching staff as they undergo this change or engage in reform.

Chapter Two Summary

Priority schools are schools performing in the bottom 5% on Michigan's state assessment. Leaders in such schools must lead their staff through the reform work of showing increased growth of their students on this single state assessment. Leaders' knowledge and maintenance of their own self-efficacy, and fostering of collective efficacy with their staff will lead itself to increased effort and persistency from their staff (Bandura, 1997). Yet, no research focused on how this is actually playing out in priority schools could be found, thus the need for my proposed study.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

The focus of this basic qualitative study was to identify, describe, and understand the

self-efficacy beliefs of principal leaders in priority schools in one midwestern state. These

beliefs were included in the language that they provided regarding how they nurture their own

self-efficacy and foster the collective efficacy of their staff members. "Nurturing" includes how

they care for themselves and encourage their own growth and development, and "fostering" is

related to how they encourage and promote the development of their staff members' collective

efficacy.

Research Design and Rationale

As part of the decision on how to measure, I chose to adopt Van der Mescht's (2004)

method of describing what is witnessed. My qualitative study is consistent with his assertion

that, "It is as though scholars have been determined to turn leadership into a science, with all the

definitive clarity, predictability and ultimate 'teach ability' that it implies" (p. 4). I found in my

literature review that there are many researchers who have developed various measures of self-

efficacy, but my study is unique because it includes interviews with principals of priority

designated schools to gain a deeper understanding of their self-efficacy as revealed through the

practices they described leading within their schools.

A basic qualitative design was selected for this study as the best way to examine 10

schools in one Midwestern state. The study focuses on the principal's meaning and

understanding. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) put it this way, "A basic qualitative study is the most

common form and has as its goal understanding how people make sense of their experiences" (p.

42). The 10 different priority school leaders may provide possible differing perspectives of the

issues, providing answers to the "how" and "why" questions as Rowley (2002) notes.   The

number of candidates, 10, was elected in part from the research where Guest et al. (2006)

describes getting at a point of understanding in the following way, "the aim is to understand

common perceptions and experiences among a group of relatively homogeneous individuals,

twelve interviews should suffice" (p. 79).

      The overarching research question asked was: What are the self-efficacy

beliefs of school principals within priority schools in one midwestern state? My two specific

research questions were:

1. How do principals in priority schools in one midwestern state navigate the demands
   of state-mandated school improvement and school reform, and describe their self-
   efficacy in relation to leading their school through a transformation process?

2. How do principals in such priority schools maintain their own self-efficacy and foster
   collective efficacy within that school?

Reflections on My Identity

      Creswell (2013) noted that "all writing is 'positioned' and within a stance" (p. 215). As I

make known my experiences with this topic, I am better able to situate myself within this

writing. My experiences have shaped me in the way that I have come to pay closer attention to

those within the workplace who are experiencing positive or negative self-efficacy at any given

moment.

      I have been a principal in elementary urban public-school settings for 10 years. I have

found that both teacher self-efficacy and leader self-efficacy play key roles in the culture,

climate, and overall success of the learning community. My experience as a building level

principal includes schools that were high achieving and schools that have been labeled by the Michigan Department of Education as priority, or failing schools. I am currently the principal of a school that was formerly labeled "priority" by the state of Michigan due to the decline in student achievement on the state of Michigan assessment, placing the school in the bottom 5% performance on the state test. As such, I have an interest in how leaders engage in the maintenance of their own self-efficacy and how they nurture the collective efficacy of those they lead. I am especially interested in the efficacious beliefs of the principals researched in this case study, as they are currently in the position that I was formerly in as a principal of a "priority" school during a time of school reform.

Population and Sample

There are 184 priority schools on the 2016 priority list in the state of Michigan which represent the population for my study (MDE, 2016 Current Priority List). Note, this was the most current list of such schools created by this state at the time of my study, as seen on the mischooldata.org website that identifies those schools performance, including those in need of improvement. My sample included 10 of these schools located in southwest Michigan. Suri (2011) found that "There is a higher likelihood of reaching data saturation if the data collection is purposeful. The more precise a question, the quicker it tends to reach data saturation" (p. 9). Purposeful sampling was used to recruit principals willing to participate, provided they came from schools meeting the following criteria: (1) schools located in southwest Michigan, (2) schools that have a status of priority, as outlined in the state of Michigan's bottom 5% criterion, (3) schools that are Title I or have high percentages of students with free and reduced lunches, and finally (4) schools that have been on the priority list for more than one year. My strategy for selecting the 10 schools and principals for participation was as follows:

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1. Obtain a list of the priority named schools in southwest Michigan.

2. Select schools from the list that have been named on the priority list for more than one year.

3. Select priority schools from the list that are Title I schools, or have high numbers of students who receive free and/or reduced lunches, high poverty schools.

4. Principals from all schools who meet the criteria will be recruited, and those who respond first will be selected to participate. Based on my assessment, recruitment emails were sent to 15 principals. I will not be including any schools from my own school district who are on this list.

5. Email each principal explaining the research study and requested their participation (see Appendix A).

6. The first 10 principals who agreed and signed the consent form (see Appendix B) became my sample population.

7. No school dropped out of the study, therefore there was no need to call the non-responding principals offering to explain my study in more detail.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in my study was a semi-structured, open-ended interview protocol used with each principal. The principals were asked to answer each of the 16 questions during the approximate 80-90 minute time frame.

Several instruments have been used in previous research to examine self-efficacy, such as Hillman's (1984) study that utilized questionnaires for students, teachers, and principals with two distinct parts: one measuring expectations and the other efficacy. Another example is interviews that were used in Singh and Al-Fadhli's (2011) study of leadership in the No Child Left Behind

era. Other examples include: Calik et al.'s (2012) study which utilized the *Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale* developed by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001), and Johnson and Logan's (2000) study which used a 12-item, five-point Likert-style scale, *School Council Efficacy Scale* (SCES), to measure the perceptions of the members of the school council. Finally, Tschannen-Moran and Gareis' (2004) study of principals' efficacy examined the validity and reliability of three efficacy scales: (1) *Principal Sense of Efficacy* developed by Dimmock and Hattie (1996), (2) *Collective Teacher Efficacy* by Goddard et al. (2000), and (3) *Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale* (TSES) by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001).

With the exception of an interview format used in Singh and Al-Fadhli's (2011) study, all other instruments noted above are Likert-scale closed-ended response tools, which can quickly capture the construct of efficacy. While such scales have value to capture a more surfaced look at efficacy, my study calls for a much deeper understanding of the construct and how it manifests itself in specific leadership behaviors. Therefore, I developed a new principal self-efficacy and leader model, using an approach to identify one's own self-efficacious beliefs that focused on four major leadership responsibilities, as identified by various researchers focused on school-level leadership (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008; Louis et al., 2010; Versland, 2013). My model provided a more balanced approach to the data that was collected, whereas the leader offered descriptions of how he or she is addressing the four identified areas of responsibility for the principal-leader.

According to Louis et al. (2010), a principal's self-efficacious beliefs can be modeled through the following four leadership responsibilities: (1) setting direction, (2) redesigning the organization, (3) managing the instructional program, and (4) developing people. As such, a new survey instrument was needed because the existing self-efficacy scales provide only a scale

format for identification, whereas my data collection tool captured a principal's descriptions of actual actions around these four areas of leadership responsibilities, which I used to ascertain the levels of self-efficacy. (See Table 1 for an overview and Appendix C for the complete instrument including interview questions.) This new tool provided a more in depth view of the leaders' self-efficacy as the descriptions they offered attested to their sense of efficacy. As seen in Figure 3, Louis et al.'s four major areas of modeled leadership responsibilities are listed down the left side of the figure.

The three self-efficacy actions as noted across the top of Table 1 are extracted from Bandura's (1997) definition of self-efficacy, "belief in one's capabilities to **organize** and **execute** the courses of **action** required to produce given attainments" [bold added for emphasis] (p. 3). I have operationalized these concepts to focus on: how the leader organizes a plan, and how the leader executes the plan, and how the leader identifies specific required actions. These questions were derived from the definition, thus creating a workable theory. Principals were asked to reflect on these three aspects of their own self-efficacy as each relates to a given job responsibility (as identified in the left side column). Essentially, self-efficacy is a crucial component to successful school leadership (Wahlstrom et al., 2008) as seen with initiation, effort, persistence, and goal setting. They believed that "principals' sense of efficacy and their ability to influence others was vital to accomplishing instructional leadership practices associated with setting direction, developing people, redesigning the organization and managing the instructional program" (Versland, 2013, p. 2).

Table 1

Principal Self-efficacy and Leader Model (Dyson, 2019)

	Leaders' Self-Efficacy Actions (Bandura, 1997)			
Modeled Leadership Responsibilities (Versland, 2013)	**How Leader Organizes**	**The Required Actions**	**How Leader Executes**	**Goal**
Setting Direction				Student Achievement
Redesigning the Organization				Student Achievement
Managing the Instructional Program				Student Achievement
Developing People				Student Achievement

Leaders' ability to describe their modeled leadership practices using this framework provides contextual relevance and application for understanding their perceived self-efficacy. Each principal was asked to describe how they model each of the four modeled leadership responsibilities (setting direction, redesigning the organization, managing the instructional program, and developing people) for each of the three self-efficacy actions (how the leader organizes, the required actions, and how the leader executes). In combination, I, as the researcher, asked "how" questions in order to evoke responses of description with relevance to the principal's leadership practices, and how particular actions are organized, required, and executed to produce the outcomes or attainments (See Appendix A). Pilot testing was done using this instrument prior to beginning the data collection for my study.

Data Collection Procedures

After doctoral committee approval, individuals were recruited after I obtained permission from the Human Subjects Review Board at Western Michigan University to conduct my study.

The strategies and steps for recruiting and selecting the 10 schools are explained clearly in the population and sample portion of this study, including permission. Written permission from the principals, was received prior to any data collected.

The protocol to collect data on principal efficacy involved 16 major open-ended questions (See Appendix C). One individual interview with each of 10 principals took place at a time and location of their convenience, and lasted 80-90 minutes on average. The principals were given ample time to respond to each question asked. The interviews were recorded as well as field notes taken. After each interview, the data collected was transcribed and returned to the participants for examination and to enhance trustworthiness and/or validity.

Data Analysis

Foss and Waters (2007) believe that "the unit of analysis should be a concept, idea, or action that illuminates the significant features of your data so that the question you asked can be answered" (p. 187). The new instrument provides the forum for the interviewer to express in their own words how they maintain their self-efficacy. The interviews conducted with the 10 principals were audio recorded for accuracy. Using a constant comparative method, the interviews were compared to each other to determine similarities and/or differences and themes were derived from review of the data collected (Kolb, 2012).

Trustworthiness

As the primary data collection instrument used for this research, it is insufficient to merely call myself "reliable" enough in gathering the data (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 44). What makes me credible to be the instrument used in this research is by acknowledging my experiences with this phenomenon, I am better able to suspend judgement to capture the beliefs of the leader participants. The results are reported in Chapters Four and Five exactly as they were

found, resulting in clear and accurate interpretations of the results based on the findings. These findings are also supported with research.

In addition, I checked in three ways using myself, the participants within the study, and others that know something about the phenomenon. Kornbluh (2015) noted strategies for increasing member checks, or solicitation of participants, as a method for reassuring trustworthiness. These member checks included following up with the participants to ensure that the discoveries reflect the intended meaning. Notes were taken, in addition to the transcriptions of the interview, which were then returned for the members to check. The collection of data (principal interviews, and other evidence) were used in answering the research questions asked. Once returned and accuracy confirmed or corrections provided, the data was organized into natural themes that emerge based on the analysis processes and procedures. McCraken (1988) believes that this "method can take us into the mental world of the individual, to glimpse the categories and logic by which he or she sees the world" (p. 9).

Limitations and Delimitations

According to Marshall and Rossman (2006), limitations within a study signals to the reader what the study is and what is not. In that spirit, this study is not an attempt to prescribe for leaders the steps to increase their efficacy, as much as it is to view the 10 cases of principal's perception of their efficacy. A limitation of this study is that it captures only a snapshot of what a principal does with a school, for humans to put their best foot forward (Kim & Beehr, 2017). My research study includes 10 principals in high poverty, low achieving priority schools. This small sample will be taken from schools in southwest Michigan, which delimits the findings to only such schools.

Chapter Three Summary

Chapter Three has provided the methods for my study. Results of the data analysis will be presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV

PARTICIPANT PROFILES

This chapter offers individual profiles of the participants in this study. The 10 semi-structured interviews with the principal participants were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Data resulting from the interviews were colored coded then analyzed for similarities and differences in four categories: Setting the Direction, Redesigning the Organization, Managing the Instructional Program, and Developing People. Care was taken to both drill down and look up as the data was explored. This chapter takes a vertical look at each individual participant and their interview responses. The purpose in providing the participant profiles is to gain insight into each principal's role at their school and ultimately their perceptions of their own self-efficacy as it relates to their roles as principals in low performing schools that have been labeled as priority in the state of Michigan. Additionally, these principals were asked how they believed their efforts effect the collective efficacy of their staff. Chapter Five explores a horizontal view of the themes that emerged across the data.

The participants included principals from 10 different K-12 educational settings. There were five elementary school principals, two middle school principals, and three high school principal participants. Table 2 provides a breakdown of the self-identified data of the participants, including: gender, current school level, educational background, years as a teacher, years as a principal, and the number of years as the principal of their current schools respectively. A unique number was assigned to each participant in order to protect their identities.

Table 2

Self-identified Data

Interview Participant	Gender	Educational Background	Years as a Teacher	Years as a Principal	Years as a Principal at Current School	Current School Level
Interview # 1	Male	B.S., M.A.	10	13	3	Elem.
Interview # 2	Male	PhD	15	4	2	Elem.
Interview # 3	Male	M.A.	10	7	3	Middle
Interview # 4	Male	B.S., M.A.	9	22	6	Middle
Interview # 5	Male	BS, MA, (ABD)	30	5	2	High
Interview # 6	Male	BS, BS, M.A.	13	10	2	Elem.
Interview # 7	Male	BS, MA, PhD	2	5	5	High
Interview # 8	Male	BS, BS, MA	6	7	7	Elem.
Interview # 9	Male	MA, (ABD)	6	5	5	High
Interview # 10	Female	BS, MA, (ABD)	7	13	8	Elem.

Interview # 1

Interview participant Principal #1 has been in the K-12 educational setting for over 23 years. He has both a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education and a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership. He had been a principal at his current elementary school for three years and a classroom teacher for 10 years. He has been a principal for the past 13 years and has been at other schools within his current district, although this was his first experience leading a school that was on the state of Michigan priority schools list. It is important to note that his school is no longer on the priority list as formerly identified by the state of Michigan.

Interview #1: Setting the Direction

Principal #1 felt that in order to set the direction of the school, as part of his plan, he had to begin by looking "at the data." He also believed that the climate and culture of the building also had to be addressed as he explained:

But first and foremost creating a climate and a culture where collaboration is appreciated and valued, because a lot of times in education we work in silos and we're individualized. And so we don't say these are my kids those are your kids, so you have to help build the idea that everyone is included in the school community. So, looking at and creating or analyzing the vision and mission of the school, trying to get people onboard.

As part of the required actions, the Principal #1 began by acknowledging the school's status of being a priority school as he described:

Well, you know, in being a priority school, I mean it's already established that you're not performing. And then you also have to work with staff, letting them know that they can make a difference. So one of the things that we do is we look at schools that are similar to ours, and we look and try to find those schools that are achieving with the same demographics, well I do. And then I say, 'Now look, this school is just like we are demographically, and they're achieving what are some things that they're doing.' I have actually sent staff out to see what other schools are doing and then they come back with whatever information they have and share it with the staff. But, you know, people have to understand that it can be done. And so when we do that, like I said previously, you have to look at the data, and in looking at the data, we can't take or accept any excuses. We can look at the circumstances that our kids come from, but we have to say that we are the

only ones that could truly make a difference in their lives academically. And we only

have control over the children when they're in our presence.

He executes this vision by empowering the teachers. He describes the building, upon his arrival

as "complete and total chaos." Therefore, in addressing the culture and climate, he began with

the teacher's beliefs in their own abilities. He added:

And so one of the things that I did in speaking with teachers, you know well what's going

on, why was this happening? Well we didn't receive support. So one of the main question

I said, I said collectively as a staff, 'If you were upset, what are some things that you

could have done without support from the administration to make some things happen?'

And so they say, 'Well you know we could have met and we could talked, and we could

have done this or this.' And I said, 'Guess what? Who truly makes a difference here?' I

explained to them, the teachers do. And so they're like, 'Oh we could have, yes, we

could have done that.' And so yes, in sparking that thought, it has helped me bring

teachers together as a collective group and kind of initiating the collective efficacy piece

believing you know, we can make a difference and in doing that we have seen a 135

degree, not 180 degree yet, but a 135 degree, you know, turn as as our cultural climate

has improved drastically.

Interview #1: Redesigning the Organization

Principal #1 created a planning process for redesigning the organization by focusing on

the data. There were weekly data meetings held with the teaching staff where the topic of great

focus was on student achievement data. He explained:

We did institute weekly data meetings and those data meetings were focused on the

stretch of student achievement. And as teachers began to look at the data, focus on the

data, they were actually witnessing and seeing student growth. So, what that actually did

was create a sense of, "Hey, we can do this!" Now they were a small, small piece or

small gains but, but eventually lead to larger gains. If we look at some of our student data

achievement in probably four out of six areas, this year with our NWEA data, it shows

the largest growth in the past three years.

As the teachers would see the changes happen over time, Principal #1 believed that it increased

their confidence in what could be done. He noted:

So, celebrating recognizing gains, building that efficacy piece you know, oh our kids can

do it, oh, I can do has helped to create some confidence, collegiality, sharing of ideas, and

more of a cooperative collaborative staff.

 As part of the redesign, the Principal #1 saw the need for the culture and climate to be

addressed. He comments:

Before I came, this building had more police calls than both the high schools combined.

So, there was a mistrust with parents and the school. And then two years before I came

the school was open. But I think opened too fast to whereas it was wide-open, where

parents were walking in, kids were doing whatever, so it was a free for all.

One of the ways that the Principal #1 addressed the climate and culture was to continue to

welcome parents in the building, but in a more organized and systematic fashion. He describes:

Providing parents opportunities in this building to have some leadership roles. So, for

example we opened a food pantry, three of our parents ran that. Getting parents into the

building for fun activities, so we were doing two parent events per month. Greeting

parents as they come in the building, greeting parents in the parking lot, getting to know

parent's names, that piece will be one major focus for the 18-19 school year, so that we

can actually build trust, get to know our parents better, and they can get to know us,

develop trust and then they can support what we're doing here at school and then we can

support what they're doing at home.

These are ways that the Principal #1 continues to execute the self-efficacy actions in redesigning

the organization. He believes that his efforts affect the collective efficacy as follows:

Well the the redesign piece is looking at data you know with a focus. Our kids are

conscience of the data as well and that's shared and recorded and kept in their data

binders. So, they're actually seeing the growth, and so when they see growth, they begin

to believe in themselves. As a teacher sees growth after providing instruction then that

helps them feel that self-efficacy as well. And so, it's just kind of almost contagious when

growth is recorded and monitored and analyzed. You know, you begin to believe, I can

do this.

Interview #1: Managing the Instructional Program

Principal #1 has a "team of experts" as he described them, who work to provide feedback

to staff on instruction. He acknowledges the challenges of being an instructional leader that

moves a school through change. He explained:

Now that's the tough part, we're supposed to be instructional leaders, but oftentimes

without adequate support, you're pulled away from that aspect. So I've been fortunate as

we are a SIG 5 school to have multiple instructional experts, so I do have an instructional

interventionist for math, an instructional interventionist for reading, then I also work with

our coaches for both math and reading and then district math and reading coaches. So, I

did have a team of experts who could focus more consistently on the instructional aspect

of the plan.

Principal #1 believes sharing data publically "in a positive light" is one of the ways that the collective efficacy is affected by his efforts. He added:

> We will look at it and then if it's around a certain grade level, we will have a grade level discussion about it. But what I try to do collectively, in a general sense, is just share all of our gains. So for example, when I'm looking at my data, I'm looking at four out of six grade levels being higher than the district. And that's probably how I would share with the staff and then, you know, pulling my grades that are not necessarily meeting and find out what's going on and talk with them outside of the meetings, so with just sharing what we're doing, highlighting the gains, and making a public display of what we're doing right.

Interview #1: Developing People

In the area of developing people, the Principal #1 was afforded the opportunity to attend a leadership training that included some professional development for staff as well. He shared how the opportunity for training arose and the steps that he took in planning for support for staff. He explained:

> That program allowed me the opportunity to pull a group of strong teachers across all grade levels to help build some leadership skills and focus on instruction, and then these teams did specialized professional development, and then when they did that, they took it back to the staff, so after each session they would take back that information and share or deliver the professional development with the staff. Also, as I have grown as a principal, I have become a little better at delegating some responsibilities and providing teachers the input. And actually, what it has done is, it's created some efficacy and collective efficacy amongst the staff.

The teachers' response from the training has been positive. He shared:

> So they've stepped up to the plate. They meet regularly outside of the contractual time to
>
> support what we're doing and, as they see our school growing, they become more
>
> involved and more apt to assist. So, trying to develop leaders has been a key component,
>
> and it's also helped that we have the grant that pays for some specialized training.

He believes that his efforts have affected the collective efficacy of his staff. He offers:

> And so parent perception data…when you're doing good things, and those good things
>
> are recognized, talked about, reflected upon. It does help to build some self-efficacy. So
>
> even within myself, because when I got here I'm like oh, prior to my arrival, so this will
>
> be nice the first week I'm like Oh Lord, we're in trouble. And my experience in schools
>
> is that things do change. But oftentimes, it happens so slowly you're not necessarily
>
> conscious of it. But this change has been so dramatic. I am fully aware and can see the
>
> changes so it has definitely increased my self-efficacy. Teachers see it, talk about it. They
>
> see it, children see it, parents see it. So, as we grow, and as we get better as a school, we
>
> get better with ourselves. Efficacy and collective efficacy and 'Hey, we can do this.'

Interview #2

Interview participant Principal #2 has a Ph.D. in Educational Administration and taught

for 15 years and has been a principal for four years. He has been at his current high school site

for two years. During the interview, the principal demonstrated a lot of passion as we dialogued

about K-12 education and poverty. He shared his disdain for those who do not believe that

children can learn. This statement reinforces this belief, "No, I'm serious. I don't accept

excuses. Those kids pick that up. If you expect them to be losers, they're going to be losers…if

you expect them to be scientists and astronauts and nurses and doctors and teachers, then they will."

Interview #2: Setting the Direction

In setting the direction, interview Principal #2 two took the following actions. First he created a daily exit checklist for teachers to make sure that the teachers "I can" statements aligned with the standard core and that the statements were visible in the classroom so that the students would be clear on the learning of the day. He states:

> I put together on Google Docs a way for every teacher to achieve more effective status by the stages evaluation system. And one thing I have teachers do that check up every day is they had a standard that is standard Core aligned with an "I can" statement displayed every day in school, so when kids came in, they would always know exactly what they were to learn, and that was aligned with the pacing guide.

He also focused on increased academic growth and decreased written referrals, as it was required through the school and district's partnership agreement with the state of Michigan. He describes the agreement as the following, "the partnership agreement stipulated that there would be 60% reduction in disciplinary, 60% reduction in exclusionary discipline."

Principal #2 was clear that the required actions were part of the partnership agreement. This agreement entered by his school district included a 60% reduction in exclusionary discipline. As he put it simply, the state was requiring the schools and district to "stop suspending these kids over and over again." Another required action that he noted was to increase academic performance by 30% on the standardized assessments. He would review those two data pieces in particular with the staff because he wanted to ensure that the staff were aware of who these students were. He said, "I reviewed data, we were very data driven. I just

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made sure that everybody knew exactly where their students were." He believes that his efforts effected efficacy. He describes:

> I think that they became more accountable. That they knew and I didn't share their individual data, but what I would do, like the first fashion of the partnership agreement was decreased referrals you know referrals lead to suspension. So this is the growth that your students have seen, they have had. I'm noticing these patterns here or use a third point of data and say, "Here are these patterns. What do you see here? What can we do or what can I do to support you to move or make those scores rise."

Interview #2: Redesigning the Organization

As part of redesigning the organization, Principal #2 and his team instituted a reward system with the acronym ROAR, which stands for respect, orderly (or safety), and achieving responsibility. The students can earn roar bucks, and it began with them earning "one for just showing up." He attributes the institution of this reward system to the decrease in the referrals for students, which was one of the state requirements resulting from the district's partnership agreement with the state. He stated that the main required action was transparency and the use of data sharing with the staff.

> Teachers are never surprised. I don't come out of the woodwork three months later and say here's what we're doing badly…to execute them we review data on a bi-weekly basis. It's all data.

He believes that his efforts affect the collective efficacy by the outcomes. He states:

> We've seen in our multi-tier student support system (MtSS), we've seen growth, we've seen academic growth and decreased exclusionary discipline efforts. That's one way that we've done that.

Interview #2: Managing the Instructional Program

Principal #2 describes his school as being restricted and as a result, they have a curriculum director that provides very clear prescriptions of what students need to learn. He explains:

> We have a curriculum director…and because we're under the thumb of the state…they're
>
> very prescriptive about what the students need to learn that every teacher teaches the
>
> same thing.

In addition, the pacing guides are to be followed in a consistent manner across the school. As part of the plan to manage the instructional program he remains visible. He shares:

> I just make myself visible every day. I did a five minute walk through, and I saw what
>
> they were teaching, and the minute what they are teaching is not consistent with what
>
> they should be teaching, I say, 'OK what's going on here?'

He believes that his efforts affect the collective efficacy of the staff because of the change in the data. He states:

> We saw growth, we saw academic growth. Our third graders came in and most of them
>
> were illiterate. Most of them, I'm not saying on grade level, I'm saying that they couldn't
>
> read or write, and so we implemented intensive intervention with our third grade. We
>
> have a lot of them that are getting there.

Interview #2: Developing People

Principal #2 began by describing this area as a "weak area for me." He believes that it is a weak area for him because he is not empathetic. Here is where he became very solemn as he spoke in an almost apologetic manner. He said, "I don't know if that comes from being a man or what, but I just don't have the social skills for that." He continued on to state that he did provide

professional development for staff, offering, "I mostly just delegated, I'm just sharing, you want honesty." He shared that he tries to be an advocate for both the teachers and the students.

> If teachers had a problem with each other. I asked them to talk it out, and I would deal with it as little as possible. I just, I tried to give support the best I could, emotional support, you know, I try to be an advocate for both teachers and students, and sometimes that line is a real balancing act.

He notes that beginning teachers usually need training in the area of classroom management. He continues:

> At the beginning of the year, you know an area of growth…the biggest one is always classroom management, especially for kids that are impoverished, especially for black kids with white teachers because, you know…it does us no good to ignore that problem. It does us absolutely no good to ignore that problem, so, you know, I was very candid with those teacher and said these kids are going to challenge you.

He shared with his staff that the students are like any other students, they just bring other "variables to the table." He continued sharing stories of horric incidents that have happened to his student population and states:

> You know, we just don't have a lot of other schools that don't have those same issues we have…it's hard…that doesn't mean that they can't have high expectations. It doesn't mean that they can't learn. It doesn't mean that they can't do exactly what the other kids can, they're just bringing those variables there.

He believes that we cannot give up on children and need to check our positive to negative ratios when dealing with students. He reiterated that children will learn no matter what. He states:

Those kids they learn, they're going to learn whether you instruct them or not they're going to pick that up, they're like sponges OK. They will learn period. You have to decide…what they're going to learn.

It was in this section that this principal spoke the longest in his responses. He demonstrated much passion around students desire to learn and the teachers responsibilities to provide those opportunities, including having the belief that the students can learn.

Interview #3

Interview participant Principal #3 has a Master of Arts degree in Educational Leadership. During our interview, he demonstrated excitement as he was sharing the growth that has been seen in his school, not only between the staff and students, but among the staff, students, parents, and community. He has been a principal for seven years and has served as a teacher for 10 years. He has been the principal of his current middle school for three consecutive years. It is important to note that his school is no longer on the priority list, as formerly identified by the state of Michigan.

Interview #3: Setting the Direction

One of the first steps that Principal #3 took in organizing and creating a plan for setting the vision for the school was to communicate directly to the staff.

One of the first steps to me after I assumed the principalship, I met with every teacher on staff. I wanted to know what made them tick, what was their why? I have some key questions that I asked them, but it was really to get to what made them tick, what was their why, and whether they feel they would better our school as a whole.

Principal #3 was a teacher at the school years ago, and his own children also went to the school at that time. He remembers the theme and aim of the school, which was, "Believe and you will

succeed." He felt like he wanted to bring the school "back to its glory days" as he describes it, by reestablishing this culture. As part of those required actions, the principal believed that it all centers around culture. He began with having a dialogue with his staff about not being scared of the children. He states, "you can't lead out of fear." After acknowledging one's own feelings regarding the students, he went on to grab a team to review and "comb through," as he describes it, the school improvement plan.

> So the first action that we did, we took the school improvement plan laid it out. We got in
> a room…we pulled that school improvement plan out, and we went through it slowly, bit
> by bit, piece by piece. And what we didn't realize was that we were throwing everything
> in that school improvement plan, including the kitchen sink. We had everything in there
> because…we were, they were, looking to make the school improvement plan thick.

The team narrowed it down to three areas of focus: writing, Compass Learning (as it supports the growth that would be seen on the NWEA/MAP assessment), and the technological infrastructure. Technology was an area that the principal believed was weak in their building.

Some of the ways to execute the vision for this principal was to "move some pieces around." He had those tough conversations with some veteran teachers, one of who was a teacher back when he was a teacher at the same school. He shared that he utilized those relationships and built on them for the first two years of his administration at the school. He reflects on when he first arrived in his position there, it was as if, "We hadn't started believing that these kids could." He says that the staff, collectively, had to change their mindset to one that "these are our children." He remarked that the mindset needed to be changed and how it "was a fight." He continued to speak of the impact of culture and how it is changed when one comes or leaves the school building, whether that's through a teacher transfer or retirement. He wanted to

have a positive culture ingrained enough where it would remain. This is represented in his comment, "…when you ingrain the culture deep enough, it will stay behind." He states:

> We hadn't started believing that these kids could. We couldn't, we couldn't believe that these kids could be successful that these kids could do math, these kids could do English because we were thinking these kids, and not our children. So once got our mindset wrapped around this is our reality, these are our children.

He wanted the staff to teach the students as if they were their children. He believed that this change of mind would create more acceptance from the staff to the students.

He remembers his first day walking up to the school building and seeing graffiti on the school grounds. He had it removed immediately. The restrooms, the chopped up trash from the lawn being cut with a lawn mower would result in blame to the students. He did not want the focus to be on a small portion of the population of students who were not making great choices. This led to their work with instituting positive behavior supports. He believes that his efforts have affected the collective efficacy by him being intentional. He states:

> So it really builds an intentionality and it was a matter truly of building relationships with our kids. That they told their siblings who were to come. So now you're impacting culture by building that relationship.

Interview #3: Redesigning the Organization

The need for concise practices and processes was noticed by the principal while in the planning process for redesigning the organization. As part of the redesign, his school took another look at how they conducted student study team meetings. He developed requirements for all participants to attend those bi-weekly meetings at their school. This team of individuals was comprised of the school psychologist, social worker, community mental health worker,

behavior specialist, assistant principal, team leader, and special education teacher. He was left as the go-to guy in the event of any need during this "sacred time" as he refers to it. The building team meets twice a month while the grade level and/or academic teams meet weekly. This student study team looks at multiple pieces of data. He explains:

> We're looking at attendance, we're looking at referrals and we're digging into these things. We're not just answering did they, or were they absence, why were they absent? We're not answering, did they get a referral, we're asking why did they get a referral. Does this child have a 504? Does this child have an IEP? I would probably implement an IEP or 504. Are there some gaps of the missing? Have we been making contact with the parents? Do we know who the parents are? Have we brought the parents in?

He believes that this first layer, where data is collected, all stakeholders are present, provided some context for the discussion at building team, and they could decipher between those students that "get on your nerves" versus those who may need to be placed at the alternative program.

One required action that he noted is that he must monitor this process. He feels that "leadership starts and it ends at the top." He supports this claim by using a cone as a representation within leadership. He says that the leader is at the top looking down and has to also look around and monitor. As you look further down, "you're swiveling, and it gets bigger as you go further down." He feels that the leader must feel like he or she is "ultimately responsible…for the passing or the failure of every one of your students." He does not believe that there is a ceiling, that reflection and monitoring must be ongoing and that there is always a place to go. He states:

> Let's say 100% of your kids are achieving, they're all at grade level. Now you have 100% of your kids that need to get above grade level. OK let's say, OK I've got an eighth

grade and all 200 of my eighth graders, all 200 of them are at a ninth grade level, so

we're looking at tenth grade. Let's go real broad. All 200 of my eighth graders are 12th

grade level, I should be doing college prep. There's always a place to go, so you can't

believe that there's a there.

When asked about his efforts affecting the collective efficacy his response included:

They know that I'm here. They know that I'm involved. They know they can come to me.

They know they can talk to me. They know that they can be transparent with me and they

know that I'm going to give them feedback.

Interview #3: Managing the Instructional Program

The planning and supervision of the instructional program for the Principal #3 begins

with dialoging. He identifies the school improvement plan document contents as a key

component in managing the instructional program.

I really focused on collegial conversations and our school improvement team, which is

derived from our school, our administrators, counselors, department heads, and team

leaders.

This dialogue also consists of developing a matrix. He describes:

Building a matrix saying, this is instruction, breaking down our instructional Charlotte

Danielson rubric. Instructions broken down into seven different parts. Breaking that

down into a matrix and saying this person does this piece well, this person does this piece

well.

He believes that this work allows the staff to then begin engaging in the work around

instructional rounds, a process that allows colleagues to access one another in their own teaching

and learning with areas of focus where their own current need lies. One of his required actions

includes viewing staff's individual evaluation and linking specific data to the four domains as identified in the Charlotte Danielson evaluation model tool. He then sees what professional development would be appropriate for the growth of any particular teacher. He included the student growth component as it is an outcome of instruction. He states:

> Now student growth is going to always be a component, it's going to always be a part of our development, student growth and then going to, and then fine tuning it. Which part, which students? Well what I found was that we are not teaching black kids well and it's an uncomfortable conversation because you want to say, oh I love all kids, I teach all kids.

Additionally, he found that the staff were doing better at teaching the "poor white child than we are doing at teaching a high middle class black child." This resulted in Principal #3 focusing on those instructional practices. To empower his assistant principal and school improvement chair he began to execute the plan for monitoring the supervision of instruction. He describes this scaffolded process:

> I left my school improvement chair and my assistant principal to build the agenda and the kind of conversation, and I was more involved in the conversation.

He supported this gradual release process by meeting with the assistant principal and school improvement chair prior to the school improvement meeting and dialoging about the agenda items. He reiterated the fact that the school improvement team work should be focused and student-centered. He states:

> I need you talking about data. I need you connecting achievement of individual students in your team. Not this, not planning a party. Yes, you can plan a party over text message. So, making the time being spent intentional and about student achievement.

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He believes that his roles includes expecting and then inspecting.

Principal #3 believes that he affects the collective efficacy by his "hands-on" leadership approach. He expressed that an area of weakness for him is in celebrating the successes. He attributes it to a cultural piece for him. He says:

This is where I'm very weak and I know it and I am intentional about doing better with it, celebrating their successes. I have, and this is a cultural piece, this is a cultural piece in me. I was brought up that you do it because you're told. My mom never said, you're doing a nice job cutting the grass, or cleaning that glass table, or doing the dishes, or vacuuming. I did it and I did it as best I could, because I was told to do it, because I didn't want to find out what the repercussions were if I didn't do it well.

He believes that learning true colors and love languages have helped him as he has shown willingness to identify his own deficiencies. He describes:

So, now you have to take this person that you've hired that have all this baggage if you will and you're putting them amongst all these people. And you're saying this is what they need. It's like, learning love languages. I had to learn a different language, learning to speak their language. And I have had to have gradually done this, learned you know who's, you know we did a true colors inventory.

He feels "that if I can do no wrong then they will believe that they can do no right." He did state that it is hard effecting the collective efficacy "because everyone's efficacy is different."

Interview #3: Developing People

In terms of professional development for staff, Principal #3 named this as a learning curve for him. He states:

What I did was I identified areas of deficiency that the staff have over all. So one of

those areas being culturally responsive education.

He sent teacher leaders to training and had them return to train the staff. This helped to shape the

teachers roles by there being less directives and more collaborative learning environments. The

principal describes it as, "It's led by us." He describes:

What I did I had identified some teachers…I have a para-pro, a teacher, and a special

education teacher and I sent them to a more in-depth training. These people that are

respected by their colleagues. I had them go out and get some training.

In addition, part of the way that he plans and organizes a plan is by modeling the behavior that he

desires. The specific actions are derived include the teacher's behaviors and their responses to

the building wide support initiatives. He states:

Is there fidelity to the process, you know do your favorites get to come on in because you

saw them rushing to get there? Do you have a teacher who who won't admonish a kid

because they are running to get to their class on time. So, you have to identify all those

different things, whole different barriers and you can't address them all at once.

He believes that efforts to affect the collective efficacy of the staff has been through modeling.

He notes that there must be a belief in the leader and the importance of modeling the desired

behavior. He gives the example of, "If I'm saying don't yell at kids, I can't be standing in the

hallway yelling at kids all day." He continued to ponder on this last question and then said, "…if

you could never articulate to them some type of success, then they will struggle and feel like

they're just treading water." He also attributes teachers leaving the profession to the teacher's

not seeing "a lot of success based on the measurements that we're giving them."

<center>**Interview #4**</center>

Interview participant Principal #4 has been a classroom teacher for nine years and a building principal for 22 years. He received his Master of Arts degree in Curriculum and Instruction in another state. During the interview, the principal demonstrated a very calm disposition as he was sharing his experiences and even his own learning as principal at this middle school over the course of six years. It is important to note that his school is no longer on the priority list as formerly identified by the state of Michigan.

Interview #4: Setting the Direction

The first step in setting the direction for Principal #4 is to do a needs assessment. He describes:

> You want to first take an assessment of what the needs are in your building and kind of believe in taking a step back before you can go forward. How do we find ourselves in this position? What are some of the strengths in our organization? What are some of the challenges and areas for growth in our organization? If you're asking how I would organize and create a plan I would start with those things and try to prioritize the needs and just begin to attack them systematically.

He identifies the needs assessment as part of the planning process and the specific required actions include accessing one or more of the five resources. He names the resources:

> I tell people this is the program I went through...you're taught to work…first you're taught that you're a teacher of teachers. That was philosophically how they approached training us as administrators and then part of that you're taught to work with five resources, basically and those are: people, space, time, money, and materials.

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He believes that after completing the needs assessment, it is necessary to gather the staff and collectively discover how best to use those resources.

In terms of executing the vision, Principal #4 names this as "the toughest part." One of the things that he claims makes it so tough is the perception that people may have of themselves or that others may have of them because they are "placed onto a list like persistently low achieving, PLA or a priority list." He defines the execution of setting the vision in a number of ways. He includes record keeping, the principal having a physical presence, modeling the desired behavior, and reporting back regularly.

He believes that his efforts in affecting the collective efficacy are seen by how he holds himself accountable. He describes:

> People should see that you hold yourself accountable. And so, you say you want to make
> a big deal of it, but it should be very clear and apparent by how you are conducting
> yourself on the job, in the building, in classrooms in meetings. That you're buy-in is there
> and should be followed. And so. I guess the simple answer is just the follow up and the
> accountability.

He believes that "if people get a sense of you being less attentive to what you ask them to do, human nature says things will slip," therefore in his promotion of accountability, he is also mindful of his own behaviors.

Interview #4: Redesigning the Organization

Principal #4 reflects on his first year at the school and how his school was a recipient of the school improvement grant. He describes the previously established teams as a "fairly extensitve school improvement leadership group." He states:

Again I inherited that being my first year that was the first year of the school

improvement grant, so I had a lot to learn. With that Grant came coaching which

supported the redesign. So, there was a leadership coach, a culture and climate person,

numeracy, literacy, and home school and community. So those five areas were well

covered and obviously represented as part of our leadership and School Improvement

process.

This cross-section of the staff had representatives from each grade level, providing input for the

school needs.

Principal #4 believes that his participation and input have been part of the required

actions. He continues with the advantages of the position. He describes:

You know as principal or an administrator, you are one person, certainly but you have the

unique advantage, I tell staff of being all around the building. So, things that you see you

have the advantage of seeing things that other folks don't.

As a result of the viewpoint that the building leader or administrator has, he believes that he is

better able to have a view of the areas of strength and areas of growth among staff. He is able to

see where the building needs lie and then he can begin identifying the next steps or required

actions.

Principal #4 executes the required actions by his planning. He describes himself as "not a

fast person" and therefore is thoughtful in his planning. He continues:

I believe in taking things step by step and making sure that you have thought through

what it is that you're trying to do. And so we in anything that we did we had a number of

different issues. In middle school, you think you spend more time focused on the soft

skills that kids need in dealing with behavior and time management which is a big part in

order to point them towards what it is that you need them to do in the classroom.

In addition, he believes that by holding one another accountable, those not meeting the

expectations become "…very much apparent."

He forms an analogy as he describes administration. He compares it to coaching sports.

This stems from his background in sports and his own belief that people like a "plan of action."

He describes: "I think, having that plan in place and communicating that plan consistently, and

clearly and keeping it as simple as possible, helps."

Interview #4: Managing the Instructional Program

As part of the creation of a plan for supervision of instruction, Principal #4 points out the

advantages of a middle school in that there are experts in each of the content areas that lead in

various ways. He states:

> I think that in middle school the advantage that you have when you organize and plan for
>
> supervision of instruction is you have folks who focus on their area and they know Math,
>
> Science, ELA, Social Studies, Video Production, Digital Imaging and they know it
>
> backwards and forwards.

While there may be similiaries and differences with respect to the content areas represented, he

names a couple of consistent areas that span across the various contents, such as planning,

preparation, and expectations and identifies some differences. He continues:

> So typically, management is a little better and this is a broad generalization but part of
>
> my observation in specials classes and I think that is just the nature of the specials
>
> classes.

He looks for ways to communicate with staff based on their own varying needs and supports them in incorporating best practices as they address student needs.

Principal #4 names the following as required actions to include having weekly lesson plans provided by teachers and engaging in dialogue with the department heads and content leaders, as they can have a better sense of what he should look for. He describes the steps:

> Lesson plans weekly, with some understanding of where you're going with your instruction, what it is that you're looking to accomplish. I think that again, talking with your department heads, your content leaders, is very important because they will have often a best sense of what it is maybe that I could be looking for or I should be looking in regard to math instruction or science instruction.

He continued to share about the management challenges of middle in opposition to elementary schools. Having been a principal at both levels, he has some understanding of his personal experiences with the varying needs of both elementary and middle schools respectively. While he acknowledges that high school "has it rough," he is also mindful of the task of supervision of instruction.

Principal #4 names two actions associated with executing the plan for supervision of instruction: communication and accountability. He believes that when you are sure of the direction, you want to be sure that the resources are made available, otherwise it can slow down the production and process. He states: "If this is the direction that we say that we're going in, do they have the resources and materials that they need in order to move ahead because that can always slow your plan down."

Also, he noted the importance of checking to ensure that there is the capacity to accomplish what is ahead.

Principal #4 believes that the ways in which his efforts affect the collective efficacy is his attention to shared knowledge. He features teachers' work at meetings. He describes:

> Teachers are sometimes reluctant. They don't want to be seen as being held out above their peers. But, I guess the way that I try to set it up is, we can all learn from each other. This is about best practice, so I think those are some of the ways that my efforts can affect the collective efficacy.

By doing this, he believes that he is promoting an environment where "we can all learn from each other."

Interview #4: Developing People

Principal #4 acknowledges first that professional development support should be individualized. He then provides a progressive history of professional development at his current school site. He describes: "Year one with a school improvement grant…I think in some ways they were kind of making things up as they went along. So, the PD structure was to pull." He compares his own experience as a principal to that of the "high maintenance building" needs that he has encountered. He continues:

> Year two, they decided that didn't work. So, let's try to have the PDs in building and we're still going to pull the teachers out, but they'll at least be in the building. You know, to me, out is out. You're either in or you're out, and out is not better than in. So same amount of professional development just a teacher is now sitting in conference room as opposed to just kind of a madhouse.

He describes the third year as the state finally got it right. He states:

> Year three, which is the final year. They figured out that the best way to do the PD was to push the people into the classrooms, which worked a whole lot better…so within that

story, I think are the horror and the success. Year three was much better, more successful

than years one and two.

One of the challenges from the first two years of the state's required professional development

for schools that were named priority was pulling teachers out. He describes it this way, "if you

lose a day, that bumps into your security staff, your assistant principal, your counselors, your

behavior, I mean everything is just rambled up."

Principal #4 identifies the specific required actions by focusing on two areas. One is

what he describes as smaller, or individual coaching. The larger piece is the building-wide needs

or coaching opportunities. He meets with the coaches to dialogue about areas or individuals in

need of continued or more support. He then has those open conversations where he shares,

"Here's what I observed. Tell me what you think and then we can start it there, and we can get

people pointed towards the people that need that help." Being a visible presence and modeling

are ways that the principal executes the required actions resulting from the plan for developing

people. He is showing staff what is working and having the coaches understand that their roles

are not to be evaluative in any way. Yet, he is direct and using a coaching metaphor to

emphasize his point. He said, "…it's not personal…but here's what I saw. Now you go back in

the game and you don't execute, then what happens? You come out of the game until you figure

it out." He believes that people appreciate and respect tactful, direct feedback.

Principal #4 believes that his efforts effect the collective efficacy by way of

acknowledging and recognizing individuals. He states:

> Sometimes when people are leaving or whatever then they come up with all of these
>
> wonderful, you know platitudes and things. But if a parent calls me and says hey this and
>
> this and this. I'm going to give it to the teacher right away just as I would if a parent calls

and says you know they had an issue and something that happened you gotta give that

right away. Just so you know that your efforts are being known as acknowledged and

recognized.

He also maintains consistent practice with regards to information. When a parent has negative

feedback, he shares that, and when there is positive feedback, he shares that as well. He wants to

celebrate the staff right now and "establish momentum."

Interview #5

Interview participant Principal #5 has a Bachelor of Science degree in sociology and

history, a Master of Arts degree in literacy and administration, and an Educational Specialist

degree, and is ABD within a doctoral degree in educational leadership. He has been a teacher for

30 years and has been a principal for five years. During the interview he demonstrated a very

calm disposition. During the interview, the principal spoke a great deal about the systemic

challenges of his job as one that is greater than the challenges associated with staff or students.

An example of this is when he stated, "unfortunately…other things get involved, like politics,

and it throws a wrench into what you're trying to do, but we were on a path of success and it's

just unfortunate that we never were able to complete it." It is important to note that this school

was not removed from the priority list.

Interview #5: Setting the Direction

Principal #5 stated clearly that the "rules and regulations" come from the district and he

implements those and provides professional development for staff, that is also organized at the

district level. He claims:

Then your tangibles, you have actual rules and regulations through which I implement, that come from the district level, to the teachers, by way of professional development, by way of e-mails, by way of in-service training.

Principal #5 identifies the culture and district directives as those required actions. He states: "It's a building type of culture. Then there are some things that are district directives that are as you say non-negotiable and those would obviously be pointed out." The principal was very clear and concise in his responses. He did not elaborate much in this section of questions, rather replied and named what he believed answered the questions most accurately. When asked about executing those required actions, he named accountability as a key factor. He exclaims:

First of all you have to make sure that they know what they are that they understand them and as the building leader that will be my responsibility. And then it's also my responsibility to make sure that they are held accountable and if they're not doing what they're supposed to do then possibly write ups, possibly conferences, possibly whatever is needed to get them to fulfill those obligations.

Principal #5 described his efforts in affecting the collective efficacy, as modeling. He holds strong beliefs around male leaders of color and how "you cannot afford to make mistakes you cannot afford to be lacadaiscal in certain areas, you have to almost be perfect." He continues on to share how it is almost impossible to be perfect, by saying, "and as we well know that's almost impossible. But the stress that goes along with that can be taxing, as I said before, but that's something that is an expectation of leaders of color."

Interview #5: Redesigning the Organization

Principal #5 describes redesigning the organization as "one of the biggest issues." He states:

That was one of the biggest issues, specifically…coming into a situation…where they were very low performing for such a long time you have many different restraints in terms of monies, staffing, materials, and other resources.

One reason that he finds this difficult is that, in spite of the fact that this has been and continues to be a low performing school, he believes that the focus must begin with culture and climate, even though instruction is equally important. He states, "The number one emphasis is always instruction, but before you get to instruction you have to deal with culture and climate." Additionally, he notes that there is the challenge of what he called being "micromanaged." This has been especially challenging as he describes the state governance, district level administration, and the hands-on approach. He describes:

Unfortunately, whenever you're in a situation like that, and you're under state governance or observation, central administration and their leadership is going to be pretty much hands on and always trying to tell you what you can or can't do. And to put it bluntly micromanaging.

As a result of the environment, this principal decided to take the lead and wait to be told that "I can't do it," rather than to go through the chain of command to begin and complete the necessary work. Those required actions stem from what he believes to be the best next steps. He believes that leaders must know what is needed and do what must be done.

Principal #5 describes his efforts affecting the collective efficacy as winning them over. He describes:

That staff had been beaten up so bad in terms of leadership, telling them how horrible they were, we needed better teachers and all those things. And so what I tried to do was

empower them and let them be a part of the process more so than dictating and trying to

run it myself.

In addition, Principal #5 felt it necessary to get involved with the staff on a social level as well.

This was done by his attendance at staff potlucks or dinners. He wanted to gain their trust so that

they could see that his goals also included supporting teachers.

Interview #5: Managing the Instructional Program

One of the ways that the principal managed the instructional program is to have an

accountability sheet that he uses weekly. He describes:

There were certain things that I was looking for. Lesson plans, attendance, are your

grades in, those type of things, so they knew that there was some structure there. There

were processes there that would hold them accountable if they were not doing what they

were supposed to do.

Principal #5 feels like the set up was the easiest part because staff were aware of what he was

looking for and he monitored that through the use of the sheet. The required actions included

principal walk throughs, because as he describes that these were district and/or state mandates, to

do walk-throughs each month. A way to maximize time, the principal uses an app that is

downloaded on his electronic devices. This allowed immediate feedback to staff after being

visited by the principal. He notes:

And so when we walked into the classroom, I could do an observation within eight to 10

minutes and simply go through that app and hit submit and then they would have it in

their e-mail by the end of the day, well actually, immediately, but they would looks at it

at the end of the day.

He would dialogue with the instructional coaches and rotate the work, and what the coach look for was clearly stated and was not used for evaluative purposes. He describes reading as being a focus within instruction and one of his "look-fors." He describes:

> Reading and literacy is the base of all learning and as we well know as teachers and whether you're doing math, art, or whatever discipline you're doing, if you don't understand the content, if you don't understand the vocabulary, there's no way that you going to succeed. So once we understood that and reading was our focus, it worked.

Principal #5 believes that being transparent with staff has been part of his efforts in affecting the collective efficacy of staff. He states:

> Transparency is a great word. It's an overused word, and it's not always used to fidelity, but it's…it's so important. It's so important because, once you lose that trust as a leader, I would simply say you can't regain it.

He believes that since the staff were "failed" by their leaders, his transparency was not only important, but necessary.

Interview #5: Developing People

Principal #5 describes the professional development and how he tried to lead his staff through professional learning communities as well as build a sustainable process. He states:

> Unfortunately, the professional development was district ran, and when I say unfortunately, they dictate what you are going to deal with. But the great thing about it that we had…PLC's, professional learning communities in my building. I raised a schedule where we all had common planning and that was all first out. So we had PLC's every 10 days and we could monitor, build a process sustaining what we're trying to do, and it worked out perfectly.

To circumvent some of the outside control and address the varying needs of the building, Principal #5 set up professional learning community structures that would meet regularly and thus was able to build what he believed to be a sustainable process. The principal defines those required actions as constant review of data. He states:

> We did a lot of data analysis and by us doing that, I would empower the teachers to look over the data and report to me some of the things that they're seeing. And when you read data obviously everybody has a different perspective. And so we brought all of this to the PLC's. We discussed it. We developed plans and then we attacked it, and then we came back with the results. That simple process in itself was, was tremendous in terms of what we were trying to do in the building.

This data was brought before the professional learning communities for continued discussion. The data collection has even gone to where data reviewed includes referrals in a month, which hour that they were issued, and most importantly, what could be done to alleviate those issues. He states that data review is an invaluable process. He describes:

> A lot of times we always talk about data driven instruction, data driven results, and it's just a word or phrase. When you're actually in there, and you're combing through the numbers, and you're looking with your staff, and then we're getting input from all of the staff, and we broke the PLC's down in different content levels…it worked, it worked.

Principal #5 believes that constant dialogue, meeting with data teams, discussing next steps, have all contributed to him affecting the collective efficacy of his staff.

Interview #6

Interview participant Principal #6 has two Bachelor of Science degrees, one in Criminal Justice and the other a Liberal Arts degree. His Master of Arts degree is in Educational

Leadership and he is considering pursuing his doctoral degree in leadership. He has taught for 13 years and has been a principal for 10 years. He has been the principal at this elementary school for over two years. During our interview, the principal seemed to be very student-and staff-centered in his responses. He would always couple the needs of the staff along with the needs of the students. He exuded passion as he spoke of the needs of the students that extend beyond the learning environment and context. He said, "If you came in the school before I got here, it was so chaotic."

Interview #6: Setting the Direction

Principal #6 plans and organizes the vision around the needs of the students. For their school, he describes the greatest need as one to have the students reading at grade level. He states:

> Well, if you look for an example at our school, one of our biggest struggles is getting our
> kids to read on grade level. So, in order for us to set a vision, that vision has to be around
> creating interventions and strategies on addressing the issue of our students not reading
> on grade level, so that would be the goal of our vision.

As a result of the identified need, Principal #6 has begun as his first steps or those required actions to place student in intervention groups and other teaching strategies to promote student growth. The students are identified after reviewing the performance data. He offers:

> We take a look at our previous test scores our NWEA Testing, our AIMS web as well.
> And take a look at those students that are struggling and create interventions around all
> the areas in which they are struggling.

Principal #6 executes the vision that is set by the creation of the interventions. The principal believes that his presence and continued dialogue aids in affecting the collective efficacy of the staff. He states:

> Well every day I talk to teachers about, "If these were your children, what would you do to help them become better?" I said whatever you would do for your child, you should do for these children because when they're, sometimes the teachers are the only people that students feel care about them.

Interview #6: Redesigning the Organization

The constant change in district level leadership has caused the plans for reorganization to shift almost yearly. The principal states:

> One are the obstacles I see even when it comes to planning, I've been an administrator for the last 10 years and in these 10 years I've had five different superintendents, each having their own plan. So, it comes back where I have to constantly keep changing the plan, and to add to that, in the last 10 years at each position I've held, I never held it more than two years.

Principal #6 shared his constant transicience as he has been moved after only being in any leadership position for two years. He commented on how this causes the plans to change all too often. The required actions for redesigning the organization includes interventions for academics and also interventions for behavior. He shares:

> We identified those students that were struggling academically and socially. So, what we did, we provided them with not only interventions for the academics but interventions for their behavior, because we have a lot of kids that have trauma in their life and we didn't understand what was going on.

Principal #6 noticed that in addition to the need for growth academically and socially, that many of the students struggled with trauma. As a result, the principal decided that the staff also needed to be trained in trauma. The staff participated in trauma training because, "a lot of times when you look at our students, there are so many other things going on in their life that they can't concentrate on the academic part." He continued, "when you look at the academic piece, there's no growth, but socially, there's growth, which you can't measure on the NWEA or AIMSweb." He executes this plan by bringing the staff together to create what he calls "timely interventions" to deal with the academics and behavior respectively. He notes that often times the staff are not prepared to address the varying needs of the students. He states:

> When you have these young teachers coming out of college, they think that they're going to sit in a classroom where he is going to sit there and listen and do as they say. And it's not that way, because kids come to school with so much baggage and unneeded baggage that you have to peel back those layers in order to get to that child.

The student needs vary depending on their circumstances and exposure in their own individual lives. Principal #6 believes that he affects the collective efficacy of the staff by "being honest with the teachers, supporting them." He describes the staff morale upon his arrival as low. Therefore he reminds the staff that "…my job is to become part of your team." In doing so, he outlines how the evaluation tool and pacing guides are just tools to help him better support the teachers. He reminds the teachers to "…relax and teach, just teach."

Interview #6: Managing the Instructional Program

Principal #6 organizes a plan for monitoring the program by meeting the teachers one-on-one, on a regular basis and checking in with them. He describes:

We met every day for maybe 10 to 15 minutes to see how your day is going. What are

your plans for today? What can I do to assist you today as a principal, we meet every

morning maybe 10 to 15 minutes, and we would discuss it. How did your day go

yesterday? What can I do to help you today?

He also informs the teachers of what he is doing each step of the way and does not surprise them.

One of the first necessary or required steps for Principal #6 was to create an intensive study

room. This begins with an interview with the specialists. Within this interview time, students

are able to express their view of what is going on for them. He explains:

They would interview the student and for them to express their feelings. Once they

express their feelings and what they can do to correct it, they go to intervention room and

they finish the classwork that they didn't finish in class and now they go back to class.

Prior to going to the intervention room, the students speak with an intervention specialist. This

two-part plan helps to get the students back on track. He feels that "…if you take them and put

them right in intensive study, you are taking them right from one class and putting them in

another class, the behavior is still there." He considers this a win-win for both the teacher and

the student. The principal describes their tiered behavior approach as a way to execute the plan

of instructional support for teachers. He states:

We have a tier system in which the teachers use once they see the student getting to that

point, we have what we call support monitors, and they are normally in the hallway

walking. That teacher may call the monitor and say, 'Hey, this person's at tier one,

maybe you just talk to him for a minute.' So, our monitor is trained in counseling…they

may walk and talk and that may work and bring them back to class…and let's walk and

talk to the intervention person, and she's going to use time…and we use those steps until

we have to get to intensive study.

This progressive discipline system supports students at their various tiers of needs for support

with behavior. Principal #6 believes that this process aids in stopping the practice of simply

putting a student out of class as the first step of intervention. The principal states, "Just being

supportive" is the way that his efforts affect the collective efficacy of the staff. He reflects on

how when he first arrived, and he would walk down the hallway, the staff would tense up, and

now they are more relaxed. He reiterates to the staff, "…your success is my success, your

failures are my failures." In addition, he believes that the school has changed. He says, "We had

to change the culture and climate. We really changed that." In spite of those changes, the

principal does not feel like there was enough academic growth made. He exclaimed, "…that

falls on me. I take the responsibility for that. So, moving forward we're going to make growth."

Interview #6: Developing People

Principal #6 states that the district is the one that provides the professional development

to the staff. Although, for the upcoming school year, the principal is planning to collaborate with

his curriculum facilitator and create some professional development around the book, *Tools for a*

Successful School Year (Silver, Perini, & Boutz, 2016). One of the required actions for the

principal was to gain clarity on whether or not he could turn his staff meetings into data

meetings. He exclaims:

I had the conversation with the new superintendent. The question was asked, could I take

my staff meetings and just turn them into a data meeting. And he said, 'yeah you can

meet more than once a month.' OK, So if I have a staff meeting and a data meeting, that

should suffice.

Once he received the clearance from central office, he did just that. He now has one staff meeting and one data meeting per month. He also has the teachers meet in their professional learning communities every 10 days. Principal #6 didn't "…want to wear them out." He believes that "if you put 100% effort in educating students all day, you shouldn't have to do it after school." He wants his staff to be revived and ready to face the students each day and after breaks. The ways that he executes the support for teachers is in having the teachers collaborate and look at data together and make decisions about the data. "Talking the talk, walking the walk" are ways that the principal believes that his efforts affect the collective efficacy of the staff. He reminds the staff that he cannot do this work alone. He tells them, "I'm going to support you in every effort to educate these kids…it's teamwork. I can't do this all by myself."

Principal #6 also reminds central administration and the staff of the growth that they are seeing. He stated that he only had one teacher who was minimally effective. He does not think that central adminstration agrees seeing that the students are still performing so low. Although, Principal #6 believes that "…you've got to look at all of the other things that's preventing them (the students) from getting that 40%" required growth. When asked about his efforts affecting the collective efficacy of the staff, Principal #6 replied, "Just being supportive you know not just talking the talk walking and walk because if I said it, I can do it."

Interview #7

Interview participant Principal #7 has a Bachelor and Master of Arts degree in Psychology and has his Ph.D. in Youth Development. He has served as a teacher for two years and a principal for five years at this high school. Principal #7 displayed a lot of passion as he spoke of the young African American male students. He shared several stories about how he continues to engage the students thinking as they are coming from challenging home lives. The

principal expounded on each question, continuing the dialogue around student needs and education. During our interview, the principal seemed to be very student-and staff-centered in his responses.

Interview #7: Setting the Direction

Principal #7 explains how he begins each year in the same manner. He meets with the staff members individually and gets their commitment to the work and the process. He describes: "I get the staff together and we meet. We meet individually and get all staff to buy in on the concept, recommit themselves to the process that's at hand because it's a task." Principal #7 has an "open door" policy with the staff, so they know that he is available and willing to meet with them as they need. He has strong beliefs about the role and responsibilities of a leader. "A leader is only as great as the people that they're leading," he remarks. Principal #7 describes the specific actions as connecting with parents and families to get their "buy in" or support with the education of their children. He explains:

> I get the parents the first thing I say to a parent is do you trust me. Do you trust in me to have the best interests of your child in heart. And if they do, then I say, "I need you to sign this agreement with me that you're going to do your part.' Because I'm going to listen to the parents expectation of us but I'm going to share with the parents our expectation of support from them.

He believes that without the parent support, it is a losing battle. He feels that the faith and trust that the parents have in the school staff better support the difficult dialogue or discussions that may arise with their child in the future. In addition, this two-way communication holds all parties accountable: the parents, school, and the students to the daily teaching and learning. This vision for the school is executed by modeling the expectation. The principal describes the initial

lack of trust from the students and how they had to learn to trust that he was looking out for everyone. He states:

> I have students come to me and…until they get to know me they'll say, 'You're gonna just listen to the teacher.' 'No! As you can see when I, when you come into my office, the first thing I do is they take a deep breath. Now if we need to count to 10, count to 10. If we need to go for a walk, I'll walk with you.'

He believes that this time of reflection enables the students to not only be heard, but to also reflect on their own behaviors. Principal #7 believes that his efforts affect the collective efficacy in terms of the support shown to staff. He demonstrates respect when entering the teachers' classroom by asking permission before inserting himself. "I would walk into a classroom and I will always observe, and I'll just listen in, and if it's a subject that they're dealing with that I have passion for, I get permission from that teacher to engage."

Interview #7: Redesigning the Organization

Reflection on the year completed and seeking additional professional development are ways that the principal includes in his planning processes for redesigning the organization. He describes, "…just enhancing and planning…to analyze the year prior and always work to enhance the value of what we're trying to inject, but I try to make sure every aspect of that is focused on the betterment of that child." The specific required actions that the principal identifies are formal and informal observations including providing direct feedback, reviewing and adhering to the referral processes, and reflecting on what work and work did not work. He describes the referral process:

> We have a pre-referral process that we revisit quite a bit to where we allow a bad choice making student to step outside of the classroom and fill out this pre-referral, give a clarity

to what they were doing and what corrective action needs to be applied to correct what's

taking place. Then they bring it to either the interventionists or to myself or my assistant

principal. We'll read what's written there, then we'll sign off on it, and we'll walk that

student back to class.

Principal #7 believes that continually kicking a student out of class due to misbehaviors or

sending them home often is not where the value lies. He encourages the staff to reflect on what

works and what is not working and to analyze and critique ways that they can better support the

student learners. The ways that Principal #7 is able to execute the process is to provide

opportunities for staff to continue their own learning through workshops, practicing, and visiting

facilities where their focus and work aligns. Principal #7 is reflective on his own personal

growth. He believes that his continual growth is a part of his efforts in affect the collective

efficacy. He states:

> In order for me to stay effective, I need to grow in every area. I need to review, reflect on
>
> what it is that I'm applying the value that I'm adding. Because like I said, I would never
>
> be one to say I have all the answers.

Interview #7: Managing the Instructional Program

Principal #7 describes his role as supporting his staff in their instruction by

acknowledging that they are the expects in their respective disciplines. He describes:

> We have staff that focus on academic growth, and I allow them to do their jobs because
>
> the simple fact of this, they're the expert in that area… So, what I do is make sure that
>
> they feel totally supported.

He promotes collaboration among staff by encouraging them to work with one another and not wait for a curriculum director to work with teachers. He wants the staff to focus on the academics and how they will grow in their expertise.

The specific required actions are holding meetings to identify concerns, look at research, have a clear direction, and follow those steps accordingly. Principal #7 exclaimed regarding the meetings, "so, we have meetings, we have weekly meetings, we have monthly meetings, we have quarterly meetings, we have meetings to have meetings." These meetings may range from "10 seconds" to a much longer time. Looking at weekly progress and concerns, these are better able to be addressed when there is opportunity to meet.

The plan is executed as a result of the analysis of data that was addressed during the meeting times. He describes himself as a "mobile principal," one that is around and on the go and not just sitting. He believes that after viewing the data and identifying the "shortcomings," it is necessary to implement the steps needed to alleviate those deficits. He identifies one of the deficiencies as the curriculum in general. He describes:

> There's not a curriculum that's created that's going to address the urban core of of our students existence. So we would use a curriculum that the district may say, this is the curriculum. I always go through, and I critique it to where I allow my instructors to implement what they think should be implemented.

Principal #7 continued on to explain the ways in which he executes the plan of managing the instructional program by identifying the deficits that the curriculum may bring and providing students and staff with a lens to view the required curriculum all the while maintaining engagement from the students. He explains:

You know our kids aren't drawn to Shakespeare…I know in one of my ELA classes, they were reading the story of Romeo and Juliet and our kids weren't feeling it. And I knew it had nothing to do with it. The idea of the story is phenomenal, it's something they live. But I said, let's research something that presents that same concept that applies to how they see things. And it's going to give them the same philosophy of what that book is trying to present to them.

This is one example of how Principal #7 is balancing his view of the student and staff needs as he is addressing the instructional program. In another example, the principal shared how in a dialogue with the chemistry teacher, he shared that the teacher can share with the students about how chemicals effect their daily lives. He said, "They're actually affected by chemicals, every second that they live…Have you looked at our kids…hot chips that they eat…Do you see all the makeup they wear? Do you see the hair that they do?"

Principal #7 points to consistent practice, learning from those around him, and having high expectations for all as the efforts that he makes in affecting the collective efficacy of the staff.

Interview #7: Developing People

Principal #7 describes how at the start of the school year, he places himself, along with his staff, on a development plan. This plan focuses on three areas because he believes that putting more than three would be "defeating the purpose." He describes:

We all create a developmental plan. And so that's how we start the year out, and we analyze the growth when we meet, and I meet with them individually. We look at that plan and…we try to focus on three areas because we try to keep it at a minimum…you're defeating the purpose. So, we look at three areas, and usually one is relationship building.

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The other two areas are something along the educational line, and another is what he calls, self-value. The required actions include attendance at conferences or workshops related to one's own growth. Another required action is the use of a self-evaluation tool that he uses with staff. He derives this tool from the book, *All About Me*. He shared that he gives the teenage version to his graduating seniors and the adult version to the staff. The portion of the book where you write your short term goals, he has them write the goals in ink, to promote permanence.

Principal #7 executes this plan by modeling. He explained that he is present at most all of the professional development sessions. He states:

Well actually 99% of them, I sit through it with them, so they can see that I'm growing as they grow. I'm getting exposed to what they're getting exposed. But then again, I allow them to create partnerships and the concept of analyzing their own internal.

He then continued to speak of the importance of having empathy for others. He spoke of the economic struggle of urban students and how differentiated instruction is necessary. The principal then shared some of his own personal experiences and the comparison of how he was reared to that of some of his students. He shares how the adults influenced his life and impacted him in meaningful ways. He continued on to share that his own "personal growth" is the way in which he believes that his efforts affect the collective efficacy of the staff.

Interview #8

Interview participant Principal #8 has a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Studies with a minor in Geology. He also has a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education and a Master of Arts degree in Educational Leadership. He has served as a teacher for six years. Principal #8 has taught and has been the principal at the same school site for the past

13 years. It is important to note that his school is no longer on the priority list as formerly identified by the state of Michigan.

During the interview, Principal #8 shared his personal growth and learning over the years as a teacher and principal. He has a shared leadership approach and this is made evident as he said, "I wasn't trained really. I wasn't expecting the job and so I had to learn the role, do all of those things, and then quickly get into, we have to change course." He credits his learning with the Adaptive Schools model as a great resource that supported his planning and also providing him with what he describes as "a good framework for collaboration." Principal #8 engaged in a lot of reflective dialogue, as he shared his current practices, coupled with his learning over time.

Interview #8: Setting the Direction

Principal #8 describes his first year as the principal and how he received coaching around organizing a plan for setting the direction of the school. He remembers how he was only three days out of a classroom and therefore was not "trained" to lead with the unknown or unspoken expectations of the job. He began by gathering the team together to aid in doing the work. He describes, "…it just quickly became me gathering up the folks that I knew would push this work forward." After attending extensive training, the team of teacher-leaders returned with Principal #8 to set the course. As he reflects on the principal before him, he remembers her style differing from his as she asked folks to weigh in, but rarely to "lead." He describes:

> The principal we had just all had, she was kind of not in some like dictator way, but she just kept everything. She would ask you to check things, "Hey look at this, look at what I did," and just, you know, you're grammar checking it. You're not, you know, she's not asking you for help on it.

His leadership took a different approach, asking individuals to lead portions of the work after ensuring that they were trained and equipped to lead the work. Because he had transitioned from being their teacher colleague to now their teacher-principal colleague, he was unsure of how accepted he would be by the teaching staff.

The required actions for him was to talk with the staff as a group and then call on teachers to come up to the front and present or lead portions of the staff meeting for example. He was transparent with the staff regarding his knowledge. He said, "I was honest and I just said I need help with this." This newness for the team, being asked to lead in ways that they were not challenged or requested before brought about some "resistance" as he describes:

> It was new for all of us, it was new for them to hear it, it was new for them to be asked to lead in that way. But a lot of them, it became pretty natural, and now like their half of that team is still intact. People have come and gone and taken new positions in the district and things like that.

He wanted to ensure that there was shared, collective knowledge that remained in the "room." He promoted an environment of everyone growing and getting better. He believes that his efforts of modeling being a learning and providing learning and leadership opportunities affects the collective efficacy of the staff.

Interview #8: Redesigning the Organization

Principal #8 organized a plan for redesigning the organization with the school improvement grant money in mind. He decided to invest the additional funds that came as a result of the grant in programs and people. He describes:

Overall, the plan was if we're going to really flip this around they have to be better. What

they do I have to be able to give them everything that they need, so there's just less

excuses or reasons, whatever word you want to put there.

He wanted to alleviate any excuses of why teachers cannot teach or students cannot learn. In this

commitment to improvement, the principal reflects on how instruction was supported through the

local Regional Educational Services Agency after experiencing an instructional audit, seeing the

areas of focus.

Principal #8 identifies three areas of focus as the required steps. The three goals are

professional learning, developing professional learning communities, and instructional learning

cycles. He speaks of the effects of being named "priority." He states:

I'm sure any school that gets identified as a priority school, those are going to be the three

areas that, you know, you fall into. So with that, you know, we had to adopt. That's where

we adopted the capturing kids hearts model and did that work around for the multi-tiered

system of support, it was, you know, whole building kind of approach things. We really

studied the ILC's and the PLC's model.

The meetings centered around these three focus areas. Continuing with implementation plans aid

in maintaining the focus on the stated goals. The staff are no longer having random interventions

and tutors placed in different places, but having a focus of the needed and required work.

Principal #8 reflects on the three years under the grant. The first year is implementation,

but as he stated, they had already begun the required work for implementation. He remembers

the school improvement grant requiring a lot of organization and management of resources. He

admits his own inadequacies with regards to organization. He shares:

I'm not all that organized. I'm getting better, but it's just not a strength. I am super

impulsive, and I fly by the seat of my pants a lot, and I make decisions that way, and I

react, whatever, so I'm trying to become more organized, and I'm trying to do better.

While he acknowledges his own deficits, he notes that the secretaries and coordinators aided in

ensuring that the deadlines were met. Additionally, he executes these required steps by meeting

the timelines and deadlines, providing evidence of completed work and tasks, and holding one

another accountable.

Principal #8 believes that his efforts of involving the staff in the decision making

processes and having them participate at each step has empowered the staff and, therefore, he has

affected the collective efficacy of the staff. Their sense of ownership and "buy in," as he

describes the staff along with himself, are the decision-makers.

Interview #8: Managing the Instructional Program

When asked about how Principal #8 organizes a plan for managing the instructional

program, he replied "That's the hardest part…whatever comes, I jump in." Principal #8 finds

that despite the fact that there is a plan for supporting and monitoring instruction, there are many

things that grab his attention throughout the school day. He explains:

Best laid plans you, show up with your list every day and when you get these things

done, and then at 4:30 p.m., when everyone is gone, you start your list because all day

long you were doing 10 other things.

However, creating a plan for monitoring and implementation of the contents of the school

improvement plan are used. He describes:

With this new calendar, and we're still like how are we, check who's checking on them

that they're doing this, and so this is the hardest thing for me to continue to monitor the

things that we say we're going to do.

Principal #8 expects "professional adults" to do their job and does not like having to check up on

the staff. However, the principal is willing to have that professional conversation when needed.

Interview #8: Developing People

Principal #8 reflects on how in his planning, he was cognizant of the fact that school

improvement grant money would go away, so he was intentional about the approach for

continued learning for the staff. He explains:

Your money is going to go away, some of your support pieces will go away, programs

will go away because the money went away. So, the people need to have the skills. And

so, what we were talking about before we started was, you always take will, because you

can teach skills and you can't teach will.

Principal #8 set the goal of developing the skill for his staff. He finds that he does not say no to

requests from staff for requested training. He considers the value added when staff initiate

training and support for their own continued professional growth and learning. He describes:

I try to say yes as much as I can. I try to give them the development, so they weren't

necessarily having to seek it out on their own or whatever the case is. And then they are

held to some accountability. If you're going somewhere where, you're receiving training,

you're teaching it.

He considers the fact that he models leadership and provides leadership opportunities for his staff

because one of his goals is to "build everybody up." As evidence of his effect, he credits the fact

that there have not been requests for transfers from his building to date. His required steps

included building the collective knowledge of the staff as well as his own and providing leadership opportunities to staff. This was executed by the staff's attendance at professional development sessions and their return to share with the staff. Principal #8 models being a learner. He describes:

> I have a few strengths. That's one of my strengths is knowing what is not my strength, and I know I am never afraid to ask someone to help me, or teach me, or show me, and whether it be a teacher or above or whatever the case is.

He seeks knowledge and allows those that are experts to lead while he provides continued support. Principal #8 believes that his efforts in building teacher-leaders affect the collective efficacy of the staff. He notes:

> I started to realize then that this stuff is taking home that they are looking at these people as leaders, that they themselves are comfortable enough with you know and confident enough that this person could come in.

He finds that the district looking at his staff and requesting them to lead in various capacities is evidence of their own increased efficacy and growth.

Interview #9

Interview participant Principal #9 has a Master of Arts degree in Educational Leadership and is completing his Doctorate of Education degree. He has served as a teacher for six years. He has been a principal at this high school for a total of five years. Principal #9 spoke freely and had much passion around the work that his team of teachers are doing. He shared about the changes that have come about within the district and the dynamics surrounding the neighboring school districts.

Interview #9: Setting the Vision

Principal #9 began with acknowledging that prior to his coming to the school as the principal, there were pre-established structures and teams in place to do the work. He describes:

For organizing and creating our plans, we have an instructional leadership team, which is just focused on adult practice. We have an administrative team, which we're blessed to have a lot of resources when it comes to our administrative team, so we end up having interventionist, counselors, and academy principals for our smaller learning communities.

He names those groups as the "primary" vision setters for the school. He has done lots of work in the past couple of years redefining their mission and vision and aligning as they are setting the course for continued growth.

Principal #9 describes those required actions are meeting with his team comprised of the core area department chairs and providing an understanding of where they are, including defining those critical things to address in moving forward. He states: "Setting for them that general vision of this is what we want to do to try to move kids forward and then letting them kind of build that together as a team."

Principal #9 describes these meetings as "learning sessions," where the team is able to ask those "how" questions and not always jump to fixing it. The principal describes his approach of executing the vision by stating that he is a "firm believer in prototyping." In doing so, he along with his team, continues to look at their intervention enrichment block for example and their RTI processes that they are currently doing at the school level. He says, "So what didn't work, we can figure out how to do it differently."

In describing how Principal #9 believes that his efforts affect the collective efficacy, he began by describing how his building was running like a shopping mall where everyone had

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purchased and set up their own shops. While they all have the same bell schedule, just as a mall has its posted hours, they were running as separate entities. He believes that when he began to get teachers to see that "it matters" that they are moving in the same direction, otherwise it is going to fail. He explains:

> One piece is continuously helping them fit. How does the work you're doing fit into the mission and vision of what we say our high school is all about? But then we also, because we're in smaller learning communities, we've got the ability to say, 'OK, now you 15 teachers, how does your work fit together?' And then we're also an intervention teams, so the four core teachers and the SPED teacher that share kids, they've also got to look and say, 'How are we doing work on the same path?' So, you've got all of those checks off. 'OK, if you're not doing the work, and I have to work with you all day long, we better get on the same page.'

Interview #9: Redesigning the Organization

Principal #9 stated with excitement, "We are right in the middle of transformation." They are currently in the planning stages of what the school will be. They are defining what makes their school stand out against others. The planning team is looking at frameworks to adopt and model as they transform their school. He describes:

> Giving students exposure to career pathways and then giving them actual experiences, like internships and job shadowing experiences and Capstone projects in the field that they're looking to study, and that planning process has been unreal.

In viewing a backward mapping approach, the principal referenced questions that the team is asking. What experiences have the students had or what will the students look like when they graduate? These questions better enable the staff and teams to create a plan for redesigning their

organization. Having a clear idea of what each student needs and should have to promote continued success is where their planning begins for the work that needs to be done. Those required actions include the teaching teams to begin answering those questions and then planning how they will get there. He describes their work to include the following, "…that process of look, we know every single kid that walks out of here needs this. How do we get there? And that's the process we've really used."

Principal #9 believes that his efforts of defining relevance for both staff and students and for the teachers to decide to truly work together. He states:

Start with our why, give them the understanding of this is what we're trying to get to. It's all about relevance. Here's where we're at right now. What process would actually get us there?

Interview #9: Monitoring the Instructional Program

Principal #9 describes moving "adult practice" forward does not orginate with the required evaluation system, rather it begins with teachers. His site has an instructional leadership team that provides observations and feedback to staff on a regular basis. As a result of the observations, they are looking at what they call active learning strategies. He describes:

You're going to go in and say, 'Hey, I saw one, this is what I saw, this is what worked what didn't work or I didn't see anything, but was a great opportunity for you to actually implement an active learning strategy.'

Principal #9 wants to get to a point where there is 80% implementation with fidelity. He believes that this will promote student growth, as they continue to move from one focus area to another.

The required actions include viewing recorded lessons taught within the building or those recorded lessons available online. The instructional team sits down and evaluates the lessons together. He describes:

> We'll sit down as an instructional leadership team, watch the video, everybody will do their own feedback as far as what did they see, what were their thoughts, what active learning strategy etc., and then we come back and calibrate, we figure out we are pretty much on the same page with the kind of feedback we're giving and what we're seeing, and then if that's the case great we can move forward.

When asked, "Where is the time?" Principal #9 replied that the instructional team uses their contractual time, while others dedicate the time as they simply want to be a part of the work. This practice mimics the practice of instructional rounds. Principal #9 remarks, that when he participates in the rounds, he is also better able to "see what's going on in the building" and can better assist the staff in pushing the work forward.

Principal #9 believes that his efforts of "pushing" staff members in their instructional practices have contributed to affecting the collective efficacy of the staff. He remarks that when the staff are engaged in their PLC work, they are able to reference strategies to aid in their instruction as a result of the work that is being done building wide. This built-in process is comprehensive as he shared, "If we're focused on active learning strategies as an ILT or as an instructional leadership team, we're going to turn around and focus in staff meetings and PD on active learning strategies."

Interview #9: Developing People

Principal #9 acknowledged that all of the professional development days are planned prior to the beginning of the school year. The district takes half of those days to provide

professional development for the staff. Principal #9 remarked how limited professional

development time that he is given. As a result, the staff meeting and professional development

times are focused with intentional planning. He explains the plan and structure as:

> Every single staff meeting will involve a reading passage and digging into, so how does
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> that impact the way you teach, and then we structure it, so we've got the overall building
>
> focus of here's our building data, and then we let them dive into their smaller learning
>
> communities and figure out so how does that impact the work we're doing and how does
>
> that change the way we're doing things.

Part of the required actions to develop the people for the this principal is to "live in a model of

coach every teacher." The teachers are coached and tiered at each of the three levels from what

he describes as light touch, medium touch, and heavy touch. Prior to his coming to the school,

coaches were used only for those teachers that were on an improvement plan. He has since

shifted this model and thinking to include everyone in the coaching processes. Principal #9

believes that his efforts affect the collective efficacy by him modeling the desired behavior. He

describes:

> Our PD is done through the lesson plan template that we expect teachers to use. So I'm
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> not going to tell you, 'Hey plan in this manner,' and then I'm going to plan it differently.
>
> It better look exactly the same, and I mean that's supposed to be brain based, so it's going
>
> to look exactly the same, and you're going to feel like, 'Hey this could be one of my
>
> lessons.'
>
> And then I think the other the other piece that really supports them is sometimes it doesn't
>
> work.

Principal #9 models through the staff meeting and professional development sessions that he facilitates by using the same planning template tool that he is requiring of his staff. He also uses active learning strategies that the staff are currently working on in his presentation to staff. He finds that even when something does not work, that is still good for the staff to witness because sometimes lessons that they try may not work. This transparency is also important because he wants his staff to see that he is stretching himself to grow and try new things.

Interview #10

Interview participant Principal #10 has a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education, Master of Arts degree in Educational Leadership, and is ABD for her Doctorate in Educational Leadership. She has served as a teacher for seven years and has been a principal for 13 years. She has been the principal of this elementary school for seven years. She is the only female principal out of the 10 principals that were interviewed. During our interview, the principal had a light disposition and laughed often as she shared stories. She referenced many resources and items that she uses in her planning and leading. She shared her philosophical beliefs on matters and how it impacts her current environment including her decision-making. It is important to note that this school is no longer on the priority list as formerly identified by the state of Michigan.

Interview #10: Setting the Vision

Principal #10 simply put her description of the ways that she organizes and creates a plan to set the vision for the school. She states, "Starting with the why we're doing it and just put a lot of energy in information and research and discussion out there about the community we serve." She continued on to share about the purpose of data. She informs her staff that the data is not merely providing information about a student's knowledge, rather what has not been

"provided for them." She has strong beliefs around the staff having a reflective approach to teaching and learning and to not simply use data to "prove" what students do not or cannot do, rather to see what else the staff can do. She states:

> I say to my teachers which data is very important to us and that as long as that data is not identifying what the children know, but what we have not provided for them. Whether we think we did or not, they didn't receive it. And that's what we use the data for. That's the way I present it. And when it comes to when we're looking at those final results like at the end of an M-STEP or even with the MAP. We're looking at, OK, did we do A, B, C, and D? That is just a tool for us. I mean, yes, we want the children to achieve, but why didn't we get that done? And if we know we did everything we were supposed to do with fidelity in terms of what our previous plan was, then we can accept whatever it is that we get and then we take that information and then we create a new plan.

Some of those specific required actions are identifying "why" are we doing it and then creating actions for the individual students. The principal believes that she executes the vision by having continued conversations with students and staff about the expectations and her beliefs of success for all. Principal #10 believes that the staff members view her passion and honesty which affects the collective efficacy of the staff. She said, "…we're in this together. I think without that, you're gonna be leading yourself. You're gonna turn around and there's nobody behind you."

Interview #10: Redesigning the Organization

Principal #10 begins answering this question about creating a plan to redesign the organization by acknowledging their now former priority school status. She describes:

Nobody becomes a priority school overnight. It doesn't happen overnight. That's not

something that happens overnight. When I came here the school was not a priority

school.

As part of the planning, Principal #10 took a look at what they were doing and it's effectiveness

and then what does it take to fix what is not working. The dialogue she describes became about

standards tied to criteria so that the staff became and are aware if they are meeting the needs of

every child. Principal #10 describes the components that promoted the required actions. These

include the compliance piece, her intentionality around aligning the standards and expectations,

and the use of data. When asked about her efforts affecting the collective efficacy of the staff

she stated:

A rising tide raises all ships and, you know, it might have been by force and in

discomfort, but your skills and their skills were improving so that we got to a point where

people are using that 20 minutes at lunch time connected to their lunch to look at the data

to make these groups. I don't have to be in every meeting, I don't have to, you know

they're doing it on their own. They're having these conversations.

The teachers initiated the dialogue with one another about their instructional planning. Whether

the priority status sparked the sense of urgency or a combination of the priority status and

improved skills, this principal believes that the school can be considered a community of care for

students. She believes that the stakeholders, including the custodians, speak to children and

make them feel comfortable in school, so they are less likely to shutdown, but will engage in

learning.

Interview #10: Managing the Instructional Program

Principal #10 meets with each of the teachers at the start of the school year as part of her role in creating and organize a plan for supervision of instruction. As part of the required actions, she does walk-throughs, explaining:

> And when I identify things I'll either ask a question, write in the document or, I'll ask the teacher later I won't interrupt them, because I also know, and we talked about this before, I also know I wasn't there five minutes before, and I'm not going to be here when I leave. Unless it is something just egregious, I'm not going to stop everything and say, what is going on? I'll wait. And usually I figure it out.

Principal #10 executes the required actions by writing down what is observed in and during the walk-through. Also, prior to developing a plan for the teachers for the school year, Principal #10 will sit in the classroom on more than one occasion to ensure that she gains an understanding of the environment, as this is part of what is observed. Another check point for the principal is to ask the students what they are learning. She describes:

> I ask somebody, what are you working on and why do you think you need to learn and, you know, what's the objective. If I could just look at the board, I don't have to, you know, and they know their grades and whether kids can work together and why I like when even a physical things, like I'll say, you know, that those same two boys, every time I come in are back there. But the teachers are pretty good at catching that, so I do think that's how I execute it.

Principal #10 believes that her efforts affect the collective efficacy by her setting the expectation and following through with support provided where needed. She states, "I do think when you are

successful, as a teacher you feel successful, your self-efficacy is better, and you perform better, because your expectations for yourself has now risen."

Interview #10: Developing People

Principal #10 begins by identifying where the needs are for staff and then couples it with the teacher's perception of what they believe they need. When there are building-wide expectations, the principal believes that support should be provided. She does not believe that staff should be surprised. She describes: "If the expectation is we're going to use this document from the essentials, which is what I do, then let's have somebody give you, I don't think, nothing should be a gotcha."

Principal #10 uses the observations as the required action to ensure that the plan for developing people is supported. She looks at data and from there has those candid, open, and honest conversations with her staff. Another required action has been to look at what is being taught and if it is necessary. She notes the importance of data:

> They were teaching their hearts out, they were doing their lessons plans, people were doing work and they didn't need to teach that. Either the children knew and already mastered that and then the things that the children were having difficulty with, they weren't touching, which is why they were having difficulty with it. It's not really that, it's not like the children get it, and I didn't teach it. The children don't know it because you missed teaching that part because you decided, without data, what they needed, and you were wrong.

The way that Principal #10 executes the plan is by finding out exactly what people need. She believes that the staff feeling "stronger" has affected their collective efficacy. This principal

continued to talk about the work associated with the "heavy work" of culturally responsive education and how everyone is in a different place.

Chapter Four Summary

Chapter Four presented 10 participant profiles from my research. The principal participants were chosen through purposeful sampling, provided they came from schools meeting a given criteria. Each participant was asked to answer 16 semi-structured interview questions at a time and location of their convenience. The final description of the data and research findings will be explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS

This chapter presents the major themes extracted from the 10 participant interviews. All 10 participants are current or former principals in elementary, middle, or high schools from diverse ethnic backgrounds and both genders. The study's conceptual framework and interview questions were closely aligned using the action verbs derived from Bandura's (1997) definition of self-efficacy, coupled with the four "areas" from the research data. The semi-structured interview protocol afforded participants the opportunity to elaborate on their perceptions as they responded to each of the questions asked. A constant comparison approach was used to analyze the data from the participants' transcribed responses.

Presentation of Themes

Bandura (1997) defines self-efficacy as the "beliefs in one's own capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action to produce given attainments" (p. 3). The conceptual framework model shows that leaders who have self-efficacy, or the belief that they can organize and execute actions (Bandura, 1982, 1984), are able to focus on the critical instructional leadership practices of: (a) setting a direction, (b) redesigning the organization, (c) managing the instructional program, and (d) developing their people (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). Therefore, I have chosen to offer my findings as categorized into those four broad areas. Table 3 summarizes the major themes where six or more principals offered data that matched each major theme, and sub-themes, where three to five principals offered such data.

Table *3*

Major Themes and Sub-themes

Themes and Sub-Themes	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10
A. Setting the Direction										
A1: Use data in setting the direction of their schools	X	X		X		X		X		X
A2: Principals focus on clear communication with staff			X	X			X	X	X	X
A2.1: Focus on climate and culture	X		X		X		X			
A2.2: Model and provide support to staff	X				X		X		X	X
B. Redesigning the Organization										
B1: Focus on data as they redesign their organization	X	X	X	X		X	X			X
B1.1: Report seeing growth changes in the data	X	X	X				X			
B2: Support, promote, and increase capacity with their staff			X	X		X	X	X	X	X
B2.1: Create staff teams to help redesign the organization			X	X				X	X	
C. Managing the Instructional Program										
C1: Leadership and content "expert" teams are an integral part	X		X	X		X	X		X	
C1.1: Show support, consistency, and maintain high expectations					X	X	X		X	X
C2: Observe and create growth plans with input from staff				X	X	X	X		X	X
C3: Use data to drive the instruction, including interventions		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
C3.1: Present data to staff to highlight change	X	X			X			X		
D. Developing the People										
D1: Individualize professional development according to individual needs	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	
D2: Professional development delegated by the school district		X		X	X	X	X		X	
D3: Use data to support staff within professional development		X	X	X	X			X		X
D3.1: Share data with staff regarding increased student growth and staff successes	X			X	X	X				
D3:2 Believe that modeling the desired behavior is important				X		X	X	X	X	

A. Setting the Direction

According to Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) *setting the direction* is having a clear vision,

engaging in effective communication and collaboration, and monitoring the performance of the

organization. All of the principals described how they set the vision for their schools. Some said

that they use data while others create teams to collaborate in this process.

Major Theme A1: Principals use data in setting the direction of their schools. Six

principals mention data as a key source in setting the direction for their schools. For example,

Principal #1 believes that "you have to look at the data and in looking at the data we can't take or

accept any excuses." He also takes the time to visit other schools that are similar to his in terms

of economics and demographics. He wants his staff to know and believe that "it can be done."

The data used ranged from academic or performance data, attendance data, and student behavior

data. He points to the data and how he and his staff should not make any excuses:

> But, you know, people have to understand that it can be done. And so when we do that,
>
> like I said previously, you have to look at the data, and in looking at the data, we can't
>
> take or accept any excuses. We can look at the circumstances that our kids come from,
>
> but we have to say that we are the only ones that could truly make a difference in their
>
> lives academically. And we only have control over the children when they're in our
>
> presence.

Principal #2 was intentional about using the data as he shares with staff their impact on

the student performances. He described: "I reviewed data, we were very data driven. I just made

sure that everybody knew exactly where their students were." He identifies accountability as one

of the ways that his efforts affect the collective efficacy and points to the increased knowledge of

the staff regarding the students. In addition, the data shared was private, allowing staff to reflect

on their own practice and make decisions based on the data. He explained:

> I think that they became more accountable. That they knew and I didn't share their
>
> individual data, but what I would do, like the first fashion of the partnership agreement
>
> was decreased referrals you know referrals lead to suspension.

In addition, he created checklists, as another form of recordkeeping or data so that the staff and

students are aware of the teaching and learning expectations of the day. "I would go in every

day and make sure it was visible." He also spoke of the required data to focus on as prescribed

by the State of Michigan. One example that he acknowledged was the student behavior data "the

partnership agreement stipulated that there would be 60% reduction in disciplinary, 60%

reduction in exclusionary discipline."

Principal #4 believes that a needs assessment is necessary prior to making any plans. He

described this backward planning as follows:

> You want to first take an assessment of what the needs are in your building and kind of
>
> believe in taking a step back before you can go forward. How do we find ourselves in this
>
> position? What are some of the strengths in our organization? What are some of the
>
> challenges and areas for growth in our organization? If you're asking how I would
>
> organize and create a plan I would start with those things and try to prioritize the needs
>
> and just begin to attack them systematically.

Principal #6 also takes a look at the student performance data. The principal believes that

this focus on the academic data allows his school to make decisions about the interventions

required and necessary for his school site:

We take a look at our previous test scores our NWEA Testing, our AIMS web as well.

And take a look at those students that are struggling and create interventions around all

the areas in which they are struggling.

Principal #8 takes a look at the teacher teams and the need to review data as a team, looking at

the "why?"

It was new for all of us, it was new for them to hear it, it was new for them to be asked to

lead in that way. But a lot of them, it became pretty natural, and now like their half of that

team is still intact.

Principal #10 felt that when focusing on the data, asking the question "why" is also important.

She explains: "I would describe it as starting with the why were doing it and just put a lot of

energy in information and research and discussion out there about the community we serve."

Major Theme A2: Principals focus on clear communication with staff to help set the

direction. Six principals believe that it is important to begin the planning process

with teams that include all staff members, as well as content coaches in some cases. Principal #3

stresses the importance of communication with staff and finding out their "why?" He states:

One of the first steps to me after I assumed the principalship, I met with every teacher on

staff. I wanted to know what made them tick, what was their why? I have some key

questions that I asked them, but it was really to get to what made them tick, what was

their why, and whether they feel they would better our school as a whole.

Principal #4 believes in communication. He states:

Just like in your classroom, as a teacher, you do it a little bit differently then maybe the

next person. I believe in communication and transparency, so I just think that it increases

the level of buy-in that is required in order to really, not only to set a vision, but to carry

the vision forward…talk through what we see as needs and that should kind of follow that needs assessment. So, once you've established that then you look to what your next steps are, what your action plan is going to be.

Principal #7 reports that it is a practice of his to begin each year with a one-on-one dialogue with his staff, as he invites them to recommit to the work ahead for the school year. He states: "I get the staff together and we meet. We meet individually and get all staff to buy-in on the concept, recommit themselves to the process that's at hand because it's a task." Principal #8 gathers his staff together, as he believes they are an integral part of the practice and are necessary in moving the work. He explains: "…it just quickly became me gathering up the folks that I knew would push this work forward." Principal #9 brought together his leadership team to aid in the work that needed to be done. He described his process thusly:

> For organizing and creating our plans, we have an instructional leadership team, which is just focused on adult practice. We have an administrative team, which we're blessed to have a lot of resources when it comes to our administrative team, so we end up having interventionist, counselors, and academy principals for our smaller learning communities.

Principal #10 also believes that beginning with "why" is an important step in planning and organizing. She explained: "Starting with the why we're doing it and just put a lot of energy in information and research and discussion out there about the community we serve."

Sub-theme A2.1: Principals focus on climate and culture. Climate and culture was noted by four of the principals as they pointed to this as one of their required actions in setting the direction for their schools.

Principal #1 emphasizes the importance of climate and culture by noting: "But first and foremost creating a climate and a culture where collaboration is appreciated and valued, because

a lot of times in education we work in silos and we're individualized." Principal #3 feels like he

wants to bring the school "back to its glory days," as he describes it, by reestablishing the

culture. Principal #5 also identifies climate and culture as an area of focus spoke of the current

conditions and the need to change or impact the existing culture. "The number one emphasis is

always instruction, but before you get to instruction you have to deal with culture and climate."

He continues "It's a building type of culture. Then there are some things that are district

directives that are as you say non-negotiable and those would obviously be pointed out."

Finally, Principal #7 believes that the principal promotes an environment where respect for

others is a part of the expectations. He described: "I know it works because teachers feel that

they have a voice and even when there's a a child making a bad choice I go into that classroom

and I say this is this teacher's classroom."

Sub-theme A2.2: Principals model and provide support to staff. Five principals spoke

of modeling the desired behavior and how they demonstrate support to the staff. Principal #1

shows support and models by "building that efficacy piece, you know, our kids can do it, I can

do it…has helped to create some confidence, collegiality, sharing of ideas, and more of a

cooperative collaborative staff." He also shared reminded the staff how they are the ones who

make the difference: "And I said, 'Guess what? Who truly makes a difference here?' I explained

to them, the teachers do." Principal #5 shared that he believed that the staff had been

discouraged and he wanted to approach them in a manner where they could collaborate and work

as a team. He explained:

> That staff had been beaten up so bad in terms of leadership, telling them how horrible
>
> they were, we needed better teachers and all those things. And so what I tried to do was

empower them and let them be a part of the process more so than dictating and trying to run it myself.

Principal #7 spoke of his visible presence and the impact that he believes it has on the staff as he is also willing to engage with the student learners. He explained:

I would walk into a classroom and I will always observe, and I'll just listen in, and if it's a subject that they're dealing with that I have passion for, I get permission from that teacher to engage.

He also names modeling as one of the ways to execute the vision. He stated:

And you do that in a number of ways from recordkeeping to your own presence, physical presence. In certain areas, to modeling the behavior that you're looking for people to execute as part of that vision.

Principal #9 notes, "…push and model for our special ed teachers and putting those minds together with the reg-ed teacher and letting them figure out how do we plan for all of the needs for kids gets way easier when they've been in classrooms and they feel like I've seen this work or I've seen it not work and how do I do it differently. So what didn't work, we can figure out how to do it differently."

Finally, Principal #10 spoke of the role of the principal and the importance of modeling a team spirit. She described, "Why don't you go and watch her do it and get, you know, to know that this is a team and to recognize that they are also the experts. And that we're in this together."

B. Redesigning the Organization

According to Leithwood and Jantzi (2008), *redesigning the organization* includes strengthening the culture, promoting collaboration, and adjusting organizational structure where

needed. All of the principals describe how they redesigned their schools, resulting in two major themes with one sub-theme each.

Major Theme B1: Principals focus on data as they redesign their organization. The first major theme that emerged from the participant interviews was how the principals also use data as they redesign their organizations. Seven principals began redesigning their organizations around data, in one of three focus areas: academics, attendance, and/or behavior. Principal #1's plans include viewing the academic data weekly.

> We did institute weekly data meetings and those data meetings were focused on the stretch of student achievement. And as teachers began to look at the data, focus on the data, they were actually witnessing and seeing student growth. So, what that actually did was create a sense of, 'Hey, we can do this!' Now they were a small, small piece or small gains, but eventually lead to larger gains. If we look at some of our student data achievement in probably four out of six areas, this year with our NWEA data, it shows the largest growth in the past three years.

He also shares the collected data with staff and students so that all stakeholders are aware of the growth and current performance of students. "Well the redesign piece is looking at data you know with a focus. Our kids are conscience of the data as well and that's shared and recorded and kept in their data binders." He also felt that viewing the changes in the data was one way to build the confidence of the staff, by noting:

> So, celebrating recognizing gains, building that efficacy piece you know, oh our kids can do it, oh, I can do has helped to create some confidence, collegiality, sharing of ideas, and more of a cooperative collaborative staff.

Principal #2 collects data from formal and informal observations of from his teaching staff.

> I just make myself visible every day. I did a five minute walk through, and I saw what they were teaching, and the minute what they are teaching is not consistent with what they should be teaching, I say, 'OK what's going on here?'

He notes that it is all in the data, "Teachers are never surprised. I don't come out of the woodwork three months later and say here's what we're doing badly…to execute them we review data on a bi-weekly basis. It's all data." He examines reward systems for behavior and attendance. His students can earn roar bucks, and it begin with them earning "one for just showing up." He attributes the institution of this reward system to the decrease in the referrals for students, which was one of the state requirements resulting from the district's partnership agreement with the state.

Principal #3 set the clear expectations for his staff in their team meeting time as he believes that decisions must be made based on data.

> I need you talking about data. I need you connecting achievement of individual students in your team. Not this, not planning a party. (Yes, you can plan a party over text message). So, making the time being spent intentional and about student achievement.

He notes that data must be viewed and staff monitored because he feels that the leader must feel like he or she is "ultimately responsible…for the passing or the failure of every one of your students."

Principal #4 looks at the data and makes decisions on next steps. "I believe in taking things step by step and making sure that you have thought through what it is that you're trying to

do." He looks at the data and makes decisions on next steps. He believes that his panoramic view aids in the decision making as he is able to observe the practices:

> You know as principal or an administrator, you are one person, certainly but you have the unique advantage, I tell staff, of being all around the building. So, things that you see you have the advantage of seeing things that other folks don't. Others used data in their reflection and planning.

Principal #6 also uses data to inform decisions about interventions.

> We identified those students that were struggling academically and socially. So, what we did, we provided them with not only interventions for the academics but interventions for their behavior, because we have a lot of kids that have trauma in their life, and we didn't understand what was going on.

> Similarly, Principal #7 uses data to inform change in practice as classroom observations and feedback are provided to staff. "We have staff members in place that should be able to sustain growth in all areas especially an academic concepts, because I tell them, you focus on the academic growth." He described it as such, "…just enhancing and planning…to analyze the year prior and always work to enhance the value of what we're trying to inject, but I try to make sure every aspect of that is focused on the betterment of that child."

> Finally, Principal #10 shares the importance of compliance and use of data.

> A rising tide raises all ships and, you know, it might have been by force and in discomfort, but your skills and their skills were improving so that we got to a point where people are using that 20 minutes at lunch time …to look at the data to make these groups.

> ***Sub-theme B1.1: Principals report seeing positive growth changes in the data.*** As part of using data to redesign their organizations, four of the principals recognize the growth, both

personally and professionally, in the data and share that with their staff. Principal #1 described it in this way:

> So, they're actually seeing the growth, and so when they see growth, they begin to believe in themselves. As a teacher sees growth after providing instruction then that helps them feel that self-efficacy as well. And so, it's just kind of almost contagious when growth is recorded and monitored and analyzed. You know, you begin to believe, I can do this.

Principal #2 is able to share the student growth through their MtSS processes and meetings.

> We've seen in our multi-tier student support system (MtSS), we've seen growth, we've seen academic growth and decreased exclusionary discipline efforts. That's one way that we've done that.

Principal #3 also believes that growth in the data must be visible. He notes: "They have to see success, the children have to see success, measurable success." Finally, Principal #7 looks at the data of his own growth and his model of such to his staff. He believes that this data also affects the collective efficacy of his staff.

> In order for me to stay effective, I need to grow in every area. I need to review, reflect on what it is that I'm applying the value that I'm adding. Because like I said, I would never be one to say I have all the answers.

Major Theme B2: Principals support, promote, and increase capacity with their staff. The second major theme that emerged from the participant interviews was how seven principals provided support and promoted increased capacity in their redesign of the organizations. Principal #3 believes that his presence signal support for his staff. He notes that this recipricol relationship allows for continued dialogue.

They know that I'm here. They know that I'm involved. They know they can come to me. They know they can talk to me. They know that they can be transparent with me and they know that I'm going to give them feedback.

Principal #4 found that the staff are empowered and comfortable when the plan is clear and they are able to know where they are headed. "I think, having that plan in place and communicating that plan consistently, and clearly and keeping it as simple as possible, helps." Correspondingly, Principal #6 found that his staff did not possess much confidence in the work that they were doing. He describes the staff morale upon his arrival as low. He reminds the staff that "…my job is to become part of your team." In addition, he considers the background and experience of his teachers and looks for ways to help them to better understand the population that they service.

When you have these young teachers coming out of college, they think that they're going to sit in a classroom where he is going to sit there and listen and do as they say. And it's not that way, because kids come to school with so much baggage, and unneeded baggage, that you have to peel back those layers in order to get to that child.

Similarly, Principal #7 provides opportunities for staff to continue their own learning through workshops, practicing, and visiting facilities where their focus and work aligns. Focused on empowerment, Principal #8 described how his staff are involved in the decision making processes and this is evidenced by their sense of ownership or what he describes as "buy in." Principal #9 said this about his school, "We are right in the middle of transformation." He believes that the act of building capacity through engaging the teachers in instructional rounds is one of the ways to execute redesigning the organization. Finally, Principal #10 releases some autonomy to the teachers where they initiate and engage in the work. She explained, "I don't

have to be in every meeting, I don't have to, you know they're doing it on their own. They're having these conversations."

     Sub-theme B2.1: Principals create staff teams to help redesign the organization. As a sub-theme, four principals shared the importance of teacher teams as an integral part of the planning and organizing for redesigning the organization. The principals used names such as: student study team, leadership teams, and planning teams to describe their created staff teams. Each of the teams consist of staff members ranging from teachers to counselors and content coaches. These teams are in place helps the principal redesign their organizations. Principal #3 describes his teams as "student study teams" that look at multiple pieces of data.

> We're looking at attendance, we're looking at referrals, and we're digging into these
>
> things. We're not just answering did they, or were they absence, why were they absent?
>
> We're not answering, did they get a referral, we're asking why did they get a referral.
>
> Does this child have a 504? Does this child have an IEP? I would probably implement an
>
> IEP or 504. Are there some gaps of the missing? Have we been making contact with the
>
> parents? Do we know who the parents are? Have we brought the parents in?

> Principal #4 described his leadership team and their role as the following, "So, there was

a leadership coach, a culture and climate person, numeracy, literacy, and home school and community. So those five areas were well covered and obviously represented as part of our leadership and School Improvement process." As part of the school improvement process and redesign, Principal #8 also identifies the following three goals: professional learning, developing professional learning communities, and implementing instructional learning cycles. He speaks of the effects of being named "priority." He states, "I'm sure any school that gets identified as a

priority school, those are going to be the three areas that, you know, you fall into. So with that, you know, we had to adapt."

Finally, Principal #9 described the planning team's work as one that looks at ways in preparing their students for continued success beyond the walls of their own school. He describes their work to include the following, "…that process of look, we know every single kid that walks out of here needs this. How do we get there? And that's the process we've really used."

He has his teacher teams engage in backward mapping in their plan for redesign.

> We've tried to use the same backwards mapping for everything we've done. So, when we think about what is stopping our kids from getting to graduation? 'Well, they are coming in skill deficient.' OK so what's our process for, if we know every kids should have all of these skills by the time they graduate, what's the process for correcting that?

C. Managing the Instructional Program

According to Leithwood and Jantzi (2008), *managing the instructional program* looks at the routines, structures, and procedures. All of the principals described how they manage the instructional program in their schools. Some said that they use their teacher teams, others utilize the teacher growth plans, and many focus on data. Three major themes and three sub-themes were revealed.

Major Theme C1: Leadership and content "expert" teams are an integral part of managing the instructional program. Six principals named leadership, content coaches, and/or expert teams as the way that they manage their instructional programs. Principal #1 uses a team of what he described as "experts" to aid in the planning of the focus and monitoring of the instructional program:

We are a SIG 5 school and have multiple instructional experts, so I do have an

instructional interventionist for math, an instructional interventionist for reading, then I

also work with our coaches for both math and reading and then district math and reading

coaches.

Principal #3's expert team includes bringing teachers together, and they engage in

collegial conversations about the teaching and learning and the expectations.

I really focused on collegial conversations and our school improvement team, which is

derived from our school, our administrators, counselors, department heads, and team

leaders.

Similarly, Principal #4 relies on the content experts to lead the dialogue about instruction and

expectations of staff and students.

When you organize and plan for supervision of instruction you have folks who focus on

their area, and they know Math, Science, ELA, Social Studies, Video Production, Digital

Imaging, and they know it backwards and forwards.

Principal #6 established teams right at the start. He would check in daily to see that their

varying needs are met withing instruction.

We created teams at the beginning of the school year. We met every day for maybe 10 to

15 minutes to see how your day is going. What are your plans for today? What can I do to

assist you today as a principal? We meet every morning maybe 10 to 15 minutes…until

we got systems in place.

Principal #7 also relies on those teaching staff members that possess knowledge and expertise to

aid in the planning for management of the instructional program.

We have staff that focus on academic growth, and I allow them to do their jobs because

the simple fact of this, they're the expert in that area… So, what I do is make sure that

they feel totally supported.

Finally, Principal #9 trust the staff with expertise within the building to support the adult learning

within instruction. He notes: "So, our instructional leadership team serves a couple of

purposes…So, when we pull all that data back then to our instructional leadership team that's the

space where we'll sit down and say okay did we have impact?"

Sub-theme C1.1: Principals show support, consistency, and maintain high

expectations. Five principals believe that showing their support, and providing and promoting

consistent practices, and maintaining high expectations are ways they manage instructional

programs.

For example, Principal #5 believes that the staff were "failed" by the leaders before him.

He maintains transparency as a key in affecting the staff's collective efficacy. Principal #6 notes

that the failures as well as successes are shared, "…your success is my success, your failures are

my failures." He also claims that "just being supportive," is the way that he believes that he

affects the collective efficacy of the staff. Principal #7 identifies consistent practice and

maintaining high expectations for all as the ways that he affects the collective efficacy. Principal

#9 believes that by "pushing" the staff to grow in their teaching and learning has been some of

the ways that he affects the collective efficacy of the staff, and Principal #10 believes that the

staff members feeling a sense of success aids in their own increased self-efficacy. "I do think

when you are successful, as a teacher you feel successful, your self-efficacy is better, and you

perform better, because your expectations for yourself has now risen."

Major Theme C2: Principals observe and create growth plans with input from staff. Six principals shared how they observe in the classrooms and review teachers' growth plans as they manage the instructional program. For example, Principal #4 looks at the lesson plans and dialogues with those content experts as he continues in monitoring of the instructional program.

> Lesson plans weekly, with some understanding of where you're going with your instruction, what it is that you're looking to accomplish. I think that again, talking with your department heads, your content leaders, is very important because they will have often a best sense of what it is maybe that I could be looking for or I should be looking in regard to math instruction or science instruction.

Principal #5 centered his efforts around a clear understanding of the teaching and learning expectations for students and staff.

> Reading and literacy is the base of all learning and, as we well know as teachers, and whether you're doing math, art, or whatever discipline you're doing, if you don't understand the content, if you don't understand the vocabulary, there's no way that you're going to succeed. So once we understood that and reading was our focus, it worked.

He also believes that the required steps include classroom observations and providing immediate feedback to the staff for review.

> And so when we walked into the classroom, I could do an observation within eight to 10 minutes and simply go through that app and hit submit and then they would have it in their e-mail by the end of the day, well actually, immediately, but they would looks at it at the end of the day.

As part of the observation to aid in growth plans for teachers, Principal #6 states: "First week of school, I'm in your classroom and I'm evaluating you because soon as the kid hits this classroom, I should be evaluating you right now no matter how many kids, you know every kid is not going to show up on the first day. But I still should be evaluating you. Not to say I gotcha but to support you." Principal #7 would meet with the content leaders, teachers, counselors to discuss student outcome data. He describes "so, we have meetings, we have weekly meetings, we have monthly meetings, we have quarterly meetings, we have meetings to have meetings." Principal #9 finds that his staff takes the initiative and engages in instructional rounds as they continue their own development in their practice. He is able to monitor his staff by walking around and "see what's going on in the building."

Finally, Principal #10 described the ways that she executes the management of the instructional program.

> I ask somebody, what are you working on and why do you think you need to learn and, you know, what's the objective. If I could just look at the board, I don't have to, you know, and they know their grades and whether kids can work together and why I like when even a physical things, like I'll say, you know, that those same two boys, every time I come in are back there. But the teachers are pretty good at catching that, so I do think that's how I execute it.

Major Theme C3: Principals use data to drive the instruction, including interventions. Seven principals shared how they use data to drive the instruction, including interventions as they manage their instructional programs. For example, Principal #2 states that he is available and visible. His daily walk throughs are ways that he is able to collect data and provide feedback to his classroom teachers.

I just make myself visible every day. I did a five minute walk through, and I saw what they were teaching, and the minute what they are teaching is not consistent with what they should be teaching, I say, "OK what's going on here?"

Principal #3 uses a gradual release of responsibility practice with his staff as he supports their continuous growth. "I left my school improvement chair and my assistant principal to build the agenda and the kind of conversation, and I was more involved in the conversation." The principal is able to view the agenda of the meeting time with teachers to see what is discussed. He continues to look at the student achievement data as he monitors the instructional program. He drills down into the real beliefs that individuals may hold about those that they teach.

Now student growth is going to always be a component, it's going to always be a part of our development, student growth and then going to, and then fine tuning it. Which part, which students? Well what I found was that we are not teaching black kids well, and it's an uncomfortable conversation because you want to say, 'Oh I love all kids, I teach all kids.'

Principal #4 takes a look at the resources needed to support the daily teaching and learning. The principal believes that the resources are part of the data in ensuring that there is nothing to stand in the way of the work that needs to be done, noting:

If this is the direction that we say that we're going in, do they have the resources and materials that they need in order to move ahead because that can always slow your plan down.

Principal #6 recognizes the behavior data as a part of the instructional program and he looks for ways to help the students get just what they need, "…if you take them and put them right in intensive study, you are taking them right from one class and putting them in another

class, the behavior is still there." He has developed a tiered system and not only monitors the student academic performance, but also the behavior data as well. He believes that by supporting with behavior, he is also supporting academics.

>We have a tier system in which the teachers use once they see the student getting to that point, we have what we call support monitors, and they are normally in the hallway walking.

Principal #7 uses the focus of instruction and supports the staff in their learning by attending workshops and demonstrating the expectations.

>If there is something that we need to focus a lot of interest in, we will find workshops to where we will attend those and we do a lot of team building concepts to make sure that everybody is fulfilling their needs. And so then we run through practice modes, we practice what it is that we're trying to implement. We practice on each other.

Principal #8 promotes teachers being reflective of their practice and sharing that practice with others. In doing so, he believes that the staff was better able to work together and grow.

>This person is not evaluating you and they're not observing we're all here to get ourselves better, we just kept doing it and people kind of, the barrier broke down with it and so it's been good…I think we initially did it and we kind of flipped around what we were, and what we were going to do, and we really hit instruction hard.

Principal #9 sits with his team and reviews videos of current teachers or those from online and the team critics the data on their own and then again together to decide on their learning context.

>We'll sit down as an instructional leadership team, watch the video everybody will do their own feedback as far as what did they see, what were their thoughts, what active

learning strategy, etc., and then we come back and calibrate, we figure out we are pretty much on the same page with the kind of feedback we're giving and what we're seeing, and then if that's the case, great, we move forward.

Sub-theme C3.1: Principals present data to staff to highlight change. As a sub-theme, four principals shared how they use data to celebrate their staff, as part of managing the instructional program. For example, Principal #1 uses the student growth performance data as a way to highlight the changes. When he presents the data, he does so "in a positive light." This data is presented at staff meetings and other meeting forums and provide a sense of accomplishment as his staff continue in their work. Similarly, Principal #2 looks at the student performance data and shares that with his staff. He believes that this is the way that he is able to affect the collective efficacy of the staff because the staff are able to see the positive changes in the data. He states, "We saw growth, we saw academic growth." Principal #5 also finds the importance of empowering the teachers to view data and sharing the growth. He declares, "It was outstanding. We saw growth in academics and that was a first for a long time. The reading scores went up. I would empower the teachers."

Principal #8 points to the changes in the student growth allowing his school to be removed from the priority list caused celebration for his staff. "I think that showed with you know, last year we made it off the priority list." Although, with the celebrating, the staff are still focusing on the daily work of teaching and learning with instructional rounds. He concludes, "Monitoring walk throughs and seeing are we there, and are we doing the things we said?"

D. Developing the People

According to Leithwood and Jantzi (2008), *developing people* involves professional development and more, such as individualized support, intellectually stimulating experiences,

and modeling. All of the principals describe how they provide professional development for their teachers. Many said that they use data, and others individualize support for staff. Four major themes and one sub-theme were revealed.

Major Theme D1: Principals individualize professional development according to individual needs. Seven principals provide professional development that fits the varying needs of their staff. For example, Principal #1 began by sending some of the teaching staff to training so that they could return and lead the training that would occur in his building.

> That program allowed me the opportunity to pull a group of strong teachers across all grade levels to help build some leadership skills and focus on instruction, and then these teams did specialized professional development, and then when they did that, they took it back to the staff, so after each session they would take back that information and share or deliver the professional development with the staff.

He also provides training to staff and then opportunities for them to lead based on their learning.

> So they've stepped up to the plate. They meet regularly outside of the contractual time to support what we're doing and, as they see our school growing, they become more involved and more apt to assist. So, trying to develop leaders has been a key component, and it's also helped that we have the grant that pays for some specialized training.
>
> Principal #2 for example, looks at the beginning teachers' needs for having increased

support in classroom management and provides the training accordingly.

> At the beginning of the year, you know an area of growth…the biggest one is always classroom management, especially for kids that are impoverished, especially for Black kids with White teachers because, you know…it does us no good to ignore that problem.

It does us absolutely no good to ignore that problem, so, you know, I was very candid

with those teacher and said these kids are going to challenge you.

Principal #3 believes in having fidelity to the process and monitors the staff behaviors

based on the learning that has taken place. He promotes an environment where the staff receive

training and return to train others. "It's led by us." He took time to identify the needs for the

particular staff members and then sent staff members that had rapport with their colleagues to the

training.

What I did I had identified some teachers…I have a para-pro, a teacher, and a special

education teacher, and I sent them to a more in-depth training. These people that are

respected by their colleagues. I had them go out and get some training.

Principal #4 provides coaching via what he describes as smaller, or individual coaching

and then more broadly for building-wide needs, there are also coaching opportunities. He states:

So, I think your support comes in two different ways. You have the smaller more

individual support that coaches can offer. And even at the elementary level, the district

brings in coaches, and then you work with people and then you have the larger piece of

what you're trying to do as a building and how you are supporting people

Principal #7 creates individualized development plans for the staff and himself. "We all

create a developmental plan. And so that's how we start the year out, and we analyze the growth

when we meet, and I meet with them individually." He also has his staff attend conferences and

training opportunities as it relates to their own personal and professional growth.

Principal #8 also believes that it is necessary to "build everybody up." In doing so, he

believes that the teachers gain knowledge and strength from teaching one another what they have

learned. He allows his staff to initiate their learning by bringing to him the professional

development and learning sessions that they would like to attend.

> I try to say yes as much as I can. I try to give them the development, so they weren't
>
> necessarily having to seek it out on their own or whatever the case is. And then they are
>
> held to some accountability. If you're going somewhere where, you're receiving training,
>
> you're teaching it.

Finally, Principal #9 holds the belief of "live in a model of coach every teacher." As a

result, he does not feel limited to the support that he provides both the veteran and probationary

teachers.

Major Theme D2: Professional development is delegated by the school district.

There were six principals who noted the professional development offered to their staff is either

solely delegated from the district, or they have limited reign in providing the professional

development of their choosing to their staff. For example, Principal #2 disappointingly stated, "I

mostly just delegate, I'm just sharing, you want honesty." Principal #4 describes the

professional development as state required. He describes the first year, "the PD structure was to

pull;" the second year, "we're still going to pull the teachers out, but they'll at least be in the

building;" and the third year, "push the people into the classrooms." He believes that this was an

okay approach as the teachers would able to view the theory and practice at one time, but he had

no real input into the training that was offered.

Principal #5 also noted, "Unfortunately, the professional development was district run,

and when I say unfortunately, they dictate what you are going to deal with." He still created

some time for the professionals to meet to continue their dialogue around instruction and

achievement. Principal #6 also stated that the district is the one who provides the professional

development offered to staff. He did however appeal to the superintendent for additional staff

meeting time to lead some of the learning at his school and the superintendent agreed. Principal

#7 states "So, we have PD's… it has to be PD of value because being in the educational field, a

lot of it comes to the standpoint of devaluing what we do." He continues on, "and I kind of

laugh at some PD's that I've been to where they're saying these are the procedures in which we

need to follow." He desires professional development that is more appropriate for their school

setting. Finally, Principal #9 points out the fact that the district uses half of the professional

development days provided to the schools, and the principals are then left with the remaining

days to lead the professional development in their own buildings.

      Major Theme D3: Principals use data to support staff within professional

development. Six principals believed in using data to support their staff within professional

development opportunities and experiences. For example, Principal #2 reviews with the staff the

student academic performance data as a reference to their own learning and behaviors. He

believes that the students will learn no matter what.

> Those kids they learn, they're going to learn whether you instruct them or not they're
>
> going to pick that up, they're like sponges OK. They will learn period. You have to
>
> decide…what they're going to learn.

      Principal #3 provides the following steps that he uses when supporting the staff in their

learning based on observational data. He states:

> 'I mean to give you a concise answer, identify the problem, try to identify what the issue
>
> that's causing the problem, or the barriers to the problem, develop multiple solutions to
>
> that, and then start attacking it with those solutions to see, identify which ones are the
>
> most viable solutions.'

Principal #4 has candid conversations with his staff about what is observed in the classroom. He provides direction and support as a result of what is observed, "…it's not personal…but here's what I saw. Now you go back in the game and you don't execute, then what happens? You come out of the game until you figure it out." Principal #5 takes the time to sit with the teachers and review the data. The staff and principal are able to drill down in the data look at areas of focus.

> When you read data obviously everybody has a different perspective. And so we brought all of this to the PLC's. We discussed it. We developed plans and then we attacked it, and then we came back with the results.

> Principal #8 also uses a coaching approach to data and support through professional development opportunities for his staff. He brings in the experts to aid in supporting his staff in their own learning needs.

> I try to view a lot of this job as coaching and trying to help people with things…I need the help in making sure we flip the school around. I sat down with the teacher, whether it's mid-year and we're doing these check ins and all of this stuff and where are you and your goals and this and that and you know I would start hearing more…I'm not going to do it by myself… I bring in all of these people that know Reading Street…You know, I'm not the expert.

> Finally, Principal #10 ensures that her staff are receiving the support and training necessary for their continued growth. She uses the data from the observations to see the needs of the staff and then has those conversations with the staff and provides the training and support as needed. She finds out just what each teacher needs and then provides that support based on their individual needs.

Sub-theme D3.1: Principals share data with staff regarding increased student growth and staff successes. As a sub-theme, four principals believe that sharing data with staff reagarding increased student growth is necessary. For example, principal #1 believes that his efforts of using the data to show the growth of the students, as well as of the teachers and parents noticing are affecting the collective efficacy of the staff.

> This change has been so dramatic. I am fully aware and can see the changes, so it has definitely increased my self-efficacy. Teachers see it, talk about it. They see it, children see it, parents see it. So, as we grow, and as we get better as a school, we get better with ourselves. Efficacy and collective efficacy and 'Hey, we can do this.'

Principal #3 believes that the success of the students and staff must be shared. "…if you could never articulate to them some type of success, then they will struggle and feel like they're just treading water." Instead of having staff feel like there is no change, the principal also shares the data of the process of the students with the staff at his meetings.

Principal #4 believes in celebrating his staff now. He does not believe in waiting to share the positive feedback, but gives it to the teachers in the moment. He believes that these efforts affect the collective efficacy of the staff.

> Sometimes when people are leaving or whatever then they come up with all of these wonderful, you know platitudes and things. But if a parent calls me and says, hey this and this and this, I'm going to give it to the teacher right away, just as I would if a parent calls and says, you know, they had an issue and something that happened. You gotta give that right away, just so you know that your efforts are being known as acknowledged and recognized.

Finally, Principal #5 notes the data team meetings and the continuous dialogue with staff all point to the student successes and thus impacts the collective efficacy. "I would empower the teachers to look over the data and report to me some of the things that they're seeing. And when you read data obviously everybody has a different perspective. And so we brought all of this to the PLC's. We discussed it. We developed plans and then we attacked it, and then we came back with the results."

Sub-theme D3:2 Principals believe that modeling the desired behavior is important.
As a sub-theme, five principals found that modeling for staff is important when developing people. For example, Principal #4 emphasizes the importance of modeling for staff. He explains, "You do that in a number of ways from recordkeeping to your own presence, physical presence…modeling the behavior that you're looking for." Principal #6 believes that modeling the desired behavior and encouraging staff contributes to the collective efficacy. "Just being supportive, you know, not just talking the talk, walking the walk, because if I said it, I can do it." Principal #7 finds that his own "personal growth" has aided in the collective efficacy of the staff. He also believes in modeling the desired behavior to his staff. As part of the modeling, the principal is present at the professional development provided to his staff.

> Well actually 99% of them, I sit through it with them, so they can see that I'm growing as they grow. I'm getting exposed to what they're getting exposed. But then again, I allow them to create partnerships and the concept of analyzing their own internal thoughts.
>
> Principal #8 also models being a learner. As part of modeling, he admits deficits and

solicits support for himself as well.

I have a few strengths. That's one of my strengths is knowing what is not my strength,

and I know I am never afraid to ask someone to help me, or teach me, or show me, and

whether it be a teacher or above or whatever the case is.

He finds that the staff members collective efficacy is increased as they are willing to take on

more and show leadership not only in his school, but also within the school district.

I started to realize then that this stuff is taking home, that they are looking at these people

as leaders, that they themselves are comfortable enough with, you know, and confident

enough that this person could come in.

Finally, Principal #9 models in and during the staff meeting as he facilitates meetings.

He uses a lesson plan template that he has asked the teaching staff to also use. In this way, he is

modeling the expectation that he has for the staff in their own lesson planning and delivery.

Additionally, he models to the staff the expectations and in the event that something is not

working, he also shows the staff members his willingness to try something new.

Chapter Five Summary

This chapter outlines 10 major themes and eight sub-themes that emerged from the

transcripts of my 10 principal participants who described their perceived efficacy, and their

effect on the collective efficacy in four distinct areas of leadership. Within the four areas of

leadership, recurring themes include data and its use, the use of teacher teams, and providing

support to staff. Other findings include varying leadership practices and approaches within those

four named areas.

Chapter Six discusses the findings of this study and how they relate to my research

questions and conceptual framework. Furthermore, I will offer recommendations for future

research.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION

This chapter synthesizes the analysis of my study via the close examination of the themes and sub-themes resulting from the data as they relate to my conceptual framework and research questions. Connections to previous research and implications for future studies are also included in this chapter.

Analysis/Discussion of Major Results

This study sought to describe the perceived self-efficacy beliefs of 10 principals in schools designated as priority by the Michigan Department of Education (2011), which were schools performing in the bottom 5% in the state as organized in a top to bottom list. The principals in such low performing schools must show improvement in academics within three years as required by the state. It is important to note that this study's aim was to identify the perceived self-efficacy of 10 principals in priority labeled schools. This study also sought to view the principals' perceived affect on the collective efficacy of their staff in these schools. The focus of this study was not school success.

In an effort to capture the self-efficacy of these 10 principals, they were asked 16 questions about four action areas of their leadership: (1) setting direction, (2) redesigning the organization, (3) managing the instructional program, and (4) developing people. The questions were framed so the responses would evoke descriptions of what these principals did within each of these leadership areas. For each of the leadership areas, they were asked to address three key descriptors from Bandura's (1997) definition of self-efficacy: how they organized, what required actions they took, and how they executed such actions. One final question within each of the

four areas focused on the principal's perceived affect on the collective efficacy of their staff. All 10 principals shared freely their practices, beliefs, and expectations of themselves and the staff as they engage in school improvement and reform; their responses provide some notable findings. Principals were also given the opportunity to review and revise the transcripts after the interviews and prior to the use of the data.

Prior to this study, most previous related research used survey instruments to measure quantitatively self and/or collective efficacy. The value of my findings is the descriptive richness of how a leader organizes, plans, and executes their efficacious beliefs to help themselves and to foster collective efficacy. My conceptual framework (see Chapter One) showed the connected relationship with the four leadership action areas in fostering collective efficacy within their schools, and previous research had revealed that a successful leader must provide mastery experiences, include vicarious learning, and offer verbal persuasion as means to provide collective efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1982, 1997). A result of individual and collective efficacy, leadership behaviors should include initiation, effort, persistence, and goal setting (Bandura, 1982, 1984; Schyns, 2004).

With these ideas in mind, the data from these 10 principals resulted in 10 major themes and eight subthemes (as detailed in Chapter Five). Taking my analysis one step further, I categorized these themes and subthemes regarding the dominant beliefs and actions of the principals into three foundational themes: (1) data driving everything, (2) creating and supporting, and (3) culture and climate attentiveness (see Table 4).

Using Table 4 as a guide, I will now discuss the results of my study. My overarching research question focused on the self-efficacy beliefs of school principals within priority schools in one Midwestern state. My first research question focused on how these principals navigate the

demands of state-mandated school improvement and school reform, and describe their self-efficacy in relation to leading their school through a transformation process. My second research question focused on how such principals maintain their own self-efficacy and foster collective efficacy within that school.

Table 4

Categorization of Themes

Themes and Sub-Themes
Foundation Theme I. Data Driving Everything
A1: Use data in setting the direction of their schools
B1: Focused on data as they redesign their organization
B1.1: Report seeing growth changes in the data as they redesign their organization
C3: Use data to drive the instruction, including interventions in managing the instructional program
C3.1: Present data to staff to highlight change in managing the instructional program
D3: Use data to support staff within professional development
D3.1: Share data regarding increased student growth and staff successes in developing the people
Foundation Theme II. Creating and Supporting
A2.2: Model and provide support to staff in setting the direction of their schools
B2: Support, promote, and increase capacity with their staff as they redesign their organization
C1.1: Show support, consistency, and maintain high expectations in managing the instructional program
D3.:2: Believe that modeling the desired behavior is important in developing the people
Foundation Theme III. Culture and Climate Attentiveness
A2: Focus on clear communication with staff in setting the direction of their schools
A2.1: Focus on climate and culture in setting the direction of their schools
B2.1: Create staff teams to help redesign the organization
C1: Leadership and content "expert" teams are an integral part in managing the instructional program
C2: Observe and create growth plans with input from staff in managing the instructional program
D1: Individualize professional development according to individual needs in developing the people
D2: Professional development was delegated by the school district in developing the people

In order to narrate the story of how these 10 principals in priority designated schools embody the actionable practices of their self-efficacious beliefs and foster collective efficacy practices, as they navigate the demands of school change, I am combining these two research questions. In the following narrative, you will see that the three core beliefs and actions of the principals are foundational in helping them meet the challenges of school improvement: (1) data driving everything, (2) creating and supporting, and (3) attending to culture and climate of their schools.

Data Driving Everything

A major outcome is that the infiltration of data is motivating and can lead to a change in the culture and climate of the schools. An example is that the principals in my study are aware of their schools' current performance and are unafraid to view data. In fact, they use data profusely throughout the various stages of change within their schools, clearly as they set the direction of their schools (Theme A1). Principals repeatedly used terms like data driven and spoke of the necessity for using data as they set the plans for their schools. Many spoke of the specific achievement data they review with their staff as they plan instruction. This is supported by previous research in that Pas, Bradshaw, Hershfeldt, and Leaf (2010) found that there are increasing demands and challenges from the state and federal government for continual academic improvement for all schools. "The increasing pressure on teachers resulting from high stakes testing highlights potential concerns about how teacher attitudes and perceptions may influence student behavioral and academic outcomes" (p. 13). Another major theme in this first foundational area is that the principals also focused on data as they redesigned their organization (Theme B1). This is seen as most of the principals in the study had a laser light focus on data; these principals held weekly data meetings, completed walk-throughs, and held conversations

that centered on the data. Also, as part of redesigning the organization, Sub-theme B1.1 from my

study revealed that some principals reported seeing achievement growth changes in the data.

This attention to the positive changes aided in the principals maintaining their own self-efficacy

as they engaged their staff in becoming agents of school change. In doing so, principals were

developing the multi-tiered system of support and reporting the positive student growth changes

to staff. This is similar to Burns (1978) believing that transformational leaders "lift people into

their better selves" (p. 462).

A third major theme under this first foundational area addresses the principals' use of

data to drive the instruction, including interventions to help remediate deficits in various content

areas for students (Theme C3). As part of managing the instructional program, principals not

only utilized data to inform the current performance of the students, they also employed its use to

show changes in academic performance as well as inform practices, including, but not limited to,

interventions. Anderson, Sanchez, and Kupfer (2011) believed that collective efficacy aides in

the combined effort of the members within an organization to accomplish their goals. Similarly

in my study, Sub-theme C3.1 found principals who presented data to staff as a way to highlight

the positive changes of student growth as seen in the data. As they managed the instructional

program, this was another way that these principals believe they affected the collective efficacy

of their staff.

Another major theme within this foundation area is how these principals used data to

support their staff within professional development (Theme D3). With the data collected from

classroom observations, the principals invested in their people by providing support through

professional development. This is supported by previous research as Walumbwa and Hartnell

(2011) assert "Transformational leaders increase the emotional connection or identification

between the supervisor and the follower such that followers feel more confident to perform beyond expectations" (p. 166). Principals developed the people by sharing data with the staff regarding increased student growth and staff successes enabling staff to see that their efforts were yielding benefits (Sub-theme D3.1). Principals shared such evidence of student growth and staff successes in various forums such as staff meetings and PLC meetings.

Creating and Supporting

Principals found it important to model the desired behaviors to their staff as well as showing them support in setting the direction of their schools (Sub-theme A2.2), especially given the current low performance of the students, and the teachers' own perceptions of themselves. This echos Federici and Skaalvik's (2012) research that also found that leaders with high levels of self-efficacy will be able to model this belief for their staff, thus aiding in fostering collective efficacy among those they lead. Principals believed that as part of their expectations for the staff, they also held themselves to high expectations. Principals reminded staff that they are the ones who make the difference, and by being visible and available, they provided support to their staff.

As discussed in Chapter Two, Ross and Gray (2006) note, "there is evidence that a supportive principal, particularly one enacting a transformational approach to school leadership, can contribute to individual teacher efficacy" (p. 168). Principals shared how they provided support, promoted, and increased capacity with their staff as they redesigned their organization (Theme B2). These behaviors were demonstrated by principals having clear plans, letting the staff know that the principal is there for them, reminding the staff that they are a team, and creating some autonomy. Similarly, in managing the instructional program, principals spoke of showing support, providing consistent practices, and maintaining high expectations for the staff

(Sub-theme C1.1). Principals reminded staff of their successes, and some felt that the staff had been failed by previous leaders and therefore were intent on providing support to staff.

The final sub-theme in this foundation area (Sub-theme D3.2) reveals some principals who believe in the importance of modeling the desired behavior in developing the people in the school. Demir (2008) believes "The principal, as a transformational leader, should influence teachers by role modeling the appropriate behaviors. Then teachers will identify with role models who are perceived in a positive light, which serves to empower them to achieve the collective task of school through the development of self-efficacy" (p. 105). Principals reported walking the walk and talking the talk, while others pointed to their physical presence and following through on their word. Another principal makes it a point to sit and engage in all of the professional development offered to staff.

Culture and Climate Attentiveness

Hoy and Hoy (2000) noted, "Simply put, collective teacher efficacy is the perception of teachers in a school that the efforts of the faculty as a whole will have a positive effect on students" (p. 503). Principals felt it necessary to address issues surrounding the culture and climate of their schools before dealing with any student achievement concerns. As part of this, in setting the direction of their schools, principals focused on clear communication with their staff (Theme A2). Principals spoke with their staff about their "why?" They found this to be important as it provided context for the work that needed to be done. Others spoke of "gathering" staff together and engaging in dialogue as they set the direction of their schools.

Additionally, as part of setting the direction for their schools, principals focused on the climate and culture of their schools (Sub-theme A2.1). They spoke of building a culture where collaboration is valued, returning to the way things were, and dealing with the culture and

climate before instruction. Given the pressure for turn around, principals felt that taking the time to address the needs of the culture and climate may prove to be beneficial. Carlson (1996) believed that the transformational leader moves the sense of power to influence the events to the followers. In efforts to redesign the organization, principals created staff teams (Sub-theme B2.1). The teams were called student study teams, leadership teams, and/or planning teams, and had the charge of leading the change.

Versland and Erickson (2017) found "Teacher leaders who provided expertise and support in implementing instructional initiatives served as 'models' so that colleagues could also acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed" (p. 14). Similarly, these principals believed it was important to bring teacher teams together to dialogue and discuss data in their future instructional planning. As part of managing the instructional program, principals used leadership and content "expert" teams to lead the work of teaching and learning (Theme C1). Principals referred to these experts as content leaders, school improvement chairs and members, and/or instructional leaders. The teams aided in leading the work to build a culture of shared leadership for many in the schools. The third major theme in the foundational area of culture and climate attentiveness, principals observed and created growth plans with input from their staff to build a climate and culture of learning and collaboration (Theme C2). Feedback was provided to staff through conversations with the principal and leadership or content coaches, by writing emails that included walk-through data, and, by completing instructional rounds. In this manner, principals were influencing the culture as this became the way they did things at their schools.

To this end, my fourth major theme revealed principals who individualize professional development according to the individual needs of their staff as part of developing the people (Theme D1). Principals felt it important to provide the immediate support to staff based on their

varying needs. One principal provides support to the beginning teacher that may struggle in the area of classroom management; others send staff to receive training to come back to the buildings to provide training for the others. In this way, principals were influencing their school's teaching and learning culture to become one that is "led by us."

The fifth and final major theme was the only real negative issue, where many principals found professional development to be delegated by their school district. In one case, the district plans for half of the professional development, and for others, it was mostly "district run." Many expressed their struggle with this lack of autonomy for the principal. One principal attempted to circumvent this level of control by having his staff meet in their PLC's to continue the work needed in their particular school.

Overall, the findings of my study show that the self-efficacy beliefs of principals in schools designated priority include infiltration of data, creating and supporting staff, and addressing the culture and climate within their schools. These results confirm the findings from prior research studies of leaders' self-efficacy and collective efficacy behaviors (Calik et al., 2012; Demir, 2008; Tschannen-Moran et al., 2006; Soehner & Ryan, 2007). My study has uncovered how three foundation behaviors are appropriated in practice by principals in schools designated priority. The principals use their self-efficacious beliefs to model their courage by data driving everything, supporting their staff, and attending to the culture and climate of their schools.

Recommendations

The findings of my study generate suggestions for future leaders in K-12 education. The findings of my research operationalized a working definition for Bandura's (1997) definition of self-efficacy, which can aid individuals with descriptions of how leaders maintain their own self-efficacy and foster collective efficacy in their staff.

Recommendations for Leaders

My findings confirm previous research that leaders believe they can influence individual self-efficacy and collective efficacy. As one source of efficacy, mastery experiences includes those experiences where persistency aids in triumph over the challenges (Versland, 2013). In this study, principals persistently used data in everything, including where the challenge of low student performance was apparent. Therefore, I recommend that school districts continue to model and promote data driven practices with their principals to increase their knowledge and understanding around presenting data to their staff; that they provide the needed autonomy to principals in making decisions on what professional development will best support the culture and climate needs within their schools as they address the learning needs of both the students and staff. Finally, I recommend that higher education preparation programs for leaders consider how they should create those crucial experiences for those desiring school leadership in K-12 especially given the current demands inherent in K-12 education.

A second source of efficacy is vicarious learning (Versland, 2013), which includes supporting individuals' work and modeling. Principals in my study created and provided such support to the staff as the second foundational efficacious action. I recommend that higher education leadership programs include training on the importance of modeling desired behaviors.

The third source of efficacy is verbal persuasion (Versland, 2013), and this source includes professional development and dialogue. The principals in my study attended to the culture and climate within their school buildings. This included creating staff teams, providing growth plans, and offering professional development for staff. I recommend that school districts provide the needed autonomy to principals in making decisions on what professional

development will best support the culture and climate needs within their schools as they address the learning needs of both the students and staff.

Recommendation for Future Research

Future studies could extend the research questions found in this study to more open-ended, discovery-oriented, inductive framework instead of predetermining the framework. Future studies should look at some comparisons with other principals in non-priority or schools that are not performing in the bottom 5% within a given state to see if these findings hold up in other settings. This study focused on principals in low achieving, priority designated schools. Future studies could look at principals in other regions and states to see whether or not these three core foundational areas also foster collective efficacy in those settings, or whether the context allows for the emergence of different core foundational actions and beliefs.

Other studies should focus on professional development for principals in these foundational belief areas as principals continue to nurture their own self-efficacy and to lead their staff. Future research could expand this study to further saturation by including more participants with the use of my newly developed principal self-efficacy and leader model (Dyson, 2019) as found in Table 1. Other research should focus on the teachers' perceived self-efficacy as it relates to the principals' leadership efficacy to see if they have the same three core convictions and beliefs or if they are different from that of the principals' beliefs.

Repetition was used to aid in identifying themes, as noted in Table 3 in my study. In a study on relational communication, Owen (1984) describes three criteria noted in relational discourse within a theme, (1) repetition, (2) redundancy, and (3) forcefulness. He believes that his study began the exploration of "the subjective sense-making experience of participants" (p. 286). When considering the criteria, forcefulness, which includes vocal inflection and volume,

there were several principals in this study who with forcefulness, mention Black students and White staff, which is often the make-up of urban schools in the Midwest. Those principals felt that many of the students, staff, and social issues are not common in other school settings. Principal #2 shared his passion in his description of "these Black kids and White teachers" and the apparent disconnect. The aim of this study did not include looking at the ethnic make-up of the principal leader in leading their lower performing schools through change and reform, however, future studies should look at this dynamic, including how this might effect leaders' roles and perceptions/beliefs in their various context.

In this study, Table 2 shows that there were nine self-identified male principals and one self-identified female principal in this research study. Future studies should look at a balance of self-identified gender principals or all of one self-identified gender to understand their beliefs, shared experiences, and/or foundational areas resulting from their descriptions of their perceived efficacy.

Finally, future research should examine the leadership teams formed within schools and their perceived collective efficacy. Many principals in this study formed teams of various staff members, including teachers to lead and move the work in their schools. This collective body engaged in leading the instructional work within their schools. Future research should use the Dyson (2019) leader model or framework in forming questions to yet little is known how principals foster the collective efficacy of such collaborative teacher teams.

Concluding Thoughts

My study took a closer look at principals' self-efficacy including their perceptions and descriptions of how they maintain and foster collective efficacy within their schools. These self-descriptions provide insight and depth into the beliefs of such said principals. The findings of

my qualitative study takes a micro view, focused on the principals' shared experiences, thus providing a different perspective than a quantitative study of efficacy. What may be missed numerically, can be retained in this type of qualitative study. As a result, the literature has increased on this topic as a result of these principals describing their leadership actions as they relate to self-efficacy.

Overall, I found that the principals in priority schools cluster their efforts around three fundamental beliefs: data driving everything, creating and supporting, and culture and climate attentiveness. As part of their self-efficacy beliefs, principals manage in such a way that they build on their successes before remediating their weakeness. They work on what is strong and this in turn grows what is weak. In doing so, they are maintaining and supporting their own self-efficacy and fostering the collective efficacy of their staff.

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Appendix A

Initial Email Invitation to Principal

Date: [Date Sent]

Dear [Name of Administrator]

My name is Micole D. Dyson, I am a graduate student pursuing a Ph.D. degree in Educational Leadership from Western Michigan University. I am researching principals in "priority" named schools and their reflection on their own self-efficacy. As a former "priority" school principal myself, with the pressures of quick turn around and perceptions from the community about the staff of the low performing schools, I believe that priority school principals work in a very challenging, yet rewarding position as a transformational leader, charged with change and reform.

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to participate in one semi-structured interview with me (at a location of your choosing), lasting between 80-90 minutes.

With the goal of creating the most accurate story possible, you would then receive a copy of the transcribed interview and given the opportunity to add and/or make corrections to any information provided. If you choose to review this information, it should take you about 15-20 minutes.

Benefits of your participation in this research will include, but are not limited to: your story being framed within and through the transformational work that you do daily, an increased understanding of the impacts of efficacy for yourself and staff as you reflect on your own self-efficacy, and most importantly, the data provided of the efficacy beliefs as identified from the descriptions.

Please contact me by [specific date] if you are willing to participate. Also, if you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me by email address micole.d.dyson@wmich.edu or by phone at 661.236.3863.

I greatly appreciate your consideration of participating in this study and telling the story of a priority school principal working in southwest Michigan.

Appendix B

HSIRB Approval Letter

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Date: June 15, 2018

To: Louann Bierlein-Palmer, Principal Investigator
         Micole Dyson, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number 18-06-01

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project titled "The Efficacy Actions of Priority School Leaders During The Dynamic Change Of School Reform" has been **approved** under the **expedited** category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note: This research may **only** be conducted exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project (e.g., *you must request a post approval change to enroll subjects beyond the number stated in your application under "Number of subjects you want to complete the study"*)." Failure to obtain approval for changes will result in a protocol deviation. In addition, if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

Reapproval of the project is required if it extends beyond the termination date stated below.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.
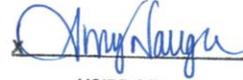
Approval Termination: **June 14, 2019**

What information is being measured during the study?
One instrument will be used to collect data for my study. The instrument in my study is a semi-structured, open-ended interviews with the principals.

What are the risks of participating in this study and how will these risks be minimized?
This study has minimal risks as your responses will be recorded in such a manner to remain confidential.

What are the benefits of participating in this study?
There are no direct benefits to you. The findings from this study can make an important contribution as district and state leaders need to know more about the beliefs of principals at priority designated schools, as they engage in their necessary school reform work. Another contribution can be how these beliefs are exemplified in principal behaviors as they influence their staff and students towards increased achievement.

Are there any costs associated with participating in this study?
There are no costs associated with participating in this study.

Is there any compensation for participating in this study?
There will be no compensation resulting from participation in this study.

Who will have access to the information collected during this study?
The principal and student investigators will be the only ones that have access to the interview transcripts collected for this study.

What if you want to stop participating in this study?
You can choose to stop participating in the study at any time for any reason. You will not suffer any prejudice or penalty by your decision to stop your participation. You will experience NO consequences either academically or personally if you choose to withdraw from this study. The investigator can also decide to stop your participation in the study without your consent

Should you have any questions prior to or during the study, you can contact the primary investigator, Micole D. Dyson at 661-236-3863 or micoledyson@yahoo.com. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at 269-387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at 269-387-8298 if questions arise during the study.

Informed Consent Form

Western Michigan University
Educational Leadership, Research, and Technology

Principal Investigator:	Dr. Louann Bierlein Palmer
Student Investigator:	Micole D. Dyson
Title of Study:	The efficacy actions of priority school leaders during the dynamic change of school reform

I have invited you to participate in a research project titled "The Efficacy Beliefs of Priority School Leaders During the Dynamic Change of School Reform." This project will serve as my (Micole D. Dyson's) dissertation for the requirements of the PhD in K-12 Leadership. This consent document explains the purpose of this research project and reviews the time commitments, the procedures used in the study, and the risks and benefits of participating. Please read this consent form carefully and completely and please ask any questions if you need more clarification.

What are we trying to find out in this study?
The purpose of this qualitative study is to identify and describe priority school principals' beliefs in their abilities to organize and execute complex actions to achieve their goals within schools labeled as low performing, or priority schools in the state of Michigan.

Who can participate in this study?
You can participate in this study if you come from schools meeting the following criteria: (1) schools located in Michigan, (2) schools that have a status of priority, as outlined in the Michigan state bottom 5% criterion, (3) schools that are Title I or those with high percentages of students with free and reduced lunches, and finally (4) schools that have been on the priority list for more than one year.

Where will this study take place?
Data collection for this study will be in one midwestern state with each leading a priority school in various school districts as listed on the 2016 priority list. Data collection will take place at your school site.

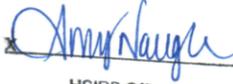**What is the time commitment for participating in this study?**
The interview will be 80-90 minutes for each principal.

What will you be asked to do if you choose to participate in this study?
You will be asked to answer each of the 16 questions asked during the approximate 80-90 minute time frame.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is older than one year.

I have read this informed consent document. The risks and benefits have been explained to me. I agree to take part in this study.

_____

Please Print Your Name

_____   _____

Participant's signature   Date

Western Michigan University
Educational Leadership, Research, and Technology

Principal Investigator: Dr. Louann Bierlein Palmer
Student Investigator: Micole D. Dyson
Title of Study: The efficacy actions of priority school leaders during the dynamic
                    change of school reform

You have been invited to participate in a research project titled "The efficacy beliefs of priority school leaders during the dynamic change of school reform." This project will serve as Micole D. Dyson's dissertation for the requirements of the PhD in K-12 Leadership. This consent document explains the purpose of this research project and reviews the time commitments, the procedures used in the study, and the risks and benefits of participating. Please read this consent form carefully and completely and please ask any questions if you need more clarification.

What are we trying to find out in this study?
The purpose of this qualitative study is to identify and describe priority school principals' beliefs in their abilities to organize and execute complex actions to achieve their goals within schools labeled as low performing, or priority schools in the state of Michigan.

Who can participate in this study?
Principals willing to participate will come from schools meeting the following criteria: (1) schools located in Michigan, (2) schools that have a status of priority, as outlined in the Michigan state bottom 5% criterion, (3) schools that are Title I or those with high percentages of students with free and reduced lunches, and finally (4) schools that have been on the priority list for more than one year.

Where will this study take place?
The principals for this study will be in one midwestern state with each leading a priority school in various school districts as listed on the 2016 priority list. Data collection will take place at each of the participant's school sites.

What is the time commitment for participating in this study?
The interview will be 80-90 minutes for each principal.

What will you be asked to do if you choose to participate in this study?
The principals will be asked to answer each of the 16 questions asked during the approximate 80-90 minute time frame.

What information is being measured during the study?
One instrument will be used to collect data for my study. The instrument in my study is a semi-structured, open-ended interviews with the principals.

What are the risks of participating in this study and how will these risks be minimized?
This study has minimal risks as the participants will be recorded in such a manner to remain confidential.

What are the benefits of participating in this study?
The findings from this study can make an important contribution as district and state leaders need to know more about the beliefs of principals at priority designated schools, as they engage in their necessary school reform work. Another contribution can be how these beliefs are exemplified in principal behaviors as they influence their staff and students towards increased achievement.

Are there any costs associated with participating in this study?
There are no costs associated with participating in this study.

Is there any compensation for participating in this study?
There will be no compensation resulting from participation in this study.

Who will have access to the information collected during this study?
The principal and student investigators will be the only ones that have access to the interview transcripts collected for this study.

What if you want to stop participating in this study?
You can choose to stop participating in the study at any time for any reason. You will not suffer any prejudice or penalty by your decision to stop your participation. You will experience NO consequences either academically or personally if you choose to withdraw from this study. The investigator can also decide to stop your participation in the study without your consent

Should you have any questions prior to or during the study, you can contact the primary investigator, Micole D. Dyson at 661-236-3863 or micoledyson@yahoo.com. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at 269-387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at 269-387-8298 if questions arise during the study.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is older than one year.

I have read this informed consent document. The risks and benefits have been explained to me. I agree to take part in this study.

_____
Please Print Your Name

_____   _____
          Participant's signature   Date

Appendix C

Principal Interview Protocol

Interviewee Number:

Date: Time: Location:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Demographic Questions

Male/Female:

Educational background:

Years served as a teacher:

Total years as a principal:

Number of years as principal of the current school:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview for this research project. The aim of this interview is to find out how you would describe your beliefs in your abilities to organize and execute complex actions to achieve the goals within your school that is labeled as low performing, or priority school in the state of Michigan.

This interview will be audio-recorded to increase the accuracy of the study. You may ask to stop recording at any time during the interview. Are you ready to begin? May I start recording now?"

Setting Direction
   1. **How would you describe the ways in which you aid in setting the vision for the school, teachers, and student learners?**

   - How would you describe the ways in which you **organize and create a plan** to set the vision for the school, teachers, and student learners?

   - How would you describe the specific **required actions** to set the vision for the school, teachers, and student learners?

   - How would you describe the ways in which you have worked to **execute** setting the vision for the school, teachers, and student learners?

   - In what ways do you think your efforts effect the collective efficacy of your teachers and students?

Redesigning the Organization
   2. **How have you worked to redesign your organization to better meet the needs of students?**

- How have you worked to create a **planning** process to redesign your organization to better meet the needs of students?

- How have you worked to identify specific **required actions** to redesign your organization to better meet the needs of students?

- How have you worked to **execute** the required actions/plan to redesign your organization to better meet the needs of students?

- In what ways do you think your efforts effect the collective efficacy of your teachers and students?

Managing the Instructional Program
3. **How do you collaborate with the staff to plan and supervise instruction, including program monitoring?**

- How do you collaborate with the staff to create and **organize a plan** for supervision of instruction, including program monitoring?

- How have you worked to identify specific **required actions** for supervision of instruction, including program monitoring?

- How have you worked to **execute** the plan for supervision of instruction, including program monitoring?

- In what ways do you think your efforts effect the collective efficacy of your teachers and students?

Developing People
4. **How would you describe the ways in which you support your teaching staff?**

- How would you describe the ways in which you **organize and plan** support for your teaching staff?

- How have you worked to identify specific **required actions** for supporting your teaching staff?

- How have you worked to **execute** support for your teaching staff?

- In what ways do you think your efforts effect the collective efficacy of your teachers and students?

Thank you for participating in this interview. All the information collected from you is confidential. Your name will not appear on any documents in which this information is recorded.

If necessary, may I contact you for a follow up interview or to clarify some of your responses? I will also provide you an opportunity to review the transcript of your interview and add to or clarify the information you shared with me today.
(**Turn off audio recorder)**