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## An Examination of Factors Contributing to Exemplary Schools in an Urban Public School District in the Midwest

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AN EXAMINATION OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO  
EXEMPLARY SCHOOLS IN AN URBAN PUBLIC  
SCHOOL DISTRICT IN THE MIDWEST

by

Gordon D. Griffin

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the  
Faculty of The Graduate College  
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requirements for the  
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Department of Educational Leadership

Western Michigan University  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
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AN EXAMINATION OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO  
EXEMPLARY SCHOOLS IN AN URBAN PUBLIC  
SCHOOL DISTRICT IN THE MIDWEST

Gordon D. Griffin, Ed.D.

Western Michigan University, 1996

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there were characteristics that identify exemplary elementary schools. Selection of schools was based on standardized scores, principal tenure, parental involvement, Directors of Elementary School's opinion, and accreditation status.

The demographic information suggested that both groups of schools were similar in composition. Developing schools demonstrated a significantly greater population of students receiving free lunch and a greater population of minority students. Each school principal and staff received two survey instruments: the Leadership Practices Inventory (Kouzes & Posner, 1992), and the School Assessment Survey (Wilson, 1985). The results were compared to determine which characteristics, or dimensions were different. A  $t$  test for independent means was computed for the majority of the dimensions. A one-way ANOVA was necessary for several dimensions, and a Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance ( $W$ ) was used to assess the dimension of goal consensus. There was support for the four hypotheses: the means of the exemplary and developing schools would be different; the exemplary schools would be identifiable as having common elements; the developing

schools would be identifiable as having common elements; and the elements for both types of schools would be different.

Scores were computed for each school staff for each dimension and for all of the two types of schools for each dimension. Results indicated statistically different mean scores for the exemplary schools in seven areas. On the LPI survey the areas of challenging the process and modeling the way were significantly higher for the exemplary schools at an .05 alpha level. On the SAS survey there were five dimensions that were significantly higher for the exemplary schools. Those were: (1) goal consensus, in which case, the significance level was .001; (2) student discipline; (3) centralization of authority; (4) vertical communication; and, (5) facilitative leadership; all four significant at the .05 level.

The results closely confirm results of effective and quality schools research presented in the Chapter II literature search. A chart comparing the elements of effective schools research, quality schools research, and the results of this study are presented in the concluding chapter.

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Gordon D. Griffin

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to compare the elements of identified exemplary schools with elements of those which were identified as developing schools. It was the researchers assumption that there would be a difference in the elements found in exemplary schools compared to those which were not and that there would be elements common to either kind of school. Perceptions of both leaders and other school personnel, including teachers, and auxiliary staff were considered.

The city schools chosen for this study embarked on a strategic planning process in December of 1991. The process began with a 27-member Steering Committee comprised of administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community representatives. This process resulted in a mission statement, belief statements, objectives and strategies to implement during the next five years. Over four hundred people were involved in the subsequent process of developing action plans for each of the strategies. The plan was finalized in 1993-94 and is to continue through 1998. The purpose of the strategic plan was to restructure the schools in order to better meet the needs of students. This process has involved training and a great deal of study on the part of administrators, teachers, and auxiliary staff.

The administrators were trained in the Xerox (Xerox, 1992) "leadership through quality" method in 1993-94. Each school staff in turn is also in the process of taking the training. The District has used the resources of known "experts" in the field of school improvement, such as, Larry Lezotte, Ron Edmonds, and William Glasser. Several administrators have participated in the NASSP administrative training evaluation process as well.

During the process of quality training, this particular District has supported school improvement efforts through an articulation of the "correlates of effective schools" (Lezotte, 1992, and Bonstingl, 1992), the arranging of time for schools to pilot the quality training, and a reorganization and rewriting of the evaluation process for school administrators. The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not the schools in this District designated "exemplary" could be characterized in ways that are similar to those articulated by the literature, and that do not exist in the "developing" schools, or, were there other commonalties not articulated by the literature.

If indeed there were factors common to the exemplary schools, it would strongly support the attainment of those characteristics in the developing schools. There would be implications for future training and evaluation of school administrative staff. The study would support the research of Ron Edmonds (1981), Brookover and Lezotte (1979), Brookover (1981), and, Rutter and others (1979), who found common characteristics of "effective" schools. This study would contrast the characteristics of effective schools, those designated as exemplary, with those designated as developing



suggesting that there is support for a common set of characteristics for effective schools.

There is debate as to whether or not there is a "recipe" set of standards for effective schools. As suggested by D'Amico (1982), these studies may represent an "intricate, perhaps idiosyncratic, phenomenon that, in turn, is probably the result of intricate, perhaps idiosyncratic, processes" (p. 62). D'Amico goes on to suggest that there are no recipes for creating effective schools as yet (1982). Lezotte responded by agreeing that caution needs to be exercised in the interpretation of the research on effective schools. However, he suggested that school personnel "find the research sensible because it looks at the whole school, recognizes roles and role relationships, and acknowledges the subtle yet powerful interactions that exist between and among the members of the school social system " (1982, p. 63).

This study looked at the opinions of the school leaders and other professionals in each school and relied on the synthesis of the results of two different instruments in order to reach conclusions regarding common characteristics for exemplary or developing schools. The study was not limited to one segment of the public school population, but rather, represented a cross section of schools that often define an urban district. The contrast of characteristics of exemplary as compared to developing schools lends support to previous research.

### Guiding Questions

There were five questions guiding the focus, development and interpretation of this study. They were:

1. Are principal and staff perceptions of leadership style similar according to the Leadership Practices Inventory?
2. Is there a relationship between principal style and exemplary and or developing schools?
3. Do scores on the School Assessment Survey indicate similarities or differences between exemplary and developing schools?
4. Are the results similar for the Schools Assessment Survey and the Leadership Practices Inventory for both exemplary and developing schools?
5. Can we arrive at characteristics common to exemplary schools and developing schools?

These questions guided in the process of organizing and summarizing the data into a list of common factors or characteristics that can be applied to exemplary and developing schools. A comparison of these findings can then be made to the existing literature.

### Rationale for the Study

The importance of the study depended on the degree to which there were commonalties among the exemplary schools and the degree to which those commonalties were similar or dissimilar to those of the developing schools. If it was found that there were elements common to the exemplary schools, then stronger suggestions could be made to schools experiencing varying degrees of difficulty and to those school leaders. If the common elements were present in a high percentage of the exemplary schools and the leadership styles were also similar, and if those elements did not exist in the developing schools, then there would be support for using those elements as

a basis for leadership training, improvement efforts, or evaluation procedures.

Support for this study was found in several recent studies. Lanny Tibaldo (1994) suggested that "further research should be conducted to determine if there were any differences between leadership style behaviors of principals of effective, recognized schools and principals of schools which have been identified as less effective rather than simply non recognized" (p. 100) Lois Koster-Peterson (1993) analyzed the role of the principal in effecting educational outcomes in an unusually effective school. The researcher found that

what operationalizes leadership in the exemplary schools were: (1) core values that shape the direction and form the school's goals and objectives; (2) a vision that is focused, clarified, and articulated among all groups; (3) involvement of people who share in the process of improvement as a continuous process; and (4) establishment of mutual trust, love, warmth, and respect within the environment between all people (p. 86).

Ronald Brice (1992) also found significant differences in the leadership behaviors of principals in effective and non effective schools. There is a relationship between effective schools and the activity of the principal, however, there are also characteristics or commonalties that need to be confirmed. For instance, Brookover, et al (1978) found that school climate is related to mean school achievement. "The first and foremost general conclusion derived from this research is that some aspects of school social environment clearly make a difference in the academic achievement of schools" (p. 316). Purkey and Smith (1992), found that schools functioned more as a social system with distinctive cultures in which improvement efforts are directed toward incremental, long-term cultural change.

Therefore, there is evidence that there is a set of common characteristics including leadership that are shared by exemplary schools. Those characteristics may differ from school to school, and may also be influenced by other factors such as implementation policy and school climate. Ron Edmonds (1982)) stated that "it's probably true that the actual cause of the improvement lies in some interaction between one's interest in obtaining the correlates and the means by which it is done" (p. 14). There is also a continuing search to, in some way, tie the effective school correlates or Deming's 14 points as the actual "cause" of effective schools. Again, Edmonds (1983), states, "Among the fundamental research issues yet to be studied is whether the correlates of school effectiveness are also the causes of school effectiveness" (p. 16). Although this study was not able to determine the "cause" of school effectiveness, it does reinforce the previous work and add to the existing knowledge regarding characteristics common to exemplary or effective schools.

For the purposes of this study, it was necessary to define "exemplary" and "developing". Schools were selected for these designations using several criteria. These criteria represented quantifiable data that was readily available from the district Research and Evaluation department and reflection on this data by the researcher and the Elementary division of the public school system. The majority of these criteria also were supported as evidence of exemplary schools in the literature (Edmonds, 1980 & 81, Lezotte & Jacoby, 1990, Levine & Lezotte, 1990, Glasser, 1990, Schmoker & Wilson, 1994).

1. Schools were determined to be exemplary if the test scores over the past 4 years indicated a positive increase. Schools were determined to be

developing if the test scores over the past 4 years indicated a decline or uneven growth. Test data available for each school included; the California Achievement Test, the Metropolitan Achievement Test, and the Michigan Educational Assessment Program Tests (MEAP).

2. Only schools which had the same administrator over the past 4 years were considered for either category.

3. A reported positive level of parent involvement in each school was a consideration. Data was available through reports made to the Research and Evaluation department regarding perceived parent involvement. The reports were contributed by school teaching staff on a yearly basis.

4. Only schools which were identified according to the Michigan State Department of Education as Summary or Interim were selected for the exemplary category.

Schools are designated as Summary, Interim, or Unaccredited by the Michigan State Board of Education based on the requirements of Michigan State Public Acts 335 and 339 of 1993 and in accordance with the Michigan Accreditation Program Standards, PA 25, Section 1280 (Michigan State Board of Education, 1995). Criteria include documentation regarding the purposes of the school, school improvement, student outcomes, curriculum and instruction, organization and administration, school staff, school and community relations, facilities and equipment, and MEAP Test criteria.

5. The final consideration for selection as an exemplary or developing school was the recommendations of the Directors of Elementary Schools for the public school system. The district involved has two directors who serve the elementary schools. They are closely involved with all school

improvement efforts and participate as evaluators of each school on a yearly basis.

Two survey instruments were administered to each school principal or principals and members of the school staff. The Leadership Practices Inventory (Kouzes & Posner, 92) was used to assess leadership practices. The Inventory was administered in two forms; the self version, which was administered to the school principal, and the constituent version, which was administered to the teaching staff. The self version reports the principal's interpretation of their own leadership style. The constituent version reports the interpretation of the same staff regarding the school principal. The results of the inventories were compared for each school leader in relationship to the same school's constituent population. In addition, each school was given the "School Assessment Survey" (SAS) (Wilson, 1985). The School Assessment Survey assesses the attitudes and perceptions of the school staff in nine areas. The resulting information gives the principal and staff a "picture" of their school climate. A combination of the two surveys assessed to what degree the leader and constituents agreed on the leadership style and also various aspects of the climate and effectiveness of each school.

At the conclusion of the surveys it was determined whether or not there were elements common to exemplary schools, whether or not there were elements common to developing schools, and, if so, what were they, and whether there were particular elements that worked effectively in one or more situations, but not in others.

The usefulness of the study was to help develop elements or criteria for evaluation, planning, and for school improvement efforts, if indeed there

were indications that there are elements common to exemplary schools. Inherent in the study is a determination by the school leader and staff of the leadership style of the school, and other elements or criteria that make the school what it is. The criteria, or elements, would therefore prove useful in preparation of school leaders and in developing growth objectives for leaders of schools which were considered to be developing.

Participation by selected schools was on a voluntary basis and strict confidentiality was maintained throughout the course of the study due to the declaration of schools being selected as exemplary or developing. Identified and participating schools did not know of their selection in either category, but rather that what was being investigated was the relationship between school effectiveness and selected variables. Each school principal and staff had the opportunity to participate or not. Each school received an identity number which was known only to the researcher. The identity number served as a reference to allow the conclusions of the surveys to be shared with the individual school principals and staffs.

### Summary

The benefit of this study was to not only report findings as to the characteristics of exemplary schools, but to serve as a support for school improvement efforts in this particular school district. The search for a set of characteristics could result in the establishment of standards that would serve to assist schools in improvement efforts. The study also serves as impetus for the improvement of the administrative evaluation process. Improvement could be based on more solid evidence of just what makes for an effective, or

exemplary school and what serves to support certain administrative practices that support the growth of an effective or exemplary school.

Previous studies, the effective school correlates, and the 14 principles of quality all suggest that there exists a "path" for the improvement of schools. This study could serve to add to that knowledge and confirm at least some aspects of those sets of characteristics that result in exemplary schools.



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Introduction

The review of literature focuses on effective schools and total quality schools research. Since the topic of the study uses the words exemplary schools, that phrase is related to the literature. Other literature was also searched to define and explain related terms such as: the Education 2000 initiative, blue ribbon schools, school climate, and leadership as related to effective or exemplary schools.

The literature search included periodicals, books, interviews, workshop notes, public school records, government information sources, dissertations, and consultations with professional development specialists. The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), Dissertation Abstracts International, Resources in Education, and the Current Index to Journals in Education were used as resources.

#### Leadership

"Leadership is making it possible for others to follow by thinking strategically and focusing on the right directions, removing the obstacles,

developing ownership, and taking self-directed actions (Belasco, 1993). "Each person joins in defining purpose and deciding what kind of culture this organization will become. We diminish others when we define purpose and meaning for them, even if they ask us to do so" (Block, 1993, p. xxi).

The ancient Chinese as interpreted by Cleary (1990) studied the art of leadership centuries ago.

The ancient establishment of rulers was not for the service of their desires; and when sages lived in lowly positions it was not for the purpose of taking things easy. Rulership was set up because the strong oppressed the weak, the many did violence to the few, the cunning fooled the simple, the bold attacked the timid, people kept knowledge to themselves and did not teach, people accumulated wealth and did not share it. So the institution of rulership was set up to equalize and unify them (Cleary, 1990, p. 4).

In the intervening years since those wise statements were made, human kind has constantly searched for the qualities that would make the best leader. We still search for those qualities, most especially in our public and private schools, because that is where the greatest influence for the good or for the not so good for our species is most critically felt.

The term "servant" has been used by Peter Block in his last two books to define his vision of a leader. The term servant also has some very negative connotations to many. Block's servant is a leader who would allow each person to reach their creative potential and the group to lift an organization to greater service (Block 1993). The suggestion was "that a non-servant who wants to be a servant might become a natural servant through a long arduous discipline of learning to listen, a discipline sufficiently sustained that the automatic response to any problem is to listen first" (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 17). In our experience in schools often the reverse is true. We listen, but not with

our ears or our hearts, we listen through our own filter that eliminates everything we disagree with or we listen with an attitude of toleration. This often breeds discontentment, isolation, and can ultimately have an effect on instruction for children in the schools.

Kelley (1992) suggested that maybe the emphasis is being placed on the wrong individual. Perhaps the emphasis on training and preparation and study of theory needs to be more properly placed on the follower. Kelly also suggested that the leader that is most respected by followers is "one who is willing to stand with them on the front line of adversity" (Kelley 1992, p. 210). The leader must provide the vision, or the direction, or as stated by Block, "sees the way we should go (1993), but cannot act in a vacuum.

Sergiovanni (1992) believes that given the opportunity, teachers would welcome the freedom and responsibility of creating a community of shared values (p. 213). Matsushita (1984) stated that "the best kind of management, I believe, allows all employees to participate, so that each can contribute in his own capacity to the realization of a common goal" (pp. 51-52). Empowerment is one of Deming's 14 points of Quality schools and one of the effective school correlates and not by accident. It is in these quality, or effective, or exemplary schools that we find leaders who listen and respect others, bringing together a team of people to solve the instructional problems and meet the educational needs of children.

Leadership, unlike naked power-wielding, is thus inseparable from followers' needs and goals. The essence of the leader-follower relation is the interaction of persons with different levels of motivations and of power potential, including skill, in pursuit of a common or at least joint purpose (Burns, 1978, p. 19).

Perhaps this study will confirm that the kind of leader inhabiting an

effective school is a "servant", a "listener", sensitive to the professionalism of the staff, and can articulate and guide in the pursuit of common goals.

In a study by Andringa & Fustin in 1991, it was discovered that teachers became highly motivated, were able to arrive at a consensus decision-making process, and were committed to carrying out their plan. The principal served as cheerleader. The conclusions included the statement that "teachers can articulate their common vision of what the school should be and use their creative powers to make that vision a reality" (p. 237). At the conclusion of the study, the principal wanted the process to continue. In this study, the theoretical "servant", or "steward" allowed the process to work. The principal did not want to get in the way of the process and demonstrated complete trust in the staff to accomplish the task. Another study by Marvin Cohen (1993) concentrated on the staffs of 2 middle schools. The administrators put their trust in the teacher leaders and "supported them in successfully carrying out the goals that served children" (p. 16). The results were that teachers knew they could rely on each other, they knew what power they had within themselves to accomplish a goal, and had learned the process of learning from each other and even evaluating each other.

Leadership also focuses on all of the individuals in an organization, in our case, the school. Covey (1990) states that

we often place the blame and responsibility on students and teachers instead of identifying all of the stakeholders. Each of them shares equal responsibility for providing the best learning environment for children to grow and become empowered. In a Principle-Centered Learning Environment we shift and align that energy to focus on the learning environment, thereby entrusting and empowering the student (p. 307).

One of the effective school correlates and one of Deming's 14 points for

quality in schools deals with the raising of the level of the student to the point where they take responsibility for their own discipline and academic success. Of course, the staff and leadership provide everything that is necessary for that to happen, including the modeling of that behavior. Therefore leadership not only refers to the principal and the teacher, but also to the student.

Behind appropriate policies, strategies, and structures are effective learning processes; their creation is the third key design responsibility in learning organizations. Leaders as teachers help people restructure their views of reality to see beyond the superficial conditions and events into the underlying causes of problems - and therefore to see new possibilities for shaping the future (Senge, 1990, pp. 11-12).

Perhaps this study confirms that a high degree of student discipline is a characteristic of an exemplary school.

If you want to know the way of the sky, observe the seasonal cycles. If you want to know the way of the earth, find out what kind of trees grow there. If you want to know the way of people let them have what they want (Cleary, 1990, p. 31).

Leadership is not about just letting people have what they want, it is about listening to people, really hearing what they want, and together arriving at what is best. People need to be encouraged to share their views without coercion or threat of reprisal.

Although we certainly won't encourage people to make mistakes in tomorrow's organization, we will encourage people to acknowledge the mistakes they do make and apply what they have learned from their mistakes to strengthen the organization and themselves. Admitting mistakes exposes our limitations, but tomorrow's leaders will publicly expose their own limitations, signaling to the organization that all of us are human, all subject to weaknesses (Patterson, 1992, p. 13).

Both the effective school correlates and Deming's 14 points clearly state that we need to "drive out fear". People need to be free to take risks, make

mistakes, and learn from them. This study seeks to confirm that this characteristic will be found in exemplary schools. Bennis (1989) states that "the leaders I talked with are far from believing that mistakes are 'bad'. They not only believe in the necessity of mistakes, they see them as virtually synonymous with growth and progress" (pp. 95-96).

With leadership comes the necessity of communication. Communication is often one-way and often misunderstood because of the experiences, prejudices, or assumptions of the hearer. "Communication means that a message not only was sent but also received and responded to in a way indicating that it was understood" (Gorton & Scheider, 1991, p. 70). Covey (1990) states that "the main problem in communication is the 'translation' problem; translating what we mean into what we say and translating what we say into what we mean" (p. 138). In an exemplary school, the researcher believes we will find a more significant degree of vertical and horizontal communication. The key, of course, again, is the school administrator. If that principal allows, encourages, and plans for communication both horizontally and vertically, it is more likely to happen.

#### W. Edwards Deming's Influence on Education

The literature closely aligns the effective schools correlates with the total quality schools' 14 points. Both have as their origin the thoughts and work of W. Edwards Deming. Deming was a physicist with the United States Department of Agriculture and was strongly influenced by a statistician, Walter A. Shewhart who developed techniques that helped reduce waste and promote improvement of the industrial and manufacturing processes. He

taught both management and workers to keep statistics on processes and results and use this data to adjust (Schmoker & Wilson, 1993). Deming was convinced that workers could be instructed to keep their own records instead of relying on quality control experts and thereby build in quality at every stage of the process.

His theories found support in Japan. After World War II Japan was interested in improving the productivity and quality of their goods. Deming helped Japan create a quality approach that has enabled them to achieve respect and leadership in the world economy.

Deming more recently turned his attention to the educational services provided by our public education system. As stated by Schmoker & Wilson (1993), Edmonds (1980 & 81) and Glasser (1990), he believed that we were still far behind other countries in succeeding with what was considered the "bottom half" of our student population. "These are the students we continue to fail" (Schmoker & Wilson, 1993, p. 14). Edmonds (1982), believed that "to be effective, a school need not bring all student to identical levels of mastery, but it must bring an equal percentage of its highest and lowest social classes to minimum mastery" (p. 4).

The effective schools research and the total quality research has resulted in support for the 14 points articulated by Deming as necessary in order for a school to become effective with all children.

John J. Bonstingl articulated Deming's 14 points as they apply to schools.

1. Schools must continually work to help students maximize their own potential through continuous improvement of teachers and students working

together.

2. Schools must continually improve through greater empowerment of teacher-student teams.

3. Tests and other instruments are to be used as diagnostic and prescriptive instruments throughout the learning process. Students must be taught how to assess their own work and progress if they are to take ownership of their own educational process.

4. Schools must build relationships of trust and collaboration within the school, and between the school and community.

5. Teachers need to be empowered to make continuous progress in the quality of their learning and other aspects of their personal development.

6. There must be effective training for new employees.

7. Leaders are coaches. Leading is helping, not threatening punishing.

8. There is an effort to drive out fear through shared power, shared responsibilities, and shared rewards.

9. The barriers between staff areas need to be broken down.

10. When education goals are not met, fix the system instead of fixing blame on individuals.

11. The focus should not be on numerical or letter symbols of learning. The investment is in long term learning.

12. Schools must dedicate themselves to removing the systemic causes of teacher and student failure through close collaborative efforts.

13. There is encouragement to enrich personal education beyond boundaries of personal and professional worlds.

14. There is constant top-level dedication to full implementation and it



must be supported by a critical mass of school and community people to implement the plan and make it stick (1992, pp. 77-82).

These points closely correlate with those articulated by Lawrence Lezotte as recorded in his book "Creating the Total Quality Effective School" (1992, pp. 6 -21). These points are known as the "effective school correlates" and are the result of research by Lezotte and others attempting to identify those characteristics that make an effective school unique.

Deming also taught a system of "profound knowledge". Greenwood (1994) states that

it is profound in the sense that it is a holistic theory of human knowledge which is capable of revolutionizing the performance and self-esteem of human individuals. Moreover, it is applicable in any sphere of human activity, including (and perhaps particularly) in schools(p. 147).

It is essentially prediction, based on systematic analysis and problem solving which allows for the optimization of the systems capability and can only be achieved when a system is brought into statistical control (Greenwood, 1994, p. 145). He believed that one was born with intrinsic motivation, self-esteem and dignity. He taught that those attributes are high at the beginning of life, but are gradually crushed by forces such as: grades in school; merit systems that judge people; incentive pay; and management by the numbers to name a few. "Extrinsic motivation (resignation to external forces) gradually replaces intrinsic motivation; self-esteem; dignity; and joy in work" (Rhodes, 1990a, p. 26). Rhodes further stated that we need to replace these external forces with leadership that will restore the power of the individual (1990).

## Control Theory

In the theory of management the "boss" is the one who initiates the job tasks, seldom if ever compromises, checks up on the workers on a regular basis, and frequently engages in coercive action to get things done. Control theory suggests that what is needed instead is a lead-manager. The lead-manager engages the workers in open and honest discussion, models the job, eliminates most of the inspection process, and teaches the workers that the essence of quality is constant improvement (Glasser, 1994). Control theory assumes an atmosphere of quality. There must be an atmosphere of trust between the workers and the managers, workers know that the work they do is useful and they feel as though they are contributing, workers do the best work possible, workers engage in constant self-evaluation, and the place "feels good" (Glasser, 1994, pp. 21-24).

Control theory would define education as a "process through which the workers (as students) discover that learning adds quality to their lives" (p. 42). Education becomes centralized in the student, in other words, the control is not from the top/down, but from the student, through the careful and well planned guidance of the building professionals. The basic tenet of control theory is that "you cannot make anyone do what he or she does not want to do. You can only teach him a better way and encourage him to try it. If it works, there is a good chance he will continue" (p. 50). Control theory believes that there are five basic human needs: (1) survival; (2) love and belonging; (3) power or recognition; (4) freedom; and (5) fun. These needs cannot be suspended in the work or school environment.

The Quality school builds upon those needs through the 4 A's of self-

acceptance: attention, acceptance, appreciation and affection (Glasser, 1991). We have to know that our own needs are met in those areas before we can help to satisfy those of our staff or students. The process of education is the process of building relationships, and for that to happen we have to know each other and we have to be willing to relinquish "control". Thus, control theory is not something applied to people, it is something that comes from within. The researcher posits that this would be more likely a characteristic of an exemplary school, though this is beyond the scope of this study.

### Effective School Research

Effective school research and total quality research both identify the principal as the key figure in the development of an exemplary school (Rupture, 1979, Brookover and others, 1979, Edmonds, 1980, 81, & 83, and Glasser, 1990). According to Edmonds (1982b), effective principals

spend most of their time out in the school - usually in the classrooms. They are constantly engaged in identifying and diagnosing instructional problems. These men and women spend a lot of time observing classes. But that's only half the formula. They are never content just to identify problems.

Their diagnosis is always accompanied by the collegial offering of alternative ways to teach that particular content. What one observes therefore, is a lot of interaction between teachers and principals to decide which of three or four possible ways to teach, say, multiplication is most appropriate in that situation (p. 13).

For this reason, this study administered the Leadership Practices Inventory to the principal and selected staff members. There should have been substantial agreement between the principal and the staff members as to the leadership style in the exemplary schools in that effective school decisions

and responsibilities are more collaborative in nature than in the less effective, or developing schools.

The effective school correlates were developed to identify those characteristics that were associated with exemplary, or effective schools. Those correlates, or principles are:

1. All children can learn, and each child enters the world and the school motivated to do so. That learning is demonstrable in outcome terms.
2. Since all students can learn, what they learn in school depends on what the adults in the school do. Abandon procedures and policies that are not working.
3. Frequent monitoring of student learning by all stakeholders. This is different than mass inspection.
4. Students master the knowledge and skills that are essential prerequisites for success at the next level of schooling.
5. The management team must accept the primary responsibility for re-inventing the school as a place that assures learning.
6. If we want to change what people know and the context in which they find themselves, we must provide for staff development.
7. Principals must see themselves as being accountable for producing student learning results. Evaluation systems need to be based on a "growth" or "wellness" model based on openness, collaboration and peer coaching.
8. School staffs must be encouraged to take risks and try new approaches to their work.
9. Barriers that exist between teachers must be eliminated for sustained improvement. School improvement will not occur until teachers

come to understand and accept the limitations on what they can accomplish if they persist in working alone.

10. The development of a school plan designed to specify the aims and goals of the schools and identify improvement areas for the coming year must involve collaborative planning and problem solving.

11. The effective school tends to not quantify results. Teachers know the research and are encouraged to adjust their classroom routines to meet the needs of their students as they strive to master the intended curriculum.

12. The effective schools process has advocated that assessment systems meet four criteria: standardized, locally generated, curriculum based, and criterion referenced. The effective schools process has consistently held that teachers need to be freed from the fear of immediate negative evaluation if they are going to engage willingly in a change process designed to improve the quality of their professional work.

13. There is a program for self improvement for everyone.

14. Everyone sees the need to meet the learning needs of students and the instructional needs of the teacher. (Lezotte, 1992)

### America 2000 and Blue Ribbon Schools

Exemplary, or effective schools have also been recognized by the Blue Ribbon Schools program created by Terrance H. Bell, former Secretary of Education, in 1982. These schools are recognized for outstanding academic accomplishments and school, community pride. This program is closely aligned with the National Education Goals and America 2000.

Public schools are nominated by chief state school officers from all states, the District of Columbia, and Department of Defense

Overseas Dependents' Schools. The Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Council for American Private Education also recommend schools for the program (Schaefer, 1994, p. 13).

Schools are visited to verify that the information submitted by the school is accurate. There is then a National Review Panel that determines whether or not a school will be recognized. This provides one more way in which we can begin to identify those schools that could be labeled exemplary or successful and, perhaps, what is unique about them.

America 2000 was an attempt by the United States Department of Education and President Bush to foster a challenge: "to reinvent American education - to design New American Schools for the year 2000 and beyond" (U.S. Dept. of Education, 1991, p. 6). Money was set aside in a private sector research and development fund to help generate innovation in education. The initiative still exists in some states more than others, but, in the least, has encouraged new debate about remaking the American school.

TheodoreSizer's "Coalition of Essential Schools" has also identified common principles that identify outstanding schools.

Such beliefs include: the purpose of school is to help all students think; people learn best when truly engaged in something important; you can't teach a student unless you know him or her well; and exhibition is superior to tests because it helps you and the student see what the youngster really knows (Goldberg, 1993, pp. 53- 57).

### Summary

From the literature review, it is clear that a great deal of attention has been given to a search for exactly what makes a school exemplary or effective. The support for the effective school correlates and Deming's 14 points is clear

in the literature. Support for further research in this area is also plentiful. The contribution of this study was to hopefully confirm this previous research and to suggest commonalties or characteristics that are unique to both developing and exemplary schools. The study also tells us to what degree the staff and principals of the exemplary schools evaluate the school leadership in a similar manner and to what degree the comparison is similar in the developing schools.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

In the literature reviewed there has been presented a case for the existence of a set of principles or characteristics that identify an exemplary school. The Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) gave opportunity to look at the perception of leadership on the part of school staffs as compared to the school administrator. As referred to previously, there is evidence that an exemplary, or effective school, does have a relationship to the leadership of the school (Rupture, 1979, Brookover and others, 1979, Edmonds, 1980, 81, & 83, and Glasser, 1990). The School Assessment Survey (SAS) allowed the researcher to assess the qualities in relationship to school climate that may describe an exemplary school (Kozlowski, 1989; Levine, 1990, & McIntire, 1994). For the purposes of this study, exemplary schools were identified as those which met the criteria for selection: positive growth in test scores; the presence of the same administrator for the past 4 years; positive reported parent involvement in the school ; schools identified by the Michigan State Department of Education as Summary or Interim accredited; and the recommendations of the Directors of Elementary Schools.

Developing schools were selected based on declining test results over the past 4 years, or on the basis of uneven growth in test scores over the past 4 years; whether or not the administrator has been in place during that time



period; and schools where parent involvement over the past three years is reported as positive. Additionally, the recommendations of the Directors of Elementary schools were considered. Eleven schools were selected in each category; exemplary and developing.

The contents of Chapter III will present a discussion of the subjects, the operational hypotheses, the instruments, an analysis of the data, the dissertation budget, the dissertation time schedule, and the summary.

### Subjects

Schools were selected according to the previously stated criteria from the total elementary school population of the urban school district. There are sixty-four elementary schools within the district. For the purposes of the study, eleven schools were selected in the exemplary category, and eleven schools were selected in the developing category. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the office of Research and Evaluation of the school district. Selected schools were given the opportunity and choice to participate in the study. Personal contact was made to the principal of each identified school. The purpose of the study, the benefit to the individual school and administrator, and the time required for the completion of the surveys were discussed and permission to mail the information was sought. If schools declined to be involved in the study, others were selected. All twenty two school principals gave permission for the researcher to conduct the survey. Of the schools, four did not complete the survey. The subjects included exemplary schools ( $\underline{n} = 10$ ), and developing schools ( $\underline{n} = 8$ ). Teachers and other staff members completing the survey totaled 171 - exemplary schools ( $\underline{n}$

= 84) and developing schools ( $n = 87$ ).

### Operational Hypotheses

For the purpose of this study, the dependent variables were the development of common elements or criteria that define a school as exemplary or developing. The independent variables were the individual schools selected as exemplary or developing. In concept, this study demonstrated a difference in the characteristics unique to exemplary schools and those unique to developing schools.

There were four operational hypotheses for this study.

1. The means of the exemplary schools will be different from the means of the developing schools for both the LPI and the SAS surveys. The means will be compared on both the teacher and principal surveys for statistical significance.
2. The exemplary schools will be identifiable as having common elements determined by the results of the surveys. Reports regarding each of the five dimensions of the LPI and the nine dimensions of the SAS will be generated.
3. The developing schools will be identifiable as having common elements as determined by the results of the surveys. Reports regarding each of the dimensions of the two instruments will also be generated.
4. The common elements of the exemplary schools will be different than the common elements of the developing schools.

## Instruments

Two instruments were used in the study. The Leadership Practices Inventory (Kouzes & Posner, 1992) was given to each school administrator and staff members. The self version (principal form) and the constituent (teacher) versions were used. All staff members were given the surveys including teachers, and support staff. The Leadership Practices Inventory reports the extent to which the leader has acquired and used the following five practices: (1) challenging the process - the extent to which the leader experiments, searches for opportunities and takes risks; (2) inspiring a shared vision - the extent to which the leader can envision the future and enlist the support of others; (3) enabling others to act - the extent to which a leader involves and fosters collaboration in others, allowing people to feel strong and capable; (4) modeling the way - the extent to which the leader sets the example and breaks down projects into achievable goals; and (5) encouraging the heart - the extent to which the leader recognizes the contributions of others and celebrates milestones (Kouzes & Posner, 1992). According to a recent study, internal consistency estimates of reliability of the LPI ranged from .70 to .91, test-retest reliabilities were .93 and above, and social desirability bias tests were not statistically significant. Internal reliabilities on the LPI ranged from .80 to .91 (Kouzes & Posner, 1993). The Leadership Practices Inventory was redesigned to make it machine scorable changing none of the contents of the original survey.

The LPI results in a score for the leader and the constituents. The scores can be compared by the leader to determine the degree to which their own personal assessment matches that of their constituents. The leader will

be able to compare the scores on each of the five leadership dimensions. The instrument is useful as a research tool, but is also meant to assist in the development of management and to enhance the qualities of leadership. The authors of the LPI provide direction for the school and the principal through a booklet summarizing the Kouzes Posner leadership framework. This was provided to each school principal along with an action plan guide which will assist the principle target areas that may need to be improved. Permission to administer the LPI was obtained from the authors of the instruments.

The School Assessment Survey (Wilson, 1985a), was also administered to the same selected population. The 55 items in the SAS questionnaire measure 9 distinct dimensions covering a wide range of organizational characteristics. The dimensions assessed include: goal consensus; student discipline; academic behavior; teacher behavior; staff conflict; centralization of instructional curriculum and resources; and facilitative leadership. Goal consensus assesses the degree to which the school staff shared the same goals for their school. Facilitative leadership assesses the degree to which the principal stresses improvement in the quality of staff performance and whether or not there is a positive effect of leadership on teacher behavior. Centralization measures the influence of fellow teachers over the principal in relation to daily instruction. Vertical communication measures the amount of discussion that takes place between administration and teachers regarding instruction and student behavior. Horizontal communication measures the amount of communication regarding instruction and student behavior that takes place among teachers. Staff conflict assesses the frequency of disputes among teachers in regard to school matters. Student discipline assesses the

degree to which policy in a school is fair, consistent and creates a sense of order. Teaching behavior measures the extent to which teachers believe that all students can achieve and direct their approach in a more individual and creative way to meet the needs of all of the students (Wilson, 1985b).

According to the Cronbach's alpha "there is significant homogeneity within each dimension and strong confirmation of the convergent and discriminant validity of the organizational dimensions in the instrument (Wilson, 1985b, p. 50)". The alpha coefficient for each category is as follows: facilitative leadership, .96; centralization of classroom instruction, .83; centralization of curriculum and resources, .76; vertical communication, .90; horizontal communication, .88; staff conflict, .89; student discipline, .90; and teaching behavior, .95 (Wilson, 1987). Permission to use the School Assessment Survey was obtained from the author, Bruce Wilson. Contact was continually made with Dr. Wilson to assure that the results were accurate and consistent with his experience in surveying more than 2,000 schools.

The SAS results in scores for each dimension. The individual scores were compiled for each school creating a mean score for each dimension for each school. The SAS scores were then compared for all exemplary schools and then for all developing schools. The scores were examined to determine commonalties or differences for exemplary and for developing schools and to test for statistical significance.

The LPI and the SAS were administered to each school staff at a staff, special meeting, or as determined by the principal. The surveys took approximately 15 to 30 minutes for each staff member. The risk to the principal and staff was the revelation of characteristics or conditions that

indicated a positive or not so positive school climate. These revelations could lead to positive plans for improvement for the school leader and staff or a confirmation of characteristics, processes, or conditions that result in an exemplary school.

### Analysis of Data

Inferential statistics were used to make comparisons and resulted in conclusions regarding characteristics of both types of schools. The LPI survey was used to assess school staff determination as to leadership style of the principal. The 30 questions on the survey assess the five dimensions of leadership (Challenging, Inspiring, Enabling, Modeling, and Encouraging). There are six questions to assess each dimension. Answers are given on a 5 point Likert scale each asking for the degree to which the question of statement describes the leader, from very frequently to rarely. The scores were inverted to reflect a high of 5 and a low of 1. The higher the score, the more representative the statement(s) was to the leader. The scores determined for each individual teacher for each dimension and then for all of the teachers for a particular school for that school resulted in a mean score for each school. The principal survey was of similar format and resulted in a score for the principal. All of the scores for the exemplary schools were compared resulting in a mean score for exemplary schools for the school staff and for the principal. The same process was used for the developing schools. The mean scores for the exemplary and developing schools were compared in regard to staff and principal scores. To determine the relationship between the exemplary and developing schools  $t$  tests for independent means were

used for both staff comparisons and principal comparisons. To determine the relationship of the exemplary schools, both teacher and principal scores, to those of the developing schools a one-way ANOVA was used.

The School Assessment Survey was used to learn more about several characteristics of each school. The survey serves as a report to each school regarding strengths and weaknesses and as a basis for the improvement of educational practices (Wilson, 1985b). The SAS results in scores in nine dimensions. Again, each teacher's score was determined for each of the nine dimensions. The teacher's scores were then compared for a building mean score for each of the nine dimensions. The mean scores for the exemplary schools were then compared to those of the developing schools. A one-way ANOVA was calculated in order to compare the means for the exemplary and developing schools in each of the nine dimensions.

There were  $n = 10$  exemplary schools studied and  $n = 8$  developing schools studied. A total of  $n = 171$  staff responded to the survey,  $n = 87$  from exemplary schools and  $n = 84$  from developing schools. The schools in each of the category types represented a cross section of schools from the available population.

The researcher proposed that there would be a statistically significant difference in some of the mean scores for the exemplary as compared to the developing schools. This would indicate support for the existence of characteristics of leadership and school climate that would result in the development of an exemplary school. Both  $t$  tests and one-way ANOVAs were used to determine the degree of comparison. The null hypotheses were :

1. There will be no difference between the mean scores for the

exemplary and developing schools on both the LPI and SAS surveys. There will be no difference for the teacher means or the principal means on the LPI survey.

2. There will be no identifiable common elements for the exemplary schools as determined by the results of the LPI and the SAS surveys.

3. There will be no identifiable common elements for the developing schools as determined by the results of the LPI and SAS surveys.

4. There will be no difference between the elements of the exemplary and developing schools.

The results are presented through Tables in Chapter IV and fully discussed for relevance to the purpose of the study.

#### Dissertation Budget

The budget for this dissertation included expenditures for paper, envelopes, the purchase of time on the mainframe computer, assistance from the research and development department of the public schools to convert the data to a machine scorable form, and copy fees. The work of converting the SAS data to DOS was done by the researcher to save time, ensure accuracy, and to lower the cost. The amount budgeted for this study was \$1,150.

#### Dissertation Time Schedule

The surveys were prepared in November of 1995 for distribution after the school staff returned in January of 1996. Each school was contacted before the end of December to determine their willingness to participate in the study. The survey packets were mailed through interschool mail the first



week of January. Instructions requested that the surveys be returned by February 1. Unfortunately, due to several conflicting responsibilities on the part of both staff and principals of selected schools, the final results were not collected until early May. The timeline for analysis of data was the beginning of June, 1996. All results were shared with building principals during the months of August and September of 1996.

### Summary

The contents of this chapter explain the method and process through which the data were collected for the study. The purpose of the study was to determine whether or not there were characteristics similar to exemplary schools compared to developing schools. The leadership characteristics of the elementary principals selected in addition to the school climate characteristics were studied to add to the scope of the study. There were 22 schools selected ( $n = 22$ , 11 exemplary schools and 11 developing schools). Of the 11 exemplary schools, 10 responded and 8 of the 11 developing schools responded. The instruments used in the study resulted in a mean score for each school in both the exemplary and the developing group. A comparison of the means was made and a  $t$  test for independent means or an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed to determine the degree of difference between the mean scores. An alpha level of .05 was used to determine the degree of significance of the scores with the exception of the goal consensus dimension of the SAS, for which a .001 level of significance was used.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### Introduction

The direct purpose of the study was to determine whether or not there were characteristics common to exemplary schools. An indirect purpose was to offer a method for school principals to review staff opinion regarding each school and to offer suggestions as to areas for improvement or further emphasis. The literature review indicated that there are elements of effective schools, however, there has not been total agreement as to what that "set" of elements may be and whether or not there is a prescription that would result in an effective or exemplary school (D'Amico, 1992 & Lezotte, 1982). This study will therefore add to the knowledge regarding those characteristics.

Participants in the study were selected according to previously stated criterion. The standardized test scores were reviewed to determine whether or not the scores were rising, falling, steady, or mixed. The amount of parent participation was reviewed using survey information provided by the research and information department of the public school system, the status of accreditation according to the Michigan State Department of Education was reviewed, and the recommendations of the Directors of Elementary Schools of the District were also considered. All principals participating in the study had 4 years of experience as elementary school administrators. Three of the administrators had been in their present building assignment for only 2 years.

Two of those were in the exemplary schools, one in a developing school. This was the only deviation from the original selection process. The result was a selection of  $n = 11$  exemplary schools and  $n = 11$  developing schools.

Each principal of the selected schools was contacted regarding the purpose of the study and the implications for their school. The degree of confidentiality and the amount of effort on their part was also discussed. All of the selected principals agreed to participate in the study. Of the 11 exemplary schools, 10 surveys were completed and returned for a return rate of 91%. Of the 11 developing schools, 8 surveys were completed and returned for a return rate of 73%. The surveys were mailed in a sealed envelope and included a letter of introduction from the researcher along with particular instructions. The number of surveys sent corresponded to the number of teachers in each school along with one principal survey. The surveys were to be returned in an enclosed envelope. Each set of surveys was given a number to identify the school. The number and correlating school name was known only to the researcher. A reminder letter was sent approximately three weeks after the due date for the survey returns. Further reminders were necessary in several cases and took the form of E-mail and personal phone calls.

The LPI was scored to determine means for each school and then for each category of school, exemplary and developing. The means were compared for each school and principal and then for the two categories of schools. A  $t$  test for independent means or an ANOVA was computed to determine the difference between the categories for statistical significance. In the case of the SAS, we were testing the results of several means for each dimension, therefore, the ANOVA was more useful. This resulted in pooled variance estimate for each of the five dimensions of the LPI and an F ratio for

the SAS. Table 1 illustrates the method for reporting the data for the LPI.

Table 1  
Mean Scores of Principals for the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI)  
for Exemplary and Developing Schools

Pooled variance estimates					
Elements of Leadership	Exemplary Schools	Developing Schools	t value	df	2-tailed probability
Challenging the Process	4.06	4.00			
Inspiring a Shared Vision	4.13	3.50			
Enabling Others to Act	4.77	4.31			
Modeling the Way	4.48	3.95			
Encouraging the Heart	4.18	3.95			

Note: An alpha level of .05 was used to determine significance.

The School Assessment Survey results were compiled on a DOS data base in order to tabulate results, develop frequencies and mean scores. A *t* test for independent means or an ANOVA was also computed to determine differences in the two categories of schools. This resulted in an F ratio for each dimension of the SAS.

The results for goal consensus was obtained by using a Kendall's coefficient of concordance (*W*) for each teacher, school, and school type.

Kendall's coefficient of concordance ( $W$ ) compares each teacher's rating of goals to every other teacher's rating in that school. The mean ( $W$ ) score represents the compilation of ( $W$ ) scores for each teacher, each school, and for each school type.

If the means for exemplary and developing schools were different for the LPI or the SAS and the means were higher for the exemplary schools, it would indicate a set of characteristics common to exemplary and to developing schools. If means on both the LPI and the SAS were similar, it would be further confirmation that those characteristics were common to both categories of schools.

The limitations to the study are in the number of schools selected and in the nature of the selection process. The standardized test results were clearly an objective criterion. Parent involvement was based on data collected from each school. The process of this data collection was through the professional opinion of the school principal and surveys given to staff members. The accreditation status is primarily based on standardized test data and is also objective. The opinion of the Directors of Elementary Schools did vary resulting in a comparison of the suggestions and a determination finally being made by the researcher. The objective and subjective data used in combination resulted in a fairly accurate determination of a school as exemplary or developing. Clearly the results of the survey are dependent upon the selection of schools as developing or exemplary and could indicate a limitation for the study.

The null hypotheses ( $H_0$ ) for the study were:

1. There will be no difference between the means of the exemplary and developing schools for both the LPI and the SAS surveys. There will be no

difference for the teacher means or the principal means.

2. There will be no identifiable common elements for the exemplary schools as determined by the results of the LPI and the SAS surveys.

3. There will be no identifiable common elements for the developing schools as determined by the results of the LPI and the SAS surveys.

4. There will be no difference between the elements of the exemplary and developing schools.

### Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

The demographic information was gathered from the School Assessment Survey (SAS), both teacher and principal forms. The data indicates the degree of diversity of the samples and gives information regarding experience of the teachers and principals, gender, university training, teaching responsibilities, and general characteristics of each school.

The number of principals surveyed was  $n = 22$ , of which 18 completed and returned the surveys. The number of teachers surveyed was  $n = 254$ , of which 171 completed and returned the surveys. There were several instances when teachers or principals did not respond to items, accounting for the missing cases in the data reports and charts. Table 2 illustrates the number of teachers and principals for both the exemplary and developing schools.

The highest degree obtained for teachers was a Master's degree + 30 or more hours. All but 2 teachers had obtained a Bachelor's degree and extra hours in both the exemplary and developing schools. In both categories of schools over 40 teachers had completed coursework beyond the Master's degree. Table 3 gives complete data on the highest degree obtained by all of

the teachers surveyed. The data indicates a high degree of similarity between the two types of schools surveyed.

Table 2  
Frequency Distribution of Teachers and Principals Completing Surveys

Schools	Principals	Teachers
Exemplary Schools	10	84
Developing Schools	<u>8</u>	<u>87</u>
	18	171

For the number of teachers completing the surveys according to gender refer to Table 4. The percentage of female and male teachers is consistent with the school district's percentages. Of the teachers completing the surveys, 82% were female and 16 were male. This percentage is also comparable with the district percentages.

The average exemplary school consisted of 318 students. Size of the school student body was 175 to 430 students, with 7 schools enrolling more than 300 students. The number of teachers ranged from 7 - 15 with several support staff, including resource teachers, speech therapist, and specialty consultants. The racial composition of the exemplary schools averaged 56% Caucasian students, 38% African American students, 6% Hispanic students, and 2% other students. Principals indicated that the average percentage of students receiving free lunch in their schools was 46%, ranging from 30% to

60%. The average tenure of the present principal was 6.5 years, with total administrative experience averaging 16 years. The principals indicated that, on average, they interact with their teachers 32% of their time. Principals surveyed indicated that the funding level for their school was: mostly inadequate (1 person), marginally inadequate (3 persons), marginally adequate (4 persons), and mostly adequate (2 persons).

Table 3  
Frequency Distribution According to Elementary School Teachers  
Highest Level of Education Attained in  
Exemplary and Developing Schools

Highest Degree Attained	Exemplary	Developing
Bachelor's Degree	2	2
Bachelor's Degree + 1-12 hrs.	26	29
Master's Degree	15	14
Master's Degree + 1-30 hrs.	24	32
Master's Degree + over 30 hrs.	17	8
Doctorate	0	0
Total	84	87

The average developing school consisted of 338 students. Schools ranged from 225 students to more than 500 students. The number of teachers ranged from 10 to 20 and also included a number of support staff. The racial



composition of the developing schools averaged 36% Caucasian, 42% African American, 20% Hispanic, and 3% other students. Principals indicated that an average of 75% of their students received free lunch, ranging from 30% to 95%. The average tenure of principals was 6.5 years, with total administrative experience averaging 11 years. The principals indicated that they interact with teachers on the average of 26% of the time. Principals indicated that the level of funding for their schools was: mostly inadequate (3 persons), marginally inadequate (4 persons), marginally adequate (1 person).

Table 4  
Frequency Distribution According to Elementary School Teacher Gender  
for Exemplary and Developing Schools

Percentage	Exemplary	Developing
Female - 82%	70	71
Male - 16%	14	14
Totals - 100%	84	85

A comparison of the general demographics of the exemplary and developing schools is illustrated in Table 5.

It is evident that the percentage of students receiving free lunch is greater for the developing than the exemplary schools and that the racial demographics are also different. There is not a considerable difference, however, in the size of schools or a great difference in administrative experience. All principals indicated a similar degree of lack of influence over

Table 5  
Comparison of Demographic Information

Characteristic	Exemplary	Developing
Number of students	318	338
Number of teachers	7 - 15	10 - 20
Percent of Caucasian	56%	36%
Percent of African-Am.	38%	42%
Percent of Hispanic	6%	20%
Percent of other	2%	3%
Percent of free lunch	46%	75%
Principal tenure	6.5 years	6.5 years
Administrative exper.	16 years	11 years
Interaction with teach.	32% of time	26% of time
Funding mostly inadeq.	1 person	3 persons
Marginally inadequate	3 persons	4 persons
Marginally adequate	4 persons	1 person
Mostly adequate	1 person	0 persons

factors which effect their schools. Decisions regarding hiring or firing of professional staff, establishing salary schedules, budget or tax matters, establishing school attendance area boundaries or keeping particular schools open, establishing or applying student grading standards, selecting required textbooks or other materials, and adding or dropping courses were largely agreed to rest in the hand of District or Central Office staff, School Board,

teacher's organizations or unions, or with parent or community groups to a lesser or greater degree depending on the people or groups of people.

### Hypotheses Testing

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not there were characteristics common to exemplary schools and that those characteristics would be different than those of developing schools. The two instruments were designed to give information concerning the leadership style of the principal, the LPI, and the general climate of the school, the SAS. From the two instruments there emerges a consistent pattern which may result in statements regarding common elements of the two sample groups. Hypothesis 1 relates to the comparison of means of the exemplary and developing schools for both the LPI and the SAS surveys. Hypothesis 2 relates to a generation of elements common to exemplary schools. Elements common to developing schools are implicated in Hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 4 relates to a comparison of elements for both groups of schools.

#### Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 stated that the means of the exemplary schools would be different from the means of the developing schools for both the LPI and the SAS surveys. It was clear that the means for the exemplary schools were different than those of the developing schools. The mean scores were higher for the exemplary schools in four of the five dimensions on the LPI. In one dimension, enabling others to act, the developing schools mean score was higher. The results indicate a significant difference in two of the dimensions;

challenging the process, and modeling the way. The results are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6**  
**Mean Scores of Teachers for the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI)**  
**for Exemplary and Developing Schools**

Elements of Leadership	Exemplary Schools	Developing Schools	t value	Pooled variance estimates	
				df	2-tailed probability
Challenging the Process	4.02	3.72	2.39	158	.018*
Inspiring a Shared Vision	3.98	3.84	.91	149	.362
Enabling Other to Act	4.06	4.17	-.81	159	.422
Modeling the Way	4.10	3.82	2.08	145	.039*
Encouraging the Heart	4.15	3.95	1.23	154	.219

Note: Mean scores were based on a 1-5 point scale for each dimension with 5 being the highest score. The alpha level used was .05.

The results of the LPI for principals also indicated a difference in the means and probability statistics in each of the 5 dimensions. The mean scores for principals were higher for the exemplary schools than those of the developing schools in each of the five dimensions. The results were significant in three dimensions at the alpha level of .05 : inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, and modeling the way. Those results are

presented in Table 7.

Table 7  
Mean Scores of Principals for the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI)  
for Exemplary and Developing Schools

Analysis of Variance				
Elements of Leadership	Exemplary Schools	Developing Schools	F	Significance
Challenging the Process	4.06	4.00	.0347	.8552
Inspiring a Shared Vision	4.13	3.50	4.5233	.0517*
Enabling Others to Act	4.77	4.31	6.3430	.0236*
Modeling the Way	4.48	3.95	5.0418	.0402*
Encouraging the Heart	4.18	3.95	.3310	.5736

Note: Mean scores were based on a 1-5 point scale for each dimension with a 5 being the highest score. An alpha level of .05 was used.

The School Assessment Survey results also indicated a difference in mean scores for teachers in each of the nine dimensions. The results were significant in five of the dimensions: goal consensus, student discipline, centralization of authority, vertical communication, and facilitative leadership. The results were significant at the .05 alpha level and in one case, goal consensus, significant at the .001 alpha level. Results on the SAS for principals was only used for demographic data and could not be compared to

the staff survey.

### Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 stated that exemplary schools would be identifiable as having common elements determined by the results of the surveys. The results of the School Assessment Survey indicate that these exemplary schools have in common at least five characteristics that are statistically significant from those of developing schools. Those dimensions include goal consensus, student discipline, centralization of authority, vertical communication, and facilitative leadership. Those results are presented in Table 8.

The elements of the exemplary schools that were statistically different than those of developing schools on the LPI were: challenging the process, and modeling the way. The LPI principal surveys indicated significance in three dimensions; inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, and modeling the way. The staff and principal survey statistics agreed on the dimension "modeling the way". Those results are presented in Tables 9 and 10.

In guiding question number one the researcher sought to find a similarity in the responses of the teachers and principals on the LPI. In looking at the mean scores for the teachers and the accompanying standard deviations, along with the principal scores, there is little evidence of a greater difference between the mean scores for the principals and teachers on the LPI. There is a similarity between the way the teachers in both categories of schools responded evidenced by little discrepancy between the standard deviations. It would be appropriate to conclude that the teachers from both

Table 8

Mean Scores for Teachers on the School Assessment Survey for both  
Exemplary and Developing Schools

School Type	Goal Consens.	Teaching Behavior	Student Discipline	Staff Conflict	Adminis. Conflict	Centraliz. of Authority	Horizon. Commun.	Vertical Commun.	Facilitat. Leader.
Exempl. Schools	(W) .5164	81.62	2.37	1.51	1.93	.1738	2.64	2.14	3.99
Develop. Schools	(W) .4305	74.19	2.41	1.95	2.29	.1159	2.42	1.81	3.73
Results	df = 16 t = 7.101	df = 17 F 1.4767	df = 17 F 1.9349	df = 17 F 1.5487	df = 17 F 1.1034	df = 16 F 2.5947	df = 17 F 1.6324	df = 17 F 2.1156	df = 17 F 2.3584
Signifi- cance	.001*	.1128	.0192*	.0869	.3574	.0019*	.0655	.0098*	.0031*

Note: Mean scores were based on several different scales. In each case, the ANOVA or Kendall tests determined the comparative results with an F ratio or a (W) score. Results were reported at the .05 alpha level with the exception of the "goal consensus" score, which was reported at the .001 level of significance.

categories of schools assessed their principal in a similar manner.

Table 9

Mean Scores for Principals and Teachers on the LPI Survey

Dimensions	Exemplary		Developing	
	Teachers	Principals	Teachers	Principals
challenging	4.02	4.06	3.72	4.00
inspiring	3.98	4.13	3.84	3.50
enabling	4.06	4.77	4.17	4.31
modeling	4.10	4.48	3.82	3.95
encouraging	4.15	4.18	3.95	3.95

Table 10

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Teachers and Mean Scores for Principals on the LPI Survey

Dimen.	Exemplary			Developing		
	Teachers	St. Dev.	Principal	Teachers	St. Dev.	Principal
challeng.	4.02	.8058	4.06	3.72	.7562	4.00
inspiring	3.98	.9667	4.13	3.84	.8886	3.50
enabling	4.06	.9624	4.77	4.17	.7114	4.31
modeling	4.10	.8799	4.48	3.82	.7531	3.95
encourag	4.15	1.0618	41.8	3.95	.9535	3.95

### Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 stated that developing schools would be identifiable as



having common elements as determined by the results of the surveys. The results of the LPI mean comparisons indicated a significant difference in agreement between teachers and principals of the two groups of schools. The F level was 3.59 and was significant at the  $p < .05$  level. The indication is that the staffs of the exemplary schools were statistically more in agreement with their principals regarding leadership than those of the developing schools. The areas where the agreement is greatest for the developing schools is in "challenging the process" and "modeling the way". The results of the SAS survey indicate significant differences in goal consensus, student discipline, centralization of authority, vertical communication, and facilitative leadership.

There is therefore evidence that those seven dimensions would be areas that would not characterize developing schools to the degree that they would characterize the exemplary schools.

#### Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 stated that the common elements of the exemplary schools would be different than the common elements of the developing schools. Based on the information from both the SAS and LPI surveys, it can be stated that there is a significant difference in the elements common to exemplary and developing schools. The surveys identify the common elements for the exemplary schools in relation to leadership and school climate. The areas common to exemplary schools were challenging the process and modeling the way, in relationship to leadership. The areas common to exemplary schools in relationship to school climate were: goal

consensus, student discipline, centralization of authority, vertical communication, and facilitative leadership. Those same areas that identify exemplary schools would not be as evident in developing schools, and the absence of those elements is statistically significant. There is therefore confirmation that there are elements common to the exemplary schools in this study and that the developing schools can be characterized as not demonstrating those elements to the same degree. Figure 1 illustrates the resulting characteristics that were found to be statistically significant on both survey instruments.

### Summary

This chapter focused on the presentation of the data collected from the LPI and SAS surveys. Tables illustrated the results of the surveys for both LPI, teachers and principal, and the SAS for teachers. Demographic data regarding the sample was presented. The data indicated the similarities of both types of schools and the differences. Data indicated that the two types of schools are representative of the schools found in the urban public school district studied.

The data resulted in statistics that indicated significance in two dimensions between types of schools on the LPI and significant differences in five dimensions between types of schools on the SAS. Those dimensions can be concluded to be characteristics of the exemplary schools in this study. It can also be concluded that those characteristics were not found in the developing schools to the degree that they were found in the exemplary schools.

### Leadership

**Challenging the Process** - The leader tends to experiment, searches for new opportunities and is willing to take risks for him or herself and encourages risk taking for others.

**Modeling the Way** - The leader sets the example for others. The leader is interested in finding ways to insure success by breaking down projects and initiatives into achievable goals.

### Climate

**Goal Consensus** - The school's staff is in general agreement as to what the goals for the school are.

**Student Discipline** - The school is characterized by a fair, consistent sense of order in which students participate. There is a tie between higher achievement and student discipline.

**Centralization of Authority** - The teachers (staff) of the school have more influence over decisions that effect them directly.

**Vertical Communication** - There is more sharing of information regarding instructional practice between teachers and between teachers and principals.

**Facilitative Leadership** - The principal engages frequently in actions that encourage and support the teaching staff.

Figure 1. Significant Characteristics of Exemplary Schools (Kouzes & Posner, 1992 and Wilson, 1985).

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

This study closely aligns with effective school research conducted by Larry Lezotte, Ron Edmonds and others. Their research has attempted to identify those characteristics, initiatives, or processes that have served to help schools develop into exemplary, or effective schools (Edmonds, 1981, 1983; Lezotte, 1990, 1992). It is given that public schools in the United States have needed to change and improve since the declaration of the National Commission on Excellence in Education report: A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform (1983). That report, along with innumerable news reports to that effect have caused educators to reevaluate the process of education and seek ways to improve. The schools in the district studied have been involved in a city-wide improvement effort since 1991. The Strategic Planning Process begun at that time developed plans for improvement through the 1998-99 school year (Public Schools, 1993). In spite of those efforts, some of the schools have improved and others have not. This study looked at 22 of those schools in an attempt to determine what those qualities or characteristics were that made some of the schools succeed where others did not.

## Conclusions

Table 11 illustrates the comparison of the results of this study with the effective school correlates and Deming's 14 points for Quality schools. There is significant cross representation of similar characteristics, processes, and leadership styles.

The seven dimensions that resulted in statistical significance do correlate closely with the effective school correlates and Deming's 14 principles. The leadership characteristics modeling the way and challenging the process support Deming's principles of empowerment and the concept of fixing the system, not fixing the individual. The two dimensions imply a transformational leadership style as opposed to a transactional or managerial style of leadership. Burns (1978) states "leaders can also shape and alter and elevate the motives and values and goals of followers through the vital teaching role of leadership " (p.425). Tichy & Devanna (1990) describe a transformational leader variously as change agents, people who believe in people and are sensitive toward other people, visionaries, and are life long learners (pp. 271-280). The transformational leader would be the one who sets the example for others, not expecting more from others than from themselves and, one who would be willing to challenge the process or work to fix the system and not quickly place blame on individuals. It can be concluded that the leaders of the exemplary schools in this study would exemplify the aforementioned characteristics to a greater degree than the leaders of the developing schools. The results for the dimension "challenging the process" were 4.02 for exemplary schools and 3.72 for developing schools, a  $t$  value of 2.39 and a significance level of  $p < .018$ . The results for the

dimension of "modeling the way" were 4.10 for exemplary schools and 3.82 for developing schools, a  $t$  value of 2.08 and a significance level of  $p < .039$ .

Table 11

A Comparison of Deming's 14 Points of Quality for Schools, the Effective Schools Correlates and the Results of This Study

<u>Deming's 14 Points of Quality for Schools</u>	<u>Effective School Correlates</u>	<u>Current Study Characteristics of Exemplary Schools</u>
1. Work to maximize student's potential (continuous improvement)	2. Adjust school's response to assume that all students do learn. Abandon what does not work. 3. Frequent monitoring of students learning by all stakeholders.	(SAS) - Student Discipline - Emphasis on a sense of order, consistency, and fairness which encourages student responsibility.
2. Empowerment of teacher-student teams.	(Correlates 7, 8, 9 & 10)	(SAS) - Facilitative Leadership - support for professional growth & behavior of teaching staff (LPI) - Modeling the Way - the leader sets the example, breaks down projects into reasonable goals.
3. Tests as diagnosis and prescription. Students learn to assess their own work.	11. Eliminate numerical quotas, rather adjust classroom routines to meet student needs.	
4. Trust and Collaboration within the school and community.	10.. Collaborative planning. Eliminate "quick fixes". Target areas for improvement.	(SAS) - Goal Consensus - Agreement among staff regarding school priorities.

Table 11 - Continued

<u>Deming's 14 Points of Quality for Schools</u>	<u>Effective School Correlates</u>	<u>Current Study Characteristics of Exemplary Schools</u>
5. Quality of learning to improve continuously for teachers.	1. Constancy of purpose. All children can learn. Demonstrable in outcome terms.	(SAS) - Goal Consensus
6. Effective training	6. Provide for effective staff development	(SAS) - Facilitative Leadership
7. Leaders are coaches. Leading is helping, not threatening or punishing.	7. Leaders take responsibility to strive for productive student learning. Evaluations based on "wellness" and "growth" model.	(SAS) - Vertical Communication - Frequent communication between teachers and principal
8. Drive out fear, shared responsibility, shared rewards.	8. Allow risk taking, drive out fear, try new approaches.	(SAS) - Centralization of Authority - Teachers and principal hold responsibility for decisions.
9. Barriers between staff broken	9. Decentralization, eliminate all barriers.	(SAS) - Vertical Communication
10. Fix the system, not fixing blame on individuals.	4. Provide what is needed. Children master knowledge and skills that are prerequisite for the next level of learning. 15. Reinventing the school as a place that assures learning.	(LPI) - Challenging the Process - The leader experiments, searches for opportunities and takes risks.
11. Long term learning	13. Program for self improvement for everyone.	(SAS) - Facilitative Leadership

Table 11 - Continued

<u>Deming's 14 Points of Quality for Schools</u>	<u>Effective School Correlates</u>	<u>Current Study Characteristics of Exemplary Schools</u>
12. Remove causes of failure through close collaborative efforts.	12. Eliminate annual rating or merit system. Teachers need high regard for their work.	(LPI) - Challenging the Process
13. Encouragement to enrich personal education.	(Correlates 6 & 7)	(SAS) - Facilitative Leadership (LPI) - Modeling the Way
14. Top level dedication to full implementation. Full community support.	14. Everyone sees the need to meet learning needs of students and instructional needs of the teacher.	(SAS) - Centralization of Authority; Facilitative Leadership (LPI) - Modeling the Way
(Bonstingl, 1992)	(Lezotte, 1992)	

Two of the guiding questions forming the focus, development, and interpretation of this study were:

- 1. Are principal and staff perceptions of leadership style similar according to the Leadership Practices Inventory?
- 2. Is there a relationship between principal style and exemplary and or developing schools?

Clearly there is little difference in the assessment of leadership by staff between exemplary and developing schools. There is no evidence to support the conclusion that staff and principal scores were more closely aligned for either group. One may conclude that principal and staff perceptions of



leadership style are similar for both groups according to the LPI.

The relationship between principal style in exemplary and or developing schools is statistically significant for the two areas mentioned; modeling the way, and challenging the process. The other 3 areas of the LPI ; inspiring, enabling, and encouraging were also different and higher for the exemplary schools in two areas, inspiring and encouraging. The developing schools scored higher on enabling, which according to research should be a characteristic of a more effective school.

The student discipline dimension indicates that the exemplary schools would place greater emphasis on consistency, fairness and a sense of order than the developing school. The goal would be to encourage personal responsibility for discipline on the student. This implies a greater degree of planning and agreement on the part of the staff to accomplish this goal. The dimension of student discipline resulted in a mean score of 2.37 for exemplary schools and 2.41 for developing schools, an F ratio of 1.9349 and a significance of  $p < .0192$ .

Again, the dimension of facilitative leadership indicates a more transformational leader, one who provides support and encouragement for personal growth on the part of the teaching staff. The facilitative leader would be interested in the implication of curriculum decisions in the "long term", not looking for quick fixes, but careful planning over a longer period of time. The results for the dimension of facilitative leadership were 3.99 for exemplary schools and 3.73 for developing schools, resulting in an F factor of 2.3584 and a  $p < .0031$  level.

The most significant statistical difference in exemplary and developing

schools was in the dimension of goal consensus. Teachers were asked to rank seven areas of student development according to their importance in their school. The areas were: appreciating and striving for excellence (in school work or other areas); critical and original thinking; basic skills (reading and math); respect for authority (discipline, character building, etc.); vocational understanding and skills; understanding others (cultural pluralism, getting along with peers, etc.); and self-esteem (self-concept). All areas are important in the education of children and it is difficult to place importance of one over the other, however, in the exemplary schools, the rankings were more closely aligned than in the developing schools. This indicates a greater degree of communication among teachers and between teachers and administrators. It indicates an atmosphere of trust and collaboration within the school, both of which are dimensions of the effective school correlates and Deming's 14 points of quality for schools. The results for the dimension of goal consensus were (W) .5164 for exemplary schools and (W) .4305 for developing schools, resulting in a  $t$  score of 7.101, which is significant at the .001 level.

Another dimension in which there was a significant difference between exemplary and developing schools was vertical communication. This indicates more frequent communication between teachers and principal. There was also a statistical difference in horizontal communication of .0655. Though not enough to be statistically different, it would indicate a greater degree of communication among teachers. The area of communication is a critical one in determining the direction of the school and ensuring empowerment on the part of teachers. Communication can sharpen, embody, and help enact the vision of the leader (DePree, 1989). According to Senge

(1990) "leaders must be willing to continually share their own vision, rather than being the official representative of the corporate vision. They also must be prepared to ask, 'Is this vision worthy of your commitment?' This can be difficult for a person used to setting goals and presuming compliance" (p. 13). To listen to each other both vertically and horizontally in a school organization is a characteristic that can be applied to exemplary schools, although only the statistic on vertical communication was significant. The results of the dimension of vertical communication were 2.14 for exemplary schools and 1.81 for developing schools, resulting in an F ratio of .0098, which is significant at the  $p < .05$  level. The results of the dimension of horizontal communication were 2.64 for exemplary schools and 2.42 for developing schools, resulting in an F ratio of 1.6324, which equates to a significance level of .0655.

The statistic in the dimension of centralization of authority indicates a more teacher centered influence in the decision making process. This closely relates to Deming's point to "drive out fear" (Bonstingl, 1992), and the effective school correlate that encourages risk taking (Lezotte, 1992). It also relates to the empowerment of teacher-student teams as in Deming's points and Lezotte's correlates relating to decentralization. The statistical difference was  $p < .0019$ , which indicates a significantly different way of the leader viewing the staff. The staff is viewed more as equals in the process of the education of the child. Therefore, the dimension of centralization of authority being more closely associated with teacher influence would characterize an exemplary school more than a developing school. The results for centralization of authority on the SAS were .1738 for exemplary schools and

.1159 for developing schools with an F ratio of 2.5947 which was significant at the  $p < .05$  level.

The other guiding questions serving to focus this study were:

3. Do scores on the School Assessment Survey indicate similarities or differences between exemplary and developing schools?

4. Are the results similar for the Schools Assessment Survey and the Leadership Practices Inventory for both exemplary and developing schools?

5. Can we arrive at characteristics common to exemplary schools and developing schools?.

The answer to #3 is yes. The SAS indicates that there are similarities between both types of schools in that the characteristics that most define exemplary schools, do not define developing schools. The results for the SAS and LPI are not similar because they do seek to answer different types of questions and in different ways. The results however are consistent with the characteristics of exemplary schools when compared with the 14 points of Quality schools and the effective school correlates. Finally, for the answer to question #5, yes, we can and have arrived at characteristics that are common to the exemplary schools in this study.

### Recommendations

A replication of this study would lend more credibility and significance to this study. Recommendations for further research are presented and discussed in this section. This study looked at characteristics of exemplary elementary schools as opposed to those schools that are developing. It is the assumption of the researcher that all schools are in a

process of developing. If those schools and school leaders would move toward the characteristics associated with exemplary schools, their development may be enhanced. This study bears replication due to the fact that the results do in part closely align with previous studies of effective schools (Tibaldo, 1994; Koster-Peterson, 1993; Lezotte & Jacoby, 1990; and Edmonds, 1981). The idea that there is a set of characteristics, correlates, or points for Quality schools bears more research. Our schools are improving across the country, but there is yet to be a national recognition of those characteristics, initiatives, or processes that work in nearly every area of the country. If studies of this type result in similar findings, there would be evidence that these characteristics do indeed reside in exemplary schools and should be implemented in all schools. The study should be replicated in a larger number of elementary and secondary schools across the country. The instruments such as the LPI and the SAS give us not only a picture of the leadership, but also a glimpse at the climate of the school. Looking at one without the other does not give a complete view of a school. Replication using those two instruments or similar instruments would be recommended.

The surveys were given to teaching staff and principals which gives a professional view of the school. It may be advantageous to expand the study to include students, parents, and other members of the community. This would give a far more comprehensive view of the school from many vantage points. In addition, interviews with parents, students, and community members would perhaps result in more sensitive and helpful information.

There is, however, value that can be attached to a more comprehensive study of leadership styles within a public school district. Using the effective

school correlates, Deming's 14 points, this study, or other indicators of school success, the leadership could be surveyed to determine what kinds of leaders exist in the school system and which ones appear to be most effective. This study confirms that leadership of the individual school can be held most responsible for the existence of effective school correlates and the like. If the school's leadership needs direction for the improvement of the school, research results similar to this study could provide a direction for those leaders, not as a threat for the purpose of dismissal, but a path for self improvement, and, as a result, growth for all students.

The process for this study would be greatly enhanced through the sharing of the results with each individual school staff. A discussion may result in a more data driven approach to the solving of instructional or school climate problems. The results could also serve as an impetus for greater and more specific professional development goals.

### Summary

Effective schools research and Total Quality Schools research along with many other previously identified studies have sought to determine just what those qualities, methods, and leadership styles are that make a school effective, no matter what the demographics. Effective schools have been found in urban, interurban, and suburban areas of the United States and among all classes and races. The common sets of characteristics identified by previous research are confirmed by this study and yet represent a unique contribution to the body of research. The use of two instruments, the LPI and the SAS enabled the researcher to determine whether or not the characteristics

of exemplary schools and developing schools are confirmed for this particular district in the midwest. The expected value of this study was to encourage a discussion as to possible target areas for school improvement for this particular district. Since this study confirms the previous work, it could be an important impetus for leadership training and the development of evaluation criteria for leaders and for elementary schools.

There is a determination on the part of school boards, superintendents, central office administration, principals and teachers to continually improve schools. Perhaps we are not looking at the enough data, for instance, just at test scores. Better results might be obtained through a study and conversation regarding the data of this and like studies which indicate that there are several factors other than test scores that serve to define a school as effective or exemplary.

## APPENDICES



## **Appendix A**

### **Protocol Clearance From the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board**

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board

Kalamazoo, Michigan  
616 387-8293

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 WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
 

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Date: December 10, 1995

To: Gordon Griffin

From: Richard Wright, Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard A. Wright".

Re: HSIRB Project Number 95-12-15

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled "An examination of contributing to exemplary schools in an urban public school district in the Midwest" has been approved under the exempt category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board with the one minor change. In addition to your phone number telephone numbers for Chair of the HSIRB and the Vice President for Research need to be included in your "Dear Colleague" letter. The standard statement is "You may also contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Review Board at (616) 387-8293 or the Vice President for Research at (616) 387-8293 with any concerns you may have."

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 that you must seek specific approval for any changes in this design. You must seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date. 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.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: December 10, 1996

cc: David Cowden, EDLD

**Appendix B**  
**Approval for Research From Public**  
**School District**

November 9, 1995

Dear Mr. Griffin,

This is to verify that the \_\_\_\_\_ Public Schools' office of Research and Evaluation gives permission for you to conduct the Research entitled "an examination of factors contributing to exemplary schools in an urban public school district in the midwest".

Permission is given under the following conditions.

The \_\_\_\_\_ Public Schools will not specifically be mentioned in the research report, dissertation, or subsequent articles.

Permission to administer the "Leadership Practices Inventory" and the "School Assessment Survey" to the 20 identified elementary schools is given with the understanding that participation in the research survey is on a voluntary basis.

A report of findings for the data obtained from the \_\_\_\_\_ Public Schools shall be provided to the Facilitator of Educational Research and Evaluation.

All activities of the researcher shall be in accordance with all federal, state, and local school district guidelines for handling student data and protection of the rights and privacy of District staff employees.

The terms of this agreement may not be modified except by mutual written agreement between the Educational Research and Development Center and the investigator. Notwithstanding the foregoing, this agreement may be terminated by either party upon thirty days written notice to the other party.

We will continue to support you in the preparation and evaluation of your research and wish you well in your efforts.

Sincerely,

Facilitator of Research and Evaluation

**Appendix C**  
**Letters of Instruction to Principals**

### **Directions for Completing Survey**

- 1. Recognize that there are 2 (two) types of surveys.  
Principal Form and Teacher Form  
LPI (Leadership Practices Inventory) & SAS (School Assessment Survey)**
- 2. Each person, teacher and administrator needs to complete both surveys.**
- 3. Despite my best proofreading efforts, there is one addition that needs to be made to the "Teacher Form" of the SAS. In question #12, please add the word "administrators" in the 3rd category - "Frequency of Discussion With \_\_\_\_\_ in This School". Ignore the word "administrators" under the column entitled "Topic".**
- 4. Complete the surveys. The directions are self explanatory. The surveys should not take more than 15 minutes of your time. If there is any confusion regarding the directions, please call, or reach consensus among staff and inform me please.**
- 5. Collect the surveys in the envelope provided.**
- 6. Return by school mail by Friday, February 2, 1996.**
- 7. Your school will receive the results by May 1, 1996.**

**Thanks Again,  
Gordon Griffin**

November, 1995

The following surveys will help assess the leadership style of the school principal and those characteristics that make your school unique. The "Leadership Practices Inventory" is to be filled out with a #2 pencil in order to facilitate data analysis. The "School Assessment Survey" is self explanatory.

Upon completion of the survey, please enclose them and seal them in the envelope provided.

Thank you for your assistance with this research.

Sincerely,  
Gordon Donald Griffin

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