Investigating the Relationship between the Use of Inspirational Motivational Practices and Shared Decision Making

Cheryl McGruder Holloway

St. John Fisher College

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Degree Name
Doctor of Education (EdD)

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First Supervisor
Jason Berman

Second Supervisor
Ruth Harris

Subject Categories
Education

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Investigating the Relationship between the Use of Inspirational Motivational Practices and Shared Decision Making

By

Cheryl McGruder Holloway

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Ed.D. in Executive Leadership

Supervised by

Dr. Jason Berman – Chair

Dr. Ruth Harris – Committee Member

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. School of Education
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November, 2008
We recommend that the dissertation by

Cheryl McGruder Holloway

Entitled: Investigating the Relationship between the Use of Inspirational Motivational Practices and Shared-Decision Making

Be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Education Doctorate degree.

Dr. Jason Berman, Ph.D., Chair

Dr. Ruth Harris Ph.D., Committee Member

8/25/08

Date
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my awesome husband, Oscar, who encouraged me to move forward when I did not believe I could. It is also dedicated to my precious mother, Pearl McGruder, who offered sage advice along the way about what was expected of me as the first in our family to attain this advanced degree. Thirdly, this work is dedicated to the loving memory of my father, Philip McGruder whose words ring in my heart each time I think about how important my education was to him. Fourthly, I dedicate this work to my son, Philip Oscar who is my joy on a daily basis. It goes without saying that this dedication would be incomplete without dedicating this work to Roy, Pat, Harriette, Cynthia, and Tywona, and Rene, my siblings who have encouraged me from afar. This work is also dedicated to Karen, whose beautiful voice calms me when I am nervous and Ester who has urged me to finish the process. Finally, this work is dedicated to Ruby, my best friend, who has prayed for me daily.

Additionally, I dedicate this work to those who have guided and supported me during this journey:

- Dr. Jason Berman
- Dr. Ruth Harris
- Dr. Arthur Walton
- Dr. Arlette Miller Smith
- Dr. Steven Million
- Dr. Brandan Keavney
• Dr. Raymond Giamartino
• Ms. Susan Kaufmann
• Ms. Edith R. Vaughn
Biographical Sketch

Cheryl McGruder Holloway is currently the Chief of Schools at the Rochester City School District. Mrs. Holloway attended Southern University from 1964 to 1968 and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1968. She attended the University of Akron from 1976 to 1979 and graduated with a Master of Arts Degree in 1979. She came to St. John Fisher College in the summer of 2006 and began doctoral studies in the Ed.D Program in Executive Leadership. Mrs. Holloway pursued her research in the inspirationally motivating leadership practices of principals under the direction of Dr. Jason Berman and Dr. Ruth Harris and received the Ed.D. degree in November 2008.
Abstract

Studies have shown that effective leadership practices, such as transformational leadership, are crucial to establishing working relationships that support successful teamwork. One aspect of transformational leadership, inspirational motivation, supports the establishment of relationships leading to commitment and success that exceed participants' expectations.

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The analysis of the quantitative data revealed common perceptions regarding the inspirationally motivating practices of the principals. Qualitative data from the focus groups and face to face interviews found that the principals in this study employed inspirationally motivating practices that facilitated working relationships within the teams they lead.
Recommendations based on the findings of this study includes the development of training modules focused on shared decision making and formal professional development for principals focused on research based practices that support team leadership.
Table of Contents

Dedication.............................................................................................................................................. ii
Biographical Sketch............................................................................................................................... iv
Abstract.................................................................................................................................................... v
List of Tables ........................................................................................................................................... x
Chapter 1: Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 1
Statement of the Problem ....................................................................................................................... 1
Theoretical Rationale ............................................................................................................................... 2
Significance of the Study ......................................................................................................................... 4
Statement of Purpose ............................................................................................................................. 6
Research Questions ................................................................................................................................. 7
Definition of Terms .................................................................................................................................. 8
Summary of Remaining Chapters ........................................................................................................... 11
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature ....................................................................................................... 13
Introduction and Purpose ....................................................................................................................... 13
Topic Analysis .......................................................................................................................................... 13
Rationale for the Study and Summary .................................................................................................... 35
Chapter 3 Research Design Methodology ............................................................................................... 37
General Perspective and Problem Statement ......................................................................................... 37
Research Context ..................................................................................................................................... 39
Research Participants .............................................................................................................................. 42
## List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.1</td>
<td>Western New York State City School District Demographics</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.2</td>
<td>Western New York State Schools Chosen for the Study</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.3</td>
<td>School Based Planning Team Structure</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.4</td>
<td>Administrative Structure of the Three Schools</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.1</td>
<td>School A: Comparison of the Principal and School Based Planning Team Modal Responses to the four statements related to Inspirationally Motivating Leadership Practices</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.2</td>
<td>School A: Comparison of the Principal and School Based Planning Team Modal Responses to the four statements related to Idealized Influence, Individualized Consideration, and Intellectual Stimulation</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.3</td>
<td>School B: Comparison of the Principal and School Based Planning Team Modal Responses to the four statements related to Inspirationally Motivating Leadership Practices</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.4</td>
<td>School B: Comparison of the Principal and School Based Planning Team Modal Responses to the four statements related to Idealized Influence (II), Individualized Consideration (IC), and Intellectual Stimulation (IS)</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.5  School C: Comparison of the Principal and School Based Planning Team Modal Responses to the four statements related to Inspirationally Motivating Leadership Practices

Table 4.6  School C: Comparison of the Principal and School Based Planning Team Modal Responses to the four statements related to Idealized Influence, Individualized Consideration, and Intellectual Stimulation

Table 4.7  Summary of the Researcher's Lenses and Related Research Questions and Statements

Table 4.8  School A: Principal Behaviors that Promote Consensus Based Decision Making

Table 4.9  School B Principal Behaviors that Promote Consensus Based Decision Making

Table 4.10  School C: Principal Behaviors that Promote Consensus Based Decision Making
Chapter 1: Introduction

Effective leadership practices are critical to the success of the shared decision making process at the school level. Those leadership practices become crucial when establishing relationships with stakeholders that include administrators, teachers, staff, and parents (Reeves, 2006). This notion is further supported by Bass’s (1985) claim that effective leadership practices that support the creation and sustention of covenantal relationships encourages followers to accept responsibility for, and commitment to, engaging in shared leadership and decision making. These leadership practices discussed by Bass (1985) are known collectively as transformational leadership.

Transformational leadership is a set of practices employed by leaders that includes intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, idealized influence, and inspirational motivation (Bass 1985). One of the four aspects, inspirational motivation ascribes to the establishment of relationships. School principals who employ transformational leadership strategies may be able to provide inspirational motivation that builds and sustains covenantal relationships and improves shared decision making by (1) articulating a compelling vision of the future, (2) setting challenging goals and standards, and (3) talking optimistically with enthusiasm, and (4) providing encouragement and meaning for what needs to be done (Bass, 1997).

Statement of the Problem

The problem in this study emerged from concerns raised by school principals and teams relative to shared decision making as required by the New York State
Commissioner of Education Regulations, Part 100.11 (See Appendix A for the complete document). This set of regulations requires that every public school in New York State institute a school-based planning team. Each team is charged with oversight of the instructional programs of schools and must include teachers, parents, and administrators.

In one large urban Western New York School District, heretofore named Western New York State School District, teams are led by school principals. Principals' leadership practices are expected to promote the creation of a collaborative environment where shared decision making can occur. In many district schools, school principals lead school-based planning teams to make shared decisions on a consistent basis. The problem, however, was that in several schools, the leadership practices of principals did not support shared decision making on a consistent basis. Additionally, the working relationships between constituents on these school teams were strained. Consequently, these school teams experienced difficulty advancing the instructional agenda because they were not able to reach mutually agreed upon decisions on a consistent basis. The importance of advancing the instructional agenda is paramount to success in every school; therefore, all teams need to use shared decision making. These decision-making difficulties served as an impetus for investigating the relationship between inspirationally motivating leadership practices of principals and shared decision making as evidenced in three PreK-6 Western New York State Schools.

Theoretical Rationale

Leadership studies related to the overall practices of transformational leaders abound in the work of academic and nonacademic theorists. An analysis of those studies resulted in the emergence of one common characteristic, inspirational motivation.
However, there are no studies that focus specifically on the influence of inspirationally motivating leadership practices employed by principals leading school based planning teams toward shared decision making.

Leithwood (1992) has provided the most comprehensive studies related to transformational leadership practices in schools. Leithwood and Jantzi theorized that, “...successful leadership was likely to be transformational rather than transactional...” and that transformational leadership met the needs of the academic community (2005, p.36). Leithwood and others hypothesized that transformational leadership is a collection of leadership characteristics instead of a set model. Charismatic, visionary, and cultural leadership characteristics have been cited as components of the transformational leadership approach. (Leithwood & Duke 1999; Bryman, 1992; Nanus, 1992)

One of the most noted non-school theorists, Bernard Bass, conducted a series of empirical studies focused on the characteristics and effects of transformational leadership. His work, *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectation*, published in 1985, is the compilation of these studies. Other researchers including Tichy and Devanna. (1986) studied the effects of transformational leadership as well. Bryman (1992) explored the nature of transformational leadership. Yammarino (1993) studied the nature of transformational leadership, while Druskat (1994) focused on causes. In his 1997 study, Bass hypothesized that there are four categories of transformational leadership practices including, (a) idealized influence (or charisma), (b) inspirational leadership, (c) individualized consideration, and (d) intellectual stimulation. Bass (1997) claims that when all four aspects are practiced, leaders are considered highly transformational. It is also important to note that, Bass’ research of leadership theory also includes aspects of
transactional leadership that he purports as necessary for successful leadership but not
even enough to stand alone (1997).

An analysis of school and non-school perspectives resulted in the emergence of
charismatic behaviors as a common characteristic. Bass (1997) maintains that it is
through charismatic behaviors on the part of leaders that covenantal relationships are
formed. Charismatic behaviors have been aligned to inspirationally motivating practices
that support and sustain relationships between constituents working toward common
goals. These relationships, according to Leithwood (2005), support the ability to find
common ground needed to make joint decisions within a team setting.

Even though the research of Bass (1997) and Leithwood (2005) focused on
relationships and joint decision making of teams, neither focused on the connection
between inspirationally motivating leadership practices of principals and the decision
making processes School Based Planning Teams. This lack of focus and the concerns
raised by school teams and principals in Western New York State School District served
as the basis for the significance of this study.

Significance of the Study

In the State of New York, School Based Planning Teams are required to make
shared decisions related to academic issues. Further, school teams are designated as the
official instructional governing body of the school. Each school team is lead by the
principal who has the responsibility for fostering mutually respectful interactions between
team members. The remaining members of the team are elected by constituency vote.
Teams are expected to make joint decisions via consensus. Appendix A delineates the full
text of Commissioner's Regulations, Part 100.1 regarding requirements relative to
School Based Planning Teams. Based on this researcher's observations of several school team meetings and conversations with principals and team members, interactions have been difficult. School Based Planning Teams were not able to make consensus based decisions consistently. School teams and principals requested district intervention. School based planning team members requested district intervention regarding team interactions and decision making. Principals requested district support citing unsuccessful attempts to bring teams to consensus based shared decision making.

Therefore, this study is significant in that the three schools chosen historically employed consensus based shared decision making as reflected in minutes recorded during team meetings. Additionally, based on discussions with school teams the Managing Director of School Improvement reported that the principal and the team expressed satisfaction with their shared decision making process. Each of the three school teams chosen for this study were asked to complete a survey and participate in focus group session conducted by a facilitator designed to measure transformational leadership practices of the school principal. Additionally, each of the three school principals was asked to participate in a face to face interview conducted by a facilitator. The results of this study may be used to develop training modules that will assist school teams in the use of consensus as the primary method of making shared decisions. More importantly, the information will be used to improve transformational leadership attributes of principals related to the use of inspirational motivation as a strategy for working with school teams in Western New York School District.
Statement of Purpose

Based on the work of Bass (2006) and Leithwood and Jantzi (2005), leaders who employ inspirationally motivating strategies are able to obtain the support of followers to accomplish tasks that go beyond their own expectations. These strategies also foster the establishment and maintenance of trusting relationships needed to reach a common goal. In Western New York State School District, several school teams continued to experience difficulties with building relationships and shared decision making based on requests for district based intervention. There were however, many schools in this Western New York School District that have demonstrated success using consensus to make shared decisions. Based on reports made by the Managing Director of School Improvement, recommendations from former school supervisors, recorded minutes of meetings, and observations by this researcher during supervisory school visitations, three P-6 school teams were chosen for this study because they have demonstrated success in using consensus to make shared decisions under the leadership of the principal. Each principal in this group of schools has demonstrated the ability to foster working relationships that support ongoing successful shared decision making.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between inspirationally motivating practices of school principals and the shared decision making processes of School Based Planning Teams in three K-6 schools in Western New York School District. The behaviors of the principal during the teams’ decision making process will be analyzed based on research based inspirationally motivating practices. Following the analysis, those practices found to be inspirationally motivational will be employed to develop training modules for professional development for other district principals.
Research Questions

Effective leadership practices and mutually respectful interactions between constituents support organizational success during shared decision making. However, difficulties experienced with shared decision making in schools indicates a need to support school teams with the process of decision making. Reeves (2006) cites Goleman and colleagues (2002) concerning collegial working relationships, “...relationship skills account for nearly three times as much impact on organizational performance as analytical skills (p.39).”

Based on the reports generated by the Managing Director of School Improvement, reviews of meeting minutes, and observations of this researcher during supervisory visits to several School Based Planning Team meetings within Western New York State City School District in this study, several teams demonstrated difficulty in employing consensus based decision making. Concerns raised by principals and school teams experiencing difficulties relative to leadership practices and team interactions prompted this writer’s investigation of the following research questions: (1) What is the relationship between the principal’s self perception and the perception of the School Based Planning Team regarding the principal’s inspirationally motivating practices? (2) Does the principal exhibit behaviors that promote consensus based decisions during School Based Planning Team meeting?
Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms have been operationally defined:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Concepts:</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charisma</td>
<td>Practices which arouse strong emotions and identification with the leader’s personal qualities and / or sense of mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consensus</td>
<td>The process used by constituents on a team to resolve an issue. Each member submits to being able to live with the decision of the team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covenantal relationships</td>
<td>Solemn agreements based on the educational connections between leaders and followers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idealized influence (charisma)</td>
<td>Leadership behaviors allow them to serve as role models for followers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualized consideration</td>
<td>Providing support and encouragement to employees for their efforts and opportunities to develop further</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational leadership</td>
<td>Communicating an appealing vision and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Concepts:</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>modeling exemplary practices consistent with that vision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational motivation</td>
<td>Capacity to motivate others to commit to the vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual stimulation</td>
<td>Practices which increase followers’ awareness of problems and encourage them to think about their work in new ways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivation- the wants and the needs, the aspirations and expectations of both the leaders and followers. (Marzano - Burns)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>The mode of a distribution with a discrete random variable is the value of the term that occurs most often. It is not uncommon for a distribution with a discrete random variable to have more than one mode, especially if there are not many terms. This happens when two or more terms occur with equal frequency, and more often than</td>
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<td>Key Concepts:</td>
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<td>any of the others. A distribution with two modes is called bimodal. A distribution with three modes is called trimodal. The mode of a distribution with a continuous random variable is the maximum value of the function. As with discrete distributions, there may be more than one mode.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<th>Shared decision making</th>
<th>Decisions made by a team representative of all school constituents using consensus</th>
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| Transformational leadership | • According to (Leithwood and Duke (1999), Bryman (1992), Nanus and Schein, 1992): A class of approaches or models of leadership rather than a distinct model of its own |
|                          | • According to James McGregor Burns: This behavior is founded on the belief that leaders and followers can raise each other to higher levels of motivation and morality. |

| Transactional leadership | • According to Avolio and Bass: emphasizes the transaction or exchange |
Key Concepts: Definition that takes place among leaders, colleagues, and followers.

- According to Bass and Riggio:
  Transactional leadership occurs when the leader rewards or disciplines the follower, depending on the adequacy of the followers' performance.

Summary of Remaining Chapters

Each of the remaining chapters present research based on the literature reviewed and analyzed. Additionally, the results are discussed and recommendations have been made.

Chapter 2 Review of the Literature

The review of the literature includes research relevant to the topic of transformational leadership, shared decision making in schools and inspirationally motivating practices.

Chapter 3 Research Design Methodology

The details regarding the mixed method design of this study, inclusive of a rationale as to when and how qualitative/quantitative measures were employed on the sample studied, are described in this chapter.
Chapter 4 Results

This chapter presents and analyzes of the data collected to describe the relationship between inspirationally motivating leadership behaviors of three school principals and the decision making processes of the School Based Planning Teams.

Chapter 5 Discussion

This chapter will present the implications of the findings, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for future studies. The study will conclude with a summary of the entire dissertation based on the analysis and results derived from the quantitative and qualitative data collected.
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction and Purpose

This chapter presents a review of the literature that includes research relevant to the topic of transformational leadership, shared decision making in schools, and inspirational motivation practices. This review begins with a conceptual understanding of leadership based on the research of Burns (1978), Bass (2006), Leithwood and Richl (2003), Smith and Piele (2006), Richmond and Allison (2003), and others. The conceptual understanding of leadership is then followed by a historical perspective of transactional and transformational leadership based on the seminal work of Burns (1978), Bass (2006), and Leithwood (2006). The third section discusses transformational leadership in schools. Section four is focused on shared decision making teams and consensus building. Positive and negative attributes of the shared decision making process are also discussed. The fifth section of the review represents a narrower focus on the principal as a transformational leader working with shared decision making teams. Section six discusses the role of the principal as an inspirational motivator and his or her role in consensus building during shared decision making. Chapter Two concludes with a summary of the research and rationale for this study.

Topic Analysis

A conceptual understanding of leadership. The importance of leadership has been discussed in business and academic settings for many years (Leithwood, 2006). Many of those discussions have caused researchers to conduct studies for the purpose of
establishing proven successful strategies to guide the work of leaders. Conceptual
definitions of leadership are abounding in studies conducted by researchers; however,
they have not agreed upon a single definition that could be considered appropriate for all
settings. According to Burns (1978), leadership is misunderstood by many even though it
is observed often. In his seminal research, Burns (1978), defined leadership as “leaders
inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations –
the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations - of both leaders and followers”
(p.19). Further research has found that there are extant commonalities among existing
definitions. For example, Smith and Piele (2006), examined four conceptual definitions
of leadership developed by Richmon and Allison (2003); Skrla, Erlandson, Reed, and
that the conceptual definitions of leadership studied were undergirded by the origin of
leadership, how leadership is practiced, and outcomes of leadership practices. They were
interested in developing an inclusive definition designed to guide the work of leaders so
that leaders learn to lead through empowerment and inspiration. Based on Smith and
Piele’s study of school and non school research, the definition for educational leadership
that was developed is as follows: “The activity of mobilizing and empowering others to
serve the academic and related needs of students with utmost skill and integrity” (2006,
p.5). The four conceptual definitions reviewed by Smith and Piele (2006), resulting in
their proposed definition are discussed in the next section.

Richmon and Allison (2003) began a study of thirty-five leadership theories in
North American literature that have been advanced over the last half of the twentieth
century with interest in investigating the misunderstanding related to conceptually
defining leadership in the research. Additionally, they also wanted to discover ways to bridge the gap between existing theory and practice to support a more organized understanding of leadership. Preliminary findings aligned with the notion that there is not a single definition of leadership, but a set of attributes that are common in most conceptual definitions of leadership. Using attributes found in the theories they examined, Richmon and Allison (2003) offered the following comprehensive definition of leadership:

Leadership is a process of exercising influence, a way of inducing compliance, a measure of personality, a form of persuasion, an effect of interaction, an instrument of goal achievement, a means for initiating structure, a negotiation of power relationships or a way of behaving. (p. 34)

In an analysis of material gleaned from 26 highly successful schools in Austin, Texas, Skrla, et al. (2001) found that several concepts recurring in conceptual definitions of leadership. These include (a) purpose, (b) direction, (c) individuals, (d) groups, (e) culture and values, (f) shared strategic vision, (g) priorities, and (h) planning change (p.9). Furthermore, Skrla, et al. (2001) also reported the following additional conclusions concerning leadership:

1. If leadership is occurring, someone is following. You can’t lead in an empty room.

2. Leadership is purposeful and directional. It does not move aimlessly.

3. The direction of leadership is always based upon priorities. Even good things must sometimes be set aside in order to pursue what is most important. Choices must be made.
4. Significant leadership results in change.

5. Effective leadership rests upon the integration of the ideas of an organization's stakeholders. (p. 9)

Welte (1978) proposed a definition of leadership by making a distinction between managing and leading. He equated management with coordinating different activities and leadership with natural and learned skills that enable the leader to interact through relationships with others and cause them to take desired actions (p.630).

Sergiovanni's (1992) conceptual definition of leadership included elements of morality, influence and integrity. His view of leadership is based on qualitatively analyzing the research and views of 95 leadership researchers in the field and administrators at various levels within school districts. His concept of moral leadership is defined in relationship to stewardship that motivates others by appealing to their values. Sergiovanni (1992) espoused the notion that moral leaders make decisions based on the common good.

In contrast to the conclusions drawn by Smith and Piele (2006) concerning the commonalities existing among leadership definitions, Yukl (1981) purported that all definitions are arbitrary and subjective. Yukl conceded however, that conceptually, certain behaviors attributable to leadership include an underpinning of influence on others. This agreement related to influence as an attribute of leadership is somewhat parallel to Sergiovanni's (1992) view of leadership. Yukl's (1981) concession was based on the outcome of synthesizing behavioral taxonomies during a four year study involving six leaders. Yukl (1981) was interested in identifying meaningful and measurable categories of leadership behavior. Fourteen behavior categories were identified in his
Five others were reserved for a future research. The synthesis of those categories resulted in the creation of following managerial behaviors: (a) motivating and inspiring; (h) clarifying the roles and objectives; (c) planning and organizing; (d) supporting; (e) developing and mentoring; (f) recognizing; (g) rewarding; (h) managing conflict and team building; (i) delegating; (j) consulting; (k) networking; and (l) monitoring (Yukl, 1981). The fourteen managerial behaviors measured in Yukl's (1981) research study are included the Managerial Behavior Survey (MBS) administered to the subordinates of leaders. Yukl's (1981) findings indicated that when managerial behaviors are measurable they are also meaningful to leaders and followers (p.120-138). This method of identifying and measuring specific managerial behaviors offers opportunities for specific improvement in leadership practice.

Noted educational researchers Leithwood and Richl (2003) analyzed three quantitative studies related to the nature of successful leadership. They identified three basic aspects of successful leadership: (a) setting direction, (b) developing people, and (c) redesigning organizations. In another research review of theory and peer reviewed evidence about the nature of school leadership, Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris and Hopkins (2006) added an additional leadership aspect: managing the instructional (teaching and learning) program. This review involved more than forty published studies. The following statements are findings from those studies: (a) when setting direction, leaders identify and articulate a vision that fosters acceptance of group goals and create high performance expectations; (b) leaders who develop the people around them offer intellectual stimulation, provide individualized support, and act as role models; (c) leaders who work to redesign organizations strengthen school cultures, modify
organizational structures, and build collaborative processes; and (d) leaders who manage the instructional program ensure student achievement. Setting direction, developing people, redesigning organizations and managing the instructional program, act as a core set of basic leadership practices that are valuable in school settings because they bring focus to the work of the school leader. Based on this 2003 study, Leithwood and Riehl (2006) concluded that a successful leader might exercise one or all of the aspects at any given point.

According to Glanz (2006), leadership is about people of different qualities working together toward a shared goal. It does not focus solely on the capacity of one person; rather it is broad and inclusive of all constituents.

While there are numerous definitions of leadership in the literature, there appears to be agreement among researchers that there are common attributes in conceptual definitions of leadership. One of these attributes focuses on connections with constituents and is viewed as critical to the work of those who serve as leaders of organizations. Such connections are an integral component of leadership practices purposed by Bass (2006) and Burns (2003) called transformational leadership.

*Transactional and transformational leadership.* Leadership theories related to transformational and transactional leadership originated from studies of non-school researchers. In his seminal research, Burns (1978) distinguished the differences between transformational and transactional leadership as follows: (a) Transactional leadership is based on an exchange where the leader rewards followers according to accomplishments and (b) Transformational leadership is characterized by the way leaders inspire followers to go beyond expectation and is based on the establishment of relationships based on trust.
commitment between leaders and followers and the work done for the common good. (p. 18-22)

The study of both styles of leadership began with the work of Max Weber, a German Philosopher. Weber's (1947) transactional and transformational leadership theory model included three types of leadership: (a) charismatic leadership, (b) bureaucratic leadership, and (c) traditional leadership. Weber associated charismatic leadership with one who has supernatural heroic qualities. This leadership style has been associated with one who is a transformer. Bureaucratic leadership is associated with one who exercises control on the basis of knowledge. This leadership style has been associated with one who is transactional. Traditional leadership was associated with one who is arbitrary in his leadership, similar to a king. This third leadership style has been associated with feudal authority in which followers follow because of the position of the leader. Weber theorized that leaders could successfully transition among the three leadership styles depending on the need of an organization. Weber's work in this area focused on moral values and represented the notion that leadership goes beyond the social exchange between leaders and followers.

Burns (1978) studied Weber's theories of leadership and identified two kinds of leadership, transactional and transformational. He characterized transactional leaders as those who, "...approach followers with the intent to exchange one thing for another" (p. 19). Further, he characterized a transformational leader as one who, "...looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower" (p. 19). He studied the leadership characteristics of transformational and transactional leadership and the relationship between leaders and followers when either
leadership style is practiced. Burns’ research findings indicated that leadership must be aligned with collective purpose and that effective leaders are judged by their ability to make social changes.

Bass (1985 and 1997) studied Burns’ conclusions and conducted additional research to further define transactional and transformational leadership. Bass was interested in transactional and transformational leadership behaviors exhibited by leaders. Bass used the results of a 1980 study to develop the content of his 1985 study. He collected and analyzed descriptions of leadership behaviors from 70 South African senior executives. The senior executives were asked to identify someone in their lives who had: (a) raised their consciousness; (b) elevated their motivation on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs; (c) moved them to go beyond their self-interests for the good of the group, organization, or society. A set of 142 statements evolved. The 142 statements were sorted by eleven trained judges into transactional and transformational leadership practices. The sorted statements became the first edition of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). Seventy three items were chosen for the MLQ. The MLQ Form 1 was then administered to 104 U.S. Army senior officers to rate their superiors on magnitude estimation scales ranging from zero to four. Study results illustrated a high correlation of .85 between perceived effectiveness and satisfaction with the leader. Both transactional and transformational leadership styles were rated positively but charisma, one aspect of transformational leadership, emerged as the most highly favored leadership practice. The correlation between charisma and satisfaction and rated effectiveness was .91 and .85. Individual consideration followed with a .76 and .70 correlation and intellectual simulation was next with a correlation of .55 and .47. Transactional factor contingent
reward resulted in a correlation of .45 and .41. The lowest correlation of .29 and .23 was management by exception. The quantitative results of this survey confirmed the notion that transformational leaders must use charismatic practices focused on socioemotional elements. Similar studies conducted involving business executives, agency administrators and U.S. Army colonels reflected the same results as in the first study. This research resulted in the development of two transactional leadership practices and three dimensions of transformational leadership practices. The two transactional leadership practices identified were contingent reward and management by exception. The three transformational leadership practices identified were charismatic leadership which included inspirational leadership, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation.

In 1994, Bass and Avolio, reexamined and refined the three behaviors Bass identified in the 1985 study. Bass and Avolio identified four behaviors of transformational leaders that have become known as the Four I's. The four behaviors included:

1. **Idealized Influence** – charismatic vision and behavior that inspires others to follow – the leader serves as a role model

2. **Inspirational motivation** – capacity to motivate others to commit to the vision – the leader builds enthusiasm, optimism and team spirit

3. **Individualized consideration** – coaching to specific needs of followers – the leader gives personalized attention

4. **Intellectual stimulation** – encouraging innovation and creativity by questioning assumptions and supporting problem solving
Bass and Avolio concluded that when a leader practices one or all four aspects, they are considered transformational.

Based on studies conducted by non-school researchers, transformational leadership has emerged as the preferred style of leadership due to the lasting impact upon followers. School leadership researchers such as Leithwood studied the attributes of both styles of leadership and concluded that the attributes of transformational leadership proposed by non-school researchers offered the most advantage to school leadership practices because of the collaborative nature of this style of leadership (Leithwood, 1992).

Transformational leadership in schools. Kenneth Leithwood’s (2002) research represents the most comprehensive research based model of transformational leadership related to school settings to date. Numerous studies have been conducted to investigate the influence of transformational leadership practices within schools. For example, Leithwood and Jantzi (1990) conducted a three year qualitative study to examine the use of transformational leadership practices during school improvement initiatives in 12 Ontario schools. The purpose of the study was to investigate the extensiveness of the school collaborative process, the significance of the improvement processes, and the strategies used by administrators to develop the collaborative environment of the school. Twelve Principals and 150 teachers were interviewed during two day visits to each school. The findings indicated that principals used transformational practices that promoted collaborative cultures within the school. The transformational practices also enhanced staff understanding of values and beliefs. Staff also reported that they were more able to solve professional problems due to the transformational leadership practices...
of the administrators. These findings align with the results of similar research conducted by Leithwood (2005).

In another study, Jantzi and Leithwood (1997), 2,378 elementary and secondary teachers in Ontario, Canada were surveyed about influences on their perceptions of transformational leadership practices of principals. This study, based on perception, is a refined replication of an earlier study (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996) that was conducted with a smaller group of participants. Leithwood and Jantzi wanted to replicate the study with a larger group of participants and with an additional question concerning school management. Teachers were asked to respond to the survey based on their overall perceptions of principals’ transformational leadership and their perceptions of six leadership dimensions proposed by Leithwood. The six leadership dimensions used in this study were the result of empirical research from earlier studies (Leithwood 1994; Leithwood & Steinbach, 1995). The six dimensions of leadership practices that teachers were asked to consider included:

1. Fostering development of vision and goals: behavior on the part of the leader aimed at identifying new opportunities for his or her school; developing, articulating, and inspiring others with his or her vision of the future; and building consensus on school goals and priorities.

2. Developing a collaborative decision making structure: behavior on the part of the leader aimed at promoting staff involvement in decision making; and facilitating the distribution of leadership among staff.
3. Symbolizing good professional practice: behavior on the part of the leader that sets examples for staff to follow in interactions with staff and students, and demonstrates openness to change based on new understandings.

4. Providing individualized support: behavior on the part of the leader that indicates respect for staff and concern about their personal feelings and needs.

5. Providing intellectual stimulation: behavior on the part of the leader that challenges staff to re-examine some of the assumptions about their work and rethink how it can be performed.

6. Holding high performance expectations: behavior that demonstrates the leader’s expectations for excellence, quality, and high performance on the part of staff. (p.507)

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire contained 243 items measuring three constructs: dimensions of transformational leadership, school management, and in-school characteristics. Due to the large number of participants in the study, a matrix sampling plan was used to ascertain responses. A five point scale of strongly disagree to strongly disagree was provided for the participant responses. A total of 1,253 or 53% of the 2,378 elementary and secondary teachers surveyed completed the survey ratings for transformational leadership. A total of 1,042 or 52% of the intended sample of 2,005 elementary teachers completed the management variable. The t-test used to examine the data separately for leadership and management illustrated no significant differences between the groups.

Jantzi and Leithwood indicated that the results of their original 1996 study and the 1997 were replicated very closely. Another finding indicated that the variations in
teachers' perception about leadership were influenced by the model used. A third finding pointed out that the management variable accounted for 80% of the variation in teachers' perceptions. Finally, with two exceptions, there were no differences of theoretical practical consequence among the six leadership dimensions. Fostering development of vision and goals and providing individual support received the highest affirmations. A .90 correlation indicated a close relationship between transformational leadership practices and school management. The findings of this study confirms the importance of transformational practices in the school setting especially related to setting goals and following through with support to constituents. Based on multiple studies conducted between 1990 and 2005, Leithwood and Jantzi concluded that “...successful leadership was likely to be transformational rather than transactional...” and that transformational leadership met the needs of the academic community. (Leithwood, 2005 p.36) Further, Leithwood and others concluded that transformational leadership is a collection of leadership characteristics instead of a set model. Charismatic, visionary, and cultural leadership characteristics have been designated as components of the transformational leadership approach (Bryman, 1992; Leithwood and Duke 1999; Nanus, 1992). Additionally, Jantzi and Leithwood’s (2000) research led him to reexamine the Four I’s of Bass. This reexamination led to the delineation of seven dimensions of transformational leadership (a) building vision and goals, (b) providing intellectual stimulation, (c) offering individualized support, (d) symbolizing professional practices and values, (e) demonstrating high performance expectations, (f) creating a productive school culture, and (g) developing structures to foster participation in school decisions.
Comparisons of non-school and school perspectives reveal charismatic behaviors as an emerging common characteristic of transformational leadership. Bass (1985) maintains that it is the charismatic behaviors of leaders that engender covenantal relationships with followers. These relationships, according to Leithwood, support the ability to find common ground needed to make joint decisions within a team setting. Covenantal relationships realized as a result of effective transformational leadership practices support successful shared decision making.

Shared decision making teams. Shared decision making in schools is a process of making instructional decisions collaboratively. It was one of the major school management reform efforts of the nineties. The original purpose of shared decision making was to improve teaching and learning and form the basis for new leadership (Liontos, 1994). The New York State Commissioner of Education developed regulations to guide the shared decision making process for New York State Schools. During that same period, several theorists conducted studies to evaluate the use of shared decision making teams within schools.

In 1994, the New York State Commissioner of Education mandated that each school must establish a school based planning team for the purpose of shared decision making to improve, "...the educational performance of all students in the school, regardless of such factors as economic status, race, sex, language background, or disability." (Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, 1994, p. 1) The Commissioner’s Regulation 100.11 delineated the processes to be used by each school to reach joint decisions.
Providing insight into this intent is a study conducted by Blasé and Blasé (1999), eight successful principals, associated with the Georgia based League of Professional Schools, participated in a study focused on principals' perspectives on democratic leadership in shared governance schools. This study was based on a limited number of qualitative studies conducted and was empirically grounded and descriptive. The study was also limited to principals of schools with active memberships in the League. As members of the League of Professional Schools, schools must commit to working in a shared governance structure and using action research within their schools. New school memberships are determined by attendance at a training session and 80% commitment of the entire school. The eight principals chosen to participate in this study were recommended by the League based on data gathered during annual visits to schools by League facilitators, Georgia State Department of Education personnel and University of Georgia faculty. Forty-five principals' school data sets were submitted. The data sets were analyzed and participants were chosen based on the goal of achieving the broadest possible representation of ethnicity, gender, and school setting diversity (e.g. elementary, middle and high schools). Participants included five male, three female, five Caucasian, and three African American principals from three rural, three suburban and two urban school locations. Three elementary, two middle and three high school principals participated. The average age of principals was fifty and the average number of years in leadership positions was seven. Results did not reflect any of the factors used to choose participants. Principals participated in interviews by answering the research question based on the Blumer-Mead approach to symbolic interaction theory. The interview guide, data collection, and analyses were also aligned to the Blumer-Mead approach. This
approach emphasizes the examination of human subjectivity. The principals were asked to respond to the research question in an open ended format setting that allowed for flexibility of follow up questions. The question asked was, "What are principals’ perspectives on democratic leadership in shared governance schools?" Each principal participated in two sets of interviews. The findings from this study identified several major strategies that all principals discussed during the interview sessions. Those major strategies included: (a) building trust, (b) initiating governance structures to encourage teacher voice, (c) setting limits, (d) hiring, (e) encouraging group development, (f) providing information, (g) supporting teachers in confrontations, (h) involving parents, and (i) supporting action research. An additional finding included principals’ statements confirming the notion that teacher empowerment improves teaching and learning when shared governance is practiced.

According to Glanz (2006), successful shared decision making is dependent upon: (a) commitment, (b) collaboration, (c) trust and rapport, (d) open lines of communication, (e) establish conflict resolution strategies, (f) involvement of the principal, (g) clearly articulated roles and responsibilities, (h) keeping everyone in the loop, (i) arranging for professional development on a consistent basis, (j) establishment of parameters for decision making, (k) provide time and place for meetings, (l) establishment of incentives and rewards, (m) identify leadership roles, (n) identify opportunities for more collaboration, (o) listen, (p) form internal and external alliances, and (q) keep student learning in mind. Additionally, Glanz’s (2006) study of the work of other researchers (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001; York-Barr & Duke, 2004) confirms positive aspects of shared decision making.
York-Barr & Duke (2004) summarized two decades of literature about teacher leadership from 1980 to the present. The researchers cited the fact that most of the studies conducted about teacher leadership is qualitative in nature and were conducted using a small number of participants. York-Barr and Duke also noted that most of the literature was derived from case studies and self-reporting methodologies. One hundred forty sources were used to complete the summary. While the roles of teachers in each source varied broadly making it difficult to render findings, York-Barr and Duke cited the following findings: (a) Teacher involvement increases the likelihood that school-wide improvement will occur, (b) Teacher involvement enhances ownership and commitment to goals, and (c) When teachers are involved in school beyond the classroom, they feel a sense of accomplishment and renewal greater than the benefits that may accrue within a single classroom.

A four-year longitudinal study was conducted by Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond (2001). The researchers were interested in making leadership practice more transparent by using an in-depth analysis. The research process involved observations and interviews with formal and informal leaders, classroom teachers and a social network analysis of thirteen schools in Chicago metropolitan area. The background of the study was that if distributed leadership could be used in the school setting, then leadership would involve all constituents to a greater extent. The researchers' argument was that school leadership is best understood as a distributed practice, stretched over the school's social and situational contexts (p.23). Spillane, Halverson & Diamond's findings confirmed their argument. They found that if significant organizational and especially instructional change is to occur then teachers must play a role. Leadership roles are important to the
success of teams working toward resolving issues. Therefore, in the school setting, the way leadership works with site based management teams is critical. Spillane, et al. study confirmed the need to use a team approach as is suggested by the shared decision making model.

The effective use of transformational leadership practices during shared decision making has been explored by a number of researchers. For example, Bush (2003) completed a comprehensive review of educational leadership and management research. Based on that research, he purported the notion that the collegial nature of transformational leadership influences decision making. According to Bush, the collegial aspect of transformational leadership supports shared values and common interests among team members. Further, those shared values and interests increase the potential to engage stakeholders in harmonious relationships that support authentic decision making.

Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee (2002) conducted numerous longitudinal studies of organizational effectiveness. That research has been compiled in Primal Leadership (2002), a summary and analysis of decades of research focused on leadership aligned to emotion, resonance and intelligence. The researchers were interested in providing a theory of authentic, collegial working relationships that are essential in organizations. Goleman, et al. advanced the notion that relational skills account for nearly three times as much impact on organizational performance as analytical skills. The relational skill of the transformational leader who is also inspirational builds the trust and credibility needed to realize organizational goals (p. 51). This body of research supports the notion that relationships are necessary to move teams forward toward a common purpose.
Productivity is another aspect of transformational leadership practices studied by Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999). A group of cultural and organizational studies were reviewed and analyzed for transformational leadership practices that could influence school culture. Three practices were identified as the basis for influencing school culture and individual classrooms. The three practices identified included (a) policy development; (b) sharing of evidence based information on a regular basis; and (c) implementation, evaluation and refining policies. The researchers concluded that transformational leadership practitioners create productive school cultures when constituents are clear about school operations. Those cultures encourage positive participation on shared decision making teams.

Additional research examined the effect of transformational leaders’ use of the collective effort of teams as a channel for decision making. Kouzes and Posner (2002) propose that effective transformational leaders engage people at higher levels of commitment that facilitates the accomplishment of organizational goals. This “committing” style, used by transformational leaders at the moral and ethical behavior level, fosters the shared view needed to reach the goals of an organization. Based on the research gathered during this review of the literature, certain practices of transformational leadership were reported as having positive effects on teams involved in shared decision making. The role of the principal in the shared decision making process is vital to the success of the school based planning team. (Kouzes and Posner, 2002)

*The principal as transformational leader and shared decision making teams.*

Principals play a vital role in the work of school based planning teams responsible for decisions regarding instructional issues. In the results of twenty four studies focused on
the role of the principal in site based management reviewed by Wendell Anderson (2006). He concluded, "The principal is the most important figure in a Site Based Management effort" (Anderson 2006, p.235). Based on one of the studies (Candoli, 1995) his conclusion was supported. School principals, according to Candoli’s research, play a pivotal role in all of the changes implemented within the school setting.

Further supporting the importance of the role of the principal as a planner and facilitator in the shared decision making process, Lynn Balster Lontos (1994) reviewed and summarized the research of David Stine (1993), Scott Bauer (1992) and others. Based on that research, Lontos (1994) identified steps the principal should take when planning for shared decision making:

1. Start small, go slowly. Small steps rather than wholesale changes foreign to school and participants will be more successful. Analyze school needs and adapt selected processes that meet the local situation.

2. Agree on specifics at the outset. Unless mandated, decide who will be involved and how the group will be representative of all constituents. Determine how decisions will be made (majority vote or consensus) and who will make the final decisions on issues.

3. Be clear about procedures, roles and expectations. Allen and Glickman learned that unclear processes created confusion that fragmented people’s actions, while clear processes empowered participants.

4. Give everyone a chance to be involved. Decisions made by administrative appointees, as opposed to volunteer representatives, may be perceived as top
down decisions. According to Allen and Glickman, accessibility to process increased positive feeling on the part of teachers.

5. Build trust and support. Allen and Glickman found that mistrust between administration and other staff causes the team to be dysfunctional.

6. Lead the team to resolve minor issues first and then move to more difficult issues. (Liontos, 1994)

In contrast to the positive role a principal might bring to the shared decision making setting, Lashway (1996) reported several concerns related to the leadership of principals working with shared decision-making teams. He reviewed the research of Blasé (1994), Griffin (1995), Prestine (1993), Spalding (1994), and Weiss (1993 & 1995) concerning shared decision making and the role of the principal. Based on this review, he made several assertions: (a) principals must be able to assume the role of facilitator rather than director when working with the shared decision making team and (b) old assumptions might also be used to shape or define the roles of team members. Lashway’s assumptions are based on a study conducted by Blasé (1994) and Spaulding (1994). In the 1994 Blasé study, principals used a directive approach to resolve issues that they believed would harm students. In the Spaulding study, the principal manipulated the shared decision-making process to fit his agenda. In an additional study conducted by Nona Pristine (1993), visibility and participation of the principal during meetings was pointed out as a concern. The negative context of the results of these studies were focused on principals that did not take an active role during shared decision-making and principals whose hyperactive responses gave the impression of being in sole charge of the team.
While much of Lashway's study casts a shadow on the shared decision making process, he conceded that the process could work if specific actions are taken to rectify the concerns. Suggestions for improvement offered by Lashway included: (a) training for teams, (b) remaining focused during team meetings, and (c) having the principal work on facilitative skills. The influence of effective transformational practices related to moving teams toward outcomes based on inspiration gleaned from the leader is directly related to the inspirational motivational aspect of transformational leadership (Bass, 2006).

The principal as inspirational motivator. In Bass & Riggio's (2006) comprehensive review of theory and empirical research, inspirational leaders are described as, "...optimistic about outcomes, able to articulate the vision, and are able to establish a clear sense of direction for the organizations they lead" (p.140). The following claims are made based on the review of the research:

1. Inspirationally motivated leaders serve as role models that inspire others to behave similarly,

2. The use of a common language encourages others to follow willingly and work beyond expectations,

3. The diverse backgrounds of team members are not a hindrance to the progress of the team when a common language is clearly articulated.

4. Inspirationally motivated leaders reframe opportunities to make the environment less threatening thereby supporting involvement of all of team members.
5. Leaders who use inspirationally motivating practices enable team members to participate by arranging the environment and modeling the kind of behavior expected.

Bass (2003) conducted a study for the Kellogg Leadership Studies Project (KSLP). The purpose was to investigate the ethical nature of transformational leadership. He concluded that when followers are inspired by the challenges provided by the leader, they become meaningfully engaged in the process of shared decision making.

Rationale for the Study and Summary

The literature related to leadership theories and models is bountiful. However, in spite of the numerous empirical studies conducted by researchers, there remains no agreement on one definition of leadership. Additionally, there are no studies specifically focused on the use of inspirationally motivating practices employed by school principals working with School Based Planning Teams using consensus to make decisions. Some concessions have been made, however, regarding specific attributes as being important to the success of leaders in the school community (Yukl, 1994). Proven leadership attributes practiced consistently by school principals support the establishment and maintenance of relationships needed to move schools toward success (Leithwood, 2003).

The need to work successfully with shared decision making teams concerning instructional issues is required for schools in New York State. Teams are expected to use consensus to make decisions. (See the Appendix A for documentation of this requirement) Reaching consensus requires school teams to engage in positive interactions on a consistent basis. Based on the work of Bass and Riggio (2006), leaders who use transformational leadership practices are able to lead teams to accomplish feats beyond
the expectations. School teams working with a transformational leader are more likely to make decisions more consistently when influenced by inspirationally motivating behaviors exercised by the leader (Burns, 2003).

The purpose of this review of the literature was to examine the research that focuses on the possibility of an existing relationship between inspirationally motivating practices by school principals and the shared decision making process of school teams. The success of shared decision making is dependent on the ability of school teams to reach consensus. Based on the research reviewed in this chapter, relationships between transformational leaders and members of their school teams support the ability of teams to reach consensus. Those relationships fostered by transformational leaders are directly attributable to inspirational motivational leadership practices (Burns, 2003). Furthermore, the more transformational a leader is, the more successful school decision making teams will be (Liontos, 1994, Leithwood & Riel, 2003).

The review of literature supports the argument that there is a possible relationship between the use of inspirational motivational practices and the ability of school teams to make shared decisions.
Chapter 3 Research Design Methodology

General Perspective and Problem Statement

This descriptive multi-site case study occurred within the natural settings of three out of thirty nine schools within Western New York School District. Each of the three schools was chosen because they represented a microcosm of the entire school district relative to size, location, and poverty level. Overall consideration was also based on discussions with the school supervisor and the managing director of school improvement relative to their shared decision making process. School A was chosen because of the observed collaborative interactions of the team and their focus on children. School B was chosen based on the recommendation of the school supervisor who observed meetings of School Based Planning Team on a regular basis. The supervisor recommended the school as a possible choice because the principal exhibited unique leadership characteristics that encouraged the team to use consensus based decision making. School C, was chosen because the team and principal was one of the schools requesting intervention. The team had begun to experience difficulty in making shared decisions. Eventually, the principal of the school requested a leave, a new principal was assigned and the dynamics of the team’s decision making practices changed.

As a primarily qualitative study, the research report embodied quantitative and qualitative perspectives (Glatthorn and Joyner, 2005). This mixed methods design was used to capture the best aspects of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (Creswell, 2003). This methodology was chosen for this study because the researcher was
interested in exploring perceptions, relationships, and influence. The mixed methods approach allowed for expansion and refinement of quantitative data through the qualitative lens (Creswell, 2003). The data for this study was collected through individual interviews of three school principals, several focus group sessions, and the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ, 5X – Short). The MLQ is a widely accepted survey instrument used to access leadership attributes associated with transformational leadership practices. The members of the three School Based Planning Teams completed the 45 items on the rater’s version of the MLQ and the three principals responded to the 45 items on leader’s version. Additional information was gathered through face to face interviews of the three school principals and focus group sessions with each of the School Based Planning Team members for each school. This data from the interviews and the focus group sessions was used to extend and refine the analysis of school leaders. This method of data collection and analysis used has been identified as the concurrent triangulation strategy forwarded by Creswell, 2003, who claims that it is, “...selected as a model when a researcher uses two different methods in an attempt to confirm, cross validate, or corroborate findings within a single study” (p.217).

The quantitative portion of this study was designed to collect and analyze data that investigates the perceptions of leadership practices of school principals on decisions made by School Based Planning Teams. The qualitative phase of the study occurred concurrently using focus group sessions and face to face interviews. These focus group sessions and interviews were designed to probe and analyze natural phenomena that occur within the settings of the school planning team meetings relevant to the leadership practices of the school principal. Specifically, the focus was on gathering evidence of
inspirationally motivating practices employed by principals as referenced in the work of

The New York State Commissioner of Education Regulations, Part 100.11
requires that every public school in New York State institute a School Based Planning
Team. These school teams are charged with oversight of the instructional programs of
schools. School teams must include teachers, parents and administrators. (See Appendix
A for the complete document). In Western New York State City School District, teams
are led by school principals. Principals’ leadership practices are expected to result in the
creation of a collaborative environment where shared decision making can occur. The
problem being addressed was that several schools principals have not been successful in
leading the shared decision making process. School Based Planning Teams in these
schools have experienced difficulty supporting the instructional agenda because they
have not been able to reach mutually agreed upon decisions at each meeting. These
decision making difficulties served as an impetus for investigating the following research
question: What is the relationship between inspirationally motivating practices of
principals during shared decision making as evidenced in three PreK-6 Western New
York State City Schools?

Research Context

This study occurred in three PreK-6 Western New York State City School District
Schools over a three month period, January, 2008 to March, 2008. The Western New
York State City School District was an urban school district that had been designated by
the New York State Department of Education as a school district in need of
improvement. The district was one of the five largest school districts in Western New York State. Table 3.1 illustrates the demographics of the entire district.

Table 3.1

Western New York State City School District Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Schools</th>
<th>Student Population</th>
<th>Poverty Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PreK - 6</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>PreK-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Total</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>District Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, sixty four percent of all students were African American, twenty percent were Latino, fourteen percent are Caucasian, and two percent were Asian or Native American. Additionally, eight percent of all district students were limited English proficient and fourteen percent are students with special needs. Also, thirty five languages were spoken within the schools of this district. (Basic Educational Data System, 2006) For purposes of confidentiality, the PreK-6 schools included in this study will be referred to as School A, School B and School C. These three schools were chosen because they represent a microcosm of the entire district relative to size, location, poverty level, and ethnicity. School A is representative of the large schools in the district and is located in one of the highest poverty areas of the city. School B is representative of the mid-size schools within the district and is located in a slightly more racially diverse neighborhood. School C is representative of the district’s small schools and is located in
the most affluent area of the city. Table 1.2 represents a summary of the each school's indicators.

Table 3.2

PreK-6 Western New York State Schools Chosen for the Study Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>School Enrollment</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Poverty Level</th>
<th>Ethnic Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School A</td>
<td>681</td>
<td>North East</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Native American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>North West</td>
<td>75.20%</td>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Native American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School C</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>North East</td>
<td>62.8%</td>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Native American</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Participants

As school supervisor in the Western New York School District, this researcher was aware of the actions of the school principal and school based planning team. The primary focus, however, was on the relationship between the leadership practices employed by the principal and the impact of those practices on shared decision making. Participant selection in this study was purposive because the participants were able to provide pertinent information about the interaction of the team and leadership practices of the principal (Gay and Airasian, 2000). This purposeful sampling was used because the individuals within the group of participants may have experienced the phenomena being studied (Creswell, 2003); in this case, the principal’s inspirationally motivating practices. Permission to work within the three school settings was sought from the Western New York State School’s Superintendent and with the Internal Review Board of the institution of higher education sponsoring this dissertation.

The participants involved in this study included the members of the three School Based Planning Teams. Specifically, the total number of participants included the three school principals, three assistant principals, eighteen teachers, two paraprofessionals, three clerical or custodial representatives, and nine parents. Due to attrition, the actual number of participants decreased from thirty eight to thirty two. Table 1.3 presents the team structure.
Table 3.3

School Based Planning Team Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Administrators</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Paraprofessionals</th>
<th>Clerical / Custodian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School A</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School C</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The principals in the three schools chosen for this study have led their individual schools for 5, 9, and 1.5 years respectively. Two the three schools have Assistant Principals while the third school does not. In this district, the assignment of assistant principals to schools is based on the size of the population. Table 3.4 is represents the administrative structure of the three schools chosen for this study.

Table 3.4

Administrative Structure of the Three Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Administrative Structure</th>
<th>Ethnic Origin</th>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School A</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School B</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School C</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to the factors illustrated in Table 3.4, these three schools were chosen because under the leadership of the school principals their school teams use consensus based decision making as evidenced by minutes recorded during meetings and observations reported by the managing director of school improvement. It is noteworthy that, this has not always been true for one of the three schools. School C’s School Based Planning Team experienced difficulties making decisions prior to the arrival of the current principal. During the 2006-07, this researcher, serving as the school supervisor, met with members of the School Based Planning Team on several occasions to discuss concerns relative to the inability of the team to make decisions based on consensus. The team and the former principal requested district level intervention. Eventually, the principal requested and was granted a transfer to another district school. A new principal was assigned to School C. After the first two months of the newly appointed principal assignment, the team began to make consensus based decisions. Finally, the three schools were also chosen because of school performance over the last five years. All have shown academic progress. Again, that was not always the case for one of the three schools. School A was designated as a School Under Registration Review (SURR) in the past but has begun showing steady academic progress. This designation, imposed by the New York State Department of Education, is the most serious of all designations and can result in school closure if progress is not made within specific deadlines. District level intervention that included changing administrative leadership, assigning extra reading certified staff and engaging consultants from higher education resulted in immediate improvement in student achievement. The school was removed from the SURR list and continues to demonstrate incremental academic gains.
Instruments Used In Data Collection

Several instruments and recording processes were used in the data collection process for this study. Instrumentation used to collect data included the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (5X-Short) a quantitative survey, face to face interviews, and focus group sessions. Additionally, written documentation from School Based Planning Team meetings was used to ascertain information relative to team decision making.

Multifactor leadership questionnaire. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5X-short form (MLQ-5X-short), is based on the Full Range Leadership Model research of Bass. (1985); Bass and Avolio. 1997; and Burns (1978). The questionnaire was designed to measure the effects of leadership behaviors. It measures nine leadership factors that include the four factors of transformational leadership, three factors of transactional leadership and one non-leadership factor. The MLQ (5X-short) questionnaire was chosen because it measures transformational leadership behaviors including inspirational motivational behaviors aligning with the focus of this study. Participants were asked to respond to statements describing the principal’s leadership behaviors using a five point Likert scale ranging from “not at all” to “frequently if not always” concerning the leadership behaviors of the principal. The MLQ (5X-short) was used to determine whether the leadership practices of each of the principals were discerned by their School Based Planning Teams. Two forms of the questionnaire were administered. Principals completed the leaders form and members of the team completed the raters form.

Thirty-two MLQ (5X-short) raters’ questionnaires were hand delivered to teachers, paraprofessionals; clerical, custodians and parents serving on the School Based
Planning Teams. Additionally, the MLQ (5X-short) Principals Questionnaire was hand delivered to the three principals. Of the thirty-two potential participants inclusive of the principals, twenty-eight agreed to participate in the study. Of the twenty-eight, twenty-three (82.3%) returned completed surveys.

*Face to face interviews.* Face to face interviews were conducted with the three elementary school principals involved in this study in order to obtain their perception regarding their leadership. The interview protocol based on inspirationally motivating practices was developed for this set of interviews. The questions for the interviews were aligned to the content of the MLQ (5X-short). The focus remained on the question: Does the principal exhibit behaviors that promote consensus based decisions during School Based Planning Team meetings? A semi-structured open-ended questions format was used to obtain responses. An example of one of the questions is: Describe instances when the principal challenged the team to make a difficult decision and how the team interacted. Additionally, these interviews were audiotaped and professionally transcribed to ensure accuracy. Each interview was conducted in the school setting by a skilled facilitator who was familiar with the concepts germane to this study. The skilled facilitator was chosen based on two important factors. The skilled facilitator: (a) has served as a successful principal of several schools and (b) was familiar with the goals, objectives and methodologies of this study. Additionally, this facilitator served as the district spokesperson for the school improvement process. The facilitator's understanding of the study was further enhanced by frequent interactions with the researcher prior to and between interview sessions.
Focus groups. The focus group protocol was designed to obtain each School Based Planning Team members' perceptions regarding the leadership practices of the school principal and addressed the following question: How do the inspirationally motivating practices of the principal influence the shared decision making process during school based planning team meetings? The protocol for the sessions was developed based on the concepts derived from the MLQ. An example of one of the questions is: How do the dreams and ideas of the principal affect the way you make decisions during School Based Planning Team Meetings? Focus group sessions were conducted by a skilled facilitator. The skilled facilitator was chosen based on two important factors. The skilled facilitator: (a) has served as a successful principal of several schools and (b) was familiar with the goals, objectives and methodologies of this study. The facilitator's understanding of the study was further enhanced by frequent interactions with the researcher prior to and between focus group sessions.

All sessions were audiotaped for accurate transcription. A total of three focus group sessions were conducted with the three School Based Planning Teams. The Principal was not present during the focus group sessions.

Documentation. Documentation examined for the study included data from minutes recorded during School Based Planning Team meetings beginning in 2006 and ending 2008. Other available public documents studied included minutes from the Executive Steering Committee for School Based Planning were examined to ascertain information related to the shared decision making process. Documentation also included an examination of Part 100.11; the New York State Commissioner’s Regulations regarding school based planning. Specifically, the evidence collected from the minutes
answered the question: Is there written evidence of leadership behaviors that influence the decision making process of the School Based Planning Teams? Other reports generated from school based planning team meetings were examined to document shared decision making.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data were collected and analyzed in two phases. In the first phase, two compatible forms of the MLQ were administered to the members of the three School Based Planning Teams and the three school principals. In phase two, face to face interviews were conducted with the three principals, and focus groups sessions were conducted with the members of the three School Based Planning Teams (See Appendices C and D for interview and focus group protocols). Finally, the data were analyzed using several steps.

Phase one. The MLQ was used to determine the degree of alignment between the perceptions of the members of each of the three School Based Planning Teams and that of the three principals regarding the inspirationally motivating practices of the school principals during meetings of the School Based Planning Teams. Once the MLQ data were collected, several steps were employed to analyze the survey results. Those steps included (a) reporting the number of participants who did and did not return the survey, (b) determining the most appropriate measure for reporting the results, and (c) determining the plan to provide a descriptive analysis of the data.

Phase two. Three face to face interviews were conducted with each of the three principals and focus groups were conducted with the members of the three School Based Planning Teams to obtain their perceptions regarding the inspirationally motivating
leadership practices of the principal. The interviews and the focus groups were used to further determine the degree of alignment between the perceptions of the members of each of the three School Based Planning Teams and that of the three principals. The interviews and focus group sessions were conducted by skilled facilitators who met the specific criteria. The skilled facilitators: (a) served as successful principals of several schools and (b) were familiar with the goals, objectives and methodologies of this study. Their understanding of the study was enhanced by frequent interactions with the researcher prior to and between interview and focus group sessions. Once the interviews and focus groups were transcribed, the following steps were taken to analyze the data:

1. The data was organized according to schools using the four questions asked of the School Based Planning Teams and the principals.

2. The responses of the members of the School Based Planning Teams and the principals of each of the schools were read for overall meaning and notes were recorded to code commonalities between the responses of the School Based Planning Teams and the principals.

3. A color coding system was used to highlight similar responses between the School Based Planning Teams and their principals.

4. Recurrent themes were highlighted to emphasize similarities between the responses of the School Based Planning Teams and their principals.

5. A narrative was developed to describe the themes that emerged from the transcribed responses of School Based Planning Teams and their principals. This narrative included common themes across school as well as those specific to schools.
6. Tables were developed to clarify the narratives relative to the themes that emerged from the transcribed responses of School Based Planning Teams and their principals.

Summary of the Methodology

This chapter provided the proposed multi-methods quantitative/qualitative research design used to conduct this study. The study was conducted in two phases. Quantitative data was collected using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (5X-Short) from the School Based Planning Team members of the three schools. The MLQ was hand delivered to each member of the three School Based Planning Teams including the school principals. Data collected from the MLQ were analyzed to discern similarities and differences between the responses of the team members and the school principals. At the same time that survey data was being collected, qualitative data was also collected via focus groups and face to face interviews. A skilled facilitator used the focus group protocol to conduct three focus group sessions with members of the three School Based Planning Teams. The interview protocol developed for the face to face interviews was also used to conduct interviews with the three principals. A second skilled facilitator used the interview group protocol to conduct the face to face interviews. Both skilled facilitators: (a) served as successful principals of several schools and (b) were familiar with the goals, objectives and methodologies of this study. Additionally, both facilitators' understanding of the study was enhanced by frequent interactions with the researcher prior to and between interview and focus group sessions. Qualitative data from focus group and interview sessions were analyzed for similarities and differences in the responses from the participants. Finally, the qualitative and quantitative data was
compared. The qualitative data was used to extend and enrich data gathered and analyzed during the quantitative phase of the study. The collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data informed the results presented in the next chapter of this study.
Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This chapter is a presentation and analysis of the data collected to describe the relationship between inspirationally motivating leadership behaviors of three school principals and the decision making processes of the School Based Planning Teams. It also reports the respondents judgments about the influence of leadership on the decision making process.

It is important to review the reason this study was conducted at this juncture. The New York State Commissioner of Education Regulations Part 100.11 required that every public school within the state implement school based planning and shared decision making by February, 1994 (See Appendix A for the complete document). A part of that requirement was that all constituents, teachers, staff, administrators, and parents be represented on the team formed in schools. Additionally, in the Western New York State School District included in this study, principals were given the responsibility for leading School Based Planning Teams (SBPT) in their schools. They were also assigned the responsibility for providing a collaborative environment that promotes consensus based team decisions. In some schools, principals were not able to provide that collaborative environment and teams were not making consensus based decisions on a regular basis. These two concerns related to leadership and team decision-making provided the impetus for this study. The study focused on one aspect of transformational leadership based on
the research of Bass, 1997, that claims that inspirationally motivating practices promote relationships needed for group success including team decision-making.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the School Based Planning Teams are the governing bodies of the schools and are responsible for overseeing the instructional programs of the schools. Decisions relative to programming are made by this team of individuals who represent all of the employee unions and parents associated with the school. Instructional programming decisions may include discussions relative to structure such as periodic summative assessments that are administered at the end of a unit of study or at the end of the school year. Summative assessments are tests given to students designed to assess how much students have learned over a specific period of time.

This study was conducted in two phases. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire was used to gather data related to the leadership style of the principal as viewed by both the School Based Planning Teams and the principals themselves. Face to face interviews and focus group discussions provided information describing the relationship of principal's leadership behavior practices to team decision-making.

Research Questions

The following are the main research questions that guided the process in describing the relationship between the leadership behaviors of the three principals and decisions made by the School Based Planning Teams:

1. What is the relationship between the principal's self perception and the perception of the School Based Planning Team regarding the principal's inspirationally motivating practices?
2. Does the principal exhibit behaviors that promote consensus based decisions during School Based Planning Team meetings?

Analysis of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Findings

The MLQ (5X-short) (Avolio & Bass, 2004) was used to answer the question: What is the relationship between self perception of the principals and the perception of the School Based Planning Team regarding the principal’s inspirationally motivating leadership practices? A particular interest was the degree of alignment between the perception of the School Based Planning Team and that of the principal.

School Based Planning Team members from each of the three schools responded to forty five items on the MLQ (5X-short) that measure seven leadership traits. Four of the seven styles measured by the questionnaire are considered transformational. They are (a) inspirational motivation, (b) intellectual stimulation, (c) individual consideration, and (d) idealized influence. Two of the seven are considered transactional leadership traits. They are: (a) management by exception, and (b) contingent reward. The seventh, Laissez Faire, a non-leadership factor, was also measured by the MLQ (5X-short). This factor, according to Bass and Avolio (1997), demonstrates leadership avoidance behaviors such as the absence of or delays in decision-making. Finally, the questionnaire included ratings of leadership outcomes focused on extra effort, effectiveness and satisfaction on the part of the leader. Scale ratings were zero through four, with 0 = Not at all; 1 = Once in a while; 2 = Sometimes; 3 = Fairly often and ; 4 = Frequently if not always.

While the MLQ (5X-short) measures seven leadership traits, the focus of this study is inspirational motivation, one of the four transformational leadership traits measured. Individual consideration, idealized influence, and intellectual stimulation, the
other aspects of transformational leadership are briefly reported due to the nexus between each of the four factors.

Inspirationally motivating leadership practices measured by the MLQ (5X-short) included four leadership attributes. These attributes focus on how leaders (a) speak optimistically about the future, (b) speak enthusiastically about the work to be done, (c) articulate a compelling vision, and (d) express confidence about goals being met (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Speaking optimistically and enthusiastically refers to statements that motivate followers to envision what will occur in the future e.g. team spirit is awakened. Statements that articulate a compelling vision clearly communicate expectations that followers want to meet. Expressing confidence about accomplishing goals includes strong statements that illustrate commitment on the part of the leader to do the work that must be done to attain the goals. (Bass & Avolio, 2002)

Idealized influence, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation leadership practices measured by the MLQ (5X-short) included statements related to the how leaders demonstrate each of the three factors. Idealized influence statements refer to leaders' ability to: (a) Act as role models for followers; (b) demonstrate consistent conduct relative to ethical behavior, values and principles; and (c) consider the needs of followers above his own. Individualized consideration statements measured by the MLQ (5X-short) reference leaders' behaviors that demonstrate (a) regard for the individuality of needs among followers, (b) time spent actually teaching and coaching followers, (c) work with followers to develop their individual strengths. Intellectual Stimulation statements measured by the MLQ (5X-short) indicate leaders' ability to (a) challenge assumptions, and (b) seek different perspectives to solve problems.
Measures of central tendency were explored to determine the most effective gauge for this study. Of the variety of measures examined, the statistical mode was chosen because it is not as restrictive as the other measures of central tendency. Additionally, the mode was the most useful to describe the distribution of scores because of the restrictive range inherent to a four point scale. The responses of the three principals were compared to the modal responses of their corresponding school teams based on four statements on the MLQ (SX-short) relative to inspirationally motivating leadership practices. The three schools were designated as Schools A, B and C.

School A. For each of the four statements related to inspirationally motivating leadership practices, the principal’s self perception was rated at level 4. The modal response for the School Based Planning Team on three of the four statements was 4. The team modal response was 3-4 for the statement referencing the demonstration of confidence because there was an even distribution of 3’s and 4’s chosen. Data are presented in Table 4.1. The modal responses of the school team and the principal’s responses indicate that the perception of the team is aligned to the principal’s self perceptions relative to the inspirationally motivating leadership practices employed by the principal.
Table 4.1

School A: Comparison of the Principal and School Based Planning Team Modal Responses to the four statements related to Inspirationally Motivating Leadership Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>SBPT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compelling Vision</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3-4 (Bi-modal distribution)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Modal response results for each of the other aspects of transformational leadership measured by the MLQ (5X-short) demonstrate alignment between the team’s perception and the principal’s self perception relative to transformational leadership practices employed by the principal. Both the team and the principal rated the principal’s leadership practices at levels 4 for idealized influence and level 3 for individual consideration and intellectual stimulation. Table 4.2 illustrates this finding.

School B. For each of the four statements related to inspirationally motivating leadership practices, the principal and the school team agreed on the ratings for optimism and enthusiasm but rated differently for compelling vision and confidence. The principal rated herself at level 4 for optimism and enthusiasm and level 3 for compelling vision and confidence. The modal responses resulting from the choices made by the School Based Planning Team however rated the principal at level 4 for each of the four statements measuring inspirational motivation leadership practices employed by the principal.
Table 4.2

School A: Comparison of the Principal and School Based Planning Team Modal Responses to the four statements related to Idealized Influence, Individualized Consideration, and Intellectual Stimulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Trait</th>
<th>Principal Response</th>
<th>Team Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idealized Influence</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Consideration</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Stimulation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data are presented in Table 4.3. The comparison of the school team's modal responses to the principal's responses indicates a perception that the team expressed greater confidence that the principal exhibits inspirationally motivating behaviors than did the principal himself.

Modal response results for each of the other aspects of transformational leadership measured by the MLQ demonstrate slight perceptual differences between the team and the principal. The principal rated himself at level 3 for idealized influence and intellectual stimulation and levels 3-4, a bi-modal response, for individual consideration. While the team agreed with the principal's rating of level 3 for intellectual stimulation, they rated the principal at level 4 for idealized influence and individualized consideration. Table 4.4 illustrates this finding.
Table 4.3

School B: Comparison of the Principal and School Based Planning Team Modal Responses to the four statements related to Inspirationally Motivating Leadership Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>SBPT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compelling Vision</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4

School B: Comparison of the Principal and School Based Planning Team Modal Responses to the four statements related to Idealized Influence (II), Individualized Consideration (IC), and Intellectual Stimulation (IS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Trait</th>
<th>Principal Response</th>
<th>SBPT Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idealized Influence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Consideration</td>
<td>3-4 (Bi-modal distribution)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Stimulation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School C. For each of the four statements related to inspirationally motivating leadership practices, the principal's self perception rating is level 3 for three of the four aspects. The principal and the School Based Planning Team agreed with a rating of level 4 for enthusiasm but differed slightly with the principal relative to the other three aspects of inspirational motivation. The School Based Planning Team modal response was 4 for each of the aspects measured. Therefore, the School Based Planning Team perceives the principal as being more inspirationally motivating than does the principal. Table 4.5 illustrates this finding.

Table 4.5
School C: Comparison of the Principal and School Based Planning Team Modal Responses to the four statements related to Inspirationally Motivating Leadership Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>SBPT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compelling Vision</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School C modal responses for other aspects of transformational leadership measured by the MLQ (5X-Short) demonstrate slight perceptual differences similar to the differences reported relative to inspirationally motivating leadership practices. While the
principal rated herself at level 3 for each of the transformational leadership traits, the
team's ratings for each of the traits was level 4. Table 4.6 presents these data.

Table 4.6
School C: Comparison of the Principal and School Based Planning Team Modal
Responses to the four statements related to Idealized Influence, Individualized
Consideration, and Intellectual Stimulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Trait</th>
<th>Principal Response</th>
<th>Team Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idealized Influence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Consideration</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Stimulation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary Comparison

In summary, a comparison of the findings of the three schools revealed
similarities and differences relative to the perceptions of the teams and principals. Each
of the three school teams rated the principals at levels 3 or 4 relative to inspirationally
motivating practices. Schools B and C rated the principals at level 4 for each of the four
aspects of inspirational motivation. School A’s School Based Planning Team however,
reported one bi-modal team response of 3-4 for confidence, one aspect of inspirational
motivation and level 4 for the other four aspects, optimism, enthusiasm and compelling
vision. Only the Principal of School A rated her inspirational motivational leadership at
level 4 for each trait. The Principals of School B and C rated themselves at level 3 -4.
Modal responses relative to the ratings for transformational leadership traits also revealed a variety of perceptions on the part of the school teams and the principals. School A's School Based Planning Team and the Principal uniformly agreed on the ratings for the principal's transformational practices. School B agreed with the level 3 rating assigned by the principal in one area, intellectual stimulation but rated the principal at level 4 in the other two areas, idealized influence and individual consideration. The Principal of School B however rated himself at level 3 for idealized influence and levels 3-4, a bi-modal response for individualized consideration. The School Based Planning Team and Principal of School C disagreed on each of the ratings for transformational leadership traits. The team rated the principal at level 4 while the principal assigned a rating of level 3 for each of the three transformational leadership traits.

Based on the analysis of the data from the MLQ (5X-short) administered to each of the three School Based Planning Teams and their principals, (a) there is an alignment between the self perceptions of the principal and the perceptions of the School Based Planning Team regarding the principal's inspirationally motivating leadership practices and (b) there is alignment between the perceptions of the School Based Planning Teams and their principals regarding the overall transformational leadership practices of the principal.

Analysis of Principal Interviews and Focus Groups Discussions

Interviews and focus groups were conducted using open ended questions and prompts developed after reviewing the literature related to transformational leadership practices and the MLQ (5X-short) (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Face to face interviews were conducted with each of the three principals and focus group sessions were conducted
with each the three School Based Planning Teams chosen for this study. The interviews and focus groups were conducted to answer the question: Does the principal exhibit behaviors that promote consensus based decisions during School Based Planning Team meetings?

Data collected from the interviews and focus groups were based on four research questions and statements related to behaviors demonstrated by the principal during meetings of the School Based Planning Team. Each research question was designed to address one of four lenses determined by the investigator. These four lenses developed by the investigator were informed by the research of Bass and Avolio (1994) and Leithwood (2002). The lenses were further influenced by the needs expressed by the principals and members of the School Based Planning Teams of the Western New York School District who were unable to implement shared decision making as required by the District and Part 100.11 of the New York State Commissioner’s Regulations. These lenses were designed to characterize the relationship between inspirationally motivating practices of the principal and the decision making process of the School Based Planning Team. Table 4.7 presents a summary of the lenses and the related questions developed to investigate the relationship.
Table 4.7

Summary of the Researcher’s Lenses and Related Research Questions and Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researcher’s Lenses</th>
<th>Related Research Questions and Statements</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Principal’s Vision/Dream</td>
<td>Do you understand the dreams and ideas of your principal as it relates to the school? How do the dreams and ideas of the principal affect the way you make decisions during School Based Planning Team Meetings?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Decision Making</td>
<td>Describe the decision making process your team uses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging Difficult Issues</td>
<td>Does your principal ever challenge the team to move forward on difficult issues? How does the principal support the process your team uses to make decisions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult Decisions, Team Interaction and the Principal’s Influence</td>
<td>Describe instances when the principal challenged the team to make a difficult decision and how the team interacted. Was the principal optimistic? What makes you think so? (actions / expressions made)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The four main questions were accompanied by prompts to clarify the thinking of the participants as they worked through the issues presented by the questions and statements.

The complete set of the questions, statements, and prompts is found in Appendix C.

Several themes emerged from the analysis of the qualitative data gathered from the transcripts of the interviews and focus groups. Commonalities in the responses from the teams and principals that indicated similar understandings about the influence of the principals’ leadership practices relative to decision making of School Based Planning Teams. A review of transcripts from each of the three schools revealed commonly used phrases and or words that supported the emergence of themes within the areas of the
principal's vision, team decision making, challenging difficult issues, and team interaction when the principal encouraged the team to make a difficult decision. The investigator inferred nine emergent themes that owe their existence to the data. Several of those themes were inferred across each of the three schools. Those themes include clarity of vision and collaboration. The other seven themes particular to one school include; Integrity, acceptance of responsibility, trust, personal detachment, student need, inclusion, and inspirational leadership. It is important to note that the members of School Based Planning Team of School C combined collaboration and hope as one theme to describe the leadership practices of the Principal. Each of the nine themes is discussed within the context of each school’s data narrative. These emergent themes are also aligned with the literature regarding the qualities of transformational leaders who employ inspirationally motivating practices (Bass, 1997 and Kouzes and Posner, 2002).

School A

The Principal and the School Based Planning Team were asked to respond to four questions and statements using the four lenses developed by the researcher (a) the Principal's vision/dream, (b) team decision making, (c) challenging difficult issues, and (d) difficult decisions, team interaction and the principal's influence. Responses to each of the four questions and statements resulted in several themes. The composite of their responses is presented in Table 4.8.

The principal's vision/dream. The Principal was asked if the team understood her dream. Similarly the team was also asked if they understood the principal’s dream. The responses to this question resulted in the emergence of Theme 1: Clarity. In response to the question; the principal stated that she believed that the team understood her dream.
and that her dream is related to the delivery of instructional programming occurring in the best learning environment possible with the focus on preparing students for life. She framed her dream in this context:

My vision and dream is to provide a learning environment for the children [that is] the best quality learning environment possible, not in this country, but across the world, that’s my dream.

Continuing the Theme 1 discussion, the majority of the team agreed that they clearly understood the principal’s dream. They also talked about understanding how her leadership supports bringing the dream to fruition. While discussing the principal’s ability to share her dreams and ideas one respondent commented:

I’ll just start out by saying I think I do. I think that’s something she is extremely strong about. She wants all of the classes trying to do the same thing, following the same programs with high expectations for students. I’m sincere about that.

She is really there.

Continuing the discussion, the majority of the team agreed that the principal’s dream includes offering students well organized instruction that is based on the needs of students that will result in high level performance. Additionally, the team described the principal’s direct involvement in delivering professional development. One respondent stated:

She has taught a lot of in service herself because of that and makes it really clear to know where she stands. Where she’s not just saying you need to do a good job in school, you actually know what she believes because of it.
Concluding the discussion of the principal’s dream, the team agreed that the dream of high level student performance is based on the principal’s commitment to the needs of the student being served in the school. One respondent’s comment described the principal’s leadership in the context of her communicative ability:

She lives by example in that she tries to articulate to the best of her ability what she needs for everyone to do to accomplish meeting the needs of students.

Team decision making. The Principal and the team were asked to describe the decision-making process used by the School Based Planning Team. They were also asked to describe how the Principal supported the process. The responses regarding the decision-making process resulted in the emergence of Theme 2: Student Needs. Both the Principal and the team talked about meeting the needs of the students serving as the guide for all team decisions. What was surprising was that neither the Principal nor the team focused on the process, but instead their responses focused on student needs as the basis for all decision making. The Principal’s response is proof of that phenomenon:

[Basically, we look] at student needs, their performance, daily work, behaviors, and emotional needs, [to drive our decisions]. We also have our school improvement plan that basically outlines where we want to be and our mission and vision statement. Then we organize our work around those statements. If an issue comes up, we discuss it, bring back to the team, sift through the data and then identify what is most profitable to get the most mileage.

The majority of the team agreed with the Principal that student needs must serve as the basis for all decisions including professional development proposals presented to the
School Based Planning Team. One team respondent represented the team response in this context:

I know with professional development, [we make sure] that the teacher, or whoever is doing professional development submits something to school and we talk about how many hours it is and how we feel it will help the kids or whatever and then we vote on it if we agree that the hours should be granted for professional development or not.

Another respondent immediately agreed stating:

We have a brief discussion about how it will impact student learning.

When asked if the Principal supported decisions made by the team, a positive support sub-theme emerged. The Principal and the team agreed that her support is reflected in the manner information is submitted during School Based Planning Team meeting. According to the team, the Principal demonstrates support by making sure that all information is shared with the team without deletions or additions.

One respondent described the support offered by the principal as:

I think one of the keys to decision making when it comes to school base, is how the principal supports by just submitting the information out there and as a school base team we discuss it without the bias of the principal. She puts it out there and she allows the team to make the decision. That’s how she supports the decision-making of the team.

Additionally, the team purported that the team feels supported because there is open communication between the Principal and the members of the team. One respondent said:

...she listens to our opinion. There is no concern about that.
When asked about support for constituency involvement, the team and the Principal agreed that if there is a need to ascertain direct input from individual constituencies represented by the team, the team is given time to take information away from the table for consideration before making a decision. According to team responses, the Principal encourages them to discuss information submitted without imposing time constraints. One team member said:

...So, she does support [the process] and if we say something needs to be readdressed or whatever, she gives us that time to do it.

While the team acknowledged the notion that the Principal encourages them to take the time needed to consider information presented, team members expressed aspirations to develop a more organized process for sharing, ascertaining constituency input, and making decisions. Evidence of that inclination is reflected in the comment made by one respondent:

I think we could learn more about the process itself. I know that there are training sessions out there. Whether it’s at the District or state level, I’m not sure, but in terms of the decision making process and carrying out the vote within the unit, we can all learn a little more about that. In other words, a little parliamentary rule...

Challenging difficult issues: When the Principal and team were asked to discuss whether the principal challenged the team to move forward regarding difficult issues, Theme 3: Collaboration, emerged. Both the principal and the team talked about the importance of using their school improvement plan as the foundation for important collaborative conversations. The Principal talked about challenging the team to remember...
that all decisions made must be aligned to the goals of the school plan. Proof of that challenge is illustrated in the following comment made by the Principal:

Looking at the school improvement plan, [that tells us] where we need to be and where we need to go, is this the battle we’re fighting for?

Team members agreed that the Principal challenges the team to resolve issues using the tenets of the school improvement plan as the barometer for bringing resolution to difficult issues. During that discussion one team member commented:

It helped us focus. You always go back to the school improvement plan – we don’t include things that are off the school improvement plan just for the sake of discussion and process and whatever. If it doesn’t belong in the school improvement plan, we just don’t discuss it, that’s it.

While team members affirmed that they understand that they have an obligation to make decisions to resolve difficult issues, they regarded the challenges initiated by the Principal as supportive. In further discussion, the team commented on the motivational approaches the Principal used, namely how she posed challenges that yielded resolution to difficult issues. According to team A, the Principal shares the information, helps the team to examine the pros and cons of issues, and then encourages them to make a collaborative decision. One team member made the following comment during the discussion referring to words the principal uses to challenge the team to move forward:

She has always said to us, you guys have to decide.

Difficult decisions, team interaction and the principal's response. When the Principal and team were asked to discuss team interaction following challenges by the Principal, both the Principal and the team responded similarly giving rise to Theme 4:
Personal Detachment. Both said the team always remains professionally focused on the needs of children and that they detach their personal view in order to make decisions that are best for all students. Team members specifically described team interaction as cordial and respectful even when difficult decisions had to be made. One team member described an instance that typifies team interaction and the principal’s ability to personally detach when confronted by difficult situations in the following context:

Going back to the computer program that was brought to us with a deadline that we [kept] taking back and forth to the constituency to approve, I thought it was a tough situation to meet with the constituency and the teachers made a decision. The Principal supported the decision, putting aside her personal viewpoint. It was a decision based on what the teachers felt was useful and beneficial for the students. We had a long conversation regarding the matter back and forth; it was cordial and very respectful. Our team meetings are always that way – calm.

Continuing the discussion of Theme 4, the Principal and the team agreed that when decisions are particularly difficult, both the Principal and the team detach themselves personally from the issue in order to make a team decision that is best for the entire school. One team member commented:

I think she knows when to detach herself from the decision itself and have the constituencies address it and discuss it.

When the team and principal were asked if the principal remained optimistic during difficult discussions, the team and the principal agreed that the principal does remain optimistic and encouraging. The Principal talked about the importance of remaining optimistic throughout the process, keeping the team focused on reaching a
solution as a united team, and trusting the team to make the best decision. Evidence of that optimism is reflected in the Principal’s comment:

Well, I am always optimistic. When we are making decisions, we [look at] both sides of the issue the negatives and the benefits. I trust that [process]. In general, the staff will make a decision that’s good for the school, but sometimes I have to help them to [remember] that we have to keep our focus on what the main objective is and leave our personal beliefs aside.

School A - Summary of Findings

The relationship between the Principal and the School Based Planning Team is grounded in the belief that the Principal is focused on meeting the needs of students. The team has a clear understanding of the Principal’s vision and has expressed full support for that vision. The mutual understanding between the Principal and the team is based on the nexus between the Principal’s vision and the tenets of the school improvement plan. The Principal is viewed as a strong knowledgeable leader who is dedicated to the mission and vision of the school.

Furthermore, School A’s barometer for consensus based decision making is directly aligned to (a) the academic needs of the students as delineated in the tenets of the school improvement plan and (b) the vision of the Principal. This alignment serves as the uniting force that facilitates consistent, consensual team decision-making. It also facilitates the team’s acceptance of the Principal’s frequent challenges to remain focused on student needs. Based on the focus group discussion, the team believes it is their obligation to ensure that student needs are met within the school setting; and as such they are willing to work with the school principal to accomplish the tasks set before them.
Additionally, according to focus group discussions, personal detachment behaviors modeled by the Principal during difficult decision making are adapted by the team because of the alignment between the school improvement plan and the Principal’s vision. Issues that do not meet the test, as imposed by the student needs barometer, are not approved by the team. In essence, it appears that the process of consensus based decision making is not the most important aspect of team decision making, but rather it is the student needs barometer that guides all team decision making. Consensus based decision making appears to be an outcome resulting from the team’s focus on meeting the needs of students. Therefore, in School A, the focus on student need is more important than the decision making process itself. Some members of the team however expressed a need to improve the formal decision making process through training.

Table 4.8 summarizes the results of the team discussions relative to the behaviors that promote the decision making process of the School Based Planning Team.

School B

The Principal and the School Based Planning Team were asked to respond to four questions and statements using the four lenses developed by the researcher (a) The Principal’s Vision, (b) Team Decision Making, (c) Challenging Difficult Issues, and (d) Difficult Decisions, Team Interaction and the Principal’s Influence. Responses to each of the four questions and statements resulted in several themes. The composite of their responses is presented in Table 4.9
Table 4.8 School A: Principal Behaviors that Promote Consensus Based Decision-Making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal shares vision with clarity</td>
<td>Vision is clearly articulated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Principal demonstrates belief about the work to be done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Instruction must prepare students for the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal encourages team to make decision</td>
<td>All decisions are made based on the needs of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>based on student needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>The Principal promotes open communication through collaboration via the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School Improvement Plan that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Guides team decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Focuses on student need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal detachment guidance practices are</td>
<td>The Principal does not express her personal opinions during decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>modeled by the Principal</td>
<td>making</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The principal's dream/vision.* The Principal was asked if the team understood his dream and similarly team members were asked if they understood the Principal’s dream. Participants’ responses to this question resulted in the emergence of Theme 1: Clarity. The majority of the team members who participated in the focus groups agreed that they clearly understand that the Principal’s dream is focused on high expectations for every
child. Continuing the discussion, the team talked about the Principal’s belief that the goal is to ensure that every child is prepared for higher learning. One participant commented:

Every child is going to go to college. If I have heard it once, I’ve heard it a thousand times. And so every decision that we make is geared toward getting kids to be the best that they can be; that is our goal. Sometimes he goes on and on but that is still his dream... I think.

Interestingly, during the interview with the Principal, he talked about how he often reminds staff that the work of the school is to prepare all children to learn at a level that will prepare them for participation in higher level education. His comments included the following:

I am a firm believer in higher education and I believe it needs to start at kindergarten and not at ninth grade, so we try to get that message out there with our kindergarten children all the way up to grade 6 here – that higher education is the key and you can do it; you will do it; we will help you.

The team’s discussion of the Principal’s dream focused on high expectations relative to student performance also included an expectation that every staff member is focused on the work of the school in the same way to ensure continuity of instructional strategies. This notion was described by one respondent as “being on the same page.”

That respondent’s comment specifically stated:

...I think he expects everybody to be on the same page and to get there in the same way, in the same timeframe and if there’s any straying from that – like some body might be singing a different tune, or dancing to a different dance [so to speak] and he doesn’t agree with that, then you have to really work to prove that
you are on the same page. Sometimes you’re successful and sometimes you’re not.

Further discussion relative to the Principal’s dream supported the emergence of Theme 2: Trust. The team talked about how the Principal entrusts staff to deliver instruction that will prepare students for their participation in higher level education in the future. This trust, according to the team, is based on the continuity of instructional strategies discussed earlier. One respondent commented:

I think he puts a lot of trust in the staff without micromanaging to do the best that they can do.

Another respondent pointed out that the Principal really believes that staff will do the work that needs to be done to ensure children’s educational future. That respondent commented:

I think that’s kind of taken for granted on his part, because that will be what happens.

Theme 3: Inclusion emerged as the team continued the discussion relative to the Principal’s dream. The majority of the team confirmed that the Principal seeks to include every member of the team when issues arise during meetings of the School Based Planning Team. In fact, according to the team, the principal’s view of being inclusive has been adapted by the team. One respondent confirmed this notion.

He [the Principal] includes all staff in other things, and including parents. We don’t look at parents as separate from the teaching staff. I think the parents and the paraprofessionals have active roles on the team. Parents, paraprofessional, everybody is included.
Team decision making. The principal and the team were asked to describe the decision making process used by the School Based Planning Team. The responses regarding the decision-making process focused on Theme 4: Collaboration. Both the Principal and the team talked about the importance of collaborative discussions and behaviors on the part of the Principal and the team to make the best decisions for the school. In response to the question asked during the interview relative to a possible nexus between the Principal’s dream and the way decisions are made, the Principal commented:

Because I am very careful not to play a dictatorial role on School Based Planning team, I see me as a member of the school based planning team; I don’t necessarily see me as the facilitator of the school based planning team.

Ensuing discussion related to collaborative behaviors demonstrated by the Principal included observations of where he strategically places himself physically during meetings. According to several team members, his effort to make sure that everyone is respected equally is demonstrated when he joins the team meeting for discussion by sitting among the team and not at the head of the table.

What was surprising is that while the team endorses collaboration, some members of the team want the Principal to be more authoritarian at certain times. During those times some of the members of the team want the Principal to take control of the meetings to move issues more quickly. During the discussion one respondent commented:

...he is the head of school base, but we have a facilitator, but he’s really the one who’s the head of school base and sometimes I think he...often I think he takes a back seat and doesn’t step forward, and we’ve actually had to push him into that on occasion.
The Principal, however, talked about not believing that he should take over, but that the team as a whole should be more collaborative and responsible for decisions to be made. He further discussed his effort to resist employing top down behaviors to move the team toward decision making and that acting in this way would be counterproductive. His comment is evidence of that effort:

I think we truly have grappled with coming to a consensus. My first couple of years in the building, folks were looking to me to make a decision and [with] my personality, that's an easy thing to do, but then you don't get necessarily everyone buying into that when it's top down, so it's taken me a long time to work with the folks here at [School B]. It's very easy for me and the Assistant Principal to say, 'this is our decision, and this is what we are going to do and just do it.'

Continuing with the discussion focused on the decision-making process, the Principal and the team agreed their process for decision-making is consensus based. According to Susskind, McKearman and Larmer, 1999, consensus based decision making is defined as, “agreement among all stakeholders participating. A consensus agreement is one that all stakeholders participating in a consensus building process can accept” (p. 327). Stakeholders or individual constituents are the distinct groups of members of the team who represent the staff, parents and administration of the school. Agreement of individual constituents as it applies to school based planning teams in this Western New York School District means that each distinct group makes a determination to agree or disagree on an issue and then cast one constituent vote to symbolize their decision. This process may include members of the team leaving the table to caucus for a short period of time on the same day or a several days that involves going back to the full constituency
before returning to the table. Once the constituents have arrived at a decision among themselves, they share their constituent decision at the table and the entire group works together come to an agreement as to whether they will approve or not approve an issue. Constituency based decision making is evidenced in the comment made by one team respondent:

Well, we discuss things at the table and I think usually we’re pretty careful about breaking into our constituencies to discuss things further and come up with a consensus, and then we put that forth as a united vote.

The Principal described the decision making process as slow and labor intensive but important because they must deal with issues that may change the structural dynamics of the school. School Based Planning Teams routinely deal with structural issues that could potentially change the way instruction is delivered within the school. These changes are described as changes in working conditions for teaching staff represented by the teachers’ union and as such must be discussed at the decision-making table. These discussions may extend over a period of time due to the concerns expressed by the constituents representing the different bargaining units of the school. He framed his response in the following context:

Its very labor intensive if it’s a very important issue that our team feels is a structural issue [such as implementing a school-wide vertical teaming model]. We don’t always move at the quickest pace that some would like. We take the time to make sure that all the constituencies are involved, including our parents. That may not happen within a week; sometimes it doesn’t happen within two weeks.
When asked if there are times when final decisions are made at the table without caucusing, the majority of the team agreed that if the issue is one that can be easily resolved by consensus the decision is made at that time. One respondent identified as a teacher commented:

I think if it is something simple we kind of do it right here, but if it's something where there may be some controversy or whatever, we take it outside of here and we have a vote outside... the teachers take it outside and have a vote outside of their own; parents, I'm not quite sure how you resolve it.

A proposal presented by one grade level team to modify their grade level long range plans for Social Studies instruction is an example of a simple decision. In this instance, the team could make a decision without consulting members of the other grade levels in the school because they will not be affected by the decision as long as students receive the content as required by the curriculum. A parent on the team responded to the comment made by the teacher concerning the process parents follow for constituency voting:

I think in most cases like you said, if it’s something that involves controversy [such as changing the way instruction is delivered in classrooms] we take it outside and we meet with our groups. and then that’s something at the next meeting, we come back to the table, we discuss what the outcomes were and we make a decision at that point.

As the discussion relative to consensus based decision making continued, another team member pointed out the team's consistent effort to gather the input of their constituency before making decisions as a team:
Yes, that brings up another point, because we each have a grade level group that we are responsible for. If there is something that we really feel that we need input from the staff, from parent groups, paraprofessionals or whatever, we go back to them and discuss it. Then we come back and bring together what we've collected from the whole school community and make a decision based on the information we have.

Additionally, both parties also agreed that even though the process is sometimes frustrating because decisions are not made quickly; it is incumbent upon all team members that all constituents are kept informed.

Interestingly there was attention brought to the change in the decision making process used by the current team as opposed to the process used by last year's team. This observation was made by a team member who acknowledged serving on both teams. New team members are added to the team in a staggered fashion on a yearly basis. Approximately fifty percent of the team changed while fifty percent remained for the sake of continuity. The Principal is the only permanent member of the team as required of the New York State Commissioner's Regulations 100.11 and remains unchanged unless there is a change in school principals. In this case, the Principal is the same as last year.

The discussion was focused on the notion that the previous team used consensus based decision-making and was a more collaborative process than is the process employed by this team. Evidence of that team member's point of view is reflected in this comment:

I think this year we concentrated a lot on process, and I have to admit that sometimes that turns me off. I kind of liked last year when we were able to jump
in and say what we wanted. This year I felt for the first part of the year a little more stifled with when I can raise my hand and how long I could talk.

It is important to note that School Based Planning Teams, by design, set the ground rules for operation at the beginning of the school year when new members begin their terms. While team members acknowledged the fact that they set the rules of engagement for the school year, they pointed out that changes in team operation are a function of the team members at the time when ground rules are set. Team members also expressed a willingness to work with the changes as long as the process is consistent. One respondent commented about how they adapt to the changes they decide upon at the beginning of the School Based Planning Team year:

Like last year, those that were on the team - it was more like Sunday dinner.
Everybody came, they sat, they talked, and they threw out their opinions, whatever. Now we have a different way of doing things here. It is more process, raising hands, and we just sort of adapt with that as we go along from year to year.

This team has expressed a willingness to operate according to the ground rules as decided upon early in the school year, but some members stated that they are not as comfortable as they were before. It is important to note that the team has the option to amend the ground rules at any point and time during the year. This team has not chosen to exercise that option.

**Challenging difficult issues.** When the Principal and team were asked to discuss whether the Principal challenged the team to move forward regarding difficult issues, both the Principal and the team agreed that the Principal does challenge the team to make
difficult decisions but that it is done only when there is a real need to do so. Team members pointed out that the Principal pushes most often when there is a school district imposed deadline on the school. One respondent pointed out that the Principal only pushes when the issue being discussed will impact the school negatively:

I think, given the Principal’s position as administrator, he has the prerogative to do that [push]. I hear what’s going on in other school based teams and I feel very fortunate that the Principal does not push this prerogative on a regular basis. It’s really when push comes to shove and something has to be done, or we lose out that he pushes the issue. When I hear of these other teams, it’s really unbelievable how there is no team; it’s the top down model with no teaming at all, and no paraprofessionals, parents or others involved. So, I feel fortunate about that. But, yes, there are times when we’re pushed to do something that we would rather do with more thought involved.

The respondent continued that the Principal pushes the team to make tough decisions and added that it also occurs when outside entities, such as the school district, ask for an immediate decision from the school. According to this team member, the team has employed the use of quorums when tough decisions must be made. Quorums are based on a requirement that a certain number of constituency representatives be present to make a decision. According to this team member, the quorums are used to avoid controversy relative to decisions made by the team. His comment is reflective of that process when the team feels pushed:

I think that sometimes we do feel that way [pushed] and I think there are times we’re controversial, and we try to get a quorum for each group [constituency]. I
think to avoid controversy among team members and the constituencies; we have tried to use quorums for every topic so that we can follow the appropriate practice for reaching a decision without feeling like we cannot speak up if you have something to say.

Difficult decisions, team interaction and the principal’s response. Theme 5: Accepting Responsibility, emerged when the Principal and team were asked to discuss team interaction when challenged by the Principal. Both the Principal and the team pointed out a particular instance that caused the team to change their normal interaction. The Principal and the team talked about how the team galvanized around the work to be done relative to a budget decision by gathering needed information to resolve the issue. The team decided that they would use their elected positions to make decisions that required immediate action, thereby forgoing the practice of going back to the constituents for input on the decision. One team respondent commented:

In that particular instance, it [the budget discussion] was opened up to go back to an outside planning team and the School Based Planning Team. This decision was made because our school was in need of improvement, a state imposed designation. I think it involved coaches as well; a coach for Math, a coach for English Language Arts, and the Academic Intervention Coach. People signed up and we had several meetings where we discussed options. Most of us went out and collected information from intermediate, primary, special education, and support services. I think the team worked hard to get information to address the needs of both primary and intermediate special education needs to make everything equal across all grade levels. It was not the type of thing to go out
again and then discuss it further with the staff and come back. I think that’s something that our team is finding a happy medium because we are serving in elected positions and we have the authority to make a decision without always going back to our constituents. When something involves our constituents, then I think we should go out of the way to go out and get input.

School B - Summary of Findings

The relationship between Principal B and the School Based Planning Team is reciprocal in nature. The Principal and the team share an understanding of the Principal’s vision. The School Based Planning Team uses consensus based decision making to resolve issues presented during meetings. During this process the Principal acts as a member of the team and at the same time he encourages the team to remain focused and make decisions that may be viewed as difficult. Challenges from the Principal to move forward on difficult decisions are accepted based on the perceived notion that the Principal exerts pressure on the team to make decisions only when indecision will result in adverse effects on the work of the school. The Principal is viewed as fair, collaborative and inclusive.

School B’s consensus based decision making process has changed over the last two years from a more relaxed model to a more stringent model aligned to the ground rules set by the membership of the existing team. While the basic decision making process involves taking major decisions back to the full constituency to determine the direction to be taken, the team has taken the responsibility to make some major decisions at the table employing the quorum strategy to avoid controversy among team members.
and constituents. Minor decisions that do not require constituency input have continued to be decided during School Based Planning Team meetings.

Table 4.9 summarizes the results of the team discussions relative to the behaviors that promote the decision making process of the School Based Planning Team.

### Table 4.9

**School B Principal Behaviors that Promote Consensus Based Decision-Making**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of Vision</td>
<td>Vision is clearly articulated by the Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration of Trust</td>
<td>Principal exhibits a level of trust in the work of the team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion</td>
<td>Principal demonstrates inclusive behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Principal encourages and models collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting Responsibility</td>
<td>Principal encourages the team to accept responsibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**School C**

The Principal and the School Based Planning Team were asked to respond to four questions and statements using the four lenses developed by the researcher (a) the Principal’s vision, (b) Team Decision Making, (c) Challenging Difficult Issues, and (d) Difficult Decisions, Team Interaction and the Principal’s Influence. Responses to each of the four questions and statements resulted in several themes. The composite of their responses is presented in Table 4.10
The principal’s dream/vision. The Principal of School C was asked if the team understood her dream and similarly the team was asked if they understood the Principal’s dream. The responses to this question resulted in the emergence of Theme 1: Clarity. In discussing Theme 1, the majority of the team members who participated in the focus group agreed that they clearly understand the dream of the principal. One participant commented:

So far as the dreams and ideas, I feel like she wants to promote literacy and have our kids read and get any sort of support that our school can get.

In continued discussion of Theme 1, the team spoke of how the Principal’s vision emphasizes that data based decision-making results in informed action based means of raising student achievement. One respondent commented:

...but she does present us with the data – the good, the bad, and the terribly ugly, so that we can deal with the reality of just how the kids are doing and discuss how to improve that. I don’t think she sugar coats the data at all.

This comment was supported by an additional respondent who said:

She presents it so clear; we could all figure out, ok, what we are doing about that.

During the interview with the Principal, she stated a need to share her vision on a regular basis and, as a result, shares it at every staff meeting and at each meeting of the School Based Planning Team:

My dream for the school is a common philosophy among all of the adults in the building: that all children are capable of learning, not just at their own speed, not just the ones that are superstars, but all children. We are here for students; we are here as a team to work together; we are here to help each other grow.
When asked about whether the actions or expressions of the principal made the team want to be a member of the team, Theme 2: *Inspirational Leadership* emerged. The majority of the team agreed that they want to be a part of the School Based Planning Team. Evidence of that discussion is illustrated in the comment of one respondent:

Her passion, her commitment, her sensibility: she’s practical [and has] common sense, and yet she knows what good teaching is and she reinforces it. I mean, you know, when you get that pat on the back you just want to do more for that individual, and that’s what she strives to do all the time.

*Team decision making.* The Principal and the team were asked to describe the decision making process employed by the School Based Planning Team. The majority of the team agreed that although there have not been a large number of decisions made this school year, the basis for those made were on the information shared using consensus based decision-making. One respondent in reference to the process commented:

The few decisions we made, we did pretty well with them because we were given the opportunity to discuss them and give our input, what every constituency thinks. I mean the parents had their say on that.

Ensuing team discussions regarding the process focused on Theme 3: *Collaboration and Hope.* The team focused on the fact that they are making decisions and simultaneously developing their formal decision making process following a tumultuous year. During the previous year, School C reported difficulty making decisions as a team and there was a change in school leadership during the school year.
The majority of the team agreed that the Principal has supported the beginnings of a more collaborative environment where each member is able to contribute and trust the principal's leadership. One respondent commented:

There were a couple of really horrible, horrible years in school base here. I was lucky enough not to sit at this table at that time. However, I heard a few of my colleagues talk about it afterwards, coming away utterly dumbfounded at a disastrous meeting that had run amuck and [was considered] completely ineffective. I think when she took over the reins here; the first goal was to add some structure within which everyone could work in the meeting.

Interestingly, the Principal's response to this question during the interview began with a reflection of her entry into this school and the difficulties encountered during meetings with the School Based Planning Team. She talked about the need to establish a collaborative environment and how long it has taken to instill collaboration among members of this team:

...I walked into a very difficult situation and it has taken me almost two years to get people on board, especially working in a collaborative environment

That notion was further supported by one respondent who said:

Our team wasn't very functional in previous years, so we've spent the last couple of years just trying to get back into that this is where the decisions are made for things that are happening in the building, because it's been, I think, far too long that things have just been done and not coming through school base.

In further discussion of Theme 3, the team expressed hope because they are on the path leading to effective decision making under the leadership of the present principal.
One respondent commented:

We have a pretty good smooth decision-making process when there are decisions to be made. Like everyone, I think feels comfortable to put their input out there. I don’t feel as though people feel attacked whenever they put anybody out.

Another respondent commented that the tenor of the School Based Planning Team meetings has become more positive:

It sounds like there was some sort of growth over this past year. I wasn’t here last year, but we’re moving in a positive direction; we do want common goals and we do want to resolve some of these issues and we’re not going to bang heads because we have a common goal focused on making decisions and we want this team to run smoothly and effectively.

The team also agreed, however, that there is still concern related to the kind of information that should be shared, how it should be shared, and how decisions should be made. During this discussion about appropriate topics to be brought to School Based Planning Team meetings for decision making, the team pointed out that the blame is not due to the leadership of the present principal. Evidence of this point is reflected in the comment of one of the focus group participants:

But I think, like our issues that we have at school base aren’t because she wants it to be that way, you know what I mean; I think she’s willing to do what we need to do to change the team to be what the team needs to be.

Continuing with this discussion, the team talked about the need to develop protocols for what ought to be presented to the team. One such protocol suggested was that if the issue
is academic, it should be presented and discussed during School Based Planning Team meetings. One respondent offered an example:

Like if the music teacher wants to do an additional vocal lesson and its going to interrupt instructional time that should come through, that should be approved by school base instead of it just happening. So those things aren’t just happening instead of people coming and presenting to school base, ‘this is what I’d like to do.’ It’s a great idea. I guess a lot of the things are great ideas, but it’s not just following protocol. So I guess we’re trying to get back to that – following protocol.

The team concluded that all team decision making should be based on the school improvement plan, a suggestion that was forwarded early in the school year by the principal. The team also expressed that making decisions based on this document would ensure support for continued improvement in student achievement and serve to focus the work of the team. Evidence of that conclusion is reflected in the comment of one respondent:

It seems to me, that our job is really to make sure that we’re sticking to our goal, our mission, and our school improvement plan.

Challenging difficult issues. When the Principal was asked to discuss whether she challenged the team to move forward regarding difficult issues, she talked about not having to challenge the team up to this juncture because the team has been responsive to her proposals she has presented to the team. She commented:
I don’t think I’ve had to do that, yet. I think because things have been positive, and the positive decisions we’ve had to make - that the team is more apt to go along with it.

The team agreed that they did not have to be challenged by the Principal to make unpopular decisions. They made these decisions based on what was right for the school and because they understood the parameters for making them.

**Difficult decisions, team interaction and the principal’s response.** When the Principal and team were asked to discuss team interaction following challenges from the Principal, the responses of the Principal and that of the team were similar. The Principal stated that there has been no need to challenge the team at this juncture because there was agreement on the way issues needed to be approached. The team talked about how they made decisions on a case by case basis. Even with being asked the second time if the principal pushed them to make a decision, the team talked about making a decision because it was the right thing to do. In further discussion however, *Theme 4, Integrity*, emerged as the team talked about the Principal. One respondent commented:

> Because I know her well and I know her sense of educational integrity so when she suggests something I know it is not casual, I know it’s well thought out which doesn’t mean she’s always right, she welcomes being challenged on her ideas in order to clarify her thinking, but we know it’s coming from a place that we’re comfortable with.

**School C - Summary of Findings**

The relationship between Principal C and School Based Planning Team is one fraught with respect and mutual understanding. The team clearly stated that the vision of
the Principal is aligned to theirs. This understanding has resulted in a collaborative relationship that is beginning to focus on what is right for the school. The team also stated that they want to accept the leadership of the Principal because she is knowledgeable and thoughtful. Additionally, the team believes that the Principal operates under an umbrella of integrity and dedication.

While the School Based Planning Team of School C is working to become more effective in team decision-making, they remain united because of their respect for Principal C. Additionally, the team has pointed to the positive changes that are evident due to the work of the Principal with the group.

Table 4.10 summarizes the results of the team discussions relative to the behaviors that promote the decision making process of the School Based Planning Team.

Table 4.10
School C: Principal Behaviors that Promote Consensus Based Decision Making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of Vision</td>
<td>Vision is clearly articulated by the Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational Leadership</td>
<td>School Based Planning Team is motivated by the Principal’s leadership to continue to work on becoming more effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration and Hope</td>
<td>Principal encourages and models collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal uses optimism to encourage the team to look forward and plan for increased student achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>Team acknowledges the Principal’s integrity as a reason for wanting to be a part of the team</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary: A Comparison of Schools A, B and C

This section of Chapter 4 examined the qualitative responses of the three Principals and their respective School Based Planning Teams relative to the second research question of this study:

Does the Principal exhibit behaviors that promote consensus based decisions during School Based Planning Team meetings?

Each Principal and team responded to four questions and statements based on this question, the research based attributes of an inspirationally motivating transformational leader and the components of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Questions and statements discussed were aligned to the four lenses determined by the researcher. Those questions and statements included (a) The Principal's Vision, (b) Team Decision Making, (c) Challenging Difficult Issues, and (d) Difficult Decisions, Team Interaction and the Principal's Influence. During each of the discussions with the principals and their School Based Planning Teams, themes related to the leadership behaviors of the principal emerged. While the questions and statements guided each team to focus on the same issues initially and responses from the participants resulted in similar themes or patterns, there were several that were individual to each school. Teams were also similar in their desire to become more effective as School Based Planning Teams.

The ability to articulate a clear and compelling vision is an important attribute of inspirationally motivating transformational leaders (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Burns, 2003; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). Each of the three school teams talked about clarity and collaboration as themes relative to the leadership behaviors of the
three principals. In each of the schools, the teams affirmed the clarity with which the principals were able to articulate their vision. That affirmation was connected to the importance of principals connecting their vision to the work of the school. Additionally, each team affirmed that the work of the team relative to decision-making is influenced by the principal’s ability to articulate his or her vision. Further, the teams purported that the nexus between the vision and work of the school will support student achievement. In Schools A, the principal’s vision was specifically discussed as being directly related to the school improvement plan. Further, each of the three schools pinpointed collaboration as a common theme. Team discussions focused on the notion that each of the three principals encouraged collaboration extensively via conversations with the teams and behaviors modeled at other times.

Other findings included the emergence of individual themes among the three schools. In School A, individual themes are focused on meeting student needs and personal detachment to make team decisions. The primary focus of the Principal and the school team is on making decisions based on meeting the needs of students and putting personal opinions aside to reach a collaborative agreement. These two themes are aligned to the research of Susskind, McKearnan and Thomas-Larmer, 1999, that claims that consensus is built upon collaborative agreements that have been depersonalized by all constituents.

Conversely, the individual themes of School B focused on demonstration of trust, inclusion and acceptance of responsibility. In each instance the Principal and the team agreed that the principal demonstrates trust in the team, promotes inclusion and encourages the acceptance of responsibility by his own behaviors or conversation during
the meetings of the School Based Planning Team. It is important to note that each of the emergent themes discussed by School B is reflected in research based practices of inspirationally motivating transformational leaders. According to Kouzes and Posner (2002), transformational leaders build trust and acceptance of responsibility among all followers. Including all followers is related to the theme of inclusion. Kouzes and Posner support the notion that building trust, accepting responsibility and inclusive practices is important to the work of leaders in their claim that states, “In enabling others to act, leaders have to skillfully balance creating a climate of teamwork and trust while holding each single person accountable for his or her actions” (p.285). It is important to note however, some members of the team did not want to assume full responsibility for all decision-making. These members wanted the principal to assume full responsibility at certain junctures and tell the team what to do.

Finally, School C participants focused on inspirational leadership, integrity, and hope, three of the most important aspects of transformational leaders who are inspirationally motivating (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Burs, 2003; Kouzes & Posner, 2002; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). Unlike the other teams chosen to be a part of this study, this team has been, by their self proclaimed affirmation, dysfunctional and is working to become an effective decision making body. The team agreed that they need to have access to training in formal consensus based decision making.

In concluding their discussion, the Team C talked about the hope that the Principal has inspired in members of the team and the demonstration of integrity in her leadership. They also affirmed the positive influence the Principal has had upon the team and that they want to be a part of this team.
Based on the analysis of the responses of the School Based Planning Teams of each of the three schools and the responses of the three principal, there is an alignment between the leadership behaviors of the school principal and the team's decision making process. Each of the School Based Planning Teams emphasized the importance of the leadership of the principal during meetings of the School Based Planning Team.

Chapter 5 will present the implications of the findings in this chapter, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for future studies. The study will conclude with a summary of the entire dissertation based on the analysis and results derived from the quantitative and qualitative data collected.
Chapter V: Summary and Discussion

This chapter restates the research problem, reviews the major methods used in this study, and discusses the implications of the findings. The chapter also discusses the limitations of this study and recommendations for future study. Finally, the chapter ends with a conclusion that summarizes the study based on the analysis of the results gleaned from the data collected.

Statement of the Problem

The objective of this study was to explore the relationship between inspirationally motivating practices employed by principals and consensus based decision-making processes of School Based Planning Teams in three schools in a Western New York School District. This investigation was conducted because the leadership practices of principals in some of the schools in the Western New York School District where this study occurred did not support consensus based decision making as required. This requirement originated from a directive to schools in New York State regarding School Based Planning Teams contained in the New York State Commissioner of Education Regulations, Part 100.11 (See Appendix A for the complete regulation). Furthermore, in schools where this inconsistency was evident, there was confirmation of strained relationships among constituents and lack of focus on the instructional agenda.

Additionally, because the principal was charged with the responsibility for facilitating the collaborative environment in which consensus based decision making could occur, leadership practices of the principal became the focus for the study. These decision
making difficulties served as an impetus for investigating the relationship between inspirationally motivating practices of principals and shared decision making as evidenced in three PreK-6 Western New York State Schools. Inspirationally motivating leadership practices of principals was chosen based on the research of Bass (1997) that claimed that leaders who employ inspirationally motivating practices promote collaboration. A mixed methods approach was used to explore the relationship between inspirationally motivating practices and team decision-making.

Review of Methodology

As explained in Chapter 2, this study was based on three case studies that examined the relationship between the leadership practices employed by the principals and the decision-making processes used by the School Based Planning Teams (SBPT) in the three schools chosen for this study. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to conduct this study. Further, the study was conducted in the three schools of the Western New York School District included in this study over a period of six months.

The study included administering the MLQ (5X-short), conducting face to face interviews of the three principals and focus group sessions with members of the School Based Planning Teams of the three schools. Each participant completed the MLQ (5X short) and participated in one interview [principals] or one focus group session [SBPT members] conducted by two skilled facilitators who were chosen using specific criteria.

Discussion and Implications of the Findings

The findings of this study are based on the results collected using two research questions:
1. What is the relationship between the principal’s self perception and the perception of the School Based Planning Team regarding the principal’s inspirationally motivating practices?

2. Does the principal exhibit behaviors that promote consensus based decisions during School Based Planning Team meetings?

Discussion of findings. Emergent findings related to the perceived leadership practices of the three principals who participated in this study implied that there are connections between transformational leadership practices and successful group processes that include team decision-making. These connections are aligned to the results of a three year study conducted by Leithwood and Jantzi, 1990, that found that transformational leadership practices promote collaborative cultures within a school. Staff in Leithwood and Jantzi’s study reported that they were more able to solve professional problems due to the administrators’ transformational leadership practices. One of those practices, discussed by Bass (1997) is building and sustaining covenantal relationships.

Building and sustaining covenantal relationships that contribute to group success is rooted in the inspirationally motivating practices of leaders. Those practices, according to Bass (1997) include the ability of leaders to articulate a compelling vision, set goals and standards, talk optimistically about the future, and provide encouragement for work to be done. The findings from each of the three schools included in this study indicate that the principal’s ability to articulate a compelling vision brought focus to the work of the School Based Planning Teams relative to decision making and raised the commitment
level of the group. This finding also aligns to the research of Bass (1997) concerning the success of group work.

Additionally, each school team talked about the importance of the principal’s encouragement when teams were faced with making difficult decisions that were in the best interest of the school community. This finding is aligned to the research of Bass and Riggio (2006), which claims, “The inspirational leader works to move followers to consider the moral values involved in their duties as members of their unit, organization, and profession” (pp.36-37).

During School A’s focus group discussion, the School Based Planning Team talked about the impact of the principal’s commitment to improving student achievement on them as a team relative to meeting student needs. This impact, according to the team, is based on how the principal “lives what she talks about.” The team also pointed out that the principal’s sincerity in working with the team is one of the reasons they want to work with her. This finding implies that there is a connection between the leadership behaviors of their principal and the research of Kouzes and Posner (2002) that purports the notion that exemplary leaders, “model the way” for their followers (pp.14-15). These exemplary leaders demonstrate their commitment by working beside followers modeling the kind of behaviors they expect of others. Further, this demonstration of commitment encourages followers to want to follow the leader (Kouzes and Posner, 2002).

During the focus group discussion with School C’s School Based Planning Team an interesting finding emerged. The team affirmed that they had been dysfunctional for the last year as a decision-making body but that they are hopeful because of the leadership of the current Principal. They explained that it is because of their belief in the
integrity and knowledge of the Principal that they are on a path that will lead to effective
decision-making. While this finding was interesting, the belief of this school team
appears to demonstrate a connection between the leadership practices of their principal
and the research of Bass and Riggio that claims, "Leaders use inspirational motivation to
build emotional commitment to a mission or goal" (2006, p.36).

Another interesting finding emerged from School B’s focus group discussion.
This discussion focused on the role of the principal as participant on the team rather than
the leader. During the discussion, some of the members of the team said that they wanted
the principal to make unilateral decisions and give specific direction at certain junctures.
This finding is in opposition to the research that describes successful shared decision­
making. In studies conducted by Blasé and Blasé (1999); Glanz (2006); York Barr
(2004); and Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2001), the findings indicate that shared
governance is most successful when teacher empowerment is practiced. These studies
purport that ownership and commitment is increased when teachers remain involved.
Additionally, moving the decision making to the principal as suggested by some of the
team members is also in opposition to the "committing" style that Kouzes and Posner
(2002), claim is essential to effective decision making. Commitment, according to
Kouzes and Posner is fostered through the involvement of all parties. Finally, according
to Susskind, McKearman and Thomas-Larmer (1999), "Consensus decision making
requires the inclusion of all organizational constituents relevant to a particular situation."
Continuing with the discussion, Susskind et al., also claim that the only times unilateral
decisions should be considered are when (a) a decision has already been made, so a
consensus building effort is a sham; (b) there is no need to make a decision; (c) crucial
parties refuse to be involved in decision making, for whatever reason; (d) adequate information is available or more input is not desired; (e) it is clear that concerned parties can decide on their own; and (f) collecting the information to make a decision will delay the decision without improving its quality, or additional data will only confuse or obscure the situation (pp. 601-602).

Implications of findings. While the majority of the findings in this study appear to be aligned to research, the findings from two of the three school teams warrant further consideration due to the impact they have on this study relative to the process of consensus based decision making. The suggestion made by some members of School B’s School Based Planning Team that the principal become the decision maker for the team at certain junctures is in opposition to research based strategies associated with the team decision making process. According to Susskind, McKearan and Thomas-Larmer (1999) when the charge of a team is to make decisions based on consensus, the responsibility for making unilateral decisions cannot be devolved to the team leader; in this study the leader is the school principal. This issue, the shifting of responsibility for decision making, might suggest that the team is fearful of making decisions that may cause dissention among constituents not present at the meetings of the School Based Planning Team. The implication in this instance is that further training is needed to ensure that the consensus based decision making is understood by teams. Further, it is important to note that according to the district requirements for this Western New York School District the team leader has the option to intervene in the decision making process when the decision has the potential to have adverse effects on the organization as a
whole. Susskind, et al. claims that when leaders show respect for the process of consensus building and decision making the likelihood of team success improves.

The other unusual finding focused on the ability of School C’s School Based Planning Team to openly discuss their previous inability to make decisions. The implication in this instance is that the team needs to have additional professional development in building consensus and the use of consensus based decision making. This issue may be addressed using the research aligned to effective practices for team decision making as purported by Susskind, McKeaman and Thomas-Larmer, 1999. Training in effective practices of consensus based decision making will improve team interaction in several ways: (a) It is self organizing, (b) it follows the principles of civil discourse; (c) it adapts and incorporates high-quality information,(d) it encourages participants to challenge assumptions; (e) it keep participants at the table, interested, and learning; and (f) it seeks consensus only after discussions fully explore the issues and interests and significant effort was made to find creative responses to differences (Susskind, McKeaman and Thomas-Larmer, 1999, pp.648-650).

The Overall Implications of the Study

Based on an analysis of the MLQ (5-X short) for each of the three schools, there are extant relationships between the perceptions of School Based Planning Teams concerning the leadership practices of the principals and the self perceptions of the three principals. Those perceptions are aligned to the attributes of inspirationally motivating leadership practices that include (a) speaking optimistically about the future, (b) speaking enthusiastically about the work to be done. (c) articulating a compelling vision, and (d) expressing confidence about goals being met (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Secondly, based on
the analysis and interpretation of the face to face interviews and focus group discussions the following conclusion was drawn by the investigator: Leaders who employ inspirationally motivating practices during the consensus based decision making process promote the effectiveness of team decision-making and support collaborative working relationships. This hypothesis offers an opportunity for evaluation in future research.

Even though the research in this study was comprehensive, other areas of transformational leadership were not explored resulting in the emergence of certain limitations. The limitations of this study are discussed in the next section.

Limitations

The research in this study focused on the relationship of inspirationally motivating practices employed by three principals on the shared decision making process during School Based Planning Team meetings. Several limitations are evident in this study:

1. The population in this study was limited to the Principals and School Based Planning Teams of three out of thirty nine P-6 schools in the Western New York School District. The study included twenty eight participants inclusive of principals, assistant principals, teachers, paraprofessionals, clerical, and custodial representation.

2. This study was also limited to the perceptions of the three Principals and the three School Based Planning Team members' experiences relative to shared decision making and the leadership practices of the principal. These perceptions collected were limited to the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, face to face interviews and focus group discussions.
3. The restricted use of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire emerged as a limitation. While findings related to each of the four aspects of transformational leadership were measured, for purposes of this study, the major findings were focused on the items that measured inspirationally motivating practices.

4. It is important to note also that the study’s sample size may limit the generalizability of the findings. These findings may only be generalizable to the schools in the Western New York School District. Further research would be needed to substantiate the applicability of the findings to other school districts.

Recommendations

With the growing need to (a) establish and maintain collaborative environments within the school setting, (b) improve the involvement of all constituents in shared decision, and (c) improve leadership practices of school leaders, it is important to continue to investigate the many variables that may contribute to improving the consensus based decision process in schools. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations for further study and processes are being made:

1. A mixed methods study of that examines the influence of other transformational leadership traits on the shared decision making process of School Based Planning Teams. In addition to surveys and interviews, observation of meetings of School Based Planning Teams will provide added perspective to findings that may support improved relationships among team members.

2. An extension of this study that examines the influence of the school principals on other staff when decisions affect the overall school population. Interviews and focus group discussions would provide information related to how the principal
influences the success of an initiative chosen by the School Based Planning Team.
Shadowing the principal may provide rich qualitative data that will offer a
different perspective on the skill level needed to lead after decisions are made.

3. Another possible extension of this study might include a focus on fewer
schools using participant-observation research strategy in addition to face to face
interviews and focus groups to investigate the relationship of transformational
leadership practices employed by the principals during meetings of the School
Based Planning Team. In this instance, the researcher will essentially become a
"participating member" of the School Based Planning Team to observe the
connection between the leadership practices employed the principal and the team
decision making process.

4. A qualitative study that investigates what makes a principal inspirationally
motivating and whether it is a leadership aspect that can be learned.

5. A mixed methods study to examine strategies that make a School Based
Planning Team successful. In one of the schools in this study, the team did not
focus on process but instead united around a specific goal. The question is should
a team be more focused on process or goal orientation to resolve issues presented
to School Based Planning Teams.

6. The development of a formal process for training for School Based Planning
Teams focused on consensus based decision making that includes:

   a. A curriculum focused on consensus building for School Based Planning
Teams
b. Mentors who work directly with School Based Planning Teams and principals throughout the course of the school year.

7. Formal professional development courses focused on successful leadership practices for leading teams.

Conclusion

Much has been written about the effectiveness of transformational leadership practices. There are however, no studies specifically focused on the influence of inspirationally motivating practices employed by the principal during meetings of School Based Planning Teams. This section will briefly reiterate the rationale for the study, the research methods used to gather and analyze the data and the recurring themes from each of the three schools.

The rationale for this study was based on the fact that Several School Based Planning Teams in the Western New York School District were experiencing difficulties making consensus based decisions. Additionally, concerns emerged relative to the effectiveness of the team leadership provided by principals. A review of the leadership research revealed a possible resolution to the leadership conundrum experienced by several schools in this district. The research that focuses on the attributes of transformational leadership seemed to address the emergent issues being expressed by school teams in the district included in this study.

The mixed methods approach emerged as the most appropriate way to investigate the relationship and influence of leadership practices employed by the school principal on the shared decision making process during meetings of the School Based Planning Team. Therefore, quantitative and qualitative methods were used to gather and analyze
the data for this study. The MLQ (5X-short) was used to investigate the alignment of the perception of the school teams and the school principals. Focus groups and face to face interviews provided data relative to the influence of the school principals on the team decision making process.

Each of the three principals was viewed as inspirationally motivating by their respective teams. The MLQ (5X-short) revealed close alignments between the perceptions of the teams and the principals relative to their inspirationally motivating practices. Within in each of the three schools however, the way that the inspirational leadership practices of each of the three principals were manifested was described differently by the teams through several emergent themes.

School A. The Principal of School A was described by the School Based Planning Team as inspirational because she modeled the behaviors she expected of others relative to meeting the needs of students. Although themes related to clarity, collaboration and personal detachment emerged as descriptors of the Principal’s leadership practices during the focus group discussion; meeting the needs of students emerged as the overarching premise. Throughout the focus group discussion, School A’s team spoke of the Principal’s constant encouragement to remain focused on meeting the needs of the students. Clearly, the team has adopted this theme as the guide for every decision made related to the instructional agenda of the school. This team adoption was also evident in their discussions about how the Principal lives the vision. Additionally, the Principal’s influence was apparent during the focus group discussion when the team described team interaction as collaborative during decision making because of their focus on meeting student need. According to Kouzes and Posner (2002), it is the commonality of values
that unite people. The common value focused on meeting the needs of students shared by
the members of School A’s team is unified by their focus on meeting student need more
than the formal process of consensus based decision-making. Consensus based decision
making is an outcome of the focus on meeting student need. The impetus for School A’s
common value is embedded in the compelling vision of the school principal whose
leadership behaviors. Several themes also emerged during the focus group discussion
relative to the leadership practices of the Principal of School B.

School B. School B’s School Based Planning Team described the Principal as
ingpirational because his leadership practices are collaborative and inclusive and that he
trusts the team. The team also confirmed that the Principal’s vision was clearly
articulated on a regular basis. Even though collaboration, demonstrating trust and
inclusion were used to describe the leadership practices of the Principal, the recurring
theme was accepting responsibility for employing consensus based decision-making. The
focus group discussion began with a strong confirmation of the team’s understanding of
the compelling vision of the Principal related to ensuring the best learning environment
for students and using consensus to make decisions. The team confirmed their
willingness to employ consensus based decision making.

While the majority of the team confirmed their willingness to use consensus based
decision making, some team members talked about the need for the Principal to be more
directive, not collaborative, when tough decisions have to be made. The team’s
celebration of employing the process conflicted with their claim that the Principal needs
to be more directive at times. Their loyalty to using consensus based decision-making
encouraged by the Principal is somewhat overshadowed by the suggestion that the
Principal should make unilateral decisions at certain junctures when difficult decisions become time consuming. This conundrum seems to imply that the team is not willing to accept the responsibility for making decisions when extended time is needed or when the decision is difficult. Unilateral decision making is only acceptable when there is no need for shared decision making. Accepting responsibility for team decision is necessary to the success of teams (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2002).

School B's team clearly understands the process and has willingly followed the leadership of the Principal who has taught the process well, however, there is a need to support the team with formal training to emphasize the rewards of consistent use.

School C. The third school in this study employs the consensus based decision making process, but is focused on becoming a more efficient decision making body under the leadership of the current Principal. The leadership practices of the Principal of School C were described as inspirational because of the hope she has engendered among team members. Other descriptive themes emerged during the focus group discussion relative to the leadership practices of the principal included clarity of vision, collaboration and integrity. As with the other two School Based Planning Teams involved in this study, team discussion was permeated by one recurring theme during the focus group discussion. That theme focused on the hope that this Principal has created within the team. This team openly discussed their weaknesses as a decision making body, however, the School Based Planning Team's understanding and willingness to use consensus based decision making is based on the confidence they have in the leadership of the current principal. The team has a clear vision of their future based on the influence of the Principal whose vision is clearly understood and accepted by this team. Additionally,
they expressed respect for the Principal’s leadership and a willingness to follow. The ability to get others to follow willingly is one of the attributes of transformational leaders who are inspirationally motivating (Kouzes and Posner, 2002).

Final Thoughts

In each of the schools in this study, the principals demonstrated one or more of the attributes practiced by inspirationally motivating leaders. Confirmation of this finding was facilitated by the combined quantitative and qualitative methodology employed to investigate the relationship between inspirationally motivating practices and the process of decision making used by School Based Planning Teams. Even though this finding was specific to the three schools chosen for this study, it is an indication that inspirationally motivating behaviors can influence the work of teams in other schools working to make collaborative decisions.

It is also important to note that while a dominant theme emerged as the mantra of each of the three schools included in this study, one, all, or none of these themes may exist in other schools across the district included in this study. Individual school themes emerged from the blending of the vision of the principal and the understanding and reception of that vision by school team members. Therefore, it is likely that other school team discussions would yield different themes based on their interactions with the school principal assigned to their building.

This study was heavily influenced by the seminal work of several noted researchers in the field of leadership and team consensus building. Bass (1985) and Leithwood (1992) clarified the importance of employing transformational leadership practices to establish working relationships between team members. Susskind,
McKearnan, and Thomas-Larmer (1999) confirmed the relationship between consensus building and team success during decision making. The work of these researchers as well as others cited throughout this study supported the importance of conducting research focused on the relevance of inspirationally motivating leadership practices during meetings of School Based Planning Teams.

Finally, it is important to remember that it is how leaders lead that makes the difference in how individual team members interact. When school leaders behave in ways that are inspirationally motivating, followers willingly work with them to accomplish tasks in ways that might not have been possible if they had not united around a cause focused on the common good. This notion is confirmed by Bernard Bass, who claimed,

Leaders are truly transformational when they increase awareness of what is right, good, important, and beautiful, when they help to elevate followers’ needs for achievement and self-actualization, when they foster in followers higher moral maturity, and when they move followers to go beyond their self interests for the good of the group, organization, or society (Ethics of Transformational Leadership – Bernard Bass, 1997)
References


Appendix A

REGULATIONS OF THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

100.11 Participation of parents and teachers in school-based planning and shared decision making.

a) Purpose. The purpose of school-based planning and shared decision making shall be to improve the educational performance of all students in the school, regardless of such factors as socioeconomic status, race, sex, language background, or disability.

(b) By February 1, 1994, each public school district board of education and each board of cooperative educational services (BOCES) shall develop and adopt a district plan for the participation by teachers and parents with administrators and school board members in school-based planning and shared decision making. Such district plan shall be developed in collaboration with a committee composed of the superintendent of schools, administrators selected by the district's administrative bargaining organization(s), teachers selected by the teachers' collective bargaining organization(s), and parents (not employed by the district or a collective bargaining organization representing teachers or administrators in the district) selected by school-related parent organizations, provided that those portions of the district plan that provide for participation of teachers or administrators in school-based planning and shared decision making may be developed through collective negotiations between the board of education or BOCES and local collective bargaining organizations representing administrators and teachers. For the purpose of this subdivision, "school-related parent organization" means a nonprofit organization of parents of children attending the schools of the school district whose purposes include the promotion of parental involvement in public education and that is chartered or incorporated under the laws of New York, or is affiliated with a statewide or regional parent organization that is so chartered or incorporated, or is an unincorporated association authorized to do business under an assumed name in New York. In districts in which teachers or administrators are not represented by a collective bargaining organization or there are no school-related parent organizations, teachers, administrators and/or parents shall be selected by their peers in the manner prescribed by the board of education or BOCES to participate in the development of such district plan. In the City School District of the City of New York, each board of education of each community school district and each high school superintendency shall develop a plan in the manner prescribed by this subdivision, and each such plan shall be incorporated into a plan by the central board of education, which plan shall comply with this section.
(c) The plan for participation in school-based planning and shared decision making shall specify:

1. the educational issues which will be subject to cooperative planning and shared decision making at the building level by teachers, parents, administrators, and at the discretion of the board of education or BOCES, other parties such as students, school district support staff, and community members;
2. the manner and extent of the expected involvement of all parties;
3. the means and standards by which all parties shall evaluate improvement in student achievement;
4. the means by which all parties will be held accountable for the decisions which they share in making;
5. the process whereby disputes presented by the participating parties about the educational issues being decided upon will be resolved at the local level; and
6. the manner in which all State and Federal requirements for the involvement of parents in planning and decision making will be coordinated with and met by the overall plan.

(d)(1) The district’s plan shall be adopted by the board of education or BOCES at a public meeting after consultation with and full participation by the designated representatives of the administrators, teachers, and parents, and after seeking endorsement of the plan by such designated representatives. The plan shall be made available to the public. Each board of education or BOCES shall file such plan with the district superintendent or, in the case of city school districts having a population of 125,000 inhabitants or more or a BOCES, with the commissioner within 30 days of adoption.

(2) Each board of education or BOCES shall submit its district plan to the commissioner for approval within 30 days of adoption of the plan. The commissioner shall approve such district plan upon a finding that it complies with the requirements of this section and makes provision for effective participation of parents, teachers, and administrators in school-based planning and decision making.

(c)(1) In the event that the board of education or BOCES fails to provide for consultation with, and full participation of, all parties in the development of the plan as required by subdivisions (b) and (d) of this section, the aggrieved party or parties may commence an appeal to the commissioner pursuant to section 310 of the Education Law. Such an appeal may be instituted prior to final adoption of the district plan and shall be instituted no later than 30 days after final adoption of the district plan by the board of education or BOCES.

(2) Any aggrieved party who participated in the development of the district plan may also appeal to the commissioner pursuant to section 310 of the Education Law from action of the board of education or BOCES in adopting, amending, or recertifying the plan. The grounds for such an appeal may include, but shall not be limited to, noncompliance with any requirement of subdivision (d) of this section and failure to provide within the district plan for meaningful participation in school-based planning and shared decision making.
(f) The district's "Plan for the Participation by Teachers and Parents in School-based Planning and Shared Decision Making" shall be reviewed biennially by the board of education or BOCES in accordance with subdivision (b) of this section. Any amendment or recertification of a plan shall be developed and adopted in the manner prescribed by subdivision (b) and paragraphs (d)(1) and (2) of this section. The amended plan or recertification of the previous plan, together with a statement of the plan's success in achieving its objectives, shall be filed with the district superintendent where applicable, and submitted to the commissioner for approval no later than February 1st of each year in which such biennial review takes place, commencing with February 1, 1996.

(g) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivisions (b) through (f) of this section, where a district has implemented a plan for participation in school-based planning and shared decision making as of February 1, 1994 through its excellence and accountability pilot district program, such district shall not be required to develop a new district plan pursuant to this section.

(h) A school district or BOCES which has developed or implemented a plan for participation of teachers and/or administrators in school-based decision making as the result of a collective bargaining agreement between the board of education or BOCES and local collective bargaining organizations representing teachers and/or administrators shall incorporate such negotiated plan as a part of the district plan required by this section. The board of education or BOCES shall develop the remainder of the district plan, including the portion relating to parental involvement, in the manner prescribed by subdivision (b) of this section.

within the intent of this section.
Appendix B

School Based Planning Team Focus Group Questions

The questions chosen are meant to obtain a description of the leadership style of the principal. The questions chosen have been drawn from the research on inspirational motivational practices. An inspirationally motivating leader (a) articulates a compelling vision of the future, (b) sets challenging goals, (c) talks optimistically about the future, and (d) provides encouragement and meaning for what needs to be done (Bass, 1997)

1. Do you understand the dreams and ideas of your principal as it relates to the school? Why or why not?

Prompt: How do the dreams and ideas of the principal affect the way you make decisions during School Based Planning Team Meetings?

Prompt: Do the actions or expressions of the principal make you want to be a member of the team? Why?

2. Describe the decision making process your team uses.

Prompt: How does the principal support the process your team uses to make decisions?

Prompt: Can you think of some of the words he/she uses to get the team to focus on important decisions? When do you hear them most?

3. Does your principal ever challenge the team to move forward on difficult issues?
4. Describe instances when the principal challenged the team to make a difficult
decision and how the team interacted. Was the principal optimistic? What makes
you think so? (actions / expressions made)
Appendix C

Principal Interview Questions

1. Explain your dreams and ideas as it relates to the school?

   Prompt: Does the team understand your dreams and ideas? What makes you think so?

   Prompt: How do your dreams and ideas affect the way the team makes decisions during School Based Planning Team Meetings?

   Prompt: Do your actions or expressions of the principal make others want to be a member of the team? Why?

2. Describe the decision making process your team uses.

   Prompt: How do you support the process your team uses to make decisions?

   Prompt: Can you think of some of the words you use to get the team to focus on important decisions? When do you say them most?

3. Does your principal ever challenge the team to move forward on difficult issues?

4. Describe instances when you challenged the team to make a difficult decision and how the team interacted. Were you optimistic? What makes you think so? (actions / expressions made)
Appendix D

Letter of introduction to the participants

Dear Colleagues:

I am a doctoral candidate in the Ed.D. in Executive Leadership Program at St. John Fisher College. The Institutional Review Board at St. John Fisher College has reviewed and approved this study.

The purpose of this study will be to examine: (1) the relationship between the principal’s self perception and the perception of the School Based Planning Team (SBPT) regarding the principal’s leadership style as it relates to inspirationally motivating practices; and (2) the extent to which behaviors exhibited by the principal promote consensus based decisions during SBPT Meetings. It is expected that the data gathered from this study will inform current practices related to principal leadership, leadership styles, and positive principal-SBPT decision making. Ultimately, the data will act as a “guide” to increasingly foster professional development relative to effective leadership strategies, practices, and styles for principals.

This research will be completed through an analysis of a confidential Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, interviews and focus groups. All information will remain confidential. Participants/respondents and associated participating schools will not be identified, but numerically coded so that only the researcher will have access to the initial data. Further, all interviews and focus group sessions will be conducted by a facilitator other than the researcher.

Again, I expect that this data will help inform effective practices, practices that will foster increased staff development opportunities, which in turn, are expected to foster increased student achievement.

Thank you very much for considering this request. It is my hope that this information will be useful to institutions pursuing initial and continuing accreditation. To this end, the major findings of the study and recommendations will be shared with participating institutions.

Sincerely,

Cheryl M. Holloway
Associate Chief - Elementary Education PreK-6
Rochester City School District
Appendix E

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (5X – Short)

Sample Questions

1. Talks optimistically about the future ................. 0 1 2 3 4

2. Instills pride in me for being associated with him/her .. 0 1 2 3 4

3. Goes beyond self interest for the good of the group .... 0 1 2 3 4

4. Expresses confidence that goals will be achieved .... 0 1 2 3 4

5. Helps me to develop my strengths ...................... 0 1 2 3 4