How School Principals' Perspectives of Hidden Curriculum Affect Title I Middle Schools

Kimberlee B. Pierre
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How School Principals' Perspectives of Hidden Curriculum Affect Title I Middle Schools

Abstract
This dissertation addressed hidden curriculum and the impact it has on principals in five Title I middle schools. Currently, there is a gap in the research exploring principal perspectives of hidden curriculum. The research objective was to investigate how principal perspectives of hidden curriculum affect Title I middle schools and enable school improvement. In this study, principals were interviewed regarding their perspectives on curriculum, leadership, discipline, testing, professional development, collaboration, expertise and perspectives about teachers and students in their classrooms and schools. This was a qualitative study and the data was analyzed for codes and themes of hidden curriculum. Four themes developed based upon principal interviews. They were the principal, students, resources and the teacher. There were no differences in the theme of principal. However, differences between principals of high performing schools and low performing schools were noted in the themes of students, resources and the teacher. The findings of this study suggest that hidden curriculum is currently functioning to a high degree in the study schools. Principals must have an open dialogue with staff about hidden curriculum, evaluate the findings, and develop school goals to ensure students meet successful educational outcomes. Dialogue between principals and staff could assist principals in creating a plan for solving the daily dilemmas of leading Title I school communities.

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How School Principals’ Perspectives of Hidden Curriculum Affect Title I Middle Schools

By

Kimberlee B. Pierre

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Ed.D. in Executive Leadership

Supervised by

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Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. School of Education

St. John Fisher College

August, 2013
Dedication

I begin by thanking God for the very air I breathe and for ordering my steps in His Word every day of my life. His grace and sustenance provided the strength I needed to finish this dissertation. This study is dedicated to my husband, Nigel Pierre, whose courage throughout this process has been an inspiration to watch. And to my daughter, Nia Imani Pierre, whom I strive to be that Proverbs 31 woman for. Your steadfast belief in me means more than you will ever know. This accomplishment would not have been possible without each of you providing unconditional support and love.

To my sister, Kaianne Vanterpool and my niece LeJana Peterson who are my biggest cheerleaders and encouraged me throughout this process. I feel your love, strength, and support every day. To my mother, Barbara Couch, thank you for your prayers and encouragement. To all my aunts, cousins, godchildren and sorors thank you for praying for me, listening to me, and supporting me throughout this journey. I love each and every one of you so very much.

Finally, I am grateful to my chair, Dr. Richard Maurer for providing structure and support throughout my dissertation journey. I thank you for everything. Dr. Yigal Joseph, my committee member, I appreciate your willingness to serve in this capacity. The discernment and direction that each of you provided will never be forgotten.
Biographical Sketch

Kimberlee B. Pierre is the Director of Learning, Teaching, Assessments and Grants for the Uniondale Union Free School District. Mrs. Pierre attended the State University of New York at Binghamton from 1983 to 1987 and graduated with a Bachelors of Science degree in 1987. She attended Long Island University from 1991 to 1992 and graduated with a Master of Science degree in 1992, later enrolling in a post Master’s program in Administrative Education at Brooklyn College to pursue advanced certifications as a School District Administrator and School Administrator/Supervisor, which she received in 1994. Mrs. Pierre came to St. John Fisher College in the summer of 2011 and began doctoral studies in the Ed.D. program in Executive Leadership. She pursued her research in how do school principals’ perspectives of hidden curriculum affect Title I middle schools under the direction of Dr. Richard Maurer and Dr. Yigal Joseph. Mrs. Pierre received the degree in August 2013.
Abstract

This dissertation addressed hidden curriculum and the impact it has on principals in five Title I middle schools. Currently, there is a gap in the research exploring principal perspectives of hidden curriculum. The research objective was to investigate how principal perspectives of hidden curriculum affect Title I middle schools and enable school improvement. In this study, principals were interviewed regarding their perspectives on curriculum, leadership, discipline, testing, professional development, collaboration, expertise and perspectives about teachers and students in their classrooms and schools.

This was a qualitative study and the data was analyzed for codes and themes of hidden curriculum. Four themes developed based upon principal interviews. They were the principal, students, resources and the teacher. There were no differences in the theme of principal. However, differences between principals of high performing schools and low performing schools were noted in the themes of students, resources and the teacher. The findings of this study suggest that hidden curriculum is currently functioning to a high degree in the study schools.

Principals must have an open dialogue with staff about hidden curriculum, evaluate the findings, and develop school goals to ensure students meet successful educational outcomes. Dialogue between principals and staff could assist principals in creating a plan for solving the daily dilemmas of leading Title I school communities.
School communities would benefit if all stakeholders identified and discussed the affect of hidden curriculum on students.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

For the purposes of this dissertation, hidden curriculum has been defined as the social act of placing severe restrictions on an individual, group or institution. Typically, a government or political organization that is in power places these restrictions formally or covertly on oppressed groups so that the groups can be exploited and less able to compete with other social groups. According to Barker (2003), the oppressed individual or group is devalued, exploited and deprived of privileges by the individual or group which has more power” (p. 4). Sambell and McDowell (1998) defined hidden curriculum as, “an appropriate metaphor to describe the shadowy, ill-defined and amorphous nature of that which is implicit and embedded in contrast with the formal statement about curricula and the surface features of educational interaction” (p. 391). While there have been multiple meanings of the term hidden curriculum, the study of hidden curriculum has been defined by a unitary goal which is to make explicit and visible that which was formerly invisible.

Perspective is defined as the process by which people translate sensory impressions into a coherent and unified view of the world around them (Business Directory, 2012). Though essentially founded on imperfect and unsubstantiated (or unreliable) information, perspective is equated with realism for real-world applications and directs human behavior. For the purposes of this dissertation, principal perspectives measures how the principal transmits high expectations to staff, students and the community; fosters compassion, resilience and determination; and leads the school to
successful educational outcomes as measured by performance on the New York State Report Cards.

Title I schools are described as schools having a preponderance of students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. Orfield and Lee (2005) identified Title I schools as having a significant proportion of minority students and students with limited proficiency in the English Language; these schools are also struggling with teacher turnover and attracting and retaining good teachers (p.17).

Students in Title I middle schools face a preponderance of trials both at home and in their communities. These trials and challenges outside of the school create a plethora of issues that schools must address in order to meet successful school outcomes. Stiefel, Berne, Iatarola, and Fruchter (2000) indicated very poor communities face many hardships, where children, families, and the schools that serve them, confront a host of challenges. For schools, these challenges include children who do not attend pre-school educational programs, excessive health and absentee issues, difficulty retaining experienced teachers, and much more. Knapp (1995) indicated that Title I schools are faced with the challenges of serving students who lack proper nutrition and health care and who live in unstable home environments. These kinds of environments present unparalleled obstacles for the principals and teachers serving Title I students.

In a study conducted by Sunderman, Tracey, Kim, and Orfield (2004), it was discovered that teachers believe parental support is missing in Title I, low performing schools. The researchers discovered excessive teacher turnover in Title I schools with sizable minority populations. They conveyed that teachers in these schools indicated they require additional resources and time to collaborate with other teachers, smaller classes,
better trained administrators and teachers, and greater parental contribution in order to meet high standards and advance student performance.

Poverty has been believed to be related to not just poor educational outcomes, but also educational disadvantages such as inadequate teacher resources, the educational hindrances of lower per pupil expenditures, and segregation from students with greater educational and material resources. Students from low-income backgrounds experience relatively low levels of academic achievement and fewer years of educational attainment relative to students from higher-income categories (Levin, 2007). Lessons, which are learned but not openly intended, such as the transmission of norms, values, and beliefs conveyed in the classroom and the social environment, were examined throughout this study.

In order to examine the factors of how school principals’ perspectives of hidden curriculum affect Title I middle schools, the dissertation study considered aspects related to lessons that are learned but not openly intended, such as the transmission of norms, values, and beliefs conveyed in the classroom and social environment. As result of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), whose emphasis is on student testing, there has been a significant increase in the number of schools failing to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Research has indicated schools have developed a culture of “teaching towards the test” and thereby are not teaching a rich, rigorous curriculum that leads to high student outcomes (Jacob & Ludwig, 2009). A common misconception is that principals direct teachers to follow mechanically the curriculum and what students are exposed to is limited. Many students are taught to memorize specifics or rulebooks rather than to be provided with skills for problem inquiry and solution. Additionally, Title I students spend
a larger proportion of class time devoted to record keeping and discipline, leaving less time for instruction.

Of failing schools, the preponderance have been those that have been classified as Title I and require extensive support services to ensure compliance with federal mandates. Since the publication of the Coleman report in 1966, the effect of family income and socioeconomic status (SES) has been fully recognized in public policy (Borman & Dowling, 2010). Coleman et al. discovered that processes of family influence have a great impact on student achievement more than any characteristics that were connected with schools. Other relevant issues identified are the degree to which children from Title I backgrounds are attending substandard schools because of residency patterns, lesser educational spending, and racism. This has led researchers to ask, is the curriculum children are exposed to in Title I schools methodically less inspiring and less rewarding academically from that of other children.

If Title I schools had exceptional curriculum, superior assessments, and well-prepared teachers, we would be on the way toward meeting successful student outcomes for children in Title I schools. Schools do not exist in isolation. Schooling requires the active participation of many including students, families, public officials, local organizations, and even the larger community (Ravitch, 2010). The issue of principal perspectives of hidden curriculum in Title I middle schools is of major significance to the field of education. An in-depth understanding of the hidden curriculum challenges Title I students experience requires an intensive investigation.

The history of hidden curriculum research is quite extensive and broad. However, it is somewhat out of date and does not focus on principal perspectives. I have briefly
highlighted several of the leading researchers of hidden curriculum. Jackson (1968) reportedly developed the phrase, hidden curriculum. His main argument was that education is a socialization process and must be viewed in that manner. Shortly after Jackson published his work, Snyder (1970) of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology published *The Hidden Curriculum*, which answered the question of why students turn away from education. Snyder stated that many campus issues and students’ personal anxiety is caused by cadre of unstated academic and social norms, which stymies students’ abilities to think creatively or develop academically. Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (2004) examined how presumptive teaching influenced students, schools and society as a whole.

Dreeben (1968) indicated hidden curriculum makes children form transient social relationships, conceal much of their personal identity, and accept their treatment in schools. Vallance (1973) examined the unstudied curriculum, the covert or latent curriculum. The non-academic outcomes of schooling or simply what schooling does to students was studied. Bowles & Gintis (1976) stated schools are not an agency of social mobility but reproduce the existing class structure, sending a silent but powerful message to students with regard to their intellectual ability and personal traits. Martin (1976) stated hidden curriculum can be found in the structure of the classroom, the teacher’s authority, and the rules governing the relationship between teachers and students. Willis (1977) stated hidden curriculum of the school structure that is most important in determining the reproduction of class relations in school; rather, it is hidden curriculum of pupil resistance, which must be understood if the dynamics of social and cultural reproduction are to be explained.
Anyon (1980) stated hidden curriculum of school work is silent preparation for relating to the process of production. Differing curriculum, pedagogical, and pupil evaluation practices emphasize different cognitive and behavioral skills in each social setting and thereby sets up stratification in the educational system. Apple (1982) emphasized hidden curriculum involves various interests, cultural norms, struggles, agreements and compromises. Giroux (1983) indicated hidden curriculum as those unstated norms, values, and beliefs embedded in and transmitted to students through the underlying rules that structure the routines and social relationships in schools and classrooms.

**Problem Statement**

The lack of critical attention to how school principals’ perspectives of hidden curriculum affect Title I middle schools has highlighted an immense gap in current literature and is a substantial problem in educational reform. The curriculum provided by the state education department and book vendors has been often studied but little attention has been given to principal perspectives of hidden curriculum and its impact in Title I middle schools. Trying to come to terms with a complex school culture and identifying hidden curriculum issues is paramount in helping students succeed in Title I middle schools.

Public schooling has been regarded as the “great equalizer” in American society (Schmidt, Cogan, & McKnight, 2011). Regardless of a child’s race, religion, gender, disability or socioeconomic status every child has an opportunity to be educated. As a free society, this expectation has been actualized through the institution of public schools; failure to do so negatively influences the future of students and each subsequent
generation. The very future of democracy and forward progression of educated individuals within the United States is stymied. Poverty and educational failure are inextricably linked in American education. Students from low-income backgrounds experience relatively low levels of academic achievement and fewer years of educational attainment relative to students from higher-income categories (Levin, 2007). It has been believed that poverty is not just related to poor educational outcomes, but also educational disadvantages such as inadequate teacher resources, the educational hindrances of lower per pupil expenditures, and segregation from students with greater educational and material resources. The degree to which this educational disadvantage is due to principal perspectives of hidden curriculum in Title I middle schools, where hidden curriculum is defined as a side effect of an education; lessons which are learned but not openly intended are examined throughout the dissertation study.

Perspectives of building principals can adversely affect children’s values, norms, and beliefs. Each student and principal are a sum total of all of their educational, home, and life experiences—the sum total of all of their schooling and individual social intentions and interactions. Since principals and students have had different life experiences, each person responds distinctively to school environment.

**Theoretical Rationale**

The functionalist, cultural, liberal and critical theories have been defined in relation to principal perspectives of hidden curriculum in Title I schools and how the hidden curriculum operates within the school structure. Additionally, the theoretical rationale includes two grand, one mid-level and one mini theory useful for considering the relationship between hidden curriculum in Title I schools and principals’
perspectives. The cited researchers have brought into focus the various issues related to hidden curriculum, poverty, and principal perspectives.

**Functionalist theory.** Theorists who advocate the functionalist perspective, which is a mid-level theory, have viewed schools as a vehicle through which students learn the social norms, values, and skills that students require to maintain the existing society. They place emphasis on the ways students are overtly socialized into future adult roles. Accordingly, Dreeben (1968) argued that each student has different parental backgrounds and when each attends school, he/she encounters the norms that will prepare them to involve in the life of public sphere(s).

Functionalists are not interested in looking at the behavior of an individual, as they believe this behavior would demonstrate a form of social encouragement. Functionalists believe behavior is conditioned by socialization and that behavior is generally acquired in a passive process. The child in the school setting is subjected to socializing influences and responds to them accordingly.

Little interest has been shown in analyzing why certain students flourish or collapse within the educational system of the United States. Functionalists do not examine individualized behavior because it is their belief the causes of human behavior are to be discovered by examining a broad view in which societies are organized institutionally.

**Cultural theory.** The cultural theory, which is a mini theory, is an examination and critique of society and culture, drawing from knowledge across the social sciences and humanities. The core concepts are that critical social theory should be directed at the totality of society in its historical specificity, how it came to be configured at a specific
point in time, and that critical theory should improve understanding of society by integrating all the major social sciences, including geography, economics, sociology, history, political science, anthropology, and psychology. The major theorist for the purpose of the dissertation study was James Coleman, the first author of the Coleman Report (1966), which fueled debate about school effects that has continued since (Kivat, 2000). The report was commonly presented as evidence, or an argument, that school funding has little effect on student achievement. A more precise reading of the Coleman Report is that student background and socioeconomic status are much more important in determining educational outcomes than are measured differences in school resources, an example being per pupil spending (Hanusheck, 1998). At the same time, differences in schools, and particularly teachers and principals, have a significant impact on student outcomes in Title I schools.

Diane Ravitch, former assistant secretary of education and a leader in the drive to create a national curriculum, has recently experienced a sweeping change of heart from previously held positions related to students in poverty. Ravitch (2010) stated students may be taught by highly qualified teachers and have access to a well written and fully implemented curriculum, but if the issue of poverty is not eliminated and eradicated, students with low socio-economic status will continue to suffer consistent educational deficits. To have no curriculum, as is often the case in American schools, leaves the schools at the mercy of those who demand a regimen of basic skills and no content at all. To have no curriculum is to leave decisions about what matters to the ubiquitous textbooks, which function as a de facto national curriculum. To have no curriculum on
which assessment may be based is to tighten the grip of test-based accountability, testing only generic skills, not knowledge or comprehension (Ravitch, 2010).

A hidden curriculum cultural theorist was Dreeben. Dreeben (1968) examined the norms of school culture and concluded that schools teach students to form transient social relationships, submerge much of their personal identity, and accept the legitimacy of categorical treatment. He focused on the identifiable social structure of the classroom and argued that classroom structure teaches students about authority (Dreeben, 1968).

**Liberal theory.** The liberal perspective, which is a grand theory, views schools as the means through which students learn social norms, values, and skills they need to obtain in order to function within society. Norms, values, and belief systems are embedded in the perceptions of principals, the school, the curriculum, and classroom life, and are conveyed to students by curricular content, social relationships, and daily routines. Hidden curriculum has been explored primarily through the social norms and moral beliefs tacitly transmitted through the socialization process that structure classroom social relationship (Giroux, 1983).

Liberal theorists have approached hidden curriculum and poverty from a distinctly different perspective from functionalists; liberal theorists strive to understand the assumptions on which poverty, school practices, and perceptions develop. Furthermore, they describe how these practices are created and maintained in classrooms. The main emphasis from a liberal theorist perspective is how do you extrapolate meaning in the classroom. Liberals address the hidden content in schools, perceptions of principals, principles that govern the interactions of students-teachers, and the significance of hidden curriculum and poverty that give significance to their actions. A vital ethnographic study
highlighting these issues is Jackson’s (1968) study of *Life in the Classroom*, which brought hidden curriculum under scrutiny. According to his analysis, there were values, dispositions and social and behavioral expectations that brought rewards in school for students and that learning what was expected as a feature in hidden curriculum. Hidden curriculum is defined as learning to wait quietly, exercising restraint, trying, completing work, keeping busy, cooperating, showing alliance to both teachers and peers, being neat and punctual and conducting oneself courteously (Jackson, 1968).

**Critical theory.** The critical theory, which is a grand theory, is an examination and critique of society and culture, drawing from knowledge across the social sciences and humanities. The term has two different meanings with different origins and histories, one originating in sociology and the other in literary criticism. This has led to the very liberal use of critical theory as an umbrella term to describe any theory founded upon critique. A major hidden curriculum critical theorist is Apple (1978, 1979, 1982) who emphasized hidden curriculum involves various interests, cultural forms, struggles, agreements and compromises. Apple attempted to challenge the removal of skill sets through traditionalist teacher practices, such as imposing a common curriculum on schools. Apple and others documented the effect of curricular and schooling practices on students and our society.

Kentli (2009) another critical theorist explained that school curriculum is generally accepted as an explicit, conscious, formally planned course with specific objectives. In addition to this didactic curriculum, students experience an unwritten curriculum described by informality and lack of conscious planning (Kentli, 2009).
Another leading critical theorist was Friere (2004), who stated that poverty and hunger severely affected his ability to learn. This influenced his decision to dedicate his life to improving the lives of the poor, “I didn't understand anything because of my hunger. I wasn't dumb. It wasn't lack of interest. My social condition didn't allow me to have an education. Experience showed me once again the relationship between social class and knowledge” (Stevens, 2002, p. 7). Freire believed education to be a political act that could not be divorced from pedagogy. Freire defined this as a main tenet of critical pedagogy. He believed teachers and students must be made aware of the politics that surround education. The way students are taught and what they are taught serves a political agenda. Teachers, themselves, have political notions they bring into the classroom (Kincheloe, 2008). Freire (2004) believed education makes sense because women and men learn that through learning they can make and remake themselves, because women and men are able to take responsibility for themselves as beings capable of knowing — of knowing that they know and knowing that they don't. (p. 15)

Hidden curriculum as a socialization of schooling can be understood by examining the social interactions within an environment. Thus, it is in process at all times and serves to transmit tacit messages to students about values, attitudes and principles. Hidden curriculum can reveal through an evaluation of the environment and the unexpected, unintentional interactions between teachers and students, which revealed critical pedagogy. Each theorist has considered important points, principally, exploring how pedagogical practices of schooling inform and socialize students. In addition, many of the theorists asserted that the demands of upper and middle class are overriding
throughout schooling. Particularly, the concept of hegemony and resistance have been
significant in the evaluation of hidden curriculum. Therefore, when examining hidden
curriculum of schooling, researchers should focus on them. The researchers argued one
needs to see a picture of the reviewed studies on hidden curriculum and guide them to use
hidden curriculum theories in new areas and open a new age for the critical pedagogy.

Researchers such as Dreeben (1968) and Coleman et al. (1966) brought into focus
the various issues related to hidden curriculum, poverty, and principal perspectives.
Dreeben (1968) argued that each student has different parental backgrounds and when
each attends school, he/she encounters the norms that will prepare them to involve in the
life of public sphere(s). A major theoretical work for the purpose of the dissertation study
was Coleman et al. (1966), which fueled debate about school effects that has continued
since its publication (Kivat, 2000). The report, commonly known as The Coleman Report,
was often presented as evidence, or an argument, that school funding has little effect on
is that student background and socioeconomic status are much more important in
determining educational outcomes than are measured differences in school resources, an
example would be per pupil spending.” (Hanusheck, 1998) At the same time, differences
in schools, and particularly teachers and principals, have a very significant impact on
student outcomes in Title I middle schools.

Since the publication of the Coleman report in 1966, the effect of family income
and socioeconomic status (SES) has been fully recognized in public policy (Borman &
Dowling, 2010). Coleman et al. found that measures of family influence have a great
impact on student achievement more than any characteristic that were associated with
schools. Other relevant issues were the degree to which children from Title I backgrounds are attending inferior schools because of housing patterns, lower educational spending, and discrimination. This leads researchers to ask, is the curriculum provided for children in poverty systematically less challenging and less fulfilling academically from that provided for other children.

In summary, hidden curriculum as a socialization of schooling can be understood by examining the social interactions within an environment. Thus, it is in process at all times and serves to transmit tacit messages to students about values, attitudes and principles. Hidden curriculum can reveal through an evaluation of the environment and the unexpected, unintentional interactions between teachers and students, which reveals critical pedagogy. Each theorist has considered important points, principally, exploring how pedagogical practices of schooling inform and socialize students. In addition, many of the theorists asserted that the demands of upper and middle class are overriding throughout schooling. Particularly, the concept of hegemony and resistance are significant in the evaluation of hidden curriculum. Therefore, when examining hidden curriculum of schooling, researchers should focus on them. The researchers argued one needs to see a picture of the reviewed studies on hidden curriculum and guide them to use hidden curriculum theories in new areas and open a new age for the critical pedagogy.

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of the dissertation study was to conduct a qualitative study to explore the concept of principal perspectives of hidden curriculum in both high and low performing Title I middle schools. The impact of the study was for administrators to understand the concept of principal perspectives of hidden curriculum in Title I middle
schools. The goal of this study was to determine how principal perspectives of hidden curriculum in Title I middle schools function in schools and classrooms and utilize this knowledge to facilitate change.

**Research Question**

The research question focused on discerning the basic principles of the affect of principal perspectives of hidden curriculum in Title I middle schools. The research question was developed in accordance with the purpose of the study and the statement of the research problem. The following fundamental question was asked:

How do school principals’ perspectives of hidden curriculum affect Title I middle schools?

**Potential Significance of the Study**

This study will have a positive impact on the field of education. Gaps in the research of hidden curriculum were identified to promote an understanding of this phenomenon and how it relates to school community. Strategies for improvement were highlighted. Often principals overlook the importance of school culture and hidden curriculum when addressing educational issues in schools. Administrators need to acquire a thorough understanding of the school setting through an exploration of the representative nature of hidden curriculum since the school environment is critical to the forward progression of a school community. The school environment influences everyone in the school. In order to gain an understanding of the school, principals need to become cognizant of the impact of their perspectives and the power of their influence of the institutional culture. However, many principals have not been aware of their impact on the school climate and culture. Despite the importance of hidden curriculum in
schools, principal perspectives are possibly the least discussed element in plans for school and district improvement.

**Definitions of Terms**

For the purpose of the dissertation study, it was important to understand principals’ views of hidden curriculum to help ensure that the experiences of children in Title I middle schools are being heard and understood. There have been many conversations in schools about hidden curriculum and how principals think about the social curriculum in education for their students’ deserved increased awareness and discussion, especially in Title I settings. Principals could benefit from learning more about their views on hidden curriculum in education and instructional practices, how their views shape the environment and culture within their schools. It is important that principals of Title I middle schools understand what teachers in their schools think about hidden curriculum, how they interpret and practice hidden curriculum in their classrooms and other instructional resources, and the dilemmas they face.

When researchers discuss poverty, they are usually speaking about two types of poverty: (a) the poverty level of individual students, and (b) a measure of the poverty level within a school. For an individual student, the most common definition has been whether or not that student is eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunch. For schools, the definition is usually the percentage of students eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunch. For the purposes of the dissertation study, Title I schools are eligible to receive free and reduced lunch and serve schools with students that live in poverty.

**Hidden curriculum.** The social act of placing severe restrictions on an individual, group or institution. Typically, a government or political organization that is
in power places these restrictions formally or covertly on oppressed groups so that the group can be exploited and less able to compete with other social groups. The oppressed individual or group is devalued, exploited and deprived of privileges by the individual or group which, has more power.

**Title I middle schools.** Schools having a majority of students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, according to federal guidelines.

**High performing schools.** District or school’s “all student” group must have achieved all applicable state standards as follows for 2010-11.

- Grade 6 - 8 ELA, All Student PI of 170
- Grade 6 - 8 Math, All Student PI of 170
- The middle school in both 2009-2010 and 2010-11 must have made AYP on all applicable measures: Grade 6 - 8 ELA and Grade 3 - 8 Math
- In 2010-2011 the middle school must have been held accountable for the academic performance of the “all student group” and at least two other subgroups in either Grade 6 - 8 ELA or Grade 6 - 8 Math.

**Low performing schools.** A school that has received State-mandated assistance and has been designated by the New York State Education Department as low performing for at least two of three consecutive years.

**Socio Economic Status (SES).** An economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family’s economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education and occupation.

**Principal Perspective.** Measures how the principal transmits high expectations to staff, students, and the community; fosters compassion, resilience and determination; and
leads the school to successful educational outcomes as measured by performance on the New York State Report Cards.

**Participation criterion.** At the middle level, 95% of Grades 6 - 8 students enrolled during the test administration period in each group with 40 or more students tested on the New York State Testing Program (NYSTP) in ELA or, if appropriate, the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT), or the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) in ELA.

**Performance criterion.** At the middle level, the Performance Index (PI) of each group with 30 or more continuously enrolled tested students must equal or exceed its Effective Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) or the group must make Safe Harbor. (NYSESLAT is used only for participation.)

**Middle schools.** Levels of schooling between elementary and high schools. For the purpose of the dissertation, students in grades 6 - 8 are considered middle school students.

**Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).** Indicates satisfactory progress by a district or a school toward the goal of proficiency for all students.

**English Language Arts (ELA).** To make AYP in ELA, every accountability group must make AYP. For a group to make AYP, it must meet the participation and the performance criteria.

**Math.** The same criteria for making AYP in ELA apply to mathematics. At the elementary/middle level, the measures used to determine AYP are the NYSTP and the NYSAA in mathematics.
**Annual Measurable Objective (AMO).** The Performance Index value that signifies that an accountability group is making satisfactory progress toward the goal that 100% of students will be proficient in the state’s learning standards for English Language Arts and mathematics by 2013–14. The AMOs for each grade level will be increased as specified in CR100.2(p) (14) and will reach 200 in 2013–14.

**Continuous Enrollment.** The count of continuously enrolled tested students used to determine the Performance Index for the Test Performance part of the AYP determination for middle-level ELA, mathematics, and science. These are the second numbers in the parentheses after the subgroup label on the middle-level ELA, mathematics, and science pages.

**District in Good Standing.** A district is considered to be in good standing if it has not been identified as a District in Need of Improvement or a District Requiring Academic Progress.

**Summary**

In Chapter 1, principal perspectives, poverty, Title I and hidden curriculum were defined. The problem statement, theoretical perspectives, study significance, purpose of the study, research questions, and definition of terms were expounded upon and illuminated. Several theories of hidden curriculum in Title I middle schools were identified as it relates to principals’ perspectives of each of the theorists. The identified researchers have brought into focus the various issues related to hidden curriculum, poverty, and principal perspectives and areas for continued research.

Many issues of principal perspectives of hidden curriculum that focused on students were identified as well as the school system itself. Thus far, research has been
indicating hidden curriculum is created and maintained by the principal, district, teachers and staff of the schools. Further study was required to gain a better understanding of the impact of the effect of principal perspectives of hidden curriculum in Title I middle schools.

Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature. Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology used to explore the research question, Chapter 4 contains the findings of the research, and Chapter 5 includes a discussion of the implications of the research and recommendations for research and practice.
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction and Purpose

This chapter explores the different viewpoints for addressing principal perspectives of hidden curriculum in Title I middle schools. The literature was examined as it relates to hidden curriculum, principal perspectives, and poverty. In addition to looking generally at selected theories and definition of principal perspectives in Title I middle schools, this review focuses on identifying principal perspectives reported in literature.

The literature review first examines the positions of influential thinkers on hidden curriculum in education that have been debated in the controversies surrounding the meaning of hidden curriculum. The specific positions reviewed in the chapter were selected because of extensive references to the following philosophers/theorists in the educational literature and the range of theories represented in their positions. The work of Dreeben (1968), Vallance (1973), Apple (1978), and Giroux (1983) was selected. These individuals have made great contributions to the study of hidden curriculum, and because of their research, educational professionals better understand hidden curriculum.

The second section of the literature review is an analysis of research studies that examined the effect of principal perspectives of the hidden curriculum in Title I middle schools. Of particular interest were targeting principals’ views in determining their purposes and goals with respect to parents, students, teachers, and others in the school
system. However, none of the research studies reviewed were designed specifically to capture principals’ views on hidden curriculum in Title I middle schools.

The third area reviewed in the literature about principal perspectives of hidden curriculum in Title I middle schools was poverty. Coleman et al. (1966), Freire (2004), and Levin (2007) have all examined poverty extensively and were utilized as major theorists to form the framework for the dissertation.

Objectives, subjects, timetables, syllabuses, standards, and technologies are prevalent topics in education today. School curriculum has been viewed as an unambiguous, cognizant, formally planned course with specific objectives. In addition to this didactic curriculum, students experience a hidden curriculum, which refers to various types knowledge gained in elementary and secondary school settings, usually with a negative connotation discussing inequalities suffered as a result of its presence. Various studies have been conducted on hidden curriculum theories. The work of Dreeben (1968), Vallance (1973), Bowles and Gintis (1976), Martin (1976), Apple (1978), Anyon (1980), Lynch (1989), Margolis (2001), and Giroux (1983) have been highlighted to define the range of hidden curriculum.

Hidden curriculum has been recognized as the socialization process of schooling. Dreeben (1968) argued that each student has distinctive parental backgrounds and when the child attends school, they confront the norms of schools that will train them for life in the public sphere. He defined these norms as independence, achievement, universalism, and specificity and suggested these norms are required to ensure children are fully acculturated into society.

Vallance (1973) stated there are three contexts of hidden curriculum.
1. Contexts of schooling – including the student-teacher interaction unit, classroom structure, and the entire organizational pattern of the educational establishment as a microcosm of the social value system.

2. Process operating in or through schools, including values acquisition, socialization and the maintenance of class structure.

3. Degrees of intentionality and depth of hiddenness by the investigator.

Vallance (1973) stated there may be unintended outcomes of schooling; however, these outcomes may not be unintended. Bowles and Gintis (1976) argued from a Marxist perspective that highlights the authority structure of schools. They developed a theory in which the key principle is that structural correspondence occurs between the social relations of school life and production. The values and culture of the upper and middle classes are dominant throughout school life. From this perspective, social inequality is reproduced through hidden curriculum.

Martin (1976) defined hidden curriculum as a set of learning activities and that ultimately one must find out what is learned as a result of the practices, procedures, rules, relationships, structures, and physical characteristics which constitutes a given setting. Hidden curriculum cannot be found directly; the researcher should examine it and search for reasons behind the events. Lynch (1989) argued that schools have universal and specific hidden aspects that enable an imbalanced environment for students. Some aspects of hidden curriculum are visible such as syllabuses, school time, and exam procedures that might be accepted as universal, whereas some of are hidden such as social and reward systems that might be accepted as specific.
Anyon (1980) stated the way lessons are conducted and the assignments are given to students affect how students are educated. After reading Anyon, it is clear that students in professional schools and executive schools receive the most meaningful education. The reason for this is because the students in those schools have more control over their learning and must think critically rather than copy what a teacher of textbooks indicates. The concepts of individual creativity, discovery, and analysis have not been present in the working or middle class schools. At working class schools, teachers have existed predominately to give students information. At the other schools, teachers have empowered rather than simply given information; they serve as a gateway for student creativity and development of personal opinions. Writing, creative projects, analysis, and development of opinions have been regarded over repetition, memorization, and ceaseless copying.

Apple (1978) stated that many economists envision institutional schooling as a black box. The box measures input before students enter schools and then measures output along the way when adults enter the work force. He also stated that there are two different ways that educators have investigated school knowledge. One has been centered on the academic achievement issue, and the second has been more concerned with schools as a socialization mechanism. In the academic achievement model curricular knowledge is not problematic; rather, the knowledge that finds its way into schools is usually accepted as a given so that comparisons can be made between social groups, children, and schools (Apple, 1978). The socialization approach, unlike academic achievement, does not leave school knowledge unexamined, but one of its primary focuses has been exploring the social norms and values taught in school (Apple, 1978).
However, this has been restricted to what might be considered moral knowledge and the set of societal values, and inquires into how the school socializes students into its set of normative rules and dispositions (Apple, 1978).

The first area examined of the literature review is hidden curriculum. Giroux (1983) indicated hidden curriculum is what is being taught and how one learns in the school. He also indicated that school not only provides instruction but also more such as norms and principles experienced by students throughout their education life. Schools are also political institutions, inextricably linked to issues of power and control of the dominant society. Giroux considered that it is possible for students to resist powers in schools. He believed the school environment can enhance individuals’ understanding of power in society, and accordingly provide new possibilities for social organization (Kentli, 2009). Marglois (2001) argued that hidden curriculum, the school and classroom life, is the reproduction of schooling that enables educators to understand schools hegemonic function that also maintains power of state.

The second area of the literature review is an analysis of research studies that examined principal perspectives of hidden curriculum in Title I middle schools. There is clearly a gap in the research in that there were no studies that discussed principals’ perspectives of hidden curriculum. The closest work is that of Anyon (1980) who studied five schools and examined how children of different socio-economic status received different types of education. During the study, Anyon facilitated conferences with the teachers in the school and made passing references to the principals. There were no questions posed to the principals regarding their thoughts on hidden curriculum issues.
The third area reviewed in the literature was poverty. Coleman et al. (1966), Levin (2007) and Freire (2004) examined poverty extensively and were utilized as major theorists to form the framework for the dissertation. Coleman et al. (1966) has been widely cited in the field of sociology of education. In the 1960s, he and several other scholars were commissioned by the United States Department of Education to write a report on educational equality in the U.S. The study was one of the largest in history, with more than 150,000 students in the sample. The result was a massive report of over 700 pages. That 1966 report, titled *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, or often simply called the "Coleman Report," fueled debate about school effects that has continued since (Kivat, 2000). The report was commonly presented as evidence, or an argument, that school funding has little effect on student achievement. A more precise reading of the Coleman Report is that student background and socio-economic status are much more important in determining educational outcomes than are measured differences in school resources (e.g. per pupil spending). At the same time, differences in schools, and particularly teachers, have had a significant impact on student outcomes (Hanushek, 1998).

Some students who attend Title I middle schools have been faced with a myriad of trials and inequities both at home and in school. The trials and inequities students encounter outside of the school environment affect students and create a host of additional needs that schools are forced to address. This has added to the significant pressures school in poverty face. Very poor communities face many difficulties, and children, families, and the schools that assist them confront a host of challenges. For schools, these challenges include children who start school without early literacy skills,
high rates of absenteeism and transience, and straining to attract experienced teachers. (Knapp, 1995) stated Title I schools struggle to serve children who experience shortages in nutrition and medical care as well as living in volatile home environments. These types of circumstances have placed exceptional strains on the staff and principals serving schools serving Title I communities.

Basing measurements of poverty on free or reduced-price lunch levels of schools, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a national survey that has been in existence for decades to ascertain the academic performance of the nation’s students. (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2009) According to the NAEP, children in schools with high concentrations of poverty enrollments have had lower percentages of students who graduate from high school on time as well as lower graduation rates. In order to adequately serve this population, educators must understand the educational challenges these students face then author, develop, and implement an outstanding world-class curriculum for lifelong success.

In particular, Levin (2007) asked the question, to what degree does school curriculum ameliorate or undermine students from Title I schools educational progress, and what can be done to support their educational success? Related questions were how do schools treat students from low-income populations? What are some curriculum interventions that have shown evidence of improved outcomes for children from poverty backgrounds? The narrowness of NCLB accountability factors and the New York State Education Department (NYSED) mandates has reduced instruction to test preparation in the few subjects tested and has forced instruction to be driven to the narrow format that is used for the test. (Borman & Dowling, 2010) Unfortunately, this practice has reduced
rich curriculum opportunities for a preponderance of students in Title I middle schools. A possible solution is to develop curriculum in alignment with assessments that can evaluate a larger range of subjects and such important human attributes as creativity, problem solving, discourse, and artistic performance.

Freire's (2004) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is a combination of philosophical, political, and educational theory. Freire outlined a theory of oppression and the source of liberation. In Freire's view, the key to liberation is the awakening of critical awareness and the thinking process in the individual. This happens through a new type of education, one which creates a partnership between the teacher and the student, empowering the student to enter into a dialogue and begin the process of humanization through thought and its correlative, action.

Freire (2004) began his book with a preface, which introduces the idea of developing a critical consciousness in the oppressed. Freire then introduced the problem of the fear of freedom in the oppressed, who are affected by being submerged in a situation of oppression. Oppressed and poor people must see outside themselves, understand their situation, and begin to think about their world. This happens through dialogue in education. Freire has been best known for his attack on what he called the banking concept of education. In the banking concept, the student was viewed as an empty account to be filled by the teacher. Freire noted that this account transforms students into receiving objects. It attempts to control thinking and action, leads men and women to adjust to the world, and inhibits their creative power. Freire was one of the leading educators who believed poverty influenced children academically and worked throughout his lifetime to eradicate poverty and provide children with equity.
Because America’s schools have been so highly segregated by income, race and ethnicity, problems related to poverty occur simultaneously, with greater frequency, and act cumulatively in schools serving disadvantaged communities. These schools, therefore, face significantly greater challenges than schools serving wealthier children, and their limited resources are often overwhelmed. Efforts to improve educational outcomes in these schools, attempting to drive change through test-based accountability, are thus unlikely to succeed (Berlinger, 2009).

Children in Title I schools face burdens that children in school without poverty do not. For example, students living in poverty are often subjected to higher rates of violence, malnutrition, and substandard housing (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997). How schools interpret these factors may disguise the advantages Title I students contribute to the school environment and contribute to the deficiency based theories of race that have been spread throughout history. Experts have called students themselves the “hidden curriculum” meaning that students learn as much from themselves as from textbooks, homework, class projects, and other pedagogical services provided by the school (Kennedy, 1986). In Title I schools, where the myriad of socio-economic problems of impoverished neighborhoods are dominant, peer influence can be a dangerous thing, seriously interfering with a student’s ability and motivation to learn and achieve (Kennedy, 1986). Persistent poverty among Title I communities may reinforce concepts of the poor that trigger schools to view students as intellectually inferior and discard the positive attributes many of these students possess, such as resilience and persistence in the school setting.
Perspectives formed from long standing constructs of race may make educators in Title I urban areas view students with “deficit eyes.” Children living in areas of poverty are also more likely to experience harmful levels of stress and severe behavioral and emotional problems than children overall (Turner & Kaye, 2006). These problems can affect a child’s ability to succeed in school. In fact, students in predominantly low-income schools have lower test scores than those who attend predominantly higher-income schools, regardless of their family’s income. They are also more likely to drop out (Kids Count, 2010). In addition, growing up in a Title I neighborhood undermines a child’s chances of adult economic success. Studies have shown that for children in middle and upper income families, living in a Title I neighborhood raises the chances of falling down the income ladder as an adult by 53%, on average (Sharkley, 2009). The effects of poverty begin to appear once neighborhood poverty rates rise above 20% and continue to grow as the concentration of poverty increases to the 40% threshold (Galster, 2012). While this problem appears impossible to solve, research has identified some urban schools managing to beat the odds. Further, evidence has suggested that these schools employ specific structures and systems that positively impact instructional practice, enabling their students of color to overcome legacies of low achievement (Kannapel and Clements 2005).

A key study underscoring favorable educational practices is *The 90/90/90 Schools* case study conducted by the Center for Performance Assessment in 2000. These school shared the following characteristics: (a) 90% of the students were on free or reduced lunch, (b) 90% of the students were students of color, and (c) at least 90% were achieving at high proficiency levels. Additionally, these schools shared common instructional
practices as well as organizational systems and structures. All schools in the study demonstrated a strong focus on achievement, clear curricular choices, an emphasis on writing, frequent assessment of student performance, and collaborative scoring of student work (Reeves, 2000).

In the 90/90/90 study, the following common factors characterized schools that achieved the most gains in student performance: (a) time for collaboration that focused on achievement, (b) frequent feedback to students regarding their performance, (c) schedule changes to facilitate effective practice, (d) teacher assignment practices, (e) data collection and analysis from multiple sources using formative assessment methods, (f) common assessment practices, (g) effective use of school resources, (h) effective professional development, and (i) implementation of an integrated cross-disciplinary curriculum (Reeves, 2000) A thorough review of the study indicated that Title I schools can overcome the obstacles if they continually engage in a sequence of efficient structures and systems designed to clearly influence teacher quality and instructional impact. Additionally, the 90/90/90 study supported Marzano’s (2003) synthesis of effective schools by highlighting that school level issues enhance student achievement in Title I urban schools.

High performing Title I schools share common practices that promote educational success. For example, Izumi, Coburn, and Cox (2002) examined factors that contributed to the high achievement of students in five Title I California elementary schools. Common themes surfaced from the interviews with principals. Principals in the study were considered resilient leaders with a clearly articulated vision involving effective practices. The application of a research-based curriculum that was supported with content
standards, an importance on parental involvement, and teacher quality were cited as causes for success. The findings indicated that organizational factors are associated with high achievement for students in Title I schools. The findings also indicated that the consistent implementation of these structures and systems impact individual classrooms positively.

Kannapel and Clements (2005) identified correlates of school culture associated with high student achievement in their analysis of common factors in eight Title I, high performing middle schools. These correlates included leadership that fosters high expectations for students, staff and faculty; collaborative decision-making; parent and community involvement; and a commitment to equity and diversity. Schools that encompass these correlates contribute to a positive school culture.

Kannapel and Clements (2005) reported principals of high performing, Title I schools communicated high expectations for all students. These expectations led to a belief that all students are capable of high performance. Principals have played an essential function in developing the collective belief amongst teachers that at all students can accomplish high academic outcomes. A positive school culture can override the effects of inaccurate assumptions about students that attend Title I schools.

Summary

In Chapter 2, the major theorists of hidden curriculum and their perspectives of how hidden curriculum affect the school system were examined. While these researchers support different views, they all agree hidden curriculum is a crucial feature in education. The literature was reviewed to determine whether principal perspectives of hidden curriculum have been studied. Currently, no researcher has examined principal
perspectives of hidden curriculum in Title I middle schools. Lastly, poverty was reviewed as it relates to the dissertation study. Poverty, for the purposes of the dissertation study, is defined by the number of students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch and attend Title I schools according to the federal government definition.

Some of the main problems of hidden curriculum focus on the children as well as the schools system. Ideas that surfaced are that hidden curriculum has a significant impact on the productivity, progress and attitudes of the students and teachers, especially for those schools in poverty as highlighted by Anyon (1980). Hidden curriculum is maintained and managed by the students, teachers, and principal of the school. Hidden curriculum can be constructive and destructive, covert and overt, and it can be difficult to change because it is so elusive and difficult to describe.
Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

Introduction

Few studies appear in the existing literature about how principals define hidden curriculum in Title I middle schools. A qualitative approach was utilized in this study because qualitative methods are designed to best discover thoughts and topics of participants. Qualitative methods are used to both discover and verify a phenomenon (Patton, 2002). In the dissertation study, the use of qualitative methods to gather principals’ experiences served as an approach to discovering, understanding, and examining principal perspectives. The qualitative approach utilized in the dissertation employed principal interviews to gauge perspectives.

Qualitative research is a potentially effective way to examine hidden curriculum. According to Merriam (2001) qualitative research, is an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that helps educators understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena such as hidden curriculum with as little disruption on the natural setting as possible. Qualitative studies usually rely on open-ended questions, observations, or analysis of documents and audio-visual records. The results of qualitative studies are described in narrative terms. (p. 5)

Qualitative procedures rely on text and image data, have unique steps in data analysis, and draw on diverse strategies of inquiry (Creswell, 2009). Characteristics of qualitative studies involve collection and analysis of qualitative data in ways that are
rigorous and framed epistemologically/theoretically. Ordering the data sequentially, merging them, embedding one strand within the other, and combining the data within the context of a single study or research program serves to mix the methods. Qualitative research also encapsulates the threads within an overall research design that guides the study as a whole.

By examining New York State Report Cards, the researcher identified eight schools recognized as having a percentage of students’ free or reduced lunch eligible, which are the federal indicators for poverty. Five schools at the middle school level agreed to participate in the study. The researcher located two schools that are Title I high performing and three schools that are Title I low performing and commenced a qualitative study to ascertain the principals’ perspectives of hidden curriculum in Title I middle schools.

**Research Context**

This was a qualitative study in which the researcher focused on principals’ perspectives of hidden curriculum and how their perspective impacts the school since curriculum is the heart of education. Curriculum is a complex issue with many multifaceted definitions. Numerous items are taught in the classroom that are not planned or intentional. In the dissertation study, the researcher concentrated on those aspects of the curriculum that are defined as hidden curriculum. According to Portelli (1993),

Besides the manifest curriculum, the curriculum explicitly taught in the classroom, curriculum consists of a hidden curriculum, which consists of underlying issues and assumptions that are communicated through subject matter choices, instructional methods, social interactions and institutional setups. (p. 21)
Additionally, “the curriculum communicated may not neatly match the received nor may it be assimilated uncontested” (Jackson, 1992). Because principals’ methods of communication with the school community vary considerably, especially in Title I schools, studying hidden curriculum means examining the curriculum taught that occurs naturally in daily interactions and the contexts that set expectations in understanding hidden curriculum. Qualitative research allowed the researcher to use qualitative methods to study the curriculum taught and its intended and unintended, or hidden, consequences. This occurred because the researcher facilitated an exhaustive qualitative analysis which examined Title I high performing and Title I low performing schools. School report cards were examined to determine whether the schools were able to meet positive outcomes; that is, whether they schools successfully met annual measurable objectives.

Additionally, a qualitative study examined principal perspectives of hidden curriculum through the use of interviews. The goal was to understand why principals do what they do and also to find out how their perspectives lead to the successful outcomes of their schools. The goal of this dissertation was to determine how hidden curriculum functions in the classroom and school based upon the perspectives of the principals and to use this knowledge to facilitate change.

Research Participants

The population for the dissertation study was principals working in grades 6 through 8 in Title I public middle schools. At the middle school level, five public schools were identified, including two Title I high performing and three Title I low performing schools. Limiting the number of principals serving grades 6 through 8 in these middle schools enhanced the comparability of the data. For the purposes of the dissertation
study, Title I middle schools were defined as schools in which a percentage of students qualified for free or reduced-price lunch according to federal guidelines.

Detailed information and data generalizability were obtained from the sample listing of selected schools. A criterion-based purposeful sampling strategy was utilized to select principals who had experiences related to the phenomena being examined (Creswell, 1997). Principals who lead Title I middle schools may have experienced issues related to disparities in resources, be they social or economic. Because of this, the principals may share a significant basis for conversation related to their perspectives of hidden curriculum. Principals involved in the dissertation study have had a majority of students from similar socioeconomic backgrounds and also have had students enrolled in the same sixth through eighth grade sample which provided an appropriate basis for a comparison of their perspectives.

To increase transferability of the findings, the following criteria were developed for choosing schools eligible for participation in the dissertation study:

1. Schools must be public grades 6 through 8.
2. Schools must be located in the state of New York.
3. There must be a percentage of students free or reduced lunch eligible.

Utilizing these criteria, eight schools were identified, five principal indicated they would participate in the study including two Title I high performing and three Title I low performing public schools at the middle school level. Five principals were interviewed to determine their perspectives of hidden curriculum in Title I middle schools. The involvement of the five principals allowed for triangulation of the extrapolated data, thereby increasing the credibility and interpretation of the data.
Instruments Used in Data Collection

A search of the New York State Education website provided pertinent school report card information indicating whether Title I middle schools successfully have met the annual measurable objectives as prescribed by the local education agency. Multiple middle schools that met the criteria of the dissertation goals were selected for further consideration. The principals of the middle schools that met the dissertation parameters were contacted via telephone to ask whether they would be interested in participating in a dissertation research project. Those schools that met the criteria were sent interview questionnaires asking the principals a variety of questions related to hidden curriculum.

After the principals of the identified middle schools agreed to participate, a site consent form (Appendix A) was emailed to the principal for review and signature. The site consent form detailed the purpose of the study and procedures to be performed, listed the interview questions, delineated the possible benefits and risks to the participants, and explained the confidentiality parameters the research would adhere to. Once principals provided oral or written consent to participate, interview appointments were established with the participants.

All interviews were conducted in person by the researcher in the principals’ offices at the various schools. The principals either completed the informed consent form in advance of the interview or signed a copy of the informed consent in the presence of the researcher. Before the interview started, the participants were asked to complete the interview data sheet (Appendix B), which asked for demographic information (age, gender, background) to help the researcher understand the data gathered. Demographic data was collected from participants in the interview process (Appendix B) and interview
questions were developed (Appendix C). The researcher clarified the purpose of the interview and answered any pertinent questions the participants had prior to commencing the interview.

Interviews were conducted utilizing an Ipad with the application Audio Note. Participants were informed they would be sent a copy of the interview transcript once it was prepared, and they would be asked to review it for accuracy. All participants indicated they were satisfied with the procedure and agreed to contact the researcher if they required adjustments to be made. The length of the interviews varied between 25-40 minutes.

The interview questions were designed to provide structure to the interviews while permitting the opportunity for open-ended responses by the participants. The semi-structured interview incorporating open-ended interviewing was the data collection technique selected because it has been useful in assessing and more fully understanding the perspective of the interviewee (Patton, 2002). The technique allowed the interviewees to go in whatever direction they wanted in answering the question, choose their own words to express what they wanted to say, and to freely share their experiences, knowledge, and feelings (Patton, 2002).

The intent of the questions was to obtain principal perspectives of hidden curriculum and capture their conceptions about curriculum, leadership, discipline, testing, professional development, collaboration, expertise, and beliefs about teachers and students in their classrooms and schools. To help the researcher further understand their ideas, principals were encouraged to provide examples of points they made in response to questions.
Participants were asked the following open-ended questions during the course of the interviews:

1. What are your expectations of staff, students, and teachers based on educational outcomes?
2. What recent educational book, journal, or article that you have read that really impressed you?
3. How do you share educational research with your staff on best practices?
4. How do your beliefs about teaching and learning help you organize your school?
5. What recent actions have you taken to assist low performing teachers?
6. Do your teachers share in your beliefs, and how do you know that? What evidence exists? How does it translate into practice?

A master coding spreadsheet was developed to keep track of the data from the interviews and to determine whether principal perspectives have an impact on hidden curriculum in their school. The coding spreadsheet was prepared to log participants and their schools as well as to assign aliases to both the report cards and the interview responses. When referring to individuals in the study, no personally identifiable information was associated with individuals’ comments or the descriptions of their perspectives.

Based upon details elicited from the data collection methods, the researcher was able to clearly express the link between daily practices of the social institution (hidden curriculum) and the relationship that exists between hidden curriculum and principal perspectives. The researcher conducted all interviews at the school site.
Data Analysis

Using traditional coding and theme analysis, the researcher analyzed the data gathered by the principal interviews and contained in the New York State School Report Cards. Coding, categorization, and analysis were performed to classify the data into categories for analysis and to identify emerging themes. The interviews were analyzed for congruence or lack of congruence of topics within interviews, between interviews, between schools, between levels, and between different types of schools. Differences in principal perspectives were analyzed and placed in themes, including principal subgroups by background, gender and years of principal experience.

Analysis were performed to identify relationships between categories, recurring themes emerging from the categories, and shared and differing perspectives across categories. Once the categories were identified, explanations, and themes in the data were identified to make sure the appropriate themes were examined and represented in the data.

In addition to analysis of the data for coding purposes, the data was reviewed and relevant participant comments were highlighted. Doing so allowed principals’ narrative accounts to be documented. The principals’ perspectives were explained and assigned to codes and themes (Appendix D). The list of codes was designed to help better understand the data, analysis, and findings reported in the dissertation.

All data analysis procedures were performed by the researcher. The use of a single researcher to evaluate the content of participants’ data in the iterative process of comparing, identifying categories, and developing themes from the data provides consistency and internal reliability to content analysis (Krippendorf, 2004; Weber 1990).
Stability, a form of reliability, was realized in the dissertation study as having identical content coded numerous times by the researcher.

All transcripts were reviewed in detail numerous times to validate the accuracy and completeness of the information extracted from the narratives and the consistency in the analysis and coding efforts (Patton, 2002). For the purposes of the dissertation study, consideration was given to passages containing statements that revealed definitions or distributive values in participants’ answers to the open-ended interview questions. Listed below are the step-by-step procedures used to record data:

1. A spreadsheet was prepared with the participants’ school data informed by utilizing the New York State Report Cards and creating aliases of both participants and schools.

2. A spreadsheet was prepared utilizing the New York State report cards and interview results. A master codebook and spreadsheet was developed to track and monitor the data.

3. Emerging categories and codes were identified. The source of this data was the New York State Report Cards and interview transcripts.

4. Recurring themes indicating a phenomena was searched for in the spreadsheet data and New York State Report cards.

5. A master spreadsheet was prepared, identifying all categories of the individual participants and grouped by school. Spreadsheets were examined for the occurrences of each category and subcategory that corresponded with the master spreadsheet.

6. A master spreadsheet was analyzed in greater depth for recurring themes.
7. The perspectives were analyzed after reading and processing the interviews, principals’ different perspectives, or the distributive criteria underlying those perspectives. All principal perspectives were included in all categories or subcategories that were pragmatic. Frequency data on the rate of occurrences of certain categories and subcategories are reported in both narrative and table form in Chapter 4. The frequency of occurrence of codes and themes were analyzed to provide an understanding of the primacy of different principal perspectives.

Patton (2002) argued there are two issues which require the utmost consideration in believing data analysis. The first is the self-assurance of the person performing the data analysis. The second is to present and analyze the data in a mode that affords others the opportunity to verify and validate the findings. In the dissertation study, inclusion of detailed data regarding the frequency of principals’ perspectives in varying categories, codes, and themes was intended to support the reader in understanding the data, findings, and analysis claimed in this dissertation.

Merriam (1998) pointed out that ethical concerns related to both data collection and dissemination of the results are probable when utilizing a qualitative case study design. Merriam (1998) recommended being conscious of one’s own individual and theoretical lenses when collecting, analyzing, and disseminating data. To control for the potential of bias beyond placing conscious attention on one’s potential biases, the current study used triangulation across multiple datasets and peer reexamination of data (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1998).
In addition to taking steps to reduce researcher bias, there are ethical considerations that must be taken when working with human subjects (Patton, 2002). In this study, the researcher delved into the issue of perspective and achievement. Care was taken to avoid harming anyone involved in the study by designing and standardizing interview protocols. The St. John Fisher College Institutional Review board (IRB) (Appendix E) reviewed all research protocols and approved the process, ensuring all necessary precautions were in place.

All consent forms, interview transcripts, and school report cards were kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher’s home office. These records will be retained for six years following the completion of the research and then will be destroyed by shredding.
Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

Chapter 4 begins by summarizing the demographics of the schools, principals participating in the study, and a breakdown of the accountability status of each school. The chapter continues with a discussion regarding terms and concepts, and then moves on to identify themes related to principals’ perspectives of hidden curriculum. For the purposes of the dissertation study, hidden curriculum has been defined as the social act of placing severe restrictions on an individual, group or institution. Typically, a government or political organization that is in power places these restrictions formally or covertly on oppressed groups so that they can be exploited and less able to compete with other social groups.

According to Barker (2003), the oppressed individual or group is devalued, exploited and deprived of privileges by the individual or group that has more power. The research question that guided the dissertation was how do school principals’ perspectives of hidden curriculum affect Title I middle schools?

Hidden curriculum is multifaceted due to its flexible and vague nature. In order to understand hidden curriculum, the dissertation research investigated the perspective of the principal in the school setting to determine how hidden curriculum is functioning in each area of the school based upon the following questions:

1. What are your expectations of staff, students, and teachers based on educational outcomes?
2. What recent book educational book, journal, or article have you read that really impressed you?

3. How do you share educational research with your staff on best practices?

4. How do your beliefs about teaching and learning help you organize your school?

5. What recent actions have you taken to assist low performing teachers?

6. Do your teachers share in your beliefs? How do you know that? What evidence exists? How does it translate into practice?

Schools A1 and A2 successfully met all New York State Education benchmarks for the 2010-2011 school year and were Title I high performing schools. Schools B1, B2, and B3 failed to make AYP for the 2010-2011 school year in multiple measures and were Title I low performing schools. The information was obtained from the 2010-2011 New York State school report cards. For the purposes of the dissertation study, Title I middle schools were defined as schools with students in which the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch according to federal guidelines and are Title I schools.

Hidden curriculum can be interpreted in many different ways, and this aspect of hidden curriculum was descriptive of how principals in the dissertation study responded to the interview questions. The variety of interpretations was evident in the descriptions and comments afforded by the principals in their responses. In addition to reporting principal perspectives of hidden curriculum, this chapter also includes sections on principals’ practices to promote student success. Finally, emergent themes across the data are identified and discussed.
This research study was conducted to examine the affect of principal perspectives of hidden curriculum on Title I middle schools. The eight participants were selected based upon a review of New York State Report Cards. The principals’ responses to the interview questions were reviewed to assess whether they have experienced the phenomena being studied. The interview questions were sent to eight sixth through eighth grade middle school principals and five opted to participate in the study. The face-to-face interviews were conducted in the principals’ offices of the selected study schools. Each participant voluntarily read and signed the principals’ consent to participate in research. Each interview was recorded utilizing an Ipad with the application Audionote. Each interview was transcribed word for word, reviewed, and utilized to develop codes for data analysis.

Table 4.1 presents a summary of principal demographic data of the study participants. Five principals from Long Island New York public middle schools participated in the study. Each school included a portion of students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch. Three schools were located in Nassau County, and two schools were located in Suffolk County. All five of the principals interviewed for the dissertation study were male. Self-identified racial backgrounds were African-American, Black, White and Caucasian. The principals’ teaching experiences ranged from 6 to 26 years with an average of 17.4 years. The average length of principal experience was 7 years. The average length of service at the current school was 4.7 years. Principals ranged from 37 to 52-years-old, with an average age of 44.4 years-old. Principals represented schools housing grades levels 6 through 8.
In summary, three principals were African American and two were Caucasian. One principal was untenured and four were tenured. Table 4.1 highlights the school, age, gender, racial/ethnic, teaching experience, principal experience and years at the current school of the participating principals. The principals in the dissertation study have broad principal experiences and are leading schools with students classified as Title I.

Table 4.1

Principal Demographic Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Self-identified Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Teaching Experience</th>
<th>Principal Experience</th>
<th>Time at Current School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summaries of the school demographic data of the study participants are presented in Table 4.1 which provides information about the school, suburban status, school enrollment numbers, attendance rate, student suspension rate and Title I status of the school. Within the schools studied, the racial composition of the student bodies varied, however, the majority of the students were from minority groups. Enrollments ranged from 406 –711 students.

The attendance rate was defined as the percentage of total school days that students in a school or district are present in school. The student suspension rate was defined as the total percentage of students that were suspended from school for the 2010–
2011 school year. Schools A1 and A2 have significantly lower suspension rates than schools B1, B2 and B3. Schools that serve Title I students often have to manage negative classroom behavior that interferes with the delivery of instruction and may be a contributor to low student performance.

Title I schools are eligible for free or reduced lunch at school as defined by the National School Lunch Act. This program provides cash subsidies for free and reduced-price lunch to students based on family income and size. Eligibility is determined by completion of an application process, which parents complete and submit each year. Title I provides federal funding to schools that have met their eligibility criteria based on their poverty levels. The funding is meant to provide academic intervention services for children who are at risk of falling behind academically. The funding provides supplemental instruction for students who are economically disadvantaged or at risk for failing to meet state standards. Students are expected to show growth due to receiving the support of Title I instruction.

To make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in English Language Arts and/or Mathematics, every accountability group must make AYP. For a group to make AYP, it must meet the participation and the performance criteria. At the middle school level, 95% of Grade 6–8 students enrolled during the test administration period in each group with 40 or more students must be tested on the New York State Testing Program (NYSTP) in English Language Arts (ELA) or Mathematics. In order to make AYP for Performance at the middle school level, 95% of Grade 6–8 students enrolled during the test administration period in each group with 40 or more students must be tested on the New York State Testing Program (NYSTP) in ELA or Mathematics.
Table 4.2

School Demographic Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>Attendance Rate</th>
<th>Student Suspensions</th>
<th>Title I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>711</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A summary of performance of the 2010-2011 ELA assessment of the study schools is presented in Table 4.3 which identifies the study schools and their AYP status based upon the 2010-2011 ELA exam results. Adequate yearly progress indicates satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress by the study school toward the goal of meeting proficiency for all students. Participation met criterion indicates the study school has met the goal of having 95% of the study schools’ students successfully tested on the 2010-2011 ELA assessment. Participation percentage tested indicates the percentage of students successfully tested on the 2010-2011 ELA assessment. Met criterion specifies whether the study school successfully made satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress toward the goal of meeting proficiency for all students.

Performance Index denotes the value from 0 to 200 assigned to an accountability group, which indicates how the group performed on the 2010-2011 ELA assessment. Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) is the performance value that indicates that an accountability group is making satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress toward the goal.
that 100% of the students will be proficient in meeting the New York State standards.

Safe harbor targets offer another method to demonstrate AYP for accountability groups that do not achieve their targets. A check mark indicates the school met their AYP, participation, and criterion targets in ELA and an X indicates the school failed to meet their AYP, participation, and criterion targets in ELA.

Table 4.3

*Presentation of Study Schools ELA Performance 2010-2011*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>AYP Met</th>
<th>Participation Met</th>
<th>Percentage Tested</th>
<th>Met Criterion</th>
<th>Performance Index</th>
<th>AMO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>✖</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>✖</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>115*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>✖</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>✖</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>116*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* * = safe harbor target.

A summary of performance of the 2010 - 2011 math assessment of the study schools is presented in Table 4.4 which identifies the study schools and their AYP status based upon the 2010-2011 math exam results. Adequate yearly progress indicates satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress by the study school toward the goal of meeting proficiency for all students. Participation met criterion indicates the study school has met the goal of having 95% of the study schools students successfully tested on the 2010-2011 Math assessment. Participation percentage tested indicates the percentage of students successfully tested on the 2010–2011 math assessment. Met criterion specifies
whether the study school successfully met satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress by the study school toward the goal of meeting proficiency for all students. Performance index denotes the value from 0 to 200 that is assigned to an accountability group, which indicates how the group performed on the 2010-2011 math assessment. A check mark indicates the school met their AYP, participation, and criterion targets in math and an X indicates the school failed to meet their AYP, participation and criterion targets in math.

Table 4.4

*Presentation of Study Schools Math Performance 2010-2011*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>AYP</th>
<th>Participation Met Criterion</th>
<th>Participation Percentage Tested</th>
<th>Met Criterion</th>
<th>Performance Index</th>
<th>AMO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>100*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>117*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *Indicates safe harbor target.

A summary of the study schools accountability is presented in Table 4.5 which denotes the study school and accountability status. Accountability status is defined as each school within New York State being assigned an accountability phase of Good Standing, Improvement, Corrective Action, or Restructuring in both ELA and mathematics. A school is initially placed in the category as follows: Focused: A school’s Corrective Action or Restructuring category in ELA or math is Focused if it failed to make AYP for one or more accountability subgroups but made AYP for the All Students group and at least one other subgroup. A school’s Corrective Action or Restructuring category in
category in science or graduation rate is Focused if it failed to make AYP for the All Students group. Comprehensive - A school’s Corrective Action or Restructuring category in ELA or math is Comprehensive if it failed to make AYP for the All Students group or if it failed to make AYP for all subgroups where there were at least two for which it was accountable.

For schools that are not in Good Standing, a category of Basic, Focused, or Comprehensive for each measure in which the study school is held accountable are listed. For a school that is not in good standing, the total number of years the school has been in that status is highlighted in the accountability status column. Limited English Proficient (LEP) is a subgroup accountability measure used to determine the performance of English Language Learners on the 2010-2011 ELA and assessments. Students with disabilities (SWD) is a subgroup accountability measure used to determine the performance of students with disabilities on the 2010-2011 ELA and mathematics assessments. Economically disadvantaged is a subgroup accountability measure used to determine the performance of economically disadvantaged students on the 2010-2011 ELA and math assessments. A check mark indicates the school met AYP targets in ELA, mathematics, and subgroups, and an X indicates the school failed to meet their AYP targets in ELA, mathematics, and subgroups.

Schools and districts must meet pre-defined participation and performance criteria on New York’s accountability measures to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Failure to make AYP for two consecutive years results in the school or district being identified as a school or district not in good standing, resulting in certain consequences for the school or district. For schools to be identified, they must fail to
make AYP for two consecutive years in the same measure. For districts to be identified in ELA or math, they must fail to make AYP for two consecutive years in the subject at both the elementary/middle and secondary levels. For districts to be identified in science or graduation rate, they must fail to make AYP for two consecutive years in the measure.

School A2 failed to make AYP in ELA within the Students with Disabilities subgroup category Year One. Therefore, school A2 is in good standing as it takes two years for a school to be placed in a designation status. School B2 made AYP in the all student categories of ELA and Math. However, School B2 failed to make AYP in the subgroup categories of LEP ELA and SWD for two consecutive years and has a Focus designation. Furthermore, School B2 and failed to make AYP for one year in SWD ELA and Math and has a designation of in Good Standing.

In summary, schools A1 and A2 successfully met all New York State accountability measures for the 2010-2011 school year and are Title I high performing schools. Schools B1, B2, and B3 failed to make AYP for the 2010-2011 school year in multiple measures and are Title I low performing schools. The information was collected from the 2010-2011 New York State school report cards.
### Table 4.5

**Summary of Study Schools Accountability Status 2010-2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Accountability Status</th>
<th>ELA</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>LEP ELA</th>
<th>LEP Math</th>
<th>SWD’s ELA</th>
<th>SWD’s Math</th>
<th>Economically Disadvantaged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>In Good Standing ELA</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In Good Standing Math</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>In Good Standing ELA</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In Good Standing Math</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Corrective Action (year 1)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comprehensive ELA</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improvement (Year 1)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comprehensive Math</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Improvement (Year 1)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focused ELA</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In Good Standing Math</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>Improvement (Year 1)</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comprehensive ELA</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In Good Standing Math</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* SH = safe harbor. Indicates the school did not have a sufficient amount of students in the subgroup for accountability purposes.

### Data Analysis and Findings

The data analysis was comprised a number of phases. First, each interview was read and analyzed to discover themes. The main themes were derived from principal responses to six interview questions. From the interviews, 25 codes (Appendix D) and 4
themes were identified. The data analysis process included a number of procedures. As defined in Chapter 3, responses to the interview questions were coded, categorized, and analyzed using emergent coding methods. Findings are presented and interspersed by principals’ comments to provide additional context for the reported perspectives.

For coding purposes, definitions, criteria, and examples expressed by principals in interviews were analyzed, identified and assigned to codes. A codebook, (Appendix D) was developed based on the interviews and served as the basis to obtain data. A master spreadsheet was prepared that identified all codes in the left column and individual participants across the top, grouped by school, Title I high performing, and Title I low performing schools.

The themes that materialized from the analysis of the principals’ responses symbolized the diverse settings or precise terms the principals related with these codes. Codes fell into 25 categories. During the coding process and analysis process, the researcher looked for principal response patterns. To the degree that patterns were distinguished, these were identified and assimilated into the findings of each section of Chapter 4 based upon a theme. Examples of how principals actually expressed their perceptions and the words and exemplars they elected to use might better express the perspective of the principal comments. Consequently, excerpts of verbatim comments were used to report the findings of the study. Significant words and phrases in excerpts from principals’ remarks that led to coding the statement into an applicable code were bolded to provide an enhanced understanding of the explanations made of the data analysis process.
The first theme, the principal, explored perceptions expressed by principals that discussed their background, discussion of any changes the principal has actually made or is in the process of making versus those things retained or will retain. The theme may refer to culture, curriculum, lesson plans or teacher performance and includes discussions of any reaction (critical or supportive) of those changes.

The second theme, the student, identified participants’ beliefs about student challenges and performance. Participants reported that their students face an inordinate amount of challenges in the course of their education, such as, but not limited to behavioral issues, hunger, income, lack of materials, lack of grade level skills, family issues, and responsibility. Additionally, the theme captured the expectations of teachers, in particular to low performance.

The third theme, resources, encapsulated the general mindset of all the principals that infrastructure, funding, and educational literature access is lacking among all schools. This theme demonstrated principals’ beliefs that resources are inadequate for the task of successful educational outcomes at both Title I high performing schools and Title I low performing schools.

The fourth and final theme, the teacher, emphasized the principals’ perceptions related to the role of the teacher in their schools. This theme encompassed discussions of how teachers are evaluated with regards to student performance. It included discussions of time and resources needed for teacher and student evaluations. This theme also included discussions of expectations of teachers and in particular low teacher performance as determined by scores, failure rate, and/or not attending faculty meetings. Discussions of the day-to-day functioning of “the classroom,” including classroom
management and teacher instructional techniques, lesson planning, curriculum, and instructional tools were included in this theme. This theme also included discussions of teacher experimentation designed to encourage student engagement and material retention.

The principal. The first theme identified how the principals perceive the school culture at large, as well as their approach to educational instruction and administration. The theme included their philosophy on the role of principal as well as their personal leadership style. It included discussion of the principal’s expectations of teachers, administrators, and students, as well as their attitudes toward any kind of experimentation or thinking outside the box. References to school culture, curriculum, lesson plans, performance, were highlighted within this theme. During the interviews, all interview participants expressed the theme of the principal in some fashion. The terminology utilized to describe the theme was consistent across all interviews. Examples of statements made by principals to highlight the principal theme are included below to give perspectives on their comments.

I think that everybody in the building has a stake in the learning environment. Doesn’t matter if they’re a paraprofessional, a security guard, a teacher, a teacher’s assistant, or a clerical staff; they all have to have the expectation that everybody’s going to do their best. The expectation is that as long as you put your best effort and you do that holistically, without any types of judgments or without any types of – what the expectations should be that if you do your best that is all we can ask from you. (Principal A1)

Principal A2 provided an opinion that elucidated the dichotomy of hidden
curriculum, he believed students from Title I backgrounds can succeed and meet successful outcomes as prescribed by the New York State Education Department.

*I think a lot of times we have a set of prejudices or set beliefs that kids who come from poverty, they can’t exceed or they can’t do as well in school because of the poverty piece.* (Principal A2)

Principal B1 had similar thoughts.

*My own personal philosophy was always to help the kids first.* What do we do that is best for the kids? But to do that, you have to have the teachers on board with you. And being flexible with them has been very helpful to me to get what we want done here. I realized a while back that if I *get more teachers involved* in say of what we do has been, really helps to push the cause. You are not going to always get everybody, pretty obviously, but we got a good staff here now that if we want to do something, it is not coming from me. We get a group together, we make a decision, and that is the decision that we go with. (Principal A2)

So one of the things *that I’m expecting teachers to do* is that when we meet with them, one of the things I’ve done is I’ve showed them how to use the technology themselves in terms of Right Reasons and going through and identifying the strengths and weaknesses of their kids.... And one of the other things that we are doing is that when we look at lesson plans or whatever it is, the expectation is that they are focusing on the weaknesses the kids have. (Principal B1)

Principal B1 summarized that one of his greatest challenges as the leader of the building is to battle the attitudes of the staff and school community.

*...expressing their low expectations without knowing they’re expressing low*
expectations. (Principal B1)

I had a very passionate conversation with my staff. And the conversation really centered around what the expectation is of a teacher is from year to year. I said, “you’re expected to move that child at least one grade level.” But my expectation with every teacher, and I told them, “every one of you sitting in this room, is that you move that child one grade level.” I had a lot of teachers come and say, “well I’m glad you mentioned that.” Because some teachers actually don’t believe that they can. …But I know a majority of my teachers truly understand that and truly strive to attain that. (Principal B2)

My expectations for teachers are that teachers come to school prepared to teach, and what does that mean? They just do not come with something that’s scripted that they’ve had from last year or the year before and thinking that the students are the same. So a teacher that has prepared to teach. My expectation for the students is that they also come prepared to learn, because one cannot happen without the other. What does it mean to come prepared to learn? For my students, on the most basic level, coming to school with a notebook and a pen is the basic level of preparation signifying that they’re open to and ready to receive some sort of instruction that they’re going to take with them. Also, being prepared to learn for the students’ means to be engaged. When you are in the classroom, you are not a passive learner. You have to challenge. To me, that’s a student prepared to learn. I expect that my staff, in general, is going to be caring toward the students. We always know that, we just do not know what to do with those students. So know your students, set standards for them so that they can progress, challenge
them. That is my expectation in general.” (Principal B3)

High expectations of teachers were expressed throughout this theme. Each of the principals voiced high expectations for teachers to meet or exceed exceptional student outcomes. The principals discussed providing professional learning experiences for their teachers to assist their students in meeting benchmarks established by the New York State Education Department.

Table 4.6 provides a summary of code responses by the principals related to the theme the principal. Table 4.6 provides the code as defined in the codebook, total number of responses by principals from the Title I high performing schools, total number of responses by principals from the Title I low performing schools, and the total number of responses combined from both categories.

The terms expectation, challenging, and engagement were words and phrases used by principals that were interpreted as expressing high standards and expectations for students and teachers within their schools. The principals’ comments in this category indicated they believe that students in Title I schools should be held to high academic standards regardless of economic status and should be challenged by their teachers. Each principal expressed the idea of children first in creating their school environment and discussed how principals knew they were imparting their beliefs to their school community.
Table 4.6

Summary of Principal Theme Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>HP</th>
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<th>Total Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Background</td>
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<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Changes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Implementation</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Perspectives</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Wishes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. HP = Title I high performing; LP = Title I low performing.*

**The student.** The second theme, the student, identified participants’ beliefs about student challenges and performance. Participants reported that their students face an inordinate amount of challenges in the course of their education, such as but not limited to, behavioral issues, hunger, income, lack of materials, lack of grade level skills, family issues and responsibility. Additionally, the theme captured the expectations of principals in particular to student low performance.

Principals in Title I high performing schools reported providing additional resources to students experiencing learning challenges and soliciting input from students regarding their learning experiences. The principals conveyed the following:

We have a group of students who get tracked or followed – I don’t want to use the word “tracked,” but they’re followed with the teacher assistant all day, so the teacher’s assistant is in the classroom, in their core classes all day, just to assist with their work, and then they’ll go to resource room. So this way they get the
feeling of being – they’re with the whole group, but they still fall back and they
still have the support they need. (Principal A1)

It’s really an open door policy. And the kids have it, too. They are not afraid to
come in this office and give their piece of mind sometimes. And I think we’ve
learned a lot from the kids, too. I think another thing is how many times do people
really listen to what the kids have to say or what they want to do, or...and we try
and really listen to them and their needs and how they are feeling, and....’cause
it’s a tough time for them, too. (Principal A2)

Principals in the Title I low performing schools reported that some of their
students do not see the value in obtaining an education. Principals reported they spend a
large portion of their time impressing the value of an education upon their students.

Principal B1 said,

I’m just trying to get the kids to focus on and understand the importance of
education. Because sometimes I think there’s a population of kids who come just
to come. They’re just coming to school to come to school, maybe not
understanding the importance of it or there really is a purpose for you to come
here. (Principal B1)

Principal B2 discussed the need for strong support services as many of his
students experience tremendous challenges that impede their ability to learn. The need for
strong student supports were discussed to help students meet successful student
outcomes.

I talk to my staff about changing it to Student Support Services. Because when I
ask people, “what does PPS stand for? – and that’s what it does stand for – they
don’t get it and they don’t understand it. So Student Support Services, and the reason why I bring that up is because during – in Student Support Services, we talk about major medical concerns with students. Major academic. Major attendance. Major discipline. Those are the types of things we talk about, and we try to put interventions in place. (Principal B2)

A lot of teachers come to me and say that the kids don’t have the ability. They come to school below grade level. We are teaching them at this level, but they lack these foundational skills, and how – what do we have in place to have them catch up? They have this pacing chart and they have this curriculum they must follow; they can’t deviate. So how do we – and these are the questions of teachers: how do I, or how do we expect them to move these kids when we know that they don’t have the this fourth grade, this fifth grade foundational skills, how are they going to do this eighth grade work and how are they going to pass the eighth grade test? So we are behind the eight-ball. And so what interventions do we put in place to move those kids to grade level? (Principal B2)

So once you show them, you give them a guide – and the expectation is when I go in, I start to see these changes. I started seeing more students organized in groups. And not just in a group, but each student has a role within their group. (Principal B2)

Because I know that students come to school at various levels of understanding and degree of preparedness, I put a great deal of effort into making sure that teachers receive professional development in differentiated instruction. Because I understand my population, some of our PD time is spent on how to improve
classroom management. In order to support students who display the ability to catch on faster than others, we created pre-honors and honor classes. While the first contact for the students is their general teachers, we do provide opportunities albeit limited for students who need support. Some students receive Academic Intervention Services (AIS) to support their development. Primarily, students are identified for these services because of low scores on State Assessment as well as teacher recommendations. (Principal B3)

We have very low performing students, so just about all my teachers appear to be low performing teachers. I can tell you that, based on the scores our students are receiving, it appears our teachers are low performing. If it’s based on just the scores, the vast majority, if not all, are low performing, even the ones I consider to be the best teachers. When I go into the classroom, there are teachers I can look at and say, “this is a very good teacher.” But the scores on state assessments are not panning out. (Principal B3)

The principals identified their beliefs about student challenges and performance. Participants reported that their students face an inordinate amount of challenges in the course of their education, such as but not limited to, behavioral issues, hunger, income, lack of materials, lack of grade level skills, family issues and responsibility. Table 4.7 provides a summary of code responses by the principals related to the theme the student. Table 4.7 provides the code as defined in the codebook, total number of responses by principals from the Title I high performing schools, total number of responses by principals from the Title I low performing schools and the total number of responses combined from both categories.
Table 4.7

Summary of Student Theme Responses

<table>
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<th>Code</th>
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<th>Total Responses</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>Poverty</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Challenges</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Demographics</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Motivation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Performance</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Community</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Parents</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. HP = Title I high performing; LP = Title I low performing.

Low student performance appeared to dominate the Title I low performing schools with those principals expressing the need for stronger student support services in order for the students to have successful educational outcomes. Strategies to assist low performing teachers were not clearly articulated in helping Title I low performing schools to meet adequate yearly progress as measured by the New York State Report Cards.

Resources. The third theme emerging from the data, resources, discussed specific educational literature and materials, materials shared from principal to teacher, teacher to teacher, during professional development, discussion of finances, including but not limited to school budgets, resources, grants, and funding in general. It can co-occur with specific references to Title I. This theme included the limitations/needs of their schools regarding infrastructure, staff, as well as any supplemental instruction involving activities, programs, support staff that are necessary as additions to classroom instruction.
All five principals participating in the interviews had a percentage of Title I students as measured by students’ free and reduced lunch eligibility. Each principal expressed providing additional resources in various formats as a method of leveling the playing field for students within their schools.

Principal A2 discussed the importance of incorporating literacy into teacher pedagogy and making the students active in their learning. He conveyed,

She is an educational consultant, very, very big. She runs a program called Literacy Builders. We met – last year; we did social studies and science. They met for two straight days just talking about ways they could incorporate literacy into their teaching practices. Then we came back, and [name] modeled a lesson in science and math. So, we did a three-block section. So period one, she would talk about what she was going to do with the teachers, period two she modeled it, period three (repeated it?). Then the next time she came back, the teachers volunteered to teach to the other teachers, the other teachers could watch them teach, about how this type of dynamic would work with literacy. So that was just one example of how we pushed that into the classroom, and I’d say more times than not – some things work better than others – I’m not going to lie to you; I’m not going to tell you it’s a utopian society – but generally speaking, this staff shares a lot of information, they try different things, and sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn’t, but they’re willing to make that effort of trying, which I think is the key. We – our big push here was increasing literacy and making students participate – actively participate – in literacy learning. (Principal A2)
Principal A1 indicated he aspires to increase the rigor in the educational program of his school. He discussed the lack of funding and that he does not use that as an impediment to implementing policies and procedures for student success. He indicated,

In terms of rigor, we want to increase teaching time. We want to give students more options. Right, now how? We cannot do the "how." We do not have the money. So right there, that goal, while it is a valuable goal on the “why” part, “how” does not really work. That was something that came out of discussions. (Principal A1)

I had an opportunity to hear Pedro Noguera speak, his book is The Trouble with Black Boys. It is another reflection on race and equity and the future of public education. But just having the opportunity to hear him speak live just sparked an interest, because he is truly a dynamic speaker, truly in touch with – I think – with education. You know, especially in I guess poverty school districts. And so by hearing him, you know, I was very intrigued, and started reading that. (Principal B2)

Each principal highlighted the need for after school or Saturday programs to assist in meeting successful educational outcomes. Schools utilized Title I resources or grant funding acquired from the New York State Education Department to develop tutorial programs.

We have a SIG Grant-Student Improvement Grant, $2.7 million. There is room for programs after school programs for children. And we are trying to put scientifically-based proven programs in place that will move kids, like our kids, and these types of communities. (Principal B2)
While we do have a fixed system as a result of resources being limited, we do work hard to adjust our schedule and teaching practices to provide a learning environment to meet the needs of the students. Quite often, we are forced to supplement instruction by establishing after school programs to reach those students we are not able to reach during the school day. (Principal B3)

Each principal spent a significant amount of time developing themselves as an instructional leader as evidenced by their efforts to develop themselves and their staff professionally. The principals in both Title I high performing and Title I low performing schools shared evidence of sharing best practices with their staff.

I spend a lot of time...I read about thirty articles a week and I try to pick the one that the teachers would want to read and not one that is burdensome to read. For example, I just read one - we were talking about it...at one of the faculty meetings were talking about vocabulary. (Principal A1)

We want to go to a nine-period day because we want to increase the number of classes. In terms of rigor, we want to increase teaching time. We want to give students more options. Right, now how? We cannot do the "how." We do not have the money. So right there, that goal, while it is a valuable goal on the “why” part, “how” does not really work. So, that was something that came out of discussions. (Principal B2)

I have learned from Teaching with the Brain in Mind, that if you want to increase the importance of something; you must use it constantly, because when you review the material your brain gives it higher priority. As it pertains to our students the material they are learning has not been made a priority in the brain
they’re not studying. *And so I have an interest in understanding the mind* and how it works in terms of teaching and learning. (Principal B3)

Anyon (1980) stated hidden curriculum of school work is silent preparation for relating to the process of production. Differing curriculum, pedagogical, and pupil evaluation practices emphasize different cognitive and behavioral skills in each social setting and thereby sets up stratification in the educational system. More resources, after school programs, professional development and grants are words and phrases utilized by principals that were interpreted to mean giving high–poverty students additional resources to meet successful educational outcomes. The principals’ comments in this theme suggested that more resources should be devoted to providing professional development opportunities for staff and extending additional after school learning opportunities to students. Principals’ perceived factors outside of school affected student performance in the classroom but did not include a discussion of methods to reach out to families to engage them in their child’s educational program.

Table 4.8 provides a summary of code responses by the principals related to the resources theme. Table 4.8 provides the code as defined in the codebook, total number of responses by principals from the Title I high performing schools, total number of responses by principals from the Title I low performing schools and the total number of responses combined from both categories.
### Table 4.8

*Summary of Resources Theme Responses*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>HP</th>
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<th>Total Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involvement Outside Consultation</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Involvement School Personnel</td>
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<td>Resources Educational Literature</td>
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<td>Resources Funding</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title I</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* HP = Title I high performing; LP = Title I low performing.

Principals in both Title I high performing and Title I low performing schools indicated a strong desire to increase teaching pedagogy in their respective schools.

Within the resources theme all principals expressed the need to obtain additional funding to provide supplementary resources to students in Title I high performing schools and Title I low performing schools.

**The teacher.** The fourth and final theme, the teacher, emphasized the principals’ perspectives related to the role of the teacher in their schools. This theme encompassed discussions of how teachers are evaluated concerning student performance. The theme included discussions of time and resources needed for teacher and student evaluations. The theme also included discussions of expectations of teachers and in particular low
teacher performance as determined by scores, failure rate, and/or not attending faculty meetings. Discussions of the day-to-day functioning of “the classroom,” including classroom management and teacher instructional techniques, lesson planning, curriculum, and instructional tools were included in this theme. This theme also included discussions of teacher experimentation designed to encourage student engagement and material retention.

I think that it’s just, again, going back to that word “culture” can really assist – I have an open door policy. Teachers are in this room all the time, I’m outside all the time, it’s… in name, I’m the principal, and I lead by sharing my thoughts, but I also – I try to lead by listening to what people are saying and letting them.

(Principal A1)

Before that, yeah, we were turning over. Because that is when we were changing things; the reports and things, and laying on the line, like “This is what we have to do.” Now it is everybody knows what we have to do, everyone does it, and for the most part people are happy. In this building, we have five teachers that went here, graduates of A2. I think we have two or three teachers who have kids, are in the school or went through the school. So, people have a nice loyalty and warmth for here and I think that is important. And I think the fact that they know I have been here as long as I have… I love this place, I love the kids here… they understand that. I think you work a little harder because you want to keep that image of your school up. (Principal A2)
Principal B1 discussed his perspective of the classroom, which included how he determines the effective day-to-day functioning of the classroom. This also included the determination of effective teacher performance.

But my view is the only way that you really see what’s going on is just visiting the classroom and make yourself visible. Otherwise, you really do not know what is going on. And I guess—you know, you can look at some data on how the kids are doing, but that is somewhat too late, so the only way I see of doing that is just being in the classroom. (Principal B1)

Principal B3 discussed how teachers are beginning to incorporate data to inform their instructional practices as well as incorporating scientifically based strategies to inform their teaching pedagogy.

I believe most teachers share my belief that we should meet the students where they are, work to help them to improve their academic condition, and send them on to the next grade better than we received them. I can see from teacher lesson plans that they are using Inquiry-Based instruction in their classrooms. Teachers are beginning to use the data from their classroom assessments to modify their lessons. Teachers are coming to Team meeting prepared to share student work and discuss strategies that work for them. I get a lot of invitations to visit classrooms because teachers want to show me what they are doing and maybe even to prove that they are in fact working hard to teach our students. Some share e-mails discussing their daily lessons. (Principal B3)

Table 4.9 provides a summary of code responses by the principals related to the theme the teacher. Table 4.9 provides the code as defined in the codebook, total number
of responses by principals from the Title I high performing schools, total number of
responses by principals from the Title I low performing schools and the total number of
responses combined from both categories.

Table 4.9

*Summary of Teacher Theme Responses*

<table>
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<th>Code</th>
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<td>Best Practices</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data</td>
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<td>Special Education</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>State Assessments</td>
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<td>Teacher Performance</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Classroom</td>
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<td>32</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnover</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* HP = Title I high performing; HP/LP = Title I low performing.

Principals in both Title I high performing and Title I low performing schools
indicated a strong desire to constantly and continuously improve teaching pedagogy and
provide opportunities for professional development. Within the teacher theme, principals
in Title I high performing schools placed importance in the areas of special education,
state assessments and turnover. Principals in Title I low performing schools emphasized
academic intervention services, best practices, data, professional development, teacher
performance, and the classroom as areas that require significant attention to ensure
successful outcomes for their students.

**Summary**

In summary, four major themes emerged from the data. The initial theme, the principal discussed how principals perceived their school culture at large, as well as their approach to educational instruction and administration. Specifically, participants identified perspectives that may have referred to culture, curriculum, lesson plans or teacher performance. The theme also addressed principals’ expectations that they expect all students to have successful educational outcomes. The principal wishes code was defined as a discussion of any changes the principal envisioned or would like to see. The principals of low performing schools referred to revisions they would like to make to the physical plant of the school, adding more time to the school day and year, and wishing for the additional resources to meet the needs of their students. Conversely, the principals of Title I high performing schools did not invoke this code throughout the interviews. In the principal theme, there were no significant differences. Each of the principals was a hard working individual who wants the best for the students served.

The second theme, the student, detailed principals’ beliefs about student challenges and performance. Principals revealed that their students face an inordinate amount of challenges in the course of their education. The theme captured the expectations of principals in particular to student low performance. Student challenges were defined as challenges students face in the course of their education, such as but not limited to behavioral issues, hunger, income, lack of materials, lack of grade-level skills, and family issues/responsibilities. Principals of low performing schools throughout their interviews indicated this was a significant factor in their students’ educational
performance. Additionally, student performance in terms of process, material retention, testing, and response to different methods were highlighted as another indicator for low student performance.

Principals in high performing Title I schools referred to community support as a factor in their success in this theme. Community support was defined as discussions of the support, or lack thereof, coming from community members other than parents. Equally represented amongst Title I high and low performing schools was support from parents. Support from parents was defined as discussions of the role and/or quality of parental support in student performance, and school culture.

In Title I high performing schools, parental support was listed as an indicator for the schools success’ and in Title I low performing schools, the lack of parental support was listed as an indicator for low student performance. This is clearly an indicator of hidden curriculum which exists within the high poverty low performing middle schools. The lack of parental involvement is viewed as a detriment by the principals of high poverty low performing schools. This is supported by Dreeben (1968) who argued the involvement of parents is an indicator for the success of students.

The third theme, resources, discussed specific educational literature and materials, materials shared from principal to teacher, teacher to teacher, during professional development, discussion of finances, including but not limited to school budgets, resources, grants, and funding in general. This theme discussed the limitations/needs of their schools regarding infrastructure, staff, as well as any supplemental instruction involving activities, programs, or support staff that are necessary as additions to classroom instruction.
In Title I low performing schools, an emphasis was placed on utilizing outside consultation. Outside consultation was defined as a discussion of if/when/how outside consultation is utilized for professional development or teacher improvement plans. While the principals of Title I high performing schools referred to outside consultation throughout the interviews, they did not utilize outside consultation as a major source for professional development. The principals of Title I low performing schools indicated they have required outside consultants to assist in complying with the components of state educational law. Therefore, they placed a greater emphasis in this area.

Additionally, there were significant differences expressed in resources educational literature by the Title I low performing principals. Resources educational literature was defined as a discussion of specific educational literature and materials, including materials shared from principal to teacher, teacher to teacher, and during professional development. The principals of Title I low performing schools indicated they spent a significant amount of their time reading literature related to complying with state education initiatives. Conversely, principals of Title I high performing schools under this code indicated they read articles to provide staff members with additional strategies to meet the needs of students.

Resources infrastructure was defined as a discussion of the limitations/needs of the school regarding infrastructure, staff, as well as any supplemental instruction involving activities, programs, and support staff. The principals of Title I low performing schools utilized the resources infrastructure code as they realized they require supplemental instruction to meet the needs of their students. The principals of Title I high performing schools indicated they spent a significant amount of time in this code.
attempting to meet the needs of their students. However, principals of Title I high performing schools referred to this in a greater degree.

The third theme, resources, discussed specific educational literature and materials, materials shared from principal to teacher, teacher to teacher, during professional development, discussion of finances, including but not limited to school budgets, resources, grants, and funding in general. The theme of resources included a discussion of the limitations/needs of schools regarding infrastructure, staff, as well as any supplemental instruction involving activities, programs, support staff that are necessary as additions to classroom instruction.

The fourth theme, the teacher, encompassed discussions from principals of how teachers have been evaluated in regards to student performance. The teacher theme also included discussions of principal expectations of teachers and in particular low teacher performance as determined by test scores. The theme involved the greatest range of differences between the principals of both high and low performing Title I schools. Principals of Title I high performing schools placed greater emphasis on special education and state assessments. Principals of Title I low performing schools placed greater emphasis on academic intervention services, best practices, data, professional development and teacher performance.

The final chapter of the dissertation offers a detailed summary of the findings. Furthermore, implications and recommendations for practice and future research are identified as well as a discussion of the study’s limitations.
Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

Chapter 5 presents the implications, limitations, and recommendations from the findings of the research study conducted to explore how school principals’ perspectives of hidden curriculum affect Title I middle schools. Implications are discussed in terms of their relation to principal perspectives and responses to the interview questions posed to the participants of the study. Conclusions aligning with the literature that were reviewed in Chapter 2 are drawn and implications of such results for practice and future research are suggested. Lastly, limitations of the study are considered and presented. Recommendations are discussed for future research, actions, and changes for organizational procedures, professional practice and development.

The research for this study utilized qualitative methodology to explore the primary research question how do school principals’ perspectives of hidden curriculum affect Title I middle schools? Analysis indicates that principals are passionate in describing their schools and their relationship with staff, students, and the school community. The excerpts from principals’ interviews in Chapter 4 highlight the care and compassion exhibited by the principals to their craft and desire to serve the school communities with dignity and excellence. The principals exhibited a high level of commitment to providing the highest quality education to their students.

Principals’ responses to the interview questions highlight the complex dilemmas they face in providing a quality education to the students they serve. From the data,
several central themes emerge that serve as the backbone to understanding hidden curriculum. The findings are presented in the following order, the principal, the student, resources and the teacher based upon the total number of responses by Title I high performing and Title I low performing schools for each code identified within the theme. These findings are expounded upon in the next section.

Implications of Findings

The findings of this study suggest that hidden curriculum is currently functioning to a high degree in the study schools. Hidden curriculum for the purpose of this dissertation is defined as the social act of placing severe restrictions on an individual, group or institution. Typically, a government or political organization that is in power places these restrictions formally or covertly on oppressed groups so that those groups can be exploited and are less able to compete with other social groups. Perspective is defined as the process by which people translate sensory impressions into a coherent and unified view of the world around them, and Title I schools are described as schools having a students who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

The extant literature does not examine principal perspectives of hidden curriculum in Title I high performing or low performing schools. Therefore, the dissertation study identifies a gap in current literature. The researcher found that principals of Title I low performing schools perspectives do not differ significantly from the principals of Title I high performing schools. Specifically, neither set of principals use poverty as an excuse for the success or failure of their schools. However, the principal perspectives varied on other issues. The variations in perspectives are discussed in the following subsections.
Principals in Title I high performing schools said they began on the path to improvement when the teachers started to modify their views about the abilities of the students served. One principal speaks about not utilizing the poverty piece as an excuse for poor student performance and speaks of adjusting instructional pedagogy to ensure student success. Another principal speaks of using Read 180 training for several years before seeing significant changes in the scores on the New York State student assessments. He also talks about the culture of the school and how having a strong group of teachers who have remained together for a long period of time has ensured successful student outcomes. The same principal indicates teacher beliefs changed through a series of professional development opportunities and the principal responding to teacher needs. He believes this led to successful instructional approaches that demonstrated students could complete work that is challenging.

Conversely, principals in Title I low performing schools spend a considerable amount of time garnering resources to meet their students’ needs. These principals indicated students arrive to their schools severely skill deficient; therefore, a preponderance of their instructional time is spent on the acquisition of skills. The use of consultants is relied upon to engage the staff in professional development and is viewed as minimally successful at best due to the inconsistency of implementation of the learned strategies.

Anyon (1980) indicates work is following the steps of a procedure, usually involving rote behavior and very little decision-making or choice. This was illuminated throughout the interviews by Title I low performing schools and reinforced by principals indicating they place a heavy emphasis on skill development.
Delpit (2006) states, skills are a necessary but insufficient aspect of black and minority students’ education. Students need technical skills to open doors, but they need to be able to think critically and creatively to participate in meaningful and potentially liberating work inside those doors. The principals of Title I low performing schools are engaging in this work and are implementing the Common Core Curriculum that stresses depth over breadth and provides for students to think critically. However, the Title I low performing schools are at the precipice of implementing the Common Core curriculum and are significantly behind the Title I high performing counterparts. Therefore, the differences in student performance will continue to lag.

Principals of Title I performing school indicated they have engaged in Common Core curriculum implementation since 2010. They began the process to expose their students to a more rigorous curriculum, which will allow for greater depth of knowledge. This is another indicator of hidden curriculum. The principals of Title I low performing schools have been engaged in compliance level activities which has diverted their attention from Common Core Curriculum implementation. This implies that students of Title I low performing schools are not exposed to the depth and rigor of the Common Core and their performance will lag behind the Title I high performing counterparts.

The principal. The theme of the principal explores perceptions expressed by principals that discuss their background, discussion of any changes the principal has actually made or is in the process of making versus those things the principal has retained or will retain. It may refer to culture, curriculum, lesson plans or teacher performance. It includes discussions of any reaction (critical or supportive) of those changes. A review of the literature indicates that current research does not exist in the area of the affect of
hidden curriculum in Title I middle schools. Therefore, these findings are new to the field.

Within the principal theme, the codes of principal background, principal changes, principal perspectives, and principal wishes are developed based upon principal interviews. In both Title I high performing schools, principal focus in this theme is predominately placed in principal background, principal implementation and principal perspectives. The principal perspectives code displays the greatest amount of responses and is defined as discussion of the principal’s perspectives on school “culture” at large, as well as the principal’s approach to educational instruction or educational administration. The approach can include the principal’s philosophy on the role of principal. It also included discussions of the principal’s expectations of teachers, administrators, and students, as well as the principal’s attitude towards any kind of experimentation or thinking outside the box.

According to Apple (1979), the differential hidden curriculum can be defined by the fact that working-class, minority, and lower-track students are taught such things as punctuality, neatness, respect for authority, external control of behavior, and a tolerance for boredom. In the Title I low performing schools the principals report they reinforced the acquisition of skills, as many students were skill deficient as well as focusing on the remediation of student behavior. This involves a significant amount of classroom time that often delays the delivery of instructional content.

Martin (1976) states hidden curriculum can be found in the structure of the classroom, the teacher’s authority, and the rules governing the relationship between
teachers and students. In the Title I high performing schools, the principals report building relationships among themselves, their students, and the staff as a major reason for their successful outcomes. These principals indicate the school community and primarily the teachers are the reason for the schools’ success. They talk about open door policies with staff and students as an indicator for successful educational outcomes and stress they attempt to build upon these relationships daily.

**The student.** The student theme identifies participants’ beliefs about student challenges and performance. Dreeben (1968) argues that each student has different parental backgrounds and when each attends school, the student encounters the norms in preparation for involvement in the life of public sphere(s). The reality of home life reinforces principals’ perspectives that their students face an inordinate amount of challenges in the course of their education, such as but not limited to, behavioral issues, hunger, income, lack of materials, lack of grade level skills, family issues, and responsibility. In Title I high performing schools, greater principal focus in the student theme is placed on poverty, demographics, and community support. In Title I low performing schools within the student theme, substantial principal emphasis is placed on student challenges, student motivation, and student performance.

Principals of Title I low performing schools indicated that teachers come to them and state the students’ don’t have the ability. They come to school below grade level and lack foundational skills. This is an indicator of hidden curriculum. Educational realities make it necessary for principals of Title I low performing schools to address not only issues relating to hidden curriculum and social issues, but they must also create multifaceted processes that examine the various aspects of the whole child. While this is
done successfully in Title I high performing schools, successful strategies must be adopted in Title I low performing schools for them to successfully meet adequate yearly progress and experience educational success.

**Resources.** The resources theme includes a discussion of the limitations and needs of schools regarding infrastructure, staff, as well as any supplemental instruction involving activities, programs, and support staff that are necessary as additions to classroom instruction. The theme also includes references to specific educational literature and materials, materials shared from principal to teacher, teacher to teacher, during professional development, discussion of finances, including but not limited to school budgets, resources, grants, and funding in general. In Title I high performing schools, greater principal focus in the resources theme is placed on infrastructure. In Title I low performing schools within the resources theme, substantial principal emphasis is placed in the involvement of outside consultants, involvement of school personnel, educational literature, and funding.

Hidden curriculum is evidenced within the theme of resources. Title I high performing schools utilize their funding to support academic services built into the students’ daily schedules. This provides additional embedded instructional support during the school day for children not performing on level. Additionally, their resources allocation funded Read 180 programs for English Language learners and Students with Disabilities. This provided extended school day embedded learning opportunities for their students to meet adequate yearly progress.

Conversely, principals of Title I low performing schools utilize their funding to provide after school and Saturday Learning Academies which are not mandated nor built
into the students’ school day. Therefore, student enrollment in these programs are
generally lower and the majority of students do not benefit from the extended learning
opportunity. This leads to students not successfully meeting adequate yearly progress on
New York State Assessments.

Principals of Title I high performing schools indicated they spent a significant
amount of time reading educational material related to providing their staff with different
resources to improve student performance. Conversely, principals of Title I low
performing schools read material related to compliance with state education mandates.
This is an indicator of hidden curriculum within Title I low performing schools.
Principals reflect educational goals and policies within their schools. If they are focused
primarily on compliance issues, insuring compliance with state mandates, they do not
have the time within the school day to develop fully as the instructional leader. Hidden
curriculum includes all those things in a school setting that send learners messages
regarding how they should be thinking and what they ought to be doing. It is a subliminal
process that is transmitted through the principals every day normal activities. The
principals’ actions greatly influence student’s attitudes towards knowledge, skills,
practices and values.

The teacher. Principals were asked what were their expectations of staff, students
and teachers based upon educational outcomes. School curriculum generally has been
accepted as an explicit, conscious, formally planned course with specific objectives
(Kentli, 2009). This definition was reinforced as principals responded that teacher growth
is measured by student progress made toward meeting Annual Yearly Progress and grade
level standards in both Title I high performing schools and Title I low performing
schools. In Title I high performing schools, greater principal focus in the teacher theme is placed on special education, state assessments, and teacher turnover. Principals of Title I high performing schools place greater academic intervention and supplemental educational services onto special education classrooms. These ancillary services assist the special education students in making AYP on state assessments.

In Title I low performing schools within the teacher theme, substantial principal emphasis is placed in the areas of academic intervention services, best practices, data, professional development teacher performance, and the classroom. There is a focus on classroom compliance, behavior and strict adherence to standards, procedure, and policy. This is stressed by principals of low performing Title I schools. This reinforces Dreeben (1968) who indicates hidden curriculum focuses on the identifiable social structure of the classroom and argues that classroom structure teaches students about authority.

Limitations

Several limitations exist within the study. First, the participant selection process yielded a small pool of individuals eligible to participate in the study. The unforeseen limitation is because schools within Long Island, New York are high performing. Of the eight schools eligible to participate in the study, three opted not to participate thereby narrowing the data collection process. Even though the small study population limits the range of data collected, the data gathered from the participating principals bring a wealth of information that does not hinder the results. Additionally, data were collected only from Long Island, New York schools. Therefore, the study does not address principal perspectives that may have regional, state or national implications.
Data were collected from two Title I high performing schools and three Title I low performing schools. The addition of another Title I high performing school would have provided an additional data set that could have served as an additional comparator.

The dissertation study primarily obtained data from male principals of Title I schools. This could be a limitation as a woman’s perspective from the viewpoint of principal could have provided a unique point of view that was not presented within the study.

**Recommendations**

The research investigates how school principals’ perspectives of hidden curriculum affects Title I middle schools and how those perspectives align with components of multiple theories and views of hidden curriculum found in the literature. Hidden curriculum is a complicated issue and appears not to be separable by principals either in theory or in practice. Due to its complicated nature, developing an awareness of the effects of hidden curriculum would require extensive professional development training to make principals aware of its existence and an even more rigorous program to counter the effect of hidden curriculum. In order for principals to develop a working conceptual framework for issues of hidden curriculum for students in all levels of schools, both principal preparation programs and principal professional development programs for current principals should add topics related to hidden curriculum to their curriculum.

Understanding the perspectives of principals related to hidden curriculum is important for a multitude of reasons. It is important that principals understand how their views on hidden curriculum in education allows them to organize their school, focus their
belief system, structure their professional development and focus their expectations of staff, students and teachers based on educational outcomes. It is important for central office administrators to understand what principals are thinking about hidden curriculum and make decisions about the allocation of the funding allotted to their buildings to assist in meeting successful student outcomes of students in Title I schools.

As defined within the dissertation research, hidden curriculum is a part of the everyday functioning of principals in both Title I high performing and Title I low performing schools. One recommendation is to expand the study to examine a larger sample of Title I high performing and low performing schools not affiliated with Long Island, New York schools. A larger sample could provide greater depth about the nature and functions of hidden curriculum.

Another recommendation is to identify, study, and share learning regarding the facets of hidden curriculum with principals who serve children attending Title I schools. Based on an understanding of hidden curriculum, principals must provide more rigorous school services for children who come to school skill deficient, which may include providing longer school days and years and provide rigorous professional development opportunities for school staff. Doing so will better support children attending Title I schools who require more support to meet successful educational outcomes as measured by meeting adequate yearly progress on the New York State English Language Arts and mathematics assessments.

Conclusion

In Chapter 1, principal perspectives, poverty and hidden curriculum are defined. Terms pertinent to understanding this dissertation are defined. The problem statement,
the theoretical perspective, the study significance, the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the definition of terms are expounded upon and highlighted. Several theories of hidden curriculum in Title I middle schools are identified as it relates to principals’ perspectives of each of the theories. The research brings into focus the various issues related to hidden curriculum, poverty, and principal perspectives and areas for continued research.

Many issues of principal perspectives of hidden curriculum that focused on students are identified. Thus far, research indicates hidden curriculum is created and maintained by the principal, district, teachers, and staff of the schools. Further study is required to gain a better understanding of the impact of the effect of principal perspectives of hidden curriculum in Title I middle schools.

In Chapter 2, the major theorists of hidden curriculum and their perspectives of how hidden curriculum affects the school system are examined. While the cited researchers support different views, all agree hidden curriculum is a crucial feature in education. The literature is reviewed to determine whether principal perspectives of hidden curriculum have been studied. Currently, no researcher has examined principal perspectives of hidden curriculum in Title I middle schools. Lastly, poverty is reviewed as it relates to the dissertation study. Poverty, for the purposes of the dissertation study, is defined by the number of students eligible for free and reduced lunch and Title I according to the federal government definition.

Some of the main problems of hidden curriculum focus on the children as well as the school system. Ideas that surfaced are that hidden curriculum has a significant impact on the productivity, progress, and attitudes of students and teachers, especially for those
schools in poverty as highlighted by Anyon (1980). Hidden curriculum is maintained and managed by the students, teachers, and principal of the school. Hidden curriculum can be constructive and destructive, covert and overt, and it can be difficult to change because it is so elusive and difficult to describe.

In Chapter 3, the research design is identified as a qualitative methodology. The chapter contains a discussion of how the methodology can effectively study principals’ perspectives of hidden curriculum in Title I middle schools. A qualitative approach is used because it is designed to capture emergent thoughts and themes. Because curriculum is the heart of education, the researcher focuses on principals’ perspectives of hidden curriculum and how that perspective impacts the school. The participants for the dissertation study were principals working in Title I public middle schools (grades 6-8). Five schools were identified, including two Title I high performing and three Title I low performing public schools.

In Chapter 4, four major themes emerge from the data. The initial theme, the principal; discusses how principals perceive their school culture at large as well as their approach to educational instruction and administration. Specifically, participants identify perspectives that may have referred to culture, curriculum, lesson plans, or teacher performance. The theme also addresses principals’ expectations that all students are to have successful educational outcomes. There are no major differences expressed in this theme by principals of high or low performing Title I schools.

The second theme, the student, details principals’ beliefs about student challenges and performance. Principals reveal that students face an inordinate amount of challenges in the course of their education. The major differences that emerge within the student
theme by principals are in Title I low performing schools wherein substantial principal emphasis is placed in student challenges, student motivation, and student performance. While in both Title I high performing and low performing schools, emphasis is placed on parental support, however the significance is different. This is clearly an indicator of hidden curriculum which exists within the high poverty low performing middle schools. The lack of parental involvement is viewed as a detriment by the principals of high poverty low performing schools. Additionally, the student theme captures the expectations of teachers in particular to low performance.

The third theme, resources, discusses specific educational literature and materials, materials shared from principal to teacher, teacher to teacher, during professional development, discussion of finances, including but not limited to school budgets, resources, grants, and funding in general. The principals’ comments in this theme suggest that more resources should be devoted to providing professional development opportunities for staff and extending additional after school learning opportunities to students. Principals of Title I low performing schools utilize their funding to provide after school and Saturday Learning Academies which are not mandated nor built into the students’ school day. Therefore, student enrollment in these programs are generally lower and the majority of students do not benefit from the extended learning opportunity. This is an indicator of hidden curriculum. Principals’ perceive factors outside of school affected student performance in the classroom but do not include a discussion of methods to engage families in their child’s educational program. The theme of resources discusses the limitations and needs of schools regarding infrastructure, staff, and supplemental
instruction involving activities, programs, and support staff that are necessary as additions to classroom instruction.

The fourth theme, the teacher, encompasses discussions of how teachers are evaluated in regards to student performance. This theme expresses the greatest range of differences between the principals of both high and low performing Title I schools. Principals of Title I low performing schools place greater emphasis in academic intervention services, best practices, data, professional development, and teacher performance. Directly from the data, hidden curriculum is evidenced by principals of Title I high performing schools place greater emphasis in special education and state assessments. The theme of the teacher also includes discussions of expectations of teachers and in particular low teacher performance as determined by test scores.

The final chapter identifies that principals must develop an understanding of hidden curriculum and how it functions in school settings. Principals must have an open dialogue with staff about hidden curriculum, evaluate the findings, and develop school goals to ensure students meet successful educational outcomes. Additionally, dialogue between principals and staff could assist principals in creating a plan for solving the daily dilemmas of leading diverse communities. Finally, school communities would benefit if all stakeholders identified and discussed the affect of hidden curriculum on students.
References


Appendix A

Principal Consent to Participate in Research

Project Title: How School Principals’ Perspectives of Hidden Curriculum Affect Title I Middle Schools
Researcher: Kimberlee Pierre
Dissertation Chair: Dr. Richard Maurer

Introduction:

You are being asked to consider taking part in a research study being conducted by Kimberlee Pierre for a dissertation under the supervision of Dr. Richard Maurer of the Department of Education at St. John Fisher College. You are being asked to participate because you are a principal of a New York State school serving grades 6 – 8 with a majority of Title I students (defined as students qualifying for free lunch). In this study, five principals in grades six – eight will be interviewed to obtain their perspectives regarding issues related to curriculum, leadership, discipline, testing, professional development, collaboration, expertise and beliefs about teachers and students in their classrooms and schools. It is hoped that principals working with high and low poverty students and who are interested in pertinent educational issues will be willing to share their views relating to the interview questions.

Please read this form carefully and ask any question you may have before deciding whether to participate in the study.

Purpose:

The purpose of the study will be to conduct a qualitative study to explore the concept of principal perspectives in high and low performing Title I middle schools in New York State. The impact of the study will be for administrators to understand the concept of principal perspectives in high and low poverty middle schools in New York State. The goal of this study will be to determine how principal perspectives in high and low poverty middle schools functions in schools and classrooms and utilize this knowledge to facilitate change.
Approval of study:

This study has been reviewed and approved by the St. John Fisher College Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Procedure:

If you agree to participate in the study, you will be asked to participate in an interview that will last approximately thirty minutes. This interview will take place at your school and will be audiotaped and later transcribed. You will be able to review the transcript of the interview for its accuracy or to correct statements made. The audiotape will be destroyed once the interview has been transcribed and you have had a chance to review the transcript for accuracy.

The following interview questions are anticipated:

1. What are your expectations of staff, students, and teachers based on educational outcomes?
2. What recent book educational book, journal, or article have you read that really impressed you?
3. How do you share educational research with your staff on best practices?
4. How do your beliefs about teaching and learning help you organize your school?
5. What recent actions have you taken to assist low performing teachers?
Do your teachers share in your beliefs? How do you know that? What evidence exists? How does it translate into practice?

Risks/Benefits:

The researcher will protect confidentiality and anonymity. There are no risks involved in participating in this research.

Confidentiality:

All information gathered in this study will remain confidential. No statements of perspectives will be identified with named school sites or named participants. All research will be conducted with the highest ethical standards for confidentiality. The names of the participants will be coded when interviews are coded and the master coding list associating participant names with interview results will be destroyed once the interview is complete. Only the researcher and her dissertation chair will have access to the master coding list and the interview data. The interview results will be retained for four years following the completion of the research and then destroyed by shredding these records.

Your rights:

1. Have the purpose of the study, and the expected risks and benefits fully explained to you before you choose to participate.

2. Withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.

3. Refuse to answer a particular question without penalty.

4. Be informed of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment, if any, that might be advantageous to you.

5. Be informed of the results of the study.
Contacts and Questions:

If you have any questions about this research project, feel free to contact the researcher, Kimberlee Pierre at (516) 965-4450 or kbp09416@sjfc.edu.

Statement of Consent:

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understood the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study.

Please return the signed form in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. You will be provided with a copy of this form to keep for your records.

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Appendix B

Interview Data Sheet

Name:__________________________________________________________________

School:_________________________________________________________________

Email

Address:________________________________________________________________

Phone:__________________________________________________________________
Background Demographic Information

Age:____________________________________________________________________

Gender:_________________________________________________________________

Racial/Ethnic
Background:_____________________________________________________________

School
Level:__________________________________________________________________

Years of Teaching
Experience:______________________________________________________________

Years of Principal
Experience:______________________________________________________________

Years Principal at Current
School:_________________________________________________________________
Appendix C

Interview Questions

1. What are your expectations of staff, students, and teachers based on educational outcomes?
2. What recent book educational book, journal, or article have you read that really impressed you?
3. How do you share educational research with your staff on best practices?
4. How do your beliefs about teaching and learning help you organize your school?
5. What recent actions have you taken to assist low performing teachers?
6. Do your teachers share in your beliefs? How do you know that? What evidence exists? How does it translate into practice?
Appendix D

Code Book

1. **Academic Intervention Services**: Discussion of the types of AIS that are provided, as well as how eligible and/or needy students are identified. Can also include discussion of principal and/or teacher recommendations for AIS and any supplemental development. Might also refer to discussion of any resources needed to provide any kind of testing modifications for students.

2. **Best Practices**: Discussion of/references to an overall summation of why a school is or is not performing well. When performing well, “best practices” refers to those practices that are yielding positive results/high performance. When not performing well, “best practices” refers to those practices that in theory (and in execution elsewhere) should impact school culture positively but which are not yielding positive results (i.e., low performance). NOTE: Be very conservative when applying this code; it should only be used when discussion explicitly highlights those practices that either do or should result in high performance (as opposed to general discussion of practices that “get the job done,” pass threshold, etc.).

3. **Data**: Discussion of performance-related data for students. Can include but is not limited to AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress), SLO (Student Learning Objectives), ELA (English Language Arts)/Math scores, etc.

4. **Involvement Outside Consultation**: Discussion of if/when/how outside consultation is utilized (e.g., during Professional Development, Teacher Improvement Plans, otherwise).

5. **Involvement School Personnel**: Discussion of faculty roles, including how faculty input is received and used. Can also include discussion in particular of how faculty beliefs and principal beliefs compare and contrast. Can also be
extended to discussion of the roles of teaching assistants. Could be extended as necessary to discussion of staff roles/input.

6. **Poverty**: Discussion of poverty as related to achievement levels and/or school functioning. Can also include discussion of preconceived notions of poverty.

7. **Principal Background**: Any discussion of the professional and/or educational background of the principal being interviewed.

8. **Principal Changes**: Discussion of any changes the principal has actually made/is in the process of making vs. those things he/she has retained/will retain. May refer to culture, curriculum, lesson plans, performance, etc. Can also include discussion of any reaction (supportive or critical) to those changes. Can co-occur with discussion of Principal Philosophy and/or Background.

9. **Principal Perspectives**: Discussion of the principal’s perspectives on school “culture” at large, as well as his/her approach to educational instruction, educational administration, etc.; this can include his/her philosophy on the role of “principal” (e.g., teacher of teacher, qualities that make for a good/bad principal), as well as his/her own personal leadership style. Can also include discussion of the principal’s expectations of teachers, administrators, and students, as well as his/her attitude towards any of kind of experimentation/”thinking outside the box.”

10. **Principal Wishes**: Discussion of any changes the principal envisions or would like to see.

11. **Professional Development**: Discussion of professional development such as seminars, working groups or speakers; educational research and materials; faculty meetings and e-mails; role of PD, etc.

12. **Resources Educational Literature**: Discussion of specific educational literature and materials, including materials shared from principal to teacher, teacher to teacher, during professional development, etc.
13. **Resources Funding**: Discussion of finances, including but not limited to school budgets, resources, grants, and funding in general. Can co-occur with specific references to Title I.

14. **Resources Infrastructure**: Discussion of the limitations/needs of the school regarding infrastructure, staff, etc., as well as any supplemental instruction involving activities, programs, support staff, etc., that are necessary as additions to classroom instruction.

15. **Special Education**: All discussions of special education, including types/counts of learning disabilities. Can include references to “504”s. Also can include discussion of the resources needed to address these special needs, any classroom modifications, time, infrastructure, etc.

16. **State Assessments**: Discussion of the state assessments of students/teachers/school and how they affect teaching practices, student engagement, etc.

17. **Student Challenges**: Discussion of any challenges students face in the course of their education, such as but not limited to behavioral issues, hunger, income, lack of materials, lack of grade-level skills, family issues/responsibilities, etc.

18. **Student Demographics**: Discussion of students in a descriptive sense in terms of “who they are;” e.g., ethnicity, gender, poverty levels.

19. **Student Motivation**: Discussion of student motivation and its role in student performance. Can include discussion of successful/unsuccessful efforts at motivation, different kinds of incentives, etc.

20. **Student Performance**: Discussion of student performance in terms of process (material retention, testing, response to different methods, etc.). Can also include references to student behavior; e.g., study practices, arriving at school with books and notebooks, truancy, etc.
21. **Support Community**: Discussions of the support, or lack thereof, coming from community members other than parents.

22. **Support Parents**: Discussion of the role and/or quality of parental support in student performance, school culture, etc.

23. **Teacher Performance**: Discussion of how teachers are evaluated with regards to performance. Can also include discussion of time and resources needed for the evaluations. Can also include discussions of expectations of teachers and in particular low teacher performance (as determined by scores, failure rate, not attending faculty meetings, etc.), Annual Performance Professional Review (APPR), and Teacher Improvement Plans (TIP’s).

24. **Title I**: Any specific references to Title I; can co-occur with references to Funding and/or Poverty.

25. **The Classroom**: Discussion of the day-to-day functioning of “the classroom,” including classroom management and teacher instruction (techniques, lesson planning, curriculum, instructional tools). Can also include discussion of teacher experimentation designed to encourage student engagement, material retention, etc. Can co-occur with discussion of Teacher Performance and various Student-related codes.
Appendix E

IRB Approval

November 16, 2012

File No: 3134-111512-02

Kimberlee Pierre
10 Lawrence Ave.
Rockville Centre, NY 11570

Dear Ms. Pierre:

Thank you for submitting your research proposal to the Institutional Review Board.

I am pleased to inform you that the Board has approved your Expedited Review project, “The Effect of Principal Perspectives of Hidden Curriculum in High-Poverty Middle Schools.”

Following federal guidelines, research related records should be maintained in a secure area for three years following the completion of the project at which time they may be destroyed.

Should you have any questions about this process or your responsibilities, please contact me at 385-5262 or by e-mail to emerges@sjfc.edu, or if unable to reach me, please contact the IRB Administrator, Jamie Mosca, at 385-8318, e-mail jmosca@sjfc.edu.

Sincerely,

Eileen M. Merges, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board

Copy: OAA IRB
IRB: Approve expedited doc.

3690 East Avenue • Rochester, NY 14618 • 585-385-8000 • www.sjfc.edu
Decision of Institutional Review Board

Reviewed by: 

Subcommittee Member #1 

Amy J. Parkhill

Subcommittee Member #2

Date: 1/6/12

Date: 1/15/12

Approved

Not Approved

Comments:

___ No Research

The proposed project has no research component and does not need be in further compliance with Article 24-A.

___ Minimal Risk

The proposed project has a research component but does not place subjects "At Risk" and need not be in further compliance with Article 24-A.

___ Research & Risk

The proposed project has a research component and places subjects at risk. The proposal must be in compliance with Article 24-A.

Chairperson, Institutional Review Board

Date: 1/10/12

Rev 12/10 jm