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**Teachers' perceptions of the roles of principals as instructional leaders in "distinguished" (high performing) and "needs improvement" (low performing) middle schools in urban metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia**

Wanda Powe Greenwood

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TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE ROLES OF PRINCIPALS AS  
INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS IN "DISTINGUISHED" (HIGH  
PERFORMING) AND "NEEDS IMPROVEMENT" (LOW  
PERFORMING) MIDDLE SCHOOLS IN URBAN  
METROPOLITAN ATLANTA, GEORGIA

By

Wanda Powe Greenwood

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Faculty of  
Mississippi State University  
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in the Department of Leadership and Foundations

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Pages in Study: 118

Candidate for Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

A total of 278 teachers participated in this study. This study was designed to examine how teachers from "distinguished" (high performing) and "needs improvement" (low performing) middle schools perceived the roles of their principals as instructional leaders who could provide schools with the necessary leadership characteristics for school improvement. This study also examined if differences existed among teachers' perceptions of their principals' roles based on school type and demographics (gender, age, years of work experience, and educational attainment). The principal leadership questionnaire (PLQ) was used to collect data based on the five factors: identify and articulate vision and provide inspiration, foster acceptance of group goals, provide appropriate model, provide intellectual stimulation, and provide individualized support. Cronbach alpha was used to establish the internal consistency of the instrument. Data

were analyzed using mean scores, percentages, t-tests and ANOVA. The findings indicated that the participants had positive perceptions with strongly agreed to agreed responses on most of the questionnaire items indicating that teachers perceived their principals should possess the characteristics associated with instructional leadership. Female participants consistently agreed with higher mean scores on all five PLQ factors than did male participants. The researcher recommended that further research and a longitudinal study be conducted on this topic to examine and compare leadership preparation programs in Georgia and other states across the nation and to determine the long-term effects of instructional leadership roles on student achievement.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study was middle school principals. Therefore, the characteristics of middle schools deserve a brief discussion. The National Middle School Association (2001) defines a middle school as one that is specifically structured to meet young adolescents' particular developmental needs. Irvin (1995) considers middle school a time-period when students from age 10 – 14 experience the formation of personal identity, the acquisition of social skills and independent decision-making and the development of values and character. Ecker (2002) concurs that middle school education is a transition period focusing on the changing needs of students moving from the primary to the secondary school.

One of the most important individuals in middle schools is the principal. Principals have the most potential to initiate and sustain improvement in academic and other areas of student performance and achievement (Jackson & Davis, 2000). Principals are thought to have the most critical role in implementing reform strategies toward improved students' results and a learning climate conducive for maximum achievement. However, the current educational reform trends across national settings are causing the role of the principal to become more complex, challenging, and ambiguous than ever before. Since the beginning of school leadership in American education, educators have struggled to define a distinctive role for the position (Leithwood, 1994).

The job of principals has been repeatedly examined. As pressure for improving student performance in middle schools continues, middle school principals are being urged to demonstrate effort that warrants becoming instructional leaders (Supovitz & Poglinco, 2001). The term instructional leader is defined as actions leaders take to improve teaching and learning (King, 2002). Instructional leadership refers to the actions principals take to develop a productive and satisfying work environment for teachers and desirable learning conditions and outcomes for children (Greenfield, 1987). It also refers to lists of characteristics usually associated with school principals whose work has been identified as effective (Purkey & Smith, 1982).

Although principals have ideas about the way they lead their schools, their success as leaders also depends on teachers' support and how they perceive their principals. If teachers perceive principals in a negative way, then principals will have problems performing their duties, because such negative perceptions could be perceived as lack of confidence in the principals' leadership style. Positive perceptions on the part of teachers can provide principals with the mandate needed to lead in an efficient and effective manner (Pashiardis, 1998). Therefore, it is vital for principals to discover how teachers perceive them as instructional leaders.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Current trends in education include increased emphasis on developing leadership. The ideal principal is a visionary leader who promotes an atmosphere of collegiality and participation in a student oriented school. In an effort to initiate school reform, teachers



are vital in planning and implementing the school's goals. It is obvious that teachers act as followers who expect certain behaviors from their principals (Lewis, 1986).

Today, due to renewed emphasis on basic skills, accountability, and higher standards of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the need for effective school leadership has become more apparent (United States Department of Education, 2001). The new goal of NCLB is focused on enhancing the academic culture between the principal, teacher, and students while elevating the role principals play in schools. One major purpose of NCLB is to assist in creating high-performing schools by incorporating rigorous academic content and achievement standards and state-mandated assessments. Its goal is to ensure all students are performing on or above proficient level by 2014 (United States Department of Education, 2006).

Perception is very important in any work organization, and educational establishments are not an exception. Since principals are the chief academic officers in school environments, the success or failure of each school is perceived as the principal's responsibility. The way teachers perceive their principals' roles is important, because positive perceptions of the roles of principals among teachers could provide principals the confidence and the mandate needed to run their schools. Poor perceptions of the roles of principals may negatively impact the way principals perform their duties. Support from teachers is considered important, because principals and teachers are expected to work collaboratively as a team in order to foster intellectual growth and to provide teachers and students with guidance and direction. Therefore, it is necessary to recognize and understand how teachers perceive their leaders.

The problem of this study was designed to examine if teachers from schools classified as “distinguished” (high performing) and teachers from schools classified as “needs improvement” (low performing) perceived the roles of middle school principals as leaders who could provide instructional leadership necessary for school improvement. This study also examined whether differences existed among teachers from schools classified as “distinguished” and teachers from schools classified as “needs improvement” in their perceptions of the roles of middle school principals as instructional leaders. In addition, this study also examined if differences existed in teachers’ perceptions of their principals’ roles as instructional leaders based on demographics (gender, age, years of work experience, and educational level).

### **Research Questions**

The following questions guided this study:

1. Do teachers perceive the role of middle school principals as leaders who should identify and articulate vision and provide inspiration as measured by the principal leadership questionnaire (PLQ)?
2. Do teachers perceive the role of middle school principals as leaders who should provide appropriate model as measured by the PLQ?
3. Do teachers perceive the role of middle school principals as leaders who should foster acceptance to the achievement of group goals as measured by the PLQ?
4. Do teachers perceive the role of middle school principals as leaders who should provide individualized support as measured by the PLQ?

5. Do teachers perceive the role of middle school principals as leaders who should provide intellectual stimulation as measured by the PLQ?
6. Do differences exist among teachers from schools classified as “distinguished” and teachers from schools classified as “needs improvement” in their perceptions of the middle school principals as instructional leaders as measured by the PLQ?
7. Do differences exist among teachers from schools classified as “distinguished” and teachers from schools classified as “needs improvement” in their perceptions of middle schools principals as instructional leaders based on gender, age, years of experience and educational level as measured by the PLQ?

### **Need for the Study**

A method for determining how teachers perceive the role of principals was to conduct assessments based on teachers’ perceptions and use the results to develop professional development plans for principals and to also identify areas of strengths and weaknesses (Lovette & Watts, 2002). The findings from this research also provided information on how teachers perceived the role of principals as instructional leaders and how such perceptions reflected their teaching responsibilities. In addition, the findings also provided data that can be used by principals to enhance their instructional leadership style through the use of feedback provided by teachers who participated in this study. Teachers were given an opportunity to communicate their perceptions of the roles of principals as instructional leaders, which may foster principal and teacher cooperation. Assessing teachers’ perceptions of principals’ leadership roles allowed principals an opportunity to evaluate their leadership characteristics to determine whether they were

exhibiting the ones teachers perceived necessary to create a school climate conducive to improving student achievement. This study also expanded existing literature concerning teachers' perceptions of middle school leadership.

### **Delimitations**

This study consisted of the following delimitations:

1. Participants included teachers and principals of five middle schools: two classified as “distinguished” and three classified as “needs improvement.”
2. Data were collected from January 2006 through February 2006.
3. A survey was the only method used to collect data.

### **Limitations**

This study consisted of the following limitations:

1. The findings from this study were generalized to teachers of “distinguished” (high performing) and “needs improvement” (low performing) middle schools in an urban Metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia school district.
2. The findings were limited in terms of the honesty and thoroughness of the respondents in completing the survey.
3. The findings were limited by the validity and reliability of the questionnaire.

## Definition of Terms

The following definitions were listed below to assist the reader in clarifying the meaning of the terms used in this study:

1. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) – a school must ensure that 95% of students who have been enrolled for a full academic year participate in state-mandated test in reading / English Language Arts and mathematics and meet annual measureable objectives (United State Department of Education, 2008)
2. Accountability – the responsibility of educators to help improve the academic achievement of all students (United States Department of Education, 2005)
3. Adequate School – must have at least 95% participation or above on the Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) in reading / English Language Arts and mathematics and meet or exceed state’s Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) by scoring proficient or advanced in the same subject for two or more consecutive years. Same subject is defined as two years of making reading/English Language Arts by participation or academic performance or two years of making mathematics by participation or academic performance (Georgia Department of Education, 2005)
4. Assessment – tools used to help students understand basic skills, think critically, analyze, and make inferences for the purpose of enhancing new knowledge and abilities (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2005)
5. Distinguished School – must have at least 95% participation or above on the CRCT in reading / English Language Arts and mathematics and meet or exceed state’s AMO by scoring proficient or advanced in the same subject for three or

more consecutive years. Same subject is defined as three years of making Reading/English Language Arts by participation or academic performance or three years of making mathematics by participation or academic performance (Georgia Department of Education, 2005)

6. Elementary and Secondary Education Act – reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965; aim to improve the performance of America’s primary and secondary schools, as well as providing parents more flexibility in choosing which schools their children will attend (Wikipedia, 2006)
7. Instructional Leader - action undertaken with the intention of developing a productive and satisfying work environment for teachers and desirable learning conditions and outcomes for children (Greenfield, 1987)
8. Metropolitan Atlanta – includes 17 cities surrounding Atlanta, Georgia (Wikipedia, 2005)
9. Needs Improvement School – did not have at least 95% participation or above on selected state assessments in reading / English Language Arts and mathematics and / or did not meet or exceed state’s AMO by scoring proficient or advanced on selected state assessments in the same subject for two or more consecutive years. Same subject is defined as two years of making Reading/English Language Arts by participation or academic performance or two years of making mathematics by participation or academic performance (Georgia Department of Education, 2005)
10. Perception - insight achieved by understanding (The American Heritage Dictionary, 2006)

11. Standardized Test – are exams designed to objectively measure the academic aptitude of students from varying social backgrounds and with different educational experiences (Encarta Encyclopedia, 2005)
12. Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) – a series of state-mandated achievement tests for students in grades 1 through 8 to measure how well the students have learned the knowledge and skills outlined by the state curriculum for their grade level (Georgia Department of Education, 2006)

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Introduction**

Leadership is defined as the relationship between an individual and a group built around some common interest wherein the group behaves in a manner directed or determined by the leader. Thus, the leader becomes the interpreter of the interests and objectives of the group. The group then recognizes and accepts the interpreter as its spokesperson (Aquino, 1985). School leadership evolves as administrators and teachers collaborate, support each other's growth, and redefine their systemic roles as professionals (Hoerr, 1996). School leadership does not involve an individual and well-defined relationship role but organizational capacity and maintaining social legitimacy. Therefore, school leaders should acquire the resources necessary to provide quality-learning opportunities, not only for students but for teachers as well (Ogawa & Bossert, 2000).

The role of school leadership has broadened from performing customary administrative and managerial duties – such as budget, oversight, operations and discipline – to include emphasis on other responsibilities such as curriculum development, data analysis and instructional leadership (United States Department of Education, 2005). Among factors that contribute to the changing role are instructional responsibilities. School administrators are now more accountable for the academic



performance of all their students. Even administrative performances are based on the academic achievement of students. School leaders are expected to know the most effective techniques for improving classroom instructional practices to increase student performance (Anthes, 2002).

School leaders are expected to initiate structure that reflects the extent to which the leader attempts to establish effective working relationships and set attainable goals. Responsibilities include emphasizing schedules and specific work assignments, initiating open lines of communication, and ensuring that followers are working to capacity (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 1991). In addition, they are expected to initiate consideration that reflects the extent to which the leader maintains job relationships that are characterized by mutual trust, respect for subordinates, and regard for their feelings. They also practice active listening and are approachable (Burns, 1978).

School leaders need to express idealism and practicality. An idealist understands the goal and is willing to provide solutions. Victory is attained by hard work and support for teachers. Educational leaders have the ability to improve teaching and learning and take into consideration the usefulness of schools and education. Although educational leaders are challenged with a difficult task, they must establish a learning environment that will promote democracy, equity, justice and human dignity (Bass, 1985).

School leaders are change agents who get respect from followers by being willing to try new things. They must lead by example by modeling the behavior they want to see in others, as well as, adhere to the rules of the organization. They must not be afraid to reprimand subordinates for inadequate performance. For example, overlooking unacceptable behavior is not in the best interest of the organization and will not foster

change. Therefore, school leaders must listen to suggestions and complaints from subordinates in order to stay abreast of what is happening and assist in making decisions that will benefit the most people and the organization at the same time (Timberlake, 2008).

In this chapter a review of pertinent literature identified and discussed characteristics of instructional leadership in middle schools. The purpose of this study was to examine teachers' perceptions of the roles of principals as leaders who could provide leadership necessary for school improvement in both "distinguished" (high performing) and "needs improvement" (low performing) middle schools in an urban Metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia school district. Analysis included identifying instructional leadership characteristics as perceived by teachers that could have an impact on school improvement. This chapter also explored the historical perspective of educational leadership, research regarding effective middle school leadership, leadership styles and No Child Left Behind.

### **Historical Perspective**

During the industrial age, many principals used authoritative administrative processes and procedures to maintain organizational stability and to supervise work of others (Cuban, 1988). The system of public education was highly centralized until the early 1970s. Few decisions could be made at the school level. There was no selection of principals or teachers at the local level. There was little involvement of the community in local decision-making. No funds of any kind were decentralized from system to school and any cash at the school level was raised locally by voluntary effort. School design

was standard with rapid growth in the number of schools and students as the effects of immigration and a rising birth rate after World War II took effect. The principal made few decisions of substance. Retention rates to the end of secondary schooling were low. Classes were large and a relatively high proportion of teachers lacked adequate training (Beck & Murphy, 1994). As a result, the principals' role had become even more complex as they operated as supervisors and chief financial managers of additional resources as a result of the Elementary and Secondary School Act, designed by Commissioner of Education Francis Keppel on April 9, 1965. Title I allocated large resources to assist principals and school districts in providing better educational services and meeting the needs of educationally deprived children (Johnson, 1966).

Before the 1980's principals were judged by their ability to manage school operations with businesslike efficiency. Many decisions formerly made centrally were decentralized with a parallel increase in decision-making for teachers and parents. National and state governments made funds available for particular purposes and these were steadily decentralized for local decision-making (Caldwell, 1998).

On August 26, 1981, the National Commission on Excellence in Education examined the quality of education in the United States and presented a report to the nation in April 1983. The purpose was to define the problem afflicting American education and to provide solutions. The report, *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Educational Excellence, 1983), indicated that our nation was indeed at risk. It specifically recommended strong leadership as a means for school improvement by stating that principals must play a crucial role in developing school and community support. In addition, the commission stressed the distinction between leadership skills

involving persuasion, setting goals, developing community consensus, and managerial and supervisory skills. By the mid-1980s, the former zoning of students to local attendance boundaries was abandoned. Enrollment started to decline in some communities and new funding mechanisms were created so that the money followed the student as budgets were decentralized (Brass, 1990).

Since then, educational leaders have begun to focus more on teaching and learning, professional development, data-driven decision making and accountability. The ideal principal in the 1980's was a leader who focused on four key elements of reform. First, principals were responsible for defining the mission of the school and setting school goals. Secondly, principals managed coordinating the curriculum, promoting quality instruction, conducting clinical supervision and teacher evaluation and appraisal, aligning instructional materials with curriculum goals, allocating and protecting instructional time, and monitoring student progress. Thirdly, principals promoted an academic learning climate by establishing high expectations and standards for student behavior and for traditionally defined academic achievement, maintaining high visibility, and providing incentives for teachers and students. Finally, principals developed a strong culture at the school that included a safe and orderly work environment, opportunities for meaningful student involvement, strong staff collaboration and cohesion, additional outside resources in support of the school goals, and stronger links between the home and the school (Murphy & Shipman, 1999).

For most of the twentieth century, successful principals supervised teachers, managed the school, and attended to public relations (Murphy, 1994). Mitchell & Taylor (1992) argue that the problem is that principals have tended to think of leadership as a

capacity to take charge and get things done. This view keeps principals from focusing on the importance of teamwork and comprehensive school improvement. Although the environment of principals is consistently changing, they are charged with meeting the diverse needs of students. Yet, they are required to lead their schools by showing meaningful improvements faster and with fewer resources available. They are also expected to improve the quality of teachers, maintain safe schools, as well as, turn staff, parent groups, and business partners into communities of learners (Educational Research Service, 2002).

The role of principals has undergone major shifts and has become more complex during the last quarter of the twentieth century. New requirements have focused on relationships, resources and results (Jackson & Davis, 2000). The Improving America's Schools Act of 1994, enacted on October 20, 1994, reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) with a focus on changing principals' roles in education by encouraging comprehensive systemic school reform, upgrading instructional and professional development to align with high standards, strengthening accountability, and promoting the coordination of resources to improve education for all children (U.S. Department of Education, 1997).

Sashkin and Rosenback (1993) describe the new role of the principal as a visionary who makes decisions based on feedback from others. Fullan (1992) concurs that good principals do not create a vision independently and impose it on people; they develop a collaborative culture in which participants build vision together. Leadership is a special form of power that enables leaders to transform others. From this perspective, the school leaders work with others to maximize the positive features of school climate

and educational practices. According to Fullan (1999), five essential components characterize effective leaders in a knowledge-based society: moral purpose, an understanding of the change process, the ability to improve relationships, acquire knowledge and sharing, and team building.

Changes in society, the economy, and the political arena have compelled educational leaders to reconceptualize the principal's role. Principals are asked to develop a vision of learning, develop a school culture and instructional program conducive to learning, manage the school, collaborate with community members, promote student learning by acting in an ethical manner, and respond to the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context (Murphy & Shipman, 1999). Murphy's (1994) ideal organizational diagram has principals leading from the center rather than the top; enabling and supporting teacher success; managing a constellation of change efforts; and extending the school community. According to Beck and Murphy (1994), principals are commonly viewed as the key actors in school-level reform to an audience of multiple constituencies who are ever more critical of their decisions. Principals are held accountable not only by superintendents but school boards, staff members, parents, the media, and community members. They are given big responsibilities to strike a vision, lead from the center, and build community of learners.

Principals are responsible for finding highly qualified teachers and keeping them. This requires detecting and eliminating ineffective teachers and programs that have not proven effective. Building strong relationships among faculty is another important role of principals. While principals encourage faculty to work together in creating strategies

to improve student achievement, they must also support teachers as they pursue education for higher learning (Beck & Murphy, 1994).

According to Lambert (1998), principals spend time in their schools developing instructional leadership capacity in others. By distributing responsibilities for getting the work done among teachers and staff members, they plainly acknowledge that every member of the school community has the potential and right to work as a leader. Blasé and Kirby (1992) agreed that leadership resides with the whole school community rather than solely with those who hold positions of authority. This type of collaboration promotes human behaviors that encourage professional learning communities.

Principals are faced with an academic mission. They must adhere to standards set for student achievement, and be held accountable for results (De Pree, 1989). According to Corderio (1994), the best of principals are generalists who, through collaboration, distribute and coordinate leadership opportunities that focus on curriculum, instruction and assessment. On the other hand, Leithwood (1994) described the role of principal as chiefly being a problem-solver because building administrators are continually required to solve problems. Greenfield (1987) agrees that in the role of problem-solver, the principal must be a good communicator and adept at interpersonal relations.

School restructuring creates a new role for principals in this twenty-first century (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). Now more than ever, principals are being held responsible for bringing about change and improvement. They are under growing pressure to increase achievement across the board, narrow the test-score gap between disadvantaged and advantaged students and make sure all teachers are of high quality (Anthes, 2002).

Prior to being instructional leaders, principals were expected to perform their duties as bureaucratic executives and humanistic facilitators (Beck & Murphy 1994). Today, as instructional leaders, principals are characterized as learning leaders. They participate in regular, collaborative, professional learning experiences to improve teaching and learning. They work with teachers in adult learning activities, make school visits and examine students' work. They recognize their own need to learn more about issues involving curriculum, instruction, and assessment (Lambert, 2002).

### **Effective Middle School Leadership**

“The job of middle school principal is one of the most crucial in the education system” (McEwen, Carlisle, Knipe & Neil, 2002, p. 158). The key person in the life of an effective and growing middle school is the principal, whose role now requires an understanding and application of strategies that enable each school to develop and accomplish its unique mission. According to Jackson and Davis (2000), “There is no single individual more important to initiating and sustaining improvement in middle grades school students' performance than the school principal” (p.12). A middle school principal is no longer a single leader controlling all aspects of the management of the school; instead the principal must function as an agent of change ensuring that all aspects going into a well functioning school community is in place and working (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 2000). There are six essential imperatives that, when practiced by middle school principals, lead to effective and long-lasting change:

1. eliciting the school's values, beliefs, and mission;
2. developing best practice knowledge and commitment;



3. shaping a collaborative vision and goals for the school;
4. collecting analyzing and interpreting a wide variety of school data;
5. developing a plan to accomplish school goals;
6. enabling and monitoring the school's action plans (Sahgal & Pathak, 2007, p. 265).

In addition, the principal is one who strives to articulate the school's mission, maintain a safe learning environment and ensure instructional improvements (Clark & Clark, 2001).

According to the National Association of Elementary School Principals (2001), the way middle schools are being operated has changed. There is no need for middle school principals to act as administrators and managers. They must perform their duties as committed change agents with an interest in improving instruction and student achievement. Team building and shared decision-making is also essential in creating and achieving learning goals. The National Association of Elementary School Principals (2001) developed six characteristics that middle school principals should possess in order to be considered effective. Principals should:

1. make student achievement and teacher learning a priority;
2. expect all students to develop both academically and socially;
3. ensure teachers implement standards that will ensure student achievement;
4. create and maintain an environment conducive to learning and setting school goals;
5. initiate community support to create shared responsibility for student and school success; and

6. utilize data as diagnostic tools to assess, identify and apply instructional improvement.

Strong leadership is essential in order for middle school reform to be effective and sustained. The leader is one of the most important members in the school. Exemplary schools have an effective leader who sets the tone for the rest of the school and engages all stakeholders – teachers, students, parents and other staff – in school-wide efforts to improve student learning (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2002). High achieving middle schools have principals who boldly lead the academic program, set goals, examine curriculum, evaluate teachers and assess results (De Pree, 1989). In order to meet the rigorous demands of reform movements, middle school principals must adapt to new roles that require inspiring others and global visionary thinking. They must exhibit characteristics that motivate teachers, students, and parents to higher levels of involvement and ultimately improved student achievement. Effective leadership skills are necessary to meet demands for greater accountability and for handling potential and existing problems with efficacy, intelligence and diplomacy (Lovette, & Watts, 2002).

Middle school principals must focus on implementing particular qualities to achieve their goals. First, they are responsible for ensuring that all students are engaged in a relevant and rigorous curriculum environment that fosters respectful and supportive relationships among students, faculty, families, and the community. This includes hiring teachers and administrators who are specifically prepared and committed to teaching middle school students ages 10 – 14. To ensure effective instruction takes place, they must ensure faculty and staff are highly qualified to perform their duties and responsibilities through on-going professional development. Secondly, they are

responsible for utilizing accountability and evaluation strategies that promote quality student learning and instructional practices. Therefore, learning decisions based on data that go beyond single test results is essential. Lastly, they are responsible for supporting the work of the schools. Thus, they must build connections between the community and school that expand and enhance the educational opportunities of all students (Romano & Georgiady, 1994).

While every stakeholder plays an important role in the implementation process, the middle school principal plays a particularly important role. Many middle school principals must reexamine how they manage their time and resources so they can focus on the priorities of student learning and informed curriculum, instruction, and assessment in their schools. By creating a school culture that embraces the characteristics of effective middle schools, principals signify a renewed commitment to a learning community where the education and well-being of every student and faculty member is a top priority (Leech, Donald, & Fulton, 2002).

In a study conducted by Williams (2000), the Audit of Principal Effectiveness (AEP) was used to assess and compare teachers' perceptions of principals' effectiveness in middle schools. The study compared principals from schools that were nominated for the National Secondary Recognition Program to principals from randomly selected schools that were not nominated. Teachers' perceptions were used to identify differences in the performance of principals selected from two types of schools. The results of this study indicated that principals in the schools nominated for Recognition Program, provided better leadership in organizational development and also in several other areas.

As educators continue to restructure schools to better meet the needs of our ever-changing society, the middle school principal's effective leadership practice becomes paramount. Kouzes and Posner (1995) identified five effective middle school leadership practices that elicit peak performance from schools. The five practices are:

1. challenging the process – this leadership practice encompasses constantly searching for opportunities to change the status quo by principals who act as risk takers in seeking new ways to improve schools
2. inspiring a shared vision – this leadership practice encompasses demonstrating passion for leadership and believing in making a difference as a leader who inspire others with their future visions and dreams
3. enabling others to act – this leadership practice encompasses facilitating collaboration and building inspired teams by actively involving others and promoting team building through mutual respect and trust
4. modeling the way – this leadership practice encompasses leading through personal example and guiding principles
5. encouraging the heart – this leadership practice encompasses celebrating school successes and promoting heroic feelings in others.

Each of the aforementioned practices is embedded within the relationship between leaders and followers and will become the focus of which the following study which examined middle and high school principal behaviors (Kouzes and Posner, 1995).

Leech et. al. (2002), conducted a study of principals in a large urban school district to examine the differences in middle and high and high school teachers' perceptions of the leadership practices of educational leaders. The sample consisted of

242 participants from 12 middle schools and 404 participants from 14 high schools. Each participant was administered Kouzes and Posner's Leadership Practices Inventory, which identified teachers' perceptions of their principals and leadership practices in each of five dimensions: challenging the process; inspiring a shared vision; enabling others to act; modeling the way; and encouraging the heart.

Using a 95 % level of confidence, no significant differences were identified between the mean scores among responses of middle and high school teachers for any of the five practices. Middle school and high school teachers reported similar perceptions of their principals' leadership practices. Additional analysis indicated that both middle school and high school principals most often exhibited the practices of enabling others to act and modeling the way and least often demonstrated the behavior of encouraging the heart (Leech, et. al., 2002).

Over 43% of middle school and 44% of high school participants reported that their principals engaged in enabling others to act usually to almost always. Forty percent of middle school and 45% of high school teachers reported that principals demonstrated the practice of modeling the way usually to almost always. Over 30% of middle and high school teachers perceived that their principals occasionally to almost never practiced encouraging the heart. The results revealed that effective principals promoted positive interactions between school staff, students, and parents (Leech, et. al., 2002).

Middle schools are perceived as communities that believe the foundation for school reform involves developing meaningful personal relationships and shared values. In becoming purposeful communities, middle schools provide the structure necessary to develop a culture of empowerment, collegiality, and transformation. The leadership of

the middle school community depends on others to accomplish shared visions and goals (Romono & Georgiady, 1994). According to Sergiovanni (1992) middle school leadership involves sound management, expert knowledge about matters of education and schooling and attention of others on matters of importance to the school. The principals possess the ability to share their ideas with others in a way that invite them to reflect, inquire, and better understand their own thoughts about the issues at hand. As a result, the principals' ideas may help others come together in shared consensus.

In summarizing research on what principals in successful middle schools do, Cotton (2003) describes 26 principal behaviors of middle school principals that contribute to student achievement in five categories. The first is establishing a clear focus on student learning which includes having a vision, clear learning goals, and high expectations for learning for all students. The second is interactions and relationships which include behaviors such as communication and interaction, emotional and interpersonal support, visibility and accessibility, and parent and community outreach and involvement. The third is school culture which includes such behaviors as shared leadership and decision making, collaboration, support of risk taking, and continuous improvement. The fourth is instruction, which includes such behaviors as discussing instructional issues, observing classrooms and giving feedback, supporting teacher autonomy, and protecting instructional time. The fifth and final category is accountability, which includes monitoring progress and using student progress data for program improvement.

## **Leadership Styles**

Leadership styles come in many forms. There are no certain rules that determine how leaders become leaders or how they influence others. However, there are some things about leaders that may better help us understand leadership. First, leadership is situational and varies with individuals and events. The situation usually assists in creating the leader. Secondly, there is no single way to prepare leaders. Leaders are born with leadership characteristics that contribute to a variety of styles. Thirdly, a leader must have followers. The followers attain their goals of the group through the help of the leader. The leader acts as their guide. Lastly, leadership has ethical implications. Even if doing what is right hurt others, leaders must always consider the moral validity of what is done or not done (Timberlake, 2008).

Leadership style is determined by the way principals present themselves to create a school climate that is characterized by staff productivity, student productivity, and creative thought (Ubben & Hughes, 1987). Consequently, teachers' perceptions of the principal's qualities and behaviors are a result of how they feel about the organization. A particular leadership style may either foster or hinder teacher commitment (Eblen, 1987).

### ***Instructional Leadership***

The position of instructional leaders is one of the most critical, demanding, challenging, stressful, and time-consuming in the educational profession. Unfortunately, there are still very few principals who are described as instructional leaders (Lezotte, 1994). Successful schools are equipped with principals who exhibit instructional leadership characteristics (Speck, 1999). More specifically, effective principals are those

able to provide instructional leadership for schools. Instructional leadership involves principals who focus on behaviors and activities that improve and enhance the school's environment and student achievement. They place the needs of learners at the center of all school activities (Daresh & Plako, 1993).

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (2001) considered instructional leadership as learning communities. One role of the instructional leaders is to make student and teacher learning a priority. This can be achieved by setting high expectation for performance. Also, principals must monitor teachers to ensure implementation of content and instruction to standards. After all, creating a culture of continuous learning for teachers and encouraging community support for school success is paramount. According to (Spillane, Richard & Diamond, 2000), these goals reflect an effective leadership perspective based on an analysis of the current demands being placed on schools. Unfortunately, little is known about how or how much principals actually carry out these functions on a daily basis.

Instructional leaders set high academic expectations, review lesson plans, supervise classroom instruction, and monitor curriculum (King, 2002.) Sergiovanni and Moore (1989) concur that instructional leadership refers to the coordination, supervision, and evaluation, of curriculum and instruction within an academic discipline. According to Peterson (1987), instructional leaders regularly observe teachers and provide feedback. They also monitor student progress by reviewing tests with teachers, work with teachers to build an instructional program, promote staff development, communicate to teachers their responsibilities for student achievement, and act as an instructional facilitator by regularly discussing matters of instruction with individual teachers.



Instructional leaders enable teachers, parents, and community members to assume leadership and decision-making roles to promote improved curriculum, instruction, and assessment (Speck, 1999). Teachers are more effective when the principal includes them in the decision making process. Thus, students have higher levels of achievement when the principal uses leadership abilities to organize the school building to create a positive climate and monitor school instruction (Donaldson & Marnik, 1995). Principals must have effective communication with the community, demand more of their students and have the school rank well in high-stakes testing (Burndrett, 2002). The principal also serves as a role model and establishes an atmosphere in which all members of the school's organization work to improve processes and outcomes (Goldring & Rallis, 1993). Instructional leadership emanates from the top, embracing and encouraging all those who participate at the lower levels (Cuban, 1988)

Heck and Marcoulides (1993) studied instructional leadership and its effect on school achievement. Using questionnaires, they measured 22 strategic behavioral interactions between principals and teachers. Those behaviors were based on the principal's instructional leadership role in governing the school, developing school climate and organizing and monitoring school instruction, which are important predictors of academic achievement. The results revealed that teachers' perceptions on the way that principals govern the school was strongly related to the principals' roles in building a productive school climate. Krug (1992) sets forth the following activities that an effective instructional leader should engage in:

1. Defining a Mission – This includes carefully communicating to all stakeholders a clearly stated purpose. A clear sense of purpose is especially important in times of structural change and crisis.
2. Managing Curriculum and Instruction\_ - Since the primary service that schools offer is instruction, it is imperative that principals have at least an awareness of all subject areas and the requirements of each. They should be able to provide information and direction to teachers regarding instructional methods, and they should be actively involved in and supportive of curriculum development.
3. Supervising Teaching – The supervisory role of the principal refers less to clinical supervision than it does to a proactive approach to staff development. The goal is to develop within each teacher the qualities to improve learning. In addition, an effective instructional leader provides opportunity for teachers to continue their professional development both on and off the school site.
4. Monitoring Student Progress – An effective instructional leader is familiar with a variety of ways in which student progress can be assessed and require that these assessments be done on a regular basis. The principal is able to clarify the meaning of outcomes, as well as, review the results and use them to assist teachers, students, and parents in developing strategies for improving performance. Although principals may not be able to interpret every assessment given, it is their responsibility to ensure that

testing, interpretation, and productive responses are expected and that the process is monitored.

5. Promoting Instructional Climate – This involves creating a school atmosphere that values learning and supports achievement. The principal is responsible for creating an atmosphere of educational excitement at all levels and for channeling the energies of students and teachers in productive ways (p. 437).

According to Northern and Bailey (1991), instructional leadership embodies professional competencies, which include establishing a vision. As a visionary leader, one must understand the dynamics of the school and be willing to make and adapt to necessary changes. In successfully articulating and implementing the changes, the leader is required to present such changes in a way that is easily understood. The leader should discern when to implement changes as well as how to address concerns during the transition period. The goal is to create a positive school climate while empowering others to excel through innovative ways.

Jack McCurdy (1983) states that the effective principal implements instructional leadership by concentrating on six areas: people, instructional support, provision of adequate resources, quality control, coordination of activities in the school and problem solving. The success of implementing instructional program is dependent upon all who engage in the process, but the ultimate responsibility lies with the principal. The effort of instructional leadership is team-driven (Hallinger, 1992). The instructional leaders facilitate the activities of myriad groups and subgroups, and they all engage in decision-

making (Corderio, 1994). The principal is the instructional leader dedicated to improving student achievement (Tyler, 1989).

Clark (1995) contends that instructional leaders are responsible for training, practice, and reflection, which include both developments in instructional methods and curriculum and in working productively. According to Krug (1992), the first step in implementing effective instructional leadership is to define the mission of the school and to communicate it effectively to the staff, students, parents, and community. As an instructional leader, the principal must provide and implement staff development opportunities to ensure that all educators are prepared especially those who do not engage in continuing education. According to Colclough (2007), staff development opportunities are better if taken place outside of the school as this may prevent teachers from sharing ideas and thoughts learned.

According to Stephens (1990), the principal's role in staff development includes being committed to providing meaningful and timely in-service training for the staff, staying abreast of current issues and trends, and actively seeking funding to support staff development. In addition, principals must actively involve teachers in planning in-service training programs according to the needs of teachers and school. The key is to build relationships that result in collegiality and trust by communicating often and effectively with staff, parents, and community. Although staff development is essential in fulfilling the role of instructional leaders, Hallinger (1992) argues that responsible decision-making requires background knowledge that can be partially provided by staff development.

Instructional leaders know what works in school and how to succeed in having students learn. Instructional leadership involves increasing the quality of teaching, expanding problem solving skills and student based learning. These leaders are not afraid to evaluate the instruction within the building and give feedback that encourages growth and improvement on the part of both the teachers and students. There are three major forces that shape and describe a school: the public, the staff, and students. An effective instructional leader is a team of teachers, students, and parents working together to improve instructional quality (Findley & Findley, 1992).

### ***Transformational Leadership***

Rost (1993) notes that the change in leadership has gone from an industrial model of management to a more collaborative model. Sashkin and Rosenback (1993) define this shift as going from instructional leadership to transformational leadership. This new transformational leadership paradigm has led to many innovative and effective approaches in leadership. Such changes have placed new demands on school principals to provide leadership within a complex system that provides self-determination within a centrally determined framework. The principal must embrace an active leadership role that promotes and fosters ongoing change as a normal aspect of school life (Reynolds, 1992). In addition, principals accomplish their role of leadership by shaping contextual factors that create organizational conditions necessary for school change (Fullan, 2002).

Timberlake (2008) defines transformational leadership style as one that encourages others to participate in a wide variety of personal development programs. Those involved are given power and responsibility to foster positive change within their

own area of influence. Such leaders embrace those who are different and support different viewpoints. They usually exhibit four types of behaviors: 1) charisma, 2) inspirational, 3) intellectual stimulation, and 4) individual consideration.

Bass (1985) notes that this type of leadership, which includes a combination of charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration is similar to the prototype of leadership that people have in mind when they describe their ideal leader. According to Timberlake (2008), charisma means possessing a rare personal quality attributed to leaders who arouse fervent popular devotion and enthusiasm. It may also be described as a personal magnetism or charm. This asserts that a leader who displays charisma would more than likely influence others in a positive manner. They also would be skilled at intellectually stimulating others and possess a high degree of empathy for others and their belongings.

Transformational leadership provides a way to understand the leadership style of principals (Sarason, 1996). Sashkin and Rosenback (1993) state that transformational leadership is based on the notion of transforming and empowering where leaders transform followers by constructing organizational contexts that allow them to exercise and expand their own capabilities. Bass (1985) proposes that transformational leadership can be identified by distinct behavioral constructs- idealized influence (attributes), idealized influence (behavior), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. Although most leaders display transformational leadership in varying degrees, transformational leadership will occur when the leader of the school becomes committed and puts forth extra effort required for change.

The important point about transformational leadership is that it effectively converts followers into leaders by asking them to transcend their own self-interests for the good of the organization. According to Burns (1978), transformational leadership results when persons with certain motives mobilize resources in a way that arouses and satisfies the motives of followers. Transformational leadership focuses on high-order psychological needs and later on moral questions involving goodness, duty, and obligation. De Pree (1989) believes that transformational leadership provides a way to understand the leadership style of principals.

Principals must become transformational change agents who are experts at teaching and learning and in the shaping of the organization through collaborative leadership and decision-making. Exemplary principals who develop and maintain high-quality relationships with the school and community positively impact all aspects of school culture, structure, and instructional programs (Rost, 1993). Transformational leaders focus on developing a collaborative culture in the organization. To achieve this culture, transformational leaders guide the thinking and feeling of the staff (Mitchell & Taylor, 1992) and influence staff decisions (Leithwood, 1992). On the other hand, Mitchell and Taylor (1992) argue that transformational leadership only works when both leaders and followers understand and agree about the important tasks to be performed. Bass (1985) develops and presents a formal theory of transformational leadership including models and measurements of its factors of leadership behavior.

Transformational leaders attempt and succeed in raising colleagues, subordinates, followers, clients, or constituencies to a greater awareness about the issues of consequence. This heightening of awareness requires a leader with vision, self

confidence, and inner strength to argue successfully for what he sees is right or good, not for what is popular or acceptable (p. 17).

According to Bass & Avolio (1997), transformational leadership is seen when leaders stimulate interest among colleagues and followers to view their work from new perspectives. As a result, the mission and vision of the organization is established and understood by the group. Success takes place when leaders enhance their colleagues' and followers' level of ability and potential and motivate them to look beyond their own interest toward those that will benefit the group.

Success continues on the basis of four behaviors of transformational leaders. First, the leader exhibits idealized influence, which involves being a role model. The leader is admired, respected, and trusted. Followers identify with the leader and want to emulate him. This is due to the leader's ability to consider the needs of others over his own personal needs. The leader shares risks with followers and is consistent rather than arbitrary. His followers can depend on him to demonstrate justice and fairness and maintain high standards of ethical and moral conduct. Secondly, the leader exhibits inspirational motivation, which involves behaving in ways that motivate and inspire those around him by providing meaning and challenge to his followers' work. The leader encourages team spirit and is enthusiastic and optimistic about the thoughts and ideas of others. Expectations are clearly described and communicated to followers as a mean to demonstrate commitment to goals and shared vision (Bass & Avolio, 1997). Next, the leader exhibits intellectual stimulation, which involves the leader stimulating his followers' effort to be innovative and creative by questioning assumptions, reframing problems, and approaching old situations in new ways. There is no public criticism of



individual members' mistakes and creativity is encouraged. New ideas and creative problem solutions are solicited from followers, who are included in the process of addressing problems and finding solutions. Followers are encouraged to try new approaches, and their ideas are not criticized because they differ from the leader's ideas. Lastly, the leader exhibits individualized consideration, which involves paying special attention to each individual's needs for achievement and growth by acting as coach or mentor (Bass & Avolio, 1997).

Transformation leaders share decision-making, collaborate with stakeholders, and find creative ways to involve the community in shaping a vision for the school. In shaping this shared vision, however, they remain ultimately accountable for the success of any plans they make. Society depends on them to ensure learning for every pupil in an increasingly diverse student population. At the same time, they are responsible for incorporating new technology throughout their schools and fostering the professional growth of faculty and staff members (Beck & Murphy, 1994).

Transformational leaders remain aware of their own behavior because it can affect an educational environment in both a positive and negative way. For example, principals are unlikely to produce desired effects if efforts to improve student test scores are implemented in ways that cause morale to fall and resentment among students and staff. Even an atmosphere of distrust due to top-down management practices can cause division and ill feelings between administration and teacher as well as teacher and students. Fault-finding supervision that isolates and splinters the teaching staff definitely yields chaos and confusion. On the other hand, efforts to improve the quality of relationships among staff and students that neglect the instrumental goals of student learning and

achievement are equally unlikely to produce effective schools (Donaldson & Maunik, 1995).

Transformational leaders need not focus only on maintaining high standards, but providing more comprehensive leadership and having a deeper and more lasting influence on organizations (Fullan, 1992). Transformational leaders attend to the learning of all members of the educational community. Together, they explore current practice, beliefs, and assumptions that serve as a basis for posing inquiry questions. Such questions are addressed in a group setting through share-decision making. This journey results in new approaches to student and adult learning, internal school accountability and shared responsibility, and a commitment to the decisions made for school improvement (Lambert, 2002).

Although principals do not have a monopoly on leadership, they do have a position of privilege in terms of status, power and mechanisms readily available to them that facilitate school improvement. The significance of the principal in shaping a school and bringing about change has been acknowledged, but there is a need for the nature of the role to be clarified (Reynolds, 1992). To meet the expectations of these new paradigms, schools need transformational leaders (Leithwood, 1994).

Transformational leadership is well suited to the challenges that school reform brings. It has the potential for building high levels of commitment and fostering growth in the capacities teachers must develop to perform their duties and responsibilities (Leithwood, 1996). The support offered by the leader usually raises the followers' level of confidence while encouraging them to develop and perform beyond expectations (Sergiovanni, 1992).

### *Transactional Leadership*

In contrast, transactional leadership seeks to influence others by exchanging work for wages. Unfortunately, it does not encourage the need for meaningful work nor encourage creativity. Transactional leadership is based in contingency, in that reward or punishment is contingent upon performance. Transactional leaders often reward their subordinates for succeeding and punish them for failing. In other words, performance determines the outcome (ChangingMinds, 2007). Transactional leadership seeks to motivate followers by appealing to their own self-interest. Its principles are to motivate by the encompassing the following four types of behavior:

- Contingent Reward – To influence behavior, the leader clarifies the work needed to be accomplished. The leader uses rewards or incentives to achieve results when expectations are met.
- Passive Management by Exception - To influence behavior, the leader uses correction or punishment as a response to unacceptable performance or deviation from the accepted standards.
- Active Management by Exception - To influence behavior, the leader actively monitors the work performed and uses corrective methods to ensure the work is completed to meet accepted standards.
- Laissez-Faire Leadership – The leader is indifferent and has a “hands-off” approach toward the workers and their performance. This leader ignores the needs of others, does not respond to problems or does not monitor performance (WeLead, 2003).

### ***Win-Win Leadership***

In the future it will be essential that principals implement a win-win leadership style. This style of leadership prepares students and all stakeholders involved to perform at their maximum potential. Principals must be involved in the design of curriculum and instruction. In addition, principals are required to conduct assessments of teachers and provide opportunities for teachers to improve their standards (Colclough, 2007).

A shared vision for school improvement is likely to develop if principals develop a win-win style of leadership. Teachers and staff will become confident in themselves and their abilities. Mutual trust and respect will develop as a result of support for the principal. Staff will be more willing to work together to make decisions that will enhance the overall culture and climate of the school (Colclough, 2007).

Each principal exhibits a unique leadership style and no one style has been proven perfect. However, all schools require a principal who is well organized and able to shape the school environment for the benefit of students. School improvement will take place at all levels when the principal possesses a positive and affirming attitude. After all, it is the role of the principal to lead his or her school into providing the best education possible (Colclough, 2007).

### **No Child Left Behind**

Schools today are constantly changing. There is increased pressure on public schools to provide an adequate education to a student body that is more racially, economically and developmentally diverse than in the past. As schools and school districts are subject to closer scrutiny by legislatures and the general public, the need for

effective school leaders is becoming more apparent. State policymakers are looking at ways to enhance the overall education improvement package by increasing the recruitment and retention of school leaders such as principals and superintendents (National Council of State Legislature, 2002).

On January 8, 2002 the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) signed by President George Bush caused the role of principals to become more challenging than ever. Since his first day in office, President Bush has supported education for all children with the idea of ensuring a quality education at all levels. As a result, President Bush has provided \$1.6 billion to the Education Department and \$340 million to other federal agencies. This investment has given principals and schools assistance in carrying out the requirements of NCLB for disadvantaged students (Paige, 2001). Lashway (2003) argued that although financial assistance is essential in carrying out the mandates of NCLB, the need for effective leadership is more important.

Since 2002 all schools have been held accountable for making adequate yearly progress (AYP) regardless of issues that may seem to have hampered their progress such as disability, race or ethnicity, limited English proficiency or economic status. The goal is to ensure that all students perform on a proficient or above level by the end of the 2014 school year. Performance is measured and assessed annually in three subject areas (math, reading, and science) in fifth, eighth, and twelfth grades (U. S. Department of Education, 2005). McKenzie (2005) argue that NCLB has failed adequate yearly progress. President Bush and his administration lack knowledge and understanding of the educational system and what works. In essence, NCLB causes chaos and confusion among administrators and teachers, which prevents them from effectively performing

their duties and responsibilities. Although the National Education Association (2008) supports the goal of NCLB, it believes that politicians and bureaucratic leaders ignored the recommendations of those directly involved such as teachers, education support professionals, and administrators.

The key mission of NCLB is to close the achievement gap in America's public schools. Thus, NCLB has the potential to make the American dream available for every single neighborhood across America. It does this in two ways: through high standards and accountability from the top, and through choice and flexibility from the bottom. It requires (beginning in school year 2005-06) annual testing in mathematics and reading or language arts in grades three through eight and once in high school, so that teachers have up-to-date data that can help to diagnose problems and identify solutions before any student falls through the cracks. Its principal innovation is to hold schools accountable for the success of all groups of students so that high average test scores will not mask serious achievement gaps (Hickok, 2004).

All schools are required to make AYP and show improvement each year and ensure all students are performing at the proficient level in spite of the challenges they may face. In retrospect, states across the nation are concerned about maintaining proficient status for all of their schools. Many feel that it is just a matter of time until their schools will be classified as failing. Consequently, when NCLB was signed into law, only nine states were adequately prepared to deal with the law's testing requirement. (Bracey, 2007).

As a result, the National Conference of State Legislatures (2005) suggests the following key recommendations to policy makers to improve the quality of education for all students and close the gaps in achievement that exist in schools today:

- Remove obstacles that stifle state innovations and undermine state programs that were proven to work before passage of the act. Federal waivers should be granted and publicized for innovative programs;
- Fully fund the act and provide states the financial flexibility to meet its goals. The federal government funds less than 8 % of the nation's education program, but the No Child Left Behind Act affects nearly all classroom activity. In addition, states ask for a Government Accountability Office review to determine the act's costs and whether it violates the Unfunded Mandate Reform Act;
- Remove the one-size-fits-all method that measures student performance and encourage more sophisticated and accurate systems that gauge the growth of individual students and not just groups of students. States believe the 100 % proficiency goal is not statistically achievable and that struggling schools need the opportunity to address problems before losing parts of their student populations;
- Recognize that some schools face special challenges, including adequately teaching students with disabilities and English language learners. The law also needs to recognize the differences among rural, suburban and urban schools.

School principals are charged with ensuring that AYP is met. They no longer are just required to shape their school's vision, but engage the community in the vision-shaping process.

It seems that principals of improving schools send out a two-part message. First, they will have a common vision of student learning and they will live up to it. Secondly, they will work together to determine what that vision should be and how it will change what they do (Lashway, 2003, p. 1). Engaging the community involves principals performing their duty to inform the community about NCLB and how it will affect their students and schools (Learning First Alliance, 2003).

In the high-stakes accountability environment, the principals must meet the needs of the faculty as well as visualize the future of the learning community by including all stakeholders in the testing process. Principals are expected to set realistic goals and negotiate for necessary resources. In addition, test data must be part of the overall school vision (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2005). According to (Heath, 2005), principals must redesign their schools, implement research-based curricula, ensure that teachers are trained in research-based instructional methods, and provide core reading knowledge to elementary teachers who did not get this training in college.

Principals of low-performing schools must implement research-based programs if they expect to receive federal funding (Beghetto, 2003). Low-performing schools are those, which fail to make AYP and consistently achieve according to NCLB legislation. go hand in hand with the achievement gap. Low performing also applies to schools in which even one group fails to make AYP. In 2002, approximately 8,625 U. S. Schools



were considered low-performing (National Association of State Boards of Education, 2002).

In reaction to these disappointing results, some have decided that there should be no federal involvement in education. Others suggest we merely add new programs into the old system. The priorities that follow are based on the fundamental notion that an enterprise works best when responsibility is placed closest to the most important activity of the enterprise, when those responsible are given greatest latitude and support, and when those responsible are held accountable for producing results. This education blueprint will do the following:

- **Increase Accountability for Student Performance:** States, districts and schools that improve achievement will be rewarded. On the other hand, failing schools be sanctioned. As a result, parents will know how well their child is learning, and that schools are held accountable for their effectiveness with annual state reading and math assessments in grades 3 - 8.
- **Focus on What Works:** Federal dollars will be spent on effective, research based programs and practices. Funds will be targeted to improve schools and enhance teacher quality.
- **Reduce Bureaucracy and Increase Flexibility:** Additional flexibility will be provided to states and school districts, and flexible funding will be increased at the local level.

- Empower Parents: Parents will have more information about the quality of their child's school. Students in persistently low-performing schools will be given a choice (The White House, 2004).

School districts are held responsible for informing the community through district report cards about state and school progress. Supplemental services such as free tutoring must be provided for schools that do not make AYP. Schools that do not make AYP are given five years to improve. According to NCLB, each state is responsible for developing and implementing a statewide accountability system that is effective in ensuring that all local educational agencies, public elementary schools and secondary schools make AYP. This accountability system includes student performance and participation on state-mandated assessment and school progress over time (United States Department of Education, 2005). On the contrary, McKenzie (2006) argues that the NCLB legislation will cause students to be neglected by holding schools that fail to achieve accountable for achieving AYP through rigorous testing standards.

To improve the quality of education, Learning First Alliance (2004) suggests that school districts acknowledge poor performance. Increased student achievement requires sufficient resources in improving instruction and support for all schools. Districts must establish clear and attainable goals, district-wide curricula, and strong professional development. All stakeholders must become involved in meeting the needs of schools by becoming actively involved and rendering their services. The budget must include funds to ensure teachers receive research-based professional development from highly trained individuals. Such meetings must involve teachers and principals actively engaged in sharing ideas and learning what works in education. Although it is the principal's

responsibility to encourage innovation and recognize the unique needs of his school, improving the quality of education requires a team of individuals who are willing to face the challenges and overcome the obstacles.

According to Bush (2001), raising academic standards is an important first step towards improving our schools. Educators will never know, however, if they are reaching those standards unless they measure student performance. Therefore, it is important that every child every year is tested to get useful information that allows teachers to analyze test data, identify low performing students and create plans to address their needs. Although tests have been in existence for many years, today's tests are much more sophisticated in their ability to diagnose problem areas in student achievement. Annual testing also allows society to identify successful school on the basis of other measures other than school's average test scores. Student's progress is seen each year regardless of their previous school attendance. Students' current level of performance is considered at the beginning of the school year as their performance outcome by the end of that same year. Schools that help their students make the most progress can be identified and rewarded as well (Bush, 2001).

President Bush (2002) concludes:

Because I believe every child can learn, I intend to ensure that every child does learn. My Administration put forward a plan called No Child Left Behind based on four principles: accountability for results; local control and flexibility; expanded parental choice; and effective and successful programs. We are pursuing these principles because too many of our schools fail to help every child learn. As our children return to school, we should reflect on how we can improve

the schools they attend. It's time to set high standards for what children should know and be able to do, to give our schools the tools they need to help children reach those high standards, and to demand that they reach them. We know that every child can learn; it is time to ensure that every child does learn (p. 2).

The National Center for Fair and Open Test (2004) applauds President Bush and his team for initiating a worthy goal for our nation. However, tragically, NCLB is not solving the real problems that cause many children to be left behind. NCLB must be revisited and revised if the federal government is to make a useful contribution to enhancing the quality of education received by low-income and minority group students.

As America enters the 21st century full of hope and promise, too many disadvantaged students are being left behind. Thus, states, school districts, and schools are accountable for ensuring that all students meet high academic standards of NCLB (Bush, 2001).

"Our bipartisan review shows that in order to reach the NCLB Act's lofty expectations, changes need to be made in the law's foundation. We extend our hand to the White House and Congress and believe they will find this exhaustive, bipartisan, earnest and impartial review of the No Child Left Behind Act an opportunity to close the achievement gap in America's schools and improve education opportunities for all students" (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2005).

The ultimate responsibility involves collaboration among students, teachers, and administrators as they interact in ways that result in students meeting challenging standards. In addition, principals are responsible for implementing leadership that renders substantial school improvement (Cotton, 2003). In terms of action, this means

that principals must promote consensus among stakeholders, yet be willing to step in decisively when decisive action is required. They must move the community forward, while accommodating a range of attitudes toward change itself. Celebrating milestones gains significance as a means to achieving this dual role. In short, today's principals are charged with shaping not just school vision, but school culture (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2004).

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This study was designed to investigate teachers' perceptions of the roles of middle school principals as instructional leaders in a Metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia school district. The schools that participated in this study were classified as "distinguished" (high performing) and "needs improvement" (low performing) middle schools. This study also examined whether differences existed among teachers' perceptions based on demographics (school type, gender, age, years of teaching experience, and educational level). The data was collected using the Principal Leadership Questionnaire (PLQ). The PLQ was validated by a panel of experts and reliability was established using Cronbach's Alpha. Teacher's demographic information was also collected.

In this chapter research design, the description of the population, instrumentation, validity and reliability of the questionnaire, administering the questionnaire and method of data analysis were discussed.

#### **Research Design**

This study was based on survey design. The aim of survey is to collect data on various variables from members of the population (Gay & Airasian, 2003). The general

goal of survey is to collect specific information from a particular group of people in ways that the members' views on issues can be perceived or made known. Survey is a self-reporting measure, and it is considered a strong method to provide insight on individuals' perceptions on the issues that interested the researcher. Generally, survey is used to establish the status of things as they were. Therefore, survey was considered an appropriate method for this study, because it sought to provide information on how teachers from "distinguished" (high performing) and "needs improvement" (low performing) middle schools perceived the role of principals as instructional leaders who could provide leadership necessary for school improvement.

### **Description of Population**

This Georgia school district consisted of 19 middle schools. All schools were classified as "distinguished", "adequate", or "needs improvement" based on students' performance on the Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT). Two middle schools were classified as "distinguished", six as "adequate" and eleven as "needs improvement" (DeKalb County Schools, 2005). Since there were only two "distinguished" middle schools in this district, they both were selected to take part in this study and these schools had a total of 151 teachers. Of those 151 teachers, only 125 teachers completed and returned the questionnaires. Three of the eleven "needs improvement" middle schools were selected based on convenience accessibility of the schools' locations and these schools had a total of 210 teachers. Of the 210 teachers, 153 teachers completed and returned the questionnaire. Therefore, a total population of 278

(77%) teachers participated in this study. The description and characteristics of these schools were listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Description and Type of School Participants in the Study

Group	Description of the School	Total Number of Teachers	Total Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
A Needs Improvement	Located east of Atlanta; opened in 1976; total student population is 880; programs include Gender-Based Education, mentoring, reading bowl; serves 7 feeder schools	75	53	60.25 %
B Needs Improvement	Located central DeKalb county; opened in 2003, total student population is 1350; programs include mentoring, conflict resolution, character education; serves 5 feeder schools	74	55	59.30 %
C Needs Improvement	Located east of Atlanta; opened in 2000; total student population is 1038; programs include Parent Teacher Student Association, Orthopedically-impaired, mentoring; serves 4 feeder schools	61	45	72.55 %



Table 1 cont.

D Distinguished	Located east of Atlanta; opened in 1996; total population is 1050 students; programs include ESOL, Discipline and Student Support, Magnet; serves 5 feeder schools	51	45	77.05 %
E Distinguished	Located east of Atlanta; opened in 1997; total student population is 1,000; programs include International Baccalaureate, mentoring, Parent Teacher Student Association; serves 6 feeder schools	100	80	80.00 %
Total		361	278	77 %

### Instrumentation

The *Principal Leadership Questionnaire* (PLQ) was developed by Jantzi and Leithwood (1996), and was used to collect data for this study. The PLQ consisted of 21 questionnaire items and used a five-point Likert scale as responses with 1 representing strongly disagree, 2 representing disagree, 3 representing undecided, 4 representing agree, and 5 representing strongly agree. The PLQ was made up of five factors and they were as follows: identify and articulate vision and provide inspiration (items 1-5), provide appropriate model (items 6-8 items), foster acceptance of group goals (items 9-

13), provide individualized support (items 14-18), and provide intellectual stimulation (items 19-21).

### **Validity and Reliability of Questionnaire**

The PLQ instrument was submitted and reviewed by a panel of six educators. The panel evaluated the instrument to establish validity. This instrument was used in previous studies, and one of those studies was *Towards an Explanation of Variation in Teacher's Perceptions of Transformational Leadership* (Jantzi & Leithwood, 1996). Reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach's Alpha to test internal consistency for each questionnaire item regarding the five PLQ factors. The Cronbach coefficient Alpha for each of the five factors was shown below.

- **Identify and Articulate Vision and Provide Inspiration:** The author describes this factor as behavior on the part of the principal aimed at identifying new opportunities for his or her school staff members and developing, articulating, and inspiring others with his or her vision of the future. This factor has a reported reliability coefficient Cronbach's alpha of .88. (University of Missouri, 2006).
- **Provide an Appropriate Model:** The author describes this factor as behavior on the part of the principal that sets an example for the school staff members to follow consistent with the values the principal espouses. This factor has a reported reliability coefficient Cronbach's alpha of .86 (University of Missouri, 2006).

- **Foster the Acceptance of Group Goals:** The author describes this factor as behavior on the part of the principal aimed at promoting cooperation among school staff members and assisting them to work together toward common goals. This factor has a reported reliability coefficient Cronbach's alpha of .80 (University of Missouri, 2006).
- **Provide Individualized Support:** The author describes this factor as behavior on the part of the principal that indicates respect for school staff members and concern about their personal feelings and needs. This factor has a reported reliability coefficient Cronbach's alpha of .82 (University of Missouri, 2006).
- **Provide Intellectual Stimulation:** The author describes this factor as behavior on the part of the principal that challenges school staff members to reexamine some of the assumptions about their work and rethink how it can be performed. This factor has a reported reliability coefficient Cronbach's alpha of .77 (University of Missouri, 2006).

### **Administering the Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was administered to teachers of each of the five middle schools. Teachers were contacted through letter to request their participation in this study. The letter further explained the purpose and procedures. The researcher pointed out in the letter that participation was voluntary and any participant could withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. Responses to the PLQ were not traced to any participant and were based on teachers' perceptions of the roles of principals as

instructional leaders. The numerical responses teachers provided were used for statistical analysis only. The researcher informed the participants that their responses were kept confidential. Questionnaires were administered to teachers during focused faculty meetings. A total of 350 teachers were instructed to complete and return the questionnaire to the researcher. The researcher collected 11 names and addresses of teachers absent from the faculty meetings and mailed the questionnaire to them in a prepaid, stamped envelope for return to the researcher. Telephone calls and e-mail letters were used as reminders for teachers who did not return the questionnaire after two weeks. All 11 questionnaires were returned.

### **Method of Analysis**

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data and to generate the mean scores, crosstabs and percentages. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The crosstabs procedure was used to test whether there was a relationship between variables. This procedure was also used to show frequencies and percentages of participants' responses for research questions 1 – 5 to determine how teachers perceived their principals as instructional leaders. An independent *t* – test, one type of inferential statistics, was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between the means of two groups. An independent *t*-test was used to analyze independent variables for research questions 6 and 7 to determine whether differences existed based on gender, school type and educational level. A one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was also used to test the equality of three or more means at one time

by using variances for research 7 to determine whether differences existed based on age and years of teaching experience.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

This study was designed to examine teachers' perceptions of the roles of middle school principals as instructional leaders who could provide leadership necessary for school improvement in both "distinguished" (high performing) and "needs improvement" (low performing) middle schools in an urban Metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia school district. This study assessed the following leadership factors: identify and articulate vision and provide inspiration, provide an appropriate model, foster the acceptance of group goals, provide individualized support, and provide intellectual stimulation. This study examined whether differences existed among teachers' perceptions of the middle school principals as instructional leaders between teachers from middle schools classified as "distinguished" (high performing) and teachers from middle schools classified as "needs improvement" (low performing). In addition, this study examined whether differences existed among teachers' perceptions of their principals' roles as instructional leaders based on gender, age, years of work experience, and educational level.

In this chapter, the methods of data analysis used to determine the findings were presented and discussed. The data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) statistical procedures to generate mean scores, crosstabs and percentages. Crosstabs were used to show frequencies of participants' responses. An

independent sample t-tests and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were also used to determine whether differences existed based on participants' demographics.

### **Demographic Information**

#### ***Participants' Gender***

Participants were grouped by gender. Group A consisted of 60 (21.5 %) male participants and group B consisted of 218 (78.4 %) female participants. Information on teachers' gender is shown below in Table 2.

Table 2: Frequency and Percentage of Teachers of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools by Gender

Group	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
A	Male	60	21.5
B	Female	218	78.4
Total		278	100.00

#### ***Participants' Age***

Participants were grouped by age range. The highest percentage (47.1 %) of participants fell in Group B. The lowest percentage (9.7 %) of participants fell in Group A. Information on teachers' age range is shown below in Table 3.

Table 3: Frequency and Percentage of Teachers of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools by Age Range

Group	Age	Frequency	Percentage
A	21-29	27	9.7
B	30-39	131	47.1
C	40-49	77	27.7
D	50-over	43	14.7
Total		278	100.00

### ***Participants' Years of Teaching Experience***

Participants were grouped by years of teaching experience. The highest percentage (33.4 %) of participants fell in Group B. The lowest percentage (12.6 %) of participants fell in Group D. Information on years of teaching experience is displayed below in Table 4.

Table 4: Frequency and Percentages of Teachers of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools by Years of Teaching Experience

Group	Years of Teaching Experience	Frequency	Percentage
A	1-5	58	21.0
B	6-10	93	33.4
C	11-15	55	19.8
D	16-20	35	12.6
E	21-over	37	13.3
Total		278	100.00

### ***Participants' Educational Level***

Participants were grouped by educational level. Group A consisted of one hundred thirty (46.8 %) participants who had acquired bachelor's degrees and Group B consisted of one hundred forty-eight (53.2 %) participants who had acquired Master's and above degrees. Information on educational level is shown below in Table 5.

Table 5: Frequency and Percentages of Teachers of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools by Educational Level

Group	Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage
A	Bachelor's	130	46.8
B	Master's - above	148	53.2
Total		278	100.00



Teachers' perceptions on the role of principals as instructional leaders were based on mean scores. Table 6 below was used to interpret the mean scores.

Table 6: Interpretation of Mean Score Ratings

Mean Scores	Interpretation
1.00 – 1.50	Strongly Disagree
1.51 – 2.50	Disagree
2.51 – 3.50	Undecided
3.51 – 4.50	Agree
4.51 – 5.00	Strongly Agree

### **Research Question # 1**

Research question # 1 was: Do teachers perceive the role of middle school principals as leaders who could identify and articulate vision and provide inspiration as measured by the PLQ?

Questionnaire items 1 – 5 were used to examine participants' perceptions of the principals' roles as instructional leaders who could identify and articulate vision and provide inspiration. As shown in Table 7, the results indicated that participants from distinguished schools with a mean score of 4.27 agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to command respect from everyone on the faculty (questionnaire item # 2). Also, participants from distinguished schools with a mean score of 4.47 agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to give the faculty a sense of overall purpose for its leadership (questionnaire item # 5). On the other hand, as shown in Table 7, the results indicated that participants from needs improvement schools with a mean

score of 4.28 agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to command respect from everyone on the faculty (questionnaire item # 2). Also, participants from needs improvement schools with a mean score of 4.62 strongly agreed that their principal should excite faculty with vision of what they may be able to accomplish if they work together as a team (questionnaire item # 3). The overall mean score for research question 1 was 4.44, which indicated that participants from both distinguished and needs improvement schools combined perceived that they agreed that their principals should assume the role as instructional leaders who identify and articulate vision and provide inspiration.

Table 7: Perception Mean Scores of Teachers of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Identify and Articulate Vision and Provide Inspiration

Questionnaire Item #	PLQ Item	School Type		Average Mean
		Distinguished	Needs Improvement	
1	Have both the capacity and the judgment to overcome most obstacles	4.43	4.50	4.47
2	Command respect from everyone on the faculty	4.27	4.28	4.28
3	Excite faculty with vision of what we may be able to accomplish if we work together as a team	4.44	4.62	4.54

Table 7 cont.

4	Make faculty members feel and act like leaders	4.38	4.41	4.40
5	Give the faculty a sense of overall purpose for its leadership	4.47	4.52	4.50
Overall Mean		4.40	4.47	4.44

Table 8 shows crosstabs for participants of both distinguished and needs improvement schools. There were 111 participants in the distinguished schools and 146 participants in the needs improvement schools who agreed to strongly agreed that their principals should have both the capacity and the judgment to overcome most obstacles.

Table 8: Crosstabs of Teachers' Perceptions of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Identify and Articulate Vision and Provide Inspiration (Questionnaire Item 1)

School Type	The principal should have both the capacity and the Judgment to overcome most obstacles.				
	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Distinguished	13	0	1	42	69
Needs improvement	3	3	1	56	90
Total	16	3	2	98	159

Table 9 shows crosstabs for participants of both distinguished and needs improvement schools. There were 108 participants in the distinguished schools and 130 participants in the needs improvement schools who agreed to strongly agreed that their principals should command respect from everyone on the faculty.

Table 9: Crosstabs of Teachers' Perceptions of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Identify and Articulate Vision and Provide Inspiration (Questionnaire Item 2)

School Type	The principal should command respect from everyone on the faculty.				
	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Distinguished	13	0	4	53	55
Needs improvement	9	3	11	47	83
Total	22	3	15	100	138

Table 10 shows crosstabs for participants of both distinguished and needs improvement schools. There were 116 participants in the distinguished schools and 148 participants in the needs improvement schools who agreed to strongly agreed that their principals should excite faculty with visions of what they may be able to accomplish if they work together as a team.

Table 10: Crosstabs of Teachers' Perceptions of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Identify and Articulate Vision and Provide Inspiration (Questionnaire Item 3)

School Type	The principal should excite faculty with visions of what they may be able to accomplish if they work together as a team.				
	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Distinguished	6	0	3	49	67
Needs improvement	2	1	2	44	104
Total	8	1	5	93	171

Table 11 shows crosstabs for participants of both distinguished and needs improvement schools. There were 114 participants in the distinguished schools and 142 participants in the needs improvement schools who agreed to strongly agreed that their principals should make faculty members feel and act like leaders.

Table 11: Crosstabs of Teachers' Perceptions of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Identify and Articulate Vision and Provide Inspiration (Questionnaire Item 4)

School Type	The principal should make faculty members feel and act like leaders.				
	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Distinguished	8	0	3	52	62
Needs improvement	3	2	6	58	84
Total	11	2	9	110	146

Table 12 shows crosstabs for participants of both distinguished and needs improvement schools. There were 116 participants in the distinguished schools and 142 participants in the needs improvement schools who agreed to strongly agreed that their principals should give the faculty a sense of overall purpose for its leadership role.

Table 12: Crosstabs of Teachers' Perceptions of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Identify and Articulate Vision and Provide Inspiration (Questionnaire Item 5)

School Type	The principal should give the faculty a sense of overall purpose for its leadership role.				
	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Distinguished	6	0	3	45	71
Needs improvement	8	2	1	47	95
Total	14	2	4	92	166

### Research Question # 2

Research question 2 was: Do teachers perceive the role of middle school principals as leaders who could provide appropriate model as measured by the PLQ?

Questionnaire items 6 – 8 were used to examine participants' perceptions of the principals' roles as instructional leaders who could provide appropriate model. As shown in Table 13, the results indicated that participants from distinguished schools with a mean score of 4.55 strongly agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to provide good models for faculty members to follow (questionnaire item # 8). Also, participants from distinguished schools with a mean score of 4.59 strongly agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to symbolize success and accomplishment within the profession of education (questionnaire item # 7). On the other hand, as shown in Table 13, participants from needs improvement schools with a mean score of 4.48 agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to symbolize success and accomplishment within the profession of education (questionnaire item # 7). Also, participants from needs improvement schools with a mean score of 4.61 strongly agreed

that their principal should demonstrate the ability to provide good models for faculty members to follow (questionnaire item # 8). The overall mean score for research question 2 was 4.56, which indicated that participants from both distinguished and needs improvement schools combined perceived that they strongly agreed that their principals should assume the role as instructional leaders who provide appropriate model.

Table 13: Perception Mean Scores of Teachers Based on Provide Appropriate Model

PLQ Item #	PLQ Item	School Type		Average Mean
		Distinguished	Needs Improvement	
6	Lead by “doing” rather than simply by “telling”	4.58	4.59	4.58
7	Symbolize success and accomplishment within the profession of education	4.59	4.48	4.53
8	Provide good models for faculty members to follow	4.55	4.61	4.58
		4.57	4.56	4.56

Table 14 shows crosstabs for participants of both distinguished and needs improvement schools. There were 118 participants in the distinguished schools and 145 participants in the needs improvement schools who agreed to strongly agreed that their principals should lead by “doing” rather than simply by “telling.”

Table 14: Crosstabs of Teachers' Perceptions of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Provide Appropriate Model (Questionnaire Item 6)

School Type	The principal should lead by “doing” rather than simply by “telling”.				
	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Distinguished	4	1	2	35	83
Needs improvement	4	2	2	41	104
Total	8	3	4	76	187

Table 15 shows crosstabs for participants of both distinguished and needs improvement schools. There were 121 participants in the distinguished schools and 140 participants in the needs improvement schools who agreed to strongly agreed that their principals should symbolize success and accomplishments within the profession of education.

Table 15: Crosstabs of Teachers' Perceptions of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Provide Appropriate Model (Questionnaire Item 7)

School Type	The principal should symbolize success and accomplishment within the profession of education.				
	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Distinguished	2	1	1	40	81
Needs improvement	11	2	0	50	90
Total	13	3	1	90	171

Table 16 shows crosstabs for participants of both distinguished and needs improvement schools. There were 122 participants in the distinguished schools and 147



participants in the needs improvement schools who agreed to strongly agreed that their principals should provide appropriate models for faculty members to follow.

Table 16: Crosstabs of Teachers’ Perceptions of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Provide Appropriate Model (Questionnaire Item 8)

School Type	The principal should provide good models for faculty members to follow.				
	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Distinguished	1	0	2	48	74
Needs improvement	3	2	1	43	104
Total	4	2	3	91	178

### Research Question # 3

Research question # 3 was: Do teachers perceive the role of middle school principals as leaders who could foster the acceptance of group goals as measured by the PLQ?

Questionnaire items 9 – 13 were used to examine participants’ perceptions of the principals’ roles as instructional leaders who could foster the acceptance of group goals. As shown in Table 17, the results indicated that participants from distinguished schools with a mean score of 4.47 agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to work toward whole faculty consensus in establishing priorities for school goals (questionnaire item # 12). Also, participants from distinguished schools with a mean score of 4.55 strongly agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to use problem solving with the faculty to generate school goals (questionnaire item # 11). On the other hand, as shown in Table 17, participants from needs improvement schools with

a mean score of 4.35 agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to work toward whole faculty consensus in establishing priorities for school goals (questionnaire item # 12). Also, teachers from needs improvement schools with a mean score of 4.61 strongly agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to encourage faculty members to work toward the same goals (questionnaire item # 10). The overall mean score for research question 3 was 4.50, which indicated that participants from both distinguished and needs improvement schools combined perceived that they agreed that their principals should assume the role as instructional leaders who foster the acceptance of group goals.

Table 17: Perception Mean Scores of Teachers of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Foster the Acceptance of Group Goals

Item #	PLQ Item	School Type		Average Mean
		Distinguished	Needs Improvement	
9	Provide for our participation in the process of developing school goals	4.50	4.54	4.52
10	Encourage faculty members to work toward the same goals	4.53	4.61	4.58
11	Use problem solving with the faculty to generate school goals	4.55	4.45	4.50

Table 17 cont.

12	Work toward whole faculty consensus in establishing priorities for school goals	4.47	4.35	4.41
13	Regularly encourage faculty members to evaluate our progress toward achievement of school goals	4.49	4.46	4.47
Overall Mean		4.51	4.48	4.50

Table 18 shows crosstabs for participants of both distinguished and needs improvement schools. There were 121 participants in the distinguished schools and 146 participants in the needs improvement schools who agreed to strongly agreed that their principals should provide for teacher participation in the process of developing school goals.

Table 18: Crosstabs of Teachers' Perceptions of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Foster the Acceptance of Group Goals (Questionnaire Item 9)

School Type	The principal should provide for teacher participation in the process of developing school goals.				
	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Distinguished	2	1	1	52	69
Needs improvement	5	1	1	54	92
Total	7	2	2	106	161

Table 19 shows crosstabs for participants of both distinguished and needs improvement schools. There were 120 participants in the distinguished schools and 145 participants in the needs improvement schools who agreed to strongly agreed that their principals should encourage faculty members to work toward the same goals.

Table 19: Crosstabs of Teachers' Perceptions of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Foster the Acceptance of Group Goals (Questionnaire Item 10)

School Type	The principal should encourage faculty members to work toward the same goals. (Questionnaire Item 10)				
	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Distinguished	3	1	1	46	74
Needs improvement	5	1	2	39	106
Total	8	2	3	85	180

Table 20 shows crosstabs for participants of both distinguished and needs improvement schools. There were 122 participants in the distinguished schools and 138 participants in the needs improvement schools who agreed to strongly agreed that their principals should use problem solving with the faculty to generate school goals.

Table 20: Crosstabs of Teachers' Perceptions of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Foster the Acceptance of Group Goals (Questionnaire Item 11)

School Type	The principal should use problem solving with the faculty to generate school goals.				
Index	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Distinguished	1	0	2	48	74
Needs improvement	10	2	3	47	91
Total	11	2	5	95	165

Table 21 shows crosstabs for participants of both distinguished and needs improvement schools. There were 117 participants in the distinguished schools and 136 participants in the needs improvement schools who agreed to strongly agreed that their principals should work toward whole faculty consensus in establishing priorities for school goals.

Table 21: Crosstabs of Teachers' Perceptions of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Foster the Acceptance of Group Goals (Questionnaire Item 12)

School Type	The principal should work toward whole faculty consensus in establishing priorities for school goals.				
	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Distinguished	4	1	3	45	72
Needs improvement	9	2	6	55	81
Total	13	3	9	100	153

Table 22 shows crosstabs for participants of both distinguished and needs improvement schools. There were 120 participants in the distinguished schools and 140

participants in the needs improvement schools who agreed to strongly agreed that their principals should encourage faculty members to evaluate their progress toward achievement of school goals.

Table 22: Crosstabs of Teachers’ Perceptions of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Foster the Acceptance of Group Goals (Questionnaire Item 13)

School Type	The principal should regularly encourage faculty members to evaluate their progress toward achievement of school goals.				
	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Distinguished	3	0	2	52	68
Needs improvement	6	3	4	46	94
Total	9	3	6	98	162

#### Research Question # 4

Research question 4 was: Do teachers perceive the role of middle school principals as leaders who could provide individualized support as measured by the PLQ?

Questionnaire items 14 - 18 was used to examine participants’ perceptions of the principals’ roles as instructional leaders who could provide individualized support. As shown in Table 23, the results indicated that participants from distinguished schools with a mean score of 4.39 agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to provide for extended training to develop teachers’ knowledge relevant to being a member of the school faculty (questionnaire item # 14). Also, participants from distinguished schools with a mean score of 4.63 strongly agreed that their principals should take teachers’ opinions into consideration when initiating actions that may affect their work (questionnaire item # 17). On the other hand, as shown in Table 23, participants from

needs improvement schools with a mean score of 4.41 agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to provide for extended training to develop teachers' knowledge relevant to being a member of the school faculty (questionnaire item # 14). Also, participants from needs improvement schools with a mean score of 4.62 strongly agreed that their principals should treat teachers as individuals with unique needs and expertise (questionnaire item # 16). The overall mean score for research question 4 was 4.52, which indicated that participants from both distinguished and needs improvement schools combined perceived that they strongly agreed that their principals should assume the role as instructional leaders who provide individualized support.

Table 23: Perception Mean Scores of Teachers of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Provide Individualized Support

Item #	PLQ Item	School Type		Average Mean
		Distinguished	Needs Improvement	
14	Provide for extended training to develop my knowledge relevant to being a member of the school faculty	4.39	4.41	4.40
15	Provide the necessary resources to my implementation of the school's program	4.56	4.52	4.54
16	Treat me as an individual with unique needs and expertise	4.46	4.62	4.63
17	Take my opinion into consideration when initiating actions that may affect my work	4.63	4.52	4.57

Table 23 cont.

18	Behave in a manner thoughtful of my personal needs	4.54	4.48	4.51
Overall Mean		4.52	4.51	4.52

Table 24 shows crosstabs for participants of both distinguished and needs improvement schools. There were 114 participants in the distinguished schools and 135 participants in the needs improvement schools who agreed to strongly agreed that their principals should provide for extended training to develop teachers’ knowledge and skills relevant to being a member of the school faculty.

Table 24: Crosstabs of Teachers’ Perceptions of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Provide Individualized Support (Questionnaire Item 14)

School Type	The principal should provide for extended training to develop teachers’ knowledge and skills relevant to being a member of the school faculty.				
	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Distinguished	7	1	3	49	65
Needs improvement	12	1	5	48	87
Total	19	2	8	97	152

Table 25 shows crosstabs for participants of both distinguished and needs improvement schools. There were 119 participants in the distinguished schools and 140 participants in the needs improvement schools who agreed to strongly agreed that their principals should provide the necessary resources to support teachers’ implementation of the school’s program.



Table 25: Crosstabs of Teachers' Perceptions of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Provide Individualized Support (Questionnaire Item 15)

School Type	The principal should provide the necessary resources to support teachers' implementation of the school's program.				
	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Distinguished					
Needs improvement	4	0	2	41	78
	8	2	3	40	100
Total	12	2	5	81	178

Table 26 shows crosstabs for participants of both distinguished and needs improvement schools. There were 123 participants in the distinguished schools and 146 participants in the needs improvement schools who agreed to strongly agreed that their principals should treat teacher as an individual with unique needs and expertise.

Table 26: Crosstabs of Teachers' Perceptions of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Provide Individualized Support (Questionnaire Item 16)

School Type	The principal should treat teacher as an individual with unique needs and expertise.				
	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Distinguished	0	0	2	39	84
Needs improvement	3	1	3	39	107
Total	3	1	5	78	191

Table 27 shows crosstabs for participants of both distinguished and needs improvement schools. There were 121 participants in the distinguished schools and 144 participants in the needs improvement schools who agreed to strongly agreed that their

principals should take teachers' opinion into consideration when initiating actions that affect their work.

Table 27: Crosstabs of Teachers' Perceptions of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Provide Individualized Support (Questionnaire Item 17)

School Type	The principal should take teachers' opinion into consideration when initiating actions that affect their work.				
	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Distinguished	3	0	1	37	84
Needs improvement	4	1	4	49	95
Total	7	1	5	86	179

Table 28 shows crosstabs for participants of both distinguished and needs improvement schools. There were 117 participants in the distinguished schools and 135 participants in the needs improvement schools who agreed to strongly agreed that their principals should behave in a manner thoughtful of teachers' personal needs.

Table 28: Crosstabs of Teachers' Perceptions of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Provide Individualized Support (Questionnaire Item 18)

School Type	The principal should behave in a manner thoughtful of teachers' personal needs.				
	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Distinguished	7	0	1	40	77
Needs improvement	9	2	7	37	98
Total	16	2	8	77	152

### **Research Question # 5**

Research question 5 was: Do teachers perceive the role of middle school principals as leaders who could provide intellectual stimulation as measured by the PLQ?

Questionnaire items 19 - 21 were used to examine participants' perceptions of the principals' roles as instructional leaders who could provide intellectual stimulation. As shown in Table 29, the results indicated that participants from distinguished schools with a mean score of 4.48 agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to challenge teachers to reexamine some basic assumptions they have about their work in school (questionnaire item # 19). Also, teachers from distinguished schools with a mean score of 4.54 strongly agreed that their principals should provide information that help teachers think of ways to implement the school's program (questionnaire item # 21). On the other hand, as shown in Table 29, participants from needs improvement schools with a mean score of 4.32 agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to challenge teachers to reexamine some basic assumptions they have about their work in school (questionnaire item # 19). Also, participants from needs improvement schools with a mean score of 4.48 agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to provide information that help teachers think of ways to implement the school's program (questionnaire item # 21). The overall mean score for research question 5 was 4.45, which indicated that participants from both distinguished and needs improvement schools combined perceived that they agreed that their principals should assume the role as instructional leaders who provide intellectual stimulation.

Table 29: Perception Mean Scores of Teachers of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Provide Intellectual Stimulation

Item #	PLQ Item	School Type		Average Mean
		Distinguished	Needs Improvement	
19	Challenge me to reexamine some basic assumptions I have about my work in school	4.48	4.32	4.39
20	Stimulate me to think about what I am doing for the school's students	4.50	4.43	4.46
21	Provide information that help me think of ways to implement the school's program	4.54	4.48	4.50
Overall Mean		4.51	4.41	4.45

Table 30 shows crosstabs for participants of both distinguished and needs improvement schools. There were 117 participants in the distinguished schools and 136 participants in the needs improvement schools who agreed to strongly agreed that their principals should challenge teachers to reexamine some basic assumptions they have about their work in the school.

Table 30: Crosstabs of Teachers' Perceptions of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Provide Intellectual Stimulation (Questionnaire Item 19)

School Type	The principal should challenge teachers to reexamine some basic assumptions they have about their work in the school.				
	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Distinguished	5	0	3	46	71
Needs improvement	11	3	3	61	75
Total	16	3	6	107	146

Table 31 shows crosstabs for participants of both distinguished and needs improvement schools. There were 120 participants in the distinguished schools and 138 participants in the needs improvement schools who agreed to strongly agreed that their principals should stimulate teachers to think about what they are doing for the school's students.

Table 31: Crosstabs of Teachers' Perceptions of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Provide Intellectual Stimulation (Questionnaire Item 20)

School Type	The principal should stimulate teachers to think about what they are doing for the school's students. (Questionnaire Item 20)				
	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Distinguished	4	0	1	51	69
Needs improvement	9	2	4	49	89
Total	13	2	5	100	158

Table 32 shows crosstabs for participants of both distinguished and needs improvement schools. There were 121 participants in the distinguished schools and 143 participants in the needs improvement schools who agreed to strongly agreed that their principals should provide information that help teachers think of ways to implement the school’s program.

Table 32: Crosstabs of Teachers’ Perceptions of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Provide Intellectual Stimulation (Questionnaire Item 21)

School Type	The principal should provide information that helps teachers think of ways to implement the school’s program.				
	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Distinguished	2	0	2	48	73
Needs improvement	6	2	2	54	89
Total	8	2	4	102	162

### Research Question # 6

Research question 6 was: Do differences exist among teachers from schools classified as “distinguished” and teachers from schools classified as “needs improvement” in their perceptions of the middle school principals as instructional leaders as measured by the PLQ?

Questionnaire items 1 – 21 were used to examine teachers’ perceptions of the principals’ roles as instructional leaders according to each of the five PLQ factors. As shown in Table 33, the results showed that participants from distinguished schools with a mean score of 4.55 strongly agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to provide individualized support. Also, participants from distinguished schools agreed

with a mean score of 4.40 that their principals should demonstrate the ability to identify and articulate vision and provide inspiration. On the other hand, as shown in Table 33, the results showed that participants from needs improvement schools with a mean score of 4.55 strongly agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to provide appropriate model. Also, teachers from needs improvement schools with a mean score of 4.40 agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to provide intellectual stimulation. However, when participants were grouped according to type of school, the results showed that with an overall mean score of 4.48 participants agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to identify and articulate vision and provide inspiration, provide appropriate model, foster acceptance of group goals, provide individualized support and provide intellectual stimulation.

Table 33: Perception Mean Scores of Teachers of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on School Type

PLQ Factor	School Type		Average Mean
	Distinguished	Needs Improvement	
Identify Articulate Vision and Provide Inspiration	4.40	4.46	4.43
Provide Appropriate Model	4.47	4.55	4.51
Foster Acceptance of Group Goals	4.50	4.49	4.50
Provide Individualized Support	4.55	4.50	4.53
Provide Intellectual Stimulation	4.50	4.40	4.45
Overall Mean	4.48	4.48	4.48

A *t*-test was used to determine whether significant differences existed among the participants from schools classified as distinguished and participants from schools classified as needs improvement in their perceptions of the roles of their principals as instructional leaders. The results showed that there were no significant differences.

### **Research Question # 7**

Research question 7 was: Do differences exist among teachers from schools classified as “distinguished” and teachers from schools classified as “needs improvement” in their perceptions of middle schools principals as instructional leaders based on gender, age, years of experience and educational level as measured by the PLQ?

#### ***Distribution of Participants Based on Gender***

Table 34 shows mean scores for questionnaire items 1 – 21, which included each of the five PLQ factors. The results showed that male participants with a mean score of 4.25 agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to provide intellectual stimulation and they also agreed with a mean score of 4.49 that their principals should demonstrate the ability to provide appropriate model. Male participants strongly agreed with none of the five PLQ factors.

The results showed that female participants with a mean score of 4.45 agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to identify and articulate vision and provide inspiration and they also strongly agreed with a mean score of 4.58 that their principals should demonstrate the ability to provide appropriate model. Female participants strongly agreed with all except one of the five PLQ factors.



However, when participants were grouped according to gender, the results showed that with an overall mean score of 4.45 participants agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to identify and articulate vision and provide inspiration, provide appropriate model, foster acceptance of group goals, provide individualized support and provide intellectual stimulation.

Table 34: Perception Mean Scores of Teachers of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Gender

PLQ Factor	Gender		Average Mean
	Male	Female	
Identify Articulate Vision and Provide Inspiration	4.37	4.45	4.41
Provide Appropriate Model	4.49	4.58	4.54
Foster Acceptance of Group Goals	4.40	4.51	4.46
Provide Individualized Support	4.39	4.56	4.48
Provide Intellectual Stimulation	4.25	4.50	4.38
Overall Mean	4.38	4.52	4.45

As shown in *t*-test Table 35, the results revealed that a statistical significant difference existed in participants' perceptions of their principals' roles as instructional leaders who should provide intellectual stimulation ( $t = -2.631$ ,  $p < .01$ ) based on gender. According to the mean scores, the female participants strongly agreed with a mean score of 4.50 while their male counterparts agreed with a mean score of 4.38 that their

principals should provide intellectual stimulation. The statistical significant difference was indicated by the higher mean score of the female participants.

Table 35: Independent Sample T – Test of Teachers’ Perceptions of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Provide Intellectual Stimulation

PLQ Factor	School Type	Mean	t	<i>p</i>
Provide Intellectual Stimulation	Distinguished	4.51	-2.631	.009
	Needs Improvement	4.41		

***Distribution of Participants Based on Age***

Table 36 shows mean scores for questionnaire items 1 – 21, which included each of the five PLQ factors. The results showed that participants age 21 – 29 (Group A) with a mean score of 4.38 agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to provide intellectual stimulation and strongly agreed with a mean score of 4.56 that their principals should demonstrate the ability to provide appropriate model. Participants age 21 – 29 strongly agreed with one of the five PLQ factors.

Participants age 30 – 39 (Group B) with a mean score of 4.42 agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to identify and articulate vision and provide inspiration and strongly agreed with a mean score of 4.58 that their principals should demonstrate the ability to provide appropriate model. Participants age 30 – 39 strongly agreed with all except two of the five PLQ factors.

Participants age 40 – 49 (Group C) with a mean score of 4.35 agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to provide intellectual stimulation and strongly agreed with a mean score of 4.52 that their principals should demonstrate the ability to

provide individualized support. Participants age 40 – 49 strongly agreed with all except three of the five PLQ factors.

Participants age 50 – over (Group D) with a mean score of 4.45 agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to provide intellectual stimulation and strongly agreed with a mean score of 4.59 that their principals should demonstrate the ability to provide appropriate model. Participants age 50 – over strongly agreed with all except one of the five PLQ factors.

However, when participants were grouped according to age, the overall mean scores indicated that participants age 21 – 29 (Group A) strongly agreed with a mean score of 4.45, participants age 30-39 (Group B) strongly agreed with a mean score of 4.51, participants age 40 – 49 (Group C) strongly agreed with a mean score of 4.45, and participants age 50 – over (Group D) strongly agreed with a mean score of 4.53 that their principals should demonstrate the ability to identify and articulate vision and provide inspiration, provide appropriate model, foster acceptance of group goals, provide individualized support and provide intellectual stimulation.

Table 36: Perception Mean Scores of Teachers of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Age

PLQ Factors	Age				Average Mean
	Group A 21-29	Group B 30-39	Group C 40-49	Group D 50-over	
Identify Articulate Vision and Provide Inspiration	4.42	4.42	4.41	4.51	4.44
Provide Appropriate Model	4.56	4.58	4.51	4.59	4.56

Table 36. cont.

Foster Acceptance of Group Goals	4.44	4.50	4.45	4.56	4.49
Provide Individualized Support	4.45	4.54	4.52	4.54	4.51
Provide Intellectual Stimulation	4.38	4.52	4.35	4.45	4.43
Overall Mean	4.45	4.51	4.45	4.53	4.49

An ANOVA was used to determine whether significant differences existed among the participants in their perceptions of the roles of their principals as instructional leaders based on age. The results showed that there were no significant differences.

***Distribution of Participants Based on Years of Teaching Experience***

Table 37 shows mean scores for questionnaire items 1 – 21, which included each of the five PLQ factors. The results showed that participants with 1 – 5 years of teaching experience (Group A) with a mean score of 4.32 agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to identify and articulate vision and provide inspiration and strongly agreed with a mean score of 4.51 that their principals should demonstrate the ability to provide appropriate model. Participants with one to five years of experience strongly agreed with one of the five PLQ factors.

Participants with 6 – 10 years of teaching experience (Group B) with a mean score of 4.51 strongly agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to provide intellectual stimulation and strongly agreed with a mean score of 4.67 that their principals should demonstrate the ability to provide appropriate model. Participants with 6 – 10 years of teaching experience strongly agreed with all of the five PLQ factors.

Participants with 11 – 15 years of teaching experience (Group C) with a mean score of 4.44 agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to identify and articulate vision and provide inspiration and strongly agreed with a mean score of 4.56 that their principals should demonstrate the ability to provide appropriate model. Participants with 11 – 15 years of teaching experience strongly agreed with all except two of the five PLQ factors.

Participants with 16 – 20 years of teaching experience (Group D) with a mean score of 4.32 agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to identify and articulate vision and provide inspiration and agreed with a mean score of 4.46 that their principals should demonstrate the ability to provide individualized support. Participants with 16 – 20 years of teaching experience strongly agreed with none of the five PLQ factors.

Participants with 21 - over years of teaching experience (Group E) with a mean score of 4.46 agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to identify and articulate vision and provide inspiration and strongly agreed with a mean score of 4.59 that their principals should demonstrate the ability to provide individualized support. Participants with 21 – over years of teaching experience strongly agreed with all except two of the five PLQ factors.

However, when participants were grouped according to years of teaching experience, the overall mean scores indicated that participants with 1 – 5 (Group A) years of teaching experience agreed with a mean score of 4.39, participants with 6 – 10 (Group B) years of teaching experience strongly agreed with a mean score of 4.57, participants with 11 – 15 (Group C) years of teaching experience strongly agreed with a

mean score of 4.51, participants with a mean score of 16 – 20 (Group D) years of teaching experience agreed with a mean score of 4.38 and participants with 21 – over (Group E) years of teaching experience agreed with a mean score of 4.49 that their principals should demonstrate the ability to identify and articulate vision and provide inspiration, provide appropriate model, foster acceptance of group goals, provide individualized support and provide intellectual stimulation.

Table 37: Perception Mean Scores of Teachers of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Years of Teaching Experience

PLQ Factors	Years of Teaching Experience					Average Mean
	Group A 1-5	Group B 6-10	Group C 11-15	Group D 16-20	Group E 21-over	
Identify Articulate Vision and Provide Inspiration	4.32	4.52	4.44	4.32	4.46	4.41
Provide Appropriate Model	4.51	4.67	4.56	4.42	4.52	4.54
Foster Acceptance of Group Goals	4.35	4.57	4.48	4.41	4.61	4.48
Provide Individualized Support	4.45	4.56	4.54	4.46	4.59	4.52
Provide Intellectual Stimulation	4.33	4.51	4.51	4.35	4.49	4.44
Overall Mean	4.39	4.57	4.51	4.38	4.49	4.48

An ANOVA was used to determine whether significant differences existed among the participants in their perceptions of the roles of their principals as instructional leaders based on years of teaching experience. The results showed that there were no significant differences.

### ***Distribution of Participants Based on Educational Level***

Table 38 shows mean scores for questionnaire items 1 – 21, which included each of the five PLQ factors. The results showed that bachelor's level participants with a mean score of 4.37 agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to identify and articulate vision and provide inspiration and strongly agreed with a mean score of 4.51 that their principals should demonstrate the ability to provide appropriate model. Bachelor's level participants strongly agreed with one of the five PLQ factors.

The results showed that master's or above level participants with a mean score of 4.49 agreed that their principals should demonstrate the ability to identify and articulate vision and provide inspiration and strongly agreed with a mean score of 4.60 that their principals should demonstrate the ability to provide appropriate model. Master's and above level participants strongly agreed with all except one of the five PLQ factors.

However, when participants were grouped according to educational level, the overall mean scores indicated that bachelor's level participants agreed with a mean score of 4.44 and master's – above level participants strongly agreed with a mean score of 4.54 that that their principals should demonstrate the ability to identify and articulate vision and provide inspiration, provide appropriate model, foster acceptance of group goals, provide individualized support and provide intellectual stimulation.

Table 38: Perception Mean Scores of Teachers of Distinguished and Needs Improvement Schools Based on Educational Level

PLQ Factors	Educational Level		Average Mean
	Bachelor's	Master's – Above	
Identify Articulate Vision and Provide Inspiration	4.37	4.49	4.43
Provide Appropriate Model	4.51	4.60	4.56
Foster Acceptance of Group Goals	4.43	4.54	4.47
Provide Individualized Support	4.48	4.57	4.53
Provide Intellectual Stimulation	4.39	4.51	4.45
Overall Mean	4.44	4.54	4.49

A *t*-test was used to determine whether significant differences existed among the participants in their perceptions of the roles of their principals as instructional leaders based educational level. The results showed that there were no significant differences.



## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The first four chapters of this study dealt with the introduction of the study, review of the literature, methodology and procedures, data analysis, and findings. This chapter summarized the findings, discussion, conclusions, and recommendations. The problem was to examine teachers' perceptions of the roles of principals as instructional leaders who could provide leadership necessary for school improvement in both "distinguished" (high performing) and "needs improvement" (low performing) middle schools in an urban Metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia school district. For the purpose of this study, the *Principal Leadership Questionnaire* (PLQ) was used to measure teachers' perceptions of principals as instructional leaders and analyses were conducted to examine teachers' overall ratings of their principals and to determine if there were significant differences among teachers' perceptions based on school type and demographics (gender, age, years of teaching experience, educational level). Results revealed a significant difference in teachers' perceptions regarding provide intellectual stimulation based on gender.

Although participants of both school types agreed that they perceived that their principals should exhibit all of the five PLQ factors, participants of distinguished schools perceived that they agreed with higher mean scores that their principals should exhibit the characteristics of provide appropriate model, foster acceptance of group goals, provide

individualized support, and provide intellectual stimulation that did participants of needs improvement schools. High achieving middle schools have principals who boldly lead the academic program, set goals, examine curriculum, evaluate teachers and assess results (De Pree, 1989). Thus, they are responsible for ensuring that teachers are highly qualified and trained in research-based instructional methods (Heath, 2005). As a result, teachers will possess the necessary knowledge and skills to meet the needs of all students.

The findings of this study revealed that although most teachers had acquired advanced degrees (53.2%), a significant number of teachers (46.8%) had not. Therefore, principals must provide current knowledge to teachers who are not getting this training in college (Heath, 2005). It was confirmed by Colclough (2007) that teachers expect principals to provide staff development opportunities to ensure that they are prepared especially those who do not engage in continuing education.

### **Conclusions**

The conclusion were based on the findings related to how the participants of “distinguished” (high) performing and “needs improvement” (low) performing middle schools perceived that their principals should exhibit the characteristics of the five PLQ factors: identify and articulate vision and provide inspiration, provide appropriate model, foster acceptance of group goals, provide individualized support, and provide intellectual stimulation. Little prior research was available that addressed teachers’ perceptions of middle school principals’ roles as instructional leaders.

Based on participants’ responses, the researcher believes that principals are responsible for creating environments that not only promote student achievement but also

address certain factors that are necessary for school improvement. Teachers are not interested in bureaucratic style leadership but leaders that are dedicated to improving student achievement (Tyler, 1989). In fact, participants' overall perceptions that their principals should exhibit the characteristics of each of the five PLQ factors ranged from strongly agree to agree. The results of this study support the conclusion of Lovette and Watts (2002) that there is a strong need for instructional leadership in order for middle school reform to be effective and sustained.

### **Identify and Articulate Vision and Provide Inspiration**

A vision is something that comes from within the individual and can either have a positive or a negative outcome on a school environment. Thus, leadership definitely involves creating a vision and sticking to it (Timberlake, 2008). The result of this study indicate that teachers perceived identify and articulate vision and provide inspiration as the least important factor necessary for effective instructional leadership practice, which suggests that participants are more concerned with principals who possess the ability to exhibit other types of instructional leadership behaviors. Therefore, perhaps, school districts may need to consider hiring visionary leaders who possess other instructional leadership characteristics that can empower teachers to perform at their maximum potential.

### **Provide Appropriate Model**

Principals are responsible for modeling the way by establishing an atmosphere, which involves everyone in the schools working to produce a desired outcome (Goldring & Rallis, 1993). The results of this study indicate that teachers perceived provide an

appropriate model as the most important factor necessary for effective instructional leadership practice. Perhaps, teachers highly expect principals to model a deep understanding of student learning, curriculum and assessment. Principals who provide appropriate model may transform schools into learning communities that promote academic excellence. As role models, the principal's behavior is being examined not only by teachers but other stakeholders as well. Therefore, it is imperative that principals model what they expect others to emulate. The findings of this study support the findings of a study conducted by Leech et. al., (2002) that middle school teachers perceived that successful schools had principals who most often exhibited characteristics of provide appropriate model.

### **Foster Acceptance of Group Goals**

It is the leader's responsibility to foster acceptance of group goals by modeling expectations in all settings of the learning environment (Northern & Bailey, 1991). This requires supporting and accepting the goals for the school as well (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2001). The results of this study indicate that teachers perceived foster acceptance of group goals as the third most important factor necessary for effective instructional leadership practice. It could be that although teachers work collaboratively with other colleagues to establish goals, they may be still interested in principals assisting them in completing and carrying out their responsibilities to ensure school goals are met.

### **Provide Individualized Support**

Individualized support happens when leaders understand that each teacher has unique needs that require individual attention (Bass & Avolio, 1997). The results indicate that teachers perceived provide individualized support as the second most important factor necessary for effective instructional leadership practice. It could be that participants may believe they are unique and capable of enhancing student achievement if principals ensure that their individual needs are addressed.

### **Provide Intellectual Stimulation**

Teachers describe an ideal leader as one who intellectually stimulates others to critically think of different ways to solve issues in education (Bass, 1985). The results of this study indicate that teachers perceived provide intellectual stimulation as the fourth most important factor for effective instructional leadership practice. One role of middle school principals as an instructional leader is to provide intellectual stimulation (Heath, 2005). The researcher suggests that principals provide professional development opportunities based issues affecting both teaching and learning.

### **Demographics**

Female participants consistently agreed with higher mean scores than did males. Although the number of male (n=60) participants was significantly lower than the number of female (n=218), it could be that the findings is a result of gender bias among the male group since most of the principals assessed were females. Participants in 50 – over age groups perceived it more important that their principals should exhibit the characteristics of each of the 5 PLQ factors than did participants in all other age groups.

It could be that older teachers have been in the profession longer and understand the impact of the principals' roles on student achievement. The results indicate that participants with 6 – 10 of teaching experience perceived it more important that their principals should exhibit the characteristics of each of the five PLQ factors than did all other years of teaching experience groups. It could be that teachers with at least 6 – 10 years of experience are still somewhat new to the field and are in need of instructional leadership to assist them in understanding and performing their duties and responsibilities. Master's and above level participants perceived it more important that their principals should exhibit the characteristics of each of the five PLQ factors than did bachelor's level participants. In addition, bachelor's level participants perceived that they agreed with lower mean scores in each of the five PLQ factors than did master's and above level participants. It could be that participants with more advanced degrees have a better knowledge of understanding the principals' roles and its effect on school improvement.

### **School Type**

Although the results indicate that participants of both distinguished and needs improvement schools agreed with the same overall mean scores that their principals should exhibit instructional leadership characteristics as measure by PLQ, participants of needs improvement schools perceived it more important that their principals should exhibit the characteristics of identify and articulate vision and provide inspiration than did participants of distinguished schools. It could be that principals of needs improvement schools were under stress to meet AYP and as a result they were focusing

on other roles than acting as visionary leaders who articulate their visions in a way that foster environments that encourage collaboration. Regardless of the obstacles principals face, they are responsible for implementing a school vision that will enhance school culture (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2004).

### **Recommendations**

Student learning must now become the focus of our educational efforts, and school leaders must have the ability to become change agents and managers with a plan to improve student achievement. The teachers in this study confirm that their perceptions of principals as instructional leaders are important in the areas of identify and articulate vision and provide inspiration, provide appropriate model, foster acceptance of group goals, provide individualized support, and provide intellectual stimulation. Our schools are in need of reform with a new paradigm of instructional leadership. Therefore, the researcher suggests the following recommendations:

1. The researcher recommends conducting further research on this topic due to the limited amount of existing literature addressing teachers' perceptions of principals' roles as instructional leaders in middle schools.
2. The researcher recommends conducting further studies to examine and compare leadership preparation programs in Georgia and states across the nation.
3. The researcher recommends that principals complete a survey to examine and compare their perceptions to those of teachers.

4. The researcher recommends that a longitudinal research study be conducted to determine the long-term effects of instructional leadership roles on student achievement.



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APPENDIX A  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD  
APPROVAL LETTER



May 1, 2006

Wanda Powe-Greenwood  
488 Eagles Crossing Circle  
Riverdale, GA 30274

RE: IRB Study #06-073: Teachers' Perceptions of the Role of Principals as Instructional Leaders in High (Distinguished) and Low (Needs Improvement) Performing Middle Schools in Urban Metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia

Dear Ms. Powe-Greenwood:

The above referenced project was reviewed and approved via administrative review on 4/27/2006 in accordance with 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2). Continuing review is not necessary for this project. However, any modification to the project must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to implementation. Any failure to adhere to the approved protocol could result in suspension or termination of your project. The IRB reserves the right, at anytime during the project period, to observe you and the additional researchers on this project.

Please refer to your IRB number (#06-073) when contacting our office regarding this application.

Thank you for your cooperation and good luck to you in conducting this research project. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me at [jmiller@research.msstate.edu](mailto:jmiller@research.msstate.edu) or 325-5220.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan E. Miller".

Jonathan E. Miller  
IRB Administrator

cc: Mabel Okojie

**Office of Regulatory Compliance**

P. O. Box 6223 • 8A Morgan Street • Mailstop 9563 • Mississippi State, MS 39762 • (662) 325-3294 • FAX (662) 325-8776

APPENDIX B

PERMISSION LETTER TO RESEARCH COORDINATOR

DeKalb County School Research Department  
3770 North Decatur Road  
Decatur, GA 30032

July 25, 2005

Dear Dr. Steve Pemberton:

I am a Doctoral student in the Educational Leadership Department at Mississippi State University interested in discovering teachers' perceptions of the role of principals as instructional leaders in "distinguished" (high) and "needs improvement" (low) performing middle schools in urban Metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia. I am also interested in examining if differences exist in teachers' perceptions based on demographic information. I believe the best way to gain insight into these areas of inquiry is to conduct a study using your school district as a representation of the larger educational industry. Although the findings of this study will not benefit participants directly, by voluntarily participating they will be contributing to the production of new knowledge that may assist both researchers and education professionals in better understanding issues regarding accountability requirements in school improvement initiative.

Therefore, I am requesting approval from your department to conduct this study. Participants will only be involved in completing the Principal Leadership Questionnaire (PLQ). Their participation is completely confidential and voluntary. They may refrain from answering any question(s) or withdraw from this research study at any time. There are no potential risks to participants for participating in this study, nor should they experience any discomfort or stress. All data generated during this study will remain confidential, and only my supervising professor and I will have access to the primary data. Upon completion of this study, all questionnaires will be destroyed.

Thank you for your cooperation. I can be reached at 770.909.9663 or via e-mail @ [w\\_gwood@yahoo.com](mailto:w_gwood@yahoo.com). For additional questions or comments regarding your participation in this study, feel free to contact either Dr. Mabel Okojie at 662.325.7598 or Dr. Anthony Olinzock at 662.325.8267. The Mississippi State University Regulatory Compliance Office is also available at 662.325.5220 for information about your rights as a research subject.

Sincerely,

Wanda Powe Greenwood

APPENDIX C  
LETTER OF CONSENT

Mississippi State University  
9730 Instructional Systems, Leadership and Workforce  
Mississippi State, MS 39762

September 23, 2005

Dear Teachers:

I am a Doctoral student in the Educational Leadership Department at Mississippi State University. I am conducting a research study regarding Teachers' Perceptions on the Role of Principals as Instructional Leaders of High (Distinguished) and Low Performing (Needs Improvement) Middle Schools in Urban Metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia. Although the findings of this study will not benefit you directly, by voluntarily participating you will be contributing to the production of new knowledge that may assist both researchers and educational professionals in better understanding issues regarding accountability requirements in school improvement initiative.

Therefore, I am asking you to assist me by agreeing to participate in the study. You will be administered the *Principal Leadership Questionnaire (PLQ)*. Responses to the PLQ will not be traced to any participant and should be based on teachers' perceptions of the position regarding the role of principals as instructional leaders and not the principal of this site. You may refrain from answering any question(s) or withdraw from the research study at any time.

There are no potential risks to you for participating in this study, nor should you experience any discomfort or stress. All data generated during the study will remain confidential, and neither your name nor the school's name will be identified. The data will not be available to the administration of your school and will not be used to evaluate your performance as part of any school or system evaluation. Only my supervising professor and I will have access to the primary data. Completion and return of the questionnaire will be considered permission to use your responses in the study. Upon completion of the study, all questionnaires will be destroyed, and you will have the right to examine materials related to the study upon request.

Thank you for your cooperation. I can be reached at 770.909.9663 or via e-mail @ [w\\_gwood@yahoo.com](mailto:w_gwood@yahoo.com). For additional questions or comments regarding your participation in this study, feel free to contact either Dr. Mabel Okojie at 662.325.7598 or Dr. Anthony Olinzock at 662.325.8267. The Mississippi State University Regulatory Compliance Office is also available at 662.325.5220 for information about your rights as a research subject.

Sincerely,  
Wanda Powe Greenwood

---

Teacher's Signature

APPENDIX D  
PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE  
PERMISSION LETTER



Yahoo! My Yahoo! Mail Make Yahoo! your home page

Search the Web  Search

**YAHOO! MAIL** Welcome, **wepowe**  
[Sign Out, My Account]

Mail Home - Mail Tutorials - Help



Mail | Addresses | Calendar | Notepad | What's New - Mail For Mobile - Upgrades - Options

Check Mail | Compose | Search Mail | Search the Web

Vantage: Best Offer Yet  
Get 1 month FREE

Previous | Next | Back to Messages

Delete | Reply | Forward | Spam | Move...

- Folders** [Add - Edit]
- Inbox (227)
  - Draft
  - Sent
  - Bulk [Empty]
  - Trash [Empty]

This message is not flagged. [ Flag Message - Mark as Unread ] Printable View

**Date:** Thu, 13 Apr 2006 11:00:13 -0400

**Subject:** Re: Permission to use PLQ

**To:** "wanda powe" <wepowe@yahoo.com>

**From:** "Kenneth Leithwood" <kleithwood@oise.utoronto.ca> View Contact  
Details Add Mobile Alert

- Search Shortcuts**
- My Photos
  - My Attachments

You are welcome to use this survey for your research.

The analysis of the results is very much dependent on your research questions so we have no standard set of analytic procedures to forward.

Good luck with your work.

- See your credit score: \$0
- Netflix-Try Free No Late Fees!
- Earn a degree in 1 yr.
- Best card for bad credit

**wanda powe <wepowe@yahoo.com> writes:**  
Dr. Leithwood,

Thanks for giving me verbal permission during our telephone conversation on Monday, April 4, 2006 to use your Principal Leadership Questionnaire (PLQ). However, per your suggestion, I am sending you this e-message for documentation purposes. By the way, is there a disk or any information available to assist in disaggregating and analyzing my data. Again, thanks for your support.

Ken Leithwood, Professor  
 OISE/University of Toronto,  
 252 Bloor St. West, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1V6  
 Phone: 416-923-6641 (2622)  
 Fax: 416-926-4741

Delete | Reply | Forward | Spam | Move...

APPENDIX E

PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE (PLQ)

## PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE (PLQ)

### Instructions

The purpose of this study is to investigate teachers' perceptions of the roles of principals as instructional leaders and examine if differences exist in teachers' perceptions based on demographics. This is not an assessment of the principals at any site but a response from you on the manner in which you perceive what principals' roles should be as instructional leaders. The numerical information you provided will be used for statistical analysis only.

### Demographic Data

Place an X on the line that represents you in each category.

What is your gender?

male  
 female

What is your age?

21-29  
 30-39  
 40-49  
 50 - over

How long have you been teaching?

1-5 years  
 6-10 years  
 11-15 years  
 16-20 years  
 21 - over

What is the highest level of education received?

Bachelor's  
 Master's and Above

## Principal Leadership Questionnaire

Use the Likert Scale below and circle the number of the response that corresponds to your perception for each statement.

1 = Strongly disagree   2 = Disagree   3 = Undecided   4 = Agree   5 = Strongly Agree

Principals should:

1. have both the capacity and the judgment to overcome most obstacles.	1	2	3	4	5
2. command respect from everyone on the faculty.	1	2	3	4	5
3. excite faculty with vision of what we may be able to accomplish if we work together as a team.	1	2	3	4	5
4. make faculty members feel and act like leaders.	1	2	3	4	5
5. give the faculty a sense of overall purpose for its leadership role.	1	2	3	4	5
6. lead by “doing” rather than simply by “telling”.	1	2	3	4	5
7. symbolize success and accomplishment within the profession of education.	1	2	3	4	5
8. provide good models for faculty members to follow.	1	2	3	4	5
9. provide for our participation in the process of developing school goals.	1	2	3	4	5
10. encourage faculty members to work toward the same goals.	1	2	3	4	5
11. use problem solving with the faculty to generate school goals.	1	2	3	4	5
12. work toward whole faculty consensus in establishing priorities for school goals.	1	2	3	4	5
13. regularly encourage faculty members to evaluate our progress toward achievement of school goals.	1	2	3	4	5
14. provide for extended training to develop my knowledge relevant to being a member of the school faculty.	1	2	3	4	5
15. provide the necessary resources to my implementation of the school’s program.	1	2	3	4	5
16. treat me as an individual with unique needs and expertise.	1	2	3	4	5
17. take my opinion into consideration when initiating actions that may affect my work.	1	2	3	4	5
18. behave in a manner thoughtful of my personal needs.	1	2	3	4	5
19. challenge me to reexamine some basic assumptions I have about my work in the school.	1	2	3	4	5
20. stimulate me to think about what I am doing for the school’s students.	1	2	3	4	5
21. provide information that help me think of ways to implement the school’s program.	1	2	3	4	5