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How Distributed School Leadership Practices are Implemented in a Rural Northeast Georgia Elementary School

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HOW DISTRIBUTED SCHOOL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES ARE IMPLEMENTED IN A RURAL NORTHEAST GEORGIA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

by

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(Under the Direction of Linda M. Arthur)

ABSTRACT

Recent leadership literature calls for distributed leadership where the principal is not the sole leader in the building. Despite already being overloaded with classroom and other responsibilities, teachers are taking on leadership roles and school leadership is becoming distributed among many individuals. This study was an examination to discover how leadership becomes distributed in one rural Northeast Georgia elementary school recognized for its collaborative efforts to improve teaching and learning. A case study was conducted, and leadership practices were observed. Four questions guided this study:

- How is leadership distributed?
- What operational practices are in place so leadership can be extended to many leaders in the school?
- How do leaders complete their tasks?
- How have relationships between teachers and between the principal and teachers been affected as a result of distributed leadership?

Data were gathered through individual interviews, focus group interviews, observations, and the analysis of documents. The data show that leadership becomes

distributed in three ways: committee work, leadership based on expertise, and informal leaders engaged in leadership actions. Distributed leadership results from faculty meetings, task force meetings, and grade level horizontal team meetings.

The results of this study suggest several implications for practice. First, the positional leader must be committed to distributing leadership among many individuals. Second, a collaborative culture must be in place in order for distributed leadership to occur. Third, everyone must be working toward the same vision and goals. Fourth, distributed leadership practices must be tied to student achievement, and fifth, practices must be embedded into the school culture to allow for distributed leadership.

INDEX WORDS: Distributed leadership, Collaboration

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DEDICATION

This educational journey was truly a labor of love. I have learned many things throughout this journey, including discipline, perseverance, and the importance of family and friends. Although the attainment of this goal was a personal one, it was not accomplished alone. This dissertation is dedicated to my family and friends who all helped make this journey possible:

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." Helen Keller

New awareness of the benefits of a multi-dimensional approach to leadership was brought to light by business and introduced to education in research reports (Carnegie Foundation, 1986; Holmes Group, 1986; National Governors' Association, 1986), resulting in a broadening of the concept of school leadership. The authors of these reports were guided by the belief that teachers needed to be involved in school improvement efforts and the restructuring of public education. Leadership literature has been changing during the past few decades from the traditional studies of leader profiles, lists of personal characteristic traits and records of administrative tasks to the current examination of leadership for school improvement, democratic communities, social justice, learning for all, and ethical schools (Furman, 2002).

Restructuring, which recognized the role of teachers in problem solving and change, became the vehicle through which reform was to be accomplished to achieve school effectiveness (Smylie & Denny, 1990). Instruction and instructional leadership remained central in reform efforts (Conley, 1991; Smylie & Denny, 1990; Wasley, 1992) however; the initiatives were relaxed in favor of decentralization and to allow for increased teacher voice and participation. The success of school improvement ultimately rested on the shoulders of the teachers because they were the ones who must implement the improvement efforts in their classrooms so students could reap the benefits. Thus, it was imperative to involve teacher leaders in the school improvement process. If teachers were not involved, they were less likely to effectively carry through with the improvement

initiatives. The importance of placing teachers at the heart of the school improvement efforts and empowering them as a group was the focus of a number of studies (Hatch, Eiler-White; & Faigenbaum, 2005; Somech, 2005; Wheelan, 2005). These studies concluded that when all school personnel work together as a team to enhance teaching and instructional practices, increased student achievement results. The belief that one administrator could serve as the instructional leader for an entire school without the substantial participation of other educators was questioned. Lambert (2002) found the following:

> The old model of formal, one person leadership leaves the substantial talents of teachers largely untapped. Improvements achieved under this model are not easily sustainable; when the principal leaves, promising programs often lose momentum and fade away. As a result of these and other weaknesses, the old model has not met the fundamental challenge of providing quality learning for all students (p. 37).

Given the current policy environment of high-stakes accountability for students, schools and school districts, it was imperative that principals and teachers build mutually supportive working relationships in an effort to help all students achieve (Elmore, 1999; Johnson, Birkeland, Donaldson, Kardos, Kauffman, & Liu, 2004; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). Traditionally, teachers taught and principals managed the organizational structures surrounding instruction (Blasé & Blase, 1999; Elmore, 1999; Heck & Hallinger, 1999; Leithwood & Duke, 1999; Meyer & Rowan, 1992). Principals and teachers in some schools were learning how to share leadership to improve teaching and learning, and school districts were recognizing the importance of supporting such collaboration. These

findings support restructuring school leadership to include responsibilities for teachers as well as for administrators. The change in focus of leadership literature resulted with a move from administrators as the sole leaders in the school to a distributed view of leadership where teachers were empowered to lead and be active followers.

Background of the Study

One of the shifts in thinking about educational leadership that was emerging was the emphasis on distributed leadership in public schools. Shared leadership models of school governance represent an effort to redefine how leadership was exercised in schools and to provide favorable conditions for school reform (Kirkpatrick, 1999; Lashway, 1998; Leithwood & Duke, 1999). Based on research suggesting that changing instructional practice at its roots (the beliefs, habits, skills, and knowledge of teachers) was key to lasting reform (Fullan, 1999; Richardson, 1990), more recent initiatives have emphasized various avenues to improvement in teaching. This mindset led to the assumptions that better decisions could be made at the site by those closest to delivery, that the reflective thinking and professional knowledge of teacher practitioners would enhance decisions, and that shared decisions would encourage ownership and commitment (Gonzales, 2004; Rogers, 2005; Sherman, 2005; Smylie & Hart, 2000).

Researchers interested in a broader perspective of leadership that considers all of the activities in an organization related to improving student outcomes frame studies of leadership from a distributed perspective (Harris, 2002). Distributed leadership allowed for voices to be heard that had traditionally been silenced due to the hierarchical way schools had traditionally operated. Consequently, all participants in the organization benefit from distributed leadership: "When teachers lead, principals extend their own

capacity, students enjoy a democratic community of learners, and schools benefit from better decisions" (Barth, 2001).

In order for leadership to be distributed in a school, those in official positions of leadership must change their current practices. Blasé and Blasé (2001) relate that a new kind of principal leader was surfacing, one that was democratic and who strives to empower "others to increase their capacity and commitment to do their best for education" (p. 100). To make schools more democratic and to develop teacher leaders, "principals must develop teacher leaders, principals must use their position in the school to build leadership capacity by developing a shared vision, guiding communication on teaching and learning, and developing reciprocal relationships" (Lambert, 2003, p. 47). As the relationship between teacher leaders and their principals had also been studied, it was found that the relationship had been consistently identified to have a strong influence on teacher leadership. Studies found that the most successful schools in improving student achievement were those in which the principal empowered, developed and involved others in leading (Blasé & Blase, 2001; Harris, 2004; & Heller and Firestone, 1995).

Statement of the Problem

The current demands on schools to meet expectations for improved student performance required increased collaboration and participatory models of decision making. The current demands on school leaders to make a difference in their schools were so immense that the idea of leadership in the hands of a single person may be obsolete in today's school environment. One of the more recent initiatives embraced by some educational leaders was a rather new phenomenon which called for tapping the

expertise of others to lead as needed, an initiative known as distributed leadership. The leadership literature calls for distributed leadership where the principal was not the sole leader in the building, but teachers were leaders as well. Much was known about what works in school through the numerous reform efforts that have been implemented to turn schools around. Studies on distributed leadership practice can be found concerning teacher leadership and school improvement; whereas, studies of the actual operation of distributed leadership are rare. While it is clear from the literature that distributed leadership had a positive impact on teacher efficacy and school improvement, the actual operational practices of distributed leadership in action were not clear.

Examining a school from a distributed leadership perspective may offer new insights into how leadership extends through an organization. Efforts to re-conceptualize leadership theory in a manner more consistent with current organizational needs appear to suggest moving away from a concentrated perspective on one person to a distributed theory approach. But how could teachers take on a leadership role in the school when their days were already full? How did principals relinquish some of the power they had as a result of their administrative position to involve teacher leaders in the work to continuously improve? How could leadership become distributed among many people?

The leadership literature called for distributed leadership where the principal was not the sole leader in the building, but teachers were leaders as well. Because distributed leadership was an emerging concept, few studies had been done to see precisely how positional leaders were building capacity in teachers so teacher leadership could emerge within a distributed leadership framework. Few studies had been done as to the effect of distributed leadership on the relationships in the school and how distributed leadership

impacted the overall school environment. A case study to examine and describe how one elementary school principal had focused on building teacher leaders and distributing leadership among many leaders in the school was conducted to discover how positional leaders could distribute leadership in their schools and the possible outcomes they experienced as the result of distributed leadership.

Research Questions

While there was expansive literature about what school structures, programs, roles, and processes were necessary for instructional change, we know less about how these changes were undertaken or enacted by school leaders (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2004). In addition, Blasé and Blasé (2001) suggested that there was a lack of research that was focused on "strategies that principals use to empower teachers and the specific effects of such strategies on teachers' sense of empowerment" (p. 143). Harris (2002) also called for more empirical research to uncover how distributed leadership was currently happening in schools. A case study of a school operating under the influence of many leaders will add to this emerging field of distributed leadership.

The purpose of this research was to explore how leadership became distributed among many leaders in an elementary school. The practices in the school were examined to determine exactly what the positional leader did in the building to consciously build leadership capacity and to empower the teachers. The study focused on how tasks were carried out in the school, and it explored the practices and structures in place that allow for distributed leadership. An attempt was made to provide a thorough description of how a school had been successful with distributing leadership among many leaders and the impact distributed leadership had on the relationships and the school environment. How

the teachers and principal work toward improving teaching and learning through their leadership actions will be examined. Because distributed leadership was a new concept, this case study on distributed leadership added to this emerging field. This study addressed the following research questions:

1. How is leadership distributed?
2. What operational practices are in place so leadership can be extended to many leaders in the school?
3. How do leaders complete their tasks?
4. How have relationships between teachers and between the principal and teachers been affected as a result of distributed leadership?

Overview of Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership was a framework for understanding how the work of improving teaching and learning happens. What differentiates distributed leadership from other analyses of leadership was that, in addition to focusing on what principals and teachers do, a distributed perspective considers leadership practice, which was defined as the interactions among principals, teachers and their situation (Spillane, 2006). "By taking leadership practice in a school as the unit of analysis, rather than individual school leaders, our distributed theory of leadership focuses on how leadership practice is distributed among positional and informal leaders" (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001, p. 24).

Distributed leadership allows for voices to be heard that had been traditionally silenced due to the hierarchical way schools have operated. Consequently, all participants in the organization benefit from distributed leadership: "When teachers lead, principals

extend their own capacity; students enjoy a democratic community of learners, and schools benefit from better decisions" (Barth, 2001). Moreover, teachers have a voice in their own working conditions, which elevates the status of teachers as professionals. The change from single leader to multiple leaders in the school reduces stress for positional leaders, increases job satisfaction for teachers, and improves the school culture and learning experiences for students and teachers (Barth, 2001; Blasé & Blasé, 2001; Kratzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Lambert, 2003).

Distributed leadership was more than just the assignment of multiple leadership roles to individuals in the school organization; it was a way of thinking about instructional leadership broadly and providing a framework for understanding the how of leadership practice (Gronn, 2003; Spillane et al., 2001; Spillane, 2006). Researchers seemed to agree that distributed leadership was a means for analyzing leadership practice in schools, as opposed to specific leadership technique (Bennett, Wise, Woods, & Harvey, 2003; Elmore, 1999; Gronn, 2003; Rost, 1991; Spillane, 2006; Spillane et al., 2004).

Distributed Leadership Framework

Two frameworks influenced the focus of this research on distributed leadership. Rost's (1991) framework was chosen due to its explanation of the relationship between leaders and followers, its focus on multidirectional leadership and noncoerciveness, and its attention to mutual purpose and intended change. This framework was applicable to explaining distributed leadership because it would be beneficial to investigate the interactions of leaders and followers who are engaged in multidirectional leadership as they share mutual purposes while working toward improving their current situation. Rost

(1991) defined leadership as “an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes” (p. 102). He further broke down his definition to incorporate four principal components that were apparent in leadership practice: (1) the leadership relationship was based on the influence that was multidirectional and noncoercive, (2) multiple leaders and followers were active participants in the leadership relationship, (3) the intent of change must have a solid foundation in the leaders and followers’ beliefs, and the change must be for the long term, not a small, fix it now solution, and (4) leaders and followers must develop and share mutual purposes.

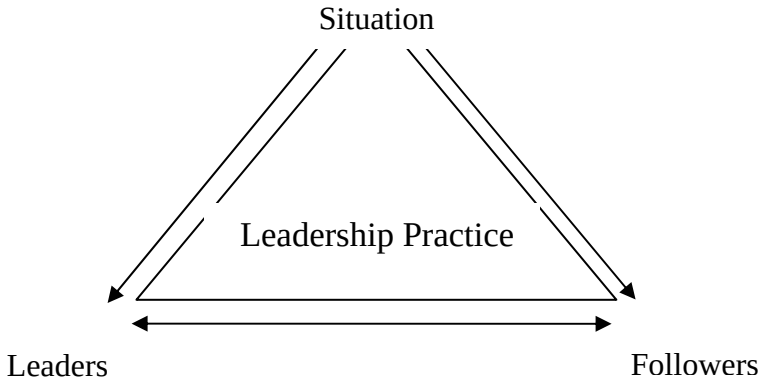
In his view of leadership, leaders and followers influence each other, and followers were engaged in a leadership act by actively following and working with the leaders. Thus, it was not just administrators who have the ability to be leaders, but teachers can also be leaders.

The second framework was a four component framework developed by Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2004). This framework was chosen because it provided a rich description of what should be considered during a distributed leadership study in a school setting. Their framework on distributed leadership (1) provides theoretical grounding for studying school embedded leadership practice, (2) indicates that school wide leadership should be the focus of leadership studies, (3) brings forth a model that unites the leaders’ work and the situation in which the work occurs, (4) calls for the need for studying the complexities of leadership (Spillane et al., 2004, p. 47-48).

In order to understand leadership practice, Spillane and Sherer (2004) created a conceptual framework of distributed leadership from a longitudinal study of elementary

school leadership which could be used to observe day to day leadership practices in a school, or the how of leadership practice (See figure 1). The distributed perspective was about leadership practice, formed through the collective interactions of school leaders, followers, and the aspects of their situation. Leaders were the individuals within the school who work together, or separately, to organize the school community to improve instruction. Followers were individuals who were influenced by leaders to improve their instructional practices, and who, in turn, influenced the leaders. The situation was an outcome of leadership and presents itself through material artifacts, such as forms, memos, and meeting agendas and through organizational structures, such as grade level teams and classroom structure. Regarding organizational structures, Spillane et al. (2004) considers both formal and informal organizational structures within the school in their definition of leadership practice. Formal team meetings and the informal networks teachers establish outside of these formal meeting were potential contributors to leadership practice.

Figure 1: Distributed Leadership Framework



Burns' (1978) work on transformational leadership influenced both Rost's (1991) and Spillane's et al. (2004) frameworks. In transformational leadership, leaders and followers in the leadership relationship must work toward long term sustainable change that has significant value. Burns (1978) explained that people in the leadership relationship cause each other to elevate levels of motivation and morality; "Transcending leadership is dynamic leadership in a sense that the leaders throw themselves into a relationship with followers who will feel 'elevated' by it and often become more active themselves, thereby creating new cadres of leaders" (p. 20). For distributed leadership to occur there must be a transformation from traditional, hierarchical practice with few leaders to a shared leadership perspective with a number of leaders and active followers.

Significance

The current efforts in public schools to meet the expectations for improved student performance require increased collaboration and participatory models of decision making based on distributing leadership. The current literature on school leadership was limited because it was grounded in theory that focused on individuals rather than the total leadership in the school. It also provided limited information regarding its practical application in school systems. The literature on distributed leadership offered a new point of view of understanding leadership in a total school by considering it as a cooperative concept of the total school, not just that of a single individual.

Distributed leadership was a growing and developing phenomenon. Because it was a relatively new concept, there has not been a large amount of research conducted regarding how exactly leadership becomes distributed among many leaders nor was there a large amount of evidence as to the impact of distributed leadership on principals,

teachers, and students. Issues regarding how distributed leadership worked, and how well, had not been sufficiently addressed by those who may support its implementation. A direct investigation of how distributed leadership was actually accomplished had not been clearly established. To contribute to the literature on distributed leadership and understand how distributed leadership was exercised, this research explored how leadership became distributed among many leaders in an elementary school. The practices in the school were looked at to determine exactly what the positional leader did in the building to consciously build leadership capacity and to empower the teachers.

An examination of the school from a distributed leadership perspective may offer new insights into how leadership extends throughout an organization. The researcher attempted to describe characteristics of distributed leadership in one setting that may provide a baseline for other school leaders. The results of this study provided insight regarding how leadership was distributed within one elementary school in rural Georgia, including the conditions that both enhance and interfere with a distributed leadership approach. The results had significance for school practitioners by providing knowledge concerning new roles and working relationships for teachers, as well as administrators. The researcher hoped to gain insight into how leadership could be distributed to involve all stakeholders.

Procedures

A case study was used to gather data for this research study. A case study provided the researcher with an opportunity to describe the phenomenon of distributed leadership in context and to achieve a deep understanding of the situation and its meaning for the people influenced by the situation (Merriam, 1998). In qualitative case studies, data tends

to be gathered through participant observation and in-depth interviewing, with the researcher's primary interest one of understanding a specific case. The researcher described in depth the particulars of a case in order to shed light on the case. A qualitative data collection method was used to understand the leadership practice in the school because distributed leadership is the analysis of leadership activity, which is defined in this study as the interactions among the principals, teachers, and organizational structures and materials artifacts. The researcher examined and attempted to enhance understanding of theory by studying distributed leadership in context. Data was gathered in a variety of ways to achieve validity of research findings including; individual interviews, focus group interviews, observations, collecting pertinent school documents, and the collection of survey results from a study conducted on the school in the spring of 2005. The interviews were audio taped and the transcripts were used to identify codes that emerged based on the four areas of interest for this study. The codes were arranged hierarchically to produce major themes. The documents were examined in light of findings to determine how they support or negate the codes.

To achieve quality data analysis, the researcher used the strategies of triangulation of data, exploration of researcher bias, a peer reviewer, and participant checks. All names were changed to maintain confidentiality. The research questions in this study were investigative and demonstrated an interest in understanding how distributed leadership was actually exercised in the school. This study addressed the following questions:

1. How is leadership distributed?
2. What operational practices are in place so leadership can be extended to many leaders in the school?

3. How do leaders complete their tasks?
4. How have relationships between teachers and between the principal and teachers been affected as a result of distributed leadership?

Site Selection

The school selected for this study, Lakeside City Elementary School, was a small rural K-5 school in Northeast Georgia that had demonstrated steady improvements on state assessments and student achievement and had been identified for exemplary shared leadership within the Lakeside School District. The district had identified this school as operational to fully operational on the Georgia Keys in Leadership, Georgia's School Standards, highlighting a high level of consistency in their teachers being involved in data analysis, reviewing student work, and making decisions about instructional practices. School improvement was viewed at Lakeside City School as a collective responsibility, and a collaborative effort existed for shared decision making and problem solving. Opportunities existed to reinforce the development and use of staff members' leadership skills, including mentoring and professional development programs to support instructional leadership (Georgia DOE, 2007).

Lakeside City School was chosen as the site for this case study due to the participation of the principal and teachers in the Modern Red School-House Institute Initiative. The school received a grant over a three-year period to assist the efforts to help advance principles for educating children in the 21st century, which "calls for changes from a bureaucratically organized school to one based on participative management, allowing more flexibility, increased communication among all personnel, greater professionalism among teachers, and improved collaboration and cross-training, or a decrease in

specialization" (Kilgore and Jones, 2002, p. 4). The Modern Red School-House initiative used a capacity building design that built on the strengths of the school, using a detailed analysis of the school's characteristics and student achievement data as a starting point, then developed a customized implementation program that provided the school with tools and strategies to attain high academic standards.

At the completion of the participation, a team of researchers conducted a study of the school, including an online survey. The results of the survey showed the presence of distributed leadership and teacher leadership embedded in the school culture. As a result of those data, Lakeside City School was recommended to be the site for this study on the influence of distributed leadership on teacher leadership from the Regional Educational Service Agency, who served as the program coordinator for the Modern Red Initiative. Participants at Lakeside.

The participants for this study were teachers and administrators at Lakeside City School, consisting of 55 certified teachers and 2 administrators with Bachelor or higher degrees at Lakeside City School during the 2007-2008 academic year. There were 53 females and 4 males with 42 white and 15 African American teachers. Purposeful sampling was used for the selection of the participants in this case study.

Instrumentation

The research questions in this study were investigative and demonstrated an interest in understanding how distributed leadership was actually exercised in the school. Specifically, this study explored four questions related to distributed leadership practices in an elementary public school. Data for this study were collected from the participants through individual interviews and focus group interviews (which will serve as the

primary source of data and to solicit perspectives regarding school leadership practices), through a review of documents (such as those referenced to during the interviews and observations), and through observations of the school leaders.

Data Collection

The researcher obtained approval to conduct this study by submitting application with all supporting documentation to the Georgia Southern Institutional Review Board (IRB). After approval was secured, the researcher used several strategies for this study, including: (1) individual interviews, (2) focus group interviews, (3) observations, (4) document collection, and (5) collection of survey results from a study conducted on the school in 2005. A presentation and invitation to participate in the study was given at a faculty meeting to the teachers of Lakeside City.

Interviews consisted of formal leaders, informal leaders, and followers at the school, using Spillane et al.'s (2004) framework. In addition, material artifacts and documents were gathered from school correspondence, emails, grade level and task force meeting minutes, and other pertinent documents. Documents were gathered because they were essential to leadership practice.

Data Analysis

To examine how leadership becomes distributed and its impact, the researcher gathered data through individual interviews, focus group interviews, observations, and documents. A variety of strategies were used to analyze the different sources of data collected. Information from the interviews about school leadership practice served as the lead for observations in staff meetings, grade level meetings, etc, that will be the context in which leadership occurs. The daily instructional leadership tasks mentioned in

interviews will be examined, as well as provide an opportunity to witness leaders and followers in action. When all the data was compiled, coded, and read and reread, a master list of coding themes was created. "Codes should be developed very close to the data and should be redundant and intersecting" (Carspecken, 1996, p. 150). The codes were arranged hierarchically to produce major themes that emerged from the data. These themes were used to inform the four questions guiding this study.

Delimitations

In an effort to protect participants from any potential repercussions resulting from their participation in this study, each participant was provided with an informed consent and their identity remained anonymous in the discussion. Pseudonyms were used. Since this study was conducted in one public elementary school in Northeast Georgia, the demographics may not be representative of other schools in the state or country. Therefore, the project focused on providing an in-depth study on how distributed leadership practices extended throughout one setting where the perceptions of the selected participants were explored to reflect in their school.

Summary

Several authors have noted that the current literature on school leadership was limited because it was grounded in theory that focused on individuals rather than on the total leadership in an organization. Distributed leadership for public schools promised a fresh perspective, yet its research base was limited. The concept of distributed leadership was based on understanding leadership in a school organization by considering it as a collective idea, not the attributes of a single person. The answer to a multi-dimensional approach to leadership may be answered by understanding what school leadership should

look like in today's world. Helen Keller's quote, "*Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much*" pointed to the current efforts in public schools to meet the expectations for improved student performance by increasing collaboration and participatory models of decision making based on extending leadership.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of the literature review is to present a review and summary of the literature regarding the shift in schooling in the United States over time and the changing practice of school leadership with the recent call for distributed leadership.

The History of Education in the United States

Schools in the United States have been expected to change the educational purpose and the curriculum in order to meet social, legal, political, and economic influences. As these influences continue to shift and evolve, they will continue to impact the educational system in the United States. In order to improve schools, strong leadership is needed. Just as schooling has shifted and evolved, school leadership has also changed over time.

During colonial times, the purpose of schools was “to reinforce religious, ethnic, and political traditions and institutions of those in control and was only available to the elite, white and wealthy citizens whose learning was focused on Latin, Greek, Hebrew, geography, history, and mathematics” (Urban & Wagoner, 2000, p.61). The needs of the agrarian society established the school calendar, thus, social, political, and economic influences impacted the educational practices during the agrarian society in the United States.

With the shift to industrialism came a shift in education. Common schools became more prominent and laws for compulsory school attendance for all children resulted. With the changes in the way businesses operated and the increase of factories, the success of the economy at that time was based on using minimally educated people who would be willing and able to put up with the tedium of work on the assembly lines (Reigeluth,

1994). The change of the economy's need also impacted family life with families moving to cities and children moving away from home to go to work in the factories. Providing moral education to elementary students and a differentiated education to the high school students was the purpose of education during this time. "Politically, differentiation was justified by the notion that the system provided equal opportunity for all students to develop to the fullest of their abilities" (Urban & Wagoner., 2000, p. 209). The educational system was impacted again by outside influences during the industrial age.

Now society is entering the informational age. Businesses are changing their practices to being team oriented and dependent upon the mental capacities of the workers (Reigeluth, 1994). Due to societal changes many of today's children are dependent on the school to meet needs they are not getting at home: stability, food, affection, and a hope for a better life. Thus, schools have the challenge of providing a high quality education to students with varying learning styles, abilities, and needs amid the current social, legal, political and economic influences.

A second wave of school reform surfaced during the mid to late 1980s and continued through the 1990s. Its aim was "to free schools from the confines of local, state, and federal bureaucracy and to empower those who were active in the school community to make decisions that affect the community" (Urban & Wagoner, 2000, p. 357). Thus, the emergence of site based management and shared decision making surfaced. (DuFour and Eaker (1998) describe this period, the restructuring movement, as one possessing optimism and high hopes because stakeholders would have input into their local educational practices.

While much school reform was focused on reform through standards, assessments, accountability, and funding changes, a second reform movement was occurring at the same time; the comprehensive reform movement. The school was the unit where reform would take place by implementing a demanding curriculum, embedding staff development into the school culture, increasing parental involvement, frequently assessing student achievement, and effectively managing school practices. (Reigeluth, 1994; Slavin, 2000; Staresina, 2004).

Currently schools continue to face the pressure of standardization and accountability under the current *No Child Left Behind*. Four elements provide the foundation for the *No Child Left Behind* plan: accountability, providing freedom for states and communities, implementing research based teaching methods in the classroom to enhance learning, and parental choice (No Child Left Behind website).

Historical Overview of Educational Reform

Education in America has been under the surge of a major storm for over three decades. Beginning with reports in the late 1960s of the declining technological superiority of America over Russia in the space program and with the international reports of American inferiority in math and science, discontent with education emerged. A series of studies, conducted by leading educational researchers of that period, uncovered a number of problems with and inadequacies in educational leadership, organizational structures, standards, and accountability (Boyer, 1983; Goodlad, 1984).

The effective schools movement was the first reform movement, and it sought out and examined educational practices in superior schools to identify “knowledge and skills needed to articulate an instructional vision, secure widespread engagement in that vision,

and promote successful fulfillment" (Lemanhieu, Roy, & Foss, 1997, P. 582). Other research studies during the effective schools movement by Edmonds (1979) and Brookover and Lezette (1979), identified positive characteristics associated with student achievement in schools found to be effective; indicating that the principal's strong instructional leadership was essential to school effectiveness. Effective school research provided hope that schools across the nation could become effective by following prescriptive remedies, and the reform initiatives that followed targeted perceived teacher failings, tightening top-down control and mandating standardization in response (Cooper & Conley, 1991; Smylie & Denny, 1990).

Second wave reform efforts were significantly lead by two 1986 reports, *Time For Results* (National Governors' Association, 1986) and *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century* (Carnegie Forum, 1986). The standards based approach to reform was criticized by the *Time For Results* report and called for restructuring that would place authority and responsibility for decisions on school districts and schools themselves. Recommendations from *A Nation Prepared* (Carnegie Forum, 1986) called for shared governance and decentralization of authority in schools and teachers having "a greater voice in the decisions that affect the school" (p. 24). Based on second wave research findings, these recommendations addressed additional school effectiveness characteristics that had been identified: parental involvement, teacher collaboration and collegiality, professional development, and site-based management (Glickman, Gordan, & Ross-Gordan, 2001).

The effective schools movement had a profound effect on educational reform. In the first wave, the emphasis was on the principal as instructional leader. In the second wave,

however, the emphasis shifted to participative leadership, bringing together three concepts in school leadership: instructional leadership, teacher leadership, and shared governance.

School Leadership in the United States

Schools in the United States have been expected to change the educational purpose and the curriculum in order to meet social, legal, political, and economic influences. Just as schooling has shifted and evolved, so has school leadership changed over time.

Through out most of the 20th century, American public schools have been traditionally structured according to the principals of classical organizational theory (Hart 1995; Pellicer & Anderson, 1995; Rost, 1991). Schools were organized as bureaucracies, with formal rules and regulations, hierarchical structures, and strict lines of authority. From this bureaucratic-rational and structural-functional perspective, the predominant perspective of schools during the 60s, 70s, and 80s, school were viewed as "closed systems whose purpose was to maintain equilibrium as they strove to accomplish set goals or purposes" (Heck & Hallinger, 1999, p. 144). In accordance with this perspective, the role of the principal as school leader was to manage the maintenance of the school's equilibrium. As times have changed, this organizational structure has outlived its ability to meet school needs, and the emphasis of the principal's role has shifted from manager to leader. While this organizational model has continued to characterize most public schools, varying leadership models have influenced the ways in which principals have led schools for the past century.

Leadership theorists sought to discover what made a leader effective, and early leadership studies centered on traits of individual leaders. Early leadership definitions at

the beginning of the nineteenth century were influenced by the great man theory. The great man theory was based on the assumptions that people are born leaders and that leaders arise when needed. The concept of one main leader leading and the followers remained virtually unchanged for decades. (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Razik & Swanson, 1995; Rost, 1991). Rost, 1991, summarizes the history of leadership definitions in the United States:

- In the 1920s, the term leadership was nearly interchangeable with the term management with an emphasis on control and efficiency.
- The 1930s brought forth the idea of a leader working with a group of followers around an interest determined by the leader.
- The 1940s softened on the concept of control of followers and presented the view of leaders working with others in group settings.
- The 1950s offers defining leadership as an influence relationship between leaders and followers working with shared purposes.
- In the 1960s, leadership was viewed as a behavior where leaders direct and coordinate the work of followers.
- In the 1970s, the idea of leadership as management surfaced. During this time, leadership actions occurred through starting and sustaining work to achieve organizational goals.
- In 1978, Burns' definition of transformational leadership began to change the concept of leadership (Rost, 1991).

Burns (1978) made the distinction between transactional leadership and transformational leadership. In transactional leadership, the people have recognized

similar purposes and the people interact to achieve the purposes. After the purposes of the interaction have been fulfilled, the people may not interact again as they no longer have a purpose to do so. In transformation leadership, however, leaders and followers are bound together based on morals, values, and motivation. “Leadership…is thus inseparable from followers’ needs and goals. The essence of the leader-follower relation is the interaction of persons with different levels of motivation and of power potential, including skill, in pursuit of a common or at least joint purpose” (Burns, p. 19). Consequently, the leaders and followers do not part ways but continuously work to achieve shared purposes as they improve themselves. These traditional leadership models have influenced school leadership during this century. These models can be considered traditional because they share a common theme: the leader (usually the principal) uses his or her power or influence to make others (teachers) do something (like achieve organizational goals) (Foster, 1986).

Leadership literature has also changed during the last few decades from the traditional studies of leader profiles, lists of personal characteristic traits and records of administrative tasks to the current examination of leadership for school improvement, democratic communities, social justice, learning for all, and ethical schools (Furman, 2002). Similarly, Morgan (1997) explains that leadership is moving from traditional, male-valued leadership style to a feminine approach, focusing on “building communities based on inclusive relationships characterized by trust, support, encouragement, and mutual respect” (Morgan, 1997, p. 136). The role of the principal has been redefined by calling for principals to serve as instructional leaders, who directly influence the

instructional programs of schools and focus on student learning (Blasé et al., 1999; Weber, 1989).

Accordingly, Lambert (1998) explains that leadership involves learning, many people, and sharing of power and authority. Lambert defines leadership as "reciprocal learning processes that enable participants to construct and negotiate meanings leading to a shared purpose of schooling" (p.9). Similarly, Spillane et al. (2004) define leadership as the "identification, acquisition, allocation, coordination, and the use of social, material, cultural resources necessary to establish the conditions for the possibility of teaching and learning" (p. 16) with the assumptions that school leadership should be understood through tasks and leadership is distributed through leaders, followers, and context. The focus shift in leadership literature is resulting with a move from the administrator being viewed as the sole leader in a school to a distributed view of leadership where many people are empowered to lead (Fullan, 2001; Lambert, 2003; Spillane et al., 2004).

Teacher Leadership

Teacher leadership is neither novel nor new. Teachers have always had the formal lead in their classrooms and have informally led outside their classrooms. Over the past decade, teachers' associations and others studying school reform have called for new organizational structures and increased teacher involvement as leaders (Carnegie Forum, 1986; Darling-Hammond, 1987; Holmes Group, 1986). The response to the restructuring wave in teacher leadership was the promotion of teachers to formal leadership structures, resulting in the preservation of hierarchical structures that second wave reform sought to replace (Smylie, 1995).

Certain teacher qualities are prerequisites to teacher leadership success. Childs-Bowen, Moller, and Scriver (2000) found that teacher leaders must first be professionally competent as teachers, must be professionally reputable and credible, and must be approachable. Wilson (1993) studied teacher leaders and her findings suggest that teacher leaders are seen by their peers as hard working, involved, creative, gregarious, and energetic individuals. They are described as resources to, supporters of, and advocates for other teachers.

Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership is more than just the assignment of multiple leadership roles to individuals in the school organization; it was a way of thinking about instructional leadership broadly and providing a framework for understanding the how of leadership practice (Gronn, 2003; Spillane et al., 2001; Spillane, 2006). Researchers seemed to agree that distributed leadership was a means for analyzing leadership practice in schools, as opposed to specific leadership technique (Bennett, et al., 2003; Elmore, 1999; Gronn, 2003; Rost, 1991; Spillane, 2006; Spillane et al., 2004). Bennett et al. (2003) and Gronn (2003) recognize that information about distributed leadership are lacking in the literature. “There are few extended, analytical discussions of the concept of distributed leadership” (Gronn, 2003, p. 27).

A series of studies was conducted in the early 1950s by Cecil Gibb at Brigham Young University, Michigan State College, and the University of Colorado. From the studies performed at these research centers, a theory of group action emerged, and distributed leadership became a basic principle of participative action. Gibb’s (1951) research included field observations, laboratory experiments, and group dynamic experiences.

Some 50 years later, Gronn (2000), an advocate of Gibb, continued to research distributed properties of leadership. Gronn's complex perspective of distributed leadership was grounded in a theory of activity. It was his belief that collaborative work helped to spread the detrimental impact of risk taking. In his estimation, pooling of expertise and maximizing sources of information and data, allowed new possibilities for the performance of collaborative work.

Long term research projects, which were exploratory and formative in nature, were conducted to learn the language of accountability as it was used and how it operated in schools. These research studies found that schools were more likely to have more powerful accountability systems if the values and norms were aligned with collective expectations (Elmore, 2000).

Bennett et al. (2003) reviewed the literature on distributed leadership to understand how researchers define the concept and what impact such leadership had on practice. They explored distributed leadership studies from 1996 to 2002 and found little agreement on a common definition. They concluded that distributed leadership is best thought of as "…a way of thinking about leadership. If we understood it this way, it challenges many current assumptions about the nature of leadership and the community within which it occurs" (p. 2). A distributed view of leadership challenges the assumption that leadership is confined to the head of the organization, specifically the principal of a school.

Harris (2004) offers a different perspective on distributed leadership by questioning whether of not distributed leadership improves testing and learning. She defines distributed leadership as "maximizing the human capacity within the school

organization" whereby principals and teachers take the responsibility for school improvement (Harris, 2004, p. 14). Harris concludes from her analysis of case studies done on 22 improving schools that the schools most successful in improving student achievement were those where the principal empowered, developed and involved others in leading. She suggests that there is a connection, not a correlation, between distributed leadership and school improvement.

Elmore (1999) expands on Harris's (2004) notion of building a school's collective expertise by referring to distributed leadership as "multiple sources of guidance and direction, following the contours of expertise in an organization, made coherent through a common culture" (p. 15). Elmore believed that distributed leadership could serve as a powerful tool for large scale instructional improvement within schools and school districts. Elmore's distributed leadership definition is based on the distributed leadership theory created by Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2001; 2004).

Spillane et al. (2001; 2004) agree that distributed leadership involves multiple people within the school, but their distributed leadership perspective values not only shared leadership but the practice of leadership as well. They believe that researchers must focus on leadership practice in order to gain a complete understanding of instructional leadership in schools. Spillane, Hallett, and Diamond (2003) define instructional leadership as "an influence that motivates, enables, and supports teachers' efforts to learn about and improve their instructional practices" (p.1). Therefore, leadership practice includes the activities engaged in by school personnel as it relates to teaching and learning.

A variety of models and definitions of distributed leadership exist, but all share the commonality that leadership must be distributed among many leaders throughout the school and that leadership increases through interactions (Furman, 2002). Distributed leadership is more than delegating tasks, rather, distributed leadership is having people within the school community take on roles, engage in acts of leadership, and share with others what they learn. It involves more than just the assignment of multiple leadership roles to individuals in the school organization; it is a way of thinking about instructional leadership broadly and provides a framework for understanding the how of leadership practice. A distributed perspective is important because the school leadership research has overwhelmingly focused on the role of principals, specifically because principals who are instructional leaders are generally associated with efforts for preparing students to reach local, state, and federal standards (Blasé & Blasé, 1999; Heck & Hallinger, 1999; Leithwood & Duke, 1999). Researchers seem to agree that distributed leadership is a means for analyzing leadership practice in schools, as opposed to a specific leadership technique The focus shift in leadership literature is resulting with a move from the administrator being viewed as the sole leader in a school to a distributed view of leadership where many people are empowered to lead (Bennett et al., 2003; Fullan, 2001; Gronn, 2003; Lambert, 2002; Spillane et al., 2004; Spillane & Sherer, 2004). Distributed leadership is a leadership phenomenon where leadership activities should not be handled by one individual but should be shared among several people in an organization or group (Lambert, 2002; Spillane, 2006; Spillane & Sherer, 2004).

Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, and Hamm (2002) refer to distributed leadership as parallel leadership:

> Parallel leadership, as we define it, encourages a relatedness between teacher leaders and administrator leaders that activates and sustains the knowledge-generating of schools: Parallel leadership is a process where by teacher leaders and their principals engage in collective action to build school capacity. It embodies mutual respect, shared purpose, and allowance for individual expression (p.38).

Furthermore, Crowther et al. (2002) explain that parallel leadership has three important components: mutualism, which involves having mutual trust and respect between positional and informal leaders; a sense of shared purpose, which helps leaders establish common goals to work collaboratively, and; allowance for individual expression, which includes respecting others for their individual opinions and ideas.

Smylie, Conley, and Marks (2002) summarize three additional views of distributed leadership and research findings regarding distributed leadership in practice. First they refer to Firestone's research. Firestone and Heller examine how six particular tasks, such as promoting vision, handling disturbances, and distributing resources, were performed; the researchers found that a variety of people in different roles complete the tasks. Second, Ogawa and Bossert's view of distributed leadership was also explored. They stress that leadership does not occur individually but occurs through interactions among individuals: "Ogawa and Bossert describe leadership as the multidirectional flow of influence through networks of roles that constitute organization" (p. 173). Finally, thoughts and findings of Pounder, Ogawa, and Adams were shared. Their study uncovered that people in a variety of roles can lead and thus have impact on school performance. Smylie et al. (2002) conclude that these three models of distributed leadership show that teachers have the ability to engage in important leadership tasks.

A review of the literature was done by Bennett et al. (2003) on distributed leadership to understand how the concept, and what impact, such leadership had on practice. They reviewed studies from 1996 to 2002 on distributed leadership and related leadership concepts (dispersed, delegated, and democratic leadership) and discovered little agreement on a common definition, few practical studies, and none that documented the impact of distributed leadership on student outcomes. They concluded that distributed leadership is best thought of as "a way of thinking about leadership. If we understand it in this way, it challenges many current assumptions about the nature of leadership and the community within which it occurs" (Bennett et al., 2003, p.2). The assumption that the principal is the head of the school is challenged by a distributed view of leadership.

Gronn (2003) acknowledges that distributed leadership is not a new concept, in that the distribution of leadership has always existed in schools in the form of decision making entities such as committees and teams. He suggests that the distribution of leadership has been overlooked in the literature because of the assumption that the head authority figure of the organization is also the one who leads. Gronn (2003) suggests that distributed leadership is a useful analytical tool for understanding schools. He notes that principals are beginning to recognize that teachers' support and participation are essential to effective leadership, and that principals' roles have intensified and expanded, making it critical to engage others in leadership tasks. He defines distributed leadership as a "loosening of previously tightly defined and interpreted individual role boundaries, and the exploitation of informal workplace interdependencies in accomplishing tasks" (Gronn, 2003, p.1).

Elmore (1999) believes that distributed leadership can serve as a powerful tool for large scale instructional improvement within schools. He refers to distributed leadership as “multiple sources of guidance and direction, following the contours of expertise in an organization, made coherent through a common culture” (Elmore, 1999, p.15). This does not minimize the contribution of administrative leaders who are ultimately responsible for the organization’s performance; rather, distributed leadership is a complex endeavor that requires the expertise of multiple people. Elmore (2002) also presents a distributed leadership model for school improvement. According to Elmore (2002), the idea of distributed leadership is based on determining who in the school possesses the skills, knowledge, and desire to complete particular tasks. “Organizing these diverse competencies into a coherent whole requires understanding how individuals vary, how their particular knowledge and skill of one person can be made to complement that of another, and how the competencies of some can be shared with others” (p.15). Elmore stresses that when using distributed leadership for school improvement, leaders must focus on improved student learning. Five principles form the base for distributed leadership for large scale school improvement according to Elmore: (1) Leadership is for improving of instruction and performance; (2) continuous learning is necessary for improving instruction; (3) learning requires modeling; (4) learning causes shifts in leadership; (5) the exercise of authority requires reciprocity of accountability and capacity (pp. 20-21).

Spillane et al. (2003) agree that distributed leadership involves multiple people within the organization, but their distributed leadership perspective values not only shared leadership but the practice of leadership. They believe that researchers must focus on

leadership practice in order to gain a complete understanding of instructional leadership in schools. “Instructional leadership is the influence relationship that motivates, enables, and supports teachers’ efforts to learn about and change their instructional practice” (Spillane et al., 2003, p.1). In order to understand leadership practice, Spillane et al. created a conceptual framework of distributed leadership from a longitudinal study of elementary school leadership. In their Distributed Leadership Project (DLP), the research team collected data in thirteen high poverty schools. Leaders are the individuals within the school who work together to organize the school community to improve instruction. Followers are individuals who are influenced by leaders to improve their instructional practices and also influence the leaders. Basically, a follower in one situation could be the leader in another situation. The situation is represented by: 1.) material artifacts, such as meeting agendas, memos, and forms, 2.) figurative artifacts, such as the vocabulary used, and 3.) organizational structures, both formal (team meetings) and informal (teacher networks) (Spillane et al., 2004).

Spillane et al. (2004) studied how leadership activity encompasses the situation, the followers, and the leaders. They also documented the importance of the situation, including the tools, artifacts, organizational structures and routines, and how they potentially enable or constrain conversations between leaders and followers. This study revealed the importance of analyzing leadership at the school level, rather than analyzing at the individual level, in order to understand the benefits of both multiple leader and practice aspects of distributed leadership. “This framework adds to the growing field of research on distributed leadership because it provides theoretical grounding for studying school-embedded leadership practice, indicates that school-wide leadership should be the

focus of leadership studies, brings forth a model that unites the leaders' work and the situation in which the work occurs, and calls for the need for studying the complexities of leadership (Spillane, 2003, pp 47-48).

Harris (2002) summarizes what distributed leadership looks like in practice based on findings from two research studies. Harris explains that in distributed leadership the formal leaders involve the informal leaders in becoming responsible for leadership in schools. The responsibility of the formal leaders is to not be the head leaders in the building, but it is to hold the pieces of the organization together in a productive relationship. Their central task is to create a common culture of expectations around the use of individual skills and abilities. Harris found that the formal leaders purposely decided to distribute leadership in their buildings and consequently established practices and incentives to allow for the sharing of leadership. Harris (2004) also suggests that there is a connection, not a correlation, between distributed leadership and school improvement. She questions whether or not distributed leadership improves teaching and learning and defines distributed leadership as "maximizing the human capacity within the organization" (Harris, 2004, p.14). From her analysis of case studies on schools, she concludes that the schools most successful in improving student achievement are those where the principal empowered, developed, and involved others in leading.

Researchers also refer to distributed leadership as shared leadership or parallel leadership and may define leadership differently, but there are many similarities in their descriptions of what distributed leadership is and what must be done for distributed leadership to impact student learning. They agree that leadership should be distributed among many leaders instead of being held by the positional leaders alone, and they stress

the importance of recognizing strengths of individuals within the organization and building on those strengths when sharing the leadership. In addition, the researchers stress developing shared values, a vision, a mission, and goals focused on improving student learning to guide leadership actions (Burke, 2003; Furman, 2002; Harris, 2002; Spillane et al., 2004).

Several studies have examined the relationship between distributed leadership and school restructuring efforts, and these studies have pointed out how engaging teachers in school improvement practices supported the distribution of leadership across the school (Copland, 2003; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Spillane, et al., 2001). A distributed perspective is important because the school leadership research has overwhelmingly focused on the role of principals, specifically because principals who are instructional leaders are generally associated with successful efforts for preparing students to reach local, state, and federal standards (Blasé & Blasé, 1999; Leithwood & Duke, 1999). Although the importance of the principal is well documented, principals can neither achieve nor sustain improvements in student learning by themselves (Elmore, 1999; Spillane et al., 2003).

Distributed leadership is a growing and developing phenomenon. Because it is a rather new concept, there has not been a large amount of research conducted regarding exactly how leadership becomes distributed among many leaders nor is there a large amount of evidence as to the impact of distributed leadership on principals, teachers, and students.

Building Leadership Capacity

In order for distributed leadership to occur, traditional structural conditions must change and leadership capacity must be built among those in the school. The first step to

building leadership capacity is having individuals become aware of their individual capacity (Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, Hann, 2002; Harris, 2002; Kratzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Lambert, 2003). Teachers can become aware of their strengths through reflection and through interactions with others (Lambert, 2003). Most importantly, to build leadership capacity it is crucial for positional leaders to build teachers' self confidence in their ability to take on leadership roles and tasks (Harris, 2003; Lambert, 2003), and the positional leaders need to draw on these strengths. Moreover, principals need to encourage individuals to build on their strengths and develop their weaknesses by involving teachers in professional development and encouraging collaboration with others.

Additionally, leaders need to work to create a common view or a moral purpose to guide school practices and decisions (Crowther et al., 2002; Fullan, 2001). Leaders and followers must work collaboratively to develop the shared values; the moral purpose cannot belong only to the head leaders, but all in the leadership relationship must agree. Many theorists support the assertion that leaders and followers must be clear on the shared guiding values when making decisions (Burns, 1978; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Fullan, 2001; Lambert, 2003, Lashway, 1998).

Building leadership capacity is based on increasing knowledge and skills. Having individuals explore their individual capacity, creating a common view, keeping on track during the school improvement process, developing a culture of inquiry and collaboration are key components of building leadership capacity. Professional development ties to the shared values of the school, reflection, conversations, and collaboration are key activities that participants engage in while increasing their knowledge and skills.

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Principals need to encourage individuals to build on their strengths and develop their weaknesses by involving teachers in professional development and encouraging collaboration with others. Most importantly, to build leadership capacity it is crucial for positional leaders to build teachers' self confidence in their ability to take on leadership roles and tasks (Harris, 2003; Lambert, 2003). Leaders need to work to create a common view or a moral purpose to guide school practices and decisions (Crowther et al., 2002; Fullan, 2001). Leaders and followers must work collaboratively to develop the shared values; the moral purpose cannot belong only to the head leaders, but all in the leadership relationship must agree. Many theorists support the assertion that leaders and followers must be clear on the shared guiding values when making decisions (Burns, 1978; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Fullan, 2001; Lambert, 2003, Lashway, 1998).

In order for the principal to be an effective leader, Lambert (2003) emphasizes that the principal must first be grounded in his own values and then must share these with others. The principal must examine the current schools practices and collaborate with teachers, parents, and students to develop norms, mutual understandings, a shared vision, leadership capacity in others, a clear communication process, a culture of inquiry, goals and plans of action for student learning, and build trust (Lambert, 2003).

Blasé and Blase (2001) add that to empower teachers, principals must model, build, and support a trusting environment, structure school to allow for collaboration, use professional development resources to support shared decision making, focus on teaching and learning, model professional behavior, praise teachers, and set up effective ways of communication.

Building leadership capacity is based on increasing knowledge and skills. Having individuals explore their individual capacity, creating a common view, keeping on track during the school improvement process, developing a culture of inquiry and collaboration are key components of building leadership capacity. Professional development ties to the shared values of the school, reflection, conversations, and collaboration are key activities that participants engage in while increasing their knowledge and skills.

Distributed leadership is a growing and developing phenomenon. Because it is a rather new concept, there has not been a large amount of research conducted regarding exactly how leadership becomes distributed among many leaders. Distributed leadership includes everyone who wants to be a leader or active follower. “Leadership is the professional work of everyone in the school. The days of the principal as the lone instructional leaders are over. Everyone has the right, responsibility, and ability to be a leader” (Lambert, 2002).

Structural Changes for Distributed Leadership

Time constraints, hierarchy of positional authority, relationships with colleagues, and the desire to maintain a conflict-free environment are among the structural obstacles that impede the emergence of multiple leaders. The lack of resources, skills, trust, and support from positional leaders also hinder the involvement of additional leaders. Communication

structures, physical proximity, and assigned teaching roles can also be impediments (Blasé & Blasé, 2001; Lambert, 2003).

Some schools have successfully implemented strategies to overcome the structural barriers. Kratzenmeyer and Moller (2001) provide examples of schools that have created time for collaboration during the school day by providing common planning time for teachers, by rearranging schedules on certain days to free up teachers to work together on school matters and by changing the daily schedule to allow for multi-age grouping of students. Furthermore, Lambert (2003) suggests that faculty meetings be used for professional development and collaboration; therefore, Lambert suggests routine information be shared through email, meeting minutes, and announcements instead of in faculty meetings. Educators focused on distributing leadership can collaboratively problem solve in their schools to remove current structural impediments that exist in traditional, hierarchical school structures to allow for sharing leadership among many leaders.

Principal Leadership

The role of the principal has been evolving during the last twenty years. In the late 1980s principals were expected to be the head instructional leaders in the buildings as well as "be good managers by attending to all the details and completing paperwork on time, good supervisors of teachers and instructional staff, and good bosses who kept the school faculty motivated, compliant, and cooperative" (Kratzenmerer & Moller, 2001, p.82). The emergence of shared decision making resulted in the 1990s, and principals who were open to sharing this responsibility were able to empower teachers. Currently there is a shift toward school administration focusing on developing a shared vision,

improving school culture, increasing teacher leadership, transforming schools, and creating professional learning communities (Kratzenmeyer & Moller, 2001).

The role of positional leaders is crucial in building leadership capacity and sharing leadership in the school. In schools were principals encourage traditional practices, emerging teacher leaders are snuffed out because of the positional barrier between teachers and administrators. In order for the principal to be an effective leader, the principal must be first grounded in his own values and then must share these with others (Lambert, 2003).

For leadership to be distributed among many leaders, principals must build leadership capacity in teachers and provide support. Crowther et al. (2002) share key actions principals do to promote teacher leadership, including: clearly communicating the intent, integrating the ambitions and thoughts of other people, asking difficult to answer questions, allowing for individual innovation, stepping back when needed to allow for others to step up, thinking out of the box, and building on successes. Blasé and Blasé (2001) add to that to empower teachers, principals must: model, build, and support a trusting environment, structure the school to allow for collaboration, use professional development and resources to support shared decision making, focus on teaching and learning, model professional behavior, praise teachers, and set up effective ways of communication.

As a result of sharing leadership, principals report that their stress level has decreased, some of their duties are not solely their responsibility, and their relationships with teachers improved (Blasé & Blasé 2001; Lashway, 2002; Kratzenmeyer & Moller, 2001).

Summary

Schools have been and currently are shaped by social, legal, political, and economic influences, and these influences have resulted in federal, state, and local leaders to call for school improvement. As a result of changing times, educational leadership literature is also shifting to focusing on building leadership capacity in many people in the school and sharing leadership among many leaders.

The emerging field of distributed leadership calls for leaders to share leadership among many people in the school. Distributed leadership has been discussed differently by various researchers, but all agree to some degree that distributed leadership is the distribution of leadership among many leaders in the school and that leadership should no longer rest solely in the hands of the positional leader in the building.

Many barriers, such as lack of time, relationships with colleagues and administrators, and traditional routine practices need to be overcome in order to build a culture where learning and collaboration can take place. Moreover, principals must change their traditional, top-down management practices and become leaders who transform, and teachers must come out of their classrooms to participate in making decisions that have school-wide impact. Because the concept of distributed leadership is relatively new, research on the effects are limited. However, preliminary empirical data show that principals, teachers, and students benefit from shared leadership.

Even though researchers may refer to distributed leadership as shared leadership or parallel leadership and may define leadership differently, the researchers have many similarities in their descriptions of what distributed leadership is and what must be done for distributed leadership to impact student learning. They agree that leadership should be

distributed among many leaders instead of being held by the formal leaders alone. Moreover, researchers stress the importance of recognizing strengths of individuals within the organization and building on those strengths when sharing the leadership.

The distributed leadership framework was used in research by Lemons (2005) to study specific leadership tasks in high schools, how these tasks were distributed across the school, and the extent to which context influences leadership practice. From this study he found that schools with targeted instructional improvement agendas can both constrain and enable the distribution of leadership in schools.

Distributed leadership is a growing and developing phenomenon. Because it is a relatively new concept, there has not been a large amount of research conducted regarding how exactly leadership becomes distributed among many leaders nor is there a large amount of evidence as to the impact of distributed leadership on principals, teachers, and students. However, initial studies show that there has been a positive impact on all stakeholders.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine how leadership became distributed among the positional and the informal leaders in one rural elementary K-5 school recognized for its shared leadership and its efforts to improve student teaching and learning in order to contribute to the literature on distributed leadership and gain an in-depth understanding of how distributed leadership was exercised among the many leaders in the building. A qualitative case study method was used to study the school's *instructional (or distributive?)* leadership practices.

A case study research design with multiple sources of evidence was utilized for the data collection process, to observe leadership practices as they occur. Case study research methodology has been described by Bogdan and Biklen (1998) as a "detailed examination of one setting, or a single subject, a single depository of documents, or one particular event" (p. 54). This method of data collection was used to understand leadership practice in the school because distributed leadership is the analysis of leadership activity, defined in this study as the interactions among principals, teachers and organizational structures and material artifacts. Observations were made of school leaders, research participants were interviewed to solicit their perspectives regarding school leadership practice, and school documents were reviewed to collect additional data. This chapter will be a review of the guidelines used to select the population as well as the procedures used for collecting and analyzing research data.

Research Questions

The research questions will be based on Rost's (1991) leadership framework and the distributed leadership framework by Spillane et al. (2004). These frameworks guided this study as the researcher explored how the components of the frameworks were present in the leadership actions of the school. This study addressed the following research questions:

1. How is leadership distributed?
2. What operational practices are in place so leadership can be extended to many leaders in the school?
3. How do leaders complete their tasks?
4. How have relationships between teachers and between the principal and teachers been affected as a result of distributed leadership?

Focus was on the interactions among the leaders and followers and observable dimensions of their situation (material artifacts and organizational structures).

Research related to these four questions may provide understanding into the distribution of instructional leadership in the school by exploring the day to day practices in addressing instructional issues, how and with whom leaders perform daily leadership tasks, and what tools (memos, agendas for meetings) and organizational structures (grade level meetings) are important to instructional issues.

Research Design

The focus of this study was to determine how leadership becomes distributed among many leaders in a school and to uncover how distributed leadership impacted working relationships and the school environment. By observing how people share leadership in

the natural setting and by uncovering the participants' perceptions of the impact of distributed leadership, the researcher hoped to gain an understanding of the phenomenon under study. This research was conducted as a single qualitative intrinsic case study of a small rural K-5 Northeast Georgia elementary school, which provided an opportunity to describe the phenomenon of distributed leadership in context. In an intrinsic case study the researcher's primary interest is in understanding a specific case.

Qualitative researchers study the phenomenon of interest in its natural setting hoping to be able to better understand the situation (Bogdan & Bilken, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003: Merrian, 1998; Yin, 2003). Qualitative researchers believe the world is composed of multiple realities which are built from individuals' perceptions, and data is gathered to explore these perceptions to make meaning and understand the phenomenon under study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Yin (2003) provided some guidelines for whether or not to use case study as a research methodology. He suggested that qualitative methodology was appropriate when the research questions are directed at "how" and "why" questions, the researcher is unable to control events, and the study examines a contemporary phenomenon. As a result, a case study produces a "holistic description and explanation" of the phenomenon (Merriam, 1998, p. 29). Merriam discusses the benefits of utilizing a case study methodology:

> The case study offers a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon. Anchored in real-life situations, the case study results in a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon. It offers insight and illuminates meanings that expand its readers' experiences. These insights can be construed as tentative hypothesis that help

> structure future research; hence, case study plays an important role in advancing a field's knowledge base. Because of its strengths, case study is a particularly appealing design for applied fields of study such as education (p.41).

A qualitative case study methodology represents the appropriate approach for adding to the understanding of distributed leadership. The research questions in this study are exploratory and demonstrate an interest in understanding how distributed leadership is reflected in the activities of a school. The researcher describes in depth the particulars of a case in order to shed light on the case. To contribute to the literature on distributed leadership and shed light on how distributed leadership was exercised, a qualitative study of instructional leadership in a school recognized for its shared leadership and their efforts to improve student learning and teaching was studied. An investigation was conducted into the practice aspect of their distributed leadership. This research will explore how principals, teachers, organizational structures and material artifacts interact in schools with high achieving students to reveal facts about school leadership practice and how such leadership practice may influence teaching and learning. Since the school will be the unit of analysis for this research, the study will provide sufficient time to understand the complex interactions among principals, teachers, organizational structures and material artifacts in the school context. The researcher examined and attempted to enhance understanding of theory by studying distributed leadership in context.

The observations in this study examined how individuals in various roles interact in their work. Data collection included both field notes and audiotapes of some of the meetings. The researcher observed the interactions among and between the positional leader and the formal leaders. Naturalistic observations were conducted to collect data,

including observations in task force meetings, faculty meetings, grade level meetings, and hallway conversations. A journal of field notes was kept to record information from the observations, which included verbal and nonverbal acts (body posture, tone of voice, etc.), observer comments, and context information.

Observations were done of the school leader, interviews were held with research participants to solicit their perspectives regarding school leadership practice, and school documents were reviewed to collect additional data. The research questions in this study were investigative and demonstrated an interest in understanding how distributed leadership is actually exercised in the school.

Site Selection

The Modern Red School House is a comprehensive design for school reform that helps teachers and building administrators establish classroom and school practices to improve student mastery of high academic areas. It requires three to five years of intense support, with the objective of the leadership component “to build a school staff’s capacity to reflect upon the effectiveness of its instructional programs and to make appropriate adjustments in school practices” (Kilgore & Jones, 2002, p. 2). The Modern Red design calls for a change from a bureaucratically organized school to one based on participative management. This reform model required schools to create new leadership positions, including coaches and/or facilitators (whose main role was to assure program implementation). “More opportunities are provided for formal leadership opportunities, as well as using a variety of strategies to communicate a firm and clear expectation that such leadership will be exercised broadly and redundantly by multiple role incumbents within the school” (Camburn, Rowan, Toylor, 2003, p. 6). MRSH uses a capacity

building design that builds on the strengths of the school, using a detailed analysis of the school's characteristics and student achievement data as a starting point, then develops a customized implementation program that provides the school with tools and strategies to attain high academic standards.

Lakeside City School (pseudonym) was selected as the context for this research case study due to the participation of the principal and teachers in this improvement initiative. At the completion of the school's participation in MRSH, a team of researchers conducted a study of the school. The site had been identified for exemplary shared leadership within the district. The results of the study showed the presence of distributed leadership and teacher leadership embedded in the school culture. As a result of those data, this school was recommended to be the site for this current study on the influence of distributed leadership on teacher leadership from the superintendent who served in the Lakeside School District for 12 years.

Lakeside City School was a small rural K-5 school in Northeast Georgia that had demonstrated steady improvements on state assessments and in student achievement. It was one of three elementary schools in the Lakeside School District. One middle school and one high school complete the school district. The district had a total enrollment of over 3300 students with over 20,000 residents in the community. The most affluent residents in the district lived in the North Lakeside School district and the South Lakeside School district. The data on the families that send their children to Lakeside City School show that the households were primarily working class or unemployed. Lakeside City School had the highest number of students within the district in the Free/Reduced Lunch

program, yet the students scored as well as the students from the other elementary schools on the state's standardized exam.

Lakeside City School was located in the center of the only town in the district, and it was surrounded by single family homes, housing projects, and businesses. The current principal, Mrs. Farmer, arrived at Lakeside City School five years ago, after Lakeside City experienced a 28 year tenure with the previous principal. The year before Mrs. Farmer arrived, the previous principal had applied for and was awarded the Comprehensive School Reform Grant for Lakeside City from federal funding that allowed schools with economically disadvantaged students to adopt a Comprehensive School Reform Design of their choice. Lakeside chose the Modern Red School House Initiative (MRSH), which would enable them to effect substantial improvements in student achievement over a three year period.

Table 3.1: *Lakeside School District Elementary Schools' Data*

School Name	Total Students 2006-2007	Ethnicity	% Free Lunch	% 5th ELA CRCT Passed	% 5th Math CRCT Passed	Average % Passed 1-5
Lakeside City School	482	1% Asian 62% African Am 3% Hispanic 34% White	68%	94%	99%	81%
North Lakeside School	665	2% Asian 16% African Am 4% Hispanic 78% White	24%	88%	84%	75%
South Lakeside School	521	1% Asian 38% African Am 3% Hispanic 58% White	48%	82%	80%	74%

After careful analysis of student achievement on state standards, Lakeside City demonstrated improved student results on the Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) over time, which may suggest that they are successful in helping students achieve state standards. Incremental improvements were demonstrated from 2005 to 2007 in student outcomes on the CRCT, increasing the percentage of students who met or exceeded state standards (see Table 3.2: CRCT Data).

Lakeside City School had also worked with the Modern Red School-House Institute to help advance principles for educating children in the 21st century, which "calls for changes from a bureaucratically organized school to one based on participative management, allowing more flexibility, increased communication among all personnel, greater professionalism among teachers, and improved collaboration and cross-training, or a decrease in specialization" (Kilgore & Jones, 2002, p. 4). The Modern Red School-House initiative uses a capacity building design that builds on the strengths of the school, using a detailed analysis of the school's characteristics and student achievement data as a starting point, then develops a customized implementation program that provides the school with tools and strategies to attain high academic standards. The participants for this study were the teachers at the school who participated in the Modern Red initiative.

Table 3.2: *Lakeside City CRCT Scores*

Lakeside Meets and Exceeds Percent									
	Reading			English/Lang Arts			Math		
	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007
First Grade	85%	83%	84%	83%	87%	73%	90%	90%	89%
Second Grade	87%	85%	86%	88%	88%	83%	86%	86%	85%
Third Grade	95%	99%	90%	90%	90%	88%	87%	91%	88%
Fourth Grade	70%	84%	89%	74%	89%	88%	60%	63%	67%
Fifth Grade	80%	91%	89%	87%	86%	94%	78%	86%	99%

Note: Numbers have been altered to preserve the confidentiality of the schools.

Participants

The participants for this study were the 55 certified teachers and 2 administrators with Bachelor or higher degrees at Lakeside City School during the 2007-2008 academic year. There were 53 females and 4 males with 42 white and 13 African Americans. Purposeful sampling was used for the selection of the participants in this case study, with the goal to develop a thorough understanding of a particular topic. Fritzpatrick, Sanders, and Worthen (2004) relate that purposeful sampling works well in case studies.

The researcher used discretion in the selection of participants that illustrate distributed leadership in action at Lakeside City School. Six of the 55 teachers at the school were individually interviewed, and since distributed leadership is dependent upon the principal in the building, the principal was also selected to be a participant in the study and interviewed individually. Two were teacher leaders selected by the researcher were individually interviewed. These teacher leaders were not in an official leadership role at the time of the study; however they were selected based on their collaboration with other teachers and their activity in the school. These teachers were selected after several observations have occurred. One teacher who was not as accepting of the practice

of distributed leadership was also asked to participate in the research. To find this teacher, the researcher looked for teachers who did not participate in meetings or who did not appear to voluntarily collaborate with peers.

Lakeside City had six task forces that were chaired by teachers, so three of these chairpersons were asked to participate in individual interviews with the researcher. Three horizontal grade level teams were interviewed in focus group interviews. The principal did not participate in the focus group interviews because the presence of the positional leader in the focus group interviews could have altered the responses of the participants.

The researcher requested permission from all participants at Lakeside City School to be observed and audio taped during faculty meetings, task force meetings, grade level meetings, and informal conversations. They were informed that their responses would be transcribed and used for the researcher's dissertation study.

Instrumentation

The research questions in this study are investigative and demonstrated an interest in understanding how distributed leadership was actually exercised in the school. Specifically, this study explored four questions related to distributed leadership practices in an elementary public school. In order to understand how leadership was distributed, the researcher conducted a qualitative case study. Data for this study was collected from the participants in the natural setting where the action took place. Data were collected through interviews (which served as the primary source of and through review of documents (such evidence as school improvement initiatives, etc.). Observations were conducted of the school positional leader, interviews were held with research participants to solicit their perspectives regarding school leadership practice, and school documents

were reviewed to collect additional data. Documents were gathered which were referenced in the interviews and observations due to their importance to gaining further insight into the leadership practice within the building.

Data Collection

The researcher obtained approval to conduct this study by submitting an application with all supporting documentation to the Georgia Southern Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix A). After approval was secured, the researcher used several strategies to collect data for this study including a questionnaire, interviews, observations, and document review. The following is a description of each research strategy.

Interviews

Seven participants were individually interviewed. The interviews were guided by a list of qualitative interview questions following Carspecken's (1996) interview protocol method. The interviews each lasted approximately 45 minutes to one hour and were audio taped. The researcher took notes and the taped interviews were transcribed. A copy of the interview questions for the teachers can be found in Appendix B, and a copy of the interview questions for the principal can be found in Appendix C.

Participants were also interviewed in focus groups to be able "to get at what people really think about an issue or issues in a social context where the participants can hear the views of others and consider their own views accordingly" (Fraenkel et al., 2003, p. 462). Three focus groups consisting of 4 or 5 participants were interviewed in each group, with a list of interview questions guiding the focus group interviews similar to the individual interview questions. The focus group interview questions were developed using Carspecken's (1996) interview protocol with primary questions, possible follow-up

questions, and covert categories. The focus group interviews had some open ended questions and were conducted in a conversational manner. These interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes and were audio taped. The researcher took notes and the taped interviews were transcribed.

The final method of data collection was gathering pertinent documents because they were essential to leadership practice (Spillane et al., 2004). Included in the collection of documents were memos, emails, minutes from task force meetings, committee information and other pertinent documents.

Data Analysis

A variety of strategies were used to analyze the different sources of data collected. To examine how leadership became distributed and its impact, the researcher gathered information through individual and focus group interviews, observations, and document collection. In qualitative studies, data was analyzed throughout the data collection process. Interviews were transcribed by the researcher and finally, the information from the interviews about school leadership practice served as the lead for observations in staff meetings, grade level meetings, etc, that served as the context in which leadership occurs. The daily instructional leadership tasks mentioned in interviews were examined, as well as providing an opportunity to witness leaders and followers in action. Key themes that resulted from the interviews, suggested by the distributed leadership framework, were documented.

Summary

To contribute to the literature on distributed leadership and understand how distributed leadership was exercised, a qualitative study of instructional leadership practice was

studied in one rural elementary K-5 school recognized for their shared leadership and their efforts to improve student teaching and learning. A qualitative research approach was used to observe leadership practice as it unfolded. This method of data collection was used to understand leadership practice in the school because distributed leadership is the analysis of leadership activity, defined in this study as the interactions among principals, teachers and organizational structures and materials artifacts. Case study research methodology has been described by Bogdan and Biklen (1998) as a "detailed examination of one setting, or a single subject, a single depository of documents, or one particular event" (p. 54). Observations were made of the school positional leader, research participants were interviewed to solicit their perspectives regarding school leadership practice, and school documents were reviewed to collect additional data to help the researcher answer what distributed leadership should look like in today's world.

CHAPTER IV

REPORT OF DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine how leadership becomes distributed among the positional leaders and the informal leaders in the school. Specifically, the study focused on how tasks are carried out in a school and explored the practices and structures that allow for distributed leadership. Also, the researcher examined the impact of distributed leadership on the principal-teacher relationships and the relationships among teachers. The participants for this study were the teachers and administrators at Lakeside City Elementary School. Purposeful sampling was used for the selection of the participants in this case study. The researcher gathered data through individual interviews, focus group interviews, observations, and documents to examine how leadership becomes distributed. This chapter presents descriptive data on the questions the researcher sought to answer.

Research Questions

This chapter presents the data that were collected and analyzed during the investigation. It is organized around the four research questions that guided this study:

- How is leadership distributed?
- What operational practices are in place so leadership can be extended to many leaders in the school?
- How do leaders complete their tasks?
- How have relationships between teachers and between the principal and teachers been affected as a result of distributed leadership?

Lakeside City Elementary School

Understanding the history of Lakeside Elementary School is significant to this research project. Prior to the beginning of Mrs. Farmer's principal ship at Lakeside six years ago, the school was under the leadership of the same principal for 28 years. His leadership style was referred to by the teachers interviewed as: "hands-off," "never involved," "good old boy," and "content with the status quo," among other things. Upon his retirement, Mrs. Farmer was employed with a very different leadership style. Mrs. Farmer was referred to as "participatory," "a true instructional leader," "involved and on top of things", and "supportive." She organized the staff into task groups (committees) to support instruction and look at the workings of the school, while utilizing the tenets of the Comprehensive Reform Grant, Modern Red School House. Over the course of three years under her leadership, the teachers developed ownership in decision making and outcomes. A mission statement, vision, and goals were developed for Lakeside through a cooperative effort between teachers and the positional leader. Every decision made about the school had to be able to answered in the affirmative, with the following questions: "Will this decision support our goals?" and "Is this in the best interest of our children?"

Teachers worked with the outside facilitators of the Modern Red Project to develop an instructional calendar to ensure the curriculum was aligned and the standards were being taught. The teachers were worked collaboratively in grade levels to develop the instructional calendars, which are still revisited frequently to improve the calendar and to share best teaching strategies to use while teaching the instructional focuses.

Another component of the Modern Red Project was developing committees (task forces) to make school wide decisions. Time was also built in to allow for teacher

collaboration, which has continued to be an extremely important change that the teachers value highly. Previously they had not been given time to collaborate so they state that they felt like they worked in total isolation every day with no peer coordination.

Participants

The subjects interviewed in the study included teachers and the positional leader from the school. There were interviews conducted both individually and in focus groups, and the years of teaching experience of the participants ranged from two years to 15 or more years, with the majority having five or more years at Lakeside City. All except one was a teacher at the school when the Modern Red School House initiative began. Overall, they were white, female, and had Master's degrees or higher. Most of the participants had not been assigned official leadership roles but were thought of by others as leaders.

The following descriptions of the individually interviewed participants is intended to provide insights into the participants and leadership at Lakeside City at the time of the study.

Mrs. Farmer

Mrs. Farmer, the principal, was in her sixth year at Lakeside City School at the time of the study and had nine years of administrative experience and ten years of teaching experience, all in the local school district. She had taught second grade at Lakeside for ten years prior to leaving Lakeside City for an administrative position. She returned to Lakeside as principal six years ago. Mrs. Farmer holds an Ed. S. degree.

Principal Farmer did not find any official committees in place when she came to Lakeside City, other than a Leadership Team who was mainly a housekeeping committee. She felt that good principals foster communities of leaders and learners; thus her

instructional leadership was based on empowerment of others. She believed her job was to nurture the environment and to provide teachers what they needed to teach and then let them do it. Being a reflective listener, a motivator, a supporter, an encourager of risk taking, and a remover of roadblocks, were all necessary skills to being an effective principal. She felt that collaboration was essential at Lakeside City and that it is also part of her job to facilitate collaboration among leaders. Her first priority was "doing what's best for the children."

Mrs. Jones

Mrs Jones, who holds a master's degree, has taught at Lakeside City for over twenty years, all in second grade until last year when she moved into a Title I teaching position. She has worked under three different principals at the school, and she feels that Lakeside City has finally gotten on the right track for improving student achievement, due primarily to Mrs. Farmer's arrival at Lakeside and the Modern Red School House initiative. Mrs Jones feels that the combination of Mrs. Farmer's arrival and the Modern Red initiative together have been instrumental in bringing collaboration, job satisfaction, and participation into the school. Mrs. Jones is unofficially known to her peers as a reading expert.

Mrs. Preston

Mrs. Preston transferred to Lakeside City from another district two years ago. She discussed the impact of changing schools as stressful her first year. At her previous school she had been in formal and informal leadership roles for six years, but with the transfer came the job of relearning procedures and practices. At the time of the study,

Mrs. Preston felt she was now able to contribute due to the respect and trust shown to her by her colleagues. Mrs. Preston holds an Ed.S degree in leadership.

Mrs. Lanknow

Mrs. Lanknow is in her second year of teaching school, and she holds a BSED degree. She feels that Lakeside City is full of leaders, and she shared that she was intimidated by them when she started her first year but now feels comfortable sharing her ideas. She contributes that to the fact that Lakeside has a "a good thing going" and everyone is "all about sharing and making things better for our kids."

Mrs. Womack

Mrs. Womack is a special education teacher and has fifteen years of experience at the time of the study. She has been at Lakeside teaching special education her total teaching career. Mrs. Womack acknowledged her role as a teacher leader, but she felt it happened by default. She explained that others had come to her about special education because of her years of experience at Lakeside and because of her strong opinion on the way things should be.

Mrs. Moore

Mrs. Moore has over thirty years of teaching experience at Lakeside City, with twenty five in the same fourth grade classroom, and she holds a life certificate in education. She describes her years at Lakeside as being stagnant until the arrival of Mrs. Farmer and Modern Red. She admits to being a reluctant follower of the "new kid on the block" but has grown to respect and become dedicated to the cause. She sees Lakeside's success largely due to the professionalism of the staff, to their partnership with each other, and to their "simply caring about the children like they should." Although she has no interest in

moving into administration or being a formal leader, she was appreciative that the school recognizes teachers as leaders.

Mrs. Garner

Mrs. Garner held an MED degree and was enrolled in a specialist's program at the time of the study. She had taught fifth grade at Lakeside City for eight years and was previously a school secretary for fifteen years. She was enthusiastic about learning and liked to take classes, implement her learning in her classroom, and share her learning with others. She is currently serving as a mentor for a new fifth grade teacher.

Site Selection

Lakeside City Elementary School was selected as the site for this case study. They received a three year Comprehensive School Reform Grant (they chose the Modern Red School House Plan) that assisted them in developing a professional learning community with everyone working toward the same expectations for improving student achievement. At the end of the three years, a study was conducted to determine the impact the reform grant had on the school. The results of the study showed the presence of distributed leadership and teacher leadership embedded in the school culture. There were now seven task forces in place that met monthly, and teachers met weekly in grade level teams to discuss instructional practices**.**

The benchmarks of the Modern Red Comprehensive School Reform Plan that Lakeside City worked toward implementing included:

- Curriculum units that are completed, piloted, continually reviewed, revised and used by all

- Teachers worked collaboratively in grade levels to develop an instructional calendar to be sure the curriculum is aligned and the standards are being taught. The calendar remains a living document which is revisited frequently to see what modifications need to be made to improve it.
- Establishing a leadership team and task forces that are high functioning and meet regularly, and they are student focused, problem solving, and goal oriented. Task forces (committees) work to provide impetus for change in the school, as well as to anticipate and recommend improvement strategies and communicate the school's vision.

Not only have the teachers at Lakeside City worked to embed the Modern Red School House Plan into the school culture and daily practices for the part six years, but they have also expanded the use of guided reading, literacy groups, and they have implemented the Writing to Win writing plan into their instruction. Principal Farmer is also currently providing time for professional development for teachers to expand teachers' knowledge and use of differentiated instruction.

Lakeside City School was also chosen based on student test scores. They have 58% of the student population qualifying for the Free/Reduced Lunch program, with 90% of the third and fifth grade students passing both reading and math on the state's criterion referenced test. These numbers suggest a positive learning environment with high expectations were developed during the six year period at Lakeside City.

Data Analysis

Individual Interviews

The researcher conducted individual interviews with six of the 55 teachers and the principal at Lakeside City, using a protocol designed to examine aspects of the research questions. Interviews served as the primary source of data for this study. The interview schedules (appendix B and appendix C) included 14-16 general questions. Each interview lasted approximately 45to 60 minutes and was recorded and transcribed by the researcher. The interviews were conducted in an open ended, conversational manner allowing the participants to discuss information freely.

Focus Group Interviews

Three horizontal grade level teams participated in focus group interviews, grades kindergarten, second, and fifth. Four or five participants participated in each focus group interview, which allowed the researcher to expand the number of participants to 20 of the 55 teachers. The focus group interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes and were audio taped and then later transcribed. Interview questions guided the interviews (Appendix D

Observations

The researcher spent six days observing the interactions among the participants at Lakeside City, in addition to attending horizontal grade level meetings, task force meetings and faculty meetings. During all visits informal conversations throughout the school were observed.

Review of Documents

Documents were collected and reviewed. Documents were gathered because they were essential to leadership practice. Administrative documents were reviewed as a format for

planning activities over a five year time frame. These documents provided information about past, current, and future work that is considered part of the school's improvement process. Another set of documents reviewed included teacher designed materials, such as curriculum maps, assessment maps, common assessments, and professional development activities. During interviews, participants referred to these documents as a blueprint for the school's improvement planning process.

Curriculum documents such as assessment and curriculum maps, rubrics, and report cards were also examined. These documents were artifacts of the work that individuals referenced in interviews. A variety of documents were collected and reviewed during data collection and analysis, and frequently during interviews participants would reference these documents as they described their work. According to all research participants, email was the primary means of school wide communication. Documents revealed requests being made for teacher input, reminders of task responsibilities, as well as spreading school news.

Findings

According to the participants in this study, leadership becomes distributed at Lakeside City School due to the collaborative and cooperative practices in place. Excerpts from the participant transcripts are used to support the findings.

Question One: How is leadership distributed?

During the data collection process at Lakeside City School, all seven individually interviewed participants stated that there are very few people who do not voluntarily join in the active leadership relationship. Most teachers at Lakeside Elementary are leaders or active followers. The followers collaborate well with their colleagues and build

professional and personal relationships with them. They attend meetings and participate by asking questions. They are dedicated to improving their instructional practices to meet the needs of the students and the shared goals of the school. A couple of the teachers, who are followers, explained why they have not taken on more leadership responsibilities:

> I just don't feel like I have enough experience, and I don't know enough to step up and take on certain roles. I think that is for more veteran teachers who have been here longer and know a lot more than I do about things, so sometimes I feel a little bit more reluctant to step up and take a risk. I am willing to do anything to help, but I just don't want to lead. Mrs. Garner

> Well, I'm just in my second year as a teacher so I really want to learn as much as I can before I step out there to lead. Everyone here is so helpful, and I feel like if I keep my eyes and ears open I will eventually become more comfortable moving from a follower to a leader. Mrs. Lankow

Additionally, every teacher interviewed mentioned that three teacher leaders are in the school and lead due to their expertise: Mrs. Burke, the math expert, Mrs. Womack, the special education expert, and Mrs. Jones, the reading expert.

In the past six years, Mrs. Farmer has built leadership capacity and has put into place practices to allow for leadership to become distributed among many people. On the fall 2007 online SAI survey taken by all 42 teachers at Lakeside City, 88% of the teachers agreed with the statement, "I would use the word " empowering" to describe my principal," 88% agreed with the statement, "our principal models effective collaboration," and 100% agreed with the statement, "my principal fosters a school

culture that is focused on instructional improvement." A veteran teacher with over 15 years at the school explained Mrs. Farmer's impact on the school:

> Since the beginning of Mrs. Farmer's principalship at Lakeside City School six years ago, our school community has experienced many changes. The school culture has become more collaborative, facility and technology improvements have been made, test scores have risen, and the staff has implemented the Modern Red School House Comprehensive School Improvement Plan to improve student learning. The decision to move to the Modern Red School House Plan came from the need to improve test scores. The principal who was at Lakeside prior to Mrs. Farmer wrote and received the grant for the school, however none of us (teachers) were involved in the writing or securing of the grant. Mrs. Farmer worked with the teachers the summer before her first year as principal making plans to implement the model at the beginning of the 2002-2003 school year.
>
> During the implementation process, we all felt overwhelmed and frustrated. When Mrs. Farmer began to see those feelings surface, she brought in a second consultant who had worked with another school in the area to implement the same plan. This consultant shared her experiences with the teachers and they began to settle into the model. The Modern Red School House Plan was a prescribed plan to improve student achievement, and the steps in the plan were carefully spelled out and monitored weekly. Mrs. Jones

The active followers at Lakeside City attend meetings and participate by asking and responding to questions. They collaborate with their colleagues and build professional and personal relationships with them. They all are dedicated to improving their

instructional practice in their classrooms to meet the needs of the students and the shared goals of the school. Support, respect, and trust exist between the teacher leaders and the principal. Even the few reluctant followers work toward the shared goals of the school, however they are as accepting to changing their traditional practices as the teacher leaders or the active followers. One of the reluctant followers stated during a focus group interview that she likes Mrs. Farmer's leadership style better than previous administrator because she feels she is listened to and her opinions are valued. One of the teacher leaders shared her perception of how reluctant followers have changed while working with Mrs. Farmer:

> We have been through three administrators in the last ten years, and everyone is more cooperative with Mrs. Farmer than they have been with anyone else. Even though sometimes it seems like some people aren't on board here, compared to how they used to be they are being great! At least now they will listen and come to task force meetings as scheduled. Mrs. Farmer really makes everyone feel like they are important in the educating of our kids, and we are all in this together! Mrs. Preston

Task Forces

The task forces allow for teachers to take an official leadership position by becoming the chairperson. On most task forces, the chairperson prepares the agenda, facilitates the meetings, and prepares the meeting minutes. The researcher observed during task force meetings a rather casual atmosphere with all committee members offering input into the topics under discussion. The established task force teams at Lakeside City were formed as a result of their partnership with the Modern Red School House Plan and were agreed upon by the teachers.

All teachers are members of at least one task force, and they meet monthly at various times after or before school. Mrs. Farmer, the principal, does not attend all these meetings regularly since she is not a member of all the committees. She relies on the minutes from the meetings, Leadership Task Force meetings, and email correspondence or face to face interactions with the chairperson to stay in touch with school wide issues. She chooses to step back and allow teacher leadership to emerge from committee work. By having these committees in place, teachers have the opportunity to participate in school-wide decisions. Having task forces in place allows for leadership to become distributed from the principal to the teachers and among the teachers on the various task forces. Each task force related the responsibilities they are charged with at the school, which included:

Technology Task Force: The purpose of this task force is to keep the school up to date on the latest technological information, as well as find research based strategies for particular areas of instructional need as addressed by the school. The technology specialist and the media specialist are co-chairs of the Technology Task Force.

Curriculum Task Force: A first grade teacher and a special education teacher are co-chairs of this task force. Their primary responsibility is to work cooperatively with grade levels to ensure the proper spiraling of the curriculum occurs. They look for ways to provide horizontal as well as vertical curriculum planning.

Standards and Assessment Task Force: The purpose of the Standards and Assessment Task Force is to look at the data from the state's standardized and criterion-referenced exams to see where the students are scoring well and determine areas of needed improvement. This task force is also responsible for overseeing the local assessments. A 4th grade teacher and a special education teacher are co-chairs.

Parent Partnership Task Force: The responsibility of this task force is to plan and organize parent involvement in the school. They are also in charge of planning student celebrations and social gatherings for bringing parents into the school. A Title I teacher and a fourth grade teacher, are co-chairs.

Professional Development Task Force: This task force works cooperatively with Principal Farmer to plan faculty meetings, which are held monthly. Since math improvement is an area noted for school-wide improvement, the math specialist and a special education teacher are co-chairs of this task force.

Organization and Finance Task Force: Mrs. Farmer serves as the chair of this task force. The majority of work for this task force occurs during the summer months when schedules are being worked out and budgets are being planned. They meet monthly to look at the impact of budgetary decisions and organization structures.

Leadership Task Force: The Leadership Task Force meets once a month and members include the chairperson of the six task forces. During their meetings they report on what they have decided in their respective task force meetings and also bring forth any problems or concerns their committee is facing. Principal Farmer also shares information that needs teacher input at these meetings. The Leadership Task Force meetings are where the majority of the school wide decisions are officially made. Principal Farmer uses these meetings as a means for discussing instructional issues and developing teacher leaders, those who would influence teaching and learning beyond their classrooms.

All participants felt the presence of the Task Forces at Lakeside City School allows for teachers to take on official leadership positions by becoming the chairperson. Each task force chairperson prepares the agenda, facilitates the meetings, and prepares meeting

minutes. During the task force meetings, all members are able to give input into the topic being discussed. According to Mrs. Farmer, she chooses to step back and allow teacher leadership to emerge from task force work, in addition the task forces allow for leadership to become distributed from the principal to teachers and among the teachers on the task forces.

Leadership based on Expertise

Mrs. Burke is known to teachers as the "math specialist" due to her ability to work with students and teachers to improve math scores. Peers recognize her as someone who lives and breaths math improvement, while Mrs. Womack is the leader in special education. She is recognized for her work as a special education teacher who worked in inclusion classes, guiding Lakeside in this area of expertise. When interviewed, Mrs. Womack acknowledged her leadership based on her expertise in special education.

> When I came to Lakeside I was the first special education teacher who had experience with inclusion classes. I got more and more questions in this area as we expanded our inclusion program, and I have been fortunate to have the support of Mrs. Farmer and the county office to provide needed professional development to the teachers here on inclusion. And I must say…they are now experts, too! I guess I just love sharing my love for special needs students, and I have evolved as the "expert" in the field!

The expert leaders at Lakeside City are available to support active followers. When the researcher asked Mrs. Burke about being mentioned by many people as a leader in math, she responded;

> Well, yes, I guess I am. I get many questions, and without sounding boastful I do feel I have the ability to help our school in the area of math. When I first came to Lakeside,

I saw math as a real weakness here, so I felt like I needed to dig and dig to figure out how to help our kids in this area. I guess math has become my passion, and I love sharing it, too! I try to attend math workshops and come back to my peers and share what I have learned with them.

Informal leaders Engaged in Leadership Acts

Informal leaders at Lakeside emerged based on situations at Lakeside City School. According to the interview data, teachers perceive teacher leaders to be those who lead by example, share their ideas, put in extra time, listen and follow through, and make decisions, resulting in an improvement in instruction at the school.

Leadership emerged in routine practices in the school. Mrs. Marlisha, the art teacher, is known as the official bus route planner. She has taken on the role of working with the bus director to plan arrival and dismissal of students. This duty emerged from the fact that she had planning at the end of each day, and she took the opportunity at the time to study and identify the most effective means of bus transportation for Lakeside. Now Mrs. Farmer relies on Mrs. Marlisha to plan effective bus arrival and dismissal. Mrs. Patton is known as the official decorator for school events. She came into education after a career in the floral business, so she leads the school in coming up with school-wide themes and decorating.

Informal teacher leaders also were evident at grade level meetings. Although there was not an appointed leader for each group, the researcher observed the teachers looking toward the teacher who had the personality or the veteran teacher of the group as the informal leader. During a kindergarten horizontal grade level meeting, the researcher

observed Mrs. Moore emerging as the leader. When the group was questioned about this, they said:

> She is definitely our leader! She likes to accomplish things and is very organized. She keeps us on task and moving forward. Sometimes when we get off task, she is the one who reminds us of our goals. Plus we all like and respect her, she listens, and many times is the one who clarifies things and puts them in proper perspective.

Summary of Question One Findings

The data showed three primary ways leadership becomes distributed among positional and informal leaders at Lakeside City School: task force work, leadership based on expertise, and informal leaders engaged in leadership activities.

The task work allows teachers to become positional leaders as chairpersons; it also enables teachers to become informal leaders within the task forces as they engage in acts of leadership. All seven of the 24 participants recognized there are also leaders in content areas. These recognized leaders share their knowledge with their colleagues and collaborate as they strive to improve instructional practices.

Another way leadership becomes distributed at Lakeside is a result of individuals becoming informal leaders through their routine leadership actions. These informal leaders engaged in a variety of leadership acts: supporting colleagues, listening, following through, sharing ideas, and leading by example. The actions of these informal leaders have resulted in an improvement of practices school wide.

Question Two: What operational practices are in place so leadership can be extended to many leaders in the school?

The description of Lakeside City School by everyone interviewed, included the following information: When Mrs. Farmer came to Lakeside City School five years ago, the teachers were isolated from each other. Monthly faculty meetings were the only time they were joined together, and then the format was top down. With Mrs. Farmer's arrival came the implementation of the Modern Red School-House Comprehensive Reform Grant, where teachers at Lakeside City were put together to began to work together on task forces. Schedules were reworked to provide time for weekly horizontal grade level team meetings, and a shift in school culture and practices began to emerge. As a result of the task force meetings, monthly faculty meetings and horizontal grade level meetings, leadership has been extended to a variety of leaders.

There are seven task force teams in place at Lakeside City that allow for leadership to be distributed among many leaders. Each task force has a chairperson or persons, which allows teachers to become positional leaders in the school. Teachers sign up for the committee they prefer to be on, and the chairperson either volunteers or is nudged by Principal Farmer. Each grade level is required to have one member on each task force, and the chairperson also serves on the Leadership Task Force. The task force teams are embedded into school practices, so leadership can become distributed among many leaders. Teachers take on positional leadership roles as chairpersons, and they can also take on informal leadership roles as members of the task force.

Faculty Meetings

Monthly faculty meetings are held on the second Wednesday of every month from 3:15 until 4:00 in the school media center. As observed by the researcher during two faculty meetings, Principal Farmer starts the meeting with a few brief announcements, and then she steps back to allow the teachers to run the meetings. Teachers present professional development activities during the faculty meetings. On the SAI questionnaire 96% of Lakeside teachers agree with the statement, "The teachers in my school meet as a whole staff to discuss ways to improve teaching and learning." Of the 6 individually interviewed participants, all of them agreed that faculty meetings are a time to collaborate and learn from each other. Furthermore, mention was made by all 6 that the items discussed at faculty meetings usually promote active discussion. The researcher observed teachers having an opportunity to ask questions and also respond to their peers' questions during faculty meetings. The researcher observed the teachers sitting with their task force teams during the faculty meetings. When the researcher asked about this, teachers stated they found this was an opportune time to discuss any issues they needed to clarify before their next task force meeting.

Horizontal Grade Level Team Meetings

Each horizontal grade level team meets a minimum of once a week during their common planning time to discuss what they are doing in their classrooms and to support one another. The interviewed teachers stated there was not anyone officially in charge at the weekly grade level meetings, however, most stated that someone usually unofficially took control of the meeting. That person was usually known as the unofficial leader of the grade level. The researcher observed this in practice while observing in various grade

level meetings. There was an informal leaders each time; someone who guided the meetings, posed questions, and moved the meeting forward to discuss issues.
Not only do the meetings provide avenues for leadership to be distributed, but they also allow for additional positional leaders in the school. The communication structures keep everything in balance, resulting in a school functioning well while having multiple leaders in a variety of areas.

Principal Farmer shared that she trusts the teachers to use their common planning time efficiently and monitored that they did so by reviewing grade level minutes. Occasionally she visits the horizontal grade level team meetings to show support and encouragement. She understood the value of developing teacher leaders and engaging teachers because she knows they would use their time wisely to figure out ways to solve problems.

Task Force Meetings

Lakeside City has seven task force committees in place, including Technology, Curriculum, Standards and Assessment, School and Parent Involvement, Professional Development, Organization and Finance, and Leadership. They all have a recognized chairperson, allowing teachers to become positional leaders in the school. Teachers sign up for the committee they prefer to be on, making the decisions in their horizontal grade level teams. One member from each grade level team must be put on each task force. Task forces are changed on a rotating basis so that all teachers get the chance to see what each task force does.

By having the task forces embedded into school practices, teachers felt that leadership can become distributed among many leaders. Teachers take on positional leadership roles as chairpersons, as well as informal leadership roles as members of committees.

Positional Leaders

There are several teachers that have a positional leadership role as a result of their job responsibilities at Lakeside City. Mrs. Farmer has enabled and assisted these teachers to be positional leaders based on their content areas. Mrs. Burke, the Title I math teacher and Mrs. Burch, the instructional technologist assist other teachers in improving instructional practices. The counselor, Mrs. Adams, provides materials and visits classrooms to support character education efforts in the school. As the music teacher, Mr. Kendall plans all the musical programs for the school.

Summary of Question Two Findings

There are some teachers in the school who have leadership responsibilities due to the nature of their positions, such as the counselor, the Title I teachers, and the EIP teachers. Mrs. Farmer has worked hard to shift the practices, culture, and structures at Lakeside City to enable teachers to collaborate with their colleagues and participate in school wide decisions. She allows the teachers to do their jobs as leaders. The established meetings allow leadership to be distributed among the many leaders. Teachers are kept informed of what is going on and what is expected of them through monthly faculty meetings, horizontal grade level meeting, task force meetings, and leadership meetings, as well as through emails.

Question Three: How do leaders complete their tasks?

To gather data for this question, the researcher observed meetings, shadowed the principal, conducted interviews, and collected documents. The data analysis showed that Principal Farmer's tasks are different than the teachers' tasks. Similar leadership activities are engaged in by both the teacher leaders and the principal, however, the

completion of those tasks is different. Consequently, the discussion of the findings for this question will include a separation of the data into two areas: how teacher leaders complete tasks and the principal completes tasks.

The Principal's Tasks

During an interview with Mrs. Farmer, she shared her vision and her view of her role as the positional leader at Lakeside City Elementary School.

> ….I picture the Lakeside City of the future inspired by commitment, purpose, meaning, and significance to the work of the school. We have shared, or distributed, governance with guidance and direction for the school, staff, students, and administration. The collective climate and culture at Lakeside allows everyone to focus on the important issues and prioritize the academic development of the whole child…AS ONE! I am definitely responsible for support and pressure with the hard edges that define expectations for the adults with focus on the kids. I am all about working smarter, not harder – so obviously it takes all of us working together to accomplish our goals, collectively done as a team. No one can be an island and get things properly done at Lakeside or anywhere. I also must always be professional and model it. We have been through some MAJOR changes in the past five years, and I believe our success in overcoming some of our shortcomings was due to the professionalism and respect we show one another. Many times I simply need to be sure the teachers have what they need to teach and then step out of the way. A lot of the time I just need to stay out of the way. I see my job as building bridges and making connections and giving teachers what they need to do THEIR job of teaching. I need to keep everyone headed in the same direction.

During the observations, the researcher witnessed Mrs. Farmer work toward that vision and role. In December the faculty Christmas party was at her house, and she asked each person in attendance to talk about one thing they were thankful for at Lakeside City. Everyone present shared a joy that they feel in teaching. There was an air of respect and trust among all the faculty members.

Mrs. Farmer believes the purpose of the Leadership Task Force is to "keep us moving forward in instruction," and she referred to the members of this task force as the leaders in establishing the school's instructional agenda. She envisions the Leadership Task Force as a mechanism for encouraging teachers by influencing teaching and learning throughout the school, and not just the students in their classrooms. Her belief that teachers who are leaders can influence teaching and learning throughout the school led to her asking two teachers, Mrs. Burke and Mrs. Jones to co-facilitate the Leadership Task Force and work with her to set the agenda for monthly meetings. Principal Farmer thinks encouraging teachers to assume responsibility in the school gives them a greater sense of ownership for all the students in the school, not just for those in their classroom.

All Lakeside research participants discussed the importance of the Leadership Task Force to the school. They recognized they are the hub for decision making in the school and a primary source of important information about what is going on in the school.

During the observations, the researcher witnessed how Mrs. Farmer works toward the vision for the school. Mrs. Farmer firmly believes family is the foundation to any educational pursuit. Her office proudly displays photographs of her three granddaughters.

She is quick to discuss their activities and accomplishments at the sign of any interest from visitors to her office.

Mrs. Farmer starts everyday with a quote on her clipboard to remind herself of who she is and what her task is. In both individual and focus group interviews, participants referred to Mrs. Farmer's monthly quotes in relation to how she encourages and provides support to everyone at Lakeside. The monthly quotes center around her personal life and responsibility to the members of the Lakeside City school. Over the past months, Mrs. Farmer's quotes have been:

> Lord, I come to You for refuge, peace, and love. I close my eyes and reach for Your guiding hand to lead me through this day. Protect us and keep us close to Your heart. Thank you for my family, freedom, and many blessings. Please cover my family, friends, and school.
>
> Lord, when I know I have displeased You, I pray for Your forgiveness. Thank you for Your total acceptance of me and Your loving patience, Your teachings and loving blessings are my foundation. Thank you for my family, freedom, and many blessings. Please cover my family, friends, and school.

Throughout the day she refers to the quote in times of need. The researcher observed a teacher on one occasion asking Mrs. Farmer to remind them what her quote of the month was. One participant referred to an "open sharing of caring words of advice flows from Mrs. Farmer's respect and care for the teachers, our respect and care for her, and the respect and care we show are students." When a teacher came to Mrs. Farmer with a problem that needed to be solved, the researcher observed Mrs. Farmer asking

questions and listening. Eventually the teacher made the decision on how to proceed with the problem.

Getting input from teachers was evidenced frequently. Mrs. Farmer's clip board was always a tool used to record input from teachers on issues that affected the school. She continuously jotted down suggestions, perceptions, and input from them. The researcher observed Mrs. Farmer praise teacher numerous times for a job well done. She also used email as the main method of communication with the teachers at Lakeside City. Every couple weeks she sent out a detailed email message about what was going on in the school. Recognition for a job well done, words of encouragement, routine practices, and the need for meetings were often topics of the emails.

Currently Lakeside is in the process of hiring a new assistant principal, and the school's Leadership Task Force is involved with the interview process. Mrs. Farmer involved the horizontal grade level teaching team during the initial interview process of candidates where teachers helped to narrow the pool of candidates to be interviewed, then met with the leadership tack force to narrow the pool to three finalists.

Building meaningful capacity in teachers is essential to Mrs. Farmer:

> People coming together to brainstorm is essential. That's why we set up a room here called the Think Tank. Everyone knows that meetings in the Think Tank are brainstorming sessions, and everyone comes prepared to work together. I believe the best problem solving comes from working together and to get the best performance from all of us, including the children, we MUST work together. Consequently our Task Forces are a critical piece of this.

Mrs. Farmer provides time during the school day for teacher to collaborate. Each grade level team has common horizontal planning time daily, and additional days are provided as teaching teams request them. All students at a grade level are scheduled into Connections classes (art, music, physical education, computer lab, guidance) at the same time each day. To provide additional time for collaboration, Mrs. Farmer uses paraprofessionals or substitute teachers to cover classes.

Teacher Leader Tasks

The analysis of the interview data and observations showed that teachers recognize several of their peers as strong instructional leaders. Mrs. Burke, Mrs. Womack, and Mrs, Jones are recognized instructional leaders in the school in the areas of math, behavioral issues, and reading respectively. During interviews and informal conversations with the researcher, these instructional leaders stated that they examine current literature and attend conferences in their content areas to stay on top. They were observed sharing their knowledge with other teachers during an in-service day, and Mrs. Burke was observed sharing math instructional practices with the elementary principals in the district during a meeting. The researcher observed them sharing their knowledge with other teachers in the building during hallway conversations and in meetings. All three teachers recognized themselves as leaders in their areas of expertise during interviews with the researcher. During a personal interview, Mrs. Burke shared with the researcher that she is team teaching with several teachers to help them improve their instructional practices in math by applying the data available on each student.

There are seven task force teams in place at Lakeside that make school-wide decisions. All committees have a chairperson or persons, and every teacher is a member

of one task force. As chairperson, the teacher determines the agenda, often with input from the others on the committee and the principal. The chairperson also guides the meeting and writes minutes.

Within the task forces, teachers will step up and take on leadership roles. At the end of each task force meeting observed by the researcher, the chairperson(s) went over a list of tasks to be completed before the next meeting and the teachers distributed the responsibilities among themselves.

Summary of Question Three Findings

While the teachers and principal work collaboratively on many of the tasks and the tasks are similar, the researcher chose to differentiate the tasks in the summary of findings because the principal has different tasks to complete due to her role as principal, thus dividing the third research question into tow groups: tasks by the principal and tasks by the teachers.

The principal's view of her job as positional leader was explored, and she shared that she feels her primary job is to give the teachers what they need to teach and then step back. The researcher discovered that Mrs. Farmer seeks teacher input to complete her tasks as principal.

In data regarding how teachers perform tasks, teachers were found to have two primary leadership tasks: instructional leaders and leaders in committee work.

Question Four: How have relationships between teachers and between the principal and teachers been affected as a result of distributed leadership?

The data collected from the individual interviews and Task Force team interviews revealed that all 24 teachers felt they had a positive relationship with the principal. They

attributed this to the support she gives them and Mrs. Farmer's personal characteristics. Four of the reoccurring descriptions of Mrs. Farmer's personal characteristics that the participants mentioned were collegial, confidential, respectful, and visionary. All of the participants spoke highly of Mrs. Farmer.

The researcher observed interactions between the principal and teachers in meetings and in hallways that supported with the teachers' perceptions. Upon Mrs. Farmer's arrival at Lakeside City School six years ago, she began to build collaborative relationships with the teachers and among the teachers. She shared that she focused on building relationships with and among teachers similar to how she built relationships with and among the students in her classroom, including keeping an open mind, focusing on building trust, sharing a vision, and working collaboratively.

During the researcher's observations, Mrs. Farmer's personal characteristics came through in her interactions with teachers. She posed questions and then listened. She was visible in the hallways of the school, and constantly asked teachers how they were doing. During faculty meetings she always took time to allow teachers to share personal information. In building and sustaining relationships with the teachers, Mrs. Farmer got to know the whole person, instead of the professional who is in the school building.
On the online Standards Assessment Inventory (SAI) survey administered in November of this year, 41 participants responded to the question, "I would use the word, empowering, to describe my principal." Four people responded always; 31 responded frequently; 6 responded seldom/never. When describing principal/teacher relationships, all respondents referred to the support Principal Farmer gives them, including being available to teachers, providing time and resources, following through, and allowing for

innovation. She was also described as someone who guides, listens, trusts, and supports the teachers. During the observations, the researcher witnessed Mrs. Farmer checking with Mrs. Jones to see if she needed anything for her presentation at the January faculty meeting. When Mrs. Jones said she had things under control, Mrs. Farmer told her she knew the presentation would be great. When Mr. Fouch, a first year 4th grade teacher, had exhausted all his options of disciplining a student, Mrs. Farmer immediately set up a meeting with all of the student's previous teachers, to brainstorm solutions to help both the student and Mr. Fouch.

Summary of Question Four Findings

. The researcher worked to uncover how the principal/teacher relationship was affected when leadership was shared. All 24 teachers reported a positive relationship with Principal Framer during interviews. The interviews, the observations, and the documents show evidence of her supportive, encouraging personality. In Mrs. Farmer's case, her personality and the support she gives the teachers are instrumental in building those relationships. The participants spoke of the relationship with Mrs. Farmer as being collegial, confidential, respectful, and visionary.

Summary

Included in this chapter are the findings from the study. The chapter is organized around the four research questions that guided the study on distributed leadership. Leadership becomes distributed by putting practices into place, by recognizing leaders based on expertise, and by respecting informal leaders' actions of leadership. The teachers and students at Lakeside City Elementary School have made many strides in the past six years under the leadership of Principal Farmer. They are working with a leader

who distributes leadership among many leaders. The embedded practices that allow for distributed leadership include school-wide Task Forces, weekly horizontal grade level team meetings, and having positional leaders in place based on expertise. As a result of the leadership in the school, the teachers and principal reported positive relationships between the teachers and principal and among teachers. The following chapter will provide a summary of the findings, the methodology used during this study, the implications, and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter provides an overview of the study, including research questions, findings, discussion of findings, conclusions, implications, recommendations, and concluding thoughts. This chapter is organized by the researcher to include a discussion of how the research findings related to the review of the literature. Finally, the chapter concludes with recommendations for further research and concluding thoughts.

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to explore how leadership becomes distributed among many leaders in an elementary school. The practices in the school were looked at to determine exactly what the positional leader does in the building to consciously build leadership capacity and to empower the teachers. The study focused on how tasks are carried out in the school and explored the practices and structures in place that allow for distributed leadership. Also, the researcher investigated the impact of distributed leadership on the relationships and the school.

Numerous interpretations for the term “distributed leadership” exist (Bennett et al., 2003; Elmore, 1999; Gronn, 2003; Harris, 2004; Rost, 1991; Spillane et al., 2003), but for the purposes of this study, the term was defined as a leadership phenomenon in which activities are practiced among several people within an organization of team. The principal is the leader among leaders in a school setting and gives others the opportunity to lead when their expertise is needed. Leadership needs to be shared in order for schools to improve school culture and student achievement. The positional leaders must work to build leadership capacity, and they need to work to remove obstacles so that distributed

leadership can emerge. Principals, teachers, and students benefit when leadership is shared among many leaders (Barth, 2001; Blasé and Blasé, 2001; Crowther et al., 2002; Kratzenmeyer & Moller, 2001).

The researcher used a case study methodology and Carspecken's (1996) model of data collection and analysis during this qualitative study. The data were collected from individual interviews with the principal and six teachers, focus group interviews of three task force teams, approximately sixty hours of observations, and documents, which included the school improvement plan, emails, meeting minutes, and test score data. Data from a study conducted by the Modern Red School House Institute in 2005 were also examined. The data consisted of transcripts from teacher interviews, principal interviews, and the Modern Red online survey that was completed by forty two teachers, before and after the implementation of the plan. This study was performed after the school received a federally funded grant from the Comprehensive School Reform, and teachers and principal participated in three years of professional development.

Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond's (2004) distributed leadership framework focuses on "how leadership practice is distributed among positional and informal leaders as well as their followers" (p. 25), which also served as a guide for this study. In distributing leadership, some people will become leaders, others will be active followers, and still some others may not enter the leadership relationship. If teachers are going to take on positional and informal leadership roles, their peers are going to be the active followers in that leadership relationship. Teachers can become involved in more than on leadership relationship in distributed leadership.

Two frameworks shaped the research questions and guided the data analysis. Two frameworks will influence the focus of this research on distributed leadership. Rost's (1991) framework was chosen due to its explanation of the relationship between leaders and followers, its focus on multidirectional leadership and noncoerciveness, and its attention to mutual purpose and intended change. This framework is applicable to explaining distributed leadership because it would be beneficial to investigate the interactions of leaders and followers who are engaged in multidirectional leadership as they share mutual purposes while working toward improving their current situation. The second framework is a four component framework developed by Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2004). This framework was chosen because it provides a rich description of what should be considered during a distributed leadership study in a school setting. Their framework on distributed leadership (1) provides theoretical grounding for studying school embedded leadership practice, (2) indicates that school wide leadership should be the focus of leadership studies, (3) brings forth a model that unites the leaders' work and the situation in which the work occurs, (4) calls for the need for studying the complexities of leadership (Spillane et al., 2004, p. 47-48).

A case study research design with multiple sources of evidence was utilized for the data collection process, to observe leadership practice as it unfolds. Case study research methodology has been described by Bogdan and Bilken (1998) as a "detailed examination of one setting, or a single subject, a single depository of documents, or one particular event" (p. 54). This method of data collection was used to understand leadership practice in the school because distributed leadership is the analysis of leadership activity, defined in this study as the interactions among principals, teachers

and organizational structures and material artifacts. Observations were made of school leaders, research participants were interviewed to solicit their perspectives regarding school leadership practice, and school documents will be reviewed to collect additional data.

Research Questions

The research questions were shaped by Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond's (2004) framework because it provides a rich description of what should be considered during an examination of distributed leadership in a school setting. Four research questions were developed that guided this study on distributed leadership:

5. How is leadership distributed?
6. What operational practices are in place so leadership can be extended to many leaders in the school?
7. How do leaders complete their tasks?
8. How have relationships between teachers and between the principal and teachers been affected as a result of distributed leadership?

Since the researcher sought to understand the phenomenon of distributed leadership, a qualitative single case methodology was used to observe the leadership actions as they occurred in the school and to gain the principal's and teachers' perceptions of the leadership in the school.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study are reviewed in this section, and they are organized according to the four research questions that guided this study on distributed leadership.

Question One: How is leadership distributed?

The first research question that guided this study was developed by Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2004). Their distributed leadership framework focuses on "how leadership practice is distributed among positional and informal leaders as well as their followers" (Spillane, et. al., 2004, p. 25). In distributing leadership, some people will become leaders, others will be active followers, and still others may not enter the leadership relationship.

The researcher explored the leader/follower relationship because leaders and followers must collaborate for there to be a leadership relationship. Unless there are followers, there will be no leaders. Leadership at Lakeside City Elementary School becomes distributed among positional and informal leaders in a number of ways, including: committee work, leadership based on expertise, and informal leaders engaged in leadership actions.

During observations, the researcher saw the informal leaders collaborating with followers on instructional matters during meetings. The established practice of having committees in place to make decisions and complete tasks allows for teachers to take on informal leadership roles within the committees.

Eighteen of the 20 participants interviewed recognized leaders in content areas. The principal, as positional leader, has shifted the structures and practices at Lakeside City in order to build a culture that allows for increased leadership capacity. Consequently, leadership based on expertise is the second way leadership becomes distributed among leaders at Lakeside. Other studies have also shown leadership emerge in informal leaders based on expertise (DuFour & Eaker, 2004).

The third way leadership becomes distributed is with informal leaders performing acts of leadership by leading by example, supporting others, making decisions, and sharing ideas, which have resulted in improvement in practices. Each grade level also has an informal leader that facilitates the weekly horizontal team meetings. These findings supports the research by Lambert (2003), who states that teachers can be leaders of their peers by asking questions that result in impacting practices.

The data collected by the researcher showed three ways leadership becomes distributed among positional and informal leaders at Lakeside City through: task force work, leadership based on expertise, and informal leaders engaged in leadership actions. The interactions between the leaders and followers are collaborative and open. They listen to each other and share their ideas and concerns in an atmosphere of respect; a direct result of shared purpose. These actions take place in schools were teachers are empowered and where a professional learning community is in place (Barth, 2001; Lambert, 2003).

The leaders, as observed by the researcher and as described by the participants in interviews, have followers. Participants were observed in different situations, situations where teachers were leaders and situations where they were active followers. Research by Spillane and Scherer (2004) demonstrated leadership being distributed among leaders and followers. This current study on distributed leadership confirms previous literature.

The interactions between the leaders and followers are collaborative and open. The leadership relationship must be real and multidirectional (Rost, 1991). At Lakeside City, within the leadership relationships, leaders and followers listen to each other and have the

freedom to share their ideas and concerns. The interactions are not a result of "authority, power, or dictatorial actions" (Rost, 1991, p. 107) but they are a result of shared power.

Question Two: What operational practices are in place so leadership can be extended to many leaders in the school?

Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2004) state, "Leadership practice (both thinking and activity) emerges in the execution of leadership tasks in and through the interactions of leaders, followers and situation" (p. 47). They emphasize that researchers must examine what practices in the school allow for leadership to become shared among many leaders and followers.

The researcher identified several practices that have allowed for leadership to be distributed Lakeside City School. Faculty meetings, task force team meetings, and horizontal grade level meetings have been embedded into routine school practices and ultimately have allowed for distributed leadership. Teachers are able to take on positional leadership roles by being chairpersons or by facilitating horizontal grade level meetings.

A second practice in the school that allows multiple leaders is recognizing and respecting leadership based on teachers' positions. Teachers also emerge as leaders based on their teaching positions due to their job, including the counselor, Title I teachers, and Early Intervention teachers. By the practice of their jobs they plan programs and build capacity in their colleagues.

Finally, the communications structures are a key factor in supporting multiple leaders engaged in different leadership tasks. All task forces report back to the leadership team task force monthly and the minutes are emailed to everyone in the school. Another important communication method is through the horizontal grade level meetings, since

each grade level team has members on different task forces and members can find out what is going on through them.

Question Three: How do leaders complete their tasks?

The second research question was developed from Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond's (2004) distributed leadership framework. Following the data analysis, the researcher decided to separate the data according to tasks performed by teacher leaders and tasks performed by the principal. Even though the teacher leaders take initiative, they generally report back to the principal or need to have the principal's permission to attend conferences or to have extra time to collaborate with colleagues. The principal also has additional responsibilities that teachers do not necessarily face.

The researcher interviewed the principal to determine her view of her role as the positional leader at the school. Mrs. Farmer felt her primary role as the positional leader is to get the teachers what they need to teach effectively, even though her position is filled with responsibilities and tasks. She involves the teachers as much as possible during her tasks, which include: improving the school, making decisions, overseeing task forces, managing conflict, and communicating with teachers. The researcher found that the principal was completing all seven of the key actions recommended by Crowther et al., (2002) in building teacher leadership: communicating the intent, integrating ambitions and thoughts of others, asking difficult to answer questions, allowing for individual innovations, stepping back, thinking out of the box, and building on successes. These actions allow teachers to take on leadership roles at Lakeside City School.

Two themes emerged regarding how teachers performed their tasks: teachers engage in leadership tasks through instructional leadership and through leadership on task forces.

The data revealed that there are teacher leaders recognized for their expertise in the areas of math, behavioral issues, and reading. Their leadership tasks include sharing knowledge with their colleagues and collaborating with their colleagues on developing learning activities for students. Previous research has recommended these actions occur among teachers to improve schools (Blasé & Blase, 2001; DuFour & Eaker, 2004; Fullan, 2001). On task forces, teachers also take on positional leadership roles as chairpersons and they also perform leadership tasks as informal leaders. According to the needs of the task force, members divide responsibilities.

Question Four: How have relationships between teachers and between the principal and teachers been affected as a result of distributed leadership?

Determining the impact of distributed leadership on the principal/teacher relationship was the focus of this research question. This question was developed from the emphasis on the leader/follower relationship as discussed in the two frameworks that guided this study (Rost, 1991; Spillane et al., 2004). Before Mrs. Farmer, the current principal at Lakeside City, the teachers worked in isolation under top down principals. Upon her arrival six years ago, Mrs. Farmer began to work to develop teacher relationships by respecting teachers, by keeping an open mind, by sharing the school's vision, and by working cooperatively with teachers to accomplish shared goals, all of which support findings from other research (Fullan, 1999; Lambert, 2003, Rost, 1991).

Leadership has become distributed at Lakeside City School as a result of building of relationships with teachers, fostering a culture for increased leadership capacity, and putting practices into place. All teachers interviewed feel Mrs. Farmer's personal characteristics of being patient, respectful, hard working, passionate, visionary, and a

motivator, enable them to have a good relationship with her. They also noted that Mrs. Farmer supports them and she is available to them, she provides needed time and resources, and she allows them to be innovative and take risks. The teachers further reported that Mrs. Farmer supports them by giving them recognition, trusting them, and providing a culture where they feel they have the freedom to be creative and learn. These findings are consistent with research on building leadership capacity and empowering teachers (Blasé and Blasé, 2001; Kratzenmeyer & Moller, 2001; Lambert, 2003). Previous researchers have stressed the significance of principals developing strong relationships with teachers as instrumental in their success as leaders in the school (Fullan, 2002; Lambert, 2003; Lashway, 1998).

Summary

The following is a summary of the major findings in this study as reported in the previous section.

- Leadership becomes distributed among positional and informal leaders in task force work, through recognition based on expertise, and through daily leadership acts by positional and informal leaders.
- The principal involves the teachers as much as possible when completing positional leader responsibilities, and teachers carry out instructional leadership tasks and leadership tasks as a result of task force work.
- Task force work is the primary way leadership becomes distributed through many leaders. Teachers keep informed about what is going on at the school by having all task forces report back to the leadership task force.

- The teachers reported having a good relationship with the principal due to the principal's personal characteristics and to the support she gives them.

Conclusions and Implications

Several conclusions can be drawn regarding distributed leadership from this case study:

- Leadership capacity must be built in teachers in order for distributed leadership to emerge.
- When leadership is distributed there is less reliance on a central figure as a leader. The principal does not have to handle every decision alone.
- Within the structure of the school organization, distributed leadership may emerge as teachers participate in activities such as task forces and other various committees, as well as providing instructional leadership.
- Practices, such as committee meetings, faculty meetings, team meetings, and a communication structure, should be embedded into school routines to allow for distributed leadership to emerge.
- Distributed leadership allows teachers to be leaders and to have a voice in their profession.
- The success of distributed leadership relies upon the principal providing supportive conditions that include collegial, cultural, and structural support.
- Communication is a key factor in supporting multiple leaders performing multiple tasks.

The main conclusion from this study is that distributed leadership is dependent upon the actions of the positional leader. Without the positional leader being willing to allow

for teacher leaders to emerge, leadership cannot become distributed. It is imperative that the positional leader build a culture to support increased leadership capacity and support teacher leaders and followers.

Leaders and followers must be committed to leaving no child behind, and they must agree on the methods they will use to ensure they achieve their goals. Leaders must have followers because if no one is following a leader, there is no leadership. Practices must also be embedded into the school culture to support increased leadership capacity and support teacher leaders and followers. The vision and goals must be shared among everyone in the school otherwise distributed leadership would not result in an aligned system toward school improvement if every leader were on a different path.

Schools in the United States have been expected to change the educational purpose and the curriculum in order to meet social, legal, political, and economic influences. As these influences continue to shift and evolve, they will continue to impact the educational system in the United States. In order to improve schools, strong leadership is needed. Just as schooling has shifted and evolved, school leadership has also changed over time. No longer can one person determine how to educate students in the midst of these influences that shape education. However, many knowledgeable leaders in a school can collaborate to determine the best educational plan for all students. Distributed leadership, therefore, is necessary in schools today to provide a quality education to every student.

Recommendations for Further Study

The concept of distributed leadership is rather new in educational leadership literature. This case study attempts to add to this emerging area in educational leadership literature; however, a case study of one elementary school cannot sufficiently address all possible

topics regarding the phenomenon of distributed leadership. Further research is needed to add depth to the emerging field of distributed leadership, and as a result of this study, several additional topics emerged that need further investigation:

1. Would similar results be found in middle schools or high schools?
2. What is the long term impact of distributed leadership on student achievement?
3. What would happen in a school with distributed leadership after the positional leader leaves?
4. What skills are needed to become a teacher leader, and how are those skills gained?
5. What happens if there is conflict in a school where leadership is distributed?
6. Do teacher leaders continue to be teacher leaders in distributed leadership schools, or do they move into administrative positions?

Concluding Thoughts

Distributed leadership is a new phenomenon in the United States. It is a framework for understanding the actions of multiple leaders and leadership practice; the interactions among leaders, followers, and their situation. From this study, Lakeside City Elementary School will know what gains have been made from distributing leadership among many leaders. The researcher plans to meet with the participants in the study to share insights of what was learned from this study.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

IRB CORRESPONDENCE

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To: Barbara Setchel
1505 Old Beacon Light Road
Hartwell, GA 20643

CC: Dr. Linda Arthur
P.O. Box 8131

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees
(IACUC/IBC/IRB)

Date: December 12,2007

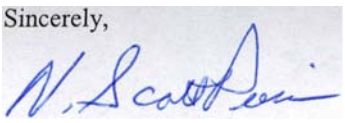
Subject: Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

After a review of your proposed research project numbered: H08103, and titled "The Implementation and Impact of Shared Leadership in one Rural Georgia Elementary School",it appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research.

This IRB approval is in effect for one year from the date of this letter. If at the end of that time, there have been no changes to the research protocol; you may request an extension of the approval period for an additional year. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, whether or not it is believed to be related to the study, within five working days of the event. In addition, if a change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary, you must notify the IRB Coordinator prior to initiating any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, you are required to complete a *Research Study Termination* form to notify the IRB Coordinator, so your file may be closed.

Sincerely,



N. Scott Pierce

Director of Research Services anti Sponsored Programs

APPENDIX B

TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Research Question One: How is leadership distributed among leaders?

1. Can you tell me who some of the teacher leaders are in this school and why they are leaders?
2. Tell me about these teacher leaders and what they do.
3. Who decides how task forces work?
4. How has the principal's way of running the school affected your job?

Research Question Two: What operational practices are in place so leadership can be extended to many leaders in the school?

1. Can you tell me about the practices in this school that help you to participate in school wide decisions?
2. Do you have time to work with other teachers, and how much time is that?
3. How often and where do teachers meet?
4. What are those meetings like?

Research Question Three: How do leaders complete their tasks?

1. Tell me about how something gets done in this school. (faculty meetings, task force meetings, etc.)
2. How do you provide input into school wide decisions?
3. How are you informed of school wide decisions?

Research Question Number Four: How have relationships between teachers and between the principal been affected as a result of distributed leadership?

1. Tell me about Mrs. Farmer and describe how she works with you.
2. How does your relationship with Mrs. Farmer affect the way you work?
3. Do teachers collaborate or are they isolated from each other?
4. Has this changed, and if so, how has it changed?
5. Pretend that I have never visited your school. How would you describe your school culture to me?

APPENDIX C

PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Research Question One: How is leadership distributed among leaders?

1. How do you get teachers involved in the school? (Specific examples)
2. Who decides how task forces work?
3. Can you give me some examples of what teacher leaders do and what followers do?
4. How do you feel about sharing leadership with teachers?
5. How has sharing the leadership affected your job as principal?

Research Question Two: What operational practices are in place so leadership can be extended to many leaders in the school?

1. How do you support teacher leaders?
2. Have schedules changed to allow for more collaboration among teachers?
3. How often do teachers meet and what are those meetings like?
4. Can you tell me about how teachers work with each other?

Research Question Three: How do leaders complete their tasks?

1. Tell me about how something gets done in this school. (faculty meetings, etc.)
2. What is your role as principal in task completion and does it depend on the task?

Research Question Number Four: How have relationships between teachers and between the principal been affected as a result of distributed leadership?

1. Describe the relationship you have with your teachers.
2. How have you built and maintained those relationships?
3. Do the relationships vary across teachers?
4. Pretend that I have never visited your school. How would you describe your school culture to me?

APPENDIX D

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Research Question One: How is leadership distributed among leaders?

1. Can you tell me about decision making at this school?
2. Who makes the decisions?
3. How do things get done once decisions are made?
4. Should teachers be involved in things regarding school practices?

Research Question Two: What operational practices are in place so leadership can be extended to many leaders in the school?

1. How do you participate in school wide decisions?

2. How often and in what capacity do you get together as a group?

3. Tell me about how the decisions you make affect the school?

Research Question Three: How do leaders complete their tasks?

1. Tell me how things get done in this school?
2. Who roles do teachers have in completion of tasks?
3. Do you feel like you truly have a voice in the school?

Research Question Number Four: How have relationships between teachers and between the principal been affected as a result of distributed leadership?

1. Focus Group Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me about decision making in the school?
2. Tell me about how something gets done in this school. For example, adopting a new school wide teaching process.
3. Can you tell me something about the practices in this school that help you to participate in school wide decisions?
4. Describe your principal. Describe how she works with you.
5. Do teachers frequently collaborate or are they primarily isolated from each other?
6. How has distributed leadership affected the school environment?

APPENDIX E

CONSENT FORM

Dear Research Participant;

My name is Barbara Setchel. I am a principal in the Hart County school system and a doctoral student at Georgia Southern University. I am interested in examining how principals and teachers are learning to share leadership to improve teaching and learning within the school.

This letter is to request your assistance in gathering data to analyze the situation. There is, of course, no penalty should you decide not to participate or to later withdraw from the study. If you agree to participate, an interview time will be established where you will be asked a series of 8-10 questions about shared leadership practices in your school. The interviews should last approximately thirty minutes to one hour. Completion of the interview will be considered permission to use the information you provide in the study. Please be assured your responses will be kept absolutely anonymous. The study will be most useful if you respond to every interview question. There are no risks in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. Some of the questions are personal and might cause discomfort. If this occurs, you may choose not to answer one or more of the questions, without penalty. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this research study. If you would like a copy of the study's results, you may indicate your interest below. You will be given a copy of this consent to keep for your records.

If you have any questions about this research project, please call Barbara Setchel at (706) 436-3708. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant in this study, they should be directed to Dr. Linda M. Arthur at Georgia Southern University at (912) 681-0697.

Let me thank you in advance for your assistance in participating in this research study. The results should allow me to better understand the importance of shared leadership practices.

Respectfully,

Barbara Setchel
Doctoral Student
Georgia Southern University

Title of Project: The Implementation and Impact of Shared Leadership in one Rural Georgia Elementary School
Principal Investigator: Barbara Setchel, 1505 Old Beacon Light Road, Hartwell, Georgia, 30643, (706) 436-3708, bsetchel@hart.k12.ga.us
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Linda M. Arthur, P.O. Box 8131, Statesboro, Georgia, 30460, (912) 681-0697, larthur@georgiasouthern.edu