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## Exploration of Common Leadership Behaviors Exhibited by Georgia Elementary Principals from High Performing, High Poverty Schools

Donna Regina Bishop

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AN EXPLORATION OF COMMON LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS EXHIBITED BY  
GEORGIA ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS FROM HIGH PERFORMING, HIGH  
POVERTY SCHOOLS

by

DONNA REGINA BISHOP

(Under the Direction of Walter Polka)

ABSTRACT

Principals of elementary schools continue to be required to perform many duties which include administrative and instructional tasks. The increased accountability for all students to achieve, including the lower achieving students, has made principals focus on their leadership behaviors and practices. Researchers of various studies on principal leadership behaviors and student achievement have found that leadership behaviors make a difference in the academic achievement for all students. Researchers also found that the principal's most important role is that of an instructional leader. Principals leading elementary schools with at risk learners may assist them academically when effective strategies, programs, and organizational structures are present within the school. The demands and the complexity of the role of the principal in the 21<sup>st</sup> century make the principal's job a hard task, especially when leading schools with majority at-risk students. The legislation of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 obligates elementary principals to reflect on their best leadership behaviors and practices to encourage all students to succeed.

Using a qualitative, phenomenological research design, the researcher explored the common leadership behaviors of six Georgia elementary principals of high

performing, high poverty schools. The phenomenological research design was appropriate for this study because it provided a means for exploring the lived experiences of the elementary principals' leadership behaviors in a high performing, high poverty school. The collection of data was obtained from interviews, school observation, and school artifacts. Six common themes and patterns emerged from the qualitative research study: (1) monitoring of teachers educating at-risk learners, (2) gathering and analyzing student achievement data, (3) instructional decision making using a leadership team approach, (4) appropriate use of reading resources and materials, (5) a positive school climate, and (6) an effective staff of teachers. The six common themes and patterns were identified as common leadership behaviors of Georgia elementary principals from high performing, high poverty schools.

**INDEX WORDS:** Principal Leadership Behaviors, Student Achievement, At-Risk Learners, Instructional Leadership, Title I, Phenomenology, Qualitative Research

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POVERTY SCHOOLS

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DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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2006

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my mother, Mattie Morrison, who was my guiding light and supported me with words of encouragement on this dissertation journey. I love you and I hope I have made you proud. My daughters, Lindsay Regina and Shayna Elizabeth, I dedicate this study to both of you as well. You both have been very supportive and helpful while you watched your mommie work during the day and word process until the late hours of the night. Hard work, perseverance, and determination will help you succeed. I love both of you. Derek thanks for your encouragement, love, and support. To my brother Daren, Sarah, and Devon, thanks for keeping the AC blowing! Oliver thanks for your support as well.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Introduction

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, earning an administrative degree prepared principals to perform management leadership behaviors, such as managing buses, buildings, vendors, operations, finances, legal issues, staff, parental and community relations, and hiring good teachers (Brandt, 2000; Hulme, 2004; Johnson, 2004). Leadership roles and behaviors for principals of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are evolving as a result of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) from school management leadership behaviors to principal leadership behaviors which improve the quality of education for all students including the hard to teach at-risk learners (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Brandt, 2000; Duke, 2004; Hulme, 2004; Johnson, 2004). Researchers of various studies on principal leadership behaviors and student achievement have found that there are elementary principals who are making a difference with student achievement from high poverty schools (Kannapel & Clements, 2005; Mullen & Patrick, 2000; Pollard-Durodola, 2003; Togneri & Anderson, 2003). The elementary principals who are making a difference are leading schools by implementing various strategies, programs, and organizational structures within their schools (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Mosenthal, Lipson, Tornello, Russ, & Mekkelson, 2004). During this era of accountability, capturing the “lived experiences” or the “essence” (deMarrais & Lapan, 2004; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Patton, 2002) of the principal’s leadership behaviors from high performing, high poverty elementary schools may assist other principals with educating at-risk students. Therefore, the researcher’s purpose of this study was to explore common leadership behaviors exhibited by Georgia

elementary principals from high performing, high poverty elementary schools using qualitative, phenomenological research methods.

#### Effects of New Federal and State Standards on the Role of the Principal

The importance of effective principal leadership behaviors for elementary at-risk learners has increased since the inception of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) (Johnson, 2004; Leithwood, 2001; [www2.edtrust.org](http://www2.edtrust.org)). NCLB is a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 ([www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org)) that requires all states to develop one accountability system to hold all schools, Title I and non-Title I, accountable for student achievement. Georgia's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) measurement is a result of NCLB, the national education law requiring states to show how they will close the achievement gaps and have all students proficient in reading and math by 2014 ([www2.edtrust.org](http://www2.edtrust.org)). Consistent with NCLB, Georgia's AYP is aimed at improving school performance among those children from racial minority groups who often fail at academic achievement as well as students from low socioeconomic families ([www.2edtrust.org](http://www.2edtrust.org); [www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org)). Georgia's AYP elementary report includes the following criteria: Early Intervention Program (EIP) eligibility and exit percentage rate, 95% test participation rate, and attaining annual measurable objectives on the Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) ([www.georgiastandards.org](http://www.georgiastandards.org)). The requirements of NCLB and the Georgia AYP elementary report have increased expectations for student achievement. Principals will need to examine their leadership behaviors and practices when planning a quality educational program for at-risk students (Johnson, 2004; Leithwood, 2001; Mullen & Patrick, 2000; Pollard-Durodola, 2003; Wurmband, 2004).

### Defining Georgia's At-Risk Learners

According to the Georgia Department of Education, elementary at-risk learners are defined as the group of elementary students who qualify for Georgia's Early Intervention Program (EIP) ([www.georgiastandards.org](http://www.georgiastandards.org)). Students are identified for EIP when they are at-risk of not maintaining or reaching academic grade level. EIP at-risk learners are identified differently at each grade level. The at-risk learners at kindergarten level score at the level of "needs extra instructional assistance", "not ready for first grade", or "ready with extra instructional assistance" based on the Georgia Kindergarten Assessment Program-Revised (GKAP-R) ([www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org)). The students in grades 1-5 scoring below 800 (not meeting expectations) on the Georgia Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) are identified as at-risk learners as well ([www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org)). Other ways to identify at-risk learners include; local assessments, portfolios, Student Support Team (SST) Checklist and the Early Intervention Program (EIP) Checklist. The students who qualify for Georgia's Early Intervention Program and/or score below 800 on the reading portion of the CRCT will be the students defined as at-risk learners from high performing, high poverty elementary schools for the purpose of this study.

### High Performing, High Poverty Elementary Schools

Principals in the state of Georgia may benefit from the lived experiences of the elementary principals from high performing, high poverty elementary schools in order to assist at-risk learners with academic achievement and to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) ([www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org); Leithwood, 2001; Mullen & Patrick, 2000; Pollard-Durodola, 2003; Togneri & Anderson, 2003). For Georgia elementary schools during the 2006 school year, AYP is made when approximately 66.7% of the students are at or above

grade level or show a 10% decrease in the number of students below grade level from the previous year on the reading portion of the CRCT. Academic progress in student subgroups which are based on race, students with disabilities, socioeconomic level, and overall school performance contributes to the school's AYP report. Consequences for not meeting AYP range from providing tutorial or supplemental services within the school to an outside provider whose task is to restructure the school organization. Schools that fail to make AYP for two consecutive years are identified for school improvement ([www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org)). For the purpose of this study, a high performing, high poverty elementary school is defined as an elementary school with approximately 80% of their student population in grades 1-5 meeting or exceeding expectations on the reading portion of the CRCT along with a free and/or reduced lunch rate of 60% or higher are according to their AYP report for the 2005 -2006 school term.

#### Principal Leadership Behavior and Student Achievement Studies

Educators have historically known that school leadership makes a difference in student achievement (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Edmonds, 1979; Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Hallinger, & Heck, 1998; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Many early studies on school effectiveness report that the styles or behaviors of principals are one of several defining characteristics of successful schools (Brown, 2004; Edmonds, 1979; Johnson, 2005; Pollard-Durodola, 2003; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003 & 2004; [www.mes.org](http://www.mes.org)). Researchers studying the style approach determined that leadership is composed of essentially three general kinds of behaviors; task behaviors, relationship behaviors and participative behaviors. The central purpose of the style approach is to describe how leaders combine these kinds of behaviors to influence others to reach a goal



(Northouse, 2004). Waters et al. identified 21 leadership responsibilities or behaviors which created a strong academic learning environment for students. The 21 leadership responsibilities or behaviors were divided into first and second order changes. The first order changes were built on past and existing models and the second order changes break from past existing models and challenge the existing norms, and values within the organization.

Scherer (2004) found there is a need for strong effective leadership in education. Scherer highlighted the following leadership behaviors in high performing, high poverty elementary schools: collegiality within school organization, aligning the curriculum, using student data to lead change, implementing research based strategies, incorporating the business community, researching how to make schools better, school choice, and establishing a clear and communicated vision. Neuman and Pelchat (2001) interviewed leaders at different levels about focusing on student academic achievement. The researchers found that principals were given more responsibility in the area of management and very little training in the area of instructional improvement. During the interview, the leaders at different levels reflected on their leadership behaviors in which they viewed their actions as a direct, mediated (indirect), or reciprocal effect towards student achievement (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Kannapel & Clements, 2005; Neuman & Pelchat, 2001).

Elementary schools with a majority of students from low-socioeconomic families have a high rate of at-risk learners ([www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org); [www2.edtrust.org](http://www2.edtrust.org)). Cuban (2004) emphasized that parents in low income communities want high academic expectations for their children. He described a high school principal who refused to accept low

expectations. The principal ensured that resources and textbooks were available to all students along with lowering pupil-teacher ratios. Cuban stated that insisting on a challenging curriculum and focusing on instructional excellence will create success for at-risk learners. The school leaders he selected used authority (hierarchical position as principal), and created a moral climate of support for students and learning. Cuban divided effective school leadership behaviors into the following three categories: instructional, managerial, and political. He summarized his findings by stating that teachers and administrators must provide moral leadership to raise students' academic performance, reduce the achievement gap, and build proud, engaged, and humane young men and women of high moral stature. Bolman and Deal (2002) further elaborated on moral leadership by stating that principals should lead with soul and spirit and maintain a positive school climate for all students to achieve.

Varlas (2003) found top-down administrative hierarchies in large urban schools with little or no collaboration with colleagues can leave teachers feeling isolated and struggling to maintain classroom order. The bureaucratic structure makes teachers feel their ideas are not heard outside the teacher's lounge. Varlas noted that principals and teacher leaders should strive to share decision making, work in teams, and build a professional school community focused on increasing student achievement for all students especially when tackling the challenges of educating at-risk learners in schools.

Researchers are finding that principals can not do it alone (Lambert, 2002; Leithwood, Steinbach, & Ryan, 1997). When working with at-risk learners, effective, lasting school change has to be a collaborative effort (Dufour, Eaker, Dufour, 2005; Kannapel & Clements, 2005; Lambert, 2002 & 2005; Leithwood, Steinbach, & Ryan,

1997). Dufour et al. (2005) stated that initiating professional learning communities was a key strategy used to improve the learning experience of every student, especially the hard to teach at-risk learner. Elementary schools need effective leadership behaviors from principals who focus on establishing a professional learning environment (Dufour, 2002). Principal and teacher leaders in schools with majority at-risk learners should foster a work environment that is both positive and collaborative. Lambert (2002) also found the old model of formal, one-person leadership left the substantial talents of teachers untapped. Lambert further stated that meaningful instructional leadership requires a shared, community undertaking. School leadership for the improvement of student achievement is the professional work of everyone (Dufour, Eaker, Dufour, 2005; Kannapel & Clements, 2005; Lambert, 2002 & 2005; Leithwood, Steinbach, & Ryan, 1997).

According to the Effective Schools Report (ESR), the responsibility for improving instruction and learning rests in the hands of the school principal ([www.mes.org](http://www.mes.org); Edmonds, 1979; Johnson, 2005; Lezotte & Bancroft, 1985; Pollard-Durodola, 2003). Edmonds (1979) concluded that when school improvement processes are based on a clear school mission, high expectations for success, instructional leadership, frequent monitoring of student progress, opportunity to learn with student time on task, safe and orderly environment, and home-school relations, are implemented, the proportions of students that achieve excellence either improves, or at least remains the same. Principals today are being asked to build a school capacity to ensure that all students meet or exceed state standards (Dufour, 2002; Johnson, 2004; Leithwood, 2001; Wurmband, 2004).

Effective leadership preparation and quality professional experiences will contribute to a principal's success within the school setting when providing an education for all students ([www.edschools.org](http://www.edschools.org)). Researchers of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) identified thirteen leadership dimensions which make a difference with student academic achievement on a Professional Development Inventory (PDI). The dimensions include (1) planning; (2) organizing; (3) problem solving; (4) creativity; (5) decisiveness; (6) system analysis; (7) vision; (8) communications; (9) instructional leadership; (10) group leadership and team building; (11) climate development; (12) moral responsibility; and (13) instructional analysis and supervision ([www.naesp.org](http://www.naesp.org)). The dimensions of the PDI were based on the results of principal leadership studies and effective leadership standards which include knowledge, skills, and disposition ([www.ccsso.org](http://www.ccsso.org); [www.naesp.org](http://www.naesp.org); [www.npbea.org/ELCC/](http://www.npbea.org/ELCC/)).

#### Statement of the Problem

On January 8, 2002, the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) which is currently known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was signed into law. The new law requires principals to employ various strategies, programs, and organization structures to improve student academic achievement. However, minority and/or low socioeconomic students continue to struggle academically. Principals are the key leaders faced with closing the achievement gap between minority and majority students. Principals of elementary schools before NCLB operated under accountability standards that did not have a primary focus on instructional improvement for all students. Instruction was viewed as the teacher's job. Principal leadership practices based on the accountability policies and laws of the 21<sup>st</sup> century dictate that

principals must look at the academic progress of all students in order to meet federal and state mandates.

It is known by various researchers that effective leadership behaviors are necessary to produce a high performing elementary school. Presently, it is unclear why every principal is not making a conscious effort to exhibit these behaviors to make a difference in student achievement. Elementary principals of high performing, high poverty schools are leading schools to help all students achieve but there are questions as to which leadership behaviors are common among the principals and which leadership behaviors are perceived as having an impact on student achievement. Therefore, the researcher's purpose for this study was to explore the common leadership behaviors of Georgia elementary principals from high performing, high poverty schools.

#### Research Questions

The researcher's purpose was to explore the common leadership behaviors of Georgia elementary principals from high performing, high poverty schools and to identify the leadership behaviors the participants have in common. The researcher asked the participants which strategies, programs, or organizational structure they supported to address the academic achievement needs of at-risk learners and to share their lived experiences with providing an education for at-risk learners. Given the stated purposes, the researcher answered the following overarching research question:

*Overarching Question:* What leadership behaviors are common to Georgia elementary principals from high performing, high poverty schools?

*Sub-questions:*

1. What educational strategies, programs, and/or organizational structures do principals promote or support within their schools to address the academic problems of at-risk learners?
2. Which leadership behaviors do principals state as most effective to increase the academic achievement of at-risk learners?

### Conceptual Framework

In this study, the researcher reviewed literature in the areas of the at-risk learners, the strategies, programs, and organizational structures which have proven to be successful for at-risk learners, the new role of the principal due to educational reform, and studies on principal leadership and student achievement. The research review will include journal articles, books, Internet sources, research articles about the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Georgia's Adequate Yearly Progress, Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards, Effective Schools Correlates (ESR), and effective instructional leadership strategies.

### Significance of Study

As new federal and state standards and school accountability issues increase, the focus of effective instructional leadership in schools is becoming more prominent. Principals are directly held accountable for the academic success of all students – including the at-risk learners. The researcher's findings will provide principals, the state department of education, and various principal organizations with suggested information regarding the changing role of the principal and their leadership behaviors, and information about specific educational strategies, programs, and organizational structures

supported by the principals who are leaders from high performing, high poverty elementary schools. Various college and leadership preparation programs may benefit from the findings in the study in order to train principals and to promote significant changes within the elementary schools.

## Procedures

### *Participants*

The participants of the study were 6 elementary principals from high performing, high poverty schools with grades prekindergarten – 5 within the state of Georgia. The elementary principals had five or more years of experience as principal at the elementary school level. The Georgia elementary principal participants were identified using the reputation-case and network selection process. The participants were also identified from school data provided at the Georgia Department of Education website ([www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org)). After Institutional Research Board (IRB) approval, the researcher contacted the participants for an interview, a school observation, and collection of any school artifacts which supported the research study.

### *Research Design*

Using a phenomenological, qualitative research design, the researcher audio taped and reported the responses of principals from high performing, high poverty elementary schools. The researcher collected the interview data, observation data, and data from school artifacts. Collecting data using a multimethod approach, referred to as triangulation, allowed the researcher look at each participant individually using the interview data, the observation data, and school artifacts. Then, the researcher analyzed

the data among the participants to find common themes and patterns of leadership behaviors.

### *Data Collection*

A pilot study was conducted with 2 participants on the topic of principal leadership behaviors which make a difference for at-risk learners. The pilot study was used to assess whether the research protocol was workable. The participants of the pilot study reviewed the researcher's method of obtaining data through interviews, observations, and school artifacts. Therefore, the pilot study was used to practice and refine the procedures and to determine if the actual study would work as planned.

After the pilot study, the researcher conducted the actual study with principal participants who did not participate in the pilot study. The participants responded to interview questions about their leadership behaviors and educational strategies, programs, or organizational structures they supported within their schools to address the academic achievement for at-risk learners. For this study, an in-depth, semi-structured interview served as the main source of data collection. The researcher observed the school to learn how the views of the principal corresponded to their lived experiences of providing an educational program for at-risk learners. The researcher gathered any school artifacts the principal participants deemed appropriate for the study.

### *Data Analysis*

The researcher designed an interview matrix to identify and code common themes and patterns for each of the participants' individual responses. The researcher looked at each individual participant's interview responses, and the results of the school



observation and school artifacts. Then, the researcher analyzed the results by looking for common themes and patterns across each of the participants' responses.

#### Limitations

This study was designed to explore common principal leadership behaviors and the lived experiences of principals from high performing, high poverty elementary schools using phenomenological research methods. Using a phenomenological, qualitative research design, the design does not lend itself to replication and the design does not have a constant or specific pattern. The participant interviews were self-reporting and based on past experiences, which may not accurately reflect the principal engaging in the cited leadership behaviors. The findings of the study may be situational and context specific. Results of this study may be different if conducted in another region in Georgia or another state. The selection of participants was based on the participants' elementary school reading results of the Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) and the elementary school's free and reduced lunch rate. Also, the research findings were dependent on the cooperation and the quality of responses from each participant.

#### Definitions

For the purpose of clarification, the following terms are defined and used in this study:

*Academic Achievement* – The term “academic achievement” is reflected in the school's reading achievement measures. Academic achievement is defined using the Criterion Referenced Curriculum Test (CRCT) which is a criterion referenced test ([www.georgiastandards.org](http://www.georgiastandards.org)).

*At-Risk Learners/Students* – The term “at-risk learners/students” is defined as students who are academically performing below the score of 300 on the Criterion Referenced Comprehensive Test (CRCT) for grades 1-5 ([www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org)).

*Elementary Students* – The term “elementary students” is defined as students in grades prekindergarten through fifth grade.

*High Performing, High Poverty Elementary School* – The term “high performing, high poverty elementary school” is defined as a school with overall scores at approximately 80% or higher of the students meeting or exceeding on the reading portion of the CRCT along with a free and reduce lunch rate of 60% or higher ([www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org)).

*Instructional Leadership* – The term “instructional leadership” is defined by behaviors, actions, and styles of the school principal associated with curriculum and instruction (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003 & 2004).

*Lived Experience* – The term “lived experience” is used by phenomenological research methods. The lived experience of a person is to learn about the nature or essence of an everyday experience a person lived through (deMarrais, 2004).

*Minority Achievement Gap* – The term “minority achievement gap” is defined as the difference in student reading achievement scores between majority students and minority students on the CRCT.

*Phenomenology* – The term “phenomenology” is defined as making sense of a point of view of those who have lived the experience. It enables the researcher to examine everyday human experience in close, detailed ways (deMarrais, 2004).

*Principal Leadership Behaviors* – The term “principal leadership behaviors” is defined by Northouse (2004) as the behavior of the principal which distinguishes it from the trait

approach (personality approach). The behavioral approach determines that leadership is composed of essentially three general kinds of behaviors or actions: task behaviors, relationship behaviors, and the combination of both behaviors (participative behaviors) in order to influence others to reach a goal.

*Title I* – The term “Title I” is defined as a program which provides financial assistance through state educational agencies to local educational agencies and public schools with a high number or percentage of families with low income ([www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/programs/titleiparta/index.html)).

### Summary

Principals during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and before NCLB operated under accountability standards that did not have a primary focus on the academic achievement of all students. Elementary principals are obligated to perform many duties which include administrative tasks and instructional tasks during the increased accountability of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The new federal and state standards require principals to employ various strategies, programs, and organizational structures to improve student achievement. Contemporary literature increasingly defines the principal’s most important role as that of an instructional leader; however as a result of the increasing administrative demands, principals may have to reflect on their leadership behaviors and prioritize the most important leadership behaviors to have a high performing elementary school. Therefore, the researcher’s study of exploring common leadership behaviors exhibited by Georgia elementary principals from high performing, high poverty schools was warranted.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF RESEARCH AND RELATED LITERATURE

#### Introduction

Academic success for at-risk learners is a matter of conscious choice by principals (Collins, 2001; Edmonds, 1979). Principals can have any kind of elementary school they want – no excuses (Davenport & Anderson, 2002). The principal's leadership behavior with decision making is the key component of fashioning any elementary school with at-risk learners. "We can, whenever, and wherever we chose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need to do that; and whether or not we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven't so far" (Edmonds, 1979, p. 23).

With the enactment of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) of 2001, principals are obligated to focus on the academic progress of all learners. Many at-risk learners lack the reading skills necessary to be academically successful. These at-risk learners described by Georgia's Early Intervention Program (EIP) will need effective leadership and academic support by elementary principals in order to make gains. The first section of this chapter explores who are the at-risk learners in high performing, high poverty schools and which strategies, programs, and organizational structures work for these types of students. The second section examines how the role and leadership behavior of the principal has been redefined based on the findings of various researchers. The third section highlights studies on effective leadership practices and how at-risk learners make progress based on principal leadership behaviors.

## Strategies, Programs, and Organizational Factors for At-Risk Learners

### *Who Are the At-Risk Learners?*

The at-risk learners within the state of Georgia are identified through the Early Intervention Program (EIP) ([www.georgiastandards.org](http://www.georgiastandards.org)). The Early Intervention Program (EIP) is an outgrowth of the implementation of NCLB and acts as the monitor for adequate yearly progress for students in the state of Georgia. Students served under EIP are students who are at risk of not reaching or maintaining grade level expectations in the areas of reading, language arts, and math. The purpose of EIP is to provide additional instructional resources to help students obtain grade level academic skills in the shortest possible time. The elementary classroom teachers identify all EIP eligible students based on a checklist. Program structure, student eligibility, and assessment and accountability are noted in the EIP strategies manual. The number of at-risk learners qualifying and exiting the program determines whether a school makes adequate yearly progress (AYP).

The overall EIP program structure is based on instructing reading effectively to at risk learners and moving them towards grade level ([www.georgiastandards.org](http://www.georgiastandards.org)). The at-risk learners are students who are identified and eligible for EIP for the purpose of this study. Along with defining the at-risk learners, a high performing, high poverty elementary school is defined as a school with overall scores at approximately 80% or higher of the students meeting or exceeding on the reading portion of the Criterion Referenced competency Test (CRCT) along with a free and reduced lunch rate of 60% or higher ([www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org)). Since reading serves as a primary focus for at-risk learners in high performing, high poverty schools, the next subsection will highlight a few reading strategies and programs proven effective by researchers.

*Reading Strategies and Programs Designed to Assist At-Risk Learners*

Effective school level reading strategies and programs are necessary to help at-risk learners make academic gains (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Mosenthal, Lipson, Tornello, Russ, & Mekkelson, 2004). Principals will need to hire highly qualified teachers or star teachers (Habermann, 1995) with an open and positive classroom environment along with high expectations to help at-risk readers achieve (Alder & Fisher, 2001; Davis & Wilson, 1999; Pierce, 1994; Soodak & Podell, 1994). Researchers performed a school study on the Emerald Elementary reading program focused on student learning outcomes, multiple reading strategies and programs, shared responsibility for student success, strong leadership at school and classroom levels, and maintaining experienced teachers (Alder & Fisher, 2001). Along with Emerald Elementary's successful reading program additional several researchers have found more key features with instructing reading to at-risk learners which include reading in-service programs, using technology, effective reading strategies, class size reduction, and the availability of literacy resources (Edmonds & Li, 2005; Greenwood, Tapia, Abbot, & Walton, 2003; Mather, Bos, & Babur, 2001; McMahon, Richmond, & Reeves-Kazelskis, 1998; Radinski & Padak, 1994).

Reading instruction at home for students and involving students in reading have proven to show significant growth for at-risk learners (McMahon, Richmond, & Reeves-Kazelskis, 1998; Soodak & Podell, 1994; Sweet, Guthrie, & Ng, 1998). Smith and Rotman (1993) found that children who were read to by their parents had an increase in their motivation to read and learn. Also, students who were exposed to print related

activities or experiences contributed to the student's success in literacy (Williams, Hall, Lauer, 2004).

Brushaber (2003) stated students should be involved with the direct teaching of reading strategies and writing opportunities. Bradshaw (2001) further stated that the directed reading strategies of the Reading Recovery program were very beneficial to at-risk learners. Leveled reading, guided reading, and direct, individualized phonemic instruction can enhance academic success for an elementary at-risk learner. Examining various reading strategies and programs advocated and purchased by principals from high performing, high poverty elementary schools can influence the at-risk learners' school behavior and literacy success (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Mosenthal, Lipson, Tornello, Russ, & Mekkelson, 2004).

Several researchers have found principal's attitudes and perceptions of instructing reading to at-risk learners is consistent with the learner's reading progress. Davis and Wilson (1999) found that the reading skills students learned had a great deal to do with what a principal believed about instructing at-risk learners. Mather, Bos, and Babur (2001) discovered through the results of their research that inservice teachers had positive perceptions about using explicit, code based instruction to teach early literacy skills as compared to preservice teachers. The findings in the study of McMahon, Richmond, and Reeves-Kazelskis (1998) indicated significant relationships between teacher and principal perceptions of literacy acquisition and the children's involvement in literacy events, and the quantity/quality of classroom literacy materials.

Soodak and Podell (1994) stated that teachers and principals frequently look outside of the school to seek instructional solutions for the at-risk learners instead of

focusing on strategies to help them at school. The researchers further stated teachers and principals do not readily perceive reading interventions they can implement in the classroom to create reading success for students. The correlations of teacher and principal perceptions of intrinsic motivation and achievement in reading were positive (Sweet, Guthrie, & Ng, 1998). Higher achieving students were intrinsically motivated with less need for extrinsic contextual supports whereas lower achieving students were characterized by the need for extrinsic contextual supports which are activity based tasks.

According to the researchers, there are various reading strategies and programs designed to assist at-risk learners with making academic gains. A student's success with reading determines their success in most academic areas. Examining an elementary school's reading scores on the Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) indicates the percentage of students who are reading on or above grade level. The high performing, high poverty elementary schools with CRCT reading scores where approximately 80% of the students are meeting or exceeding reading expectations were defined as a high performing school for this study.

#### *Organizational Factors Related to At-Risk Learners*

It is important for principals to examine the organizational structure of the classroom as well as the school when working in high poverty elementary schools. Smith, Molnar, and Zahorik (2003) studied the Wisconsin Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (Project SAGE) which was designed in 1996 to increase the academic achievement of low-income students by reducing the k-3 class size to 15 students to 1 teacher. Project SAGE established "lighted schoolhouses" which were open longer than the traditional school day. The study compared the academic performance of SAGE



students with the performance of a comparable group of students in larger classes from 17 non-SAGE schools. The researchers found that SAGE first graders scored significantly higher than the comparison group on reading, language arts, and mathematics subtests of the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS). Class size reduction benefited all students, but the effects were especially powerful for African American students from low-socioeconomic families. The researchers of Project SAGE found student achievement increased for those at-risk students. The program appeared to promote effective teaching, as well as mitigating the impact of poor attendance, and narrowing the achievement gap.

Pollard-Durodola (2003) performed a case study on a Houston Independent School District (ISD) elementary school, Mabel B. Wesley Elementary. Pollard-Durodola described the school characteristics as supporting the research on effective schools ([www.mes.org](http://www.mes.org)). The school's principal, Thaddeus Lott, volunteered to transfer from a successful school within the same school district to Wesley Elementary School. Wesley Elementary was known for serving students from an economically depressed area with disruptive student behavior, poor teacher quality, and a curriculum that did not meet student needs. The researcher highlighted the characteristics of creating a culture that encouraged both effective teaching and effective student learning at the classroom level. The principal and the three teachers interviewed used characteristics of effective schools within the school environment. The principal served as an instructional leader and led the staff towards a common goal. He empowered other instructional leaders within the "inner circle" of the school (leadership team) and devised a set of core beliefs that were shared by the staff (vision).

The researcher summarized nine factors that significantly impacted the academic success at Wesley Elementary: (1) strong leadership by the principal and teacher experts; (2) a core reading and math program that emphasized basic skills; (3) a safe and orderly environment; (4) high expectations for both teachers and students; (5) frequent and systematic evaluation of teachers and students; (6) a well planned curriculum that addressed student needs; (7) innovative staff development that was attentive to specific teacher needs; (8) a plan for preventing academic problems; and (9) a common vision. Based on the findings of the researcher, the principal's leadership behaviors complemented the effective schools correlates ([www.mes.org](http://www.mes.org)) and had a positive influence on this high performing, high poverty elementary school.

Mullen and Patrick (2000) researched how an academically at-risk school facing state take over was positively changed by principal leadership. The researchers shadowed the principal at an inner-city k-6 elementary school in Alabama and identified eight strategies that the principal used to improve the school's climate. The eight strategies were; (1) implementing a philosophy of discipline and management; (2) developing a system of support systems to improve the school climate; (3) building a strong staff who supports students; (4) establishing strong relationships and high visibility with the school community; (5) identifying the basic needs of students as a priority; (6) designing a new remedial program to support the ability of the students; (7) implementing teacher developed standards by analyzing student data; and (8) developing a case for year round schooling. Along with the strategies, the researcher further described the principal's leadership behaviors as a part of the school's academic success. The principal and staff tackled the complex problems of a challenging school

environment. The principal supported the implementation of strategies to show that poor, inner-city children can learn with the appropriate programs in place headed by a caring, highly effective staff.

Sinden, Hoy, and Sweetland (2004) found that school structures should not be rigid, controlling, and coercive. The researchers concluded that the collegial leadership of the principal and the organizational commitment of the staff developed school structures that facilitated academic success for all students. These enabling schools have high levels of trust, authenticity, truthfulness, and low levels of role conflict.

The key elements of school structures may be divided into two categories: centralization and formalization (Hall, 2002; Owens, 2004; Sinden, Hoy, & Sweetland, 2004). The enabling centralization school structure uses problem solving, cooperation, collaboration and change as a process. The enabling formalization school structure promotes dialogue, flexibility, judgment, and guidance. The hindering forms of centralization and formalization school structures promote conformity, control, obedience, and status quo (Hall, 2002; Owens, 2004). Basically, researchers Sinden, Hoy, and Sweetland found that the importance of both collegial leadership behaviors of the principal and organizational commitment of the faculty were instrumental in developing enabling school structures which facilitated student academic success.

Showing improvement in student academic achievement and sustaining academic achievement year after year will be the challenge for principals working in high poverty elementary schools (Chrisman, 2005; Lambert, 2005). Only principals equipped to handle a complex, changing learning environment can implement the reforms that lead to sustained improvement in student academic achievement (Fullan, 2002; Strahan, Carlone,

Horn, Dallas, & Ware, 2003; Wurmband, 2004). Therefore, principals will need to examine leadership behaviors and practices they deem are effective for high performing, high poverty elementary schools.

### Redefining the Role and Leadership Behavior of the Principal

#### *Distributed or Shared Decision-making*

There is a demand for effective principal leadership behaviors based on the educational accountability laws and policies of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Brandt, 2000). The increase of accountability laws and policies required changes in the role of the principal (Wong & Nicotera, 2004; Johnson, 2004; Leithwood, 2001). Lambert (2002) stated the days of the principal as the only instructional leader are over. Similarly, the traditional view of one person leading has shifted to a vision of shared or distributed leadership (Brown, 2004; Lambert, 2002; Leithwood, Steinbach, & Ryan, 1997). One principal cannot serve as the instructional leader for an entire elementary school with majority at-risk learners without the substantial participation of other educators. Brown (2004) further stated that all principals should possess the knowledge and skills to lead schools to high levels of achievement for all children. The principal's job of improving student achievement has become too complex to be accomplished alone (Lambert, 2002).

Principal leadership behaviors have changed from managing teachers and staff members to including the school community in leadership decisions and responsibilities (Brown, 2004; Case, 2004; Hulme, 2004; Neumann & Simmons, 2000). Principal leadership behaviors which include the school community are vital to the school improvement process and will help students identified as at-risk to make academic achievement gains (Lambert, 2002 & 2005; Neuman & Simmons, 2000). The use of

shared decision making as a leadership tool has served as one step in improving the quality of leaders who are being prepared in 21<sup>st</sup> century schools (Brandt, 2000; Johnson, 2004; Leithwood, Steinbach, & Ryan, 1997). Lambert (2005) described the inclusion of the school community in instructional decisions and responsibilities as shared responsibility for lasting reform or high leadership capacity schools. Principals who include skillful participation, vision, inquiry, collaboration, reflection, and student achievement with staff exhibit shared leadership behaviors.

Neumann and Simmons (2000) similarly defined the leader or the principal as one who includes teachers, staff members, parents, and members of the entire education community in the decision making process. Principal leadership is no longer seen as a function of age, position, or job title. If schools are to meet the increasing demands and to ensure high quality education for all students, school leadership needs to be redistributed in ways that share responsibilities across the school community and that value collaborative decision making (Brown, 2004; Hulme, 2004; Leithwood, 2001; Leithwood, Steinbach, & Ryan, 1997).

### *21<sup>st</sup> Century Leadership Preparation*

The demands of educating all students including the at-risk learners require that the quantity of principal leaders increase along with the quality of leadership (Meyer & Slechta, 2002). Improving the quality of principal leadership starts with strong preparation programs, leadership evaluations based on student achievement, and standards grounded in the knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning ([www.ccsso.org](http://www.ccsso.org); [www.edschools.org](http://www.edschools.org); [www.naesp.org](http://www.naesp.org); [www.npbea.org/ELCC/](http://www.npbea.org/ELCC/); Varlas, 2003). Varlas (2003) further described successful leadership preparation or professional

development to include teachers. Principals can not improve the academic achievement of at-risk learners alone (Lambert, 2002 & 2005). Professional collaboration will enhance the quality of leadership by developing the leadership skills from within the school (Leithwood, Steinbach, Ryan, & 1997).

The Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) is described as a partnership with higher learning institutions and school districts for preparing leaders for the new work of being a principal during the 21<sup>st</sup> century ([www.galeaders.org](http://www.galeaders.org)). The officials of GLISI also use Performance-Based Training Modules which include leading teams through group decision-making process, analyzing root causes to improve student achievement, and developing SMART goals. Leadership preparation programs such as GLISI are important to principals during this time of accountability to improve student achievement.

Principal leaders are held accountable for leading their schools based on the collective efforts of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in the form of Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders. The specific indicators of the standards define and classify successful leadership practices by knowledge, disposition, and performance ([www.ccsso.org](http://www.ccsso.org)). These sets of principles act as an ethical theory which guides principals on how to act, and behave professionally as instructional leaders. The ISLLC standards also serve as leadership expectations with state policies to develop highly qualified principal leaders with higher institution leadership preparation programs ([www.npbea.org/ELCC](http://www.npbea.org/ELCC)) and with determining state leadership certification ([www.ccsso.org](http://www.ccsso.org); [www.gapsc.org](http://www.gapsc.org)). Leadership preparation programs during the 21<sup>st</sup> century also includes making strong connections with other

people which consist of caring and valuing input from others as individuals and members of the educational community ([www.ccsso.org](http://www.ccsso.org)).

### *Climate and Culture – Moral Leadership*

Researchers have examined school leadership roles from the perspective of the school's climate and culture (Strahan, 2003; Strahan, Carlone, Horn, Dallas, & Ware, 2003). Meyer and Slechta (2002) attempted to define leadership as achieving specific, beneficial results through people. Leadership behaviors for the 21<sup>st</sup> century require certain values such as integrity, a servant's heart, and stewardship (Bolman & Deal, 2002; Meyer & Slechta, 2002; Polka, Mattai, & Perry, 2000). Similar to leading with a servant's heart, Bolman and Deal (2002) described principal leadership as leading with soul and spirit. Bolman and Deal identified five qualities of effective leadership behaviors which included passion, integrity, focus, courage, and wisdom. Kessler (2002) emphasized the need for trust, reflection and meaningful connections for effective school leadership. Collins (2001) further used similar descriptors with "good to great" leaders as a "selfless executive" and "servant leader".

Polka, Mattai, and Perry (2000) stated that technological changes need to be handled with human needs in mind. According to Polka et al. (2000), teacher satisfaction and productivity are based on the five correlates which include challenge, commitment, control, creativity, and caring. Principal leadership behaviors which resolve to provide high expectations for all students and leading schools with stewardship will produce a positive school culture and academic success for at-risk learners (Bolman & Deal, 2002; Strahan, 2003; Strahan, Carlone, Horn, Dallas, & Ware, 2003 ).

In addition, Dufour (2002) found that educators are constantly redefining the role of principal from instructional leader with a focus on teaching to a leader of a professional learning community with a focus on learning. In order for elementary at-risk learners to make academic gains, principal leadership behaviors will need to include the essence or lived experiences of effective Title I elementary principals along with the school community. The role of the principal as an instructional leader is too narrow a concept to carry the weight of the kinds of reforms that will create the schools needed for the future of educating the at-risk learners (Fullan, 2002).

#### *Evolving 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leadership Roles and Behaviors*

Just as the leadership roles from the business perspective have changed from the focus on the leader to the focus on team building within the organization, leadership roles and behaviors have changed for principals. Meyer and Slechta (2002) found that skills alone cannot produce effective leaders. Leadership skills are no substitute for key leadership values. Meyer and Slechta identified five elements of achievement or five pillars of leadership which include; 1) defining specific results to achieve, 2) creating a plan, 3) developing internal motivation to take action, 4) building the belief and confidence of the school community so everyone performs at an optimum level, and 5) continuing to work through problems or obstacles. The five pillars complement the effective schools correlates and principal leadership behaviors needed in elementary schools to bring about change in the way we educate our at-risk learners (Edmonds, 1979; Johnson, 2005; Pollard-Durodola, 2003; Meyer & Slechta, 2002).



## Leadership Behaviors and Student Achievement

The researchers of the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) performed a meta-analytical study of classroom, school, and leadership practices that are highly correlated with student achievement (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003 & 2004). The researchers of this study addressed two important concerns: do the quality and focus of leadership behaviors have a significant relationship to student achievement and what specific principal leadership responsibilities and behaviors have the greatest impact. The researchers found a significant, positive correlation of .25 between effective principal leadership behaviors and student achievement. The researcher's findings reflected that as leadership behaviors improve, so does student achievement. The positive or negative impact on student achievement is based on whether the focus of change is in the first-order change or the order of change which is the second order change. Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003 & 2004) further stated if principals fail to understand or acknowledge certain changes needed for their stakeholders, they may struggle to get support for the successful implementation of these changes resulting in failure to improve student achievement for at-risk learners.

The McREL balanced leadership framework (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003 & 2004) complements the Correlates of Effective Schools Research (ESR) (Edmonds, 1979; Lezotte & Bancroft, 1985; [www.mes.org](http://www.mes.org)). The correlates serve as the means to achieve high and equitable levels of student learning. The correlates are defined as a clearly articulated vision, high expectations for success, instructional leadership, monitoring student progress, establish home-school relationships, and opportunities to

learn and stay on task in a safe, orderly environment (Edmonds, 1979; [www.mes.org](http://www.mes.org)). Leaders are held accountable for leading their schools based on standards of academic achievement. The standards are the collective efforts of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in the form of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders. The specific indicators define and classify successful leadership practices by knowledge, disposition, and performance ([www.ccsso.org](http://www.ccsso.org)). These sets of principles act as an ethical theory which guides principals on how to act, and behave professionally as instructional leaders.

Rettig, McCullough, Santos, and Watson (2003) identified a three step process with the principal's leadership behavior as the key to student academic success. The three step process included a school wide academic pacing guide, formative assessments, and scheduled staff meetings to discuss student data. The three strategies served as a blueprint and structure for principals to increase academic achievement for all students and share the accountability among staff members.

However, researcher Dr. Joann Brown (2004) of the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) identified eight roles of leadership: (1) data analysis leader, (2) curriculum, assessment, instructional leader, (3) performance leader, (4) operations leader, (5) relationship leader, (6) process improvement leader, (7) change leader, and (8) development leader. These roles were identified by analyzing the tasks that effective principals perform in their school to improve organizational effectiveness and student achievement particularly for the at-risk learners ([www.galeaders.org](http://www.galeaders.org)). Dr. Joann Brown (2004) identified the eight roles of leadership through distributed or shared leadership ([www.galeaders.org](http://www.galeaders.org); Leithwood, Steinbach, & Ryan, 1997).

Leithwood (2001) mentioned four conclusions for school leadership in the context of school accountability. He stated good leaders will recreate schools as a marketable product, empower the school community to prioritize curriculum efficiently and effectively, hold schools accountable for effective professional practice, and manage schools rationally and strategically through distributed decision making. Theories that only focus on the development of the leader's behavior skills and competencies are insufficient to meet the needs of the contemporary leader in the context of today's accountability (Johnson, 2004; Leithwood, 2001; Wurmband, 2004).

*Effective Leadership Behaviors for At-Risk Learners*

Principals are held accountable for the academic success of all students – including the traditionally lower achieving at-risk learners. The at-risk learners as defined by the Georgia Early Intervention Program (EIP) are entering schools below grade level with literacy and math skills ([www.georgiastandards.org](http://www.georgiastandards.org)). Strahan (2003) found an important priority for principal leadership behavior which is to modify the school structure for at-risk learners to be educated equitably and to avoid at-risk learners from dropping out of school (Statler & Peterson, 2003; Strahan, Carlone, Horn, Dallas, & Ware, 2003). Cuban (2004) emphasized how parents of at-risk learners want high academic expectations for their children. The principal should ensure at-risk learners be provided the opportunity to be in heterogeneous grouped classes, offered higher learning literacy skills, have access to appropriate resources and textbooks, and offered learning content in concept units (Cuban, 2004; Statler & Peterson, 2003; Strahan (2003); Smith, Molnar, and Zahorik, 2003).

Togneri and Anderson (2003) conducted a study with the nonprofit Washington-based, “Learning First Alliance” which consisted of five high poverty school districts where many at-risk learners were not making academic progress. The researchers found the principal and district leadership behaviors facilitated academic success for the at-risk learners and produced significant academic gains for all students. The school board members with the five school districts in the study did not originally have academic achievement as the focus of change. Their emphasis on principal leadership behaviors were focused on administrative duties instead of academic achievement for all students. However, after the leadership focus switched from management to academic achievement of all students, test scores begin to increase. The researcher’s findings suggested that providing a district level framework of instructional supports and redefining leadership behavioral roles can increase the academic productivity of at-risk learners in high poverty schools.

In a contrasting study, Mosenthal, Lipson, Torncello, Russ, and Mekkelson (2004) examined the contexts and leadership practices of six Vermont schools whose at-risk students met or exceeded the reading standards. Through the researchers’ school visits, interviews, and observations they found four factors common to successful schools; (1) strong commitment to literacy improvement; (2) a focused school community with a common vision; (3) instructionally knowledgeable teachers; (4) students provided with opportunities and time for discussion and reading.

Andrews and Soder (1987) conducted a two year study of the relationship between principal leadership behaviors and the academic achievement of at-risk learners. The researchers’ finding reflected that the principal plays a crucial role in the academic

performance of students particularly the low achievers. The principal who exhibited stronger leadership behaviors had gains in total reading and mathematics with normal equivalent scores of students than the principals who were identified as average or weak leaders. A strong instructional leader performing at high levels was described as the following: a resource provider, an instructional resource, a communicator, and highly visible in the school (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Hallinger & Heck, 1998).

Researchers have identified and concluded that principal leadership behaviors are influenced by socioeconomic status, parental involvement, and gender. Hallinger, Bickman, and Davis (1996) conducted a study on school context, principal leadership, and student reading achievement. The results reflected that a principal can have an indirect effect on school effectiveness through actions that can shape the school's learning climate. Kannapel and Clements (2005) found similar results with their study of eight successful schools which had a high poverty level with the principal having an indirect effect on student achievement. Kannapel and Clements (2005) further stated that whether the principal's effect on student achievement is direct or indirect should not be the main focus since it is assumed that achieving results for at-risk learners is the school's overall goal.

#### Summary

In sum, principal leadership behaviors of the 21<sup>st</sup> century reflect the changes in policies and accountability with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Achieving the goals of the NCLB Act will undoubtedly require schools to undertake numerous changes. Many of the changes may challenge prevailing norms and values and require educators to acquire new knowledge and skills. While principals are striving to make effective

instructional decisions such as searching for effective strategies, programs, and organizational structures for a highly diverse student population, they are still faced with parental issues, discipline, community relations, and facilities management. Principal leadership behaviors which reflect a balanced approach with care and concern for the school community, instruction, use of student data for planning, organizational management, and shared responsibility creates a positive learning environment for at-risk learners. As a result of this research and the supportive literature, exploring the common leadership behaviors of principals from high performing, high poverty elementary schools are necessary during this time of accountability.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

The researcher's purpose was to explore common leadership behaviors exhibited by Georgia elementary school principals from high performing, high poverty schools. This chapter includes a description of the research design, participants, and the instrumentation used in the study. A pilot study was used to assess whether the research protocol was realistic and workable. Data collection, analysis, and reporting by the researcher were based on the following research question:

*Overarching Question:* What leadership behaviors are common to Georgia elementary principals from high performing, high poverty schools?

*Sub-questions:*

1. What educational strategies, programs, and/or organizational structures do principals promote or support within their schools to address the academic problems of at-risk learners?
2. Which leadership behaviors do principals state as most effective to increase the academic achievement of at-risk learners?

#### Research Design

In conducting this study, a phenomenological, qualitative research method was used to gather data on the common leadership behaviors by Georgia elementary principals from high performing, high poverty schools. According to Kerlinger and Lee (1999), qualitative research is social and behavioral research based on unobtrusive field observations that can be analyzed without using numbers or statistics. Qualitative

methodologies allow the researcher to construct multiple realities, which surround an occurrence (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Patton (2002) suggested qualitative research allows the researcher to listen to the experiences of the participants in his or her own setting without manipulating the variables being studied.

The specific qualitative research design was phenomenological analysis. Patton (2002) described phenomenological analysis as seeking to grasp and elucidate the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of a phenomenon for a person. The researcher obtained a view into the participants' life-worlds and to understand their personal meanings constructed from their "lived experiences" within their environment (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Patton, 2002). deMarrais (2004) described phenomenology as enabling the researcher to examine the human experience and learn about the nature or "essence" of their environment through an interpretation of the textual data provided by the participants. Instead of searching for one truth, qualitative research will allow the researcher to understanding of the essence of being a principal at a high achieving school with majority at-risk learners.

In this study, the researcher will examine the qualitative data using phenomenological research methods by interviewing principals, observing the school, and reviewing school artifacts to make meaning and describe the participants' lived experiences as a principal and their leadership behaviors. Therefore, the researcher used the phenomenon design to seek to understand the essence or the common leadership behaviors exhibited by elementary principals from high performing, high poverty schools.



## Participants

For this study, the researcher selected the participants through the reputation-case and network selection process (deMarrais, 2004). The researcher asked leader representatives from the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement ([www.galeaders.org](http://www.galeaders.org)) and school administrators to recommend principal participants who have a high performing, high poverty elementary school ([www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org); [www.gsci.org](http://www.gsci.org)). Using the reputation-case and network selection process, the researcher selected two principal participants for the pilot study and six principal participants for the actual study.

The principal participants had five or more years of experience as a principal. Some of the principals of the elementary schools were former or current participants of the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) and/or principals from elementary schools which were former or current Distinguished Title I Elementary Schools. The principal participants from high performing, high poverty elementary schools had an overall score of approximately 80% or higher for the percentage of students meeting and/or exceeding on the reading portion of the CRCT and a free/reduced lunch rate of 60% or higher.

## Instrumentation

First, the researcher interviewed each principal. The interview questions were designed to explore the principals' leadership behaviors. The researcher used the data from principal leadership behavior research studies to construct the interview questions and generated an interview question item analysis (see Appendix E). The participants responded to five open-ended interview questions along with sub-questions to produce an in-depth semi-structured interview (see Appendix A). The five interview questions and

sub-questions generated responses to give the researcher the lived experiences (actions) of a principal from a high achieving school with majority at-risk learners. The researcher used the interview guide approach (Patton, 1990) by covering topics and issues exploring the leadership behaviors or actions of the principal participants in outline form. The researcher decided the sequence and wording of the questions in the course of the interview. The strength of the interview guide approach increased the comprehensiveness of the data and made the data collection somewhat systematic for each respondent. The interviews were fairly conversational and situational (Patton, 1990).

After the interview, the researcher toured the school with each principal. A school observation reflection log or field notebook accompanied the researcher during the tour. The collection of information from the observation reflected events which naturally occur and complement information from the interview. The researcher made notes during the school tour and used the notes to produce a brief summary based on the principal's statements about strategies, programs and/or organizational factors for producing a high performing elementary school. The researcher also noted any comments which supported the principal's perception of improving the academic achievement of at-risk learners. After the school observation, the researcher observed any school artifacts that related to the study. The interview, school observation, and the observation of school artifacts were 1-1-1/2 hours per participant.

### Pilot Study

After IRB approval, the researcher contacted two of the eight principals to participate in the pilot study. The pilot study was conducted as if it were the actual study. The pilot study results were not used in the study but it assisted the researcher with

determining if the research protocol was workable. Adjustments to the interview questions, the school observation, and observation of school artifacts were not necessary based on the recommendations of the pilot study participants. The researcher noted that in order to maintain anonymity amongst the participants and their schools, the participants and their elementary schools were identified by pseudonyms.

### Data Collection

The collection of data was obtained from the interview questions, the school observation field notes and school artifacts. The researcher established a school visitation appointment with each participant by email or phone call. After establishing an appointment for 1-2 hours, the researcher provided the selected principal participants a letter of informed consent explaining the need and importance of the study along with the steps to obtain data pertinent to the study (see Appendix B) prior to the school visitation appointment.

On the school visitation appointment day, an interview was conducted first to collect data pertaining to the lived experiences of the principal participant in a high performing, high poverty elementary school. A list of interview questions was used as a guide to gather the essence or the lived experiences of each participant. After audio taping and collecting the interview data, the researcher toured the school with each participant to observe for data shared during the interview or any information the participant deemed appropriate for the purpose of the study. The school observation data was written on a notepad. The written observation included the principal's dialogue, the physical setting, and a detailed description of any school artifacts shared by the participant. The researcher was responsible for establishing the trustworthiness of

qualitative research through a variety of ways. During data collection and transcribing, the researcher avoided and minimized the potential errors that can occur such as equipment failure, environmental hazards, and transcription errors (Easton, McComish, & Greenberg, 2000) by following the procedures of the pilot study and making revisions as necessary.

### Data Analysis

The researcher used the phenomenological research design to capture the lived experiences of the principal participants in high performing, high poverty elementary schools. The interviews, observations, and the school artifacts by each participant were analyzed by looking for common themes and patterns with the leadership behaviors of the participants from high performing, high poverty elementary schools. It should be noted that the researcher observed the school artifacts by the individual participants at each school during the school observation.

The common themes and patterns of the leadership behaviors of the principal participants were examined individually then compared to each of the participants' responses. The collected data from the interview, school observation, and school artifacts were transcribed and coded according to the themes that developed for each participant. The collected coded themes and patterns will be analyzed, integrated, summarized, and organized into written text and tables. An interview matrix was designed by the researcher to generate a list of common leadership behaviors among the participants. The compilation of the data from the study in the form of written text and tables were evaluated for the usefulness and centrality with answering the primary question: What

leadership behaviors are common to Georgia elementary principals from high performing, high poverty schools?

### Summary

The methodology was defined as a phenomenological, qualitative study design for exploring the common leadership behaviors of Georgia elementary principals from high performing, high poverty schools. The research design allowed the researcher to consciously observe the participants, the research setting and any school artifacts at the elementary school. A pilot study was performed on two participants. The results of the pilot study were not used in the actual study. The results of the pilot study decided if the study was realistic and workable. Six principals participated in the actual study. The principal interviews, school observation, and the observation of school artifacts took place at each participant's school and served as the three ways to obtain data and to explore the common leadership behaviors exhibited by Georgia principals from high performing, high poverty elementary schools.

## CHAPTER 4

### REPORT OF DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS

#### Introduction

The researcher's purpose of the study was to explore the common leadership behaviors of Georgia elementary principals from high performing, high poverty schools. The following overarching research question guided the study:

*Overarching Question:* What leadership behaviors are common to Georgia elementary principals from high performing, high poverty schools?

*Sub-questions:*

1. What educational strategies, programs, and/or organizational structures do principals promote or support within their schools to address the academic problems of at-risk learners?
2. Which leadership behaviors do principals state as most effective to increase the academic achievement of at-risk learners?

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section describes the participants in the study, the second section briefly tells the participant's story along with the school observation and any school artifacts provided during the visitation, and the third section presents the common themes and patterns of the leadership behaviors of the study.

#### Participants

Table 1 describes the personal demographics of the participants in the study. Six principal participants were selected for the actual study. The education level of the participants included three with a specialist degree in educational leadership and three

with a doctorate degree in educational leadership. The total years in education as a classroom teacher and a principal ranged from 13 – 26 years of experience. The ethnicity and gender of the participants in the actual study were two African American males, two African American females, and two Caucasian females. Their ages ranged from 35 – 48 years of age.

Table 1: *Demographic profile of the participants in the study*

Participant	Degree	Total Yrs. In Education	Ethnicity	Age	Gender
Alice	Ed.S.	24	African-American	46	Female
Bob	Ed.D.	25	African-American	47	Male
Carrie	Ed.D.	13	African-American	35	Female
Douglas	Ed.S.	19	African-American	41	Male
Ethel	Ed.S.	23	Caucasian	45	Female
Frances	Ed.D.	26	Caucasian	48	Female

### Description of Participants

This section is divided into six sections. Each section is a description of the participants' school and a narrative of the interview and the observations held at each school. At the end of this section, Table 2 describes the profile of the participants' elementary school in the study.

#### *Alice*

Alice has served as principal for seven years at Apple Elementary School. Alice worked as an assistant principal at Apple Elementary before acquiring the principal position. She received her educational leadership specialist degree in Georgia. She did not receive Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) training but she participated and presented at various workshops, and attended various leadership conferences. Alice also stated that she served as a Southern Association of Colleges and

Schools (SACS) evaluator. The school's overall CRCT reading scores were 86% with a free and reduced lunch rate of 60%. The student population reflects 43% African American, 35% Caucasian, 11% Hispanic, and 5% Multiracial and Asian.

Alice stated she needed to be knowledgeable about various reading programs and monitor the teachers implementing the reading program. Alice emphasized the importance of providing professional development for the teachers in reading. Her response to the interview question regarding expectations as a principal when students were having difficulty in reading was the following:

The principal is responsible for every child in the building and making sure that we (as a school) are doing everything to improve in the area of reading. As a principal, I need to make sure my teachers are knowledgeable and understand the reading program... teachers need to do everything to help students with reading...I need to be in the classroom monitoring teachers with their work with students.

Alice further stated that if the teachers were not knowledgeable about instructing at-risk students in reading, as a principal, she needed to provide professional learning.

Alice's response was:

As a principal I need to monitor the teachers to make sure that they are aware of the weak areas the students are having difficulty in...such as if it's reading comprehension the teacher has completed enough evaluations or assessments to find out what those problems are ...and that the teacher has the knowledge to come up with some strategies to help the child improve in reading...if the teacher is not there... that's my responsibility



to provide professional learning and to be in that classroom observing to make sure the child is getting the instruction that the child really needs.

Alice's opening statement to the interview question regarding educational strategies and programs offered at Apple Elementary was about the accelerated reader program. Alice wanted the at-risk students to be motivated to read and have a love for reading. Alice emphasized the importance of having someone to read aloud to the at-risk students and have the students to read aloud as well:

I think for any child including the at-risk learners there are some certain components you have to have in a reading program to help all kids...one thing I want is for the kids to be motivated to read...so one of the things we used for years which is not the regular reading program... it is the accelerated reader program...it's a motivational program and we want the students to enjoy and read on their own and earn various prizes and rewards ...helping them (all students) to have a love for reading and giving them avenues and time so that they can read out loud to others is critical to their reading success.

During the interview, Alice shared how time was allotted for students to read with others and she expressed her love for reading by telling how she enjoyed being read to as a child. Alice stated the following with a big smile and a loud giggle:

We try to provide time during the day to read to other peers ...having the teachers to read aloud to the students... that is something I always loved as a child ...I would love for someone to read to me right now (giggle).

Alice highlighted the components of a good reading program or reading block which included guided reading, shared reading, silent reading, and independent reading. Alice discussed implementing an effective reading and writing program for at-risk learners. The interview continued with a discussion of the daily schedule. Alice stated the daily schedule was designed to address the academic needs of the at-risk learners and the reading time was described as “protected learning time”. The staff members at Apple Elementary were asked not to use reading instructional time for other activities. The assigned reading time was for direct reading instruction and for the reading programs offered at the school. Alice’s response to her leadership behaviors with the daily schedule was the following:

I go around and monitor the schedules and make sure they (the teachers) are not using their reading time for other things...such as going to recess...protecting the reading instructional time is priority...I make sure that the at-risk learners receive one-on-one tutoring during the day or after school tutoring...I make sure the at-risk learners are getting EIP reading instruction daily.

The instructional decisions at Apple Elementary are made by a leadership team comprised of the principal, the assistant principal, teacher leaders, parents, and a couple of community members. Alice currently does not have an instructional coach at Apple Elementary School. She uses teacher leaders across the grade levels to assist other teachers during their planning and after school planning. Alice described her leadership behaviors with instructional decisions as shared leadership. During the 2005 - 2006 school term, the teachers decided that paraprofessionals were needed at second grade for

the at-risk learners. So, the teachers got together and devised a schedule for the paraprofessionals in first grade to serve the at-risk learners in second grade. This decision by the team was successful for the at-risk students.

The instructional decisions are made not only by the staff but by the parents and community members...the school district curriculum people are involved to make sure we are doing what we need to do...so we sit down as a team and identify what the problems are for a particular grade level and we come up with a way to meet the needs of the students... we have an active leadership team...I don't know everything and I can't decide everything...they (members of the leadership team) always come up with a lot of unique ideas.

At Apple Elementary School, the teachers use the MAP benchmark assessment, reading program assessments, and the accelerated reader program to monitor reading progress. Alice stated she met with individual teachers during preplanning to discuss the CRCT test data and formulated a plan for the students who did not meet expectations on the test.

I met with every teacher to discuss their results from last year and what are the students weak areas...I have teachers to submit to me an improvement plan which consists of goals on how to improve reading instruction with the students who did not meet expectations on the CRCT.

In Alice's closing remarks, she stated she wanted to learn from other high performing, high poverty elementary principals on what they are doing at their schools to help at-risk students achieve in reading and she was interested in receiving results of the

study findings. Alice described her leadership behaviors or actions with educating at-risk learners during her interview as the following: a monitor or an instructional leader of the reading program, a coordinator of professional resources for staff members, and part of a team with instructional decision making (shared leadership).

*Bob*

Bob served as an elementary principal for six years at Bell Elementary School. He served as an assistant principal in another northeast Georgia school district. He currently participates with GLISI with his school assignment. He also presents at various workshops and conferences with reading programs which work for at-risk learners. The Bell Elementary student population consists of 47% African American, 51% Caucasian, 2% Hispanic and Asian. Eighty-one percent of the student population receives free or reduced lunch. Approximately 80% of the students met or exceeded reading expectations on the CRCT.

During Bob's interview, he stated that his leadership behavior to positively impact the reading skills of at-risk learners was to perform five minute "walk-throughs" daily by visiting each teacher's class and asking the students about the lesson. He also added that he had an excellent instructional lead teacher who assisted the teaching staff with the delivery of instruction. Bob said he communicated regularly with his instructional lead teacher about the strategies and programs at Bell Elementary School:

As a principal, I need to find core of the problem... what the deficiency is of their (the at-risk students) reading skills...then we (the instructional coach and principal) take a look at all of the struggling students... the teachers give the students an informal reading test which includes

phonemic awareness, a test for fluency, and comprehension...the instructional lead teacher and teachers discuss strategies to help the struggling students.

Bob explained the process of working with his instructional lead teacher to analyze the data for the at-risk learners to ensure the learners are making progress in reading. Bob's response to ensure the strategies and programs are having a positive impact with at-risk learners was the following:

Looking at the student data and the implementation of learning focused strategies in the classroom created success for our students...the test data determine what's working (instructional delivery) and what's not...the test data determines the quality of instruction going on in the classroom.

The daily schedule reflected a reading block for all grade levels. Bob stated his actions to ensure the schedule is addressing the needs of at-risk learners were observing teachers in the classroom and checking lesson plans. Bob's response was:

Letting instruction drive the overall school schedule instead of special area classes has helped our at-risk learners make progress...we all participate with the scheduled morning meetings to start our day.

Bob requires all of his teachers to post their schedules outside of the classroom. When he observes the classroom, he checks the schedule. The schedules posted outside of each teacher's classroom were witnessed by the researcher during the school observation.

The organizational structure to address the at-risk learners at Bell Elementary School included having various grade level committees working together along with one leadership team. The instructional lead teacher and teacher leaders from each grade level

with paraprofessional representation meet monthly to discuss academic celebrations or concerns with all students. The leadership team also planned the daily schedule at the beginning of each school term. Bob said his leadership team uses student data to monitor student reading progress.

As a leadership team, we meet together and we look at the strengths and weaknesses of the students...we also look at what specific actions to take in the classrooms...for instance...we have EIP students and this year we are implementing the collaborative model...particularly at kindergarten...As a principal, I'm looking at how the class is organized for instruction.

Bob highlighted his support of a reading program that was motivational and technology-based called the accelerated reader program. The points from the computerized reading program were used to give students prizes as their reading points increased.

Bob takes great pride with his students and staff. When he described his leadership behaviors or actions toward students and teachers he used words which expressed care and his enjoyment of being a principal at Bell Elementary. He celebrates student progress with the student population by offering prizes at awards assemblies for academic success. His awards assemblies are filled with music and opportunities to dance.

### *Carrie*

Carrie is the principal at Clover Elementary. Clover Elementary is located in the middle of a small historic city. Most of the homes within the school zone are rental properties. The families living close to the school are retired. The students in the

attendance zone for Clover Elementary live in the inner-city and rural area trailer parks, old mill homes, and government housing. There are a few students from families who own a home. The student population reflects 56% African American, 38% Caucasian, and 4% Multiracial and Asian. The CRCT scores for 2006 were 80% meeting and exceeding expectations in the area of reading with a free and reduced lunch rate of 80%.

The researcher entered the school and was greeted with a smile by the office staff and receptionist. The principal's office was bright and organized. Several family pictures were on display. The interview opened with questions about Carrie's personal demographic information. Carrie just received her doctorate degree in education administration. She shared her enthusiasm and joy for completing her doctorate with the researcher.

For the first interview question, Carrie described her leadership behavior as a principal who analyzes the student achievement data and makes instructional decisions based on the findings for the at-risk learners. She expressed that reading has been the area of concern for the history of the school. To address the reading concerns, the staff looked at the daily school wide schedule and planned for two fifty minute reading blocks for all the students. The two reading blocks consist of instructional level reading and on-grade level reading (basal reading). The at-risk students were assigned to an adult in the building for mentoring purposes which was a new strategy for this year. Carrie's response was:

We make sure we have two reading blocks each day. There is one block for instructional level reading and one block for on grade level reading.

During the instructional grade level reading, a third grade student reading

at a 1.0 grade level would receive fifty minutes of reading instruction at that level with other students with a similar reading ability level. The same student will also receive another fifty minute block of reading on grade level. The second block of reading is on grade level reading that consists of using the basal reader and other supplemental reading material.

We take the students where they are and move them forward.

After Carrie explained the two reading blocks, she shared with the researcher how each “at-promise” student received a staff member as a mentor:

All of the at-promise students were assigned to an adult for mentoring purposes. We think it is important for at-promise students that they feel good about who they are and that they have a cheerleader who believes in them. This is a new initiative for our school this year.

The organizational structure is supported by the principal. Carrie stated academics drive the schedule, not art, music, and physical education. The staff makes instructional decisions by having one representative from each pod with six pods all together. Everything is based on best practices. As a leadership team, they review the student reading achievement data and select the top three goals students have not mastered and devise a plan to academically assist the students. Carrie further stated she ensures the data is at the staff’s fingertips along the way.

This schedule or model (organizational structure) is designed to support teaching and learning with a emphasis on learning...the schedule is designed for learning...lunch and specials (special areas) no longer drive our schedule...academics drive the schedule, not Art, Music, and PE. The



administrative team makes the master schedule over the summer to incorporate the two reading blocks and the administrative team performs the walkthroughs to make sure the schedule is being followed...As principal, I make sure data is at our fingertips every step of the way.

The principal stated she monitors teachers by implementing the learning focused strategy method of 5-by-5's and walk-throughs. After monitoring the teachers, she leaves a form with walk-through feedback on their desk. Carrie shared a copy of the walk-through feedback form with the researcher and stated the following:

We have a 5-by-5 focus skill each month and this month we are looking at students using summarization within the classroom. During our leadership meeting, we decided student summarizing would be the focus for the month. The teachers do a good job summarizing instruction...now we need to hear the students summarize the lessons. When the students can explain the lesson, they know it... With the walk-throughs, we (the administrative team) have a triplicate form that we write our comments on... we leave a yellow copy on the teacher's desk so they will have immediate feedback.

Carrie supports and reviews the data from the quarterly benchmark assessments to track student progress. The report has every child's name on the list. Carrie mentioned the importance of monitoring the students with the assessments in order to make gains on the CRCT:

The most important assessment tool we have is the benchmark assessment. Again, what you don't want to do is wait until spring to start being

concerned about areas our at-promise students have not mastered...Tracking the benchmark assessment is the most important indicator... the instructional coach provides me with a report with each students' name and the benchmarks that he or she has not mastered...based on that information, the teachers would use this data for planning purposes to guide their instruction... We have to make sure we are monitoring those boys and girls and make sure those boys and girls are a part of the pyramid of intervention with an action plan for improvement.

Overall, Carrie described her leadership behaviors or actions as a principal who uses student data to plan instructionally and to monitor the quality of instruction the teachers are providing the students. She credits her assistant principal and her instructional coach for supporting the effective staff members at her school. She mentioned some of the reading awards and recognition her students receive during the monthly awards assemblies. The student awards consist of donated items from the partners in education such as gift certificates, electronic games, and specialty clothing items. Carrie was very knowledgeable about learning focused strategies and the reading programs used at Clover Elementary School because she knew what to “look for” during classroom instruction.

#### *Douglas*

Douglas has served as an elementary principal for a total of five years. He served as principal for three years in another northeast Georgia elementary high poverty school and two years in his current elementary school assignment at Dusk Elementary School.

He actively participated with GLISI at his former elementary school within another school district and he stated he continues to follow the leadership styles of GLISI with his current school assignment. Douglas presented at various conferences with technology-based reading programs which work for at-risk learners. Douglas' past administrative position also included serving as a high school assistant principal. Dusk Elementary student population consists of 48% African American, 32% Caucasian, and 23% Hispanic with a free and reduced lunch rate of 80%.

Douglas greeted the researcher in the main office area. Upon entering his office he had a sign posted on his door regarding his availability within the building. He stated he keeps his door open for staff members to have access to him for questions or a conversation. His interview opened with a discussion about a Reading First grant the school received to improve student reading achievement for the at-risk learners at Dusk Elementary.

Douglas' response to the first interview question about the expectation of a principal when students were having difficulty in reading was the following:

When we take a look at our students who are struggling readers, we give the students a reading test called the DIBELS test...This is a diagnostic test which gives us a critical clear idea the areas our students are struggling in...the DIBELS test has nonsense words...whether or not they can read the nonsense words using phonemic awareness and phonics determines whether students can decode and read vocabulary words.

Douglas stated the teachers were aware of the reading deficiencies school wide so they applied for Reading First grant to help at-risk learners achieve by purchasing an

additional instructional coach and reading materials. The other reading programs mentioned to help struggling students read were the Academy of Reading which is an intense computerized program, Books Challenge which includes a quiz bowl among other elementary schools within the district, and the accelerated reader program. The accelerated reader program and Books Challenge were the programs offered through the media center. The accelerated reader program at Dusk Elementary offers the students an opportunity to acquire points and prizes. Douglas explained the incentives the students were able to earn by improving their reading ability:

Every month, students in grades two through five bring their agendas to the awards assembly. Every agenda has a reading log that should be signed by the parent. If a student's number is pulled at the assembly, we check their reading log and parent signatures and give a prize to the student...Student safety patrols pass out newspapers to parents and staff members during the mornings...if a student notices their parent reading, they will want to read.

Douglas continued to share other reading incentives offered at Dusk Elementary such as sending a group of students on field trip to the aquarium and allowing students to ride in a limousine to lunch. The assessment components from the various reading programs and the incentives serve as a means to ensure the strategies and programs are having a positive impact for at-risk learners. Douglas stated:

If a child can't read, a child can't learn...so social studies and science doesn't matter...not to say these subjects are not important...but you've

got to be able to read to understand everything else that you're doing...we try to push the writing aspect of language arts as well.

The daily schedule at Dusk Elementary School reflects 135 minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction for grades kindergarten through third grade. The same amount of reading instructional time is offered at grades four and five but the special area classes split up the reading instructional time. The Early Intervention Program (EIP) teachers, English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, and special education teachers use inclusion to instruct students needing additional assistance. Douglas defined uninterrupted instruction as the following:

Uninterrupted instruction means there are no announcements, no discipline problems, and less transition going on within the school building...everything is focused on academics...I follow up with the daily schedule by observing classrooms and trust that the teachers are doing a good job along with making sure they are doing their job...visibility and monitoring are important.

Douglas observes and monitors teachers and students engaged in learning. The guidelines for the Reading First grant have instructional and technology components that will challenge some of the teachers at Dusk Elementary School.

Teachers don't like change...especially if it takes them out of their norm...the Reading First grant instructional requirements takes them out of the norm...The most effective teachers are the ones who are up teaching and using hands-on manipulatives... With the students we are instructing today, we can no longer sit behind a desk and pass out a

worksheet and expect the students to learn...especially the teachers who have students coloring worksheets...you can't learn a thing just coloring worksheets.

The leadership behaviors or actions Douglas described to support the organizational structure are follow up, monitoring, and visibility. The indicators that tell Douglas the at-risk learners are making progress are the MAP benchmark test and the DIBELS test. The MAP benchmark test takes one day to get student results back. Progress monitoring is a component with the DIBELS test. Douglas stated teachers use the results of the DIBELS test to monitor reading progress.

During the school observation, Douglas walked with the researcher over the entire school and introduced the researcher to select teachers and a few students. The hallways were lined with student work and colorful student artwork. The researcher had an opportunity to sit in a workshop for teachers using a handheld palm to assess student reading progress. The handheld palms were purchased using funds from the Reading First grant. Douglas entered the workshop and introduced the researcher. The teachers smiled as they spoke with Douglas. The workshop continued with the instructional coach guiding the three teachers through a powerpoint presentation on how to use the handheld palm for reading assessment. The teaching staff at Dusk Elementary School remains stable. He said the average years of experience for teachers on his staff were 25 years. The secretary who greeted the researcher has been at the school for 35 years. Douglas' concluding remarks based on his leadership behaviors were as a principal he had to "inspect to expect" and he had to monitor teachers delivering instruction during this time of accountability.

*Ethel*

Ethel served as principal for five years and had ten years of experience teaching upper elementary grades third through fifth. Her classroom experience ranged from teaching at various schools with various socioeconomic backgrounds. The student population at Evans Elementary consists of 43% African American, 54% Caucasian, 2% Multiracial and Hispanic. Sixty percent of the student population receives free and reduced lunch. The CRCT scores for 2006 were 85% meeting and exceeding expectations in the area of reading.

The school is located off of a busy road with businesses and hotels across the street. The elementary school building appeared to be ten years old. Upon entering the building, the researcher was introduced to the secretary who spoke with the researcher about the school while waiting for Ethel to enter the office area. The researcher noticed student artwork displayed in the lobby. The Title I Distinguished School certificate was framed and displayed in the trophy case. Ethel entered the office area, greeted the researcher and proceeded to her office for the interview.

Ethel stated her responsibility was to make sure the teachers are trained appropriately for the reading programs offered at Evans Elementary School. The educational strategy used at Evans Elementary is learning focused strategies. Ethel continued to explain additional reading strategies and programs which consisted of best practices. Ethel stated they look at each child's scores and individualize instruction. Her response was:

They (the teachers) don't do mass instruction for mass destruction. We do individualized instruction. It's not just monitoring data; it's monitoring

what's going on in the classrooms. As administrators, we have to watch what is going on in the classrooms. As principals we have to lead and guide the decision making process and support the teachers. With our leadership team, it's not just about the teachers making all of the decisions.

Ethel continued to explain the importance of reading the book "Closing the Achievement Gap" by Gerald Anderson and how her staff used strategies from this book. She received the book through the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) three years ago. Ethel found out that the staff was not well trained with diagnostic reading with at-risk learners. Ethel stated her actions with monitoring the academic progress of at-risk learners consisted of diagnostic testing and offering teachers time to learn how to diagnose reading:

Teachers can not do what is expected of them to do unless we give them professional release time. Every team has one day of professional leave monthly. They need the time to plan together, and training with appropriate reading resources. There is more growth going on during that professional leave day when teachers plan together.

Ethel reflected on a training the teachers received in the coastal Georgia area to learn more about the use of four block reading. The committee returned and shared with the leadership team about the use of four block and implemented it at Evans Elementary School. Ethel stated she not only monitored data with the at-risk learners but she monitored instruction within the classrooms:

It's not just monitoring data...it's monitoring in the classrooms...I can walk in a classroom and within thirty seconds, I can tell what's going on



in that classroom...I can tell if it (instruction) is what it should be and what it shouldn't be...there is no substitute for what's going on in the classroom.

Ethel continued to share reading programs that were a part of the daily schedule. She described the early morning tutoring program called team time from 8:00 – 8:30 am. Team time utilizes the nonhomeroom teachers as tutors for the at-risk learners. She stated the early morning tutoring program has made a difference with the reading achievement of the at-risk learners.

Ethel described her leadership behaviors or actions as a reading resource and instructional provider. Ethel is knowledgeable about the reading programs and the assessments tools at her school. She monitors the teachers carefully when they are instructing students in reading to make sure they are using the programs and the assessment tools appropriately.

#### *Frances*

Frances is the principal at Farm Elementary School. Upon entering the school, the researcher was told a story about how Frances' school had inside renovation over the summer. The inside and outside of the building were very clean and orderly just like the hallways. Farm Elementary's student population has changed since the 1960's. The school was described as a neighborhood school which once housed all working class minority students during the 1960's but now reflects a high percentage of students from low socioeconomic families. A well-kept graveyard sits right across the street from the elementary school and the school grounds were once a cow pasture before integration.

The school demographics reflected 71% African American, 22% Caucasian, and the rest of the student population were Hispanic. The CRCT scores for 2006 were 87% meeting and exceeding in reading with a free and reduced lunch rate of 75%.

Frances has been an elementary principal for six years and she has twenty seven years of experience in education. Her background is elementary education. Frances credits her current principal training during her interview to her participation with the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) and professional learning through her district's central office staff. She elaborated on how Gerald Anderson's book, "Closing the Achievement Gap" has made a difference with how the staff at Farm Elementary uses data to plan effectively for at-risk learners and how her actions as a principal has changed to practice suggestions from the book.

Frances just completed a parent conference prior to the interview using the leadership team to help formulate reading strategies for an at-risk learner. The conference members included the school counselor, the classroom teacher, and a parent who was upset because her child was not making academic progress. Frances exhibited lots of care and concern for her struggling students based on her tone, use of words to describe her students and staff, and the smile on her face during the interview.

Frances stated using her Title I funds for extended day programs has helped her at-risk learners make progress in reading. She further stated the extended day program was standard throughout the school system. On a regular basis, teachers communicate across grade levels about struggling readers to make sure modifications were in place.

The daily schedule reflected a collaborative model approach with EIP students, and special education students. There were some cases where "pull out" would work for

a few students. Eighty percent of the EIP students were served within the classroom for reading instruction and the rest of the students would receive reading instruction outside of the classroom. Frances stated that having a flexible reading program with at-risk learners and facilitating the program were “key” to the school’s success. Frances also stated that the staff may not use the same reading approach next year.

The organizational structure was described as setting aside every Wednesday for professional learning, grade level meetings with an assigned discussion topic, faculty meetings, and school improvement committee. Therefore, once a month the staff had input at various levels. Doctor appointments and family commitments were asked by the principal to be scheduled outside of Wednesdays. Frances described her actions during the Wednesday meetings as a principal who monitors the meetings by attending the meetings and reflects on the findings from the meetings. As principal, she makes school wide instructional decisions with the staff. Frances is in charge of the scheduling. Frances stated every year was different.

Frances emphasized the “biggy” of assessments was the Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT). She added that looking at other data along the way such as benchmark tests, and the accelerated reader program results assisted with meeting or exceeding standards on the CRCT.

We have been very pleased with our CRCT results, we’re not at the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile but our scores are along the state average...looking at all forms of data along the way has helped us...we can’t wait until June to figure out our progress.

Frances is establishing a student achievement data room with her staff to post student data for school wide monitoring purposes.

Overall, Frances described her leadership behaviors or actions as making a concerted effort to interview and hire teachers who truly respect every family in the school building. There was very little turnover with her staff at her school. She gave credit to previous principals of Farm Elementary for hiring and retaining a remarkable staff who instructs at-risk learners at a quality level.

For a number of years,... a very concerted effort to interview and hire teachers with the same vision, and that vision is truly respecting and valuing the families at our school... being dedicated... the staff here is a very remarkable staff...there is very little staff turn over...I don't have many new teachers...this is our school population and this is what we believe...it's okay if you don't think you (as a teacher) fit here...we have made this clear...the teachers who are here want to be here...the teachers are the vital part of our program.

During her interview she described her leadership behaviors as supportive of the students and staff, working collaboratively and making instructional decisions together, and monitoring student and teacher progress as a principal from a high performing, high poverty school. Farm Elementary is currently a Title I Distinguished School.

Table 2: *Profiles of the participants and the participant's elementary school*

Participants	Principal Experience	GLISI	Title I Dist. School	CRCT Rdg Score	FRL Rate
Alice	7	no	yes	86	60
Bob	6	yes	yes	80	81
Carrie	6	yes	yes	80	80
Douglas	5	yes	yes	80	80
Ethel	5	yes	yes	85	60
Frances	6	yes	yes	87	75

### Findings

The researcher's purpose of the study was to explore common leadership behaviors by Georgia elementary principals from high performing, high poverty elementary schools. The participants described their leadership behaviors or actions from the interviews, school observations, and school artifacts based on the overarching research question: What leadership behaviors are common to Georgia elementary principals from high performing, high poverty schools? The common themes and patterns obtained from the data collection and data analysis reflected the following: (1) monitoring of teachers educating at-risk learners, (2) gathering and analyzing student achievement data, (3) instructional decision making using a leadership team approach, (4) appropriate use of reading resources and materials, (5) a positive school climate, and (6) an effective staff of teachers. The next subsections are a discussion of the findings with quotes to support the six common leadership behaviors among the principal participants.

#### *Monitoring of Teachers*

All of the participants mentioned some form of monitoring the teachers during their interview. Alice used monitoring as a means of observing teachers using the reading

program at Apple Elementary School. Bob stated his leadership behavior consisted of monitoring teachers for quality of instructional delivery. Carrie's leadership behavior included monitoring of teachers with the implementation of learning focused strategies. Carrie performed "walk-throughs" or 5-by-5's to monitor best practices and leave a feedback form for the teachers to review. Douglas emphasized that he had to "inspect to expect" with principal visibility. Ethel used monitoring as a leadership behavior to follow up with any professional learning opportunity. Ethel provided teachers with guidance on how to use various reading assessments and she stated how she had to observe the teachers implementing the new learning. Frances monitored the teachers during various school level committee meetings at Farm Elementary School in order to guide the teachers with instructional decisions.

The following quotes supported the leadership behavior or action of monitoring the teachers:

*Alice*

As a principal, I need to monitor the teachers to make sure that they are aware of the weak areas the students are having difficulty in...

*Bob*

As a principal, I perform five minute "walk- throughs" daily by visiting each teacher's class and asking the students about the lesson.

*Carrie*

With the walk-throughs, we (the administrative team) have a triplicate form that we write our comments on... we leave a yellow copy on the teacher's desk so they will have immediate feedback.

*Douglas*

I follow up with the daily schedule by observing classrooms and trust that the teachers are doing a good job along with making sure they are doing their job...visibility and monitoring are important.

*Ethel*

It's not just monitoring data; it's monitoring what's going on in the classrooms. As administrators, we have to watch what is going on in the classrooms.

*Frances*

As a principal, I monitor the grade level meetings by attending the meetings and reflect on the findings from the meetings.

#### *Analyzing Student Achievement Data*

Analyzing student achievement data as a leadership behavior or action was shared among all participants. The principals stated that benchmark assessments, reading assessments, and diagnostic testing by various reading programs helped them to plan instructionally. The use of student data assisted principals with organizing the daily schedule for additional reading instruction with at-risk learners. Student data was also used to monitor the delivery of instruction by teachers. The following quotes supported the leadership behavior or action the participants stated they exhibit with analyzing student achievement data:

*Alice*

I met with individual teachers during preplanning to discuss the CRCT test data and the teachers formulated a plan for the students who did not meet expectations on the test.

*Bob*

I work with the instructional lead teacher to analyze the data for the at-risk learners to ensure the learners are making progress in reading... the test data determine what's working (instructional delivery) and what's not...the test data determines the quality of instruction going on in the classroom.

*Carrie*

As principal, I make sure data is at our fingertips every step of the way... The most important assessment tool we have is the benchmark assessment... as a principal, I analyze the student achievement data and make instructional decisions based on the findings for the at-risk learners.

*Douglas*

When we (as a staff) take a look at our students who are struggling readers, we give the students a reading test called the DIBELS test...This is a diagnostic test which gives us a critical clear idea the areas our students are struggling in.

*Ethel*

They (teaching staff) look at each child's scores and individualize instruction.

*Frances*

We look at all forms of data along the way...this has helped us...we can't wait until June to figure out our progress.

#### *Use of Leadership Teams*

The use of leadership teams was consistent among all participants. Every leadership team consisted of teacher leaders. Alice was the only participant who stated a community partner in education serves on her leadership committee. The decision



making process of each leadership team varied. Some of the principals allowed their teachers to make most of the decisions through consensus while the other principals needed to facilitate or guide the decision making process. The principal participants also varied on the number of leadership team meetings per month.

The following are several quotes from the principal participants supporting the use of leadership teams as a leadership behavior or action:

*Alice*

... we have an active leadership team...I don't know everything and I can't decide everything...they (members of the leadership team) always come up with a lot of unique ideas.

*Bob*

As a leadership team, we meet together and we look at the strengths and weaknesses of the students...we also look at what specific actions to take in the classrooms.

*Carrie*

During our leadership meeting, we decided student summarizing would be the focus for the month.

#### *Appropriate Use of Reading Resources*

The appropriate use of reading resources was mentioned by each principal participant. The participants stated that they had to be knowledgeable of the reading strategies and programs along with the teachers to ensure the delivery of reading instruction was effective for at-risk learners. Several principals shared their experiences

with professional development, reading workshops, and school level training for teachers on how to use reading resources appropriately within their building.

All of the principal participants stressed the importance of being knowledgeable about the reading programs in their building and the use of appropriate resources for reading. Alice, Douglas, and Ethel made clear statements to support this leadership behavior:

*Alice*

As a principal, I need to make sure my teachers are knowledgeable and understand the reading program... teachers need to do everything to help students with reading.

*Douglas*

Teachers don't like change...especially if it takes them out of their norm...the Reading First grant instructional requirements takes them out of the norm...The most effective teachers are the ones who are up teaching and using hands-on manipulatives.

*Ethel*

My responsibility was to make sure the teachers are trained appropriately for the reading programs offered at Evans Elementary School.

*Positive School Climate*

Every participant emphasized the importance of having a positive school climate. Bob expressed his appreciation for his school through his quarterly awards assemblies. The other participants made statements about having a stable staff with little turnover. During the school observations, the principals shared displayed student work and awards.

The participants' tone when describing their staff was positive with smiles and laughter. The researcher also observed staff members interacting using a caring, positive tone with the participants during the school observation. The school grounds and hallways were clean and orderly and the few students who were in the hallways were polite and appeared to be happy.

*Carrie*

All of the at-promise students were assigned to an adult for mentoring purposes. We think it is important for at-promise students that they feel good about who they are and that they have a cheerleader who believes in them...

*Frances*

...a very concerted effort to interview and hire teachers with the same vision, and that vision is truly respecting and valuing the families at our school... being dedicated...

*Effective Teaching Staff*

All of the participants acknowledged their teaching staff as the reason for their elementary school being successful and receiving the Title I Distinguished Award. The participants stated that teachers needed to use reading resources appropriately with at-risk learners in order to be an effective staff. Also, having a stable staff with little turn over was mentioned by the participants to have an effective staff. Frances noted that her actions of hiring teachers who truly respect every family in the school building created a positive climate and an effective staff.

*Carrie*

I credit our assistant principal and our instructional coach for supporting the effective staff members at our school.

*Frances*

The staff here (at Farm Elementary) is a very remarkable staff...there is very little staff turn over...I don't have many new teachers...this is our school population and this is what we believe... the teachers who are here want to be here...the teachers are the vital part of our program.

### Summary

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Georgia Southern University (see Appendix C) gave clearance for the research at which the researcher began scheduling interviews with six Georgia elementary principals. The researcher gathered their lived experiences with their leadership behaviors in a high poverty school and explored which leadership behaviors the participants have in common. All of the participants' high performing, high poverty elementary schools were located within the northeast Georgia area. The demographic profile for the study represented a range of diversity, experience, and educational background. The researcher used the following to obtain participants for the study; network selection data, reputation selection data, and data from the Georgia Department of Education website. The interviews were scheduled with the participants at their respective schools and at a time that best suited them. The in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted in the confines of each principal's office whereby they were asked five interview questions and sub-questions related to study. Each interview, school observation, and observation of any school artifacts if applicable took approximately an

hour to an hour and a half to complete. The research design for the study was qualitative in nature.

The researcher's findings in the described study included the following common themes and patterns among the principal participants: (1) monitoring of teachers educating at-risk learners, (2) gathering and analyzing student achievement data, (3) instructional decision making using a leadership team approach, (4) appropriate use of reading resources and materials, (5) a positive school climate, and (6) an effective staff of teachers. The six common themes or patterns were discussed in the findings with supporting quotes from the principal participants. The six common themes or patterns were identified as common leadership behaviors exhibited by Georgia elementary principals from high performing, high poverty schools.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

#### Introduction

This chapter is a summary of the study, analysis and discussion of the research findings, conclusions and implications based on the findings, and recommendations based on the analysis of the data gathered in the study.

#### Summary

The researcher's purpose of this study was to explore common leadership behaviors exhibited by Georgia elementary principals from high performing, high poverty schools. The overarching research question was: What leadership behaviors are common to Georgia elementary principals from high performing, high poverty schools? The sub questions included: (1) What educational strategies, programs, and/or organizational structures do principals promote or support within their schools to address the academic problems of at-risk learners? (2) Which leadership behaviors do principals state as most effective to increase the academic achievement of at-risk learners?

The phenomenological, qualitative study was completed largely through the use of in-depth semi-structured interviews that were conducted with six elementary principals from high performing, high poverty schools in the northeastern area of Georgia. Along with each interview, the researcher was granted a brief school observation. The participants were able to share any school artifacts they deemed would fit the study. Each interview consisted of five questions and sub questions. The researcher scheduled the interviews with the principals at their respective schools. The interviews were audio taped and transcribed by the researcher. An interview matrix was designed by the

researcher and used to look for common themes or patterns of leadership behaviors. In order to maintain the anonymity of the principals, their names and respective elementary schools were identified with pseudonyms throughout the study.

### Analysis and Discussion of Research Findings

Based on the data analysis by the researcher, six common leadership behaviors emerged from the common themes and patterns stated by the principal participants from high performing, high poverty schools. The common themes and patterns obtained from the data collection and data analysis reflected the following: (1) monitoring of teachers educating at-risk learners, (2) gathering and analyzing student achievement data, (3) instructional decision making using a leadership team approach, (4) appropriate use of reading resources and materials, (5) a positive school climate, and (6) an effective staff of teachers. The six common themes and patterns were identified as common leadership behaviors of the principal participants. The researcher's findings of the study were consistent with the findings of various researchers with their studies on principal leadership behaviors and student achievement. The first sub-section addresses the overarching research question: What leadership behaviors are common to Georgia elementary principals from high performing, high poverty schools? The second sub-section addresses the two supporting sub-questions of the overarching research question. The last sub-section is the conclusion statement of the research findings.

#### The Overarching Research Question

This sub-section addresses the overarching research question regarding the leadership behaviors that are common to Georgia elementary principals from high performing, high poverty schools. The researcher found six common leadership

behaviors based on the data collection and data analysis of this study: (1) monitoring of teachers educating at-risk learners, (2) gathering and analyzing student achievement data, (3) instructional decision making using a leadership team approach, (4) appropriate use of reading resources and materials, (5) a positive school climate, and (6) an effective staff of teachers. The six common leadership behaviors are listed and compared to the research literature in the following sections.

### *Monitoring of Teachers*

The monitoring of teachers was the leadership behavior or action mentioned most often during the interviews and noted during the school observation among the principal participants. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) conducted a study with thirty-five years of research on school leadership which had a substantial effect on student achievement. Out of the studies, 21 categories of specific behaviors related to school principal leadership were found. One of the twenty-one categories of specific behaviors included monitoring or evaluating teachers. Marzano et al. (2005) identified the monitoring or evaluation of teachers as second order change. He concluded that second order change is a dramatic departure from the norm both in defining the problem and finding a solution. Accordingly, leadership does matter and a positive correlation does exist between effective school leadership and student achievement (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

Pollard-Durodola (2003) performed a case study on a Houston Independent School District (ISD) elementary school and found nine factors that significantly impacted the academic success of the school. Frequent and systematic evaluation of teachers and students was one of the nine factors which made a difference with the



academic achievement of at-risk learners according to the researchers. Pollard-Durodola (2003) found that the results of their study complemented the effective schools correlates (Edmonds, 1979; Lezotte & Bancroft, 1985). Monitoring and evaluating the teachers instructing at-risk learners were “key” for the principal participants of this study.

In sum, the principal participants Alice, Bob, Carrie, Douglas, Ethel, and Frances stated that the monitoring of teachers was important for all students to make academic achievement. Douglas concluded his interview by saying he had to “inspect to expect” in order for students to make academic achievement.

#### *Analyzing Student Achievement Data*

Based on the researcher’s findings of this study, all of the principal participants gathered and analyzed student data to make instructional decisions. Carrie, the principal from Clover Elementary School mentioned the monthly meetings to discuss student data. Alice, the principal of Apple Elementary, Bob, the principal of Bell Elementary School and Douglas, the principal of Dusk Elementary School highlighted the use of a technology based benchmark assessment programs that presented them with student reading data within a day to track student progress.

According to Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005), knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment significantly correlated with higher student achievement. Kannapel and Clements (2005) found the use of assessment as one of the eight common characteristics which contributed to high student performance with high poverty, high achieving elementary schools. Rettig, McCullough, Santos, and Watson (2003) identified a three step process with principal leadership behaviors. The three step process included

a school wide academic pacing guide, formative assessments, and scheduled staff meetings to discuss student data.

Dr. Joann Brown (2004) of the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) identified a data analysis leader as one of the eight roles of distributed leadership. Mullen and Patrick (2000) researched how an academically at-risk school was positively changed by principal leadership. One of the eight strategies included implementing teacher developed standards by analyzing student data. Meyer and Slechta (2002) found analyzing student data supported the following; (1) defining specific results to achieve, (2) creating a plan, (3) developing internal motivation to take action, (4) building the belief to have students perform at optimum level, and (5) work through obstacles. The principal participants stated during their interviews that they used student achievement data to determine what's going in within the classrooms with instructing at-risk learners.

According to the Effective Schools Report (ESR), the responsibility for improving instruction and learning rests in the hands of the school principal (www.mes.org; Edmonds, 1979; Johnson, 2005; Lezotte & Bancroft, 1985; Pollard-Durodola, 2003). Edmonds (1979) concluded that when school improvement processes use frequent monitoring of student progress and assessment student achievement will either improve, or at least remains the same.

#### *Use of a Leadership Team*

Every participant had a leadership team that made instructional decisions. Some of the principals varied on the level of autonomy with instructional decision making with their leadership team. Alice, Bob, and Frances gave their leadership team more

autonomy with decision making than Carrie, Douglas, and Ethel according to their interview responses. Principal participant, Alice from Apple Elementary School, shared an example with the researcher about the how the teachers found an alternative way to use paraprofessionals in first grade to help struggling readers in second grade. Ethel cited an example of how she participates with the leadership team but she ensures the decisions made by teachers will be carefully monitored for classroom use and benefits all students. Ethel allows the teachers to make decisions but she mentioned she had to guide them by sharing “non-negotiable” instructional strategies with classroom instruction and assessment.

Lambert (2002 & 2005) stated the role of the principal has changed from one person leading the instructional decisions to a team of teachers collaborating as a leadership team. The shift in decision making to a distributed or shared approach will assist with the academic progress of students (Brown, 2004; Hulme, 2004; Leithwood, Steinbach, & Ryan, 1997; Neumann & Simmons, 2000).

#### *Appropriate Use of Reading Resources and Materials*

According to Alder and Fisher (2001), Emerald Elementary’s reading program was successful with teaching reading to at-risk learners due to reading inservice programs, effective reading strategies, class size reduction, and availability of literacy resources. The researchers also mentioned shared responsibility for student success, strong leadership, and a stable staff of experienced teachers. Andrews and Soder (1987) conducted a two year study of the relationship between principal leadership behaviors and student achievement. They found the principal plays a crucial role as an instructional resource provider.

Based on the interview responses and the findings, the organizational structure of the school day was extended or modified according to the needs of the students for all of the principal participants in the study. Smith, Molnar, and Zahorik (2003) studied the Wisconsin Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (Project SAGE) and found altering the organizational structure of the classroom and school day increased the academic achievement of low-income students especially for African American students. Based on the findings of this study, principals leading effective reading strategies, programs, or organizational structures are important for at-risk learners to make reading gains (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Mosenthal, Lipson, Tornello, Russ, & Mekkelson, 2004).

#### *Positive School Climate*

Leadership behaviors for the 21<sup>st</sup> century include leading with care, and stewardship (Bolman & Deal, 2002; Meyer & Slechta, 2002; Polka, Mattai, & Perry, 2000). Maintaining a positive school climate was one of the six common leadership behaviors from the study findings. Polka et al (2001) found teacher satisfaction and productivity were based on the five correlates – challenge, commitment, control, creativity, and caring. All of the participants exhibited evidence of the five correlates based on their cited examples of working with staff, facial expressions and gestures when discussing staff members, or comments made during the school observation.

#### *Effective Teaching Staff*

All of the elementary schools in the study were Title I Distinguished Schools and the participants stated the award was based on their effective teaching staff.

Sinden, Hoy, and Sweetland (2004) concluded from their research that the collegial leadership of the principal and the organizational commitment of the staff facilitated academic success for students.

#### Research Sub-Questions

The next two sub-sections address the supporting research sub-questions:

(1) What educational strategies, programs, and/or organizational structures do principals promote or support within their schools to address the academic problems of at-risk learners? and (2) Which leadership behaviors do principals state as most effective to increase the academic achievement of at-risk learners?

#### *Strategies, Programs, and/or Organizational Structures Supported by Principals*

For the research sub-question number one, the educational strategies, programs, or organizational structures supported by the principals were different; however, their leadership behaviors or actions of promoting or supporting the strategies, programs or organizational structures were common. All of the principals described their actions with educational strategies, programs, or organizational structures as a principal who monitors the teachers or acts as an instructional lead teacher. The principal participants could articulate how to use and monitor their strategies and programs within their school. Most of the strategies, and programs mentioned during the interviews had an assessment component to track reading progress. The strategy or program assessment results determined which students needed additional instruction or if teachers needed training to use the reading resources and materials. The principal participants were able to observe effective teaching practices when monitoring the teachers. All of the principal

participants were active with producing the school wide schedule or planning the organizational structure of the school day.

*What are the Most Effective Leadership Behaviors?*

For research sub-question number two, the three leadership behaviors the principals identified as most effective to increase the academic achievement of at-risk learners were: (1) monitoring of teachers, (2) analyzing student data, and (3) making decisions as a leadership team. The three common leadership behaviors out of the six common leadership behaviors listed above were mentioned most often during the interview and witnessed by the researcher during the school interviews and observations. The most effective common leadership behaviors were identified interchangeably. The principal participants stated their ability to monitor the teachers using student achievement data and plan collaboratively using the leadership team. The leadership behaviors or actions of monitoring the teachers and the use of student achievement data were identified as second order change according to Marzano et al. (2005). The three leadership behaviors identified as most effective complemented the research studies of the effective schools correlates (www.mes.org; Edmonds, 1979; Johnson, 2005; Lezotte & Bancroft, 1985; Pollard-Durodola, 2003). The use of the effective schools correlates will create a culture that encourages effective teaching and effective student learning within a school (Edmonds, 1979).

### Conclusions

In conclusion, the effects of new federal and state standards have increased the importance of effective principal leadership behaviors for students to make academic progress. The new federal and state standards also have redefined the role for principal. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) requires all states to hold schools

accountable for the academic achievement of all students- including the at-risk learners. Georgia's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is an outgrowth of NCLB which obligates all principals to increase academic expectations for students. The at-risk learners defined as students qualifying for the Early Intervention Program (EIP) will need strong principal leadership to guide high poverty elementary schools to become high performing schools. Researchers from various studies identified leadership behaviors that supported the academic progress of students and lead the school to make reading gains on the state reading test. Also, the educational strategies, programs, and organizational structures supported by the principals determined student reading success. The researcher's findings of this study were consistent or complemented most of the findings of various researchers with principal leadership behaviors and student achievement.

The six common leadership behaviors that emerged from the data collection and data analysis were: (1) monitoring of teachers educating at-risk learners, (2) gathering and analyzing student achievement data, (3) instructional decision making using a leadership team approach, (4) appropriate use of reading resources and materials, (5) a positive school climate, and (6) an effective staff of teachers. According to the researcher's findings of this study, the use of the six common leadership behaviors or actions by the principals in high poverty schools helped the students to make reading gains and produced a high performing elementary school. The conscious choice of expecting academic success for all learners – including the at-risk learners was determined by the principals in this study.

### Implications

The implications for this study include three facets which are educational practice, educational policy, and educational research. The implication for educational practice is that principals need to know that they, in fact, make a difference in student achievement based on their leadership behaviors or actions within their school. Various researchers have found in their studies that principals can have an impact on student achievement, especially the at-risk learners. The implication for educational practice is a matter of conscious choice by principals. Based on the researcher's findings of this study, principals have the leadership behavior capabilities as well as access to research studies that confirm the relationship between principal leadership behaviors and student achievement. Principals are knowledgeable about educating at-risk learners. If principals want a high performing elementary school, they need to implement the practices found most effective with this research study. The researcher's findings of this study will make a contribution to the current literature supporting the relationship between principal leadership behaviors and student achievement.

All school districts in the United States must meet the No Child Left Behind mandates that require all students to be on grade level by 2014. The implication for educational policy include allocating funding for leadership preparation, professional development, and use of research for both aspiring and veteran principals. New educational policies are being reviewed for principal preparation and principal evaluation based on performance standards. It is the researchers' hope that this study will contribute to aspiring principal's knowledge base so that they are capable of exhibiting the leadership behaviors of principals from high performing, high poverty schools. As new federal and state standards and school accountability increase, it is the researcher's hope



that the findings of this study will support all principals, the state department of education, and various principal organizations with information about effective leadership behaviors and practice.

With the implication of educational research, the researcher's findings of the six common leadership behaviors of principals from high performing, high poverty schools will be included with the research studies on leadership behaviors and student achievement. The addition of this study to educational research will hopefully promote significant changes in the elementary schools during this era of accountability.

### Recommendations

The results of this study suggest the following:

1. Elementary principals from high poverty schools should examine their leadership behaviors when supporting the implementation of reading strategies, programs, and various organizational structures within their school. The researcher recommends principals should analyze their leadership actions using reflective practices to explore principal leadership behaviors that have an impact on the academic achievement of at-risk learners.

2. The researcher's visit to various high performing, high poverty schools was a great opportunity. The researcher was able to interview, observe the school setting, and reviewed any artifacts shared by the principal of a high performing elementary school. The researcher recommends aspiring and veteran principals establish principal mentors and visit their schools. All principals who have the opportunity to visit other high performing elementary schools can learn how to produce an effective school by observing the actions of other successful principals.

3. The researcher's findings of this study may provide to various institutions of higher education; national, state, and regional principal preparation programs; and other professional organizations information about specific leadership behaviors that impact at-risk learners. It is the researcher's hope that information obtained from this study will be presented at workshops and conferences as well as published in professional journals. In this era of accountability, principals need the professional support and the personal will to have a high performing elementary school.

4. The researcher recommends additional research on the six leadership behaviors that are common to Georgia elementary principals from high performing, high poverty schools. The six common leadership behaviors are: (1) monitoring of teachers educating at-risk learners, (2) gathering and analyzing student achievement data, (3) instructional decision making using a leadership team approach, (4) appropriate use of reading resources and materials, (5) a positive school climate, and (6) an effective staff of teachers. Additional research on the researcher's findings of this study will further validate the findings of this study and other studies with leadership behaviors and student achievement.

#### Dissemination

The researcher plans to disseminate the findings of this study by serving as a guest speaker for individual elementary schools and school districts. Also, the researcher has made a presentation at an educational planning conference regarding the leadership behaviors that are common to Georgia elementary principals from high performing, high poverty schools. The researcher is currently working as a Leadership Preparation Performance Coach (LPPC) with the Georgia Leadership Institute for School

Improvement as a principal mentor. As a LPPC, the researcher's findings of this study will be disseminated to aspiring principals so they can practice the common leadership behaviors that make a difference with student achievement. It is also the researcher's hope that the findings of this study can be disseminated in a professional journal or article.

### Concluding Thoughts

The overall goal during this era of accountability is to build better principal leaders for all elementary schools. The researcher's participation with this study was very beneficial. As an elementary principal of a high poverty school, the researcher was able to interact with various principals from similar schools and discuss what the principals are doing to have a high performing school. The researcher was able to take the principals' lived experiences and conduct a study that was helpful to the researcher. The researcher was able to take the findings of this study and use the leadership behaviors as a principal, principal mentor, and as a conference presenter. It was amazing how the principal participants "juggled" the many administrative duties of a principal and maintain a positive attitude within their building, with their staff, and with the researcher. The principal participants were determined and made a conscious choice to place student achievement first. The researcher's concluding thought: principals can make the choice of producing a high performing elementary school; we know what to do to make that happen, it's just a matter of having the will to do it.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A  
PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

**An Exploration of Common Leadership Behaviors Exhibited  
by Georgia Elementary Principals from High Performing, High Poverty Schools**

The participant interview questions will serve as a guide to obtain information exploring the leadership behaviors of Georgia elementary principals from high performing, high poverty schools. The students who scored below 800 on the reading portion of the CRCT and qualify for Georgia's Early Intervention Program (EIP) will be identified as at-risk learners for the purpose of this study. The participant's responses will be audio taped and transcribed. The results of the interview will be kept confidential and the participant(s) will not be identified individually in anyway in the final report.

Thank you for your participation.

**Principal Interview Questions**

1. Tell me what is expected of you as a principal if students were having difficulty in reading?
  - a. What actions do you take to positively impact the reading skills of at-risk learners?
  
2. Describe the educational strategies and programs offered at your school to address the academic achievement of at-risk learners.
  - a. Tell me about your reading strategies and/or programs you promote or support at your school.
  - b. What actions do you take to ensure the strategies and/or programs are having a positive impact for at-risk learners?
  
3. Describe your school's daily schedule to address the academic needs of your identified at-risk learners.
  - a. What actions do you take to ensure the instructional schedule is addressing the academic needs of at-risk learners?
  
4. Describe your school's organizational structure to address the academic needs of your identified at-risk learners.
  - a. Tell me about how your school makes instructional decisions and who are the stakeholders?
  - b. What actions do you take to support the organizational structure?
  
5. What indicators do you have in place that tells you that your at-risk learners are making progress (or not making progress)?
  - a. What are your actions with monitoring the academic progress of the at-risk learners?

Thank You For Your Participation,  
Donna R. Bishop, Doctoral Candidate for Georgia Southern University

APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER TO PARTICIPATING PRINCIPALS



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**COLLEGE OF GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY**

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**DEPARTMENT OF LEADERSHIP, TECHNOLOGY, & HUMAN  
DEVELOPMENT**

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**INFORMED CONSENT**

1. Identify who you are, your relationship to Georgia Southern University, and why you are doing this research.

My name is Donna Regina Bishop, and I am a graduate student at Georgia Southern University working on my doctorate in Education Administration. I am interested in exploring the leadership behaviors of Georgia elementary principals from high performing, high poverty schools.

2. Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of this research is to explore the leadership behaviors by Georgia elementary principals from high performing, high poverty schools. This information can be used by educators to provide insight on building better principal leaders when providing an education to at-risk learners.

3. Procedures to be followed:

Participation in this research will include an interview, a school observation, and a collection of school artifacts. Interviews will be recorded using a tape recorder for the purpose of transcribing the information thoroughly and correctly. The tape recorded information will be kept by the researcher in her office inside a locked and secure vault. The tapes will be transcribed and destroyed after October 30, 2006. The only people who will have access to the audio tapes will be myself (principal investigator) and my advisor, Dr. Walter Polka. The researcher will be responsible for scheduling all interviews which will take place at each participant's elementary school. All participants have the right to refuse to answer any questions during the interview and may terminate the interview at any time, or may choose to have any or all of their responses deleted from those analyzed.

4. Discomforts and Risks:

Effective leadership behaviors and/or strategies employed by elementary school principals can be a sensitive issue for some individuals. Some of the interview questions may address sensitive subjects related to the participant's leadership styles. These sensitive interview questions may cause slight embarrassment or may cause latent emotions related to the event to re-emerge. Again, participants have the right to refuse to answer any questions they do not feel comfortable answering. If there are any questions or concerns about this research project, the participants may call me at (706) 207 – 6939. If there are any questions about rights as a research participant in the study, they should be directed to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Coordinator at the Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at (912) 486 – 7758 or email [oversight@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:oversight@georgiasouthern.edu).

5. Benefits:

- a. The benefits to the participants include possibly gaining insight on leadership behaviors Georgia elementary principals use in high performing, high poverty schools.
- b. The benefits to society include adding new information to the existing literature related to effective principal leadership behaviors and student achievement. This information could also be useful to educators in light of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) with helping elementary at-risk learners make academic gains by building better principal leaders, assisting colleges and universities with leadership preparation programs, adding new training information to the state department of education, and providing insight to principal leadership organizations.

6. Duration/Time:

It will take approximately two hours to complete the interview, the school observation, and the collection of school artifacts the principal participants deem appropriate for the study.

7. Statement of Confidentiality:

Participation and the participant's name in the study will be kept strictly confidential. While it is possible that the demographic responses could link or identify a participant, the researcher will make no attempt to identify the participant from the data. This study will be beneficial to all educators to provide insight on how select Georgia elementary principals from high performing, high poverty schools use their leadership behaviors to impact student achievement. The data obtained from this study will provide much needed research in this area. Copies of the study results are available at the participant's request. Participants may indicate their desire for a copy of the research results on the consent form.

8. Right to Ask Questions:

Participants have the right to ask questions and have those questions answered. If any of the participants have questions about this study, the participants may contact the researcher named above or the researcher's faculty advisor, whose contact information is located at the end of the informed consent. For questions concerning rights as a research participant or the IRB approval process, contact Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at (912) 486 – 7758 or email [oversight@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:oversight@georgiasouthern.edu) .

9. Compensation:

Participants will not incur any costs for participating in this study. Participation in this study is completely voluntary.

10. Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this study is completely voluntary and may be terminated at any time without risk of penalty.

11. Penalty:

There is no penalty for refusing to answer any questions during the interview, refusing the school observation, refusing to provide pertinent school artifacts, or for choosing to terminate the study altogether.

12. Deception will not be involved in the study. Participants will be informed of the purpose of the study from the outset. They will also be informed of their rights prior to conducting the interview.
13. Participants in this study are over the age of 18 years old. A copy of this consent form will be given to each participant to keep for his/her records.

### RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

*You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records.*

You must be 18 years or older to consent to participate in this study. If consent is given to participate in this study and to the terms of the study, please sign your name and indicate the date below. You must be 18 years or older to consent to participate in this study.

Title of Project: An Exploration of Leadership Behaviors Exhibited by Georgia Elementary Principals from High Performing, High Poverty Schools

Principal Investigator: Donna Regina Bishop  
 505 Sterling Water Drive  
 Monroe, Georgia 30655  
 (706) 207 – 6939  
[Dbishop5@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:Dbishop5@georgiasouthern.edu)  
[dbishop@walton.k12.ga.us](mailto:dbishop@walton.k12.ga.us)

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Walter Polka  
 Department of Leadership, Technology, and Human  
 Development  
 P.O. BOX 8131  
 Statesboro, Georgia 30358  
 (912) 486 – 0045  
[wpolka@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:wpolka@georgiasouthern.edu)

\_\_\_\_ Yes, I would like a copy of the research results.

\_\_\_\_ No, I would not like a copy of the research results.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Participant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

I, the undersigned, verify that the above informed consent procedure has been followed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Investigator Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date



## RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

If consent is given to participate in this study and to the terms of the study, please sign your name and indicate the date below. You must be 18 years or older to consent to participate in this study.

Title of Project: An Exploration of Common Leadership Behaviors by Georgia Elementary Principals from High Performing, High Poverty Schools

Principal Investigator: Donna Regina Bishop  
 505 Sterling Water Drive  
 Monroe, Georgia 30655  
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 Department of Leadership, Technology, and Human  
 Development  
 P.O. BOX 8131  
 Statesboro, Georgia 30358  
 (912) 486 – 0045  
[wpolka@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:wpolka@georgiasouthern.edu)

\_\_\_\_ Yes, I would like a copy of the research results.

\_\_\_\_ No, I would not like a copy of the research results.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Participant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

I, the undersigned, verify that the above informed consent procedure has been followed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Investigator Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL LETTER

APPENDIX C  
IRB APPROVAL LETTER

Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs		
<b>Institutional Review Board (IRB)</b>		
Phone: 912-681-5465		Administrative Annex
		P.O. Box 8005
Fax: 912-681-0719	Ovrsight@GeorgiaSouthern.edu	Statesboro, GA 30460

**To:** Donna Regina Bishop  
505 Sterling Water Drive  
Monroe, GA-30655

**CC:** Dr. Walter Polka  
P.O. Box 8131

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

**Date:** September 27, 2006

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

After a review of your proposed research project numbered: **H07048**, and titled **“An Exploration of common Leadership Behaviors Exhibited by Georgia Elementary Principals from High Performing, High Poverty Schools.”**, 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,

Julie B. Cole  
Director of Research Services and Sponsored Programs

APPENDIX D  
LITERATURE MATRIX

**Primary Resources Literature Matrix**

ARTICLE/STUDY	PURPOSE	PARTICIPANTS	DESIGN/DATA COLLECTION	OUTCOMES/ CONCLUSIONS	OUTLINE TOPIC
<p>Alder, Martha A., &amp; Fisher, Charles W. (2001).</p>	<p>The purpose of the study was to identify effective reading practices in a specific high performing, high poverty school.</p>	<p>Emerald Elementary School – 26 certified staff which included 16 classroom teachers</p> <p>2.4 Title I staff</p> <p>1.5 Special Ed. Teachers</p> <p>6 Title I Paraprofessionals</p> <p>464 students – 50% free/reduced lunch, 40% mobility rate, 71% white, 26% black, 3% other</p>	<p>Case Study Analysis- Descriptive Study</p> <p>Quantitative Case Study Design</p>	<p>The key features of Emerald Elementary’s Reading Program; strong focus on student learning outcomes, multiple reading programs in every classroom, shared responsibility for student success, strong leadership at school and classroom levels, and maintaining veteran, knowledgeable, coherent, and committed staff.</p> <p>Emerald Elementary outperformed other schools in the state and district on reading achievement.</p>	<p><b>II</b></p>
<p>Andrews, R.L. &amp; Soder, R. (1987)</p>	<p>The purpose of the study was to improve the district’s elementary and secondary schools by examining the staff perceptions of principal leadership.</p>	<p>67 elementary schools and 20 secondary schools of the Seattle School District</p>	<p>Questionnaire to all district instructional staff ~ measured 18 strategic interactions between principals and teachers in terms of the principal as a resource provider, instructional resource, communicator, and visible presence.</p> <p>Leader Group = independent variable</p> <p>Total RDG and Total MATH avg. gain scores as the dependent variable.</p> <p>Quantitative</p>	<p>Findings suggest that teacher perceptions of the principal as an instructional leader are critical to the rdg and math achievement of the students, particularly among low achieving students.</p> <p>As a resource provider, the principal takes action to recruit personnel and resources within the building, district, and community to achieve the school’s mission and goals. These materials, resources, information or opportunities are seen as the principal acting as the broker.</p> <p>As an instructional resource, the principal sets expectations for continual improvement of the instructional program and actively engages in staff development. Through this involvement, the principal participates in the improvement of classroom circumstances that enhance learning.</p> <p>As a communicator, the principal models commitment to school goals, articulates a vision of instructional goals, and the means for integrating instructional planning and goal attainment, and sets and adheres to clear performance standards for instruction and teacher behavior.</p>	<p><b>I, II, III</b></p>



<p>Bradshaw, Paula (2001)</p>	<p>The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the Reading Recovery program with a first grade classroom and track their progress.</p>	<p>Classroom of eighteen first grade students</p>	<p>Student Reading Survey about their attitudes regarding reading</p> <p>Interview/Case Study on the reading progress of five student s with reading recovery:</p> <p>Qualitative</p>	<p>Reading Recovery has proved to be an effective intervention for meeting the needs of <i>at-risk</i> first graders. When Reading Recovery is not fully implemented in a school, the teacher assumes responsibility for intervention. This project addresses how a regular education, first grade classroom teacher can best meet the needs of first grade children with special literacy needs. Children enter first grade with diverse literacy needs. Those who are more economically disadvantaged often have a greater need than those who come from more enriched homes. However, it is not just an issue of economics; it is an issue of literacy deprivation. Research has revealed that there are common threads to appropriate interventions for <i>at-risk</i> readers. Although there is no one perfect method, strategies tend to include Reading Recovery techniques. Some important methods include good first whole class teaching of phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle and meaning making strategies. Interventions for those <i>at-risk</i> include 30 minutes of one on one tutoring with each child. These intervention lessons should include leveled reading, guided reading, and direct, individualized, phonemic instruction. School wide staff development in specific teaching strategies and a consistent instructional approach in the classroom can be very beneficial to at-risk learners.</p>	<p><b>II</b></p>
<p>Brushaber, T. (2003)</p>	<p>The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of direct teaching of reading strategies to elementary students.</p>	<p>12 fourth grade students in a rural town.</p>	<p>Teacher observations during group discussions, reader response journals, and multiple-choice written responses similar to the TAAS.</p> <p>Qualitative &amp; Quantitative</p>	<p>Results were slightly positive due the time length of the study.</p> <p>Teaching comprehension through a comprehension strategy framework can improve a poor readers' comprehension.</p> <p>After using the direct teaching of reading strategies, group discussion comments of the poor readers included more high level comments, the length of journal entrees increased, and the reading TAAS scores increased.</p>	<p><b>II</b></p>
<p>Case, D. S. (2004)</p>	<p>The purpose of the study was to determine the degree</p>	<p>8 participating high performing, high poverty</p>	<p>Quantitative</p>	<p>The principals of this study regularly participated in instructional leadership behaviors which went beyond</p>	<p><b>I, II</b></p>

	<p>in which principals of high performing, high poverty schools participate in seven specific leadership behaviors.</p>	<p>schools</p> <p>Survey had 29 closed questions with a likert-scale 1-5 from never to always</p>		<p>the daily duties of site management.</p> <p>The seven specific leadership behaviors were based on McEwan’s “Seven Steps to Instructional Leadership”; establishing and implementing instructional goals, acting as an instructional resource for staff, creating a school culture and climate conducive to learning, communicating the school’s mission and vision statement, setting high expectations for staff, developing teacher leaders, fostering and maintaining positive attitudes towards students, staff, and parents.</p> <p>The findings reflected that principals who exhibited leadership behaviors with a clear vision of their school as a high performing school and communicated their goals to the staff helped to identify the specific behaviors were perceived as effective by their staff.</p>	
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<p>Davis, Mimi &amp; Wilson, Elizabeth (1999)</p>	<p>The purpose of the study was to compare previous research findings that examined the consistency between a Title I teacher's belief about reading and instructional practices at third and seventh grade levels.</p>	<p>A pool of teachers were administered a belief survey to determine each teacher's theoretical orientation about reading - Deb, a Title I Reading teacher was selected.</p> <p>Deb had 20 years teaching experience, master's degree. Deb taught third grade one year and seventh grade another year.</p>	<p>Qualitative Case Study Design</p> <p>Observations, field notes, audiotapes, interview transcripts</p> <p>The researchers looked for emerging patterns and trends. Data was used to gain insight into the relationship between the participant's belief about reading and decision making.</p>	<p>Results were organized into categories that reflected the purpose of the research – consistency in the Title I teacher's beliefs about instructional decision making with the planning (preactive) phase, interactive phase of teaching, and possible constraints &amp; opportunities that influenced the decision making for third grade and seventh grade levels.</p> <p>The reading skills the students learned had a great deal to do with what Deb believed about reading. Her belief reflected the instructional activities offered.</p>	<p><b>II</b></p>
<p>Edmonds &amp; Li (2005)</p>	<p>The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perspectives and approaches when teaching at-risk learners with technology and the secondary purpose was to examine the difficulties that teachers encounter when using technology.</p>	<p>Nine experienced female elementary teachers who work closely with at-risk learners</p>	<p>Five open-ended interview questions: Qualitative</p>	<p>The results reflected technology-based environments helped some students overcome barriers from learning disability to self esteem issues. The teachers stated technology contributes to the increased success rates for at-risk learners. The study further reflected the approach may not be applicable for every student and may create another learning barrier.</p>	<p><b>II</b></p>
<p>Greenwood, Charles R., Tapia, Yolanda, Abbott, Mary, &amp; Walton, Cheryl (2003)</p>	<p>This study investigated the multiyear effects of school wide implementation of evidence based literacy practices and a program to prevent early reading failure in an elementary school.</p>	<p>Students – 350 students k-5, two classes per grade level each year, 41% free/reduced lunch rate, a professional development school in association of a nearby university, 90% white, 7% Hispanic, 3% black. Special Education model was primarily inclusion.</p> <p>Teachers – 16 teachers and an administrator, 10 teachers (59%) taught more</p>	<p>Multiyear Case Study – A longitudinal, sequential cohort design that incorporated process and product measures of growth in student performance.</p> <p>Practices implemented by the teachers and the reading CBM data were recorded and entered into SPSS files for analysis. Simple descriptive statistics and graphic</p>	<p>The hypothesis was accepted. Results over three years indicated the following; 1. teachers implemented new evidence based strategies; 2. use of these practices with kindergarten and first grade cohorts was associated with larger slopes in silent reading in second grade; 3. classroom reading behaviors occurred most often in a smaller setting, i.e., peer tutors, small group, reading partners, etc.; 4. a growth in reading fluency.</p>	<p><b>II</b></p>

		<p>than 15 years, 2 taught for three years, 5 remaining teachers' experience ranged from 4 – 14 years.</p> <p>Researchers/Consultants – A team of 4-5 researchers and staff at the Children's Project participated all three years.</p>	<p>displays were used to display the data on implemented practices.</p> <p>Z score tests of the difference between conditional and unconditional probabilities to investigate differences between specific classroom instructional arrangements and their relationship to students' reading behavior.</p>		
Hallinger, P., Bickman, L., & Davis, K. (1996)	The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between the elementary principal's effects on reading achievement.	A sample of 87 US elementary schools	<p>Principal &amp; teacher questionnaires and student reading test scores.</p> <p>Examined relationships bet. Student SES, parental involvement, prin. Gender and teaching experience, Principal instructional leadership, instructional climate, &amp; reading achievement</p> <p>Quantitative</p>	<p>The results reflected no direct effects of principal instructional leadership on student achievement. However, the results support the belief that principals can have an indirect effect on school effectiveness through actions that shape the school's learning climate.</p> <p>Elementary principal leadership is influenced by personal and contextual variables (SES, Parental Involvement, &amp; Gender).</p> <p>Confirmed viewing the elementary principal's role in school effectiveness through a conceptual framework that places the principal leadership behaviors in the context of the school organization and its environment and assess leadership effects on student achievement through mediating variables.</p>	<b>I, II, III</b>
Hallinger, P. & Heck, R.H. (1998)	The purpose of this study was to review research from 1980 – 1995 exploring the relationship between principal leadership and student achievement.	A review of approximately 40 studies on principals and student achievement.	A review of approximately 40 studies divided into three principal effects with student achievement; direct-effects model, mediated-effects model, and reciprocal-effects model.	<p>The conclusion of the study supported the belief that principals exercise a measurable, indirect effect on school effectiveness and student achievement. Although the indirect effect is relatively small, it is statistically significant and supports the general belief that principals contribute to school effectiveness and improvement.</p> <p>Schools that make a difference in a student's learning are led by principals who make a significant and</p>	<b>I, II, III</b>

			<p>Quantitative</p>	<p>measurable contribution to the effectiveness of staff and in the learning of their pupils in charge.</p> <p>The study highlighted three study models; direct-effects models, mediated-effects models, and reciprocal-effects models.</p> <p>Direct-Effects Model – proposed that the leader’s practices can have effects on school outcomes. Researchers using this model do not typically seek to control for the effects of other in-school variables such as organizational climate, teacher commitment, and instructional organization. This was the study norm around 1987.</p> <p>Mediated Effects Models – hypothesizes that leaders achieve their effect on school outcomes through indirect paths. Leadership practices contribute through other people, events, and organizational factors such as teacher commitment, instructional practices, or school culture. <i>“results through other people”</i></p> <p>Reciprocal-Effects Models – relationships between the administrator and features of the school and its environment are interactive. This interaction may initiate changes in the school’s curriculum program or instructional practices. This produces feedback that causes reciprocal effects in the originating variable, leadership.</p>	
<p>Johnson, Barbara (2005)</p>	<p>The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which the following effective school characteristics were prevalent in the selected school.</p>		<p>The following research methods were used: parent and teacher surveys, interviews, document review.</p> <p>Questions on the teacher surveys reflected the prevalence of the selected characteristics as well as the principal’s influence on those</p>	<p>Two primary research questions were addressed: (1) To what degree are the identified effective school characteristics present in the selected high-poverty, high-performing school? (2) How does the principal influence the degree to which these common characteristics are prevalent in the selected school?</p> <p>Based on teacher responses, all of the characteristics existed and the principal’s influence was well noted. The parent surveys addressed the parental perceptions of the culture of achievement. Generally, the parents were satisfied with the academic standards at the school and</p>	<p><b>II, III</b></p>

			<p>characteristics.</p> <p>Qualitative &amp; Quantitative</p>	<p>felt that the selected school had order, discipline, and high levels of mutual respect.</p> <p>The results of this study supported the findings of the Effective Schools Research (ESR) and identified the principal as the primary change agent, suggesting that additional investigation and implementation of ESR characteristics should be considered when creating successful schools aligned with the No Child Left Behind Legislation (NCLB).</p>	
Johnson, Claudia (2004)	<p>The purpose of this study was to examine how principals interpreted external accountability demands for the improvement of teaching and learning and how their leadership practices influenced their schools' responses to those accountability demands.</p>	Principal Interviews	Qualitative	<p>The increasing alignment of accountability policies across levels of the educational system and more targeted attention to student achievement have served to focus these principals' attention to issues of improving teaching and learning. However, gaps persist between the intent of state and district accountability policies, particularly, and the way that people working in these schools interpret and respond to the accountability demands embedded in the policies. Some lack of clarity regarding what local schools and their leaders are accountable for contributes to such gaps. More importantly, the district's adoption of a developmental approach to accountability—i.e., something schools and their staffs are supposed to get better at as their instructional and organizational capacity develops—has allowed principals to peg their enacted accountability responses variously, based on their personal sense of accountability, their own leadership role conceptions and capabilities, and their assessments about available capacity in their schools. Although the two schools in this study faced comparable external demands, their accountability responses demonstrated considerable variation.</p> <p>This study confirms research suggesting that, in lower performing schools where capacity and motivation for improvement may be low, the principal plays a pivotal role in crafting the school's response to performance accountability demands. The success of such a school's accountability response relies on the principal's</p>	<b>I, II,</b>

				<p>leadership ability to mobilize internal capacity to improve teaching and learning in effective, sustainable ways. Findings from this research suggest that the district would benefit from redefining its accountability for the work of principals with more explicit and specified attention to student achievement as a driver of instructional decision-making and improvement efforts, as well as providing principals training and support to help them learn to better target, mobilize, and leverage instructional and organizational capacity in support of high-performance accountability.</p>	
<p>Kannapel, P., &amp; Clements, S. (2005)</p>	<p>The purpose of the study was to examine common characteristics which contribute to high student performance with high poverty, high achieving elementary schools. Also, the study examines which characteristics and practices differentiate high performing, high poverty elem. schools from low performing, high poverty elementary schools.</p>	<p>Eight Kentucky Urban/Rural Elementary Schools</p> <p>Selection Criteria: 50% or more students on FRL, a state accountability index (a combination of academic/nonacademic indicators) of 80% or higher, progress or gains on the state test overtime, and with an achievement gap of fewer than 15pts. between the FRL rate of low &amp; middle income students along with race.</p>	<p>School Visitation/Observation-state trained teams spent a week observing each school.</p> <p>Interviews &amp; School Documents</p> <p>Quantitative &amp; Qualitative</p>	<p>The audit report reflected high ratings in school culture and student, family, and community support for the eight elementary schools. When the audit reports were compared to the low performing schools the higher achieving elem. Schools were successful in the following areas; review and alignment of curriculum, individual student learning tailored to student needs, caring and nurturing environment with high expectations, ongoing professional development, &amp; efficient use of instructional resources and materials.</p> <p>The common characteristics of the eight elementary schools were high expectations, caring &amp; nurturing atmosphere, academic instructional focus, use of student assessment, leadership &amp; decision-making, faculty ethic &amp; work morale, and teacher recruitment, hiring, and assignment.</p> <p>The study also reflected little impact with the following; leadership, planning and school based decision-making, technology, and the district's role.</p> <p>Through school observation, the study reflected the importance of choosing &amp; cultivating school personnel, individual student assessment, dealing with the poverty issue, and the alignment of the curriculum and instruction.</p>	<p><b>I, II, III</b></p>
<p>Leithwood, K. (2001)</p>	<p>The purpose of this study</p>	<p>A seven country study</p>	<p>The literature review was</p>	<p>Analysis resulted in a four-fold classification of</p>	<p><b>I, II, III</b></p>

	was to review theoretical and empirical literature identifying school leadership practices which are productive towards the four approaches to accountability.	which included written policies.	in three stages, ERIC search information on leadership, accountability and principal, relevant papers from the American Educational Research Association, and 52 articles with 31 of them forming the empirical basis for the claims.  Quantitative and Qualitative Data	approaches to educational accountability: market, decentralization, professional, and management approaches.	
Leithwood, Steinbach, & Ryan, (1997)	The purpose of this study was to examine distributed leadership; What factors internal and external to the team foster or inhibit team learning in secondary schools? What is the nature of team leadership? What is it that stimulates team learning? How can team learning processes adequately be described? What outcomes result from team learning?	Six teams in five secondary schools	Qualitative & Quantitative Data	Six teams of secondary school teachers were studied in order to learn more about the nature of their collective learning and the conditions which influenced such learning. The study was motivated by the increasing prevalence of shared decision making and distributed leadership in restructured schools.  Qualitative and quantitative evidence collected for the study identified a large number of within-team conditions that helped to explain variation in the nature and amount of learning across the teams. The study also pointed to both in-school (including leadership) and out-of school conditions affecting such learning.	<b>I, II, III</b>
Marzano, R.J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B.A. (2005)	The purpose of the study was to study 35 years of research on school leadership which had a substantial effect on student achievement.	Examined 69 studies in the meta-analysis study looking for specific behaviors related to principal leadership. Out of the studies, 21 categories of specific behaviors related to school principal leadership were found. The behaviors were defined as responsibilities.	Meta-analysis study of 69 studies about school leadership.	The twenty one key leadership responsibilities which are significantly correlated with higher student achievement include affirmation, change agent, contingent rewards, communication, culture, discipline, flexibility, focus, ideals/beliefs, input, intellectual stimulation, involvement in curriculum, instruction, and assessment, knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, monitoring/evaluating, optimizer, order, outreach, relationships, resources, situational awareness, and visibility.	<b>I, II, III</b>



				<p>Two types of change were identified in the study: first and second-order changes.</p> <p>First Order Change – defined as incremental. It is thought of as the next most obvious step to take in a school or a district. First Order Change is also defined as using all 21 responsibilities while managing the daily life of a school. Second Order Change – dramatic departure from the expected both in defining the problem and finding a solution; deep change. Seven of the 21 responsibilities are related to the second order change; knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, optimizer, intellectual stimulation, change agent, monitoring/evaluating, flexibility, and ideals/beliefs.</p> <p>Key ideas includes; leadership matters. A significant, positive correlation exists between effective school leadership and student achievement.</p> <p>Effective leaders not only know what to do, but when, and how to do it. This was described as the essence of balanced leadership.</p>	
<p>Mather, Nancy, Bos, Candace, Babur, Nalan (2001)</p>	<p>The purpose of the study was to examine the perceptions and knowledge of general educators at two professional levels (preservice &amp; inservice) toward early literacy instruction for students at risk of reading failure.</p>	<p>The study involved two groups of teachers; 293 preservice &amp; 131 inservice.</p> <p>Preservice teachers were engaged in student teaching in elementary education – most were women. The inservice teachers were employed as k – 3 teachers at four metropolitan and six rural elementary schools in the southwest. Their teaching experience ranged from 11- 20 years. The inservice teachers have taken 1-6 literacy courses.</p>	<p>Data was collected on two measures – a perception survey, Teacher Perceptions Toward Early Reading and Spelling (TPERS) and a knowledge assessment, Teacher Knowledge Assessment: Structure of Language (TKA:SL).</p> <p>TPERS = A 2X2 mixed design analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine different perceptions of preservice and inservice teachers.</p>	<p>The results demonstrated that inservice teachers were more knowledgeable about the structure of language than preservice teachers. Neither group obtained high scores on the assessment. The inservice teachers had more positive perceptions about using explicit, code based instruction to teach early literacy skills than the preservice teachers.</p> <p>Both groups of teachers were similar with their perceptions about implicit holistic instruction.</p> <p>On several statements the preservice teachers and inservice teachers had similar viewpoints and knowledge.</p> <p>Both groups however had insufficient knowledge about the concepts of English language structure.</p> <p>Specific cognitive-linguistic processes, such as</p>	<p><b>II</b></p>

			TKA:SL= a t test for independent samples was used to determine if differences were evident bet. two groups on their knowledge of early literacy	phonological awareness, have been identified as important predictors of early reading and spelling development in kindergarten and first grade children. Unfortunately, this has not had a significant impact on teacher preparation. Teachers lack essential knowledge for teaching children who struggle with reading.	
McMahon, Rebecca, Richmond, Mark, Reeves-Kazelskis, Carolyn (1998)	<p>The purpose of the study was to examine the relationships between teachers' perceptions of literacy acquisition and the extent to which children engage in voluntary literacy events during self-selected activities.</p> <p>Also investigated was the relationship between teachers' perceptions of literacy acquisition and the availability of literacy classroom materials.</p>	<p>12 female kindergarten teachers from 6 public school districts in southern Mississippi. Eleven of the teachers were European American and 1 was African American. Teaching experience ranged from 2 – 29 years. Seven teachers had their master's degree.</p> <p>192 students participated. 16 students were randomly selected for observation from each of the 12 classrooms. They were selected from the two categorical teacher groups (reading readiness skills and emergent literacy), each containing 96 students – 50.5% girls and 49.5% boys – 60.4% were European American, 32.8% African American, &amp; 7% Hispanic Americans</p>	<p>Qualitative Data</p> <p>Two separate instruments were constructed to collect data – The Inventory of Literacy Indicators (ILI) to determine the quantity and quality of literacy materials in the classroom. The Literacy Acquisition Perception Profile (LAPP) to determine teacher's perceptions of literacy acquisition.</p> <p>Chi-square tests were used to test the frequency of occurrence between the total number of literacy events observed in the classrooms of reading readiness skills teachers and emergent literacy teachers.</p>	<p>The findings in the study indicated significant relationships between teacher perceptions of literacy acquisition and children's involvement in literacy events, &amp; quantity and quality of classroom literacy materials.</p> <p>It is the teacher's responsibility to control and plan a student's literacy development rather than give a student the opportunity to make choices and construct print related knowledge through interaction in the environment.</p> <p>The results of this study strongly suggest that kindergarten teacher's perceptions of literacy acquisition do affect children's involvement in literacy events, the quantity of classroom literacy materials and the quality of classroom literacy materials.</p>	<b>II</b>
Mosenthal, J., Lipson, Tornello, Russ, & Mekkelson (2004)	The purpose of the study was to examine the contexts and practices of six Vermont elementary schools with reading achievement at second and fourth grades.	<p>Six Elementary Schools in Vermont</p> <p>2 high performing schools and 1 low performing schools within 2 clusters within the school district</p>	<p>8-15 school visitations Teacher interviews</p> <p>Qualitative</p>	Four factors were common among the academically successful elementary schools; the commitment to literacy over 8-10 years within the school along with a stable administrative and curricular leadership team in literacy instruction, school focus & commitment on literacy achievement for all students, knowledgeable and trained staff in the area of reading instruction, and	<b>II, III</b>

	What classroom practices and school contextual factors promote high student performance in reading? Do the factors that influence success and promote excellent performance vary among successful schools, depending on school characteristics?			<p>ample time for students to read and discuss books.</p> <p>The factors which influence success and promote excellence vary among the successful schools.</p>	
Mullen, C., & Patrick, R. (2000)	The purpose of the case study was to determine how an academically at-risk school facing state take over was strengthened by principal leadership.	The principal of an inner city k-6 elementary school in Alabama.	Researcher “shadowed” the principal at an inner city k-6 school in Alabama and identified eight strategies used to improve student achievement.	<p>The first strategy for school improvement was to implement a philosophy of discipline and management. The second strategy was to develop a system of support systems to improve the school climate. The third strategy was to build a strong staff which supported the students. High visibility and strong relationships with the school community. Satisfying student basic needs as top priority was the fifth strategy. The sixth strategy was designing a new educational remedial program to support the ability of the students. The seventh strategy was implementing teacher development standards by analyzing student data. The eighth strategy was developing a case for year round schooling.</p> <p>The case study was an effective way to highlight the actions of the leader and note behaviors which can assist other leaders in the same position.</p>	<b>I, II, III</b>
Pierce, Cecilia (1994)	The purpose of the study was to discuss the findings of a qualitative case study of an effective seventh grade social studies teacher who taught primarily at risk students in an urban setting and describe how she created a classroom environment that diminished the risk factors and increase student’s level	Participant is Mary Morgan, a middle school teacher with 24 years of teaching experience. She was effective in teaching at risk students based on recommendations of administrators, peers, parents, and former students. Verification was through observations by researcher.	Qualitative Design – Observations, audiotapes, field notes, Verbal and nonverbal teaching behaviors and patterns, teacher personality characteristics – all combined to see how this facilitated student learning	<p>The outcomes were demonstrated quantitative and qualitative. Many of the routine organizational decisions made by teachers have important consequences that are not evident when the teacher only focuses on immediate outcomes.</p> <p>Morgan’s positive classroom climate created through her exhibited behaviors allowed students to make progress especially in reading.</p>	<b>II</b>

	of academic achievement.	Inner city school – 38.1% caucasian & 61.9% black – all students described as at risk – 67% free/reduced lunch – The fifth period Eastern Hemisphere class had 21 students which were 29% white, & 71% black.	Quantitative Design- Progression of scores on six week examinations, SRA reading scores increased as well.		
Pollard-Durodola, S. (2003)	The purpose of this case study was to examine the leadership practices of the elementary school principal and how the effective schools correlates turned around student achievement.	Wesley Elementary School, TX. Houston Independent District  Interview with the Principal and Teacher Leaders	Interviews with teacher leaders and the principal.  Qualitative	The researcher highlighted the characteristics of creating a culture that encouraged effective teaching and student learning. The principal served as an instructional leader.  Nine factors impacted academic success; strong leadership, a core reading and math program, a safe and orderly environment, systematic evaluation of teachers and students, high expectations, a well-planned curriculum which addressed student needs, innovative staff development, a plan for preventing academic problems and a common vision.	<b>I, II, III</b>
Rasinski, Timothy, & Padak, Nancy (1994)	The purpose of the study was to test a specific instructional approach (fluency development lesson) for developing reading fluency in second grade students integrated into the regular school curriculum.	The participants were four second grade classrooms in two elementary schools in a large urban ethnically diverse school district. One classroom implemented the FDL treatment while the others served as a control group. Treatments were 15 minutes daily.	Questionnaire Descriptive Design- Quantitative	The results revealed greater gains in instructional reading level and reading rates than the control group. Fluency development lessons allowed at risk readers become better readers.	<b>II</b>
Smith & Rotman (1993)	The purpose of the study was to examine factors that may foster advanced knowledge of literacy among impoverished preschoolers who are found to be academic at risk in learning to read.	Three preschoolers from the Head Start Program based on teacher recommendation according to their profound interest in reading.	Parent interviews & observations Observations & interviews of children Assessment of Language Knowledge Demographic information:  Quantitative &	Regardless of a disruptive home environment, activities which promoted literacy development continued. Reading to the preschoolers was found to be a regular routine in the homes of the preschoolers. An influential adult in the household had an impact on the literacy growth of the preschooler. Also, exposure to print related activities or experiences contributed to advancing the preschoolers in literacy.	<b>II</b>

			Qualitative		
Soodak, Leslie, & Podell, David (1994)	The purpose of the study was to examine teacher's suggestions for addressing specific student problems. This was based on the assumption that teachers' suggestions reflect their underlying beliefs about student needs and abilities.	110 teacher participants. The participants of the study had been teaching 1-21 years. Grades 3 - 6	Four Page Questionnaire, Teacher Efficacy Scale, and short list of identifying questions	The results of this study revealed interesting patterns in teaching thinking about difficult to teach students. Teachers frequently look outside of the classroom to seek solutions to the problems faced with difficulty. Teachers do not perceive interventions they can implement to create success for students.	<b>II</b>
Statler & Peterson (2003)	The purpose of this study was to examine the essential components present in an exemplary at-risk/dropout prevention program for k-6 students.	Twenty- five educators ranging from teachers of at-risk students to the administrators along with parents	Qualitative Case Study	The findings revealed three major themes essential to the program; 1. shared assumptions about the mission; 2. student centered focus; 3. commitment to a nurturing environment.  Participants in the study indicated that their program effectively reduced three major at-risk behaviors through improved attendance, academics, and self-esteem. The parents of the study described impressive changes in improved self-esteem, but the respondents identified changes in all areas.	<b>II</b>
Strahan, D., Carlone, H., Horn, S., Dallas, F., & Ware, A. (2003)	The purpose of the study is to describe how an elementary school improved its school academic climate.	Archer Elementary School, North Carolina	Interviews with teachers and administrators along with school observations during team meetings over a two year period.  Qualitative Study	Interviews and observations over a two year period reflected three major changes; teachers and administrators have a shared stance towards learning, teachers and administrators have strengthened instructional norms that emphasize more student engagement, and the teachers & administrators have promoted the development of stronger procedures for data-direct dialogue regarding school reform.  This study has an appendix of sample interview questions used in the study.	<b>II, III</b>
Strahan, D. (2003)	The purpose of this study is to explore the professional culture at three elementary schools.	Three Elementary Schools in North Carolina -	Three year case study on three elementary schools  Researchers constructed case studies by collecting demographic & achievement data,	From 1997 to 2000, the state test scores increased from less than 50% proficient to more than 75% proficient due to data-directed dialogue, and purposeful conversations guided by student assessment and informal observations. Also noted was the change of focus from things which were not working to things which helped students make academic progress.	<b>II, III</b>

			interviewing teachers and administrators and observing lessons and meetings at the elementary schools  Qualitative	This study has an appendix of sample interview questions used in the study.	
Sweet, Anne, Guthrie, John, & Ng, Mary (1998)	The purpose of the study was to examine teacher perceptions of student intrinsic motivation for reading from self determination development and reading achievement.	Quantitative Study Participants- a sample of 68 teachers from random selected 14 elementary schools grades 3-6 in the urban Maryland area. 374 students participated. 112 third graders, 92 fourth graders, 87 fifth graders, and 83 sixth graders  Qualitative Study Participants – 1 school randomly selected out of the 14, 6 teachers representing four grades. 1-2 students were selected based on average reading achievement.	Quantitative Study – using a questionnaire, <i>Teacher Questionnaire on Student Motivation to Read (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition)</i> Students were rated on each variable using a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA)  Qualitative Study – Open ended questions developed to explore 6 teachers perceptions of student reading motivation. Case Based Approach and Conversational Interviews were analyzed to assess the four motivational constructs.	Correlations of teacher perceptions of intrinsic motivation and achievement in reading were positive. Higher achieving students were more intrinsically motivated with less need for extrinsic contextual supports whereas lower achieving students were characterized by the need for contextual supports than intrinsic motivation for reading.  Teachers should remember that lower achieving students are motivated to read by engaging in activity based tasks that attracts their attention and interest. Teachers do not plan activity based tasks to low achieving students regularly.	<b>II,</b>
Togneri, W. & Anderson, S. (2003)	The purpose of the study is to examine policies and practices of high poverty districts which improved in student achievement.	Five High Poverty School Districts participated in the study – Aldine Independent Sch. Dist. (TX), Chula Vista Elementary Sch. Dist. (CA), Kent County Public Schools (MD), Minneapolis Public Schools (MN), and Providence Public Schools (RI).	Qualitative Study	The five school districts had a similar set of strategies used to improve student achievement; the acknowledgement of poor student academic performance and the desire to seek improvement, the districts had shared goals of improving student achievement, the districts built a system wide framework of instructional supports, the leadership within the districts were redefined & redistributed, and professional development was made relevant and useful.	<b>I, II, III</b>
Williams, Hall, Lauer (2004)	The purpose of this study was to determine whether instruction focused on text	Teachers of ten second grade classes in three New York City Public Schools.		Expository text is often neglected in the elementary school curriculum even though most of the reading that children do in school is of that type. Most of the	<b>II</b>

	<p>structure helps second grade students improve their comprehension of compare &amp; contrast expository text.</p>	<p>128 students participated.                      56% Hispanic                      41% AA                      2% Caucasion                      1% Asian                      90% Free/Reduced Lunch Rate                      6% served in Special Education</p>		<p>research that demonstrates the importance of text structure in reading comprehension and the benefits that accrue from instruction in text structure deals with children at or above the 4th grade. This research literature, reviewed briefly, provides the basis for the work that is described in this article, which involves younger children. First, a study is presented that demonstrates that children are sensitive to text structure, and therefore would benefit from instruction, as early as 2nd grade. Second, a new instructional <i>program</i> is described that focuses intensively on one specific expository structure, compare and contrast. Finally, the results of a study that evaluates the effects of the <i>program</i> are described.</p>	
<p>Wurmband, L.B. (2004)</p>	<p>The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify and describe principal leadership practices, which were associated with sustained growth in student achievement as measured by the Academic Performance Index. Also, the study examined the similarities and differences in the perceptions of those practices as reported by teachers, parents, and the principals themselves.</p>	<p>Five elementary schools within an urban unified school district</p>	<p>Qualitative Study</p>	<p>The data suggest that principals, parents, and teachers of elementary schools that demonstrated an increase in student achievement as measured by external accountability systems perceived principals to demonstrate a commitment to school academic improvement, communicate high expectations for student academic performance, and ensure systematic use of data to create internal accountability systems to measure student progress. The data also suggest that principals aligned the sites' curricular programs and instructional practices with the district's theory of action to create coherence between the requirements of external accountability systems and school site practices and programs. The following conclusions were made: (1) principal leadership practices were instrumental in creating the culture and climate and instructional programs to support student achievement; (2) principals understood and implemented a "systems" perspective to achieve congruence with external requirements of the state and federal accountability systems, and (3) the district's Theory of Action framed the work of the school sites. The following recommendations are made: (1) schools and districts should use the momentum generated by the requirements of external accountability systems to focus on the implementation and monitoring of successful principal practices; and (2) administrative training and professional development should</p>	<p><b>I, II, III</b></p>

				incorporate the teaching and modeling of leadership practices proven to be positively correlated with increased student achievement.	
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APPENDIX E  
INTERVIEW QUESTION ITEM ANALYSIS

## Research Question &amp; Interview Question Item Grid

<b>RQ &amp; Specific Questions</b>	<b>Principal Interview Questions</b>	<b>Item Topic</b>	<b>Research Literature Primary &amp; Secondary</b>
1	1,a	Principal leadership and accountability	Brandt, 2000; Brown, 2004; Collins, 2001; Davenport & Anderson, 2002; Duke, 2004; <a href="http://www2.edtrust.org">www2.edtrust.org</a> ; <a href="http://www.glc.k12.ga.us">www.glc.k12.ga.us</a> ; <a href="http://www.galeaders.org">www.galeaders.org</a> ; <a href="http://www.gsci.org">www.gsci.org</a> ; Hulme, 2004; Johnson, C., 2004; Lambert, 2002 & 2005; Leithwood, 2001; Lezotte & Bancroft, 1985; Neuman & Pelchat, 2001; Wong & Nicotera, 2004
2	4,a,b	Educational Strategies, Programs and Organizational Structure for At-Risk Learners	Chrisman, 2005; ; Bradshaw, 2001; Brushaber, 2003; Cuban, 2004; Dufour, 2002; Dufour, Eaker, Dufour, 2005; Edmonds & Li, 2005; Hall, 2002; Lambert, 2002 & 2005; Owens, 2004; Pollard-Durodola, 2003; Rettig, McCullough, Santos, & Watson, 2003; Sinden, Hoy, & Sweetland, 2004; Smith & Rotman, 1993; Smith, Molnar, & Zahorik, 2003; Strahan, Carlone, Horn, Dallas, & Ware, 2003; Strahan, 2003; Williams,Hall, & Lauer, 2004
3	2,a,b	Principal Leadership and Student Achievement	Andrews & Soder, 1987; Burris & Welner, 2005; Case, 2004 ; Dufour, 2002; Dufour, Eaker, Dufour, 2005; Edmonds, 1979; Evans, 2005; Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Johnson, B., 2005; Kannapel & Clements, 2005; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Mosenthal, Lipson, Tornello, Russ, & Mekkelson, 2004; Mullen & Patrick, 2000; Neuman & Pelchat, 2001; Neuman & Simmons, 2000; Rettig, McCullough, Santos, & Watson, 2003;; Strahan, Carlone, Horn, Dallas, & Ware, 2003; Strahan, 2003; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003 & 2004; <a href="http://www.mes.org">www.mes.org</a>
3	2,a,b 5, a	Educating At-Risk Learners	Bradshaw, 2001;Burris & Welner, 2005; ; Brushaber, 2003; Cuban, 2004; Davenport & Anderson, 2002; Dufour, 2002; Dufour, Eaker, Dufour, 2005; Edmonds & Li, 2005; Mathis, 2005; Ramirez & Carpenter, 2005; Smith & Rotman, 1993; Statler & Peterson, 2003; Togneri & Anderson, 2003; Williams, Hall, Lauer, 2004; Varlas, 2003
1, 2, 3	1, a 2, a,b 3, a 4, a,b 5, a	Principal Leadership Behavior	Bolman & Deal, 2002; Brown, 2004; Collins, 2001; Dufour, 2002; Dufour, Eaker, & Dufour, 2005; Fullan, 2002; <a href="http://www.galeaders.org">www.galeaders.org</a> ; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Johnson, B., 2005; Kessler, 2002; Lambert, 2002 & 2005; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005; Meyer & Slectha, 2002; Mullen & Patrick, 2000; <a href="http://www.naesp.org">www.naesp.org</a> ; Northouse, 2004; Polka, 1997; Pollard-Durodola, 2003; Scherer, 2004; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003 & 2004; <a href="http://www.ccsso.org">www.ccsso.org</a>