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## The influence of school climate and leadership style on teacher transiency in urban middle schools

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THE INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL CLIMATE AND LEADERSHIP  
STYLE ON TEACHER TRANSIENCY IN  
URBAN MIDDLE SCHOOLS

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the

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Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
College of Education**

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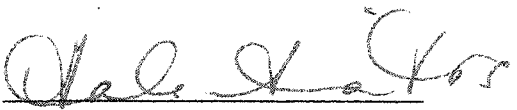
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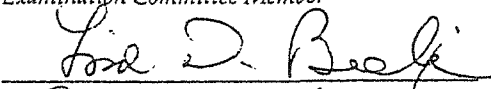
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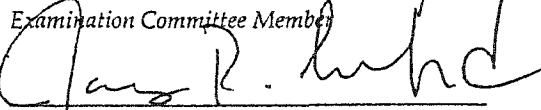
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Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Instruction

  
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## ABSTRACT

### **The Influence of School Climate and Leadership Style on Teacher Transiency in Urban Middle Schools**

by

Jenefer J. Tirella

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Professor of Education

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This study examined teachers' perceptions of school climate, the principal's leadership style, and their influence on teacher transiency in urban middle schools. Two surveys, the Urban School Climate Survey and the Leadership Effectiveness Adaptability Questionnaire, were distributed to four middle schools within the participating school district. Fifty-eight teachers participated in the study and returned the completed surveys. Teacher interviews were conducted with participating teachers who were willing to be interviewed. The theoretical framework for this study was based on the contingency theory (Likert, 1967; Donaldson, 2001).

This study determined a significant main effect for schools. School profiles were outlined to provide a comparable view of each participating school. Significant mean differences were determined for school climate based on the teachers' years of teaching experience and each participating school. This study determined that teachers with twenty or more years of experience had a more positive school climate perspective than

teachers with less teaching experience. As each school is a unique environment with different challenges and successes, the school climate varied by schools. Schools with low teacher collaboration, high risky behaviors, and a high number of new teachers exhibited a low school climate. The style in which the principal responded to the teachers' needs also impacted the school climate.

Primary and secondary leadership styles of principals were identified based on teacher perceptions of their principal. Style adaptability score and range identified the principal's ability to adjust and respond to the teacher and the organizational needs of the school. The two schools in which the principals viewed the staff as having a high level of readiness and the principal's primary leadership style was "delegating," exhibited a higher school climate than the other two participating schools. Teacher interviews at the other two schools identified teacher discontent with ineffective communication and inappropriate leadership style of the principal.

Teacher transiency was identified as a primary concern within the participating school district. This study determined the leadership style of the principal and the school climate to have an impact on a teacher's decision to remain at the school or to seek out an alternative work location. There is evidence to suggest school climate and leadership style have an influence on teacher transiency in urban middle schools. Additional research is recommended to further support the influence of school climate and leadership style on teacher transiency.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	viii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
Purpose of the Study .....	1
Background.....	2
Theoretical Framework.....	4
Significance of the Study .....	5
Definitions.....	7
Research Questions.....	8
Summary .....	8
CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....	10
Introduction.....	10
Contingency Theory.....	10
School Climate.....	18
Previous School Climate Literature Reviews .....	20
School Climate Factors .....	23
Leadership.....	39
Leadership Styles.....	44
The Situational Leader.....	49
Teacher Transiency.....	55
Middle School.....	59
Summary .....	61
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY AND DATA DESCRIPTION .....	64
Introduction and Review of Study .....	64
Purpose of the Study .....	65
CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS .....	79
Introduction.....	79
Analyses.....	80
Conclusion .....	110

CHAPTER 5	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	112
	School Climate .....	114
	Leadership Style.....	116
	School Climate, Leadership Style, and Transiency .....	119
	Limitations .....	122
	Recommendations for Future Research .....	123
	Conclusion .....	125
APPENDIX I .....		128
APPENDIX II .....		132
APPENDIX III.....		135
APPENDIX IV.....		140
REFERENCES .....		152
VITA.....		174



## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Teacher Participation.....	141
Table 2	Demographics.....	142
Table 3	Means and Standard Deviations for the dimensions of School Climate, Leadership style, and Transiency.....	144
Table 4	Tukey Pairwise Comparisons Including the Dimensions of USCS, Teacher transiency, Level of experience, and mean differences.....	146
Table 5	Tukey Pairwise Comparisons Including the Dimensions of USCS, LEAD, Teacher transiency, school, and mean differences.....	147
Table 6	School profiles.....	149
Table 7	Teacher transiency by school.....	151

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Purpose of the Study

This study was a three-dimensional research study that examined leadership style, school climate, and teacher transiency within an urban middle-school setting. The study focused on teachers' perceptions of school climate and their principals' leadership styles within a middle school context as well as the relationship of these perceptions to teacher transiency rates. There has been an increasing concern regarding teacher transiency at the middle-school level (National Center for Educational Statistics, NCES, 1998). By studying these relationships in the middle school, this study addressed an area of research that has been ignored by previous school climate researchers.

The climate of elementary and high schools has been examined frequently and in some depth (e.g. Creemers & Reezigt, 1999; Hoy & Feldman, 1999). However, research about the school climate of middle schools has been neglected (Hoy, Hoffman, Bliss, and Sabo, 1996). Middle schools have been defined by researchers as a transition school between elementary and high school for students to develop social, psychological, and emotional self (Cuban, 1992; Eichhorn, 1991; Douglas, 1971). The influence of leadership on school climate has been studied since the early 1960's (Flagg, 1964; Feldvebel, 1964; Hall, 1988; Hall & George, 1999; Bulach, Lunenberg, & McCallon,

1995). This study expanded prior research and explored the influence leadership style and school climate have on teacher transiency using surveys and interviews as data sources. Through follow-up interviews and survey responses, teachers' perceptions of the principals' leadership style were identified.

## Background

Taylor and Tashakkori (1994) emphasized the importance of examining teachers' perception of the school-level environment since the quality of school environment and teachers' commitment and desire to teach are highly related. Other researchers have found that school environment correlates with the effectiveness of schools and the professional development of teachers and staff (Creemer, Peters, & Reynolds, 1989; Fisher & Fraser, 1991).

School climate and leadership have been the focus of research since the early 1960s. Studies have shown that the leader in a school has a major impact on the school climate (Winter & Sweeney, 1994; Taylor & Tashakkori, 1994; Maxwell & Thomas, 1991; Whitaker, 1995). Additional researchers suggest that the principal is the real and symbolic head of the school (Lortie, 1975; Hall, 1988). Senge (1995) identifies the principal as the person with the greatest impact who sees his/her role as creating an environment where teachers can continually learn. Moreover, principals must build a positive morale among the staff to build a positive school climate (Winter & Sweeney, 1994).

Teacher transiency has also become a major dilemma, especially in urban schools (NCES, 1998). Retaining teachers is just as important to alleviating teacher shortages as

recruiting new staff (NCES, 1998). A federal report, the *1998 Condition of Education*, provides a list of reasons cited by teachers for leaving the teaching profession. Of those who left, 27% retired and 24% left because of a move, child rearing, or pregnancy. Just over six percent stated they were leaving for a better salary or benefits. About 12% cited dissatisfaction with teaching or “personal reasons” for leaving (NCES, 1998). Since the early 1990s, the annual number of exits from teaching has surpassed the number of entrants (Darling-Hammond, 2003). Teacher turnover is 50% higher in high-poverty than in low-poverty schools (Ingersoll, 2001).

An earlier study of teacher retention and transiency conducted at the University of Pennsylvania and published by the National Center for Education Statistics reported a strong relationship between teacher transfers and lower salaries (Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, Whitener, and Weber, 1996). This information indicated that successful teacher retention programs should focus not only on salary and benefits but also on non-monetary conditions such as positive working relationships, training and professionalism, leadership style of the principal, and the influence of school climate.

Logically speaking, as urban school districts struggle to retain teachers it is important for districts to determine the reasons why teachers are departing. This study focused on identifying the effects of school climate and principal’s leadership style as reasons teachers leave the schools. The setting for this study was a large urban school district within the southwestern United States. The participants included fifty-eight sixth to eighth grade teachers within a traditional 6 - 8 grade configuration school. Four schools were selected based on the principals’ willingness to participate in the study. The participating principals were asked to select a staff meeting or professional development

day on which a leadership style survey and a school climate survey could be administered to the staff. One school provided ten minutes at the beginning of staff development, another allowed for a presentation during teacher lunches, the remaining two schools declined the introduction and requested the surveys and a cover letter be placed in the teacher's mailboxes.

### Theoretical Framework

Contingency theory is a major theoretical lens used to view organizations (Donaldson, 2001). The essence of the contingency theory paradigm is that organizational effectiveness is a result of the interaction of various components of the organization (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1969; Pennings, 1992). The three interacting components in this study are leadership style, school climate, and teacher transiency.

Contingency theory is based on how organizational characteristics fit together and interact to achieve high performance (Likert, 1967). Organizations seek to avoid a misfit and adapt new organizational characteristics to fit the new needs of the organization (i.e. leadership style needs to adapt to the needs of the teacher and school). As a result, the organization becomes shaped by the contingencies in order to prevent a loss of performance (Likert, 1967). The assumption here is that school climate interacts with leadership style that thereby interacts with teacher transiency. Contingency theory includes the concept of a fit that affects performance, which in turn, impels adaptive organizational change. An example of a study using the contingency theory is to

examine the size of the organization (i.e. the number of staff members) and the affects the size of the organization has on the structure of the administration.

Contingency theory is to be distinguished from universalistic theories of organization, which assert that there is “one best way” to organize the structure of the school and the staff positions. Contingency theory represents an improvement of past theories that prescribes a best approach to leadership that is suitable to all situations (Sergiovanni, 1979). Contingency theory adapts to the varying needs of the employees and organization, thus allowing and providing for transition movements within the organization. (Likert, 1961). Contingency theory views the maximum performance resulting from adopting the variables to fit the specific need. For these reasons, it was appropriate to utilize contingency theory for the basis of this study.

### Significance of the Study

The primary significance of this study was to examine teacher transiency, a major concern in urban schools, within each school as it relates to the principal’s leadership style and the school climate. It is also significant from a personal perspective: the school in which I previously worked had twenty-two teachers leave the previous year. My current school had fourteen teachers depart last year. Clearly, teacher transiency is an issue in the local school district (Article 35-2 (C)). This study will examine how the leadership style of the principal and the school climate play a role in teacher transiency.

Bulach (1999) argued that the demands on leaders have made leadership increasingly complicated and further encouraged leaders to adapt their leadership style to the situation and specific needs of their staff. There has been a strong focus on leadership

and leadership styles in research literature (McGregor, 1960, 1967; Hall & George, 1999; Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2002). Much of this research has been based in the business industry, and was quickly generalized to fit the needs of the educational environment (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982b, Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2002).

Deitrich and Bailey (1996) asserted that the responsibility for establishing a positive school climate begins with the principal who provides leadership in developing and maintaining a climate conducive to learning. Akin and Hopelain (1986) suggested those in leadership positions could identify the organizational environments people prefer and the cultures that enable them to achieve greater productivity. Leaders could then work to create those environments and cultures.

When describing effective leaders, Winter and Sweeney (1994) noted the importance for leaders to listen carefully, encourage staff members, and reinforce their words with believable action. The perceptions of the teachers and staff have a major influence on the completion of the school's objectives and goals for the year (Winter & Sweeney, 1994). When the leader works to include the employees in the decision making process or continues to be fair and consistent in his/her practice, the staff begins to feel comfortable and accepting of the situation and will participate in the completion of the identified objectives (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2002).

Dinham, Cairney, Craigie, and Wilson (1995) discovered that it was apparent that leadership, particularly that of the principal, influenced school climate. This study examined the leadership style and school climate within the middle-school environment to determine if these are the reasons for teachers leaving their current school and transferring to another school.



## Definitions

To assist the reader with interpreting the information contained in this study, the following definitions are included:

1. Middle-level school is defined as a separate school designed to meet the special needs of young adolescents in an organizational structure that encompasses any combination of grades five through nine, wherein developmentally appropriate curricula and programs are used to create learning experiences that are both relative and interactive (Atwater, 1996; Clark & Clark, 1994; Cuban, 1992). Throughout the United States, the 6-8 configuration is the most common, followed by 7-8 and 7-9 (Clark & Clark, 1994; George & Alexander, 1993).
2. Middle-school teacher is a teacher of students in grades 5 – 9 within a designated middle-school environment.
3. Urban middle school is a fifth through ninth grade institution located in the inner city of a large, densely populated city. Raywid (1996) describes large middle schools as housing over 1,000 students.
4. School climate is defined by Freiberg & Stein (1999) as “the heart and soul of the school. It is about the essence of a school that leads a child, a teacher, an administrator, a staff member to love the school and to look forward to being there each school day” (p. 11).
5. Leadership is “the behavior of an individual.... Directing the activities of a group toward a shared goal” (Hemphill & Coons, 1957, p. 7).

6. Teacher Transiency is defined as the movement of teachers from school to school and district to district (Ingersoll, 2001).

### Research Questions

This study was designed to address the following questions:

1. How do teachers perceive the school climate of the middle school in which they work?
2. How do teachers perceive the leadership style of the principal within the middle school in which they work?
3. What are the relationships among teacher-perceived school climate, teacher-perceived leadership style, and teacher transiency?

### Summary

During the past thirty years, the middle-school movement has been a driving force in public education (George, Stevenson, Thomason & Beane, 1992). What began as a better way to handle rapidly increasing numbers of students has developed into a formalized program to better meet the needs of students as they transition between elementary school and high school (Johnston, 1991; Cuban, 1992). Today's formal middle-school program assists students in making a successful transition from the nurturing environment of the elementary classroom to the departmentalized formation of the high school (Lounsberry, 1991; Cuban, 1992; George, Stevenson, Thomason &

Beane, 1992). In order to evaluate the environment within the middle school, the school climate must be analyzed (Bulach & Malone, 1994).

With the recent publication “Quality Counts 2003” published in Education Week (January, 2003), the state where data was collected received a “D+” for school climate, and a “C-” for improving teacher quality. Teacher quality is based on state standards, teachers with degrees in their teaching area, and professional support and training opportunities for teachers. These low grades demonstrate a need for further analysis and evaluation to improve schools and meet the needs of the teachers.

The Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989) referred to the middle school as “the last best chance to make a difference” in the lives of early adolescents and made strong recommendations for restructuring education at the middle level (George & Alexander, 1993). Currently, the National Center for Educational Statistics stresses the importance of retaining qualified teachers (NCES, 2000). Districts must meet the needs of teachers and determine the reasons for teachers leaving certain schools: knowing such needs can lead to adjustments that may lead to limiting or reducing teacher transiency.

This study added to the limited research and knowledge of urban school climate within the middle school setting and explored why teachers look for alternative locations to teach. This study is resourceful in adding to the currently limited knowledge base regarding leadership style and school climate in the middle school. The next chapter will review research on school climate and leadership styles.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

This chapter will review pertinent literature associated with school climate, school leadership, and teacher transiency. The theoretical framework will be examined and related to the objective of this study. School climate and relating factors of school climate (i.e. teacher morale, leadership, school size, teacher cohesion) will be discussed. After the review of the school climate literature, the review will focus on the literature and research associated with leadership, leadership style, and specifically, Situational Leadership. Following the review related to leadership, teacher transiency and middle school literature will be examined. A summary of this review will conclude the chapter.

#### Contingency Theory

Contingency theory initially arose from the body of work concerning leadership and motivation (Beckford, 2000). The principal researcher of this psychology-based approach is Fiedler (1967) whose work suggested that the best leadership style depended upon the particular set of circumstances of the organization. Overall, Fiedler's work suggests that there is 'no one best way' of leading or managing.

According to Beckford (2000), “Contingency theory considers the organization systematically as an interacting network of functional elements bound together in pursuit of a common purpose” (p. 156). Each element is essential to the success of the organization and the needs of each element must be met within the organization. Contingency theory recognizes that the organization is contained within an environment with which it interacts – influencing and being influenced (Beckford, 2000).

Jackson (1991) developed a theoretical perspective for contingency theory based upon five ‘strategic contingencies’ which affect each other and influence the choice of organizational structure. The five contingencies are: goals, people, technical, managerial, and size. The contingency theory of organizations is designed to understand and represent the key associations that characterize relationships between the organization and its environment (Jackson, 1991). These contingencies can be understood in terms of the organizations need to survive and adapt in certain ways to survive in its changing environment.

Contingency theory is based on three main hypotheses. The first is that there is ‘no one best way’ to structure the activities in an organization in all circumstances (Jackson, 1991). This hypothesis goes against the traditional theories of management and human relations where the principles of management are applicable to all individuals and circumstances.

The second hypothesis is that certain contextual factors determine the nature of the structure due to the constraints they impose on the organization (Jackson, 1991). If the organization fails to adapt to the context (technology, environment, society, etc.) then

opportunities for the organization are lost and will influence the outcome of the organization.

The third hypothesis contends that due to circumstances (i.e., on the context), some form of organization structure is likely to be more effective. Due to the changing situations and contexts, it is important for leaders to examine each situation on an individual basis and respond appropriately to the organizational needs.

#### *Contingency Theory Subsystem*

Contingency theory involves five subsystems that influence one another and the organizational structure (Jackson, 1991). The five subsystems are the goal, the human, the technical, the size, and the environment. These five subsystems interact with the leader's perception of the situation and the decisions and actions the leader makes. The goal subsystem is closely inter-related with the internal organization. The choice of the goal will have an effect on the technical, human, and managerial aspects of the organization. In education, the goal subsystem would refer to the school's identified objectives and school improvement plan. These two documents determine the direction and planning for the school year.

The human subsystem relates to the status of the person in the organization. "Individuals are seen to possess certain needs that must be satisfied if they are to be attracted and encouraged to stay within the organization, and if they are to be motivated to give their best" (Jackson, 1991, p. 54). The human subsystem focuses on how teachers perceive their importance in the school and how they feel accepted and involved in the organizations goals and activities. The leader (principal) must identify each individual teacher's needs and work to fulfill the needs.

The third subsystem is the technical aspect of the organization. To get maximum efficiency from the employees, the technical subsystem examines what type of technology is available and what technology is needed to successfully complete the required task. Within relations to schools, do teachers have the equipment to analyze their student test scores, to minimize workload, to present information to other teachers? Technology has changed the face of education. Principals have to include technology in their school improvement plans and provide teachers with training on new software and equipment.

The size of the organization influences the principal's reactions to each choice and situation. Hickson, Pugh, and Pheysey (1969) examined how size influences the structure of the organization. They determined that increasing the size of the organization decreased centralization and communication, but increased structured activities. Jackson (1991) argued that size is a primary factor leaders need to take into account when designing organizations and planning activities. Additionally, the size of the school has been determined to influence the school's climate (Frieberg, 1998).

The final subsystem is environment. The survival of the organization depends upon some degree of change between the parties (Jackson, 1991). Different environmental conditions and different types of relationships will require different types of organizational structure and management (Burns and Stalker, 1961; Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967). Burns and Stalker (1961) emphasized the need for leaders to adjust the organizational structure and leadership response according to the nature of the environment being faced. Situational leadership theory, discussed later in this chapter,

emphasizes the need for the leader to identify the needs of the organization and adjust the leadership style to fit those needs.

Contingency theory of an organization is the center of mutual influence and interaction between the five subsystems. Donaldson (2001) pointed out that the focus of the contingency theory is the ability to explain the success or failure of the organization. The determination for whether the organization is effective is dependent upon the goals the organization has set and the level of success for the specific identified tasks. The assumption of this study is that positive school climate and constructive leadership inschools will decrease teacher transiency, thus having a positive impact on the school environment.

### *Leadership Effectiveness*

Leadership research has been primarily concerned with two major questions: (1) What personality factors determine whether an individual will become an effective leader? and (2) What are the personality attributes that characterize an effective leader? (Fiedler, 1964; 1967). This led researchers to identifying various clusters of leadership styles (i.e. autocratic versus democratic; task-oriented versus relation-oriented; self-oriented versus group-oriented) with each containing separate and unique attitudes and behaviors. However, all of these leadership styles have a crucial part in affecting group performance and outcomes (Fiedler, 1964).

The contingency theory of leadership effectiveness is based on the research of Fiedler (1951) in psychotherapeutic relations. The data from his earlier study showed that effective psychotherapists viewed their patients as similar to themselves. Fiedler suggested that individuals who perceive themselves similar to another person tend to feel



psychologically closer, more accepting, and can anticipate the likes and dislikes of that individual. Likert (1961) further supporting Fiedler's findings, indicated that supervisors who possess attitudes towards human-relations oriented increased work productivity. Additional research (Fiedler, 1954; 1962) on this problem showed that the prediction of group performance, based on the leader, attributes its effectiveness to how the leader operates. Thus, the leadership-effectiveness theory advanced by Fiedler (1964) suggested a theoretical explanation for the confusion that exists in the literature and the practical insights of many leaders. Contingency theory suggests that leadership is process (Hill, 1969). The ease to which the group responds to the leader is a function of the group's favorableness for the leader (Hill, 1969).

The empirical basis on which contingency theory was deduced includes over 50 studies of 21 different types of groups (Hill, 1969). Experiments comparing the performance of two types of leaders, democratic and autocratic, have shown that each is successful in some situations and not in others. The authoritarian leader is described as a person who dictates what has to be done and is unconcerned about group members' autonomy and development (Bass, 1990). The democratic leader shares the decision-making with their subordinates and is concerned about the subordinates need to contribute to the decision-making process (Bass, 1990). The democratic, group-oriented leader provides general rather than close supervision and is concerned with the effective use of human resources (Fiedler, 1986).

Another cluster of leadership style identified by researchers is the task-oriented versus the relation-oriented leader (Fiedler, 1964; 1967). In examining task-oriented leadership style it is important to clarify the task structure the leader may take to

determine the leadership style. Task structure refers to the process required to complete the task. Task structures with detailed procedures do not require much leadership while unstructured task (no set procedures) tend to have more than one correct solution (Fiedler, 1986). However, some situations exist in which the power of the leader can supersede the task structure (i.e. military). In searching for the most effective leadership style, Fiedler (1969) referred to his previous studies and investigated a wide variety of group and leadership situations (basketball teams, businesses, military units, creative groups, scientists).

By identifying successful or unsuccessful task completion with the effectiveness of the group performance and leadership style, Fiedler (1986) determined that the task-oriented leader performs best in situations in both extremes. The task-oriented leader can accomplish the group goals when he/she is in a position of a great deal of power and influence over the group and even when the situation does not provide the influence and power over group members.

Upon examining relationship-oriented leaders, Fiedler (1986) determined leaders tend to perform best in mixed situations where they have a moderate influence over the group. Relationship-oriented leaders focus on the emotional aspect of the group. These leaders are friendly and concerned about the emotional aspect of the group and want each group member to feel invited to participate in the decision-making process (Fiedler, 1986).

The actions and behavior of group members is contingent upon the actions and behavior of the leader. If the group generally agrees with the leader and has a good relationship with the leader, the members will have the tendency to follow the direction

of the leader. However, if the member is angry or does not like the leader, the individual may have the tendency to disagree with the leader. To complete the task successfully, the leader must adjust the leadership style to fit the needs and requirements of the group members individually.

Currently, contingency theory is used in managerial accounting (Covaleski, Dirsmith, & Samuel, 1996; Libby & Waterhouse, 1996); budget control (Ezzamel, 1990); manufacturing practices (Sim & Killough, 1998); cooperation sizing and down-sizing (Hoque & James, 2000); and military contexts (Duncan, LaFrance, & Ginter, 2003). Contingency theory could have been used to test situational demands and resulting leadership styles (Tarter & Hoy, 1998). Recently, Campbell, White, and Johnson (2003) utilized contingency theory to determine the level of communication between management and employees. The contingency theory has continued to be utilized by the business industry to determine the outcomes and projections for projects, software, hiring and firing of employees, and business directions. The military utilizes contingency theory in planning and evaluating war strategies and methods. Regardless of the organization, be it military, business, service, or education, the process is the same (Tarter & Hoy, 1998).

When working and dealing with human behavior, numerous factors impact the emotions, lives, and results of the organization (Argyris, 1957). No prediction or estimation of the extent of the impact is accurate. Individuals are ever changing, evolving, and so must the theory and research (Donaldson, 2001). It appears that the numerous factors that impact leadership also impact the factors of school climate (Argyris, 1957). Each factor of school climate can have an unperceived reaction on other

school climate factors. In the next section of this chapter, school climate and some of the major factors (e.g. teacher cohesion, respect, discipline, student achievement, community/parent relations) will be examined.

### School Climate

In 2001, Education Week published their annual “Quality Counts” report. Out of the thirty-five participating states, eleven states (31.4%) obtained a failing grade in school climate. The participating state had a score of 49% and placed second to last in school climate analysis. Education Week uses class size, parental involvement, and student engagement of the previous year to determine the states school climate score. Currently, there is a rejuvenated effort to examine and improve school climate (Bulach, Booth, & Michael, 1999; Sweetland & Hoy, 2000).

A major obstacle to overcome when researching school climate is the lack of a single definition. Further, the construct of school climate is complicated by the numerous factors that impact it. There are various definitions of school climate with some focusing on the outcome of a positive school climate, while others focus on the affective nature of school climate. Following are several definitions of school climate:

1. Halpin and Croft (1963) used this analogy to define school climate:  
“Personality is to the individual what “climate” is to the organization” (p.1).
2. Howell and Grahlan (1978) define school climate as the result of the promotion of satisfactory and productive experiences, with a sensitivity towards human needs.

3. Schmuck (1982) defined school climate as the soul of a school with different schools expressing tones of feeling that are important and distinguished. These interpersonal relationships (vibrations) within the school compose the school's climate.
4. Andriga and Fustin (1991) examined the definition of school climate through the teachers' perspective. Teachers defined a positive school climate as containing high expectations, strong sense of belonging, continuous recognition, strong academic mission, and professional collegiality among the staff.
5. Freiberg and Stein (1999) summed up the nature of school climate as a construct. They stated, "School climate is the heart and soul of a school. It is about the essence of a school that leads a child, a teacher, an administrator, a staff member to love the school and to look forward to being there each school day" (p. 11).

While researchers vary on a clear definition for school climate, the basic definition supported through the research is anything that may make an impression or impact on the individuals, whether in school or out influences the school climate. For the purpose of this study, Freiberg and Stein's (1999) definition of school climate will be used: "School climate is the heart and soul of a school. It is about the essence of a school that leads a child, a teacher, an administrator, a staff member to love the school and to look forward to being there each school day" (p. 11).

As demonstrated through the difficulty in identifying a single definition for school climate, this subject is complex. Argyris (1957) summed up the complexity of studying

human behavior within schools that can be applied to the complexities of studying school climate. Studying human behavior in schools as in any organization, involves “ordering and conceptualizing a buzzing confusion of simultaneously existing, multilevel, mutually interacting variables” (Argyris, 1957, p. 501). When evaluating school climate, researchers must examine multi-levels of interaction among individuals within the school (e.g. parents, administration, teachers, and students) while focusing in on the numerous factors that make-up the school climate (e.g. teacher cohesion and morale, respect, discipline, student achievement, community/parent relations).

The purpose of the next section of the chapter is to explore previous research conducted in the area of school climate from 1960 to present. After addressing earlier literature reviews concerned with school climate, tools that have been used to measure school climate are addressed, and then different factors that effect school climate are identified and described with a discussion of the relevant literature for each of the factors.

### Previous School Climate Literature Reviews

Anderson completed the first significant review of school climate in 1982. Anderson (1982) summed up school climate research by suggesting the need for researchers to improve school climate models rather than adding to the already long list of separate variables. Anderson explored the reasoning behind researchers frustration in examining school climate research by presenting three theories, the Albatross theory, the Unicorn theory and the Phoenix theory. The basis of the Albatross theory is that there are too many variables that are involved in school climate making it nearly impossible to evaluate and examine. Haller and Strike (1979) clearly articulated this criticism: “It is

unclear, for example, why (much less how) an administrator or policy-maker might go about changing an organization's climate" (p. 236).

Dreeben (1968) further supported the Albatross theory by noting how much of student learning is an unplanned result of the school or classroom. A great deal of a student's education includes the learning that occurs outside of the classroom. Bloom (1976) distinguished between the manifest curriculum, which involves the educational objectives and goals, and the latent curriculum, which is based on the values the students acquire and the role the students are expected to portray. In education, there is more taught in school than what policy makers have determined as the set curriculum. This supports the Albatross theory that one cannot control all of the variables impacting or influencing the outcomes. The Albatross theory addresses the frustration that many perceive as they are faced with the prospect of studying the school's climate.

The Unicorn theory addresses the difficulties in evaluating school climate due to the excessive number of variables that impact school climate. Anderson (1982) identified school climate as a desirable focus of study, but one that is unattainable. Many of these variables are "so overwhelming that some researchers have given up the search for school climate as a holistic entity" (p. 371). Meyer (1980) and Deal and Celotti (1980) recommend that researchers narrow the focus of school climate research to one particular classroom since the possibility of studying the effect of school climate within the school as a whole is doomed to failure.

A more optimistic theory is the Phoenix theory. This theory is based on the failure of earlier studies to find significant results based on poor models, wrong variables, or inadequate measurements. Phoenix theory supporters view school climate research as

both possible and desirable (Wilson, 1980; Brookover & Lezotte, 1979). Anderson (1982) claims that the contradiction of earlier school climate studies (i.e. Flagg, 1964; Feldvebel, 1964) is due to improper measurement tools that were used and an inadequate look at the variables' impact on school climate. "These more optimistic researchers, then, view school climate as the Phoenix, born of the ashes of the past school effects research" (Anderson, 1982, p. 372).

Anderson's review also examined the historical background of school climate with its beginnings in the business context and within the college context. Argyris (1957) identified the pervasive influences of an organizational environment, particularly on employee morale, productivity, and turnover during his case study of interpersonal relations within a bank. The development of the Organizational Climate Descriptive Questionnaire (OCDQ) by Halpin and Croft (1963) relied heavily on Halpin's earlier work on leader behavior in organizations (e.g. businesses). The Organizational Climate Index (OCI) was developed by Stern (1961) for use in business organizations to measure a series of environmental variables, including some measuring of college environments.

School climate studies also became prevalent in colleges. Colleges began to measure their environment with the development of the College Characteristics Index (CCI) by Pace and Stern (1958) with a parallel instrument, the Activities Index (AI). Additional adaptations to the CCI were developed to produce the College Characteristics Analysis and the College and University Environmental Scales (Stern, 1961).

In the late 1960s, several researchers began to focus on the measurement of classroom climates (Moos, 1974; Walberg, 1969). With the development of the OCDQ



by Halpin and Croft (1963), researchers began to focus on elementary and secondary schools (Brown & House, 1967; Andrews, 1965). According to Brown and House (1967), over 100 studies using the OCDQ were completed from 1963 to 1967. Further developments in school climate instruments ensued (see Appendix A).

Anderson (1982) organized a table of various school climate research based on their ecology, milieu, social system, and culture. Anderson's literature review has become a seminal review that is continually cited within the school climate literature.

In addition to Anderson's review, researchers in school climate agree that there are numerous variables (e.g. teacher efficacy, leadership, collegiality, student achievement, parental involvement) in and out of school that have an impact on the school climate (Breckenridge, 1976; Deitrich & Bailey, 1996; Dusseau, 1997). Researchers, such as Anderson (1982), Good and Brophy (1986), and Freiberg (1998), agree that school climate can have a positive or negative effect on student's education and perception of school. The next section of this literature review will describe the factors that researchers have examined in determining a school's climate.

### School Climate Factors

Researchers, from a variety of perspectives, have studied school climate by examining different factors. School climate, for example, may be viewed as the simple physical attributes of the building (air conditioning, heating, appearance, etc.) or may be seen to encompass all aspects of the school building. Andringa and Fustin (1991), through the study of 44 teachers who collaborated to solve problems, identified school climate using factors of high student expectations, a sense of identity and belonging,

student recognition, a clear academic mission, and professional collegiality among the staff. Previously, Flagg (1964) discovered school climate to be related to school size, teacher turnover, and principal characteristics. Dusseau (1997) listed twelve constructs of school climate with the vision of the school leader as number one. Good and Brophy (1986) identified the teacher impact on a student's learning ability with further emphasis placed on the student's age, achievement level, and class size as impacting a student's success.

School climate continues to be a major area of research among educational researchers today (Dusseau, 1997; Good & Brophy, 1986; Freiberg, 1998; and Hall & George, 1999) and continues to be different and complex in the number of factors that impact school climate. In order to understand how factors can each individually impact the climate within a school, the following section focuses on the literature associated with common factors associated with school climate: physical attributes of the school, school size, parental and community involvement, teacher cohesion and morale, diversity, at-risk behavior, and leadership. An additional area of focus is on the literature associated with transiency, diversity, and at-risk behaviors as these factors are associated with school climate in urban schools (Olafson, Bendixen, Tirella, and Espozito, 2001).

#### *Physical Attributes of the School*

The look and the feel of the school have a direct impact on the manner in which the school is seen by the community and respected by the students. Freiberg (1998) stated, "The climate of a school can be set by what happens in the common area, the playground, the hallways – and the infamous cafeteria" (p.3). Students need a place in

which they feel safe and comfortable to learn, and this place should be within a school building.

Kelly, Brown, Butler, Gittens, Taylor, and Zeller, (1998) stated “A school’s inviting exterior and cheerful, warm interior set the tone for an environment in which both parents and students felt welcomed and wanted” (p.1). Kelly et al. (1998) encourages schools to have aesthetic attributes within the school to satisfy minds, not overwhelm them. Decorated and clean painted walls, healthy plants, Welcome signs, and school personnel excited to be within the school building impact the learning environment. Students need to be educated in learning environments that are safe, welcoming, and aesthetically pleasing. For many students in today’s schools, learning environments are less than adequate.

There is a stark contrast between what is known to be an adequate physical environment and the actual conditions of schools. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2000) reported the average age of public school buildings is 42 years. With the increase in student population and overcrowding in schools, districts across the country are scrambling to find adequate funding to handle the crisis of properly educating today’s students housed in buildings that are safe and modernized. In 1996, Education World reported, “Schools built during the baby boom period were built when the idea was to get them up cheap and fast” (p. 1). Further, NCES (1999) reported that, “Almost half (45%) of US public schools were built between 1950 and 1969” (p. 1). With the buildings built prior to 1950 coming into a time of major renovations, districts are being additionally pressed for funds to renovate the shabby construction of schools between 1950 and 1969. With the lack of funding necessary to renovate and rebuild schools to

handle the overcrowding and school facilities in need of repair, districts are seeking alternative solutions. In the meantime, physical attributes of school buildings will have a negative impact on school climate.

### *School Size*

School size can be an important determinant of school climate. According to Freiberg (1998), “Even the size of the school and the opportunities for students and teachers to interact in small groups both formally and informally add to or detract from the health of the learning environment” (Freiberg, 1998, 1). The Carnegie Council of Adolescent Development (1989) identified elementary schools with more than 200 to 350 students and middle or high schools with 400 to 500 students as hosting potentially unhealthy effects, noticeably more prominent in vulnerable students.

Cotton (1995) reviewed 103 documents that identified relationships between school size and aspects of schooling. Cotton discovered that attitudes, behavior problems, attendance, dropout rate, and extra-curricular participation were related to school size. For example, within smaller schools, students were known personally by at least one faculty or staff member. This acknowledgement allowed the student to have an adult to seek out for advice. In larger schools, not every student is known by staff members thereby creating a feeling of isolation within the school.

Glidden (1999) identified school size as a prime factor in identifying breakthrough schools. In Glidden’s study, breakthrough schools were defined as schools with high achievement, high poverty, and were below the district average for school size. This finding supports the idea that smaller schools provide greater communication among staff members and leads to easier management of the student population.

Through the evaluation of school-size literature, it is clear that all students benefit from being in smaller schools (i.e. reduced class size, access to extra-curricular activities, improvement in social behaviors, increase in academic achievement). Conant's (1963) idea of an adequate large high school (300 to 400 students) would be considered a small school by today's standards.

In response to growing populations, school administrators are trying to discover ways to include all students. Shore (1995) identified a school that built programs to connect with students on a personal basis. Shore identified these schools as attempting to include all students in the educational process and providing them a voice within the school. Purkey and Novak (1996) described in their research how students feel discouraged with school by being overlooked: "These students suffered from a 'caring disability'; not enough educators cared to invite them to participate in school life" (p.14). Students have a strong desire to belong.

Within large schools, increasing numbers of students are not included in the school functions, activities, and often remain nameless through their education career. Schoggen and Schoggen (1988) reported, "Although the small school does not provide such a wealth of activities, the average student has a better experience as measured by the amount of involvement in the available activities" (p. 292).

Smaller schools provide students with greater teacher/staff involvement in which the students feel as if they can provide value and impact school decisions. Smaller school size provides greater student involvement in activities and extra-curricular programs. School size impacts student achievement and how they perceive school; hence, school climate is affected.

### *Parental and Community Involvement*

Positive school climate requires the active collaboration of everyone involved, including parents and the community. Researchers have long encouraged parental involvement in education (Powell, 1989; US Department of Education, 1994). Bulach and Malone (1994) concluded the parent and community involvement is significant factor and is relevant to student achievement. Shurr (1992) claimed that when parents are involved in their child's education, student achievement improves. Shurr (1992) encouraged schools to promote the school building as a place that is comfortable for parents and community members to visit and to feel accepted and welcomed.

Seefeldt, Denton, Galper, and Youoszai (1998) advocated that parents become involved with their child's education. "If parent beliefs influence child outcomes ... those who believe their children are at-risk academically may be motivated to take part in parent involvement activities of the school" (p. 342). Kaplan (1997) encouraged teachers to break the communication gap and explain the methods and reasoning to parents and community members. "Parents have the prerogative to direct their children's upbringing and education" (p.35). These two researchers maintained that parental involvement in a child's education can make a difference between success and failure in school.

Bradley (1995) stated that criticism of education often evolves from community concerns and misunderstandings. To avoid these societal problems, Kaplan (1997) recommended that educators "listen to parents' questions with open minds, welcoming parental involvement without being patronizing or defensive" (p. 38). Parents faced with an unwelcome school may become discouraged and uninvolved in their child's school (Fine, 1993). The unwelcome school may affect the parent's perception of the quality of

education the students are receiving, and result in dysfunctional communication between parents and teachers, thus impacting school climate.

Griffith (1997) reported parent satisfaction and student enjoyment are based, in part, on group perceptions of how well the school functions overall. These perceptions evolved from the school informing and empowering parents regarding their child's education. With open communication between the parents and the school, and open schools, allowing parents to visit their child's classroom, parent perception and reflection on the school climate.

White and Matz (1992) compared the school to a three-legged stool with each leg holding equal importance within the school climate. One leg represents the parents, a second the community, and the third leg the school. With one leg missing, the chair topples over. The way in which the office staff greet and assist visitors to the school, the communication between the school and the parents, and initiating parental involvement are all-important components of school climate (Vattertot, 1994; Shurr, 1992; White & Matz, 1992).

Schools need the support of parents and community members to be successful in accomplishing the school mission and goals. With positive school climate, parents feel as if they have a say and impact on their child's education. Open discussions between parents, teachers, and other school personnel prosper. Positive school climate requires the active participation of every individual involved in the educational process – this includes the parents and community. As the research shows, through partnership between parents and school personnel, school climate can be improved.

### *Teacher Cohesion and Morale*

In working to build a positive school climate, teachers need to be included and feel as if they are an important part of influencing change within a school (Riehl & Sipple, 1996). Much like students, teachers need to feel their contributions to the school are valued and respected, and these perceptions have an impact on school climate. For example, Riehl and Sipple (1996) evaluated the data from a 1987-1988 National Center for Education Statistics Schools and Staffing Survey and found that “school climate variables were the most strongly associated with professional commitment” (Riehl & Sipple, 1996, p. 883). Teachers of academic subjects were less committed to the goals and values of the school. However, “teachers’ goal commitment was strongly associated with general school climate characteristics” (p. 883). A number of teacher characteristics, such as morale, collaboration, and leadership, are associated with school climate.

Teacher morale is related to a cooperative atmosphere. Smith and Scott (1990), for example, suggested that schools with teachers who cooperate with each other also have students who work cooperatively. Bryke and Driscoll (1988) found that in communally organized schools, morale is higher among staff, teacher absenteeism is lower, and teachers express a higher satisfaction with their work. In other words, teachers and staff members need to feel a sense of belonging and friendship when working among their peers. As the friendship develops, a bond is formed to improve the work place, thereby improving the school climate.

Sargeant's (1967) research findings identified staff position, teacher satisfaction, and perceived school effectiveness to be associated with differences in climate type.



Watkins (1968) found climate type related to school and staff size, staff accountability, and staff position. When the staff size is large, staff members have less opportunity to interact with their colleagues. Within smaller school communities, opportunities for collaboration (teacher-developed projects and student-developed projects) can lead to increased cohesiveness among teachers.

Associated with teacher morale and cooperation is the idea of teacher leadership. In addition to the primary role that administrators play in directing school climate, there is strong evidence to suggest that teacher leaders also have an impact on school climate (Berry & Ginsberg, 1990; Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1988; Whitaker, 1995). Hall (1988) identified the importance of teacher leaders and their influence on other teachers and the school climate. Hall identifies the teacher leaders with negative characteristics as “poisonous mushrooms” as they can destroy the positive climate within a school. The perception and guidance of a leader within a school environment is what provides the teachers with the direction and inspiration to continue to strive for excellence. In other words, the administrator must value and support the activities of teacher leaders if they are to be successful.

It is important for teacher leaders to be involved in school decision-making. Research has been done in this field by Herriott and Firestone (1984), Schneider (1985), Mohram, Cooke, and Mohram (1978), and Taylor and Bogarch (1994). Through these various studies, decision-making has been defined as bi-dimensional involving classroom instruction, managerial issues, salary and grievances, and the latest technology dimension. Taylor and Tashakkori (1994) maintain that several researchers have

indicated that teacher participation is positively linked to job satisfaction and to greater feelings of efficacy for teachers.

Teachers that preceive high morale and acceptance within the work place will work cooperatively with other staff members to improve school climate. School climate can improve through the assistance of the teachers, and when the teachers are a part of the decision making process (Watkins, 1968).

### *Diversity*

Each student and staff member who becomes a part of the school community brings with them unique cultural and philosophical differences. School leaders need to be aware of these differences and build the school climate by emphasizing this uniqueness in an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding. In fact, Jensen and Kiley (2001) encouraged schools to examine diversity when considering school climate. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (1997), racial and ethnic diversity has increased substantially in the United States in the last two decades. In 1995, 67% of U.S. children ages 5-17 were white, 15% were black, 13% were Hispanic, and 5% were Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian, and Alaskan Native. Between 2000 and 2020, the number of minority children aged 5-17 is projected to grow faster than the number of white children. The relationship between diversity and school climate is clear: "Differences in climate or in the distribution of resources between high and low poverty schools have a disproportionate impact on minorities, as racial/ethnic minorities are far more likely to attend high poverty schools" (NCES, 1997, p. 12). Crosby (1999) identified the change in populations in American schools since World War II as he

researched the population change impacting education. This drastic change in the population brings additional challenges for teachers and school personnel.

According to Adger and Locke (2000) “Language minority students, in particular, may face obstacles resulting from a mismatch between their language and culture and the language and culture of the school, and from the school system’s difficulty in addressing their academic needs appropriately” (p. 1). Due to the demographic changes that effect education, Williams (1991) encouraged teachers to seek guidance and put in the effort to help children negotiate differences between how things are done at home and how they are done at school.

The NCES (1997) further noted that teachers in high poverty schools report that student misbehavior (e.g., noise, horseplay, or fighting in the halls, cafeteria or student lounge) in their school interfered with their teaching. These types of student misbehavior are similar to climate factors identified by Hall and George (1999). The incidents that occur in-between classes, at lunch, and in the public spaces of the school may carry throughout the students’ day and affect other classes. For example, when a student is punished or humiliated within one classroom, that student may be focused on the problem throughout the remainder of the day and does not learn or participate as required in the other classrooms.

The demographics in many schools are changing. The percentage of children from minority backgrounds is increasing, as is the percentage of children who have difficulty speaking English (NCES, 1997). When examining school climate, schools must be cautious and informed about the culture and lifestyle from which their student population is derived.

### *At-Risk Behavior*

Since June 1999, the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Secret Service has been working together to understand and ultimately prevent school shootings in America (Vossekuil, Reddy, & Fein, 2001). The development of Threat Assessments in Schools Guide was provided to schools to assist in identifying and preventing school violence. A major portion of the guide, chapter two, is focused on creating positive school climates where students feel safe. Schools must foster respect between staff and students, create connections between adults and students, and provide outlets for students to “break the code of silence.” Clearly, at-risk behavior of adolescents, including violence, is on the national agenda.

Urban schools are now located in communities where vandalism, drug abuse, poverty, and unemployment are commonplace, creating an environment in which adolescents are increasingly at risk (Crosby, 1999). Hafner, Ingels, Schneider, Stevenson, and Owings (1990) identified “at-risk” students as these who possess one or more characteristics associated with educational disadvantage or school failure. Using data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988-A profile of the American Eighth Grader students were identified as at-risk if they:

- (a) came from a single parent home or with an annual income less than \$15,000,
- (b) were home alone more than three hours a day,
- (c) had parents or siblings who dropped out of school, or
- (d) were not proficient in English. (Hafner et al., 1990)

According to the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1989), one of four American youth are at-risk for reaching adulthood without the necessary

requirements to meet the demands of the workplace, personal commitments, and the responsibilities of society. They reported that 7 million of the 28 million adolescents, ages 10-17, were at serious risk for school failure, substance abuse, unprotected sex, with another 7 million at moderate risk. Hafner et al. (1990) reported that students with two or more risk factors were six times likely as students without the risk factors to fail or drop out of school.

Recently, Glidden (1999) conducted a study of low-income schools within Wichita Public Schools that perform as high-income schools. The study identified three major factors that the breakthrough schools had in common: school climate, school size, and leadership style. The principals for these at-risk schools identified common school climate aspects that must be in place for the students to feel accepted and encouraged to achieve.

- The identification of high expectations for all students (with no exceptions).
- Emphasis on high levels of involvement by teachers in all aspects of planning, organizing, and development of staff accountability.
- A written campus-improvement plan that is public information for parents, students, and staff.
- An atmosphere in the school that is both businesslike and accepting. All of the principals emphasized that their school was the safest and most inviting location in the community for many of their students (Glidden, 1999, p. 24).

At-risk schools in particular must provide a safe learning environment in which students feel comfortable and accepted (Williams, 1991; Baker, 1998). One way to accomplish this is to involve students in creating an atmosphere of tolerance and

understanding. For example, Killian and Williams (1995) reported that “school climate is affected dramatically when students learn to resolve conflicts through communication rather than violence” (p. 46). Schimel (1997) expanded on this concept, maintaining that students who assist in creating the rules are more likely to internalize the rules. The concept of student shared decision-making and its impact on school climate is not a new area of research (e.g., Duke & Berry, 1978; Cox, 1978; Beane, 1979). Specifically, both Breckendridge (1976) and Urich and Batchelder (1979) indicated that the climate itself was improved when students were involved in the decision making process.

For school wide rules and regulations, Deitrich and Bailey (1996) identified the importance for students to understand the “historical traditions and behavioral expectations” at the beginning of each school year (p. 19). In addition, “The staff works with students to defuse conflicts by building a sense of community within the school” (p. 19), and providing a sense of resolution for the students to apply outside of the school walls.

Students in at-risk schools need to feel appreciated and valued. At-risk schools administrators and teachers need to work cooperatively and quickly to provide these students with a positive school climate. When all participants in the educational program work to assist the at-risk students to achieve and build a sense of community, school will become a desired place to attend.

### *Leadership*

Leadership has been the focus of school climate since the beginning of climate research (Flagg, 1964; Feldvebel, 1964). Studies have shown that the leadership of the administration has a major impact on the school climate (Winter & Sweeney, 1994;

Taylor & Tashakkori, 1994, Maxwell & Thomas, 1991; Whitaker, 1995). Others suggest that the principal is the real and symbolic head of the school (Lortie, 1975; Hall, 1988). Senge (1995) identifies the principal as the person with the greatest impact who see their role as creating an environment where teachers can learn. Principals must build a positive morale to build a positive school climate (Senge, 1995).

Winter and Sweeney (1994) identified principal support at the top of the list for shaping school climate. The principal directs and guides the staff within a school to have a positive or negative environment. The principal has the responsibility of balancing teachers' needs for support with the additional demands from parents and community (Winter & Sweeney, 1994). The principal needs to encourage all education participants (teachers, students, parents, and community) to have an equal involvement in the educational process.

Krajewski (1996) described the demands on a principal by stating: "the principal is and always has been expected to be the initiator, the energizer, the facilitator, the visionary – in short, the leader of the school" (p. 3). The principal must identify the climate of the school, the areas that need to be improved to raise school climate, and have the vision to accomplish the goals set. The principal is a key factor necessary to lead and direct the staff and school community to improve school climate (Berry & Ginsberg, 1990; Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1988; Whitaker, 1995). The leader of the school must assume primary responsibility for encouraging and directing the improvement of school climate.

Leadership plays a powerful role in the teachers' perceptions of their supervisor and within their work location enhancing the principal's role in the shaping of the

school's climate. Sweeney's (1992) synthesis of effective principal behaviors identified support as one of six important principal behaviors that made a difference. Using teacher interviews, Winter and Sweeney (1994) identified five types of administrative support that affect school climate: recognizing achievement, backing up teachers, encouraging teachers, caring, and administering school rules fairly.

Encouraging teachers remains a key element in the positive-climate equation. It gives teachers pride in their own work and the knowledge of being an important member of the organization. Teachers appreciate principals who encourage them to try new things. "Leadership is ... a two-way process and it was equally apparent that the behaviors of the leaders were also in part a product of the school environment and interactions with others" (Dinham, Cairney, Craigie, & Wilson, 1995, p. 51). Thus, it is essential when analyzing the influence of leadership styles to be reflective of the demands that particular style places on the teachers, along with the rewards the teachers receive.

The identification of the principal's leadership style is beneficial for teachers to understand. They can then learn effective techniques for communication depending on principals' leadership style (Hall, Rutherford, Hord, & Huling, 1984). As teachers learn to identify and respond to different leadership styles, communication lines open between the administration and the needs of the faculty. It is essential for teachers to learn how to identify and respond to the various leadership styles. The leader needs to be honest and clear in describing their position and keeping to the identified role, he has identified (Tannenbaum & Schmidt, 1958). Many work relationship problems occur due to a lack of clear instructions and the failure to identify the needs of the teachers. This is further



complicated by an incorrect interpretation of the administrative needs by the teachers, and the teachers' perception of not being valued by the administration (Tannenbaum & Schmidt, 1958).

"The profile of school climate is a snapshot of the school at a given point in time" (Hoy, Hoffman, Sabo, & Bliss, 1996, 56). The picture does not explain why things appear the way they are. The picture provides a snapshot at what exists of that exact moment in time. This study will examine how teachers' perceive their schools climate and their principal's leadership style.

As identified in the previous literature, leadership has a major influence on school climate. The principal influences the outcome of school climate and how teachers perceive the climate within their school. The physical attributes and cleanliness of the school (Kelly et al., 1998), parental and community involvement (Shurr, 1992), and school size (Cotton, 1995) provide a welcoming or discouraging atmosphere to those entering the school. Additionally, teacher interaction with other teachers (Riehl & Sipple, 1996) the school leadership (Hoy, et al., 1996), and how the teachers respond to the students diverse needs (Jensen & Kiley, 2001) enhances or lowers the school climate that is felt by all who attend, work, or visit the school. The next section of this paper examines leadership research and leadership styles.

### Leadership

Just as school climate is difficult to define, leadership theory is continually changing. Pfeffer (1977) noted that the many definitions of leadership are "ambiguous." This is complicated further by social influences blurring the exact definition of

leadership. Spitzberg (1986) suggested that the meaning of leadership may depend on the kind of institution (i.e. large/small, public/private, elementary/high school) in which it is located.

Leadership can be broadly defined as the relationship between an individual and a group built around some common interest wherein the group behaves in a manner directed or determined by the leader. Burns (1978) noted the definition of leadership remains “one of the most observed and the least understood phenomena on earth” (p. 2). According to Rejai & Phillips (1997), “no universally accepted definition or conception of leadership has emerged” (p. 1). Some of the various leadership definitions are:

1. Leadership is “the behavior of an individual.... directing the activities of a group toward a shared goal” (Hemphill & Coons, 1957, p. 7).
2. Leadership is “the process of influencing the activities of an organized group toward goal achievement” (Rauch & Behling, 1984, p. 528).
3. Leadership is the process of making sense of what people are doing together so that people will understand and be committed (Drath & Palus, 1994, p. 4).
4. Leadership is about articulating visions, embodying values, and creating the environment within which things can be accomplished (Richards & Engle, 1986, p. 206).

Leadership in a public school setting is the result of the way principals use themselves to create a school climate that is characterized by staff productivity, student productivity, and creative thought (Ubben & Hughes, 1987). Consequently, the principal's qualities and behavior determine to a large degree how the subordinates feel

about their organization (Dinham & Scott, 1998). A particular leadership style may either foster or hinder teacher commitment. For the purpose of this study, the leadership definition by Hemphill and Coons (1957) will be used.

Likert (1967) suggested that leadership is a relative process in that leaders must take into account the expectations, values, and interpersonal skills of those with whom they are interacting. A number of studies have explored the relationship between the leadership style of principals and teachers' commitment to the school. Tarter, Sabo, and Hoy (1995) and Hoy and Koppersmith (1985) indicated that in order to build strong teacher commitment, principals must provide strong, directive leadership in setting and developing school goals, creating a unity of purpose, facilitating communication, and managing instruction.

Halpin and Croft (1963) introduced landmark research in organizational climate with their development of the Organizational Climate Descriptive Questionnaire. In their historical study of the organizational climate of schools, Halpin and Croft (1963) conceived climate as being either open or closed, developing six types along a continuum: open, autonomous, controlled, familiar, paternal, and closed. These climate types were based on various degrees of four teacher-related factors: hindrance, intimacy, disengagement, and esprit; and on four principal-teacher relations factors: production emphasis, aloofness, consideration, and trust.

An *open* climate, for example, is characterized by low hindrance, low disengagement, average intimacy and high esprit of teachers; and low aloofness, low production emphasis, and high trust and consideration of the principal. By contrast, a *closed* climate is characterized by high disengagement, high hindrance, low esprit, and

average intimacy of teachers. Within the *closed* climate, principals exhibit high aloofness, high production emphasis, and high trust. In essence, the degree of openness of a school climate is the result of the quality of human interactions in the school.

As recently as 1996, Hoy and his colleagues identified the neglect of middle schools in organizational climate studies. “Once it was decided to conceive of middle school climate in the terms of openness of principal and teacher behavior, a strategy to generate items to measure climate became clear” (Hoy, Hoffman, Sabo, & Bliss, 1996, p. 42). Hoy et al. (1996) developed the Organizational Climate Descriptive Questionnaire – Revised Middle (OCDQ-RM) to identify three factors that capture principal-teacher interactions. They are identified as Supportive, Directive, and Restrictive behaviors. Additionally, Collegial, Committed, and Disengaged behaviors are used to identify and describe teacher-teacher interactions.

As this survey is related to the OCDQ by Halpin and Croft (1963), it identifies the open and closed climate within the school. Figure 1 identifies the typology of middle school climates as identified by Hoy, Hoffman, Sabo, and Bliss (1996).

		Principal Behavior	
		Open	Closed
Teacher Behavior	Open	Open climate	Engaged climate
	Closed	Disengaged climate	Closed climate

Figure 1

The *open* climate demonstrates a principal who is supportive of his/her teachers' suggestions and actions. In an open climate the principal "gives freedom to teachers to act and does not supervise closely" while the principal tries to not burden the teachers with bureaucratic affairs or busy work (Hoy, Hoffman, Sabo, & Bliss, 1996, p. 52). When the faculty and the administration are both open in their respect for one another, the results are a warm committed environment.

The *engaged* climate enhances teachers' collaboration and achievement in accomplishing set goals. The principal hinders this environment by not supporting the teachers in their actions, not shielding the teachers from outside interference (i.e. bureaucratic burdens or busy work), and closely supervising the teaching performance. "Although teacher-principal relations are closed, the faculty has open teacher interactions with both their students and colleagues" (Hoy, Hoffman, Sabo, & Bliss, 1996, p. 52). This faculty is engaged in professional work and is dedicated to the students.

*Disengaged* climate has a supportive principal who provides the staff with professional courtesy to accomplish their goals and objectives. The principal is open to meet with the staff and attempts to keep bureaucratic influences to a minimum. However, "faculty members are indifferent to each other and the principal" (Hoy, Hoffman, Sabo, & Bliss, 1996, p. 53). Disengaged teachers do not go out of their way to assist students or fellow teachers, and "they are prone to sabotage actions of peers as well as those of the principal" (Hoy, Hoffman, Sabo, & Bliss, 1996, p. 53).

The climate of a *closed* school is unpleasant for the administration, teachers, students, and community members. In a closed climate, "the principal distrusts the actions and motives of the faculty, does not support teachers, is rigid and authoritarian,

and is perceived as burying the faculty in needless paperwork” (Hoy, Hoffman, Sabo, & Bliss, 1996, p. 53). The controlling behavior of the principal is further influenced by an apathetic, self-centered, and uncaring faculty. In essence, the behavior of the teachers and principal are guarded and closed. This climate is destructive to the learning process for the students who are required to attend this kind of school.

Halpin and Croft’s (1963) work examined the influence of principal behavior through teachers’ perspectives, and additional researchers (Dinham, Cairney, Craigie, & Wilson, 1995; Spitzberg, 1986; Pfeffer, 1977) have continued the examination of many facets of leadership through the eyes of the teacher. For example, Sylvia and Hutchinson (1985) remarked that the motivation of teachers is considerably based on the teachers’ perceptions of their relationship with their supervisors. The principal is an integral part of the climate of the school. As the cause and effect relationship impacts the relationships at work, the principal is being influenced and influencing the school and all who enter the school building (Dinham, Cairney, Craigie, & Wilson, 1995). The next section of the literature review focuses specifically on the style of the leader.

### Leadership Styles

Leadership is typically defined as the “process of influencing the activities of an individual or group in efforts toward goal accomplishment” (Hersey, Blanchard, & Natemeyer, 1979, p. 418). In education, the principal is the key to an effective or ineffective school (Blanchard, Zigarmi, & Zigarmi, 1987). The principal is the key individual to the school’s ability to react to situations and goals that determine the future of the school.

Leadership is an influencing process (Blanchard, Zigarmi, & Zigarmi, 1987). The principal is influenced by the demands of higher administrators and further influences the staff by his/her decisions in the school. Any time an individual tries to influence the behavior of another individual, the individual doing the influencing is engaging in the act of leadership. The act can be a silent form of influence through mentoring and role modeling or through manipulation. Leadership is working with people to accomplish a specific goal. The process by which a goal is accomplished is a result a particular leadership style.

Leadership in a school setting is the result of the way principals use their skills and abilities to create a school climate that is characterized by staff productivity, student productivity, and creative thought (Ubben & Hughes, 1987). Consequently, the principal's qualities and behavior determine to a large degree how the subordinates feel about their organization (Eblen, 1987). A particular leadership style may either foster or hinder teacher commitment. Thus, this section will focus on the prominent leadership styles within leadership literature that led to the development of the Situational Leader (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982a).

Throughout the years, numerous leadership styles have been identified. For example, The Ohio State Study identified the leader in two categories: (1) consideration and (2) initiating structure. Later, McGregor's (1966) Theory X and Y influenced the development of Ouchi's (1981) Theory Z. Additional leadership styles also became prevalent in leadership literature, such as, autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership; transformational or transitional leadership. All of these leadership styles

contributed to the development of what Hersey and Blanchard (1969) called Situational Leadership.

The Ohio State University has long been a leading-edge authority on management and leadership. The Ohio State studies began in 1945 to identify the dimensions of leadership behavior. The staff of The Ohio State created a Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) designed to discover how leaders carry out their activities. Questions focused on two elements of leadership. The first element was tagged “Initiating Structure” and deals with Task Behavior, focusing on production issues. The second element, “Consideration for Workers,” focused on the human side of the business and was identified as Relationship Behavior.

The seminal research at The Ohio State University directed leadership researchers in examining the leaders behavior and style. The leadership studies at The Ohio State University (Stogdill, 1962) ultimately suggested that leaders exhibiting consideration and initiating structure behaviors can be grouped into four quadrants (see Figure 2).

QUADRANT III High Consideration and Low Initiating Structure	QUADRANT II High Consideration and High Initiating Structure
QUADRANT IV Low Consideration and Low Initiating Structure	QUADRANT I Low Consideration and High Initiating Structure

Figure 2



To summarize briefly, a *Quadrant I leader* is low on consideration and high on initiating structure. This leader is production-oriented and interested in getting the work done, often forgetting in the process that he or she is dealing with human beings. The *Quadrant II leader* demonstrates both consideration and initiating structure behaviors. Such a leader is efficient and effective in managing both people and tasks. The *Quadrant III leader* is high on consideration but low on initiating structure. This leader maintains a friendly relationship with the subordinates and is concerned about subordinate welfare, but is ineffective in getting things done. The *Quadrant IV leader* is low on both consideration and initiating structure. This leader's management is accompanied by group chaos and ineffectiveness (Stogdill, 1962). The present study uses the model of The Ohio State studies involving the two leadership behavior dimensions of consideration and initiating structure and the four leadership quadrants in order to determine the dominant leadership style of the school principal.

Factor analysis of the questionnaire responses by The Ohio State Study indicated that subordinates perceived their supervisor's behavior primarily in terms of two categories: (1) consideration and (2) initiating structure (Stogdill, 1962). "Consideration is the degree to which a leader acts in a friendly and supportive manner, shows concern for subordinates, and looks out for their welfare" (Yukl, 1998, p. 47). "Initiating structure is the degree to which a leader defines and structures his or her own role and the roles of subordinates toward attainment of the group's formal goals." (Yukl, 1998, p. 47). An important finding of The Ohio State study was that these two dimensions are independent. This means that consideration for workers and initiating structure exist simultaneously and in different amounts.

McGregor's (1960, 1966) historical studies are the foundation for leadership theories. He postulated two types of organizational leadership – Theory X and Theory Y. Theory X is based on the assumption that people are passive and resistant to organizational needs, and partake of top-down decision-making leadership (authoritarian). Theory Y is based on the assumption that people already possess motivation, desire responsibility, and participate in bottom-up decision making (egalitarian).

Ouchi (1981) described Theory Z. The organizations that he studied were firms characterized by long-term employment, intense socialization, and clear statements of objectives and values, encouraging teamwork and cooperation. According to Ouchi (1981), Theory Z gives the impression of greater equalization of power and control and “bottom-up” management. In fact, theory Z organizations eliminate middle managers, thereby increasing the top manager's control and power.

Hersey and Blanchard (1969) created their model, Situational Leadership, after the previous work and leadership studies by McGregor and The Ohio Study. This model illustrated managers whose leadership styles can be used for development. “Development is a pattern of styles that enables you to gradually turn over responsibility to members of your team” (Hersey and Blanchard, 1969, p. 127). Initially, the leader should anticipate providing a lot of directions, complete explanations, a clear picture of the payoffs and plenty of advice with ongoing feedback. The leader is providing on-the-job training for new hires. As the person gains experience, increases skills, and increases their understanding their position, their confidence increases. At this time, the leader begins to ask team members for input about problems and invite recommendations within

the decision making process (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson , 2002). Eventually, the leader can delegate responsibility and the individual can function independently. As the individual grows, so can the responsibility.

### The Situational Leader

Hersey and Blanchard (1969) proposed a situational theory that prescribes the use of a different pattern of leadership depending on the readiness of the individual over which the leader resides. Situational leadership is based on an interplay among (1) the amount of guidance and direction (task behavior) a leader gives; (2) the amount of socio-emotional support (relationship behavior) a leader provides; and (3) the readiness level that followers exhibit in performing a specific task, function, or objective (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969).

Task behavior is the “extent to which a leader engages in spelling out the duties and responsibilities of an individual or group” (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2002, p. 173). Task behavior relates to how the leader deals with their followers: telling them what to do; how to do it; when to do it; and where to do it. The task-oriented leader sets the goals for the followers and defines each the roles. The followers are not involved in the decision making process.

Relationship behavior is the “extent to which a leader engages in two-way or multi-way communication” (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2002, p. 173). The leader provides support, encouragement, and facilitating behaviors. Relationship leaders actively listen to their followers and support them in their efforts. Stodgill and Coons

(1957) showed that leadership styles tend to vary considerably from situation to situation, and that it is not helpful to think of leadership style as an either/or continuum.

Readiness is defined as the “extent to which a follower demonstrates the ability and willingness to accomplish a specific task” (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2002, p. 175). Readiness is determined by how ready the individual is to complete the task. All individuals tend to have different levels of readiness in relation to specific tasks, functions, or objectives that need to be accomplished. In addition, the group, may have a different level of readiness than specific individuals within the group.

The levels of readiness are based on two categories: ability and willingness. Ability is the “knowledge, experience and skill that an individual or group brings to a particular task or activity” (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2002, p. 176). Willingness is the “extent to which an individual or group has the confidence, commitment, and motivation to accomplish a specific task” (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2002, p. 176).

The readiness level of the followers determines the degree of interaction. As seen in Figure 3, the levels of readiness are provided by Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (2002) for determining the appropriate leadership style based on the readiness level. The readiness levels are placed on a continuum into four categories: low readiness (R1), low to moderate (R2), moderate to high (R3), and high readiness (R4).

Each of the following four categories (combinations of leadership styles) involves a different degree of follower and leader decision-making. Figure 3 illustrates the four basic leadership styles.

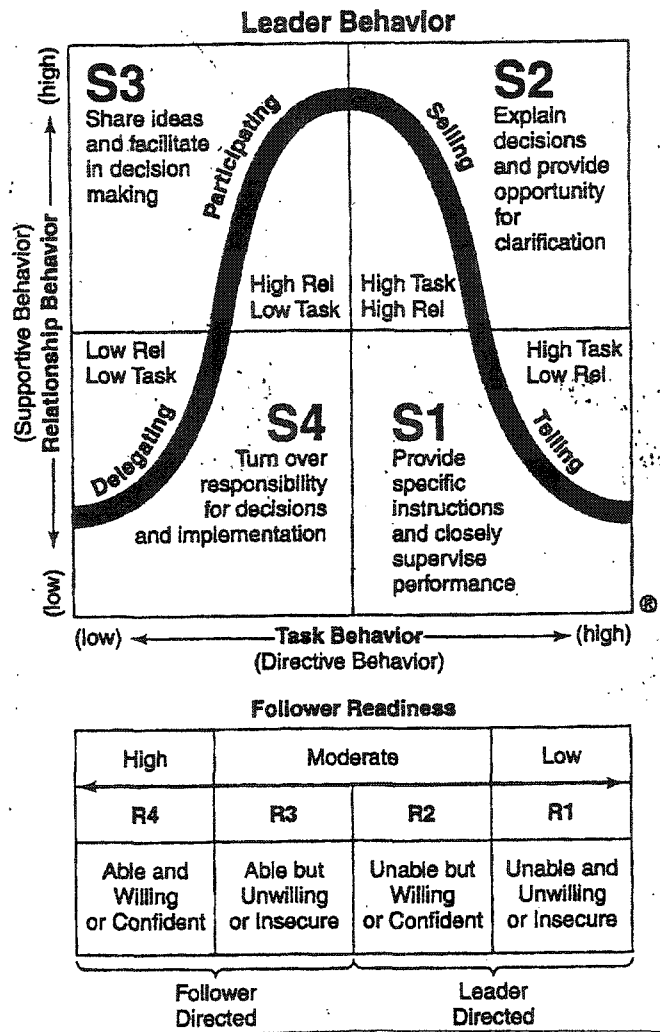


Figure 3 (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2002, p. 182)

When examining the different styles of leadership, it is important to stress that according to Situational Leadership, there is no one best way to influence people (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982a). The appropriate leadership style for the given levels of the subordinates readiness is represented in Figure 3 with the bell curve (“prescriptive curve”) going through the four leadership quadrants.

According to Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (2002), there are four combinations of leadership styles (“telling,” “selling,” “participating,” and “delegating”). The appropriate leadership style for each of the four readiness levels includes the correct combination of task behavior (direction) and relationship behavior (support).

Individuals with readiness level one (R1) need more direction; therefore, the “telling” leadership style provides a comfort range for individuals who are unable and unwilling to take on the responsibility or do not possess the competence or confidence to complete the task. Thus, a directive “telling” style (S1) provides clear, specific directions and supervision with the highest probability of being effective for these individuals. This style is identified as “telling” because it describes the leader’s defining roles by telling people what, how, when, and where to do their tasks (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2002). This style involves high task behavior and low relationship behavior. Principals may find this style most effective with new teachers who lack confidence and experience. As the individual grows, matures, the leader needs to adjust the leadership style to fit the needs of the teacher.

The next level is “selling”. Selling is for low to moderate level of readiness. These individuals are unable but willing (R2) to take on responsibility and are confident but may lack the skills at this time. Therefore, a “selling” style (S2) provides directive behavior, to assist with the lack of ability, and supportive behavior to reinforce the individual’s willingness and enthusiasm. This style is identified as “selling” because most of the direction is still coming from the leader, yet there is a two-way communication developing as the leader gets the individual to develop desired behaviors. Followers at this level usually go through with the decisions once they understand the

reasoning behind the decisions (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2002). This style involves high task and high relationship behavior.

“Participating” is for individuals with moderate to high level of readiness. These individuals are able but unwilling to do what the leader wants them to do. The leader needs to open a two-way communication and actively listen to the follower to provide the necessary support for the follower to utilize their current abilities. Therefore, a supportive, nondirective leadership style (S3) has the highest probability of being effective with the individuals at this readiness level. This style is identified as “participating” because the leader and follower share in the decision-making process with the leader’s role to facilitate and communicate (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2002). This style involves high relationship and low task.

The final leadership style is identified as “delegating.” Individuals at this readiness level are willing, able, and confident to take on the additional responsibility. Thus, a low profile or leader intervention (S4) is required. The leader will provide little direction or support and only as needed by the individual. These individuals are permitted to run the show and decide how, when, where, and why the task is to be completed. These individuals require only a minimum amount of two-way communication or supportive behavior. This style involves low relationship behavior and low supportive behavior (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2002).

The key to using the Situational Leadership model is to assess the readiness level of the follower(s) and to adjust the leadership style to fit the individual needs of each follower. Implicit in Situational Leadership is the idea that a leader should help followers grow in readiness as far as they are able and willing to go (Hersey, Blanchard, &

Johnson, 2002). Situational leadership contends that strong direction (task behavior) with low readiness followers is appropriate if they are to become productive individuals (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2002). Similarly, an increase in readiness on the follower should be rewarded with an increase in positive reinforcement and socio-emotional support (relationship behavior) from the leader.

#### *Application to Education*

When applying the Situational Leadership model to experienced faculty, the low relationship/low task style (S4) is characterized by a decentralized organization structure and delegation of responsibility to individuals (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982b). The level of education and readiness level of the faculty is often such that the administration or department chairperson needs to provide or initiate the structure of the organization. Some of the faculty may need only a limited amount of support (relationship behavior) and may resent having too much provided (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982b).

New teachers will require more direction and assistance. Principals need to provide a “telling” leadership style. As the teacher grows and advances through the school year, adjustments need to be made in the leadership style and the principal will advance to “selling” and possibly “participating” as the teachers’ level of readiness increases throughout the school year.

At times, certain deviations from the leadership style are necessary. For example, during a curriculum change or at the beginning of the school year, a certain amount of structure (i.e. what is to be taught, by whom, when, where) must be established (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982b). Once the faculty understands the requirements and objectives, the



administrator may move back into the specific leadership style as required for working with each individual on the faculty.

### Teacher Transiency

There has been increasing concern about the shortage of high quality teachers around the country. National data indicate that every year, about 13% of all public school teachers leave their school of employment, either to transfer to other schools or to leave teaching employment altogether (Whitener, Gruber, Lynch, Tingos, Perona, & Fondelier, 1997) while over 30% leave within the first five years (Halford, 1998). A large number of public school teachers leave voluntarily (Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, Barkanic, & Maislin, 1998).

Teacher transiency is the largest single factor determining the demand for additional teachers in the nation's schools (NCES, 2000). In 1993, over 20% of new hires in teaching were not new teachers but people who had taught sometime in the past and were returning to the profession (NCES, 1997). Patterns of transiency vary considerably according to the age of teachers and the destination of those leaving. While the rate of teacher transiency is not as high today as it was in the 1960s and 1970s, it is still important to study transiency patterns and their implications for the nation's future need of teachers as the current teacher work force ages.

In suburban and rural districts, over one-third of newly-hired teachers are experienced teachers, transferring from another teaching position, while only fifteen percent of urban new hires are transfers (NCES, 1997). The participating school district has expressed a concern in high transiency among schools due to the frequency with

which teachers transfer schools within the district. Within the participating school district, 2003-2004 will be the first year in which teachers will be required to remain at the school site for three years before voluntarily transferring to another school (Bach, 2003).

In a 1998 study, the National Center for Educational Statistics determined that six percent of full-time public school teachers left teaching before the 1994-95 school year. Further, six and seven-tenths percent of public school teachers left to work at another school. When asked about a host of problems, urban teachers were more likely than their suburban and rural counterparts to see problems as serious including school climate issues (i.e. student absenteeism, verbal abuse, lack of parental involvement, student disrespect) (NCES, 1997). In addition to these problems, urban teachers must also contend with physical limitations such as classrooms without heat or air conditioning, and a lack of books, supplies and computers (NCES, 1997).

While the supply of teachers to urban districts is lower than in other districts, the demand for urban teachers is higher. In part, this is simply a function of size. For example, districts with enrollments larger than 25,000 make up only one and six-tenths percent of all districts to educate 31.5% of all students (NCES, 1999). With so many students, urban districts simply have more teacher positions to fill and these districts employ roughly one-third of the teacher labor force (NCES, 1999).

Students who attend high-poverty schools are about twice as likely as other students (20% to 11%) to serve as training classes for inexperienced teachers, those with fewer than three years experience (NCES, 2000). Within schools where there is a high teacher transiency rate and a high number of new teachers filling the vacancies, the

principal must adjust the leadership style and focus on the individual needs of each new teacher. Little is known of how the organization and management of schools impacts and is impacted by turnover. About half of the overall turnover of teachers is migration from one school to another (Ingersoll, 1995).

Extensive research on teacher turnover has examined the effects of a wide variety of factors on teacher stability, turnover, and mobility (Bluedorn, 1982; Halaby & Weakliem, 1989; Mueller & Price, 1990). One consistent finding is that teacher turnover is significant because of its impact on the conditions, characteristics, and effectiveness of the school. High levels of teacher turnover were found to be both cause and effect of problematic conditions and low performance in schools (Ingersoll, 1999).

Using data from the NCES and SASS/TFS supplement data, Ingersoll (1999) determined that “about half of the total teacher turnover is migration” (p. 18). Even though teacher transiency among schools does not reduce the overall number of teachers, it does contribute to the problem of staffing and stability within schools (Ingersoll, 2002). Additionally, the data showed that school-to-school differences in teacher turnover were significant. High-poverty public schools had higher teacher turnover rates than did affluent public schools. For teachers in high-poverty, urban public schools, the reasons provided for dissatisfaction and the decision to transfer schools included student discipline, lack of student motivation, lack of support from the administration, low salaries, and the lack of influence over decision-making (Ingersoll, 1999).

In addition, high-poverty schools are generally not schools perceived as the ideal places to teach for a variety of reasons. These schools tend to have less resources to work with, inadequate facilities, students with high needs academically and emotionally, higher

teacher mobility, and limited community resources (Touchton & Acker-Hocevar, 2002). Because of these factors, many teachers do not wish to work in these schools or will work there for only one to two years.

Principals report that teachers leave the school and transfer to other schools because working conditions and demands are too difficult (Touchton & Acker-Hocevar, 2002). Low performing, high-poverty schools have difficulty retaining teachers. Low performing, high-poverty schools have high number of beginning, first-year teachers or teachers new to the district (Darling-Hammond, 2002). This high number of new teachers places additional demands on the administration and tenured teaching staff to provide mentoring and training to the new teachers.

Teachers' feelings about administrative support, resources, and teacher collaboration are strongly related to their plans to stay in teaching and to their reasons for leaving (Darling-Hammond, 2002). In a recent study, Johnson and Birkeland (2003), determined that teachers who transferred from school to school were seeking the basic conditions that would allow them to practice their craft day to day: appropriate course assignments, sufficient curriculum materials and guidelines, efficient systems for disciplines, communication with parents, and smooth transitions between classes. Through their interviews with teachers Johnson and Birkeland (2003) determined that teachers were looking for schools where they could feel like professionals, share ideas and resources, and receive respect and guidance from the principal.

When teachers were explaining their decision to transfer schools, dissatisfaction with the administration was cited more often than any other factor (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). High levels of teacher turnover suggest that the school has underlying problems.

In turn, this high turnover can cause turmoil and lead to problems in how the school functions (Price, 1977; Mobley, 1982).

Few educational problems have received more attention in recent times than the failure to ensure that all classrooms are staffed with qualified teachers. Recently, Educational Leadership dedicated an entire issue to addressing the dilemma of hiring and keeping qualified teachers. With the “No Child Left Behind Act” implemented in all schools, principals need to retain their highly qualified teachers. Middle schools, in particular, are struggling to find highly qualified teachers who are certified to teach in content areas. The next section discusses the unique environment of the middle school. Middle schools require teachers to have content knowledge as well as inter-personal relation skills to work with the unique student dynamics of the middle school environment.

### Middle School

Cuban (1992) researched the history and beginnings of the middle school environment. In the early 1900’s, junior high schools were developed to handle an internal need of keeping students in school. Teachers, administrators, and other school personnel began to discuss the growing issue of how students in the higher elementary grades (6-8) were struggling with their interest level in school. With a growing number of students dropping out of school after the sixth grade, the junior high school was developed.

The junior high school followed the same structure of the high school, with teachers who specialized in their content area were paid a higher salary. In essence, the junior high school became a mini high school.

In the 1960s, the middle school movement began. This movement focused on restructuring the junior high school. The middle school grades were changed from 7-9 to 6-8. Middle school structure was based on social, psychological, moral, and intellectual needs of the student. These needs were accomplished through cooperative learning, and interdisciplinary teams structured through departmentalized or specialized teaching in content areas by the instructor. Keeping the content areas traditionally geared provided the students an opportunity to determine their areas of personal interest and enhance their knowledge content in the core classes preparatory for the work force and high school courses. These specialized content classes were presented in shortened class periods, typically 50 minutes in duration, and with students grouped according to their ability. This program is typically child-centered not subject-centered, and emphasizes learning and exploration rather than extreme and premature specialization (Tarter, Sabo, & Hoy, 1995).

In the participating state, teachers in the middle grades do not need specialized professional preparation to teach. Elementary teachers are certified as K-8 teachers. According to Gaskill (2002), this viewpoint has led to minimalistic licensure regulations in many states that allow almost anyone with any type of a degree to teach young adolescents. The lack of specialized middle-level preparation and licensure has resulted in young adolescents being taught by teachers who, at least initially, do not have specialized knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be highly effective (Gaskill, 2002;

McEwin, Dickinson, & Smith, 2003). Stepp (2000) has contended that middle-level teachers are among the most ill prepared in the profession. The lack of preparation and training results in teachers refraining from teaching in the middle school or leaving the middle school due to the inability and inexperience to meet the specific needs of middle-level students.

Stevenson (2002) contends that the stereotypes frequently associated with young adolescents keep many prospective teachers from working in the middle school environment. The stereotypes exaggerate the characteristics of young adolescents and portray them as rebellious, frantic, confused, inattentive, and irresponsible (Stevenson, 2002).

Newman (1991) recommended that leaders give teachers more autonomy, discretion, and control in conducting their work. This will encourage a greater sense of ownership and responsibility for student learning. Scales and McEwin (1994) surveyed 1,069 middle school teachers in six states. When asked whether they planned to continue teaching at the middle level, 93% responded positively. Stevenson and Erb (1998) remind educators that “teacher quality of life influences school climate. Yet as school climate improves, the teacher quality of life gets even better” (p. 52). Middle school provides young adolescents with a place to develop from a child into a young adult. Teachers are in a position to assist the developing adolescent.

### Summary

Researchers agree that the impact of school climate, whether positive or negative, is an important fact of the educational process. Administrators, teachers, and students all

play a role in the construction of school climate. Principals and teachers need to work cooperatively toward building a successful school climate. Principals must develop the leadership and vision that will direct and provide the outline and goals for all school staff members. Teachers must feel as if they have a voice in the school decision and functions. Bryke and Driscoll (1988), Mendel (1987), Washington and Watson (1976), and Hoy and Miskel (1987) all agreed that high staff morale result in higher staff achievements and involvement in school goals. The role of the principal has been shown to impact school climate, social structure, morale, and student achievement (Austin, 1978). According to Austin (1978), the principal's attitude and expectations for student success are critical factors that determine school climate. Every individual needs to feel the impact each individual has on education and the school climate.

Currently, there is limited research completed in the area of school climate and middle schools. Hoy, Hoffman, Sabo, and Bliss (1996) encouraged further examination into middle school climate. Hence, this study will focus on urban middle schools. As leaders focus on how their leadership style influences the school environment, they may begin to improve areas of school climate by working towards improving their leadership skills.

Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (2002) advanced the important proposition that leaders should be aware of opportunities to build the skills and confidence of subordinates, rather than assuming a subordinate with deficiencies in skills or motivation must forever remain a "problem employee" (Yukl, 1998). In the Situational Leadership model the emphasis is placed on the behavior of a leader in relation to the followers.



Teacher transiency is a problem facing urban school districts. Teachers are departing schools and the teaching profession. Urban schools continue to seek for reasons as to why teachers are departing their schools and ways to retain and attract teachers. Using the situational leadership model, this study identified the level of influence leadership style had on teacher transiency rate in the middle school setting.

Having reviewed the literature associated with the school climate, leadership, teacher transiency, and middle schools, the next chapter will focus on outlining the methods of this study. The survey instruments will be discussed as well as the methodology for obtaining research information and the data for this study.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY AND DATA DESCRIPTION

#### Introduction and Review of Study

As previously identified in the literature review, school climate has been a topic of educational research since the early 1960s (Flagg, 1964; Feldvebel, 1964). School climate has been examined through the lens of leadership (Hall & George, 1999), school level (Creemers & Reezigt, 1999; Hoy & Feldman, 1999), classrooms (Moos, 1974), school appearance (Kelly, Brown, Butler, Gittens, Taylor, & Zeller, 1998) and other areas. This study examined school climate with the “Urban School Climate Survey” developed by Olafson, Bendixen, Tirella, and Esposito (2001).

Leadership has been identified as the most influential factor of school climate (Senge, 1995). Leadership in a public school setting is the result of the way principals create a school climate that is characterized by staff productivity, student productivity, and creative thought (Ubben & Hughes, 1987). As the leadership factor is a strong influence on school climate, this study attempted to determine the principal’s leadership style according to Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson’s (2002) Situational Leadership Style.

This study was conducted in a large urban school district with a high level of teacher transiency. The participating district has a strong desire to meet the needs of new and incoming teachers. On June 8, 2003, the local newspaper reported that from October

2001 to September 2002, the participating school district lost 1,300 teachers (9.7% of their teaching staff). In addition, the teacher transiency among district schools is high. The participating school district is initiating a transfer limit that reduces the ability for teachers to transfer among district schools. New teachers will be required to remain at the school of hire for a minimum of three years. Teachers will be permitted to seek a transfer every two years.

### Purpose of the Study

The challenges within the participating school district are not unique. They are being experienced across the nation in other large urban school districts. This study will provide educators and researchers with data concerning the relationship between the teachers' perceptions of the principal's leadership style, school climate, and their desire to remain within the school. The data concerning school climate and leadership style may be useful to the participating principals and the school system. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) and Glesne and Peshkin (1992) explained that one of the objectives of quantitative research is to reveal understanding, not pass judgment. The following research questions were examined during the course of this study:

1. How do teachers perceive the school climate of the middle school in which they work?
2. How do teachers perceive the leadership style of the principal within the middle school in which they work?

3. What are the relationships among characteristics of teacher-perceived school climate and teacher-perceived leadership style in relation to teacher transiency?

This study was a two-phase study involving both quantitative and qualitative methods. The first phase of the study involved the quantitative collection of the data and analysis using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 11.5). The quantitative data were derived from two survey instruments completed by the teachers in four middle schools.

The second phase of the study consisted of gathering qualitative information. From the analysis of the survey data, interview questions were designed to further clarify the data obtained in the surveys. A minimum of three teachers within each school were interviewed. This information was transcribed and analyzed for further support of the survey results.

#### *Participants*

Four middle school principals agreed to participate in the study. The sampling of participants was based on convenience sampling identified by Merriam (1998) as the availability of sites or respondents. The schools were all within the same school district. This school district has a growth rate ranging from 6.7% to 7.6% over the past seven years and currently has 255,316 students in grades K-12 and 45 middle schools (see Table 2).

Three of the four middle schools (Stewart, Victor, and Jones) are located in low-income areas and service a high number of diverse students. These three schools have been identified as at-risk schools by the participating school district. The fourth middle

school, Roberts, is located in an upper-middle class area and has a low percentage of minority students.

In the four middle schools, 219 teachers were provided with the survey and the opportunity to complete and return the survey. Fifty-eight teachers returned the completed survey from all four middle schools (see Table 1). Of those 58 teachers, 24 (41.4%) of them were male, and 31 (53.4%) of the respondents were female. Three individuals did not identify themselves as male or female (5.2%). Of the participants, 24% of them taught sixth grade only, 17% taught seventh grade, 16% taught eighth grade, and 43% taught students in more than one grade level.

All of the content areas were represented among the four schools. Math teachers made up 12.5% of the respondents, 23.22% were English or Reading, 14.3% were Science, 7.1% were Social Studies, 3.6% were Physical Education/Health, 7.1% were in the Special Education department, 12.5% taught Electives, and 17.9% of the teachers taught in multiple areas. Only one respondent (1.8%) did not identify their teaching content area.

The number of years teaching at the school was broken into two levels: one to three years, and four or more years at the same school. The first category, one to three years, was higher since two of the schools were open for less than three years. Therefore, 81% of the teachers were classified as new or having been at the school for less than three years. The remaining 19% of the teachers had remained at their current school for over four years.

Teachers were asked to identify how many years of teaching experience they had and were then categorized according to their response. For the purpose of this study, the

years of experience were identified as: beginning, intermediate, experienced, and most experienced. Beginning teachers were identified as having less than three years of teaching experience. This included 20.7% of the teachers who completed the surveys. Intermediate teachers (34.5% of the participants) were identified as having four to ten years of teaching experience. Experienced teachers (22.4%) were those with eleven to twenty years of experience, and most experienced teachers (17%) included individuals with over 21 years of teaching experience. Five percent of the individuals did not identify their years of teaching experience.

Of the fifty-eight teacher participants, 19% had only a Bachelor's degree, 63.8% had obtained a Master's degree, and one individual (1.7%) had a doctorate. Nine teacher participants (15.5%) did not write down their highest degree. In addition to the previous demographic information, ethnicity data were collected. The majority of the participants (77.6%) identified themselves as white, two (3.4%) as Hispanic, two (3.4%) as African-American, and two (3.4%) as Asian. Only one participant (1.7%) claimed to be of Native American heritage, and six individuals (10.3%) did not provide their ethnic background (see Table 2).

### *Materials*

The teachers were asked to complete a three-part survey. The first portion of the survey consisted of demographic information (i.e. years teaching, ethnic background, years teaching at the school, grades the individual is teaching). The second portion of the survey consisted of a 5-point Likert scale survey, the Urban School Climate Survey (USCS) (see Appendix II). The third portion was followed by the Leadership Effectiveness Adaptability Descriptive (LEAD - Other) to identify the leadership style of

the principal. The principals within the four middle schools were asked to complete the LEAD-Self survey. The survey prompted the principal to reflect personally and identify his/her leadership style.

*Urban School Climate Survey.* For the purpose of this study, school climate data were measured using the Urban School Climate Survey developed by Olafson, Bendixen, Tirella, and Esposito (2001) because the survey was developed to identify the school climate factors that influence urban schools. Accordingly, the Urban School Climate Survey (USCS) was designed to account for factors in urban school districts that affect school climate, such as risky behaviors of students (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989), diversity of student population (Jensen & Kiley, 2001), and the high rate of transiency for students and teachers (Cotton, 1995). These factors have not been used in previous or current measures of school climate.

Additionally, the USCS covers factors associated with school climate such as administrative leadership (Hall, Rutherford, Hord, & Huling, 1984), teacher cohesion and morale (Riehl & Sipple, 1996), instructional approaches (Taylor & Tashakkori, 1994), and student awareness. These items were tested during a pilot study in 2000. This survey was selected for its validity and direct relationship to the intended purpose of this study.

*Validity and Reliability of USCS.* In order to examine the validity and reliability of the tests, it is important to understand the associated definitions and how they impact this study. When constructing or selecting assessment instruments, regardless of the type of assessment or how the results are used, all assessments should possess certain characteristics (Linn & Gronlund, 2000). Validity and reliability are the most common

and essential of these characteristics (Linn & Gronlund, 2000). Validity refers to “the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of the specific inferences” (American Educational Research Association (AERA), American Psychological Association (APA), & National Council on Measurement in Education, 1985, p. 9). Validity provides the necessary statistical information to know whether the inferences derived from an assessment are accurate (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 1998). “Reliability refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated” (Merriam, 1998, p. 205). Two different methods for assessing validity and one method for assessing reliability will be discussed as they relate to the USCS.

Construct validity “refers to the extent to which a procedure or test measures a theoretical trait or characteristic” (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 1998, p.176). One way to assess construct validity is by defining the domain or tasks to be measured. The USCS approach to defining school climate was to examine the various definitions of school climate in the literature and to include additional definitions of urban school climate to complete the picture (Hall & George, 1999; Halpin & Croft, 1963; Schmuck, 1982; Andriga & Fustin, 1991; Freiberg & Stein, 1999).

Content validity is defined as the “extent to which a test’s items actually represent the domain or universe to be measured” (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 1998, p.168). Factor analysis is one way to provide evidence for content validity. Using factor analysis, four factors were determined in the USCS (Olafson, Bendixen, Tirella, & Esposito, 2001). These four factors loaded unambiguously (i.e. no cross-loadings in excess of .30) and were related directly to the construct of the question. All four factors yielded eigenvalues greater than one and explained 46% of the total sample variation. All items within a



factor had alpha loadings .33 or greater. Based on factor analysis, the 40-item USCS survey was used in this study to determine the school climate.

Reliability is concerned with the consistency of an assessment (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 1998). Reliability of the USCS has been examined using Cronbach's Alpha that tests for the internal consistency of the instrument. The alpha for each of the four factors generated were .85 or greater. Administrative leadership had a score of alpha = .95; risky behaviors had a score of alpha = .94; cohesion had a score of alpha = .88; and instructional approaches had a score of alpha = .85. The reliability of the USCS is very strong (alpha >.8) to excellent (alpha >.9) according to Cronbach's Alpha. A reliability test was run with the data obtained through this study. The reliability of the USCS on this study had a score of alpha = .8793.

*Leadership Effectiveness and Adaptability Descriptive.* The school principal plays a high profile and significant role in establishing the climate of the school. In fact, Winter and Sweeney (1994) identified five types of administrative support that create a positive school climate: recognizing achievement, backing up teachers, encouraging teachers, caring, and administering school rules fairly. Winter and Sweeney's (1994) information is relevant to this study. The principals' leadership style and the schools' climate were examined through the perceptions' of the teachers.

The Leadership Effectiveness and Adaptability Descriptive (LEAD) instrument was designed to measure perception of three aspects of the leader behavior: (1) style; (2) style range; and (3) style adaptability (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2002). The LEAD instrument was originally designed to serve as a training instrument (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2002). An individual's style range is the extent to which the leader is able to

vary their leadership style: “Leaders differ in their ability to vary their style in different situations” (Hersey & Blanchard, 1982a, p. 233). While some leaders are limited to one leadership style, they are only effective in the situations in which their leadership style is compatible. Leaders have their preferred leadership style also known as the primary style. Some leaders will have a secondary style they refer to as needed when working with teachers in which their preferred leadership style is not adequate for the teacher’s needs (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2002).

This study utilized the LEAD in order to identify and examine the leadership style of the principal. The LEAD instrument measures specific aspects of the leader behavior in terms of the Situational Leadership theoretical model (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2002). The LEAD contains twelve leadership situations in which respondents are asked to select from four alternative actions. These alternative-choices reflect the style the respondent would most closely describe the leader’s behavior. The categories range from a high task/low relationship behavior, a high task/high relationship behavior, a high relationship/low task behavior, and a low relationship/low task behavior.

*Validity and Reliability of LEAD.* The LEAD was standardized on the responses of 264 managers constituting a North American sample. The twelve item validities for the adaptability score range from .11 to .52, and 10 of the twelve coefficients (83%) were .25 or higher (Greene, 1980). Eleven coefficients were significantly beyond the .01 level with one significantly at the .05 level. Each response option met the defined criteria of less than 80% with respect to selection frequency (Greene, 1980).

Several criterion-related validity studies were conducted on the LEAD. Criterion-related validity refers to “the extent to which a person’s performance on a criterion

measure can be estimated from that person's performance on the assessment being validated" (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 1998, p. 173). A significant ( $p < .01$ ) correlation of .67 was found between the adaptability scores of the managers and the independent ratings of their leaders (Greene, 1980).

The reliability of the LEAD instrument was examined through a test-retest interval. The test-retest method allows researchers to establish an instrument's stability over time and requires two admissions of the same survey to the same people (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 1998). The test-retest reliability of the LEAD instrument was moderately strong. In two administrations across a six-week interval, 75% of the leaders maintained their dominant style with 71% maintaining their secondary style. Based on these statistics there is evidence to support the validity and reliability of the LEAD instrument.

#### *Design and Procedures*

This study examined four urban middle schools whose principals were willing to have their teachers participate in the study. The schools selected were all within the same school district. Approval from the school district was obtained prior to beginning the study. This study was limited to the data obtained from within one district and from willing participants.

Prior to obtaining district approval for the study, a letter was sent to all middle school principals in the school district to obtain permission for the teachers to participate in the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A second letter was sent through the district's electronic mail service, InterAct, followed this letter. Additionally, follow-up phone calls were utilized to seek each principal's support in the study.

Two of the schools permitted the researcher to present information about the study to the teachers during a staff meeting and to respond to any questions concerning their involvement in the study. A total of 39 surveys were returned from teachers at the two schools where the researcher was permitted to present the information. The additional two school principals permitted the surveys to be placed in the teachers mailboxes with a cover letter. These later two schools yielded a return of 19 surveys.

The teachers were provided a two-week time frame to complete the surveys. The principals were asked to forward an electronic message reminding teachers to return their completed surveys. A sealed box was provided in the mailroom for the teachers to place the completed surveys. Following the collection of the surveys, teachers were invited to participate in follow-up interviews. Some of the teachers requested a list of the questions to which they could respond through InterAct and were then available for further explanation, if needed. A major constraint in collecting the data and obtaining individuals willing to be interviewed was due to time constraints and the closing of the schools for the summer.

### *Interviews*

Interview questions were developed from the evaluation of the quantitative data from the two surveys administered to teacher participants. Interviewing is a process that allows the researcher to elicit meaning as perceived by the participant (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The interview questions were designed to probe further into the teacher's perception of school climate, obtain a personal reasoning for responses to survey questions, and to identify the transiency of teachers within the school.

*Teacher Interviews.* The interviews were semi-structured and guided by a set of questions and issues to be explored. The predetermined interview questions were designed to allow the respondent to feel comfortable and provide information and direction for further probing in specific areas. “The more structured the interview, the more accurate the comparisons of the results of several different interviews” (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 1998, p. 32). A total of fourteen teachers participated in the interviews. Roberts and Jones had four teachers each who were involved in the interview process. Stewart and Victor had three teachers each who participated.

By way of example, a few interview questions for this study were: How many years have you been teaching at this school? What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges this school is currently facing? What do you perceive to be the biggest strengths of this school? Do you feel the principal is aware of your concerns? Does the principal assist you in your projects/needs? In what way? Do you perceive the teachers in this school to work cooperatively with each other? (See Appendix II for a complete list of interview questions asked of teachers.) If additional information was needed in areas (i.e. school climate, school leadership) follow-up questions were used to probe for more information.

*Principal Interviews.* Only two of the principals participated in the interview process after the data were collected. Examples of the principal interview questions in this study were: How many years have you been Principal at this school? What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges this school is currently facing? What do you perceive to be the biggest strengths of this school? How do you assist your teachers with

their projects/needs? Do you perceive the teachers in this school to work cooperatively with each other? (For additional interview questions, see Appendix II).

The participants were all based on convenience sampling (Merriam, 1998). The participants were selected based on their location, availability, and desire to participate in the study. The interviews were conducted before or after school, during free periods, or during a set appointment time that the participant requested. Each interview took approximately twenty to thirty minutes.

Two common methods of recording and evaluating data during the interview process were integrated (Merriam, 1998). The two methods utilized were the tape recording of the interview and taking notes during the interview. The interviews were tape recorded to ensure accuracy and minimize the errors that may occur during the note-taking process. After each interview, the notes and tape were transcribed and analyzed.

The interviews were transcribed and coded. Coding “requires the analyst to create or adapt concepts relevant to the data rather than to apply a set of pre-established rules” (Merriam, 1998, p. 165). The data were categorized according to information about the school, factors of school climate, comments on leadership, personal feelings and perceptions of working in the school, and other. As these themes emerged, follow-up interviews were conducted to clarify comments made by the teachers and principals and determine the consistency of the themes across participants. The principals were not available to participate in the follow-up interviews.

Several factors may have influenced the participants’ information during the interview such as their health, their mood at the time of the interview, as well as possible ulterior motives (Merriam, 1998). According to Whyte (1982), the major way to detect

and identify distortions is “by comparing an informant’s account with accounts given by other informants” (p. 116). Identifying the participants mode and attitude at the time of the interview assisted in determining the perception of the teacher. Three participants requested the interview to be rescheduled due to the days activities and their emotional status.

*Document Collection.* In order to balance analysis of the school climate, leadership style, and teacher transiency, many types of data were gathered and integrated into the study. School documents, such as teacher transiency rates from the previous school year, reasons teachers had provided for transfers, and accountability reports were used to provide additional information and background on the participating schools.

Documentation provides a source of data that is free from the “researcher effect” since the records reflect what occurred prior to the research (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Document data were integrated with the information gathered from the surveys and interviews. All of the information was triangulated using multiple sources of data (e.g. school statistical information, interview data, survey data) to confirm major findings (Merriam, 1998). In addition to the triangulation of the data, member checks were used by taking the data and tentative interpretations back to the individual participants and asking if the results were credible (Merriam, 1998). Six teachers were used in member checking the data.

Two individuals from Victor and Jones provided clarification on interview comments and school organization, since principals from these schools did not participate in the interview process. During these member checks, school organization, policy, and process became important part of the focus. For example, teaming or department

structure were discussed and clarification was provided to further explain the reasoning behind comments. One individual from Roberts and one individual from Stewart examined the school profiles, reviewed themes that emerged in the data from the school documentation and survey, and clarified additional areas. For example, during member checking, the teacher at Roberts was able to clarify the school's definition of site-based management and how this influences teacher collaboration.

Teacher interviews, school documents, and member checking were utilized to assist in understanding the school climate and leadership style of the principal in each school. These data were used to clarify the information gathered in the surveys. Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the data and describes how the qualitative and quantitative data were utilized to answer the research questions directing the study.



## CHAPTER 4

### DATA ANALYSIS

#### Introduction

This chapter will review the data obtained from the surveys and interviews and associate them with the research questions directing the focus of the study. Quantitative and qualitative analyses were utilized to evaluate and examine each research question. The following research questions will be individually addressed in relation to the data obtained in this study. The research questions for this study are:

1. How do teachers perceive the school climate of the middle school in which they work?
2. How do teachers perceive the leadership style of the principal within the middle school in which they work?
3. What are the relationships among characteristics of teacher-perceived school climate and teacher-perceived leadership style in relation to teacher transiency?

The following sections of this chapter will include an analysis of the data used in the study regarding the three research questions and a summary of the results.

## Analyses

### *Method*

*Quantitative.* Statistical analysis testing was utilized using the SPSS (version 11.5 for Windows) program for the LEAD and USCS. A Multiple Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used because it allows for the means of multiple dependent and independent variables to be examined simultaneously. Specifically, a MANOVA was used to determine if various demographic information (i.e. ethnicity, age, gender, etc.) were associated with school climate and leadership style. Appropriate follow-up tests (e.g. Tukey) were used with the significant interactions or main effects. In evaluating each research question, the schools were compared based on their leadership styles, school climate, and teacher transiency data.

*Qualitative.* The qualitative analysis included data collected from the teacher and principal interviews, in addition to staffing information and school documents. The data were analyzed and member checks were used to verify the quantitative analysis of the data described above. If the statistical information conflicted with teacher interview responses, follow-up interviews and member checking were utilized to clarify previous interview responses. The data were placed into categories based on the emerging themes and research questions. Some of the emerging themes included: school organization, teacher collaboration, student involvement, discipline. Data triangulation was used to verify the appropriate placement of data into the categories (Merriam, 1998). The interviews were analyzed and categorized according to the emerging themes. The statements were placed into the theme category and were used to support and verify the statistical analysis of the surveys.

### *Research Question #1*

How do teachers perceive the school climate of the middle school in which they work? Prior to examining the unique background and environment of the four schools obtained from school and district documents (i.e. accountability reports), statistical data were analyzed to determine school climate.

A MANOVA was used to determine if there were significant mean differences on the measure of school climate (USCS). The dependent variables of school climate included: administration, risky behaviors of students, student awareness, and instructional strategies. The independent variables were ethnicity, degree (bachelor, master, or doctorate), experience (1-3 years, 4-10 years, 11-20 years, or 21 or more years), and school (Jones, Victor, Stewart, or Roberts). The data were examined to identify the main effects and possible interactions among school climate dimensions and the independent variables (for means and standard deviations on all variables see Table 3).

There was a significant main effect for school  $F(18, 43) = 3.42, p < .0001$ . There were significant statistical interactions with the variable school averaged across the levels of the other variables used in this study. No other main effects were determined between ethnicity  $F(18, 43) = .72, p = .77$ , degree  $F(12, 30) = .87, p = .58$ , experience  $F(18, 43) = .75, p = .75$ , nor were there any significant interactions among the variables.

Univariate F tests for each of the dependent variables revealed significant differences between: school and administration  $F(3, 42) = 4.69, p < .05$ , and school and student awareness  $F(3, 42) = 3.36, p < .05$ . There was a marginally significant difference between degree and instructional approaches  $F(3, 42) = 3.45, p < .05$ . These findings will be discussed as they relate to the research questions in this study.

Post hoc Tukey comparisons indicated that years of experience differed significantly with instructional approaches, administration, risky behaviors, and student awareness (see Table 4). Teachers were categorized in to four groups based upon their years of experience teaching. The first group, beginning, were teachers with one to three years of teaching experience. The second group, intermediate teachers, had three to ten years of teaching experience. The third group, experienced teachers, had 11 to 20 years of teaching experience. Most experienced teachers, the fourth group, had over 20 years of teaching experience.

Analysis of the USCS determined most experienced teachers were significantly more aware of student-centered activities and utilized various instructional approaches. When compared to the other experience levels, beginning teachers (teachers with one to three years of experience) had significant lower mean than the most experienced teachers. This finding is supported by the teacher interviews. For example, a new teacher at Victor Middle School stated, "I did not have the time to learn new techniques. Sometimes you can get another teacher to help you; but most of the time you are left to struggle." This is also reinforced by another teacher who went to the principal to receive assistance and was provided with professional reading materials to examine. "When I asked her for help and advice, something I could take back and use immediately in my classroom, she gave me a bunch of reading and told me to improve."

There was also a significant mean difference with the instructional approaches utilized in the classroom and intermediate teachers. The third group of teachers, experienced teachers, are individuals with 11 to 20 years of experience. This group did

not have a significant mean difference with any another group; however, the mean value continues to rise with experience. Thus, there is evidence to support that with years of experience comes a greater knowledge base and an increased awareness of instructional approaches.

A significant mean difference was also identified with the most experienced teachers. The most experienced teachers had a more positive view of the administration than teachers with less teaching experience. They understood the stress and position of the leader (principal). Additionally, most experienced teachers viewed less risky behaviors in the students than teachers with three to ten years of teaching experience. However, most experienced teachers also viewed the students as being more aware of their school environment than the other experience levels. This dimension did not have a significant mean difference, but it is important to note that the pattern of the mean continued to increase with teaching experience.

During the comparison of schools, a significant mean difference was found between Stewart, Victor, and Roberts Middle Schools (see Table 5). According to the USCS, teachers at Roberts Middle School were more student-centered and aware of instructional strategies than the other three schools. There was not a significant mean difference between Jones and Roberts; however, it is important to note that the pattern of the mean continued to increase across the four schools. Furthermore, there was not a significant mean difference between the other schools. A teacher at Roberts Middle School commented, "The team has control over our activities and planning. If we want to attend a conference or try something new in our classroom, we have the freedom to

experiment. We do have to be prepared to explain how the program will influence student achievement.”

Additionally, two significant mean differences were found in relation to risky behaviors. Risky behaviors identify the teacher’s perception of how involved students are in inappropriate activities for their age group. This may include smoking, drugs, alcohol, sexual relations, etc. Stewart Middle School teachers viewed more risky behaviors among their students than Roberts Middle did; however, Victor Middle School teachers viewed fewer risky behaviors than Roberts. This was an interesting finding as Roberts Middle School were not challenged with the risky behavior challenges that Stewart and Victor Middle Schools currently face. At Roberts there were no violent acts towards staff members compared to Victor Middle School which reported four violent acts towards staff members. Additionally, Roberts reported one threat/extortion on school campus, with Victor reporting 50.

The final significant mean difference of school climate among schools was student awareness. Student awareness focuses on the students’ knowledge of their environment and their interaction with that environment. Roberts teachers viewed their students as being more aware of the school environment than the teachers at Stewart and Victor Middle Schools. Furthermore, teachers at Jones Middle School viewed their students as being more aware of their school environment than the students at Victor Middle School.

To also compare means of school climate in relation to gender and years at the same school (1-3 years, 4 or more years), an Independent Samples T-tests was run. No significant mean differences were found for either variable.

To further enrich the examination of school climate, additional school documents (i.e. transiency form completed by each school and school accountability reports) were gathered and provided an insight into the school climate of each school. Additionally, teachers from each school participated in the interview process providing information and examples of the school climate. This information has been threaded throughout the school profile accounts.

School documents and teacher transiency information were collected at each of the four participating middle schools. The school documents were analyzed and a brief outline of each of the four schools is provided (see Table 6). As each school is faced with different challenges and school demographics, information was provided on student discipline, teacher licensure, school programs, and school mottos and missions. School profiles provide a brief synopsis of each individual school.

#### *School Profiles*

*Jones Middle School.* Jones Middle School is a neighborhood school in the inner-city area. The only students provided transportation by the school district were the Special Education students. All other students were required to walk to school, ride the Citizen Area Transit (city buses), or find alternative transportation to and from school. For the 2001-2002 school year, Jones Middle School housed 1,067 students. The average daily attendance rate was 93.0% with a 40.0% transiency rate among the students.

Jones Middle School's motto was: "Academic Achievement Makes Dreams Come True." Their mission statement was "The staff, students, parents, and community partners of Jones Middle School are committed to creating a safe and positive

environment where individuals make dreams a reality through academic achievement and positive citizenship.”

Student discipline at Jones Middle School included two violent acts to school staff and 163 violent acts to other students. There were nine reported incidents of students possessing weapons on school campus and 50 disciplinary interactions for threats and/or extortion. Teachers participating in the interviews responded that they feel safe and comfortable with student discipline. “If you do not like the decision the dean made about a student, he is open to listening to your view point. The dean also seeks additional information from us if the student is reporting something different than what we wrote. He is not on a power-trip and has to make all of the decisions.”

The average class size at Jones was higher than the district overall. In English, the average class size was 38 with a district average of 29. The school reported an average Mathematics class size of 34 compared to 29 in the school district. Science was fairly close to the district average class size with the school reporting one more than the district (school = 32, district = 31). Social Studies had an average class size of 35, which was still higher than the district level of 30. The variations in average class size may be a result of the administration’s teacher placement within the school building. From teacher interviews, teachers reported that low performing students were placed in smaller classes, resulting in a higher average class size. When asking one teacher why she decided to leave Jones Middle School, she responded “It is getting too difficult to prep for four different classes a day. I am excited to go next door (neighboring high school) and have some of my old students. I only have to prep for two classes also.”



The teachers at Jones Middle School varied in educational training. In 2001-2002, 47.3% of the teachers had only their Baccalaureate degree. Fifty-two and seven-tenths percent of the teachers had advanced degrees, with all of the teachers, except one, holding Masters degrees. One teacher in 2001-2002 had a doctoral degree.

The teaching experience of the Jones Middle School staff was reported with 23.6% of the teachers having one to two years of teaching experience. A majority of the teachers were categorized with three to ten years of experience (67.3%). The percentage of teachers with 11 to 20 years of teaching experience was 7.3%, followed with 1.8% with over 21 years of experience. The average daily attendance rate for the teachers was 94.2%. This attendance rate was slightly higher than the student attendance rate (93%).

Twelve percent of the student population were classified as Special Education and 45% of the students were identified as English Language Learners. The economic background of the students was low; therefore, 80% of the student population were on Free/Reduced Meals. One teacher reported during the interview that she spent an average of \$200 a month on her students. "They come into class without supplies and hungry. How can I even begin to teach these students if their basic needs are not met? As a special education teacher, I do not feel comfortable sending my students to other teachers when they are not prepared to learn and participate in their class."

The Jones Middle School staff and administration were dedicated to involving the parents and community in the school environment. Approximately 70% of the parents attended Open House, and 50% of the parents attended additional school functions throughout the school year. The school hosted a Multicultural Festival that brings the parents, community, and school together in a carnival atmosphere. Students were able to

show off projects and activities, perform for the parents, and sell items to support the school clubs. During a teacher interview, one teacher commented, "The Multicultural Festival is a great way to show off to our parents and have fun with the students. It is a lot of work to get ready for."

Additionally, the school hosted a different academic night each month to encourage parental involvement in academics. Teacher perceptions of academic nights included one teacher who said, "I wish they would let us know at the beginning of the year what month was ours. It is difficult to have a family, work, and then donate an extra night and all the preparation." Teachers are paid \$20/hour stipend funds for attending the academic night, but there is not any funding for the planning and preparation of the night.

Overall, the Jones faculty, who participated in the interviews, enjoyed working at Jones. The teachers felt the administration were supportive and encouraging of their efforts. "If you need something, you just have to ask (the principal). She will try to get you what you need and want." The common problem that teachers mentioned was the communication problems that arose throughout the year. "Sometimes we would get paper notices, other times we only got emails. This got to be confusing and many of us did not remember to daily check the school house folder for school-wide messages."

A first year teacher summed up the school climate by stating:

"I was a little wary about working here. You drive around the neighborhood and wonder what kind of students you will get. This is not the best of schools. However, the administration and teachers have made me feel welcome and comfortable. I feel bad at the number of mistakes that I have made, but no one criticized me for them. It is a learning experience. I am always being asked what else I could have done and to think through the situations so the next time it happens I am prepared. I have some dozers of students. At times, it gets really frustrating trying to handle them. When I was in college, I imagined a different world than what I am teaching in."

Later the same teacher responded, “Do I want to move schools? Sometimes. But overall, I enjoy whom I work with, the administration, and even the students. At the beginning of the year, I kept saying ‘one year, one year’, now I don’t know if I want to leave this.”

*Stewart Middle School.* Stewart Middle School was opened in 2001 to meet the demands of the growing population. Stewart is located across from the city’s recycling center and garbage collection center. Stewart opened its doors to 1,440 students within the first year. The average daily attendance rate for the students was 93.1% with a transiency rate of 37%. Eleven percent of the sixth grade students were retained, with six percent of seventh and eighth graders retained.

The motto for Stewart Middle School was: “Educating Today’s Youth to Become Tomorrow’s Leaders.” Stewart Middle School’s mission statement was to “secure in all students: Strength in diversity, Excellence in academics, Desire to achieve all goals, Wisdom in all judgments, Appreciation for the Arts, Yearning for lifelong learning.”

During the 2001-2002 school year, Stewart Middle School reported nine violent acts to school staff by students and an additional 151 violent acts to other students. There were two reported cases of possession or use of a controlled substance and six incidents of possession of a weapon. Teachers, who participated in the interviews, expressed a high level of frustration. “Student discipline at times is a joke. The students think they can sweet talk their way out of problems. And some of them do. I stopped sending students up on referrals unless it was really bad. It just wasn’t worth my time.”

The average class size for Stewart Middle School was close to the district level in all four academic areas. In English and Mathematics, the school reported the average

class size as 31, with the district reporting the average class size as 29. Science was one over the district level, with the school reporting an average science class of 32 with the district reporting an average science class size of 31. Social Studies average class size was reported as 32 compared to the district average of 30.

For the first year of operation, Stewart Middle School had a teaching staff with 48.4% holding Baccalaureate degrees and 51.6% with graduate level degrees. Twenty-eight and one-tenth percent of the teachers were either new to the school district or were in their first two years of teaching. The majority of teachers had between three to ten years of teaching experience (48.4%). Fourteen and one-tenth percent of the teachers who opened Stewart Middle School had 11 to 20 years of experience, and an additional 9.4% of the teachers had over 21 years of experience. The percentage of teachers who opened Stewart with 21 or more years of experience (9.4%) was higher than the district percentage of teachers who have 21 years or more of teaching experience (8.7%). The average daily attendance rate for the teachers was 94.8%, which was one-tenth of a percent lower than the district average.

During the interviews, teachers were asked to describe the teacher collaboration and morale within their school. "The teachers here are great to work with. We have fun and share lots of ideas," said one teacher. Another teacher commented, "Our department is really close. It is great to have everyone working together." A third teacher stated, "There are some teachers who complain and ruin everything; but you deal with it. Overall, teachers are positive and do not think less of you for having a bad or frustrating day."

Stewart Middle School educates 11% of their student population in the Special Education department. An additional 15% of the students are classified as English Language Learners requiring assistance to learn the English language. As Stewart Middle School is located in the North inner-city region of the district, they also struggle with low-income students. Sixty-one percent of the students at Stewart Middle School participate in the Free/Reduced Meals program supported by the Federal government for economically disadvantaged students. “We have a high minority population. With this come home problems we have to deal with and gangs. I have some students that I do not know if they will ever live to be 18.”

Stewart administration and teachers are dedicated to including the parents in the school activities and their child’s education. Approximately 50% of the parents attended the Open House at the beginning of the school year. There were 30-50 parent volunteers reported to assist in the library, attend field trips, help with team events, book fairs, fundraisers, and other school functions. Additionally, 90% of the parents attended at least one school function throughout the school year. “Some parents come out and support the schools. I have found it frustrating that the parents you really need to talk to are not around or do not have phones.”

Stewart teachers were organized in teams with each team sharing the same students. This provides the opportunity to increase student and teacher interaction. The team worked together to improve each student’s opportunity for academic success and parental involvement. The teams at Stewart Middle School worked together on interdisciplinary units, field trips, and parent conferences. Sometimes though, teaming was not viewed positively as stated by the following teaching, “Teaming is okay. I have not

had the best of luck this year. I did not get along with my fellow team teachers and my students suffered due to our lack of communication and collaboration.”

Overall, the teachers at Stewart Middle School expressed a high level of frustration with the administration and lack of communication. Many teachers felt they were not getting clear, straight answers from the administration. When teachers were asked about why they were leaving or would ever leave Stewart, the common theme was a lack of discipline, communication, and teacher support.

*Roberts Middle School.* Roberts Middle School was located in a different region of the school district than the other three participating schools. This school was located in a newer residential area near the financial district of the city. In 2001-2002, Roberts housed 1,075 students with the average daily attendance rate of 95.3%. The student transiency rate was low (21%) with a majority of the students live in single-family housing.

The school motto was: “Education in Action.” The Roberts Middle School mission was “to provide a positive middle school experience that fully prepares students with the academic skills, integrity, and moral responsibility that are necessary for success.” In addition, the principal at Roberts Middle School was recently named “Principal of the Year” by the State’s Association of Secondary School Principals.

Roberts Middle School was not struggling with the disciplinary problems reported by the other schools in the study. In 2001-2002 school year there were no reported acts of violence on a school employee and ten violent acts to other students. There were two reported incidents of possession/use of a controlled substance with an additional two reported cases of distribution of controlled substance. There was one reported case of

threat/extortion among students. Disciplinary concerns among the staff and parents at this school was low.

The average class size for Robert Middle School was close to the district level in all four academic areas. In English, the school reported an average class size of 29, with the district also reporting an average of 29. In Mathematics the school reported an average of 30 students per class compared to the district average of 29. Science and Social Studies were two over the district level, with the school reporting an average class size of 33 and the district reporting an average class size of 31.

Roberts Middle School was in its third year of operation with a majority of the staff following the principal from the previous school location. A small percentage of the staff (6.1%) were new to the participating school district or within their first two years of teaching. The remainder of the staff was spread equally among levels of experience. Thirty percent of the teachers had three to ten years of experience, and 38.8% had 11 to 20 years of experience in the participating school district. A high percentage of teachers (24.5%) had over 21 years of teaching experience in the district. This is the highest percentage of intermediate teachers among the four participating schools.

Eight percent of the student population was classified as Special Education with an additional three percent of the students classified as English Language Learners. Eight percent of the student population was participating in the federal Free/Reduced Meal program.

Parental involvement was relatively high with over 75% of the parents attending Open House and 90% of the parents attending other school functions throughout the school year. The parent volunteer list contained over 700 entries reflecting assistance in

dance supervision, library assistance, field trips, fundraisers, carnivals, eighth grade picnic, guest speakers, etc. Community involvement was high with numerous community partnerships (WalMart, Pepsi, Target, Applebee's, and Southwest Vending).

Throughout the teacher interviews, many teachers commented that they had followed this principal from her previous school and would not want to work elsewhere. The school staff worked cooperatively on budgeting and school concerns. A teacher explained the process as follows: "The DCs (department chairs) all bring in teacher wish lists. Each department submits their lists and totals. If there is enough money, everyone gets what they want. If not, the DCs discuss priority and how the items impact instruction. The DCs decided the end budget, not the principal." This level of teacher control and site-based management was evident in other programs. "As team leader, I inform the principal of our activities and plans. She assists with funding, scheduling, and other team needs." Teachers responded positively about the freedom and high level of professionalism they felt working at Roberts Middle School.

*Victor Middle School.* Victor Middle School was an inner-city school. The school struggled with similar challenges to Jones with the addition of busing of students to the school. Victor recently underwent a rezoning of their school boundaries and a change in leadership. Victor Middle School's motto was "Easy as A, B, C. Act on the Belief that you Can do anything." The mission of Victor Middle School was "to act on the belief that you can set and reach academic and behavioral goals to strengthen and shape our world."

During the 2001-2002 school year, Victor Middle School enrolled 1,381 students and had an average daily attendance rate of 89.6%. A goal of the School Improvement



Plan was to improve average daily attendance. A high number of seventh grade students with truancy issues were noted when compared to sixth and eighth grade students. It had been a focus of the new administration to improve the daily average attendance rate.

Victor Middle School had four incidents of violence to school staff and 397 accounts of violence to other students. Student discipline was a focus and concern of the teachers and administration at Victor Middle School. In addition, six cases of possession or use of controlled substances were documented. Alarming, students had possession of weapons on campus in 18 incidents. An additional 50 reports of threats or extortions to students concluded the disciplinary report. In the teacher follow-up interviews, the teachers commented on the inconsistency of discipline. One teacher commented, "Students were disciplined according to how well the administration knew and liked the student. There is no consistency and the students know this."

The average class size for Victor Middle School was close to the district level in all four academic areas. In English, Mathematics and Science, the school reported the average class size as 30, with the district reporting the average class size as 29. Social Studies average class size was reported as 33 compared to the district average of 30.

In addition to disciplinary concerns, staffing of teachers at Victor Middle School appeared to be a challenge. Forty-three and seven-tenths percent of the staff holds Baccalaureate degrees with the remaining 56.3% having advanced degrees. Victor Middle School was the only school in this study that had teachers teaching outside of their license and endorsement areas. Five percent of the English teachers were reported to be teaching outside of the licensed area.

The majority of teachers within this school had less than ten years of teaching experience in the participating school district. An equal percentage (45.1%) of teachers were classified as new or with less than two years of teaching experience, or between three and ten years of experience. The remaining 9.9% included intermediate teachers, with 8.5% having 11 to 20 years experience and a 1.4% with over 21 years of teaching experience.

Victor reported 14% of their students as Special Education with an additional 28% identified as English Language Learners. The low-income area is represented by the high percentage (75%) of students who participate in the Free/Reduced Meals program.

Parental involvement was another identified challenge for Victor Middle School. Approximately 50% of parents attended the Open House. A break down by grade showed the highest percentage (75%) to be with sixth-grade parents. Fifty percent of the seventh grade and less than 27% of the eighth-grade parents attended Open House. Additionally, parent attendance at other school functions was low (55% or less). Most frequently attended events were concerts featuring student performances. Parents attended to watch their children perform.

Throughout the teacher interviews, teachers expressed high levels of frustration and concern with the principal. Teachers felt the principal was not respecting them as professionals and did not trust their decision-making skills. Teachers commented on the concern they had for the students and their desire to make a change in at least one student's life. "It is difficult working in this high at-risk school. I do it for my students. I know that I can impact a student's life and make it better (at least for one day)."

*Summary.* Urban School Climate Survey analysis and teacher interviews were used to determine the school climate level within each of the four participating middle schools. A summary for the overall school climate is provided with identification of areas of school climate that should be addressed. Jones Middle School reported a high positive school climate in the areas of discipline, teacher experience, parental involvement, and teacher collaboration. These results illustrated a need for school personnel to focus on class size, specific needs of their student population, and communication between administration and the teachers. Teachers at Jones Middle School positively remarked on their enjoyment of working at this school and the respect they receive from the principal.

Stewart Middle School had a inconsistent view about school climate. Teacher responses identified positive climate in the areas of class size, teacher collaboration, parental involvement, and teaming. School climate factors that need to be improved upon are discipline, teacher experience levels, identifying and supporting the specific needs of the student population, and communication between teachers and the administration. Teacher interviews identified opposing view points of the school climate. Two teachers felt the school climate was positive, while another felt the climate at Stewart Middle School was lacking in the areas of communication and teacher collaboration.

Roberts Middle School had a high and positive school climate. The teachers were adequately responding to the needs of the student population, discipline was under control and effective, parental involvement was high, class size was within an acceptable

range, teachers collaborated within their teams and departments, and there was a high percentage of experienced teachers.

Through the USCS and teacher interviews, Victor Middle School was determined to have a low school climate. Teachers perceived a lack of respect by the administration, and identified the need to improve the school climate in most areas. The teachers felt that specific needs of the student population were not being addressed, there was a lack of strong discipline, class sizes were too large, parental involvement was low, and teachers were not encouraged and supported in collaboration efforts. Overall, the teachers that participated in this study felt that Victor Middle School was not adequately addressing school climate.

The school climate influences the way in which teachers respond and identify the needs of the school. In examining various dimensions of school climate, this study revealed that teacher experience has an influence on the perception of school climate, with most experienced teachers expressing more positive dimensions of school climate than the other three levels of teaching experience. Additionally, each school had a school climate that is unique to the school population and needs. Just as teachers' perceptions of school climate were evaluated, the next research question examined how teachers' perceive the leadership style of their principal.*Research Question #2*

How do teachers perceive the leadership style of the principal within the middle school in which they work? Participating teachers completed the Leadership Effectiveness Adaptability Descriptive (LEAD) survey and it was analyzed to provide a synopsis of the principal's leadership style as perceived by the teachers.

A MANOVA was used to determine if there were significant mean differences on the measure of leadership style (LEAD). Therefore, leadership style was the dependent variable and the independent variables were ethnicity, degree (bachelor, master, or doctorate), experience (1-3 years, 4-10 years, 11-20 years, or 21 or more years), and school (Jones, Victor, Stewart, or Roberts). The data were examined to identify the main effects and possible interactions among leadership styles and the independent variables.

Univariate F tests for each of the dependent variables revealed significant differences between degree, experience and leadership style  $F(3, 42) = 4.25, p < .05$ . Post hoc Tukey comparisons indicated that the staff at Roberts identified more with their principal's leadership style than the other schools. A significant mean difference was found between Roberts (mean = 24.92) principal's leadership style and Stewart (mean = 20.40). Additional significant mean difference was found between Roberts (mean = 24.92) principal's leadership style and Victor Middle School's (mean = 19.17) leadership style (see Table 5).

When comparing the leadership style of the Roberts Middle School principal and the Stewart Middle School principal a significant mean difference was found. The Stewart principal was perceived by the staff to be "telling" as the primary leadership style and "delegating" as the secondary style. During the interview process, teachers at Stewart Middle School commented on how the principal lacked the ability to clearly communicate the needs of the administration with the teaching staff. One teacher stated, "I never know what he wants. It is the end of the year and there is not any directions or information pertaining to next year. It has been like this all year long. It gets really

frustrating as a teacher to find out you were suppose to have done something which you did not know about.”

Again, Independent Samples T-tests were used to determine significant mean differences with leadership style related to gender and years of teaching at the same school. There were no significant mean differences identified.

In further examining the leadership style, the LEAD questionnaire was used to determine the primary, secondary, and style adaptability score for each participating school. The primary leadership style is the major leadership style and is the first form of leadership used by the principal. The secondary leadership style is the backup style the principals revert to when the primary style does not seem to be working. The style adaptability score refers to the principal’s ability to adjust to the needs of the staff.

*Jones Middle School.* Twenty-five teachers completed the LEAD-Other survey analyzing the principal’s leadership style. The range of primary leadership styles ranged from “telling” to “delegating.” The primary style of leadership perceived by the teachers at Jones Middle School was “delegating.” The “delegating” principal recognizes the readiness and experience of the staff and allows them to take responsibility. The “delegating” principal provides little direction or support and allows the individuals the opportunity to determine a solution and carry out their plans.

The secondary style or supporting style is the “back-up” style when the primary style is not appropriate or is not working. Teachers completing this survey identified the secondary style as “selling.” In this style, the staff is willing but unable to take the responsibility or lacks the skills to complete the task on their own. This style provides directive behavior with the principal providing systematic directions and a supportive

nature to reinforce the individuals/staffs willingness to complete the task(s). The leader must provide clear directions and explanations to the individual/staff (sell the product) to get the appropriate and desired behaviors.

The style adaptability score indicates the preferences and tendencies of the leader. The style adaptability score is the degree to which the leader is able to vary their leadership style according to the readiness level of the follower(s) in various situations. The range of the score varies from zero to 36. Expressing adaptability as a score allows some generalizations to be made based on numerical benchmarks. The style adaptability score for Jones Middle School principal was 24.04. The scores ranged from 19 to 30. This range reflects a moderate degree of adaptability. Scores in this range usually indicate a pronounced primary leadership style, “delegating,” with less flexibility into the secondary style, “selling.”

*Stewart Middle School.* Stewart Middle School had twelve individuals return the surveys with eleven having completed the LEAD – Other survey. The primary leadership style of the principal perceived by the 11 participants was identified as “telling.” The teachers’ perceived the principal as viewing them as unable and unwilling to take responsibility or to complete the necessary tasks. A directive style is applied in which the principal provides clear, specific directions and high levels of supervision.

The secondary leadership style was identified as “delegating.” The “delegating” principal recognizes the readiness and experience of the staff and allows them to take responsibility. The “delegating” principal provides little direction or support and allows the individuals the opportunity to determine a solution and carry out their plans. This is in high contrast to the primary leadership style previously described.

The style adaptability score of the principal was 20.4 with a score range of 11 to 28. An adaptability score of less than 23 indicates a need for self-development to improve both the ability to diagnose task readiness and to use appropriate leader behaviors.

Due to the extreme ranges of leadership style and low adaptability score, teachers were asked to provide additional information in follow-up interviews. One teacher stated that she was more comfortable seeking out the Assistant Principal for clarification and to present the teacher's needs than discussing this with the Principal. "You never know how he is going to react. You always feel uncomfortable and feel as though you will be punished for voicing concerns or disagreeing with a decision." Another teacher stated, "The principal claims to be available for teachers, but you can never pin him down. It is easier to get information from other teachers or the Assistant Principal."

Another common thread that emerged from the interviews was the lack of clear communication from the administration to the teachers. This may have reflected the varying leadership styles identified by the teachers. "The principal does not clarify or provide teachers with information. It is the end of the year and other teachers are just as confused as I am about the procedures and plans for next year." Another teacher pointed out that a group of teachers were notified the last week of school that they would be moving rooms next year. Throughout the interviews, teachers expressed frustration and confusion at the lack of communication and clear details to finish the school year.

*Victor Middle School.* Victor Middle School had seven surveys completed and returned. The seven participating teachers identified the primary leadership style of the principal as "participating." The teachers felt the principal viewed them as able but



unwilling to do what needs to be accomplished. The teachers may be unwilling or lack the confidence to complete the task. During the interviews, one teacher commented, but did not want to be quoted in fear of recognition, the need for the principal to respect and trust the decision-making skills of the teachers. However, the other teachers that participated in the interview process were excited about the concept of teaming next year and the potential for staff involvement in the decision-making process.

The secondary leadership style of the principal was identified as “telling.” The teacher’s perceived that the principal viewed them as unable and unwilling to take responsibility or to complete the necessary tasks. A directive style is applied in which the “telling” principal provides clear, specific directions and high levels of supervision.

The style adaptability score of the principal was 19.7 with a score range of 13 to 25. An adaptability score of less than 23 indicates a need for self-development to improve both the ability to diagnose task readiness and to use appropriate leader behaviors. During the interviews, one teacher mentioned that she was concerned with her students and met with the principal to discuss what she could do in her classroom to improve student achievement and discipline. The teacher was seeking information and guidance that she could immediately take back and apply. Instead, she was frustrated when the principal provided her with alternative articles and books to read to obtain the information. “When I asked her for help and advice, something I could take back and use immediately in my classroom, she gave me a bunch of reading and told me to improve.”

*Roberts Middle School.* Roberts Middle School had fourteen teachers return the survey forms with thirteen having completed the LEAD-Other survey. The teachers identified the primary leadership style of the principal as a “two-style profile.” In other

words, there was not one primary leadership style identified, but two with equal scoring. The two primary leadership styles were “delegating” and “telling.”

In delegating, the principal recognizes the readiness and experience of the staff and allows them to take responsibility. The principal provides little direction or support and allows the individuals the opportunity to determine a solution and carry out their plans. This is in contrast to the second primary leadership style, telling. In telling, the teachers’ perceived the principal as viewing them unable and unwilling to take responsibility or to complete the necessary tasks. A directive style is applied in which the principal provides clear, specific directions and high levels of supervision.

The secondary leadership style for this principal was identified as one of the primary leadership styles, “delegating.” One teacher summed up the leadership style of this principal by stating, “She cares about her staff and creates a fun work environment. She is not a dictator, but a guide and gives us the freedom to try new things. She is honest with us when it is being mandated and we understand that it is a directive we can not debate.”

Out of the four principals asked to complete the LEAD-Self survey to analyze their own view of their leadership style, the principal at Roberts was the only one to have completed and returned the survey. She identified her primary leadership style as “participating” with the secondary leadership style as “telling.” The teachers’ perception of her leadership style differed greatly to her perception. The teachers’ perceived this principal to be high in “delegating” and “telling” with the secondary style as “delegating.” The teachers at Roberts perceived the principal as allowing them autonomy and professional freedom within their job.

The style adaptability score identified by the teachers was 24.83 with a range of 18 to 29. The style adaptability score identified by the principal was 26. Both scores fall in the range from 24 to 29. This range reflects a moderate degree of adaptability. Scores in this range usually indicate a pronounced primary leadership style with less flexibility in the secondary styles. With the teachers' perceived primary styles being in two categories and the secondary also being a primary style, this adaptability range is within acceptable limits.

*Summary.* The leadership style of the principal varied between schools. The principals' ability to respond appropriately and meet the professional and personal needs of the staff was reflected in their leadership styles. In this study, the leadership style and adaptability score for each participating principal was identified. Teacher interviews provided insight and support for the leadership style identified.

The principal at Jones Middle School was identified as a "delegating" principal. The adaptability score identified this principal as being able to adapt moderately to the needs of the organization and teachers. Teacher interviews identified the principal's respect for them as professionals and assisting them in their duties.

Stewart Middle School's principal was identified as a "telling" leader with the secondary style of "delegating." The adaptability score would suggest that the principal should further analyze her personal leadership style and learn how to properly diagnose teacher readiness and how to respond properly to the teachers' needs. The adaptability score and diverse primary and secondary leadership styles would explain teacher confusion and the lack of communication from the principal.

The principal at Roberts Middle School was identified as having a two-style profile. The primary leadership style was “delegating” and “telling.” The adaptability score showed a moderate degree of adaptability and the principal’s ability to respond to a situation appropriately. Teachers were aware of how the principal would respond in various situations and felt the principal adequately responded to their needs.

Victor Middle School teachers perceived the principal as having a “participating” leadership style. The secondary leadership style was identified as “telling.” The teachers perceived the principal having a low perception of their readiness and ability to respond to the situations. The adaptability level of the principal was perceived to be in need of self-development. The principal needs to learn how to identify teacher readiness and identify appropriate leader behaviors for individual situations. The final question examined teacher transiency in each school in relation to school climate and the leadership style of the principal.

### *Research Question #3*

What are the relationships among characteristics of teacher-perceived school climate and teacher-perceived leadership style in relation to teacher transiency? A MANOVA was used to determine if there were significant mean differences on the measure of school climate (USCS), leadership style (LEAD), and transiency. Therefore, the dependent variables included: administration, risky behaviors of students, student awareness, instructional strategies, leadership style, and transiency. The independent variables were ethnicity, degree (bachelor, master, or doctorate), experience (1-3 years, 4-10 years, 11-20 years, or 21 or more years), and school (Jones, Victor, Stewart, or

Roberts). The data were examined to identify the main effects and possible interactions among school climate dimensions and the independent variables.

Univariate F tests for each of the dependent variables revealed significant difference between school and transiency  $F(3, 42) = 21.21, p < .001$ . Post hoc Tukey comparisons indicated that teachers at the different schools viewed teacher transiency differently and years of experience differed significantly in their perceptions of teacher transiency (see Table 4 & 5).

Previously, the leadership style of the principal in each of the four schools was identified (see Leadership Styles). Principals with “delegating” leadership style had a lower teacher transiency rate. The principal at Roberts Middle School had a “two-style profile” in which the primary leadership style was both “delegating” and “telling” with a transiency rate of 3.7%. Additionally, the principal at Jones Middle School had a “delegating” primary leadership style and a teacher transiency rate of 16.9%. The principal at Stewart Middle School had a “delegating” secondary leadership style and a teacher transiency rate of 13%. This is compared to the Victor Middle School principal whose primary leadership style was “participating” and the secondary was “telling” and the school had a teacher transiency rate of 30.6%. (Table 7 provides additional insight into teacher transiency.)

At Roberts Middle School, only two teachers were leaving the school this year. One teacher wanted to move closer to home and the other retired from the profession. Victor Middle School had nineteen teachers departing their school this year. Twelve of these teachers transferred to another school within the same district while another four moved out of state, and another two teachers quit teaching. Stewart reported ten teachers

leaving their school. Eight of these teachers transferred to another school within the district and the remaining two were moving out of state. Jones reported nine teachers departing their school. Four of these positions were lost due to reduction of student population. Out of the nine teachers, five moved to another school within the district, three teachers moved out of state, and one teacher retired.

When examining the degree level of the teachers, there was a significant mean difference between the teacher's degree and the teachers' perception of transiency. Teachers with a master's degree viewed a higher level of transiency within the school. This mean difference was supported by teachers with more years of teaching experience at the same school. Teachers that remained at the same school for four or more years felt that there was a higher level of transiency in the school.

In addition to the previously mentioned demographics that were related to transiency within the school, the level of experience (total years of teaching) had a significant mean difference with respect to transiency. Teachers with 21 or more years of teaching, perceived a higher level of transiency. There were significant mean differences between beginning teachers, one to three years of experience, and intermediate teachers, four to ten years. There was not a significant mean difference between the experienced teacher, 11 to 20 years of teaching experience, and the most experienced teacher, however, there was an overall pattern of increasing means as years of experience increased (see Table 4).

When comparing the four participating middle schools and the teacher's perception of transiency, significant mean differences were determined among the four schools. Victor Middle School teachers had a higher perception of transiency than the

teachers did at Stewart Middle School. Victor Middle School reported a total of 19 teachers departing their school this year (31% of their teaching staff). Stewart Middle School reported ten teachers leaving, 13% of their teaching staff.

Another significant mean difference was between Roberts and Jones Middle Schools. Roberts's teachers viewed a higher level of transiency than Jones Middle School. This was a unique finding since Roberts reported two teachers (four percent of their teaching staff) leaving their school, while Jones reported losing nine teachers (17% of the teaching staff). Jones viewed a higher level than that of Victor Middle. Overall, the school with the lowest perception of transiency was Stewart Middle School who actually reported losing ten teachers (13% of their teaching staff).

*Summary.* The findings of this study identified a correlation between school climate, leadership style of the principal, and teacher transiency within an urban middle school. Within each of the four participating schools the school climate and leadership style were examined and analyzed according to the teachers' perceptions. Within Jones Middle School, the teachers identified a positive school climate with a high leadership style, "delegating," and a low 9.4% teacher transiency rate. (The transiency rate of 16.9% was adjusted as four of these teachers were transferred due to a reduction in student population.)

Similarly, Roberts Middle School teachers perceived a high and positive school climate and a two-style profile. The primary leadership style of "delegating" and "telling" was followed by the secondary leadership style of "delegating." This unique leadership style and the adaptability score demonstrated the principal's ability to adapt to

each situation and respond appropriately. The teacher transiency rate at Roberts Middle School was low (3.7%).

Stewart Middle School teachers' perceived a moderate school climate and a "telling" leadership style. The adaptability score suggested that the principal learn how to diagnose situations and respond appropriately. The 13% teacher transiency rate and teacher interviews supported the desire for teachers to transfer schools when the school climate was perceived to be low and the principal's leadership style was not adequately meeting their needs.

Finally, Victor Middle School was perceived to have a low school climate and a leadership style of "participating." Teacher interviews identified the principal's lack of support and respect toward teachers which, in turn, impacted their perception of the school. Thirty and six-tenths percent of the teachers at Victor Middle School intended to transfer the following school year.

The four participating schools were unique in their challenges and responses to the study. This study determined a correlation between school climate, leadership style, and transiency within the urban middle schools. In examining the four participating schools, as the school climate decreased, and the principal's leadership style reflected a lower readiness level of teachers, the transiency rate of teachers increased.

## Conclusion

School climate was unique in each school examined. Teachers responded differently to the atmosphere of the school. Similarly, the leadership style of the principal impacted the school and staff. Teachers' response to the principal's leadership



style influenced the teachers' perception of school climate and their decision to stay or leave the school.

In examining the four schools, Roberts Middle School staff had a higher and more positive school climate than the other three schools. In this, the staff had a more positive viewpoint of the administration and were willing to work with the principal through the challenges the school faced. The teacher support and response to the school climate and leadership style was also represented by the low teacher transiency rate at Roberts Middle School.

Throughout this chapter and for each research question, each participating school has been identified with its unique profile, the principal's leadership style, and how the school compares in relation to leadership style, school climate, and transiency. Since each school is unique in its challenges and student population, the means for each category reflected these differences (see Table 3). The following chapter will discuss the findings of this study, examine the evidence for each of the research questions, relate the findings to the literature, and provide recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings of this study, examine the evidence for each of the research questions, relate the findings to the literature, and provide recommendations for future research. This study was concerned with determining the relationship between teacher transiency and the teachers' perception of school climate and leadership style in four urban middle schools. In 2001-2002, the participating school district served over 244,684 students. This is a 36.8% increase in student population since 1996. The school district maintained 244 schools during the 2001-2002 school year with 12,625 licensed personnel. The school district covers 7,910 square miles.

A review of the literature revealed a relationship existing between school climate and leadership (Winter & Sweeney, 1994; Senge, 1995). Leadership in a school setting is the result of the way principals create a school climate that is characterized by staff productivity, student productivity, and creative thought (Ubben & Hughes, 1987). Consequently, the principal's qualities and behavior determine to a large degree how the subordinates feel about their organization (Eblen, 1987). This study hypothesized that a particular leadership style may either foster or hinder teacher commitment to the school and influence teachers transferring to other schools within the district.

A warm, positive climate contributes greatly to the productivity of the institution (Stenson, 1985). Leadership style has a direct affect on a school's success with climate improvement (Stenson, 1985). While it is very important that schools focus on improving school climate, it is important to remember that each person in the organization has an influence, negative or positive, on school climate. The key to the quality and climate of the school is through the leadership of the school (Tarter & Hoy, 1998).

This study utilized quantitative and qualitative techniques to answer the research questions. The findings in this study indicate significant differences between school climate and the principal's leadership style. The qualitative interviews provided additional clarification and insight into the relationship of school climate, leadership style, and teacher transiency. The next section will address the findings in relation to each research question.

All research questions were addressed using data from the Urban School Climate Survey, the Leadership Effectiveness Adaptability Descriptive, school documents, and teacher interviews. The research questions are as follows:

1. How do teachers perceive the school climate of the middle school in which they work?
2. How do teachers perceive the leadership style of the principal within the middle school in which they work?
3. What are the relationships among characteristics of teacher-perceived school climate and teacher-perceived leadership style in relation to teacher transiency?

## School Climate

School climate has been defined as the "feel" of a school (Halpin & Croft, 1963), as its "collective personality" (Norton, 1984). School climate is defined by Freiberg & Stein (1999) as "the heart and soul of the school. It is about the essence of a school that leads a child, a teacher, an administrator, a staff member to love the school and to look forward to being there each school day" (p. 11). Climate is the human environment within which the teachers of a school do their work. Like the air in a room, climate surrounds and affects everything that happens in an organization (Freiberg, 1998). As one moves from school to school, it is possible to note that one school feels different from another. This is primarily the result of school climate.

In 2001-2002, the participating state was ranked second to last in Education Week's "Quality Counts" report. The participating school district currently requires all schools to submit a School Improvement Plan. A portion of this plan must address an area of school climate (i.e. risky behaviors, parental involvement, teacher cohesion and morale, etc.). Participating principals were open to determining specific areas of school climate that needed improvement in their school buildings.

This study determined significant mean differences between the teachers with over 20 years of teaching experience and their perceptions of school climate. Those teachers had a significantly more positive perception of school climate. Riehl and Sipple (1996) found that school climate variables were strongly associated with professional commitment. Teachers with twenty or more years of teaching experience are committed to the profession. These teachers were also aware of instructional approaches to use in their classroom, and were sympathetic to the needs and concerns of the principal. Thus,

the longer a teacher remains in the profession the more positive outlook the teacher has on school climate.

Darling-Hammond and Berry (1988) identified the importance for experienced teachers to become teacher leaders. These teachers can share their expertise and experiences through mentoring and school leadership. Taylor and Bogarch (1994) encourage teacher leaders to be involved in the school decision-making process. Their experience and knowledge of teaching practices provides an additional view to educational challenges and demands. As teachers remain in the profession and at the same school, they become active members of the school community and assume various leadership roles.

Additionally, differences were identified in relation to school climate at each of the participating schools. Teachers identified the need to focus on instructional strategies to fit the needs of the students. Jensen and Kiley (2001) encouraged schools to examine diversity and individual needs when considering school climate. Teachers feel less effective when principals fail to be receptive and respect teachers' ideas and suggestions (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Participating teachers identified the need for time and opportunity to discuss concerns within their classrooms and to identify instructional approaches and strategies that would enhance their teaching. This study found that a lack of respect and focus on teacher needs lowered the school climate. Principals need to address their teachers' needs during staff development training and provide on-going assistance.

Collaboration among teachers promoted an exchange of information about teaching and professional development opportunities (Madsen & Hipp, 1999).

Additionally, Bryke and Driscoll (1988) found in communally organized schools, teacher morale was higher. Half of the participating schools were organized in teams. Both of these schools exhibited a more positive school climate than the other participating schools. Instructional activities provide teachers with opportunities to share their expertise and empower each other.

Teachers who are committed to the organization feel a sense of ownership for student achievement and focus their efforts on school goals. The principal plays an important part in establishing these conditions for teachers (Hord & Boyd, 1995). Principals need to encourage teacher collaboration and work with the teachers professionally. This study identified teachers who felt accepted and received positive professional assistance had a higher perception of school climate. Similarly, teachers who were not offered assistance or were discouraged when seeking assistance had a negative perception of school climate. Hoy and Miskel (1987) identified a healthy school environment in which teachers feel good about themselves, what they are accomplishing, and have a sense of achievement.

There was significant evidence in this study from the surveys and interviews to determine the perception of school climate in the four middle schools. Roberts Middle School had a positive school climate specifically in the areas of instructional strategies, student awareness, risky behaviors, and administration. The other three schools had significant areas of school climate that were positive and open. Victor Middle and Stewart Middle had low school climate as it related to instructional strategies. This finding was supported by teacher interviews in which communication and teacher cohesion were identified as being low. Teachers identified a high frustration with the

principal due to a lack of communication. This lack of communication influenced the teachers' perception of school climate and the principal's leadership style.

School climate studies are an examination of one moment within a school building (Hoy, Hoffman, Sabo, & Bliss, 1996). School leaders need to be continually analyzing and evaluating the climate of their school. The next question will review and interpret the findings associated with the leadership style of the principal.

### Leadership Style

Leadership is "the behavior of an individual.... directing the activities of a group toward a shared goal" (Hemphill & Coons, 1957, p. 7). Leadership requires the principal to be receptive and responsive to the needs of the staff and the organization. This study examined the primary and secondary leadership style of the participating principals. Their style adaptability score identifies their ability and readiness to adjust their leadership style to the needs of the staff and organization.

The concept of adaptive leader behavior questions the existence of a "best" style of leadership; it is not a matter of best style but the most effective style for the particular situation and school (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2002). "The more managers adapt their style of leader behavior to meet the particular situation and the needs of their followers, the more effective they will tend to be in reaching personal and organizational goals" (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969, p. 15).

Through this study, a significant relationship was found between Roberts's principal's leadership style and two other school's (Victor and Stewart) leadership style. Teachers at Roberts Middle School were more supportive and aware of their principal's

leadership style. Teacher interviews provided supporting evidence about the principal's ability or lack of ability to adapt to the changing needs of the staff. The principals at Stewart and Victor had an adaptability score that reflected the need for self-development to improve both the ability to diagnose task readiness and to use appropriate leader behaviors. Teacher interviews identified a lack of clear communication and inadequate response to teacher needs at Stewart and Victor Middle Schools. The Roberts' principal adaptability score reflected a pronounced primary leadership style with less flexibility into the secondary styles. Teachers at Roberts Middle School were more aware of the principal's reactions and response in various situations and therefore the teachers could adequately prepare and respond to the principal's leadership style.

Leadership is a two-way process in which the staff needs to feel comfortable and respond effectively to the requests by the principal. The principal needs to acknowledge the professionalism of the staff and respond appropriately to their needs (Yukl, 1998). Dinham, Cairney, Craigie, and Wilson (1995) determined it was equally apparent that the behaviors of the leaders were also in part a product of the school environment and interactions with others.

Leadership is working with people to accomplish a specific goal (Blanchard, Zigarmi, & Zigarmi, 1987). Hersey and Blanchard (1969) identified how essential it is to treat different subordinates differently, and to treat the same subordinate differently as the situation changes. The leadership style is based on the readiness level of the staff (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2002). Thus, principals in each school need to be aware and responsive to the individual and collective needs of the teachers and organization.



This study identified that schools with a lack of clear communication and inappropriate response to teachers lowered the school climate.

As each staff member is on a different level of experience and requires a different level of support from the principal, the principal must be able to correctly and adequately respond to the needs of each individual (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2002). If the individual feels as if their needs are not being addressed, they may select to work in a different location with a different principal (Ingersoll, 1995). To determine the influence of leadership, the next research question reviews and interprets the findings associated with school climate, leadership style, and teacher transiency.

#### School Climate, Leadership Style, and Transiency

When teachers feel invited, wanted, and respected within the school, there is a low level of teacher transiency (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). As teachers began to feel discouraged, undervalued, and disrespected, the level of teacher transiency increases (Bluedorn, 1982; Halaby & Weakliem, 1989). Victor Middle School reported the highest level of teacher transiency (31%). The leadership style of Victor Middle was primarily “participating” in which the principal told the teachers what to do. Teacher interviews identified a high level of teacher frustration and dissatisfaction with the school administration. Johnson and Birkeland (2003) identified dissatisfaction with the administration as one of the highest reasons for leaving the school.

Additionally, Victor Middle School teachers expressed concern with various school climate factors (i.e. parental involvement, teacher cohesion and morale, at-risk behaviors of the students, student awareness, etc.) that were not being addressed

adequately by the administration. Darling-Hammond (2002) identified resources and teacher collaboration to be related to teachers' decisions to leave the school. During the interviews, teachers at Victor Middle School identified dissatisfaction with the administration, lack of supplies for their classroom, and isolation as areas of frustration. The findings of this study at Victor Middle School supported the hypothesis of this study that low school climate and low leadership style will result in higher teacher transiency.

Surprisingly, Roberts' teachers viewed a higher level of transiency than that of Jones teachers. This finding is surprising in relation to the positive school climate at Roberts Middle School and both Roberts and Jones principals' primary leadership styles being "delegating." Additionally, Roberts reported a lower number of teachers departing the school than that of Jones. Further studies may be able to determine if the teachers at Jones are accustomed to high teacher turnover that they view this year as a low teacher transiency year. This finding is not supported by teacher interviews.

Eblen (1987) identified the leadership behavior of the principal to be a major influence on the level of teacher commitment to a school. Additionally, the way the principal uses their skills and leadership style to create a school climate is characterized by teacher commitment, staff morale, and student productivity (Ubben & Hughes, 1987). In examining the influence of teacher transiency in relation to school climate and leadership style, this study was unable to determine a definite connection between the three dimensions of the study. However, significant mean differences have been found that would recommend the need to further evaluate this area of school climate research.

For example, other studies have highlighted a positive correlation of teachers' perceptions of the principal's leadership behavior with teacher morale (Smith & Scott,

1990) and teacher commitment to the school (Riehl & Sipple, 1996). Overall, these studies strongly suggest that there may be important relationships between a principal's leadership style, school climate, and teacher transiency.

Additionally in this study, significant mean differences were determined based on the educational degree held by the teacher and the number of years teaching at the same school. Teachers with a master degree viewed a higher level of teacher transiency than those with bachelor or doctoral degree. Teachers that had remained at the same school for four or more years viewed a higher teacher transiency than the teachers who had worked at the same school for less than four years. Since three of the four participating schools were low-income schools, teacher transiency had been identified (Touchton & Acker-Hocemar, 2002) to be higher within these schools.

Touchton and Acker-Hocemar (2002) identified high teacher migration at high-poverty schools with limited resources. New teachers struggled with the limited resources and lack of experience when teaching in these schools. The participating school district implemented a new policy in which new teachers must remain at the same school for three years. Tenured teachers were permitted to transfer to another school within the district after two years. This policy was intended to reduce the high teacher transiency rates in low-income schools.

Significant mean differences were also found based on the number of years of teaching experience. Most experienced teachers viewed a higher level of teacher transiency than the other three categories. This may be due to the number of years in the profession and the lack of stability among the low-income schools within the participating district. Teacher transiency should be a focus of research since underlying

conditions, characteristics, and effects of teacher transiency impact the school and community in significant ways (Ingersoll, 1999).

### Limitations

Several limitations impacted this study. First, generalizations from the finding of this study are limited to populations with similar characteristics. Second, this study focused on teachers' perceptions of school climate and principals' leadership styles. Lastly, the principals' perceptions were not included, as intended, due to a lack of principal response.

The reliability and validity of this study may be limited since both instruments used to collect data were self-reporting instruments. While falsifying data in an educational context is rare (Hopkins, Stanley, & Hopkins, 1990), the teachers who have completed these surveys may have enhanced their responses based on the information they believed the researcher wanted or based on how they wanted the school to be viewed. One source of error is the use of ambiguous items that can be interpreted in different ways by different respondents (Shipper, 1991), such as teachers who may perceive the survey questions in a different manner than another. An accurate judgment is difficult to make, since the respondent may not have noticed the behavior of the principal at the time it occurred or may be unable to remember how many times this behavior occurred during a specific time period (Shipper, 1991). Responses may also be distorted by stereotypes and implicit theories about what behaviors occur together (Lord, 1977) such as the principal feeling ill and teachers perceiving this behavior as disappointed or upset.

This study is further limited and biased by the selection of schools based on the principals' willingness to participate in the study that may have resulted in limiting the various leadership styles in which to study. True selection of the schools and various leadership styles was limited to the selection of schools with principals who were willing to be reviewed.

### Recommendations for Future Research

This study suggests that additional research should be conducted in the area of school climate and teacher transiency. Examples of such studies might include the following:

1. A study could be conducted to determine the influence of Article 35-2 (C) Voluntary Transfers in the participating school district on school climate. This policy is intended to support low-income schools experiencing high teacher transiency. The 2003-2004 school year will be the first year the policy will be enforced. The findings in this study suggested that low-income schools would have a lower school climate and reduction in staff morale due to the inability to transfer schools.
2. The current study could be repeated to determine if there is a stronger correlation among the principal's leadership style within the middle schools. With the limited number of participants and similar leadership styles among the participating principals, a wider range of leadership styles and a higher number of participants is recommended to support this study. The findings in this study suggested a correlation between the principal's leadership style and the school

climate within the middle school context. A correlation could be determined that principals with “telling” or “selling” leadership styles will have a lower school climate than those principals with “participating” or “delegating” leadership styles.

3. What impact does teacher transiency have on leadership style? Schools with high teacher transiency could be examined separately to determine if the teacher transiency rate has an influence on the principal’s leadership style. This study suggested that the principals with high teacher transiency rates maintained their leadership styles in the “telling” and “selling” stages to meet the demands of the new teachers.
4. Personal leadership style of principals could be studied. How styles impact decision-making processes within their school could be identified. Personal reflection and awareness of staff needs and concerns are necessary to maintain a positive school climate within the school. Based on the results of the current study, it would seem that principals are not consistently aware of the teachers’ needs and thereby responds inappropriately to the staff. Identifying the teachers’ needs incorrectly may lower the school climate and may increase the teacher transiency rate.
5. A repeat of the current study with a higher yield return of surveys and across additional school districts could be conducted. This study is limited in its findings due to the low number of participants and lack of principal support once the study began. Additional schools outside of this district could provide additional insight

regarding the influence on leadership style and school climate on teacher transiency.

Teachers and principals who find their school in need of change should begin to focus on uncovering what is producing the undesired effects and determine what areas they can begin to focus on toward improving the climate of the school.

### Conclusion

This study was concerned with the influence of school climate and leadership style on teacher transiency in urban middle schools. An important goal of this study was to provide practical data to the participating schools for improving school climate and reducing teacher transiency. The data and analysis of this study have important implications that can be utilized by the administration of the participating schools and officials within the participating school district.

This study recommends that each of the four participating schools further examine their school climate and leadership style. At Jones Middle School it is recommended that the school climate focus on targeting communication between the principal and the teachers, and focus on the specific needs of the student population. Stewart Middle School needs to improve student discipline, communication, and the leadership style of the principal. It is recommended that the principal seek assistance by other administrators to enhance appropriate leader behaviors and learn how to diagnose the needs and readiness of the teachers adequately. It is recommended that Roberts Middle School continue current leadership practices and continue to focus on the specific needs of the student population. Victor Middle School needs improvement in all areas of

school climate. It is recommended that the principal and teachers begin to focus on one or two areas of school climate (i.e. communication, discipline, teacher collaboration). The principal needs to seek assistance with the leadership style and learn how to diagnose the teachers' needs appropriately and respond appropriately to the needs based on the individual situation.

A research-based body of literature existed prior to this study that suggested potential for a correlation between leadership style and school climate. Similar studies with various instruments (see Appendix I) have been conducted in other school climate studies; however, there has been a lack of research at the middle school level. It was intended for this study to yield useful information for the participating administrators and further enhance the current research by adding the middle school level to the study.

The data analysis and teacher interviews revealed a strong relationship between school climate, leadership style, and teacher transiency. Four areas of school climate were examined: administration, risky behaviors, student awareness, instructional approaches, along with the leadership style of the principal, and the teachers' perceptions of teacher transiency.

It is apparent that the leadership of each school, particularly that of the principal, has influenced school climate (Dinham, Cairney, Craigie, & Wilson, 1995). Teacher interviews supported the survey analysis and literature review in connection with the influence of leadership style on school climate. Finally, it is difficult to separate the principal from the climate of the school (Winter & Sweeney, 1994), as there are cause and effect relationships at work, with the principal influencing and being influenced by



the school and those involved within and without of the school (Dinham, Cairney, Craigie, & Wilson, 1995).

In this study the influence of school climate, leadership style, and teacher transiency in urban middle schools was examined. Significant mean differences were found in relation to school climate, leadership style, and teacher transiency. Further research is recommended to examine the impact of teacher transiency on school climate in the urban middle school contexts.

APPENDIX I

SCHOOL CLIMATE INSTRUMENTS

Appendix I: School Climate Instruments

Author, Year	Instrument	Factors	Perspective
George Stern with the Psychological Research Center at Syracuse, NY 1961	OCI - Organizational Climate Index HSCI – High School Characteristics Index (HS version of the OCI)	Combination of 2 instruments: the College Characteristics Index – adult perceptions, and the Activities Index – student needs	Organizational Perspective with some Psychosocial
Halpin & Croft 1963	OCDQ – Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire	Examines the degree of satisfaction with teacher-principal interaction in elementary schools.	Organizational
Likert 1968	Likert Profile of a School Questionnaire	Goal commitment Decision-making process Team cooperation	Organizational
Litwin & Stringer 1968	Litwin & Stringer Climate Questionnaire	Structure Responsibility Reward Risk Support Conflict Standards Identity	Organizational
Coughlan 1970	SS – School Survey	Teacher morale Satisfaction with working conditions	Organizational * Used in conjunction with the LEI and MSI
Sinclair 1970	ESES – Elementary School Environment Survey	Practical climates Community Awareness Propriety Scholarship	Psychosocial *Examines student perceptions of teachers & peer values & attitudes to develop profile
Charles F. Kettering, LTD. Under the direction of R.S. Fox Early 1970s	Kettering (CFK)	General climate factors Program determinants Process determinants Material	Organizational

		determinants	
Anderson & Walberg 1974	LEI – Learning Environment Inventory		Psychosocial
Moss & Tricket 1974	CES – Classroom Environment Scale		Psychosocial
Fraser 1979	ICEQ – Individualized Classroom Environment Questionnaire	Personalization Participation Independence Investigation Differentiation	Psychosocial
Wubbles, Creton & Holvast 1985  Developed in Netherlands	QTI – Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction	Leadership Helpful/Friendly Understand Student responsibility & freedom Uncertain Dissatisfied Admonishing Strict Behavior	Psychosocial *Students' and teachers' perceptions of interpersonal behavior
Fisher & Fraser 1981	MCI – My class Inventory		*Parallel to LEI
Taylor & Fraser 1991	CLES – Constructivist Learning Environment Survey	Personal relevance Uncertainty Critical voice Shared control Student negotiation	Psychological view of learning focused on students developing their own knowledge
Fraser & Wilkinson 1993	SLEI – Science Laboratory Environment Survey	Student cohesiveness Open-ended Integration Rule clarity Material environment	Psychosocial
Giddings & Dellar 1990	School Organizational Climate Questionnaire (SOCQ)	School commitment Peer cohesion Work pressure Professional involvement Participatory decision-making Autonomy Innovation	Organizational

Freiberg 1998	Consistency Management Project	What students worry about Entrance/Exit interviews Cafeteria ambient noise checklist	Psychosocial
Creemers & Reezigt 1999	Measuring the Climate Factors: A Dutch checklist for the Assessment of the Quality of Classroom and School Climate	School plan for effectiveness Physical environment Teacher behavior School system	Organizational -low on social factors and no items on expectations
Hall & George 1999	Change Facilitator Style Questionnaire (CFSQ)	Social/Informal Formal/Meaningful Trust in others Administrative efficiency Day-to-day Vision and planning	Organizational
Olafson, Bendixen, Tirella, & Espozita 2001	Urban School Climate Survey	Leadership Teacher collaboration Diversity At-risk Transiency	Organizational

APPENDIX II  
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### Interview Questions for Participants

1. How many years have you been teaching at this school?
2. What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges this school is currently facing?
3. What do you perceive to be the biggest strengths of this school?
4. Do you feel the principal is aware of your concerns?
5. Does the principal assist you in your projects/needs? In what way?
6. Do you perceive the teachers in this school to work cooperatively with each other?
7. Do you enjoy working for this principal? Why or why not?
8. Are you planning, or would you like to leave this school?
9. If you answered yes to #8, why are you leaving or why would you leave this school?
10. Would you ever work for this principal again? Why or why not?
11. Do you feel the students respect and value the teachers and staff of this school?
12. How is the communication between the administration and the teachers in this school?
13. How many times have you transferred schools and for what reasons?

### Interview Questions for Principals

1. How many years have you been Principal at this school?
2. What do you perceive to be the biggest challenges this school is currently facing?
3. What do you perceive to be the biggest strengths of this school?
4. How do you assist your teachers with their projects/needs?
5. Do you perceive the teachers in this school to work cooperatively with each other?
6. How many teachers left your school this year?
7. What were some of the reasons for leaving the school?
8. Do you feel the students respect and value the teachers and staff of this school?
9. How do the parents and community respond to the needs and concerns of the school?
10. How is the communication between the administration and the teachers in this school?
11. Does the administrative team present a united front among the staff and community?
12. What do you see as your biggest strength as a Principal?
13. What do you see as your strongest weakness as a Principal?



## APPENDIX III

### FORMS/DOCUMENTS



## Human Participant Protections Education for Research

### Completion Certificate

This is to certify that

**Jenefer Tirella**

has completed the **Human Participants Protection Education for Research Teams** online course, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), on 02/11/2003.

This course included the following:

- key historical events and current issues that impact guidelines and legislation on human participant protection in research.
- ethical principles and guidelines that should assist in resolving the ethical issues inherent in the conduct of research with human participants.
- the use of key ethical principles and federal regulations to protect human participants at various stages in the research process.
- a description of guidelines for the protection of special populations in research.
- a definition of informed consent and components necessary for a valid consent.
- a description of the role of the IRB in the research process.
- the roles, responsibilities, and interactions of federal agencies, institutions, and researchers in conducting research with human participants.

**University of Nevada, Las Vegas – Department of Curriculum and Instruction**  
**Research Study Participant – Informed Consent**

I am Jenefer Tirella, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. I am asking your participation in a research project that will study your school's climate and the leadership style of the principal on teacher transiency.

The purpose of this study is to investigate teachers' perceptions of school climate and their principal's leadership style. If you agree to participate you will be asked to complete two surveys Measuring Urban School Climate and Leader Effectiveness and Adaptability Description. All information gathered would remain confidential.

Completing the two surveys will take approximately 30 minutes. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and non-participation will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

**Every attempt to minimize your identity will be made and no identifying information will be recorded in the data. Results of this study will be made available to you at your request. Under these conditions, by completing the surveys you agree that any findings obtained from this research may be used by the researchers for publication and/or the furtherance of educational goals (i.e. doctoral degree through completion of dissertation).**

If you have any questions regarding the data collection process or purpose of this study, please discuss your concerns with the researcher. Jenefer Tirella can be reached by phone or by email. Jenefer Tirella is currently teaching at JD Smith Middle School, home phone (702) 892-9012 or cell phone (702) 338-5303, email to: [jtirella@unlv.edu](mailto:jtirella@unlv.edu) or CCSD interact [Jenefer\\_Tirella@nteract.ccsd.net](mailto:Jenefer_Tirella@nteract.ccsd.net). If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects, you may contact the UNLV Office of Sponsored Projects at 895-1357.

If you agree to participate, please sign the statement that follows.

**I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this study as stated above and the possible risks arising from it. I hereby agree to participate in this project. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent statement and my understanding of the same.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of subject or responsible agent)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Printed name of Subject)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Investigator)

1250 American Pacific Dr.  
Apt. #2311  
Henderson, Nevada 89074

<<Principal's Name>>  
<<School>>  
<<Street Address>>  
<<City>>, <<State>> <<Zip>>

May 9, 2003

Dear <<Principal>>,

Subject: Dissertation Study

I am currently working on my dissertation at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. My dissertation focuses on leadership style, school climate, and teacher transiency within the middle school. I am trying to determine if the style of leadership by the principal and the school's climate results in a higher/lower teacher transiency rate.

I am seeking middle school principals who will be willing for me to gather data and complete interviews. I will need approximately fifteen minutes at a staff meeting to present the instruments and study to the teachers. The teachers will be asked to complete two surveys Urban School Climate Survey which will determine the school climate and the Leadership Effectiveness and Adaptability Descriptive to determine the leadership style. These two instruments will be collected after two weeks. The information will be analyzed for developing themes, followed by interviews with teachers.

As the principal, I will request you complete the two surveys and participate in a follow-up interview. Information gathered from this study will be discussed and available to you. I will be calling you within the next two weeks to determine your acceptance in participating in the study. If you should have any further questions please feel free to contact me at (702) 892-9012 or (702) 338-5303. I am also available through interact at Jenefer\_Tirella@interact.ccsd.net or jtirella@unlv.edu

Thank you for your time and participation in this project. I look forward to working and meeting with you further.

Respectfully,  
Jenefer Tirella

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University of Nevada, Las Vegas

I, Center for Leadership Studies, holder of copyrighted material entitled Style of Leader diagram, The Situational Leader, p. 182, in Hersey, P., Blanchard, K.H. and Johnson, D.E. (2002). The management of organizational behavior: Leading human resources, (8<sup>th</sup> ed.) Center for Leadership Studies: Escondido, CA hereby give permission to graduate student Jenefer Tirella to use in her doctoral dissertation the above described work, which is indicated in the attached xerographic copies.

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Date

Julene M. Burton  
Name (typed)

Center for Leadership Studies  
230 West 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue  
Escondido, California 92025

## APPENDIX IV

### TABLES

Table 1

*Teacher Participation.*

	Number of Teachers	Returned Surveys	Percentage of Returns
Stewart	75	12	16%
Victor	62	7	11.3%
Roberts	54	14	25.9%
Jones	53	25	47.2%

Table 2

*Demographics.*

		Total n = 58		Jones n = 25		Stewart n = 12		Roberts n = 14		Victor N = 7	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Gender	Male	24	41.4%	10	40.0%	7	58.3%	6	42.9%	1	14.3%
	Female	31	53.4%	15	60.0%	3	25.0%	8	57.1%	5	71.4%
	Not listed	3	5.2%	0	0.0%	2	16.7%	0	0.0%	1	14.3%
Grade	6th	14	24.1%	4	16.0%	6	50.0%	2	14.3%	2	28.6%
	7th	10	17.2%	3	12.0%	2	16.7%	5	35.7%	0	0.0%
	8th	9	15.5%	4	16.0%	2	16.7%	1	7.1%	2	28.6%
	Mix	25	43.1%	14	56.0%	2	16.7%	6	42.9%	3	42.9%
Subject	Math	7	12.1%	3	12.0%	2	16.7%	1	7.1%	1	14.3%
	Eng/Read	13	22.4%	6	24.0%	2	16.7%	4	28.6%	1	14.3%
	Science	8	13.8%	3	12.0%	2	16.7%	1	7.1%	2	28.6%
	Soc.										
	Studies	4	6.9%	2	8.0%	1	8.3%	1	7.1%	0	0.0%
	PE	2	3.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	14.3%	0	0.0%
	SPED	4	6.9%	3	12.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	14.3%
	Electives	7	12.1%	4	16.0%	2	16.7%	1	7.1%	0	0.0%
	Multiple	10	17.2%	4	16.0%	2	16.7%	2	14.3%	2	28.6%
	Not listed	1	1.7%	0	0.0%	1	8.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%



Years at	1 to 3 yrs	47	81.0%	15	60.0%	12	100.0%	14	100.0%	6	85.7%
School	4 + yrs	11	19.0%	10	40.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	14.3%
Years	1 to 3 yrs	12	20.7%	6	24.0%	2	16.7%	0	0.0%	4	57.1%
Experience	4 - 10 yrs	20	34.5%	12	48.0%	5	41.7%	2	14.3%	1	14.3%
	11 - 20 yrs	13	22.4%	5	20.0%	2	16.7%	5	35.7%	1	14.3%
	21 + yrs	10	17.2%	2	8.0%	1	8.3%	7	50.0%	0	0.0%
	Not listed	3	5.2%	0	0.0%	2	16.7%	0	0.0%	1	14.3%
Degree	Bachelor	11	19.0%	5	20.0%	4	33.3%	1	7.1%	1	14.3%
	Master	37	63.8%	17	68.0%	5	41.7%	11	78.6%	4	57.1%
	Doctorate	1	1.7%	1	4.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Not listed	9	15.5%	2	8.0%	3	25.0%	2	14.3%	2	28.6%
Ethnicity	White	45	77.6%	21	84.0%	7	58.3%	11	78.6%	6	85.7%
	Hispanic	2	3.4%	2	8.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	African-										
	American	2	3.4%	0	0.0%	2	16.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Asian	2	3.4%	1	4.0%	0	0.0%	1	7.1%	0	0.0%
	Native										
	American	1	1.7%	1	4.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Other	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Not listed	6	10.3%	0	0.0%	3	25.0%	2	14.3%	1	14.3%

Table 3

*Means and Standard Deviations for the dimensions of School Climate, Leadership style, and Transiency as measured by USCS and LEAD..*

Dimension	School	$\bar{X}$	SD	n
Administration	Stewart	40.00	6.94	11
	Victor	40.29	4.86	7
	Roberts	50.53	1.92	15
	Jones	45.00	5.47	25
Risky	Stewart	23.08	4.52	12
Behaviors	Victor	19.43	7.85	7
	Roberts	14.27	3.11	15
	Jones	18.12	5.25	24
Student	Stewart	25.64	4.13	11
Awareness	Victor	23.14	3.24	7
	Roberts	30.07	1.94	15
	Jones	26.67	3.19	24
Instructional	Stewart	23.18	4.60	11
Approaches	Victor	21.14	3.76	7
	Roberts	29.60	2.23	15
	Jones	24.6	2.14	25

Leadership	Stewart	20.40	6.57	10
Style	Victor	19.17	5.08	6
	Roberts	24.92	2.72	13
	Jones	24.04	3.31	25
Transiency	Stewart	1.18	1.60	11
	Victor	2.86	1.77	7
	Roberts	7.87	.52	15
	Jones	5.71	1.12	24

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Table 4

*Tukey Pairwise Comparisons Including the Dimensions of USCS, Teacher transiency, Level of experience, and mean differences.*

Dimensions	Level of Experience		Mean Difference
Administration	Most experienced	Beginning	4.68
		Intermediate	6.61*
		Experienced	2.46
Risky Behaviors	Most experienced	Beginning	-4.21
		Intermediate	-6.44*
		Experienced	-3.61
Student Awareness	Most experienced	Beginning	3.88
		Intermediate	3.61
		Experienced	0.55
Instructional Approaches	Most experienced	Beginning	4.74*
		Intermediate	4.28*
		Experienced	2.57
Transiency	Most experienced	Beginning	2.56*
		Intermediate	2.22*
		Experienced	1.01

\* $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

Table 5

*Tukey Pairwise Comparisons Including the Dimensions of USCS, LEAD, Teacher transiency, school, and mean differences.*

Dimensions	School		Mean Difference
Administration	Roberts	Stewart	10.63*
		Victor	10.39*
		Jones	6.04*
Risky Behaviors	Roberts	Stewart	-8.71*
		Victor	-7.74*
		Jones	-4.33
Student Awareness	Roberts	Stewart	4.20*
		Victor	7.50*
		Jones	3.21
Instructional Approaches	Roberts	Stewart	6.05*
		Victor	8.79*
		Jones	4.82*
Leadership Style	Roberts	Stewart	5.05*
		Victor	6.29*
		Jones	1.40
Transiency	Roberts	Stewart	6.52*
		Victor	4.48*

Jones

1.98\*

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\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

Table 6

*School profiles.*

		Stewart	Victor	Jones	Roberts	District
Student	Population	1440	1381	1067	1075	244768
	Attendance Rate	93.1	89.6	93.0	95.3	93.6
	Transiency Rate	37	43	40	21	39
Discipline	Violence to Staff	9	4	2	0	276
	Violence to other students	151	397	163	10	6849
	Weapons	6	18	9	0	637
	Threats/Extortion	2	50	50	1	905
Class Size	English	31	30	38	29	29
	Math	31	30	34	30	29
	Science	32	30	32	33	31
	Social Studies	32	33	35	33	30
Degrees	Bachelors	48.4	43.7	47.3	16.3	42.4
	Advanced	51.6	56.3	52.7	83.7	57.6
Teaching	1 – 2 years	28.1	45.1	23.6	6.1	29.6
Experience	3 – 10 years	48.4	45.1	67.3	30.6	43.5
	11 – 20 years	14.1	8.5	7.3	38.8	18.2
	21 or more years	9.4	1.4	1.8	24.5	8.7

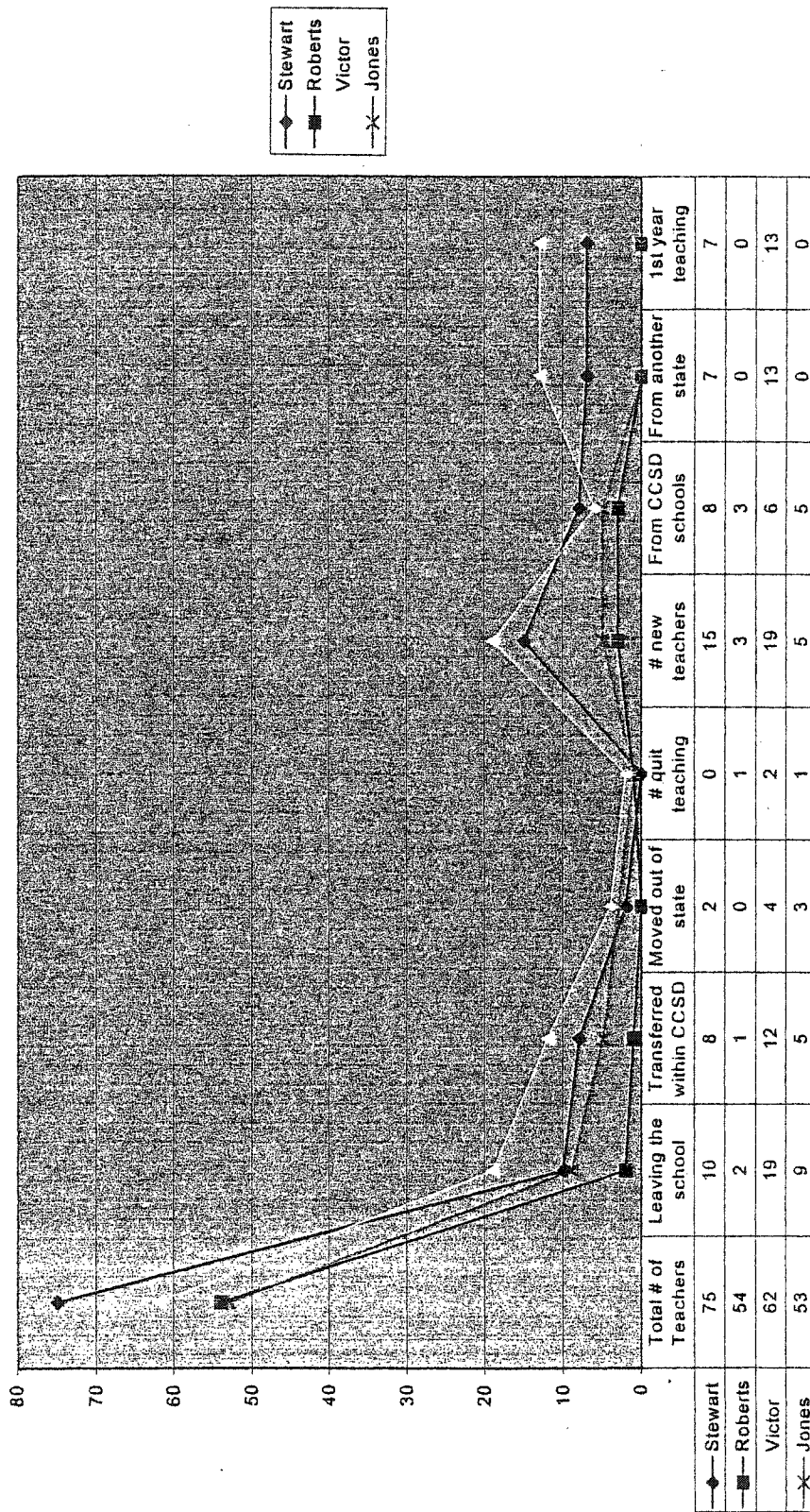
Teacher	Rate	94.8	94.6	94.2	95.5	94.9
Attendance						
Student	Special Education	11	14	12	8	11
Population	English Language	15	28	45	3	16
	Learners					
	Free/Reduced	61	75	80	8	42
	Meals					
Parent	Open House	50	50	70	75	NA
Attendance	Other Functions	90	55	50	90	NA

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Table 7

*Teacher transiency by school.*



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