The Road traveled to becoming a safe high school

Monica J. Pufky Cortez
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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THE ROAD TRAVELED TO BECOMING A SAFE HIGH SCHOOL

by

Monica Pufky Cortez

Bachelor of Arts
University at Buffalo, New York
1997

Master of Science
LeMoyne College, New York
1999

Master of Arts
University of Phoenix, Las Vegas
2003

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Executive Doctor of Education Degree in Educational Leadership
Department of Educational Leadership
College of Education

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
May 2011
THE GRADUATE COLLEGE

We recommend the dissertation prepared under our supervision by

Monica J. Cortez

entitled

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be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Executive Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership
Department of Educational Leadership

Gene Hall Committee Chair
James Crawford, Committee Member
James Hager, Committee Member
Linda Quinn, Graduate Faculty Representative

Ronald Smith, Ph. D., Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies
and Dean of the Graduate College

May 2011
ABSTRACT

The Road Traveled to Becoming a Safe High School

by

Monica Pufky Cortez

Dr. Gene E. Hall, Ph.D., Examination Chairperson
Professor of Education Leadership
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Many urban school districts share a common profile of high dropout rates, low graduation rates, high discipline statistics and acts of school violence, and low student achievement on assessments. Researchers have argued high schools are teaching students in ways that are not only ineffective but also fail to provide the requisite tools for students to achieve success in the 21st century (Gates Foundation, 2010). Additional voices claim urban high schools are not adequately preparing students to become successful citizens for a knowledge-based society (Cuban, 2007).

Using qualitative methodology, this naturalistic study revealed five factors that contribute to creating a safe urban high school in a large school district. Open, Axial and selective coding were used to generate understandings and linkages from the interviews, observations, artifacts and literature related to high school reform and school safety. Five research questions anchored the basis for this study.

Findings from this study revealed that principal leadership and learning proved to be two significant factors that characterize a safe school. Findings also revealed internal and external factors that appear to have contributed to the development of a previously unsafe high school to being a safe one. Specifically - resources, administrative support and community context contributed to one urban high school becoming safe. The study
report concludes with the introduction of an organizing framework related to factors that contribute to a safe school.
DEDICATION

You must always follow the dreams in your life, regardless of the obstacles or limitations.

In order to ensure that they are real you need to persevere, find self-discipline and I promise it will happen.

To My Boys: Kendyl and Kayden, with all of my love I dedicate this to you.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the support and willingness of the participants to share their personal perspective of Turnaround High, and, specifically, the current principal. The time, information, and the access that you provided me to do my research is immeasurable.

I owe my deepest gratitude to Dr. Sylvia Tegano, who spent countless hours with me, teaching me how to research, code and code some more, edit, and most importantly, teaching me to think deeper.

It is a pleasure to thank those who made this dissertation possible, including:

- Cheryl Pullen, who encouraged me relentlessly to concentrate and focus on my paper and continued to tell me I could do it.
- Dr. Mike Barton, who continuously said you did not do this for an ABD and was very patient with me needing time off from work to research and write.
- Jerri, Diane, and Traci, for instilling the confidence in me to have faith and complete this dissertation. You are all amazing women who came into my life for a purpose and we will be eternally connected.
- Tom Mason, for saving me in the ninth hour and assisting me with my technical writing.
- Pops and Judy, for your constant patience and encouragement that I could do anything I put my mind to.
- My mom and sisters who had to work around and visit me the past three years on my school schedule and were available to just be supportive when I needed you to listen, watch the boys, and mom, to clean my house.
• Kendyl for being so patient and understanding when you knew I had to do my paper and could not go to your wrestling matches or soccer games or help you with your homework.

• Jax (Kayden) for being so loveable and kind, you always knew when I needed your jokes or smiles to get me through a tough day.

• Alex, my husband, who without you I would have never finished this program. The bond that we have created through the ups and downs of this journey can never be broken. I will never forget and be able to thank you enough for the support you have given to me during the past year.

I also would like to thank my dissertation committee: Dr. Jim Hager, for encouraging me to be a part of this program and broaden my horizons; Dr. James Crawford, for always being there to say the right thing when I needed it; Dr. Linda Quinn, for providing me the qualitative support and grounding me when I couldn’t figure out where to go and, most importantly, Dr. Hall, your patience is beyond measure, and the dedication, time, and wisdom you have provided me will not be forgotten.

Thank you all.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The first chapter of this study provides the history of education through naturalistic inquiry. It looks at the history of education, specifically high schools, and the evolution that has occurred, along with policies that have influenced the transformations in secondary education. Additionally, this chapter provides information on: the background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, research design and methodology, significance of the study, assumptions, limitations and delimitations, definition of terms, and organization of the dissertation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand and describe the indicators and factors encountered in turning around a public high school from its perception as “unsafe” to “safe.” The study describes the characteristics of unsafe and safe schools through the story of one urban high school’s strategic and systematic turnaround. The researcher revealed the first-hand perceptions and ideas of the leaders, teachers, community members, and local police agency to arrive at an authentic understanding of this urban high school’s journey from its roots to its restructuring. The study focuses on the safety aspect of the school for the primary reason that the school had a reputation of being a “dangerous place.” The study addressed the different transformations the school experienced as well as the rationale for the decisions that were made. The study addressed the perceptions of staff, school employees, and community members. In
addition, the research produced a definition of what a safe school is and what that can look like in a large inner-city high school.

Turnaround High School opened in 1999, and had a total of four principals between the years 1999-2010. The first two principals were in their positions for approximately three years each. The school originally accommodated over 3,000 students, but it has been rezoned recently and there are approximately 2,100 students currently attending Turnaround High School. The school is 76 percent Hispanic and has a reputation for being “unsafe” by the state, district, and community.

**Statement of the Problem**

Recent national statistics regarding school violence and discipline show school violence to be a national problem that affects urban, suburban, and rural schools alike (Dinkes, Cataldi, & Lin-Kelly, 2007). School safety is an essential component of efforts to improve school quality (Marzano, 2003, Lezzote, 1992, and Edmonds, 1979b). However, safety is defined in many ways. The literature revealed an array of definitions from researchers who each view safety through a nuanced lens. For example, safety has been defined as the reduction of discipline antics, classroom disturbances and violence (Thomas, 2006); compliant where problems are not addressed (Brophy, J.E .,1996, Freeman, B.,1994, and Marzano, R.J. and J.S., 2003); or a culture where students and staff feel comfortable walking around campus without fear of physical, emotional, or psychological pain (Bryk, Bender Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, Easton, (2010) Dinkes, Cataldi, & Lin-Kelly, (2007)). Safety has also been simply defined as a place where people feel comfortable; confident that their voice will be heard and respected (Gastic & Gasiewski, 2010). According to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, safety is the
next-most basic need. Therefore, when considering the educational environment, safety becomes a necessary basic need for successful teaching and learning to occur (Bryk, Bender Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, Easton, (2010) Dinkes, Cataldi, & Lin-Kelly, (2007)).

Five research questions guided this study:

1. What are the characteristics of a persistently unsafe high school?

2. What are the characteristics of a persistently unsafe high school that is now considered safe?

3. What are the internal and external factors that have contributed to a previously unsafe high school now being considered safe?

4. What strategies and events attributed to turning around a persistently unsafe high school?

5. What was the role of the principal in turning around a persistently unsafe high school?

**Significance of the Study**

Identification and analysis of the characteristics, indicators, and factors encountered by school leaders during the transformation process may be valuable to other school leaders involved in a similar process. Furthermore, this study’s significance is rooted in the examination of different leaders’ actions over time to identify the contextual safety needs of the school. These leadership practices, while site-specific for this urban high school, may serve as a guide to other urban leaders in their restructuring process.
Chart 1.1.

*Research Question Matrix for Qualitative Research Questions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Kind If Data Collected</th>
<th>Process of Analysis</th>
<th>Literature Review</th>
<th>Time Collected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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| 1. What are the characteristics of a persistently unsafe high school that is now considered safe? | **Interview:** district/region/ area personnel, current and previous school principals, current and previous teachers, support staff employees, community members, and local police officers | Conceptual Framework Use of Bolman and Deal Four Frame Model Coding through Corbin and Strauss. Transcription of oral text, triangulation among data, content analysis of artifacts, grounded theory inquiry, peer debriefing, member check, purposive sampling, chain of events, reflexivity journal | • Creswell, (2005,2003,1994)  
 • Bolman and Deal (2008)  
 • Corbin & Strauss (1990)  
 • Lincoln and Guba  
 • Gastic & Gasiewski, 2010  
 • Krauss, Wesner, Midlarsky and Gielen, (2005)  
 • Thomas, 2006  
 • Brophy, J.E .1996  
 • Freeman, B.,1994  
 • Marzano, R.J. and J.S., 2003  
 • Bryk, Bender Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, Easton, (2010)  
| **Observation:** School assembly, dismissal, lunch time, passing time, classroom observations, school improvement meeting | **Documents:** school improvement plans, discipline statistic reports, interview results, field notes, meeting minutes, agendas, state reports | | | |
| 2. What are the internal and external factors that have contributed to a previously unsafe high school now being considered safe? | **Interview:** district/region/ area personnel, current and previous school principals, current and previous teachers, support staff employees, community members, and local police officers | Conceptual Framework Use of Bolman and Deal Four Frame Model Coding through Corbin and Strauss. Transcription of oral text, triangulation | • Creswell, (2005,2003,1994)  
 • Bolman and Deal (2008)  
 • Corbin & Strauss (1990)  
 • Lincoln and Guba  
 • Gastic & Gasiewski, 2010  
 • Krauss, | Nine to eleven weeks of collection. (September 2010-November 2010) Ongoing analysis (September 2010-February 2011) |
### Observation:
- School assembly, dismissal, lunch time, passing time, classroom observations, school improvement meeting

### Documents:
- School improvement plans, discipline statistic reports, interview results, field notes, meeting minutes, agendas, state reports

### among data, content analysis of artifacts, grounded theory inquiry, peer debriefing, member check, purposive sampling, chain of events, reflexivity journal.

Wesner, Midlarsky and Gielen, (2005)  
- Thomas, 2006  
- Brophy, J.E., 1996  
- Freeman, B., 1994  
- Marzano, R.J. and J.S., 2003  
- Bryk, Bender Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, Easton, (2010)  

---

3. **What strategies and events attributed to turning around a persistently unsafe high school?**

### Interview:
- district/region/ area personnel, current and previous school principals, current and previous teachers, support staff employees, community members, and local police officers

### Observation:
- School assembly, dismissal, lunch time, passing time, classroom observations, school improvement meeting

### Documents:
- School improvement plans, discipline statistic reports, interview results, field notes, meeting minutes, agendas, state reports

### Conceptual Framework
- Use of Bolman and Deal Four Frame Model
- Coding through Corbin and Strauss.
- Transcription of oral text, triangulation among data, content analysis of artifacts, grounded theory inquiry, peer debriefing, member check, purposive sampling, chain of events, reflexivity journal

### Nine to eleven weeks of collection. (September 2010-November 2010) Ongoing analysis (September 2010-February 2011)
Methodology

The study utilized naturalistic inquiry and resulted in a case study. The case study was launched to investigate and document the process a high school utilized to change beliefs and practices. This case study described first-hand knowledge, perceptions of the process, and insights into the evolution and innovations that transformed the school from unsafe to one now seen as safe. These findings may be used in the future to inform professional development for administrators who are engaged in school turnarounds.
According to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, safety is the second level of the pyramid (see Appendix D). According to Maslow, safety is defined as protection, security, order, law, limits, stability, etc. These are the building blocks for the next level of belongingness and love, which is defined as family, affection, relationships, workgroups, etc. Understanding these two essential needs for survival gives insight into what it means to be human. As the levels of Maslow’s triangle build, the ability to reach success is more attainable. However, when people think of high school students in contemporary society, the lower-level needs encompassed in that triangle tend to be overlooked. Education affects every person in society; however, not everyone realizes that his/her actions affect education, with assuring safety being a continuing component of education. Thus, the basic question of this study: what are the keys to turning around a high school that has a reputation for being unsafe? The next section addresses the five research questions that will be answered in the study.

**Research Design**

This research study was conducted through a naturalistic inquiry process. It was used to create a picture of the school’s evolution and to create a universal definition of a safe school. The different perspectives from the interviews and document reviews provided a rich understanding of what it was like to be in a school that had numerous factors affecting its success. These factors ultimately led this school to adopt practices that would translate into student success.

The first issue addressed was the basic foundation of survival to achieve academic success and the unique aspects of the restructuring process that detracted from the teaching profession. The researcher set up a two-phase model to address the basic
foundation of academic success and the unique aspects of the restructuring process. The first phase addressed the questions, “What are characteristics of a persistently unsafe high school?” and “What are characteristics of a persistently unsafe high school that is now considered safe?” The second phase addressed the questions, “What are the internal and external factors that have contributed to a previously unsafe high school now being considered safe?” “What strategies and events attributed to turning around a persistently unsafe high school?” and “What was the role of the principal in turning around a persistently unsafe high school?” (See Table 1.1 for an outline of the research questions addressed and methods used).

**Phase I Development of the Study**

The study was conducted with the appropriate consent obtained from the university and school district. The intention was to research a high school that met all of the researcher’s established criteria. The researcher began a reflexive journal about the study, making initial notations of the process and ideas that emerged as it progressed.

The researcher contacted district and area personnel to provide a brief overview of the study and schedule interviews. A follow-up e-mail was sent to the principal and supervising administrator to reiterate the study overview and to confirm the interview date.

The first phase consisted of gathering information about the research site. The researcher collected data and reports available regarding the school’s population, achievement level, and discipline information. Following the initial data collection, the researcher determined interview questions for unstructured, exploratory interviews with the principal of the site.
Once the data was available, the researcher piloted the research questions with another principal who had experience in a similar context. The researcher began to develop grounded theories based on analyzing the data, followed by open-ended interview questions, based on the current research in school culture. The selection of the school was based on the established criteria: Title I high school, high minority population, a significant number of English Language Learners, and low socio-economic status. Interviews were scheduled with the current principal and current employees. In planning for each interview, the researcher decided to use purposeful, critical sampling. According to Creswell (2008, p. 214), critical sampling is “a sampling strategy to study an exceptional case and the researcher can learn much about the phenomenon.”

As Phase I progressed, the focus shifted to interviews with the principal and staff. The following questions are a sample of those used to guide the interview with the principal:

1. What was it like five years ago when you arrived in 2006-2007 as the principal of a school considered unsafe?
2. How has the school evolved during your time here?
3. Please tell me about the school’s environment, and how it has changed over the years?
4. What were the external agents that attributed to turning around the school?
5. What were the challenges that you encountered in the early stages?
6. How did you overcome them?
During the interview stage, the researcher interviewed previous principals and central office administration. The guiding interview questions for those internal and external agents were:

1. When you first arrived at Turnaround High, what was it like?

2. What was it like five years ago when "Principal X" arrived in the 2006-2007 school year?

3. When you first arrived at Turnaround High’s campus, what was it like (Sub probe about students, community, role of the principal, safety.)?

4. How had the school evolved during your time here?

5. Please tell me about the school’s environment, and how it has changed over the years.

Interview information was transcribed and shared with the participants for accuracy. As a form of triangulation, the researcher observed the actions, interactions, and reactions of participants as they related to the turnaround theme. Similar questions were asked of all school, district, and community participants.

**Phase II Reflection and Analysis**

The second phase of the study focused on reflection and analysis of the research through the reflexive journal. The researcher continually analyzed new data gathered and made modifications to the developing grounded theory. Throughout the process, the researcher member-checked the data collected. Once the data was analyzed, the researcher developed a provisional outline of the study. The researcher reviewed the outline with the committee chair and wrote the case study. Throughout the process, the case study was revised numerous times as the researcher analyzed the data. The
The researcher provided the report to the committee chair for review and the researcher exited the school. The final step in Phase II was to release the study for consumption.

The next section of this chapter will discuss the conceptual framework that was used in organizing and analyzing the data from the research.

**Conceptual Framework**

The lens through which the researcher viewed the data throughout this study was based on the four-frame model of “Reframing Organizations” from Bolman & Deal (2008). Bolman & Deal’s “Reframing Organizations” is divided into four frames: (1) Structural; (2) Human Resource; (3) Political; and (4) Symbolic. According to Bolman & Deal (2008), the structural approach focuses on the architecture of organization, the design of units and subunits, rules and roles, and goals and policies. The human resource lens emphasized understanding people, their strengths and foibles, reasons and emotions, and desires and fears. The political view saw organization as competitive arenas of scarce resources, competing interests, and struggles for power and advantage. Finally, the symbolic frame focused on issues of meaning and faith. The symbolic frame put ritual, ceremony, story, play, and culture at the heart of organizational life (p. 21).

**Limitations and Delimitations**

The following limitations assisted with defining the parameters of this case study:

1. This study was conducted exclusively at one high school site, and it should not be assumed that what transpired at this school would occur at all high schools.

2. Time constraints prevented the interviewees from providing a rich description of their time at the subject high school.
3. The school staff and community member participation in the interviews was strictly voluntary. This could mean that alternate perceptions and views could be represented by those staff and community members not interviewed.

4. The primary methods of collecting data from school employees were observations and interviews.

5. The school observations provided a simple snapshot of that specific time at the school. Information about what the school was like in the past is based on the interviews and documents.

6. The study relies heavily on participants’ memories and recall of what the school was like the in the past. It is based primarily on individuals’ perceptions, which may distort the reality of the school’s past, which cannot be determined because data is not available.

Some participants of the study interviewed were apprehensive when it came to their involvement in the transformation process. It was difficult to identify the reality of the school versus the perception of the school during the past ten years, due to the availability of the participants’ comfort level in sharing negative details. Assumption

The researcher began the study with the assumption that everyone involved had the same definition for a “safe school.” The researcher informed the interview subjects that the purpose of the study was to determine if the school had, from the beginning, made a turnaround from an unsafe school to a safe school.
Definition of Terms

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) – No Child Left Behind (Public Law 107-110) requires each state to define what AYP should be for each elementary and secondary school. Beginning in 2002, each state was to establish a timeline that would ensure all students in each subgroup would meet or exceed the state’s proficiency level of achievement on the state-determined assessment by the school year 2013-2014. AYP looks at the percentage of students in each school that scored at or above the “meets” or proficient level on the state test. This measure is not about growth in student achievement; it is only about the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the target.

Case Study – In qualitative research, this is the study of a “bounded system,” with the focus being either the case or an issue that is illustrated by the case (or cases) (Stake, 1995). A qualitative case study provides an in-depth study of this “system,” based on a diverse array of data collection materials. The researcher situates this system, or case, within its larger “context” or setting (Creswell, 2007). Lincoln & Guba (1985) view case study research not as a method of inquiry but as a form of writing or presentation for reporting the results of a naturalistic inquiry.

Clique: A narrow exclusive circle or group of persons

Flexible Day: Instructional time before and/or after the standard school hours of operation.

Gang: (1) a group of persons working together; (2) a group of persons working to unlawful or antisocial ends; (3) a band of antisocial adolescents.

In Need of Improvement: The No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 developed the rules and
regulations for school accountability to ensure that all students meet state standards. NCLB also determines whether schools make AYP and delineates the school improvement procedures and consequences when schools do not make AYP. If any elementary or secondary school fails to make AYP for two consecutive years, the school district identifies the school for improvement. Each year, for a school to make AYP, each defined group of students must meet or exceed the objectives set by the state, and 95 percent of enrolled students in each subgroup must participate in the assessments (NCLB Act, 2002).

*Magnet:* Magnet Schools and Career and Technical Academies offer coursework associated with a variety of pathways leading to both careers and opportunities for higher education, consisting of the Academy of Information Technology (AOIT) and Academy of 21st Century Communication (AOC).

*Naturalistic Inquiry:* The investigation of a phenomenon within and in relation to their naturally occurring contexts (Willems & Raush, 1969).

No Child Left Behind Act: A federal law passed in 2001 under the George W. Bush administration. A reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Act* (ESEA), which relies on test-based accountability, and operates on the theory that measuring performance, identifying schools and districts that fail to meet an expected performance level, and applying a series of sanctions is what is needed to induce schools and teachers to work harder and smarter to improve student achievement (Sunderman, 2008).

*Perception:* That which is believed, based on an individual’s account of the details or comprehension of the situation.
**Reality:** The quality or state of being real; actual.

**Reform Model:** Reform model schools are defined as schools that have organized themselves around a consistent school design model, that often affiliate with a central organization that supports the implementation of the reform model’s philosophy and practices, and that form at least a minimal professional learning community across the network (Ravitz, 2010).

**Safe School:** A safe school is a place where the business of education can be conducted in a welcoming environment free of intimidation, violence, and fear. Such a setting provides an educational climate that fosters a spirit of acceptance and care for every child. It is a place free of bullying, where behavior expectations are clearly communicated, consistently enforced, and applied daily (Mabie, 2003).

**School Improvement:** Standards and indicators used in order to produce desired learning results for students.

**Title 1:** Title 1 is a federal aid program through which most school districts receive funding to provide supplemental instruction for those students who qualify based on low socio-economic status.

**Turnaround:** A dramatic improvement in performance created by various changes within an organization (The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement, 2005). In this study, the researcher will refer to “turnaround” as a specific restructuring option under the NCLB Act; for example, district-management replacement of a school leader and staff relevant to the school’s failure (NCLB Act, 2002).
Unsafe School: An unsafe school is most commonly described in terms of self-reported perceptions, such as one’s own fear of victimization or sense of not being safe at school in terms of violent incidents or other unsafe threats (Anderson, 1998; Astor, Meyer, & Pitner, 2001; Jimmerson & Furlong, 2006; Peterson, Larson, & Skiba, 2001).

Violence: the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation” (WHO Global Consultation on Violence and Health, 1996). Many researchers have called for a more inclusive and nuanced definition of school violence that incorporates the perspectives of diverse groups of stakeholders as well as the use of a more diverse set of measurements and methods used to describe school violence (Gastic & Gasiewski, 2010).

Weapons: Something (such as a club, knife, or gun) used to injure, defeat, or destroy.

Organization of Dissertation

The dissertation has been organized into five additional chapters, appendices, and a bibliography, respectively. Chapter Two provides a review of literature with key findings to support this study. Chapter Three explains the research design and methodology for this study. Chapter Four provides specific information about the school site and the district. Chapter Five addresses the research questions Chapter Six and presents the study’s conclusions. The bibliography and appendices follow Chapter Six.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

“Researchers realize that any proposed study must be grounded in a discussion of prior, relevant work” (Johnson, 2006, p.1). Therefore, the literature review addresses four major themes that provide the rationale for the development of the study.

In the first section, “The Historical Background of Safety in Schools” was discussed through the cultural and structural lens to document the evolution of our present state of safety in schools. The second section, “Innovation Efforts in the United States” examined the mindful choices educators implemented on their way to reforming schools. The focus of the third section, “Dimensions of Safety” established the foundation for various definitions of safety throughout the literature; a convergence of this thinking led to the initial definition of safety for this study. The fourth and final section, “Principal Leadership for a Safe and Orderly Environment” addresses the leadership theories and practices in guiding and managing various schools today.

The conceptual framework proposed by Bolman and Deal’s Reframing Organizations (2008) uses several lenses which specifically focus on the (1) Structural; (2) Human Resource; (3) Political; and (4) Symbolic aspects of reorganizing an organization. This framework assisted with outlining the various headings for the literature review.

Throughout this paper, the challenges that schools face while educating high school students as well as ensuring their safety in today’s society are described. Through the literature the researcher justifies the importance and significance this research has on high school environments and students. Across the United States, high schools suffer from high drop-out rates, low graduation rates, and low achievement scores on state
assessments. Many high schools are teaching students in ways that are not only ineffective but also fail to provide a safe environment necessary to learn. However, leaders have not been successful in identifying the problem or the specific variables causing schools to fail. Potts cites, “The lack of serious study on how dangerous schools as institutions can be is a little surprising since, the matter was out squarely on the research agenda in persuasive fashion back in 1932” (Potts, 2006).

The high school statistics of failure are astounding and there is a need for immediate intervention to correct the problems. President Barack Obama stated on his blog in 2010:

At this defining moment in our history, preparing our children to compete in the global economy is one of the most urgent challenges we face. We need to stop paying lip service to public education, and start holding communities, administrators, teachers, parents and students accountable. We will prepare the next generation for success in college and the workforce, ensuring that American children lead the world once again in creativity and achievement” (Obama, 2010, para.1).

Comparing international achievement test results was one critical reason for reforming high schools; the United States ranked low when compared to Japan, Germany, and other countries in mathematics. However, the United States led the world in bachelor degrees in proportion to population (Jenkins, 1996, p.xi).

Fifty years ago, 80 percent of jobs were considered unskilled; the traditional high school, graduating only 20 percent of its students adequately prepared to finish college, was acceptable. In a global economy, however, the above statistics do not satisfy the
needs of the contemporary knowledge-based economy. Some argue the problem with contemporary high schools is not the students or the buildings, it is the way high schools are organized and operated, coupled with the teaching methodology the conventional model promotes (North Carolina Schools Project, n.d). A Harris poll from 1995, documented that only one-third of employers believed that high school graduates showed the ability to read and understand written and verbal instructions. However, only one-fourth of employers said that these high school students were “capable of doing arithmetic functions” (Jenkins, 1996). This evidence justifies the need for high school reform for increasing the academic rigor in high school classes. However, before any of this instruction can occur the students and staff must feel “safe.” What is safe? This literature review describes specific elements that contribute to and define the culture of a safe school.

**The Historical Background of Safety in Schools**

The purpose of including the historical background of education is to provide the background context that leads to further research in safe schools. According to Krauss, Wesner, Midlarsky and Gielen (2005) school violence can be categorized into four types of school violence: rebellion, action of out anger, protests, and random act of violence (2005). Each generation has sought ways to pass on cultural and social values, traditions, morality, religion, and skills to the next generation. The passing on of culture is also known as enculturation, and the learning of social values and behaviors is socialization. Enculturation is defined as the process by which an individual learns the traditional content of a culture (Osberg, 2008). Throughout the history of education, enculturation
has been an integral component in educational reform, and each generation has had its own educational priorities regarding enculturation.

The following sections in this chapter explain the context of the school during different historical moments as well as provide a background of the safety level in schools during those particular eras.

**Early Years of Education and Student Violence**

According to Aries (1962), wide arrays of student misbehaviors have occurred in schools throughout history. Clay tablets dating back to 2000 BC were found with descriptions of student misbehavior and disruption in the ancient Mesopotamian civilization, Sumer (Volokh & Snell, 1998). During the eleventh century, medieval educators developed Scholasticism, a method of inquiry, scholarship, and teaching. These teaching clerics turned to faith and reason as complementary sources of truth. Even though students went to school and learned about religion and skill-building for seven years, there were reports of students being turbulent, rebellious, and violent (Baker & Rubel, 1980). The hornbook was used by school children for several centuries, starting in the Mid-15th century in Europe and America. The hornbook consisted of a wooden paddle with lessons tacked on and covered by a piece of transparent horn. Schools were governed and protected by the church, and the culture of religion was the emphasis and primary purpose of education in this moment (Austin, 2004).

**Education and Student Violence in the 17th Century in Colonial America**

Menius became the most sought-after teacher in Europe in the 17th century. His works reflected that of a realist. The first person to put pictures in text was Comenius. He felt it was necessary for children to see what the world looked like with the help of
pictures. Building on Comenius’ ideas was the first written children’s picture book, *Orbis Pictus*. Following the first children’s literature book, Freidrich Wilhelm Froebel founded the concept of kindergarten (Dewey, 2004). Froebel was a strong idealist whose view of education was closely linked to religion and religious study; he believed that everything in this world was developed according to the plan of God (European Influences on American, 1996). Even while religion was the main impetus behind the educational systems in this moment, there was a movement to expand ways of seeing and thinking throughout society.

The first Latin Grammar School (Boston Latin School) was established in 1635. Latin Grammar Schools were designed for sons of the highest social class, destined for leadership positions in church, state, and/or the courts (Spring, 2001). In 1647, the church declared that every town with at least fifty children to have a Latin Grammar School; the purpose of the school was to ensure Puritan children were exposed to the bible and certain of their culture (Historical Timeline, 2006). Their teachers were expected to instill values and morals, content beyond that was secondary (Denmark, et al. and Marie Klain, 2005). Schoolmasters were typically strong, large males that could endure the beating and violent behavior from teenage boys (Denmark et al., 2005).

In 1669, a Massachusetts student threw a schoolmaster down and attacked him with a chair and threatened to break his neck (Bybee, 1982). The New England colonies became the setting of over 300 student mutinies each year (Volokh & Snell, 1998). These mutinies consisted of students chasing and locking teachers out of the schools (1998). As a result it was very difficult to find teachers to staff the schools and educate the students (Denmark et al., 2005).
Violence in the 17th Century in Europe

Contrary to belief that students began carrying weapons to school in recent years, Midlarsky and Marie Klain convey a different story, namely that European students commonly carried weapons to school during the 17th century (2005). They further state that students fought with one another and beat their teachers (2005). Additionally, it was common for students to revolt and riot with physical violence; however, people would avoid walking near the schools for fear students would attack them (2005). Research revealed that when teachers felt they had no options, they called for military assistance to restore order and eliminate the chaos (2005).

Education and Student Violence in the 18th Century

The birth of the new nation created a system of change for the schools. While religion continued to play an important role in the educational system, the need for individuals to become literate was of increasing significance. The challenge, however, was that access to school was traditionally designated for the wealthy elite. In 1779, President Thomas Jefferson proposed a dual track educational system, with different tracks for "the laboring and the learned" (Historical Timeline, 2006, para.2). This was the first American moment that education was valued in the same category as trade. In 1790, Pennsylvania’s constitution created free public education, but it was available only for poor children; wealthy people were expected to pay for their child’s schooling (Historical Timeline, 2006). The formal goals of education at this time were the focus on virtues: discipline, sacrifice, and simplicity, but teachers began incorporating concepts of liberty and government (Kaestle, 1983).
Education and Student Violence in the 19th Century

An influential figure of merit in the evolution of education was Herbert Spencer. He was known as one of the leading Social Darwinists of the 19th century (Keb, 1996). “Herbert Spencer helped gain acceptance of the theory of evolution; then became the basis for most of his books and teaching” (para.3). Spencer was a nonbeliever who believed that the only way to gain knowledge was through a scientific approach. He felt that religion was a pointless attempt to gain knowledge of the unknown. Spencer wanted to replace the theological systems of the Middle Ages with his philosophical system, which stated that all knowledge could be placed within the framework of modern science (Keb, 1996). This philosophical belief was one of great controversy and was highly discouraged by the church.

American schools in the early 1800’s “were run on the "Lancasterian" model, in which one "master" can teach hundreds of students in a single room” (Historical Timeline, 2006, para. 5); this was the birth of the concept of the one-room-school-house. The master gave a rote lesson to the older students, who then passed it down to the younger students (para. 5). These single-room schools emphasized discipline and obedience, qualities that factory owners demanded of their workers. “The first public high school was created in the United States” (Historical Timeline, 2006, para.11).

The early 1800’s, saw low attendance in secondary schools, because the curriculum was specialized and difficult due to children attending only for short periods of time to fulfill the compulsory attendance law; children worked if they were not in school. According to Midlarsky and Marie Klain (Denmark et al.,2005), school violence was widespread during periods wherein education was compulsory. Discipline problems
were rampant and addressed through corporal punishment (Denmark, et al., 2005). An important reason for the increased violence in the schools was that there was not a connection or positive attachment for the teachers or the students; there was no relationship of significance that bound the culture together (Denmark, et al., 2005).

The demand for skilled workers in the middle of the eighteenth century led Benjamin Franklin to start a new kind of secondary school. Thus, the American Academy was established in Philadelphia in 1751. American high schools eventually replaced Latin grammar schools. In 1820, the first public high school in the United States, Boston English, opened (Historical Timeline, 2006).

**Education during Post-Revolutionary War in America**

During the period of early post-revolutionary war, the schools in America continued to be chaotic and disorderly (Denmark, et al., 2005). Reformers who hoped all children would gain the benefits of education opposed this model. Prominent among them were Horace Mann in Massachusetts and Henry Barnard in Connecticut. Mann started the publication of the Common School Journal, which took the educational issues to the public (Historical Timeline, 2006). The common-school reformers argued for the case on the belief that common schooling could create good citizens, unite society, and prevent crime and poverty. Until the 1840s, the education system was highly restricted and available only to wealthy people. The first reform school opened in Massachusetts: Westboro. Westboro was the school where children who refused to attend public schools were sent. This school began a long tradition of "reform schools," which combined the education and juvenile justice systems (Historical Timeline, 2006, para.12). During the
19th century, Horace Mann (1934) reported that over 400 Massachusetts schoolhouses were “broken up” due to the student discipline problems in the schools.

**Education during the Industrial Revolution in America**

Following the civil war, it was considered the norm for children to attend school on a regular basis (Denmark, et al., 2005). African-Americans mobilized to bring public education to the South for the first time between 1865-1877 (Historical Timeline, 2006). Because of reformers’ efforts, free public education at the elementary level was available for all American children by the end of the 19th century (Keb, 1996). In 1892, the National Education Association Committee of 10 Report acknowledged the need for a traditional elite high school curriculum. The curriculum was designed for those students who were advancing to post-secondary education (under 10 percent) to incorporate four years of English, history, science, mathematics and a foreign language (Parker, 1993).

The education system changed drastically during the Progressive Era in American history. A significant philosopher from this era who greatly impacted the direction of American education was John Dewey. He recognized that schools, particularly elementary and secondary schools were often institutions that did not promote exploration and growth. “Dewey believed that school should teach students how to be problem-solvers by helping students learn how to think rather than simply learning rote lessons about large amounts of information” (Ecker, 1997, para.3). John Dewey believed schools should help students learn to live and to work cooperatively with one another (Ecker, 1997).

According to Dewey, the fundamental purpose of education was to socialize the child to function in the changing society (Dewey, 1897). To encourage American higher
Education, the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 provided federal financial support to state universities.

**Education and Student Violence in the Early 20th Century**

Though the educational system was intended to produce successful members of society, school violence remained a threat (Denmark, et al., 2005). As the 20th century progressed, most states enacted legislation extending compulsory education laws to the age of 16. As a result, from 1900 to 1996, the percentage of teenagers who graduated from high school increased from about 6 percent to about 85 percent. By 1900, thirty-one states made education compulsory (Denmark, et al., 2005). Due to the change in laws, the rise in American high school attendance was one of the most striking developments in United States education during the 20th century.

**The Gary Plan, the First Student Major Protest in America**

In 1917, the *Gary Plan* was implemented in the New York City schools to assist with accommodating the student population. The *Gary Plan* was a reorganization structure of the school to combine specific classes into one classroom (Crews & Counts, 1997). This was a new idea that was difficult for all students, especially immigrant students that struggled in school due to language barriers (Crews & Counts, 1997). As a result of this reform, the students protested receiving a lesser quality education in the New York City schools (Baker & Rubel, 1980; Crews & Counts, 1997). The initial protest involved nearly 3,000 irate students that participated in a strike, picketing and throwing stones at the schools in response to the *Gary Plan* (Baker & Rubel, 1980; Crews & Counts, 1997). As the rioting spread through the New York City schools, the number of students involved in this protest grew to 10,000 students. The violence did not stop
until police arrested 14 student leaders (Baker & Rubel, 1980; Crews & Counts, 1997).

**Educating Students in Moral and Character Education**

“The Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education were issued in 1918, by the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education” (Schugurensky, 2005, para.3). The focus of this commission was to form objectives for secondary education. They determined that segmented subjects and their content was the way to achieve the decided goals, but they acknowledged they were not the one and only way. The commission was also instrumental in the beginning stages of the school reform movement (Schugurensky, 2005). One reason changes were needed was increased enrollment in secondary schools; a refined focus of student differences, goals, attitudes, and abilities was adopted by adults. The concept of democracy was decided on as the framework for American education. The work on the Cardinal Principles was started in 1915, and was completed in 1918 (Scherer, 2004). Notably, during the 20th century, participation in higher or postsecondary education in the United States increased significantly. “At the beginning of the century about 2 percent of Americans from the ages of 18 to 24 were enrolled in a college” (Thattai, n.d., para.6). Near the end of the century more than “60 percent of these individuals ages 18-24, or over 14 million students, were enrolled in about 3,500 four-year and two-year colleges” (Thattai, n.d., para.6). In 1919, the Progressive Education Association was founded. The “progressive education movement was formed by educational reformers who were particularly active in the United States from the 1890s to 1930s, promoting the ideas of child-centered education, social reconstructionism, active citizen participation in all spheres of life, and democratization of all public institutions” (Schugurensky, 2005, para. 2). In the 1920s
and 30s, “progressive education” was the movement; the education focus shifted to intellectual discipline and curriculum development projects in the later decades.

**The Great Depression and Education**

The Great Depression brought dramatic shifts in American education. The early 1900’s were an era of prosperity and pleasure. (Palmquist, 1929). Following the prosperous era, the stock market crashed resulting in a massive economic depression. Student violence evolved from rioting and protesting to lying and truancy (Crews & Counts, 1997). Undoubtedly, students were tasked with working and contributing income to their families; a likely reason for the lack of school violence during this period (Baker & Rubel, 1980). Another reason for limited violence in schools was children were more obedient and had greater respect for authority as a result of the danger the country was in during World War II (Shepherd & Ragan, 1992).

It is essential to look at the history of public education along with the events shaping the country in the early 20th century. The Great Depression, World War II, the Cold War, wars with other countries, the civil rights movement, student protests, and innumerable political events within the country all had effects on the educational system. Many land-grant colleges and state universities were established through gifts of federal land to the states for the support of higher education. Financial support was extended to the universities, and this led to increased research. At the end of World War II, the G.I. Bill of Rights gave thousands of working class men college scholarships for the first time in U.S. history. As a result, the number of students attending college increased dramatically in 1945 after World War II ended (Historical Timeline, 2006).
Education and Student Violence in the 1950s

While the social landscape of America in the 1950’s seemed somewhat static, the educational landscape underwent dramatic change. Until 1954, an official policy of "separate but equal" educational opportunities for African-Americans had been determined as the legally accepted method to ensure that all children in America received an adequate and equal education. “In 1954, the case of Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas declared that separated facilities for blacks did not make those facilities equal according to the Constitution” (Historical timeline, 2006, para.6). Integration began across the nation. The 1950’s students were active in social movements focused on school segregation and racial equality (Denmark, et al., 2005). “In 1957, the first black teenagers entered the then the all-white Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas” (After Facing Mobs, 2007, para 2). According to Crews & Counts (1997) the 1950’s had an increase in school assaults and vandalism. Additionally, in 1957 the Soviet Union set off a shock wave in the United States with the first successful launch of an artificial satellite, Sputnik. Almost instantaneously politicians correlated this Soviet Union success to the failing American educational system. Politicians claimed the curriculum was not rigorous enough and more emphasis needed to be placed on mathematics and science. Subsequently, the federal government appropriated millions of dollars for educational reform (Gelbrich, 1999). This was a significant moment, because it focused on the politics in culture and the need for rigor in the school system.

Education and Student Violence in the 1960s

In the 1960s, as a result of the launch of Sputnik, Americans became aware that the nation was suffering from a shortage of citizens whose education and training
sufficiently met the technological challenges of modern society. At the beginning of the
decade, the gap between the learning needs of the country and the ability of the American
educational system to meet those needs was at a crisis point. As a result of the problem of
violence in schools, the term “school violence” evolved during the 1960s (Crews &
Counts, 1997). This resulted in the demand for improved education, forcing reassessment
of every piece of the teaching-learning process. During this decade there were
monumental acts and projects that set the stage and improved the educational system.
Specifically, the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title VI, links federal funds to non-
discrimination and supports desegregation activities in the United States. In 1965, the
Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and Title I were established. Title I
funds were allocated to meet the needs of educationally deprived children in public and
non-public schools. Funds go through states to school districts and must meet federal and
state guidelines for compensatory education. Title III funds were for "innovative
projects" (open classrooms, team teaching, alternative schools.) Title V provided direct
federal aid to strengthen state education agencies. Operation Head Start was established.
"Compensatory education" gained acceptance, emphasizing that to attain the Sputnik-
inspired academic objectives of the late 1950s for poor, urban, minority students,
additional financial aid was essential (Spring, 2001). Significantly in 1966, the Coleman
Report (Equality of Educational Opportunity), commissioned under the Civil Rights Act
of 1964, found that academic achievement was more related to the student's family
background than to the quality of the school (Goodwin & Bradley, 2009). According to
Denmark, et al., (2005) between the years 1964 and 1968, assaults on teachers increased
from 253 to 1,801 incidences. Additionally, there was an increase of weapons offenses on
school campus from 396 to 1,508 incidences (Beavan, 1967). Crews and Counts (1997) suggest that an increase of violence during this era might be attributed to the increased number of students attending schools, specifically high schools.

**First Random Act of Violence Reported**

During the summer of 1966, the first random act of violence was reported in a school. A student from the University of Texas, Charles Whitman, aimed a gun at students and faculty in the university library. Over a period of 96 minutes, Charles Whitman shot and killed thirteen people and wounded thirty-one (Altman & Ziporyn, 1967).

**Education and Student Violence in the 1970s**

The social movements of the 1970s, particularly the anti-war movement, changed education. Mandatory busing to achieve racial integration in schools was established and implemented. Congress guaranteed equal educational access to the handicapped with the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, which was an important shift in the paradigm of providing free and appropriate education for all students (Goodwin & Bradley, 2009).

This was instrumental in reforming the whole education system in the United States. Equity amongst all individuals was established and people were appreciating the need for education. Additionally, the culture of the people was changing the school system for their children’s’ success.
Table 2.1.

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Civil Rights Act, Title VI</td>
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<td>1965</td>
<td>Elementary and Secondary (ESEA) Title I, Title III, Title V, Operation Head Start</td>
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<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Coleman Report</td>
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<td>1975</td>
<td>The Education for All Handicapped Children Act</td>
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However, it was the first time that violence in schools was included in the Gallup poll of public attitudes toward schools (Gallup, 1978). During 1970 and 1973 on school grounds there was a 19.5 percent increase in homicides, an 85.3 percent increase in student to student assaults, student to teacher assaults increased 77.4 percent, weapons on school grounds increased 54.4 percent, and rapes and attempted rapes increased 40.1 percent (Goldstein, Apter, & Harootunian, 1984). Baker and Rubel (1980) described this decade of school violence as student acts of rebellion and anger. During this time, gangs were responsible and attributed to a majority of the crimes and deviant behavior in the classroom (Baker and Rubel, 1980).

**Education and Student Violence in the 1980s**

In the 1980s, educational reform was moved by *A Nation at Risk* (1983) under the administration of President Ronald Regan. His leadership focused on the "quality of teaching and learning" and began the conversations and inclusion of “cultural literacy” in the schools (Elmore, 2004, p.213). This report was policy driven without any support. Its
intent was designed to mobilize others to act. “A Nation at Risk provided a clear diagnosis of the education system at that time as opposed to a prescription” (Elmore, 2004, p.214). This report was significant because A Nation at Risk provided clear evidence that there was an immediate sense that American schools were failing miserably, and it demanded reform efforts from the American school systems. However, the increase of criminal behavior during the 1980s was attributed frequently to the discovery of crack cocaine (Simonsen, 1991). It is important to note that during the 1980’s schools suffered substantial federal funding cuts that resulted in a reduced quality of education in the public schools (Spring, 1990). The students took on a philosophy during this era of getting tough and their behavior replicated this philosophy (Crews & Counts, 1997). Therefore, school violence was viewed by many people as a major social problem (Denmark, et al., 2005).

**Education and Student Violence in the 1990s**

During the Clinton administration in the 1990s, education reform shifted to “Outcomes Based Education.” Schools were responsible for looking at the outcomes of students, student achievement, graduation rates, attendance rates, and other accountability measures. Both A Nation at Risk and Goal’s 2000 created the standards movement. This was significant in education reform in that the culture was aware of what was going on in the education setting and the culture was assisting in demanding the need to change the culture of the schools of status quo.

**SCANS Report**

The SCANS Report, Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills was created in 1991 in an effort to ensure that high school graduates were prepared with the
necessary skills for a successful future. Through triangulation of conversations with parents, business owners, public employers, and unions there were three conclusions:

- All American high school students must develop a new set of competencies.
- The qualities of high performance that today characterize our most competitive companies must become the standard for the vast majority of our companies, large and small, local and global foundation skills if they are to enjoy a productive, full, and satisfying life.
- The nation’s schools must be transformed into high-performance organizations in their own right. (SCANS, 1991)

“The results of the Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) study were published in a document entitled What Work Requires of Schools: A SCANS Report for America 2000” (SCANS, 1991, para.1). The result of the world of work was changing education. As a result, the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education formed the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills to study the kinds of competencies and skills that workers must have to succeed in today's workplace. This was a tool that was created for the educators to use as a point of reference for guiding students towards the necessary curriculum to be successful in the workplace environment of the 21st Century (SCANS, 1991). A summary of the findings are provided in the Appendix (Appendix D). There were five skill categories in the report: resources, interpersonal relationships, information, and systems and technology (Skills and Competencies Needed to Succeed in Today's Workplace). The Skills and Competencies Needed to Succeed in Today's Workplace report linked the work place skills (21st century skills) and the academic skills for the first time in thirty years (SCANS, 1991).
Goals 2000

“Goals 2000: Educate America Act (P.L. 103-227) was signed into law on March 31, 1994” (Goals 2000, n.d., para. 1). This Act provided resources to states and communities to ensure that all students reach their full potential. Goals 2000 was based on the premise that students would reach higher levels of achievement when more was expected of them. Goals 2000 established a framework that required identification of world-class academic standards, to measure student progress, and to provide the support that students may need to meet the standards (Goals 2000, n.d.).

“The Act codified in law the six original education goals concerning school readiness, school completion, student academic achievement, leadership in math and science, adult literacy, and safe and drug-free schools” (Goals 2000, n.d., para 2). It added two new goals encouraging teacher professional development and parental participation. Additionally, Goals 2000 also created a National Skill Standards Board to facilitate development of rigorous occupational standards (Goals 2000, n.d.). This initiative encouraged the shift from what teachers thought should be taught to a curriculum that was defined and set with clear expectations for student achievement.

School reform was increasing with various laws being enacted during the 1990’s, but so was the violence in schools. Crews and Counts state that during the 1990s nearly 20 percent of the students reported carrying a weapon to school: they estimated there were 270,000 guns brought to schools across the United States on a weekly basis (Crews & Counts, 1997). Additionally, during one year, from July 1, 1997 through June 30, 1998, 60 violent deaths in the United States were school related (Kaufman, Chen, Choy, Ruddy, Miller, Fleury, Chandler, Rand, Klaus, & Planty, 2000). Of those 60 deaths in the
United States, 12 were suicides and the other 48 deaths were homicides (Kaufman et.al, 2000). Additionally, during the same era there were 253,000 reports of non-fatal student-to-student violence, which included rape, assault, and battery. During the next four years, teachers were victims of 668,000 violent crimes at school, which translates to 83 crimes per 1,000 teachers yearly (Kaufman et. Al, 2000). However, the most shocking and devastating case of school violence to date is the Columbine Massacre of 1999 (Cullen, 2009). This killing spree involved two male students who planted bombs in their school prior to fatally shooting 12 students and one teacher, as well as injuring 20 more individuals and then committing suicide (Cullen, 2009).

**No Child Left Behind**

Since the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, many educators, legislators, business leaders, and other stakeholders have offered solutions to the crisis that is occurring in today’s high schools. Ideas such as longer days, longer school years, more stringent graduation requirements, and increasing the academic rigor are just a few suggestions. Some individuals disputed the existence of such a crisis and claimed that schools in general - and high schools in particular - were doing remarkably well given the circumstances of today’s society (Jenkins, 1996).

During the George W. Bush administration, a new version of ESEA, the No Child Left Behind law, was established. Schools were held to higher accountability for student achievement, and schools and districts were tasked with the need to make sure all students had the right to the best possible education, interventions, and supports to become proficient in mathematics, reading, and writing. If schools did not make the targeted goal for proficiency or sufficient progress then the school was labeled “Did not
make Adequate Yearly Progress.” Each state was heavily involved as schools failed to make progress and therefore, failed to meet the needs of all of the students. Zhao stated, “The Greeley event highlighted the defining characteristics of educational reform efforts in the United States during the early years of the 21st century” (Zhao, 2009, p 2). The Greeley event occurred the night of the sixth anniversary of the day that President George Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act. According to Schmidt, 2008, President George W. Bush also stated that he would veto any version of No Child Left Behind that changed the law as it stood, and that he had the power to implement parts of the law through executive order whether or not Congress reauthorized the law, which was currently stalled in both the House and Senate. President George W. Bush said that he had chosen Greeley Elementary as the site of his speech because it had been chosen by the U.S. Department of Education as an exemplary public school, based on No Child Left Behind (NCLB) guidelines.

This school demonstrated the philosophy of No Child Left Behind Act; “excellence equals good test scores in math and reading, and standards-and test-based accountability is the tool to achieve such excellence” (Zhao, 2009, p.2). Administrators who are seasoned or “veterans” have to learn this way of thinking, or develop a sense of accountability that is based upon data and not the arrogance of, “I know best.” However, for administrators who are new or relatively new to education, this is not a hard concept or way of thinking because it has been the prevailing paradigm. These administrators are not aware of how to lead a school without the pressures of NCLB and are only familiar accountability component of NCLB. Additionally, through the NCLB law the term “persistently dangerous schools” was created. This is the term that each state has the
daunting task in defining and reporting to the state. However, this is a major flaw since the states have the control of how they define this term as well as how the interpretation is used in the reporting of the incidents at the schools. The culture of the school shifted to one of expectations, accountability, and results based on academics.

**Education in 2010-Race to the Top**

In May of 2009, under President Obama’s administration, the Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, suggested that national education reform efforts should be strategically focused on "reconstituting" the thousand lowest performing schools in the country. “He deemed this a good strategy for dealing with chronically failing schools” (Reconstituting Schools, 2009, para.1). The problem with this idea is that the country is in a state of economic difficulty and reconstituting is a great expense (Reconstituting Schools, 2009).

Once it was announced that General Motors was strongly considering bankruptcy, Eli Williams of Northern Kentucky University initiated a quick press release to alleviate some of the concerns. It appears as though some of the issues haunting the previous administration may no longer be present given the recent efforts to reform failing schools (Unknown Author, n.d., para. 1).

During this form of reconstitution community schools were closed based on the following:

- Low test scores
- Low enrollment
- Poor graduation rates
- Lack of attendance
• Cost to run the schools

According to President Obama’s administration, and Education Secretary, Arne Duncan, 3.5 billion dollars will be available in Title I School Improvement grants to fund transformational changes in schools that qualify for this policy. The proposal will make available significant grants to help states, districts, and schools implement the rigorous interventions required in each state’s lowest-performing challenge schools under the college and career ready students program (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). This is targeting students who are college bound as well as high school students who are not college bound but may have an interest in a career that does not require college attendance to be successful. The importance of this is that students will be prepared for these arenas prior to entering college or the work force. Often the focus has been on elementary students and targeting their needs early. There has been limited research involving high schools and high school students. There are more variables that need to be considered when high schools are being researched and innovations implemented. High schools have to consider proficiency (state testing), graduation rates, attendance requirements (students that age out of school prior to graduation are not legally required to attend school even if they haven’t completed the course work necessary for a diploma), drop-out rates, credit requirements, and teenage pregnancy to name a few.

According to The Breaking Ranks Model: Data-Driven High School Reform (2004), the need for comprehensive high school reform is particularly apparent in urban, low-performing high schools where too many students leave school without developing the proficiencies required for success and dropout rates remain unacceptably high. Evidence of poor student performance in these schools is indicative of the fact that too
many adolescent students feel disenfranchised, disconnected, and disengaged from learning. This is especially true for students who are at risk due to poverty, cultural differences, or the demands of learning a second language, and lack clear paths to adulthood. Multiple indicators of student failure are thus underscoring the pressing need to restructure low-performing, urban high schools into more engaging and supportive learning communities.

The process that schools must go through in order to qualify for the funding is determined by their capacity to improve low-performing schools, which includes developing and implementing effective school quality review teams to assist schools in identifying school needs and supporting school improvement. There are four options that schools or districts may choose to implement this policy to best meet the needs of their students: transformation model, turnaround model, restart model, or the school closure model. The transformation model is defined by the Obama administration as replacing the principal, strengthening staffing, implementing a research-based instructional program, providing extended learning time, and implementing new governance and flexibility. The turnaround model is described as replacing the principal and rehiring no more than 50 percent of the school staff, implementing a research-based instructional program, providing extended learning time, and implementing a new governance structure. "In general, we don't have much evidence on what it takes to create an alternative to a failed school," said Grover J. "Russ" Whitehurst, a Brookings Institution analyst who oversaw education research in the Bush administration. "There are not a lot of case studies that you can point to. It's not that (Obama officials) are ignoring evidence. It's just that there isn't much evidence to go on."
Superintendent Williams Andrekopoulos (2010) says the Milwaukee School District will consider all four options, but he personally does not support the idea of firing half the teachers. “If I remove 50 teachers from this school, they’re still going to teach, they have tenure rights, and so then I’m going to put them in another school.”

Unfortunately, all of these models require that the principal be removed from his/her position regardless of the context of the current situation happening on campus. There are different types of leaders as well as different principal leadership styles. This change causes disconnect in high schools, particularly where the principal has established a community environment with the students and staff. Questions that are being asked of all involved in this policy revolve around the following: “If a public school struggles year after year, is the solution to shut it down? Fire everyone and start over? Hand the reins to a contractor? Or help teachers and principals raise their game?” (High School Reform, 2004) Education reform is occurring constantly in the academic world, and its effectiveness is in constant need of assessment.

The above section of this study was divided into two sections. The first section reviewed the history of education in the United States of America. The second section was an overview of significant changes and events in education that resulted in reforms, which resulted in changing education. Common themes that emerged from educational reform over the past 300 years include economic issues as a significant factor and conflicts over cultural domination (Spring, 2001). As a result of the review of the history of education, high schools have physically changed minimally since their creation in the late 1800’s, however; the culture has had an impact on changing the curriculum over the past 200 years. Therefore, establishing and creating the need for high school reform for
our students today is crucial. The consequences of our high schools lack of preparation for our students, and the outcomes that our high school students are experiencing from high drop-out rates, low graduation rates and low achievement scores on state assessments from students not being successful is devastating. The high school statistics of failure and lack of success are astounding and there is a need for immediate intervention to correct this problem for our children is paramount.

**Problem**

The purpose of this study was to understand and describe the indicators and factors encountered in turning around a high school from being unsafe to safe. The problem is that high schools have changed minimally since the original creation. According to Ancess, there have been an impressive number of esteemed scholars making a compelling argument against the large comprehensive factory-model high school for more than three decades before the Columbine tragedy (Ancess, 2003). Recent national statistics regarding school violence and discipline show school violence to be a national problem that affects urban, suburban, and rural schools alike (Dinkes, Cataldi, & Lin-Kelly, 2007). School safety is an essential component of efforts to improve school quality (Marzano, 2003, Lezzote, 1992, and Edmonds, 1979b). There is, of course, a need for high schools to be reformed. These factors are likely contributors to many high schools experiencing violence, unsafe environments, high dropout rates, low graduation rates, and low achievement scores on state assessments.

In the next section of this paper, the researcher will provide literature and research to support the various reform efforts in education in relationship to high school education. The literature review section will also provide research supporting the significance that
culture has in a school, as well as the research-based innovations that are in education reform. “School culture is defined as patterns of meaning or activity (norms, values, beliefs, relationships, rituals, traditions, myths, etc.) shared in varying degrees by members of a school community” (School Culture, 2010).

According to Merriam-Webster, “reform is defined as to put or change into an improved form or condition” (2010, para.1). In order to better serve today’s students and societal needs, there has to be major changes in high schools. Small changes have been tried, with little difference. Major transformation of American high schools appears to be greatly needed.

**Innovation Efforts in the United States**

In this section the researcher will present information regarding reform in the United States in the business, health care, and the education worlds. The literature review will provide evidence to support the need for reform for growth in society today. Additionally, it will support the notion that the culture impacts reform and that it has a lot of power in the reform.

**Business Reform**

The business community is in dire need of a major reform at this time in America. The Obama administration is demanding reform on Wall Street. The Obama administration proposed a bill regarding the following: enforce regulations covering mortgages, credit cards and other financial products. Lenders face new restrictions on the type of mortgages they write and cannot be rewarded for steering borrowers to higher-cost loans (Associated Press, 2010). These new restrictions are in place as a result of the disaster the economy is in from the previous five years. During the past five to ten years,
banks have provided mortgages to individuals at rates that were too high for individuals to maintain paying. The global financial crisis that Americans have experienced over the past two and a half years has been the worst since the Great Depression.

**Health Care Reform**

As President Barack Obama entered the White House in 2008, it was with the promise of Health Care Reform. Currently, the United States is the only industrialized nation in the world that does not offer universal health care coverage. As a result, the health care system is the most expensive in the world, i.e., health care costs more per person than any other nation and consumes a greater percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Other complaints of the health care system included sky rocketing premiums, denial of coverage for people with pre-existing conditions, patrons being dropped from coverage due to sickness, and rejection of necessary medical services and procedures as a result. The astounding statistic that 43.6 million Americans did not possess insurance, which makes up approximately 17 percent of the population, was reported in 2008 by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Center for Disease Control, 2010). It was the promise and mission, of President Barrack Obama to reform the health care system if he was to elected. Through legislation in the Spring of 2009, Barack Obama was able to pass major comprehensive health care reform. This achievement was instrumental in the United States due to the fact previous administrations have been unsuccessful in accomplishing health care reform during their presidency.
Approaches to Education Reform

Elementary Reform

A significant amount of research has been conducted regarding innovations in elementary schools. According to a study that was conducting regarding elementary reform, the Principal was quoted that her vision as an educational leader in a reform school is about “hanging tough, being loving, which gets positive results in a challenging school such as hers.” Like Eileen McDaniel (1999), another effective principal who has studied her own practice in elementary reform, she builds vision in her school through “encouragement, support, and, above all, a feeling of trust” (Mullen, 2000, p.239.) Reform is not about just having more money or additional resources; it is about the relationships and culture that is created in the school environment.

Reform has been attempted in thousands of schools nationwide, mostly for high-poverty students in low-performing schools. This trend is driven by the recognition that school improvement efforts are complex and require a coordinated, systematic approach that addresses every aspect of a school including curriculum, instruction, governance, scheduling, professional development, assessment, and parent, family, and community involvement. Comprehensive School Reform has integrated research-based practices into a unified effort to raise student achievement and achieve other important outcomes, such as reducing dropout rates or improving behavior. To date, education stakeholders at the national, state, and local levels have had few objective, rigorous, and consumer friendly sources to turn to when making choices from among the hundreds of Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) models available for reform (Comprehensive School Reform, 2006).
Middle School/Junior High School Reform

Although the first report indicating there was a need for reform in middle schools was documented in the mid-1970s; schools are finally realizing the importance of reform now. In response to the concern of the middle school problem of students being unsuccessful, in 1989 The Carnegie Corporation of New York issued *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century*, a landmark report which recognized the need to strengthen the academic core of middle schools and establish caring, supportive environments which value adolescents” (Feldman, 2004, p.1).

The recommendations contained in the report were thought to drastically improve educational experiences of all middle grade students, but especially the students who were at risk. The Task Force called for middle grade schools that:

- *Create small communities for learning* where stable, close, mutually respectful relationships with adults and peers are considered fundamental for intellectual development and personal growth. The key elements of these communities are schools-within-schools or houses, students and teachers grouped together as teams, and small group advisories that ensure that every student is known well by at least one adult.

- *Teach a core academic program* that results in students who are literate, including in the sciences, and who know how to think critically, lead a healthy life, behave ethically, and assume the responsibilities of citizenship in a pluralistic society. Youth service to promote values for citizenship is an essential part of the core academic program.
• Ensure success for all students through elimination of tracking by achievement level and promotion of co-operative learning, flexibility in arranging instructional time, and adequate resources (time, space, equipment, and materials) for teachers.

• Empower teachers and administrators to make decisions about the experiences of middle grade students through creative control by teachers over the instructional program linked to greater responsibilities for students' performance, governance committees that assist the principal in designing and coordinating school-wide programs, and autonomy and leadership within sub-schools or houses to create environments tailored to enhance the intellectual and emotional development of all youth.

• Staff middle grade schools with teachers who are expert at teaching young adolescents and who have been specially prepared for assignment to the middle grades.

• Improve academic performance through fostering the health and fitness of young adolescents, by providing a health coordinator in every middle grade school, access to health care and counseling services, and a health-promoting school environment.

• Re-engage families in the education of young adolescents by giving families meaningful roles in school governance, communicating with families about the school program and student's progress, and offering families opportunities to support the learning process at home and at the school.

• Connect schools with communities, which together share responsibility for each middle grade student's success, through identifying service opportunities in the
community, establishing partnerships and collaborations to ensure students' access to health and social services, and using community resources to enrich the instructional program and opportunities for constructive after-school activities (Turning Points, 1990).

The findings of the Turning Points report, along with ten years of research and practice data from middle schools around the country, led to the creation of the National Turning Points Network. In 1998, Carnegie turned to the Center for Collaborative Education (CCE) in Boston to develop a new whole school reform design that would be based on the research and work of the preceding nine years. CCE launched the National Turning Points Network in August of 1999, and in January 2000, Turning Points became a member of New American Schools (NAS) and their portfolio of comprehensive school reform design teams. Also in 2000, Carnegie Corporation issued an in-depth update of the 1989 report - *Turning Points 2000: Educating Adolescents in the 21st Century*, by Anthony Jackson and Gayle Davis (Feldman, 2004).

Middle schools are reflecting on their data, student relationships, community involvement, curriculum, school culture and other factors impacting student success in school. According to a study that was conducted with twelve middle schools (six high performing and 6 low performing schools); the low performing middle schools (LPS) and high performing middle schools (HPS) equally lacked five of the eleven middle school reform components. The eleven reform components that the study was using were: standards-based curriculum, exploratory courses, varied assessment, varied teaching and learning approaches, flexible scheduling, experts at teaching adolescents, team teaching,
advisory programs, administrators govern democratically, promote good health, and involve families and communities (Roney, Brown, and Anafar, 2004).

**High School Reform**

Perhaps the rationale that more research has been conducted in elementary schools, as opposed to secondary schools, is based upon the fact that it is easier to measure degrees of student success, and/or because there are fewer environmental factors. History and patterns are often repeated and since high school research and reform is uncharted territory, there are few researchers who want to explore the unknown. Elementary data is simplistic: students were either proficient or not; students were present or not; environmental factors are minimal. According to Sammon (2006), while there are not any "cookie cutter" approaches to education reform, there are tried and verified lessons about success from leaders in reform.

According to Marsh and LeFever (2004, pp.338-339) education reform is taking a broad, common direction that includes:

1. Clear performance standards for student results
2. Improved assessment technology, which hopefully dramatically changes the way assessment, teaching, and learning take place
3. A comprehensive reframing of the learning environment to meet the needs of the new student performance standards
4. A shift from a rule-driven to a results-driven system where local schools have much greater authority and control of resources
5. Meaningful partnerships between students and the school where both have accountability linked to clear standards of student performance
6. New strategic partnerships with families and community agencies characterized by new approaches to incentives and accountability, with shared but limited resources.

Today’s calls for high school reform echo those of *A Nation at Risk* and other national studies of American education in the mid-1980s. The reformers of that era argued that an emerging knowledge-based economy, in which decent-paying jobs required brains rather than brawn, demanded that public high schools provide a rigorous academic education to their entire student population, rather than to only a small percentage of their students, as they had done in the past. Arguing that traditional academic disciplines were the best vehicle for preparing students for the new workplace and instilling in them a common “cultural language,” reformers called for an academic core curriculum in the nation’s high schools (Jerald, 2006, p.3).

Education comes with a cost. However, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has been motivated by sobering reports of ill-prepared students to allocate a billion dollars in funding: policymakers nationwide have since embraced the issue of high school reform.

Political, business, and education leaders convened at a National Education Summit on high schools in Washington, D.C. in 2005. “Later that year, the National Governors Association awarded the first of nearly $24 million in grants to over two dozen states to develop comprehensive high school improvement plans” (Jerald, 2006. p.3). As a result every governor signed an unprecedented National Governors Association pact to measure high school graduation rates more accurately (Jerald, 2006).
Nearly 7,000 students drop out of American high schools each day. Altogether, an estimated 1.2 million teenagers abandon the public school system each year without a diploma or an adequate education. A disproportionate number will have attended the nation’s 22,000 high schools in which less than 60 percent of students graduate within four years of entering the ninth grade. The future is not much brighter for many of those students who do persist and earn a high school diploma. An estimated 40 percent of freshmen in community colleges (and 20 percent in public four-year institutions) require remedial instruction in reading, writing or mathematics before they can succeed in college-level courses (Southern Regional Educational Board, 2010.).

Commission reports, conferences, and research briefs have made a compelling case for reform. Only 68 percent of the nation’s high school freshmen and only about half of African-American and Hispanic students graduate on time. Just 57 percent of high school graduates take the core academic courses proposed by a national commission two decades ago. As a result, only one in three high school freshmen graduate on time with the academic preparation necessary to succeed in college (Jerald, 2006). While there are many successful high schools among the nearly 22,000 across the country, too many are still not getting the job done.

Chart 2.1 is an organizational chart that is a listing of different reform approaches high schools are implementing at this time. Students who are chosen to attend MATCH high school in Massachusetts have a rare opportunity. MATCH has an enrollment of 220 students yearly for each grade level that is selected by a random lottery. Students are placed on a waiting list; however, students rarely change their mind once they are accepted. Students who are accepted at MATCH receive intensive instruction in math,
reading, and language arts, attend extremely small classes, and receive tutoring. Students who attend MATCH are typically students who are far below standard in reading and math, and who consequently end up surpassing the state’s minimum proficiency level score. Last year all students passed the math assessment at MATCH. Students are exposed to classes of high academic rigor. The results and outcomes from students who complete the four years at MATCH is astonishing; 99 percent of the first seven classes of students have been accepted to 4 year colleges (MATCH, 2010).

Manual High School is a school that has been reopened after being closed because it was deemed ineffective and unsafe. This year, Manual High School completed the third year of its transformation and is seeing great success according to the state assessments. The culminating class will be complete in the 2010-2011 school year. Manual High School is a community school that has a strong principal who required the staff to pursue excellence and make a personal connection with every student every day. Manual High School is a charter school now, and is currently under an innovation plan, which gives the flexibility and discretion to make decisions relative to curriculum and other leadership issues involving the school. (Manual, 2010).

According to Green Dot, “Alain Leroy Locke Senior High School was opened in 1967 in response to the Watts’ riots” (Green Dot, 2010, para.1). The school was created at that specific location to provide South Los Angeles a safe and secure place of learning. Over the years, Locke High School deteriorated academically and the campus became an unsafe environment. On September 11, 2007, Los Angeles Unified School District voted to give Green Dot operational control of Locke High School. In the fall of 2008, Locke reopened as eight small college-prep academies. The small learning communities
consisted of the following concentrations: career tech educational schools focusing on architecture, construction, and engineering, additionally the ninth independent school opened in the fall of 2009 (Green Dot, 2010). The common theme between the schools is that they are focusing on school culture and academic rigor.

Chart 2.1.

**School Reform that Works**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Match</th>
<th>Manual</th>
<th>Locke</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Website</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.matchschool.org">www.matchschool.org</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.manual.schoolfusion.us">www.manual.schoolfusion.us</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.greendot.org/schools/locke">www.greendot.org/schools/locke</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size</strong></td>
<td>220 students, chosen by random lottery</td>
<td>2007 1st year reopening 9th grade, 2010-2011 - 1st senior class</td>
<td>9 campuses; random sizes (averaging 140 students in each grade)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td>61% African-American, 31% Hispanic, 1% Asian, 3% White, 4% Multi-race</td>
<td></td>
<td>Multi-racial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unique Attributes</strong></td>
<td>Mathematics ranks #1 out of 341 high schools for students scoring proficient or advanced on the math MCAS</td>
<td>School culture and literacy</td>
<td>Originally opened in 1967. One of LA's most troubled and chronically under-performing public high schools. Green Dot's school model has focused on graduation students and preparing them for college, leadership, and life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>Denver, Colorado</td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Analysis</strong></td>
<td>Named 49th in Newsweek top high schools in the nation. Recognized by the Effective Practice Incentive Community as a Silver Medal winner.</td>
<td>2010 - New principal Friends of Manual - Build the community connection Innovation Plan</td>
<td>2007 Green Dot operates the school it remains a public school; however, is a charter school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
North Carolina New Schools Project Five Essential Design Principles

A framework that is used in North Carolina is referred to as the North Carolina New Schools Project Five Design Principles (NCNSP). North Carolina School District personnel use these five design principles district wide when they are reforming a school. “A one-year planning process occurs and is followed by five years of implementation” (North Carolina New Schools Project Five Design Principles, 2010, para.2). The schools use the essential guiding principles to assist and guide them into having the best institution and instructional environment for their students’ success.

The five components North Carolina New Schools Project Five Essential Design Principles are defined as:

*Ready for College:* Innovative high schools have a pervasive, transparent and consistent understanding that each school exists for preparing all students for college, careers and life. They maintain a common set of high standards for every graduate to eliminate the harmful consequences of tracking and sorting students (North Carolina New Schools Project, n.d., para.3).

Ready for College is the ultimate area that all of the design principles relate to and are focused on. The goals that the students work toward during their high school careers are all targeted toward the mission of being ready for college.

*Require Powerful Teaching and Learning:* Innovative high schools have common standards for high quality teaching. Teachers design rigorous instruction that ensures the development of critical thinking, application, and problem-solving skills often neglected in traditional settings (North Carolina New Schools Project, n.d., para.4).
This philosophy and academic rigor prepares the students for the learning that will occur and transfer into their lives, which presumably will make them successful individuals in society. The high quality of education and rigor with inquiry allows them the opportunity to expand their knowledge to grow and be competitive in the adult world.

Personalization: Educators in innovative high schools understand that knowing students well is essential to helping them achieve academically (North Carolina New Schools Project, n.d., para.5).

This is a key aspect of helping students to achieve mastery of the material. The more teachers are aware of their students, the better they are equipped to teach their students. This is analogous to the notion that the more a businessman/woman knows his or her product, the better that person is able to sell that product. In education, linking personal experience and prior knowledge to the material is essential to mastery of the concepts.
**Redefine Professionalism:** The responsibility to the shared vision of an innovative high school is evident in the collaborative, creative, and leadership roles of all staff in the school. Staff members take responsibility for the success of every student, hold themselves accountable to their colleagues, and are reflective about their roles (North Carolina New Schools Project, n.d., para.6).

This is very important in education and is definitely one of the greatest successes in reform. Collaboration in education and leadership among staff is crucial to achievement. In many other professions collaboration, sharing, and communication are considered prerequisites and indispensable attributes of organizational success. However, in education norms, as well as set timelines, have to be established for this to occur. Once educators see the success of reflective conversations and collaborations, they generally continue to promote and maintain timelines without resistance.

**Purposeful Design:** Innovative high schools are designed deliberately to create the conditions that ensure the other four Design Principles. The organization of time and space and the allocation of resources ensure that best practices become common practice (North Carolina New Schools Project, n.d., para.7).

This is important because it allows the schools and communities the opportunity to have a voice to meet their needs.

The North Carolina District is very creative in that it acknowledges individuals have different interests and needs; once students are interested in those areas they teach the content through those selected themes. These schools are all focused with a different theme; thus, they already have buy-in from the students and staff, which in turn increased student engagement and decreases incidents of student noncompliance. One possible
downside to this mode of operating education is the huge fiscal impact it may have on education.

According to AnComm’s ‘Talk About It®, anonymous online and text based reporting service, the following were key findings based on the 2006-2007 school year student responses. AnComm’s ‘Talk About It®, Incident Report encompasses aggregated usage data from more than 54,000 students enrolled in 52 United States schools across 8 states:

- Stress, bullying and depression ranked one, two and three respectively in a list of incidents as reported by elementary, middle, and high school students (New Report, 2007, para.3).

- 5,992 total incidents were reported by students ranging from the most common (stress, bullying, and depression) to other significant types of problems, including family problems, fighting, peer pressure, drugs, cheating, cutting/self-injury, suicide, pregnancy, eating disorders, alcohol usage, dropping out, threats, and weapons (New Report, 2007, para.4).

- Eight out of ten students are more likely to reach out and communicate problems with administrators, counselors and law enforcement in schools using AnComm’s ‘Talk About It®’ anonymous online and text based reporting service (New Report, 2007, para.5).

From a constructivist perspective the result from reforming our high schools would be more actively engaged students in the learning process (Jenkins, 1996). The next section Innovations in Efforts in Education will provide different innovations that have been successfully implemented in school reform. The significance of this section is to present
information on other schools' and/or districts' ways of meeting today's student needs in the educational setting.

**Innovations in Efforts in Education**

For the purpose of this paper, the researcher will define innovations as meaning “the introduction of something new…a new idea, method or device” (Reiman and Dotger, 2008, p.152). The innovations that will be discussed in this section are innovations that are new to the schools or districts. There are numerous innovations or changes that occur in education every day of every year. It is a booming business that many salespeople have locked into and are assisting schools in making changes for the good and the bad of our children. For example, one innovation is the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that has donated enormous amounts of dollars and resources to high schools to help improve their student outcomes. Specifically, the Gates Foundation put high school reform back on the national agenda in 2000 when it launched a five-year high school initiative initially focused on addressing the anonymity that Sizer, Boyer, and Goodlad had identified as such a significant detriment to the productivity of public high schools (Jerald, 2006, p.3). Some of these reform high schools are successful and the students are making tremendous growth with the resources that are available to them. However, there are also some students and schools that were not successful with the financial resources due to the fact that the reform needed more than financial resources it needed solid leadership and innovation.

**Outcome-based Education**

Outcome-based education is similar to the total quality movement in business and manufacturing. It reflects a belief that the best way for individuals and organizations to
get where they are going is first to determine where they are and where they want to be, then plan backwards to determine the best way to get from here to there. The term outcomes describe what students should know and be able to do in particular subject areas. Student performance outcomes describe how and at what level students must demonstrate such knowledge and skills. School performance standards define the quality of education schools must provide in order for students to meet content and/or performance outcomes (North Central Regency Educational Laboratory, 1995).

**Coalition of Essential Schools**

Another reform strategy is the Coalition of Essential Schools. The Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) is at the forefront of creating and sustaining personalized, equitable, and intellectually challenging schools. Essential schools are places of powerful learning where all students have the chance to reach their fullest potential.

By coaching for cultures of continuous improvement and powerful professional learning communities focused on student achievement, CES works with educators to support and promote innovative and effective teaching. CES works with school districts and other entities to shape the policy conditions that support and promote schools characterized by personalization, democracy and equity, intellectual vitality and excellence, and graduates who experience success in all aspects of their lives: educational, professional, civic, and personal (Coalition of Essential Schools, 2010, para 1).

The coalition is implemented in schools that serve young people from low-income communities (Coalition of Essential Schools, 2010).
Professional Learning Communities

Professional Learning Communities (PLC) are innovations that schools consider when change is desired. There are many components necessary when educational institutions desire to implement PLC’s in the buildings in order to ensure success.

During the eighties, as cited in Hord, Meehan, Orletsky, & Sattes (1997), Rosenholtz brought teachers' workplace factors into the discussion of teaching quality, maintaining that teachers who felt supported in their own ongoing learning and classroom practice were more committed and effective than those who did not receive such confirmation. Through teacher networks, cooperation among colleagues, and expanded professional roles teachers increased efficacy in meeting students' needs. Further, Rosenholtz found that teachers with a high sense of their own efficacy were more likely to adopt new classroom behaviors and also more likely to stay in the profession (Rosenholtz & Simpson, 1990).

According to Hord, McLaughlin and Talbert (2002) confirmed Rosenholtz and Simpson’s findings, suggesting that when teachers had opportunities for collaborative inquiry and the learning related to it, they were able to develop and share a body of wisdom gleaned from their experience. Adding to the discussion, Darling-Hammond (1995) cited shared decision making as a factor in curriculum reform and the transformation of teaching roles in some schools. In such schools, structured time is provided for teachers to work together in planning instruction, observing each other's classrooms, and sharing feedback. These and other attributes characterize professional learning communities (Southwest Educational Development Laboratory [Hord et al.], 1997).
Professional Learning Communities Framework

This theoretical framework creates an environment between administrators and teachers that leads to shared and collegial leadership in the school, where all grow professionally and learn to view themselves all playing on the same field and working toward a common goal or purpose. Louis and Kruse (1993, p.2) identified the supportive leadership of principals as one of the necessary human resources for restructuring staff into school-based professional communities.

Collective Creativity

Through Senge’s many famous works between 1990 and 1992, the idea of a learning organization "where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together" (Hord et al., 1997, p. 3) caught the attention of educators who were struggling to plan and implement reform in the nation's schools. “As Senge's paradigm shift was explored by educators and shared in educational journals, the label became learning communities” (Hord et al. 1997, pp.18-19).

In schools, the learning community is demonstrated by people from multiple constituencies, at all levels, collaboratively and continually working together (Louis & Kruse, 1993). Inquiry requires debate among teachers about priorities and values. Inquiry promotes understanding and appreciation for the work of others...and inquiry helps principals and teachers create the ties that bond them together as a special group and that bind them to a shared set of ideas. Inquiry, in other words, helps principals and teachers become a community of learners. This is successful because participants that engage in
conversations learn to apply new ideas and information to problem solving, and therefore, are able to create new conditions for students. Key tools in this collaborative process are shared values and vision; supportive physical, temporal, and social conditions; and a shared personal practice (Hord et al., 1997).

**Shared Values and Vision**

Many individuals aren’t aware of the impact that a shared vision can have on a school’s success. According to SEDL, “sharing vision is not just agreeing with a good idea; it is a particular mental image of what is important to an individual and to an organization” (2010, para. 3).

A core characteristic of the vision is an undeviating focus on student learning, maintains Louis and Kruse (1993), in which each student's potential achievement is carefully considered. These shared values and vision lead to binding norms of behavior that the staff supports. In such a community, the individual staff member is responsible for his/her actions, but the common good is placed on par with personal ambition. The relationships between individuals are described as caring. Such caring is supported by open communication, made possible by trust (Hord et al., 1997).

**Supportive Conditions**

There are numerous factors in determining the process and implementation of PLC’s such as: who, when, where, and how the staff can regularly come together as a unit to do the learning, decision making, problem solving, and creative work that characterize a professional learning community. “In order for learning communities to
function productively, the physical or structural conditions and the human qualities and capacities of the people involved must be optimal (Louis & Kruse, 1995).”

**Physical Conditions**

Physical conditions according to Louis and Kruse (1993) refer to factors that support learning communities: time to meet and talk, small school size and physical proximity of the staff to one another, interdependent teaching roles, well-developed communication structures, school autonomy, and teacher empowerment (Hord et al., 1997). An additional but significant factor is the staff's input in selecting teachers and administrators for the school, and even encouraging staff who are not in tune with the program to find work elsewhere.

“Boyd presents a similar list of physical factors that result in an environment conducive to school change and improvement: the availability of resources; schedules and structures that reduce isolation; policies that encourage greater autonomy, foster collaboration, enhance effective communication, and provide for staff development” (Hord et al., 1997, p.37).

**People Capacities**

One of the first characteristics cited by Louis and Kruse (1993) of individuals in a productive learning community is a willingness to accept feedback and to work toward improvement. In addition, the following qualities are needed: respect and trust among colleagues at the school and district level, possession of an appropriate cognitive and skill base that enables effective teaching and learning, supportive leadership from administrators and others in key roles, and relatively intensive socialization processes (Hord et al., 1997, p.22).
Shared Personal Practice

The review of a teacher's behavior by colleagues is the norm in the professional learning community (Louis & Kruse, 1993). This practice is not evaluative but is part of the "peers helping peers" process. Educators enter each other’s classrooms on a regular basis to observe, script notes, and then discuss their observations with the teacher who taught participate in the review process.

Wignall (1992) describes a high school in which teachers share their practice and enjoy a high level of collaboration in their daily work life. Mutual respect and understanding are the fundamental requirements for this kind of workplace culture. Teachers find help, support, and trust as a result of developing warm relationships with each other. "Teachers tolerate (even encourage) debate, discuss and disagree. They are comfortable sharing both their successes and their failures. They praise and recognize one another's triumphs, and offer empathy and support for each other's troubles" (Hord et al., 1997, p.23).

Summary of Attributes of Professional Learning Communities

This information is from the summary of results included in the literature review noted below regarding professional learning communities (Hord et al., 1997, p. 27).

- The collegial and facilitative participation of the principal, who shares leadership - and thus, power and authority - through inviting staff input in decision making
- A shared vision that is developed from staff’s unswerving commitment to students' learning and that is consistently articulated and referenced for the staff’s work
• Collective learning among staff and application of that learning to solutions that address students' needs

• The visitation and review of each teacher's classroom behavior by peers as a feedback and assistance activity to support individual and community improvement and

• Physical conditions and human capacities that support such an operation.

According to Hord et al., the literature on professional learning communities repeatedly gives attention to five attributes of such organizational arrangements: supportive and shared leadership; collective creativity, shared values and vision, supportive conditions and shared personal practice.

There are many more innovations in education. The innovations that were provided in this paper are just a few. It is imperative that research is conducted in high schools to support the notion or the assumption that students are not successful in school. The research would allow educators to make sound, informative decisions and to effectively educate the students in a high school setting. The next section of this paper will discuss approaches to school reforms that school sites and districts are implementing with success.
**Professional Learning Communities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For staff, the following results have been observed:</th>
<th>For students, the results include:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- reduction of isolation of teachers</td>
<td>- decreased dropout rate and fewer classes &quot;skipped&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- increased commitment to the mission and goals of the school and increased vigor in working to strengthen the mission</td>
<td>- lower rates of absenteeism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- shared responsibility for the total development of students and collective responsibility for students' success</td>
<td>- increased learning that is distributed more equitably in the smaller high schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- powerful learning that defines good teaching and classroom practice and that creates new knowledge and beliefs about teaching and learners</td>
<td>- greater academic gains in math, science, history, and reading than in traditional schools and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- increased meaning and understanding of the content that teachers teach and the roles they play in helping all students achieve expectations</td>
<td>- smaller achievement gaps among students from different backgrounds (p. 28).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- higher likelihood that teachers will be well informed, professionally renewed, and inspired to inspire students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- more satisfaction, higher morale, and lower rates of absenteeism</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- significant advances in adapting teaching to the students, accomplished more quickly than in traditional schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>- commitment to making significant and lasting changes and</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- higher likelihood of undertaking fundamental systemic change (p. 27).</td>
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Leadership and Organizational Implications

Contemporary high schools are not succeeding in preparing students to participate in our ever-changing society. The educational system is continuing to spin the same cycle and change the name of its approach without changing its end result. If high schools do not change now, we will have a future of bleak, limited educated individuals running the United States. The leadership in today’s schools must also change to meet the needs of the students and society. In order for a high school to successfully turnaround there needs to be a “whole school buy in.” As cited in Murphy “several leadership qualities are critical to successful turnaround” (2008, p.150).

School systems have to be much more dynamic, become data-driven organizations that can be immediately responsive and that allow and support learning at all levels. A successful high school today must be a school that will foster an environment that will align people with information through a technology framework (Becerra-Fernandez & Stevenson, 2001). The concept of having resources readily available for staff in an educational organization allows the school to improve its qualities and actions, which will translate into student success.

School Culture

According to Saskin and Walberg (1993, p.12), “In business the connection between culture and performance is commonly accepted.” The authors also suggest, “In schools where the product is complex and intangible, a strong cohesive culture is even more important than in business.” Dr. Sara Lawrence Lightfoot is a leading researcher in urban high schools and in her book, A Good High School, she wrote about a school with the humanistic approach (rapport that is staff built with the students and staff) that the
headmaster established as the framework at Milton Academy (Boston) (1983). The headmaster states, “This school makes an enormous commitment to the individual person… This is a dynamic, complicated, and highly personal place… We are like a house of cards that could tumble down. But we are pretty glued together, I think” (Lightfoot, 1983, p.271). The research by Deal and Peterson (1985), states that in studying the patterns of a typical school it becomes evident how culture affects student performance. Deal and Peterson (1985), state school culture describes the character of a school and reflects deeper themes and patterns of core values, common beliefs, and regular traditions that develop over time.

School cultures are shaped through a variety of means. Principals, by virtue of their formal positions and visibility assume five key roles in shaping social tapestry. Principals act as (1) symbols, (2) potters, (3) poets, (4) actors, and (5) healers.

**Symbols**

Principals reinforce and mold school values through their dress, daily behavior, and attention to or appreciation of events and routine activities. They communicate beliefs about teaching and learning by what they read, talk about or call attention to.

**Potters**

Principals consciously and unconsciously shape school culture by identifying school heroes and heroines (exemplars of core values). The principal also convenes daily rituals and develops traditions and ceremonies. These symbolic activities connect people to core values by communicating and reinforcing dramatically what the school stands for.
Poets

Principals shape culture through the use of language. The principals paint images of improvement, weaving words of metaphors and spinning tales to focus the culture. What they say, the words they use, and even the tone of their delivery sends messages and ideas that reinforce core purposes and values.

Actors

Here the principal is the key member of an ensemble capable of shifting situations or scripts with ease, portraying or dramatizing a consistent set of values and a clear, direct vision. The principal must be able to improvise the inevitable dramas, crises, and comedies that make up a school’s daily life. The role a principal takes on provides opportunities to reinforce and mold underlying norms and values.

Healers

The principal is overseeing and ministering to those experiencing transitions and changes in the life of the school; this naturally produces a sense of loss or hurt. The principal marks beginning and ends with ceremonies and works with individuals and groups to cope with any rift or tear in the school’s social fabric (Deal and Peterson, Shashkin and Walberg, 1993).

Administrator Succession as a Context for Leadership

Research on principal succession extends over several decades. In studies of overall school performance, findings indicate that a succession can produce positive effects, deleterious effects, or no effect (Taylor, 2006). Gordon and Patterson (2006), state the transition from one principal to another can represent a significant turning point in the culture of the school. The principal is tasked with the need to find a ‘fit’ for his own style in the school’s culture with his vision intact. The incoming principal must be
aware of the predecessor’s vision, ideas, practices and leadership. As an administrator this is something that must be considered because it is an additional role that individuals are not always aware of in order to maintain a school culture that is positive and successful.

**Dimensions of Safety**

The third section of this chapter establishes the foundation for various definitions of safety throughout the literature. A convergence of thinking on safety has led to the initial definition of safety for this study. A safe school can be defined as the reduction of discipline antics and classroom disturbances (Thomas, 2006) and violence (Thomas, 2006); compliant where problems are not addressed (Brophy, J.E., 1996, Freeman, B., 1994, and Marzano, R.J. and J.S., 2003) or a culture where students and staff feel comfortable walking around campus without fear of physical, emotional, or psychological pain (Bryk, Bender Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, Easton, 2010; Dinkes, Cataldi, & Lin-Kelly, 2007). The section will begin with examples of safety in everyday life and will conclude with school safety.

**Society Safety**

The next section of this chapter is addressing the word “Safety” in different contexts in society. The purpose is to provide the reader with a complete sense of what the word encompasses.

**Safe**

According to the standard American dictionary safe is defined as free from hurt, injury, danger, or risk: to arrive safe and sound. It is also defined as; involving little or no risk of mishap, error, etc.: a safe estimate, dependable or trustworthy: a safe guide,
careful to avoid danger or controversy: a safe player; a safe play denied the chance to do harm; in secure custody: a criminal safe in jail (Merriam-Webster, 2011).

**Safe in Sports**

In baseball a player is safe when the individual reaches base without being put out. For example, the player is safe on the throw to first base if he/she arrives there before the ball meets the player’s glove.

**Safe Mode**

In this day of time, many households own at least one computer. However, there is an instance or two that the computer states it is shutting down. In order for the computer to work initially to rectify the problem the computer suggests a restart in “safe” mode. Safe mode is a troubleshooting option for Windows that starts the computer in a limited state. Only the basic files are shown and the other files are secure from liability to harm, injury, danger, or risk: a safe place (retrieved by http://www.kephyr.com/spywarescanner/library/glossary/safemode.phtml, 2011).

**Safe Water**

In California, water quality depends on upstream inputs, such as urban runoff, agricultural runoff, or wastewater treatment discharges. Since 1986, the Environmental Protection Agency has relied on culturing *Escherichia coli* and *Enterococcus* bacteria to spot feces contamination in these waters. A positive test for feces usually indicates the presence of pathogens that cause illness, such as stomach disorders and respiratory infections. However, a study indicated that the water is safe and that the bacteria was testing false positive and was indeed not feces. Safe in this sense means ok, not harming
based on water tests and chemical levels (retrieved by 

Work Place Safety

Safety climate is an official term used by safety and personnel professionals to describe employees’ perceptions regarding overall safety within the workplace.

Weather Safety

So, the question is "How safe is safe?" The answer to this question is situation-dependent and probabilistic. There is a North Eastern blizzard that arrives in December however it is in Upstate New York where they receive typically 250+ inches of snow a year, is it safe? Yes, they have the equipment necessary to remove the problem and ensure that people are able to move from point A to B and that all needs are met. On the other hand, Hawaii receives five inches of snow in December, are they safe? No, because they are not equipped with the tools necessary to remove the problem and deal with the situation. Individuals are not prepared with the minimal daily items necessary to survive. (retrieved by http://www.zunis.org/how_hot_is_hot_how_safe_is_safe.htm, 2011).

Fire Safety

The Fire Protection Research Foundation recently completed a series of meetings with some important, but often unrecognized, National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) constituencies: those industries that fall outside what we traditionally consider our fire safety community. Many industries affected by our codes and standards can benefit from the dialogue and technical solutions the Foundation can provide. This in turn provides information for firefighters to consider when to educate the community on how to prevent fires and how to best be safe in a fire situation. The NFPA Safe Community
program was created with the goal of reaching more people with NFPA's nationally acclaimed education programs. (retrieved by http://www.nfpa.org/publicJournalDetail.asp?categoryID=&itemID=49800&src=NFPAJournal&cookie%5Ftest=1 and http://www.nfpa.org, 2011).

School Safety

In 2002, according to Scherz, there were 309,000 students ages 12-18 that were victims of serious violent crimes away from school compared to 88,000 occurring at the school (Scherz, 2006). According to Merriam Webster Dictionary (2010, para.1), the word “safe” means “free from harm or risk: unhurt or secure from threat of danger, harm, or loss.” The term “Safe” is based upon individuals’ perception of what safe is. It is a place free of bullying where behavior expectations are clearly communicated, consistently enforced, and daily applied (Mabie, 2003). The literature states the latest national statistics regarding school violence and discipline show school violence is a national problem that affects urban, suburban and rural schools alike (Dinkes, Cataldi, & Lin-Kelly, 2007). Despite unanimous agreement on the importance of school safety, there is little consensus around what “safe” actually means (Gastic & Gasiewski, 2010). School safety is essential in an effort to improve school quality. Gastic and Gasiewski (2010) state that school violence and school safety are not neutral concepts; their definitions are bounded by social and historical contexts (Michaloski, 1996; Watts & Erevelles, 2004).

According to Bucher & Mannin (2005), “a safe school is one in which the total school climate allows students, teachers, administrators, staff, and visitors to interact in a positive, nontthreatening manner that reflects the educational mission of the school while fostering positive relationships and personal growth.”
A safe school is a place where the business of education can be conducted in a welcoming environment free of intimidation, violence, and fear. Such a setting provides an educational climate that fosters a spirit of acceptance and care for every child. It is a place free of bullying where behavior expectations are clearly communicated, consistently enforced, and daily applied (Mabie, 2003).

The No Child Left Behind Act 2001, is the most recent Federal Education Policy to directly address the issues of school safety. According to No Child Left Behind (NCLB), unsafe schools are defined as persistently dangerous. According to the Federal legislation, each state is tasked with creating its own definition and criteria for ‘Unsafe’ schools. What is defined as persistently dangerous and safe varies from state to state (Gastic & Gasiewski, 2010). According to NCLB, states were advised to use “objective data or that which is not influenced by emotion, surmise, or personal bias” (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Using that data, states were required to determine the level of risk that constitutes a persistently dangerous school. This policy is based on a formula strictly based on statistical violent citations.

In the state of Nevada, a persistently dangerous school is a public school for which the following is true for at least two of three consecutive fiscal years:

1. The school had at least one criminal citation of a student or non-student by school or community police for one of the following criminal offenses committed on school property or at school-sponsored events; and

2. For schools with enrollment \( \leq 750 \) students, the school had criminal offenses equal to 2 percent of enrollment; for schools with enrollment between 750-1500 students, criminal offenses equal to 1.75 percent of enrollment; and for
schools with enrollment > 1500 students, criminal offenses equal to 1.5 percent of enrollment.

Criminal offenses are murder; mayhem; possession of a dangerous weapon on school property or in vehicle at school; kidnapping; sexual assault; robbery; assault; battery; harassment; stalking; and hazing (Gastic & Gasiewski, 2010).

Many researchers have addressed the challenges inherent to not having a universal or singular definition of school violence or safety. These researchers have called for a more inclusive and nuanced definition of school violence that incorporates the perspectives of diverse groups of stakeholders as well as the use of more diverse set of measurements and methods used to describe school violence (Adams, 2000; Furlong. Morrison, & Cornell, 2004; Henry, 2000; Scott, Nelson, & Liaupsin, 2001) (Gastic & Gasiewski, 2010). According to Shaffii and Shafii (2001), “the research into the causes of violence remains in infancy” (p.53).

School safety is most commonly described in terms of self-reported perceptions, such as one’s own fear of victimization or sense of safety at school. Safety is also described in terms of the absence or reduction of violence or other safety threats (e.g., Anderson, 1998, Astor, Meyer, & Pitner, 2001; Jimmerson & Furlong, 2006; Peterson, Larson, & Skiba, 2001).

Ronald D. Stephens, the executive director of the National School Safety Center in 2003, supports this theory. The research conducted in this study assisted the researcher in determining a definition of Safe and Unsafe schools. The final definition derived from the literature review, interviews conducted, and data analyzed.
School Violence

In one study by Dupper & Meyer-Adams, 2002, in Scherz (2006), there were 1,600 ethnically mixed youth, 85% of girls and 76 percent of boys were reported experiencing some sort of sexual harassment in school.

According to the Center for Children Exposed to Violence (2010) in a survey of high school students conducted in 2003, the number of students who had carried a weapon to school during the 30 days preceding the survey was 17.1 percent (para. 1). In 1999, one in six teachers reported having been the victim of violence in or around the school. This was an increase from one in nine in 1994 originally cited by Violence in America’s Public Schools-Five Years Later, Metropolitan Life, 1999. Lastly, According to the Gun-Free Schools Act Report: School Year 1998-1999, U.S. Department of Education, October 2002, 57 percent of [expelled] high school students were expelled for bringing firearms to school, 33 percent involved junior high school students and 10 percent involved elementary students (National Center for Children Exposed to Violence (2010, para.7)).

The ‘Code of Silence’ is the term that students use when they are aware of a violent act that may be committed but that the student is choosing not to say or do anything about. According to Syversten and Flanagan (2009, para.1), statistics from the Safe School Initiative report which is funded by the United States Secret Service and the United States Department of Education reveal that in 81 percent of the school shootings between 1974 and 2000, the attacker informed someone about his/her intent to cause harm. According to the School Associated Violent Deaths and School Shootings specifically, Kenneth Trump, Chart 2.2 School Associated Violent Death Summary from
1999-2010 is provided. Chart 2.4 illustrates the number of violent deaths; homicides, suicides, or other violent, non-accidental deaths in the United States in which a fatal injury occurred (Trump, 2010). According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2010), the term ‘at school’ includes on school property, on the way to or from school, and while attending or traveling to or from a school sponsored event. These statistics are alarming and shocking considering that so many unnecessary deaths occur at a place where students and staff are supposed to feel safe. The highest years of death totals are 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 whereas, the lowest number of deaths are during the years 2009-2010. However, according to the data there does not appear to be a trend. Therefore, this statistic is another indicator that high schools are improving their safe school environments.

School violence is presumed to occur only in the “urban areas” or ‘those’ areas. However, as seen in the Chart 2.5 and Appendix A of worldwide school shootings, school violence is no respecter of geographical location or persons. Society has changed and children have changed; why has our education system failed to change and thereby meet the safety needs of today’s youth so that they can meet the leadership challenges of tomorrow? An interesting analysis result was what occurred during the 2003-2007 years. Why did the number of shootings increase, only to decrease significantly in 2008? The detailed location and description chart is included in Chart 2.4.
Chart 2.4.

**School-Associated Violent Death Summary Data**

![Bar chart showing school-associated violent deaths from 1999-2010. The chart indicates a peak in deaths in 2003-2004 with 49 deaths, followed by a decline in subsequent years.]

Chart 2.5.

**School-Associated Violent Deaths: Method of Death Breakdown**

![Bar chart showing the method of death breakdown from 1999-2010. The chart indicates a significant number of deaths by shooting, suicide, murder-suicide, fighting, stabbing, and other methods.]
School safety is valid and essential to student success. If individuals do not feel safe in their environment how will learning occur? It cannot. School safety is a critical concept that educators must consider physically and emotionally. Once people feel safe they are more acceptable to growth and being productive. According to Bonilla (2000), “Violence is lowest in schools with effective discipline systems that mete out punishment swiftly and consistently…”.

**Gangs**

Gangs are another problem in the contemporary high school. According to Ruth Struyk, “a gang is a group of individuals who have sworn allegiance to each other, have selected a name to represent their allegiance, and seek to enhance their status through criminal activities (2006, p.11). Gangs have been around the United States for many years and are not specific to any ethnic group or particular economic status. The first documented gangs in New York City were the Irish Gangs (Walker, 2005).

If a group of youths in your community have joined together and call themselves by a particular name, whether the name is a local street, a local neighborhood, or the Bloods, Piru Bloods, Crips, Latin Kings, Mara Salvatrucha, or Gangster Disciples, and if they use signs, symbols and or colors; and if they are committing crimes; they are a gang regardless of what members of the community say” (Walker, 2005, para.3).

The traditionally best-known gang offense, fighting, is common to most gangs in the United States (Sheley, Zhang, Brody & White, 1995). However, this is not necessarily the same today, 15 years later. Gangs claim or designate an area in their community, which is their home base, and defend that location against anyone interfering with them.
The gangs name the location and typically engage in “business” deals from bullying others to selling drugs to killing other gang members. Gang membership is unique in that it creates a bond between its members; in order for someone to become a member of the gang there is a process that one would need to go through to be a legitimate member. Depending upon the gang’s vision or philosophy the “rush” or process can be from giving the individual an illegal challenge to committing to a “jump in” by other gang members.

“No matter what the origins of the gangs, they have become a major problem in our schools” (Struyk, 2006). According to a study conducted in 1995, with 375 male juveniles, the more organized the gang is, the greater the violence (Sheley et al., 1995). The characteristics of a safe school are more than violence, however violence is a significant factor in a safe school.

The next section of this paper will discuss research in high school reform conducted by Sunny Kristin, 2005. The research that was conducted supports that rigorous academic coursework is one of the top indicators for whether a student will graduate from high school and earn a college degree. However regardless, most recent high school graduates report being only moderately challenged in high school. In the 2005 survey of almost 1,500 recent graduates, just 24 percent of graduates said they were significantly challenged during high school. Elements of rigorous academic coursework are described below (Kristin, 2005).

- Higher expectations for all high school students
- Requirement that all students complete a college- or work-ready curriculum to graduate from high school
- Relevant Learning Opportunities
There are many innovations in the education world that can change the educational setting. Some are more successful than others in achieving the desired results. However, the researcher will summarize a few of the most commonly used innovations that are occurring in high schools today in the next section of this paper. These innovations have seen successful outcomes based on different measures of success.

**Stakeholders of a Turnaround School**

In order for an idea to take hold in a school culture, there must be ownership of that idea by those required to implement it and live it. The following information addresses the importance of understanding the significance that stakeholders possess in implementation of an innovation. Adams and Copland state that during the transition from the current state of schools and moving forward principals must determine learning
goals for their school. They must win the support of the community members and stakeholders (2007). According to Fowler (2004), understanding and identifying those involved in policy is important. It is the stakeholders who make the difference if policies are supported and implemented successfully or if they fail. Multiple stakeholders are involved in educational policy issues, especially because education is one of the greatest assets that contribute to a successful life. The performance of high schools around the country is receiving a significant amount of attention from state and federal policymakers, business interests, and communities as we continue to learn more about the challenges our education system is facing in the new global economy. High schools are being asked to revamp their curriculum, methodology, and teacher and student relationship paradigms in order to better serve the needs of students, communities, and our state and local economies. In today's global economy, America's ability to compete depends on our ability to prepare high school graduates to be successful in an increasingly knowledge-based economy (Cruz, 2010). For those students who don't graduate from high school, the outcomes are devastating. More than 1 million students who enter ninth grade each year fail to graduate with their peers four years later, and approximately 7,000 students drop out every school day. According to the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, some 70 percent of students nationally graduate from high school on time, but little more than half of African-American and Hispanic students earn diplomas with their peers (National Conference State Legislature, 2010).

There are numerous stakeholders that have an interest in educational policy. For example, the nongovernmental policy actors: teachers, support staff and administrator unions have a huge stake in this policy because the component of student performance is
included in the teacher evaluations. This causes many individuals to be uncomfortable for numerous reasons.

High school reform is shaped by the experiences and knowledge of school officials, teachers, students, educational stakeholders, prominent national educational organizations and reform experts, and legislative members. These stakeholders contribute to the task force as they examine the issues surrounding high school education and suggest a plan of action to assist students.

One example is Florida's high schools, which expand their target beyond the students sitting in the classroom with a textbook. An immediate need exists for an expansion of innovative and effective instructional leadership and the continued effort for recruitment and retention of quality instructors and administrators. Parents, community members, businesses and institutions must also have a raised awareness and participatory role in any reform movement. According to George, coordination of workforce education programs to improve the multitude of skills required by today's emerging workforce is a critical component for post secondary success (George, 2010).

“We can not continue to have a public school system that has proven to fail children year after year after year,” Superintendent John W. Covington said in an interview. The goal, he said, is to create a system that produces graduates who will be “fierce competitors,” (Aarons, 2010, para.2) is a supporter of this policy to assist in helping our children become successful future leaders.

**Possible Factors in High School Reform**

The kinds of innovations will change depending upon the reform and the location; there are many barriers that may occur with change. Change is something that is not easy
or something that happens over night; it takes time. Possible factors associated with high school reform include the following:

- Budget decisions of what professional development to implement, what curriculum to support, to fiscally decide where the money goes
- Change is something individuals are not generally receptive to initially but will respond to it over time
- Speculation: without knowing the research of high schools most of the decisions made are based upon assumptions and speculations about what is believed are the reasons why schools are not safe, performing, or unsuccessful
- Safety: if supports are not put into place and funds are not available to assist with staffing, a problem is posed. Additionally, supervision is an issue. If staff are not visible then it also is a problem when students are not monitored closely
- Low socio-economic status: this causes challenges on many levels: certain students may come to school hungry or tired, clothes unkempt, or coping with challenging home issues that are impacting their academics, they may have difficulty with school supplies, uniforms, fees, or the wherewithal to participate in activities on campus
- Minority/ethnicity concerns: there may be a small subgroup of that population on campus or there may be community or race issues
- Turnaround: change from unsafe, low performing to a safe, progress achieving school
• Stakeholders: politics are a huge barrier and, depending upon one’s political agenda, can become a major problem from notwithstanding one’s standing (President of the United States to the parent group in the community to the teachers’ union)

• School board: another political barrier as their support is necessary for any type of major change

• Gangs/violence

• Attendance

• Perspective that this is the only way that high schools have been conducted in the United States since the late 1800s

Challenges and obstacles are ever present in education; however, a true leader must be cognizant of their inevitability and be prepared to address the barriers as they occur. The next section will explain the principal leadership for a safe and orderly environment. This is significant to the review of literature for the reason that many schools in America have a principal or a leader who is the person in charge of the school.

**Principal Leadership for a Safe and Orderly Environment**

According to Lawrence Lezotte (1991), there are seven correlates of effective schools. As discussed in the previous *Dimensions of Safety* section in order for a school to be effective and achieve academically the school must be safe. Lezotte (1991) further states that there are two generations to his thinking. The first generation must be achieved prior to reaching the second level, or generation. Lezotte’s seven correlates are as follows; Safe and Orderly Environment, Climate of High Expectations for Success, Instructional Leadership, Clear and Focused Mission, Opportunity to Learn and Student
Time on Task, Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress, and Home-School Relations. These seven correlates are what Lezotte states are needed to create an effective school.

A *safe and orderly environment* is defined as; an orderly, purposeful, businesslike school, which is free from the threat of physical harm. The school climate is not oppressive and is conducive to teaching and learning for all (1991). The first generation of this correlate was defined in terms of the absence of undesirable behavior. The second generation of this correlate is the next level where the focus of behavior is on the positive behavior (1991). There was a shift from discipline to focus on cooperative learning. It is significant to address that Lezotte states, for instance, it is unlikely that a school’s staff could successfully teach its students to work together unless the adults in the school model display collaborative behaviors in their own professional working relationships. Teacher collaboration and staff teamwork philosophy is one that will assist in getting students to work together cooperatively because they have been taught to respect human diversity and appreciate democratic values through the faculty modeling the same behavior (Lezotte, 1991).

The second correlate, *Climate of High Expectations for Success*, addresses the climate of expectation in which the staff believes and demonstrate that all students can attain mastery of the essential school skills, and the staff also believe that they have the capability to help all students achieve that mastery (Lezotte, 1991). This is imperative in creating an atmosphere that is conducive to student learning. The third correlate in Lezotte’s researcher is Instructional Leadership. *Instructional Leadership* in the first generation is defined, as that the principal act as an instructional leader and it is the principal who effectively and persistently communicates the mission to the staff, parents,
and students. The principal understands and applies the characteristics of instructional effectiveness in the management of the instructional program. Instructional leadership in the second generation refers to the concept that leadership is teacher empowerment and it is a community of shared values (1991). The fourth correlate according to Lezotte is a *Clear and Focused Mission*. A clear and focused mission is defined as when the whole staff shares an understanding and commitment to the instructional goals, priorities of the school, and accountability. This mission is when staff accepts that it is their responsibility for students to learn (1991). *Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task* is the fifth correlate. The correlate refers to the method of instruction that students learn. This area is about teachers becoming more skilled in their teaching and specific content is taught to mastery instead of teaching everything just to get it all taught (Lezotte, 1991). *Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress* is done through a variety of assessment procedures (Lezotte, 1991). The rationale in this correlate is that teachers use the assessment data and the teacher adjusts his/her behavior to meet the students’ need in order to learn the material (Lezotte, 1991). The last correlate, *Home-School Relations* is a correlate that informs, educates, and involves the parent and community in a partnership between home and school (Lezotte, 1991). Utilizing the seven correlates from Lezotte’s research provides a clear framework for the necessary components for an effective school. The next section in this chapter will explain the different leadership theories that have evolved over time. These theories are necessary for an understanding that there are different types of leaders and styles to lead a school.
Leadership Theories

According Bolden, Gosling, Masturano, Dennison (2003) there are seven different leadership theories; Great Man Theory, Trait Theory, Behaviorist Theory, Situational Leadership, Contingency Theory and Transformational Theory. Leadership theories are constantly building upon the theories of earlier times. Over the years leadership theory has evolved into what it is today.

Burns categorized leaders into two different types: transactional and transformational. Then he described the different types of leaders in each of the categories. Following Burns was Goleman who looked at the behaviors of the leaders and referred to his leadership theory as Emotional Intelligence. According to Gordon and Patterson, (2006, p.206) their “framework claims a successful leader negotiates a way to lead that meets the needs of the school community.” Bass defined transformational leadership in terms of how the leader affects followers, who are intended to trust, admire, and respect the transformational leader. He identified three ways in which leaders transform followers:

- Increasing their awareness of task importance and value.
- Getting them to focus first on team or organizational goals, rather than their own interests.
- Activating their higher-order needs.

Transformational Leader

“The term transformational leadership”, coined by James McGregor Burns in 1978 and later developed by Bernard Bass and others, is still evolving. According to Burns, “transformational leadership occurs when one or more persons engage with others
in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to a higher way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality…” (Jason, 2000, p.7). Today transformational leadership is associated with restructuring, since school reformers usually advocate a change in power relationships” As cited in Lintos, transformational leadership is described as the convergence of research on shared decision-making, teacher empowerment, and school reform” (Lintos, 1993). This model is based upon the premise that the inspirational and empowering leader can achieve ‘performance beyond expectations’ (Hawkins & Dulewicz, 2009).

**Turnaround Leadership**

According to Leithwood, there were eight key findings based on the results of the research study that was conducted with successful turnaround leadership in an organization. The eight key findings that were found in the literature as well as the study were (Leithwood, 2009, p.27):

1. Low performing schools require effective leadership to turnaround.
2. Core leadership practices are the key to success.
3. The core leadership practices encompass most of what is required to successfully lead a school turnaround.
4. As a school turnaround process evolves, the core leadership practices enact differently.
5. Effective turnaround leadership is narrowly distributed.
6. As turnaround process evolve, the nature and number of sources of leadership change.
7. The leadership challenges in turnaround process in the beginning are predictable.

8. Leaders turn their schools around by changing teachers’ attitudes and school cultures.

**Characteristics of Turnaround Leaders**

As cited in Turning Around Failing Schools (Murphy, 2008, p.151), turnaround managers tend to be extremely “optimistic leaders” and are “committed and positive.” They have the belief that anything is possible and as long as there is a possibility then it will happen. Most importantly, “turnaround leaders feel that he/she has the power to mold the organization to the vision of a reconstructed future” (Murphy, 2008, p.138).

According to Brinson, Kowal and Hassel, “when a turnaround leader implements an action plan, change is mandatory, not optional” (2008, p. 14). This brings the problem of when a super hero Turnaround leader leaves the school after creating a culture at the school that is safe and successful, now what?

**Role of Principal**

The role of school principals has evolved completely over the past twenty years. Among many positive changes for administrators, the feeling that restructuring is beneficial for the school is generated. Reform increases building autonomy and creates a shared decision making environment for schools and teams (Hallinger, Murphy, & Hausman, 1992). “Dramatic changes in principal leadership in the work environment that include a more turbulent policy environment, overwhelming scale and pace of change and a new view of teacher involvement and expertise” (Marsh and LeFever, 2004, p.388).
First, principals were supposed to be responsible for defining the school mission and vision along with determining the school goals. The focus was on traditional student achievement and time was allotted so that it would be attained. Secondly, principles would manage education production: supervising, coordinating curriculum aligning materials with goals and monitoring student progress. Thirdly, principals were to promote an academic learning climate by establishing high expectations for student behavior. Lastly, principals were to develop a strong culture at the school that included a safe and orderly work environment, strong collaboration with faculty, and connections between home and school (Marsh and LeFever, 2004).

Perception/Impact with Student Achievement

Researchers administered a questionnaire to measure interactions between principals and teachers, the questionnaire provided the following types of principals; resource providers, instructional resource, communicator, and visible presence. The findings concluded that students’ scores were somewhat inconsistent, with students who are white or non-free-lunch, in average or weak-leader schools. The research also concluded that consistency was highest among strong-leader schools. The range of gain scores for black and free lunch were highest for strong leader schools to lowest for weaker-leader schools (Andrews and Soder, 1987).

Summary

Although high schools of today bear similarity to Rydell High, the high school portrayed in the movie, Grease, the students are not the same. Although the limitations are not the same and the factors of education are not the same, society is vastly different in 2011. But, it is the roles of the individuals in the education institution that have
changed. “To look back at Rydell High the principal was tasked with: addressing students who were off task, sorting out any clerical errors, and chaperoning extracurricular activities” (Johnson, 2008, p.72). The principal was required to be an instructional leader, cheerleader for their staff and students, and to evaluate their school to determine if it was proficient or making gains based on data.

As the literature revealed, the research is replete with studies on reform/turnaround efforts. The literature discussed the accountability that principals have as a result of NCLB. Additionally, the research supported the various types of principals and the type of principal determines the outcomes. However it was evident through the review of literature that there is not a set definition of what “SAFE” means. The purpose of this study was to understand and describe the indicators and factors encountered in turning around a high school from being unsafe to safe. Another outcome of this study has been to provide a clear definition of what a safe school is and the elements needed to have a safe school. A focus on a large urban high school utilizing the case study methodology as proposed by Merriam (1988) will add to the limited body of literature on high school turnarounds. The next chapter will explain the methodology used in the case study.
In order to address the aforementioned factors, it is imperative to conduct further research. High schools that lack the motivation to adapt their approach to teaching based on students’ needs and conditions today, as opposed to conditions a decade ago, are not likely to make the gains necessary in adequately preparing them for the challenges of the future. It is essential that as a society that we demand research-based outcomes in our high schools and utilize a more progressive approach to research as it relates to high schools.

Chapter Three describes the methodology used in the study. Naturalistic inquiry is the research approach that was used in this case study. Following the type of study, the chapter explains the data collection procedure and implementation of the study. The conclusion of the chapter describes the process for organizing the data as well as the analysis of the findings for the naturalistic case study.

**Naturalistic Inquiry Method**

The following information will provide an explanation of the characteristics of naturalistic inquiry. Qualitative research draws on a different paradigm than scientific or traditional research. “Qualitative research assumes there are numerous realities – that the world is not an objective thing out there but a function of personal interaction and perception” (Merriam, 1988, p.17). Individual beliefs rather than hard facts form the basis of one’s perception (Merriam, 1988). Additionally, information regarding the trustworthiness of the case study is discussed.
In order to fully grasp the importance of all the factors that contributed to the innovation, the researcher interacted with the participants to understand all the details that were significant in the evolution of the turnaround. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), “the naturalistic paradigm opens the possibility of having both high creditability and transferability” (p.191). The naturalistic case study occurred at a Title I High School in a large southwest urban school district. The case study consisted of interviews with internal agents (specifically, teachers and administrators) who have worked at the school during its existence. Additional interviews were conducted with informal external agents such as: community members, School Support Team Leader(s), and administrators. The collection of artifacts that were analyzed for this case study consisted of: interview responses and notes, journal entries from the researcher and researcher’s observation notes, end-of-the-year reports, accountability reports, and school support team supports. Lastly, the researcher conducted observations, with principal approval, of an assembly, student lunch, school dismissal, and school support team meeting. The opportunity to conduct the research on the campus provided credibility and validity to the study. This triangulation of data; interviews, artifacts, and observations, allowed the researcher to frame the context of a Turnaround High School. The district as well as the school allowed the researcher unprecedented access to the school and were highly interested in the study. Due to the immediate interest in the story, the principal and teaching staff were receptive to participating in the study and accepted the researcher instantly.

According to Creswell (2008, p.476), “… a case study is defined as an in-depth exploration of a bounded system based on extensive data collection.” The researcher used purposeful, critical sampling. Critical sampling, according to Creswell (2008, p.214), is
“A sampling strategy to study an exceptional case and the researcher can learn much about the phenomenon.”

**Research Site**

In order for the researcher to understand the environment for which the study was conducted, the research was carried out in the natural setting or environment. Lincoln & Guba (1985, p.39) believe that naturalistic research must be carried out in a natural setting or context for which the study is proposed because the naturalistic research paradigm firmly believes that realities cannot be understood in isolation from their contexts (Erland, et al, 1993).

Rossman and Rallis (1998) suggest that the ideal research site includes the following characteristics: “(a) entry is possible; (b) there is a rich mix of the processes, people, programs, interactions, structures of interest, or all of these; (c) strong relations with the participants are possible; and (d) ethical and political considerations are not overwhelming, at least initially” (p. 86). Turnaround High School (given a pseudonym for purposes of anonymity) where the researcher did the study, met each of these characteristics.

At the time of the study, Turnaround High School’s community had already evolved into a safer school, implementing expectations that were acceptable to the community. They were consciously implementing student behavior expectations into policies, programs, and practices. A school leadership team who was interested in changing the perception of the school from unsafe to safe led Turnaround High School. The community was open to the discovery and to the possibility of change. The
community was hoping for someone or something to change their children’s educational experience in high school.

**Human Instrument**

In a naturalistic study, the researcher is the primary instrument, using all of the senses, as well as intuition, to enable the human to be a “powerful and perceptive data gathering tool” (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen (1993, p.82). In conducting this study, the researcher was the main data gather. The researcher had to be flexible in scheduling and interviewing the participants in order for the participants to feel comfortable for the study to be conducted. According to Lincoln & Guba (1985), “… naturalistic research encourages the use of tacit knowledge” (p.40). Naturalistic research suggests that researchers use the five senses (i.e., sight, touch, taste, hearing, and smelling) plus intuition to gather, analyze, and construct reality from the data. Erlandson et al. (1993) suggest that, “Relying on all its senses, intuition, thoughts, and feelings, the human instrument can be a very potent and perceptive data-gathering tool” (Moulden, 2010, p.53). This is significant because, during the finding chapter, information was discovered based on the participants’ nonverbal responses as well as what they did not say when they responded to questions. It was essential that the researcher be aware of what was not being said with words during the interviews.

Furthermore, the researcher gathered data from a variety of sources and in numerous ways. Initially, the researcher made an appointment with the principal of the school in order for the researcher to gain access to the participants for interviews and observations of the school and staff.
Valuable Participants Linked with Turnaround High School

Thirty-three adults volunteered to participate in this study. This group consisted of the Associate Superintendent of the school, two other office administrators, the principal and two previous principals, three current administrators, four teachers from a range of different subjects, six support staff, four community members (parents, previous students, and business manager), and ten local police officers. Thirteen of the participants were female and 20 were male.

The next section discusses the context pertinent to this case study. Specifically, it describes the school district, the school, the community in which it is located, and the reasons it was chosen as the site for the research.

The School District

The school is located in the largest school district in the state. The district is divided into six separate regions/divisions. The school district encompasses all of the southern part of the state, which covers 7,910 square miles. This large urban southwest school district operates 352 schools as of the 2009-2010 school year. In the school district, there are 213 elementary schools (76 year-round, 137 nine-month), 59 middle schools, 48 high schools, 24 alternative schools, 8 Special schools, 13 charter schools, and 107 private schools. The district serves several large communities as well as surrounding rural areas. It employs 38,523 people, including full-time, part-time, substitute, and temporary employees. There are 18,211 licensed personnel, 11,444 support staff (including clerical and food service staff, bus drivers, teacher aides, custodians, etc.), 1,322 administrators, 157 school police, 4,252 substitute teachers, and 3,634 other temporary/substitute employees (www.ccsd.net). In order for students to
graduate from high school from this school district, the following requirements must be fulfilled.

*Required course work (earn 22 ½ credits) in the following subjects:*

- English – 4 credits
- Math – 3 credits
- Science – 2 credits
- U.S. History – 1 credit
- U.S. Government – 1 credit
- Physical Education – 2 credits
- World History or Geography – 1 credit
- Health Education – ½ credit
- Computers – ½ credit
- Electives – 7 ½ credits

*Pass the Nevada High School Proficiency Exams in:*

- Reading
- Writing
- Math
- Science

**Description of the School and the Community**

The study took place in a high school located in the southwest United States. It is the largest school district in the state, encompassing over 70 percent of the state’s student population, and is divided into six separate regions or divisions. The school district is the largest employer in the community area, employing approximately 39,000 people. The enrollment of the district is approximately 311,240 students in kindergarten through
twelfth grade, and includes 213 elementary schools; 59 middle schools; 49 high schools; 25 alternative schools; 8 special schools; 13 charter schools; and 107 private schools. The district covers over 7,910 square miles, and serves several large communities as well as surrounding rural areas. The community has one public research university, which serves approximately 28,000 students. In addition to the university, there are three publicly supported four-year colleges and one community college, as well as other degree-granting private and for-profit foundations of higher education in the surrounding area.

The mission statement for the district reflects the characteristics and ideals of the community. The mission statement of the school district reads: “All students will have the knowledge, skills, attitudes and ethics necessary to succeed academically, and will practice responsible citizenship at a justifiable cost.”

The researcher chose Turnaround High School as the research site for several reasons. First, the school has a history of addressing many of the issues identified in the literature review regarding approaches to an unsafe high school. Next, the district and specifically Turnaround High School were concentrating on turning around failing schools. Finally (and most compelling), Turnaround High School’s Associate Superintendent and Principal were interested in the study of turning around a once-unsafe school. The researcher had inquired about conducting research there because she learned about a possibility of the principal being reassigned to a different school since the school has not made sufficient progress academically.

The researcher wanted to do a study in an environment that was considered unsafe and in an urban community as well as a school that focused on students, not just numbers.
Turnaround High School seemed to the researcher to be a good place to begin asking questions.

**Turnaround High School**

Turnaround High was announced in the winter of 1999 to officially open in August of that year. The community was primarily a Hispanic community, but there was a 25 percent African American population as well. The school’s location was in the innermost part of the city. Section 8 and low-income housing surrounded the school. The school was designed to meet the needs of the students in the community; however, the needs were not necessarily the primarily reason for having the school built. The location was due to inexpensive land and the district was able to readily acquire that parcel. The school was estimated to cost $36 billion dollars. The school first opened its doors to students in August of 1999 to approximately 2610 students in grades 9th, 10th, and 11th. The students were 54 percent Hispanic, 23 percent African American, 18 percent Caucasian, and 4 percent Asian. Additionally, 12 percent of the students were receiving services from special education and 26 percent, English Language Learner services.

The school’s motto was “Making an Impact” (integrity, multi-cultural, pride, and achievement, character, teamwork). The following positions and programs were put in place to ensure that the students would have the best support available with an emphasis on literacy:

- Full-time reading/learning strategist
- Extensive English-language learners program
- School-wide study skills program
- 8 computer labs
• Internet access in every classroom
• Pilot English language academy for non-English-proficient students
• Daily school-wide teacher impact period (T.I.P) to review testing and study skills
• 27 Honors classes and advanced study courses
• Technology in every classroom
• Career center
• Extensive extra-curricular clubs and athletic offerings

However, one important fact was that the school was not equipped with enough certified teachers and this was a constant battle for the administration. The school had 46 percent of the faculty with advanced degrees, but also had numerous substitutes in the school. During the first year of existence the school achieved the following national percentile rank: Ability 31 percent, Reading 33 percent, math 30 percent, language 34 percent, and science 28 percent (Table 3.1). Over the next few years the ethnic subgroups decreased minimally in their overall percentages except for the Hispanic population. The national percentile ranks listed. The five categories remained relatively constant over the three-year period except for the language category, which made a 6 percent increase over the time.

In 2003, NCLB was implemented and the students’ proficiency or achievement levels were now assessed through the state proficiency assessment. The content areas assessed of academic achievement level were reading, mathematics, and writing. The students were required to pass these examinations in order to fulfill the high school requirements and graduate with a standard high school diploma. If students did not successful achieve the proficiency level of these exit examinations, they received a
Certificate of Attendance. The Certificate of Attendance is certification that the student attended and completed the coursework for high school graduation, but failed to successfully pass at least one of the proficiency examinations.

As a whole school, Turnaround High School failed to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress for the past seven years as represented in Table 3.2 Turnaround High School’s AYP Status. The students’ failure to complete and achieve proficiency of the exit examinations led to a higher dropout rate for the students.

Table 3.1.

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<td>Science</td>
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According to the state’s 2009-2010 Accountability Report, the configuration of the school is: gender balanced, 76.9 percent Hispanic, 12.7 percent African American, 7.3 percent Caucasian, 2.8 percent Asian/Pacific Islander. Additionally, the special education percentage is 9.7 percent and Limited English Proficient is 22.1 percent. Over half of the school, 52.1 percent, qualifies for free reduced lunch.

Additionally, the current principal has been at the location for five years. The number of teachers who are not highly qualified is much higher in comparison to the district’s percentage.
The average class size in core classes ranges from 25-28 students. There are four Assistant Principals and two deans. The school is separated by small learning communities and sectioned off on the campus by those specific communities. “The school’s mission is to push education so all students are better equipped with the academic, physical, communication, organizational, leadership and citizenship skills necessary to meet the challenges of today's ever changing world by motivating school involvement and promoting further education for a better future” (School District’s website, retrieved on 11/05/10).

**The Community**

The school is located in a community with a juvenile penitentiary facility located within five miles of the school. There are numerous government subsidized apartments and houses surrounding the school. Additionally, there are numerous elementary schools, two middle schools, and two alternative schools located within five miles of the high school. The community is primarily a Hispanic community with numerous small local businesses surrounding the area. The community is an older community of the city and has been established for many, many years.

The next section will describe the researcher’s role in the study as well as the design of the study.

**The Researcher**

The researcher has an interest in secondary education and culture in schools. The site of the study was one that fit the criteria of the researcher’s interest. As a researcher conducting a qualitative study, the researcher focused on the four specific characteristics to formulate the findings. First, the researcher focused on the process for the study as
opposed to outcomes and products. The researcher considered such questions as: How did the turnaround happen? What happened over time? Was the school safe in the beginning? Did the school ever become safe? Secondly, the researcher was interested in the meaning of the study, asking such questions as: How did the staff feel on campus? What did the staff do on campus over the clusters? The third characteristic is the primary instrument for data collection. The researcher was the human instrument in this case study. The researcher was the instrument that was able to process the data, clarify the responses, and note the changes in behavior. The fourth characteristic of qualitative research used for the study was the fieldwork. The researcher physically went to the site and conducted interviews as well as observations over a four-month period.

**Qualitative Methods**

This is a qualitative study utilizing case study methodology. Lincoln & Guba (1985) state that, “Qualitative methods are more open to mutual shaping and exposing the relationship of the researcher to the respondent” (p.40). Qualitative methodology will allow the researcher to gather data and to examine the strategies based on the actions and events that led to the school turnaround. According to Mischler (1995), “We do not find stories; we make stories.” Additionally, Mischler states that we construct the story and meaning through our concepts and methods, our research strategies, data, transcription process, journals, observations, and, lastly, the interpretive perspectives from the participants (1995, p.117).

**Purposive Sampling**

Purposive sampling is key to naturalistic research. Purposive and directed sampling increases the opportunity of being exposed to the data and maximizes the
researcher’s ability to identify emerging themes that take adequate account of contextual conditions and cultural norms. The participants were purposive sampling for the reason that the researcher felt it was imperative to interview each principal at the site to have a trustworthy study. The other participants were directed and purposive sampling from the school to ensure a whole picture and multiple perspectives of how the school once was and is now perceived.

In naturalistic inquiry, the researcher looks for samples that contain information rich on the main topic or questions presented in the study.

Chart 3.2.

Participants Association Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>1995-2000</th>
<th>2001-2005</th>
<th>2005-Present</th>
<th># of Years associated with the Cite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Washington</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Adams</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Jefferson</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Dry</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Friendly</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Know It</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Impatient</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Business</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Please</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Equal</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Tough</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Eyes</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Ali</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Calm</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Andre</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Analogy</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Funny</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Frank</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Head</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Beautiful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Bossy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Direct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Police Department</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Direct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The purposive samplings for this study were support staff, teachers, administrators, external agents, community members, and school support team leaders. The purposive sample that was chosen included both males and females. Chart 3.2 is a participant association chart that was created, based on the interviews conducted. The left-hand column is the participants’ pseudonym; the next few columns are broken down into three time clusters. The clusters are the years that the participants worked or were associated with Turnaround High School. An “X” indicates the time that the interviewee was involved with the school. The last column in the chart is the total number of years the individual was associated with the school.

**Grounded Theory**

The case study is “grounded in the data.” According to Merriam, grounded theory research emphasizes discovery with description and verification as secondary concerns. A grounded theory consists of categories, properties, and hypotheses that state their relationships among categories and properties. Hypotheses in grounded theory research are considered tentative and suggestive, rather than tested (Merriam, 2002). Theory that is grounded in data and emerges throughout the research study will represent the different perspectives of the participants more than just the perspective of the researcher.

Glasser (1992) refers to having grounded theory research based on the following ideas:

1. Grounded theory exists at the most abstract conceptual level rather than the least abstract level as found in visual data presentations such as coding paradigm.

2. A theory is grounded in the data and it is not forced into categories.
3. A good-grounded theory must meet four central criteria: fit, work, relevance, and modifiability.

In this study, the researcher established herself as an unbiased researcher without any prior generalization of what it would be like to work in an unsafe high school. The researcher utilized different levels of coding and analyzing the data through grounded theory.

In grounded theory the generation and development of concepts, categories, and propositions is an iterative process. Grounded theory is not generated \textit{a priori} and then subsequently tested. Rather, it is:

\ldots \textit{inductively} derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. Therefore, data collection, analysis, and theory should stand in \textit{reciprocal} relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory, and then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge.

(Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 23.)

According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), there are three basic elements of grounded theory; they are categorized as: concepts, categories, and propositions. The concepts are the basic units of analysis since it is from conceptualization of data, not the actual data per se, that theory is developed. Corbin and Strauss (1990, p. 7) state:

Theories can not be built with actual incidents or activities as observed or reported; that is, from "raw data." The incidents, events, happenings are taken as,
or analyzed as, potential indicators of phenomena, which are thereby given conceptual labels.

In creating the grounded theory of safe schools based on Corbin and Strauss, the researcher created the Figure represented as “Figure 4.2” to create a visual representation of the linkages of the interviews, observations, and artifacts to the ultimate safe school framework. Utilizing the data from the interviews, observations, artifacts, and the researcher’s journal, the researcher used open coding to initially organize the data. The researcher color-coded interviewee’s responses, looking themes that were emerging. Further iteration and reiteration of the data allowed the researcher to implement Axial coding. The second element of grounded theory, categories, is defined by Corbin and Strauss (1990, p. 7):

   Categories are higher in level and more abstract than the concepts they represent. They are generated through the same analytic process of making comparisons to highlight similarities and differences that is used to produce lower level concepts. Categories are the "cornerstones" of developing theory. They provide the means by which the theory can be integrated.

   Further analysis over time allowed the researcher to delve deeper into the interview responses, the artifacts, and the literature to understand the data. The researcher initially began looking at the information as high school reform. The second stage through coding of the data allowed the researcher to refine and categorize the data to a theme of violence. Axial coding allowed the researcher to analyze the data categorically and led to the creation of thematic taxonomies for non violent and discipline categories. The third stage allowed the researcher to develop a theme of Safe and Orderly concept of
the schools, which encompassed the reform of urban high schools, violence, and safety in the school. In stage three, the researcher further analyzed the data and began selectively coding the information, which developed a table of the indicators of a safe urban high school and unsafe urban high school. The third element of grounded theory is propositions, which indicate generalized relationships between a category and its concepts and between discrete categories. This third stage was originally referred to as a 'hypotheses' by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Whetten (1989, p.492) felt that the term 'propositions' is more appropriate since propositions involve conceptual relationships whereas hypotheses require measured relationships. Since the grounded approach produces conceptual ideas and not measured relationships, the former term is preferred.

Ultimately, through selective coding of the literature and data, the researcher created a conceptual framework of the five factors that create a safe school through the indicators of the data in Table 5.2. The table represented by Table 5.2. **Summary of Indicators of the Characteristics of an Unsafe to Safe School** is presented in Chapter Five.

**Emergent Design**

In naturalistic research, the researcher assumes that other methods do not allow for flexibility or change due to the results. In other words, naturalistic research allows the research design to emerge during the study. Glasser (1992) stresses the importance of letting a theory emerge from the data, as opposed to having set categories to fill in based on the data. However, viewed from the perspective of Corbin and Strauss… “The emergent design allowed the researcher to let the story unfold based on the data as opposed of having it constructed in advance and filling in the holes with the data. In
grounded theory, a researcher collects data and analyzes the data immediately then bases what data to collect next based on the data analysis” (Creswell, 2008).

**Constant Comparison**

In grounded theory research, the researcher engages in a process of collecting the data and sorting it into categories. “The process of slowly developing the categories of information is the constant comparative procedure” (Creswell, 2008, p.443). This specific process allows the researcher to generate and connect categories by comparing incidents in the data to other incidents and categories into different categories. “The overall intent is to ground the categories in the data” (Creswell, 2008, p.443). The data in the findings in Chapters Four and Five are presented through the categories that emerged through the coding process of the data.

**Negotiated Outcomes**

The naturalistic researcher negotiates meaning and interpretations with the participants from which the data had been drawn. It is the participant’s perception of reality that the researcher attempts to reconstruct; therefore, the meaning of the data and the working hypotheses that apply to the context will be verified and confirmed by the participants in the school context. This kind of member checking (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993) was conducted after each interview session, as well as throughout the study. After participants were interviewed, the researcher transcribed the interview data and the participants were allowed to provide additional information that may have been left out during the actual interview. In addition, during the interviews, the researcher confirmed interpretations and data gathered from observations, documents, and previous interviews. The researcher also engaged in casual conversations and one-
legged interviews with participants, asking them to provide additional comments on parts of the inquiry report throughout the study.

**Case Study Reporting Mode**

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), naturalist inquiry prefers to negotiate the meanings and interpretations with the human sources from the data. This approach is preferred because it relies on the researcher to seek and reconstruct the story from the data. The quality of the interaction between the knower and the unknown assists in the understanding and shaping of the respondents’ perspectives.

**Ideographic Interpretation of Data**

This is done through the interpretation of the data and the researcher’s conclusions specifically instead of generalizations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This is significant to note especially in a case study that is primarily based on individual’s perspective of the school’s safety level. The interpretation’s validity is meaningful for different realities and interpretations depend heavily on particulars in the respondent’s interpretation (1985).

**Tentative Application**

In naturalistic inquiry, the researcher is likely to be hesitant in making broad application of the results because realities are multiple and varied (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The findings are also, to some extent, dependent upon the particular interaction between the researcher and the participants. Throughout this study the researcher understood that the “transfer of understandings across social contexts depends on the degree to which thick description of one set of interrelations in one social context allows for the formulation of a ‘working hypotheses’” (Guba, 1981) that can direct inquiry into
another” (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993, p. 16). Therefore, the tentative applicability of this study’s findings to other studies is up to those who are looking to make the transfer of understanding of this study’s interpretation. The researcher has provided a thick description of the evolution of a once unsafe school to a safer school in order to enable others to determine whether they would want to implement this framework at their own school site to evaluate their school’s safety level.

**Focus-Determined Boundaries**

In a naturalistic inquiry, the naturalistic researcher begins with a focus to establish the boundaries for the study and to effectively determine the criteria for new information that becomes available. The naturalistic researcher is ready to alter the focus of the study as new and relevant information emerges. In this research study, the researcher began with five relevant research questions, which provided the focus of the inquiry for the study. As the case study progressed, the researcher reviewed the data and looked for patterns of interpretation of the subjects to glean more information (Merriam, 1988). Determining the relevance of data is not a simple undertaking. However, as this study progressed, the researcher was able to narrow the scope of the study as items of significance came into focus using inductive data analysis and emergent theory. Lincoln & Guba (1985) suggest that the naturalistic researcher should always expect and anticipate change, but more importantly, they should be able to recognize the inevitable changes in focus that are constructive and “signal movement to a more sophisticated and insightful levels of inquiry” (p. 229).
Trustworthiness in Turnaround High School Case Study

Naturalistic research classifies special criteria for trustworthiness and defines the operational procedures that apply to them. In the naturalistic paradigm, the conventional trustworthiness criteria of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity are found to be inconsistent with the procedures of naturalistic inquiry. However, in a naturalistic research, trustworthiness of an inquiry is established through the following four standards: credibility (truth value), transferability (applicability), dependability (consistency), and conformability (neutrality) (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). Lincoln & Guba (1985) recommend specific techniques that were used in this study to enhance the credibility of the research: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, and referential adequacy materials, peer debriefing, member checking, reflective journal, thick description, purposive sampling, and an audit trail. A description of each of these techniques is provided in the following sections.

Prolonged Engagement

Prolonged engagement is a technique that helps build a basis for establishing the credibility of the naturalistic inquiry. Prolonged engagement requires that the researcher be involved with a site sufficiently long to detect and be aware of distortions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The length of time that the researcher can remain in the study setting, the more trust and rapport she will develop with the participants. Lincoln and Guba also state that if the investigator produces field notes and makes interpretations that are predictable from the original formulation, then the researcher did not spend enough time at the site (1985). The intention of prolonged engagement is for the researcher to build trust with the respondents (1985). "The purpose of prolonged engagement is to render the inquirer
open to the multiple influences, the mutual shapers and contextual factors that impinge upon the phenomenon being studied” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.304). For this research case study, the researcher made every attempt to be on campus during the week of research besides the scheduled interview times to observe the interaction between the administration, teachers, staff, community members, and students.

**Persistent Observation**

According to Lincoln and Guba, “the purpose of persistent observation is to identify those characteristics and elements in the situation that are most relevant to the problem or issue being pursued and focusing on them in detail. If prolonged engagement provides scope, persistent observation provides depth” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 304). The researcher had the opportunity to hone in on these characteristics through the observations of the campus interactions, interviews, and meetings on campus among the administration.

**Triangulation**

Triangulation involves the validation of findings through multiple sources of information, such as using multiple methods of data and or multiple methods of data collection (Merriam and Associates, 2002). Lincoln & Guba (1985) stated that each form of information in a study should be expanded by at least one other source, such as a second interview or a second method. Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen (1993) pointed out that “Single items of information contribute little to an understanding of the context of the study unless they are enriched through triangulation” (p. 138). Throughout the study, triangulation provided credibility by reproducing similar data from differing perspectives. Therefore, looking through multiple lenses allowed the data to be
triangulated provided internal validity for the case study (Merriam and Associates, 2002). This triangulation was evidenced through the multiple data sources: interviews, observations, and document collection.

**Referential Adequacy Materials**

Referential adequacy materials involve the archiving of some of the data collected to be used later as reference material against which conclusions, based on analyzed data, can be checked for adequacy. In this study, referential adequacy materials included interview responses, school assessment data, school discipline data, End-of-the-Year reports, and memos that were produced without reference to the researcher.

**Peer Debriefing**

“Peer debriefing” is a process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.308). This process may be informal, using friends and colleagues to ensure multiple points of view. The debriefing session should include a discussion of the design and any other issues or concerns that may have arisen. Several colleagues, friends, and family participated in peer debriefing sessions with the researcher during the research phase of the case study.

**Member Checking**

Member checking is both informal and formal, and the process is done continuously (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Member checking can occur through interviews, conversations, or fact checking. Member checking is the most important step in establishing credibility, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985). During the research phase of this study, participants were encouraged to respond to what the researcher had
identified as emerging themes through the questions asked and to make suggestions for the study as it proceeded.

**Reflexive Journal**

The reflexive journal is a tool that supports the credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability of the naturalistic inquiry. The reflexive journal for this study provided information regarding the researcher’s daily notes, ideas, schedules, insights, reflections, and developing themes. Additionally, the reflexive journal provides methodological decisions made by the researcher and the reasons for making those specific decisions (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The researcher continued the journal writing practice throughout the research process.

**Thick and Rich Description**

In a naturalistic inquiry, the thick description means a complete, literal description of the incident or entity being researched (Merriam, 1988). A thick description is not the findings in the research; rather, it is how the findings are provided with complete descriptions. A person reading a descriptive study should be able to visualize, feel, taste, hear, and even smell what is actually going on in the classroom or on the school’s campus. The researcher provided a thick description through prolonged engagement and persistent observations during the course of this naturalistic case study.

**The Halpern Audit Trail**

In order for an audit trail to be completed, the naturalistic researcher must keep adequate records stemming through the inquiry. Lincoln & Guba (1985) describe six categories of Halpern audit trail that should be kept by the researcher:
(1) *Raw data.* The naturalistic researcher kept raw data files that included written notes acquired from interviews, observations, documents, and other sources, including the date that the data was obtained.

(2) *Data reduction and analysis products.* These include the researcher’s write-ups, plus peer-debriefing notes that clarify the data shortly after it was acquired.

(3) *Data reconstruction and synthesis products.* These included files that tracked themes that emerged from the raw data files and data reduction files to form the overall themes for the case study.

(4) *Process notes.* The process notes included methodological notes that provided information regarding the process of inquiry and how the procedures and day-to-day decisions were made during the study. These procedures are acknowledged in the reflexive journal.

(5) *Materials relating to intentions and dispositions, including the research proposal, the reflexive journal, and peer debriefing notes.* The materials collected during this time were maintained in the reflexive journal and on peer debriefing notes, including the researcher’s predications and intentions.

(6) *Information relative to any instrument development, including the key questions that provide the focus for the study, preliminary interview protocols that might be used, and the various tools that will be used to collect and analyze the data* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 319-320). The preliminary
schedules, observation format, and interview questions for the study are also maintained in the reflexive journal.

Throughout the study, the researcher kept individual files to establish dependability and confirm ability. The researcher’s first file contained all of the guidelines and applications from the University’s Office of Human Research and from the School District in order to be able to perform the study. The researcher’s second through thirty-fourth files combined all of the participant’s invitation letters, signed informed consent documents, copies of their participant profiles, interview questions, all interview transcriptions, e-mail transactions, and schedules. Each participant file was color-coded, based on their role in the study. For instance, all administrators were coded blue, teachers were pink and green striped, support staff was yellow, community members were green, and local police were white. This allowed clarity for the researcher in analyzing the data and the responses. The researcher’s thirty-fifth file included all of the research material that was utilized throughout the study. The researcher’s thirty-sixth and final file held the reflective journal, peer debriefing notes, and all of the written versions of the study that were ready for clarification and editing.

The following sections of this chapter include the details about the design of the study, data collection, and data analysis.

**Case Study**

Methodology defines the study under research and explains how the method for data collection was determined. Case studies are detailed investigations of individuals, groups, and institutions or other social units. According to Merriam, “by concentrating on a single phenomenon or entity (the case), this approach aims to uncover the interactions of significant factors characteristic of the phenomenon” (1988, p.10). The purpose of this
study was to understand and describe the indicators and factors encountered in turning around a high school from being unsafe to safe. The researcher conducted a case study so that an analysis of the indicators and factors that were implemented based on the events and actions that led to the turnaround of a high school from unsafe to safe. The principle difference between case studies and other research studies is that the focus of attention is the individual case and not the whole population of cases. “A case study is an examination of a specific phenomenon such as a group, an event, a person, a process, an institution, or a social group” (Merriam, 1988, p.9). Specifically, it presents a rationale, research approach, naturalistic inquiry. This section concludes by describing the procedures developed for organizing and analyzing these data to explain the case study.

Conceptual Framework

Utilizing Bolman & Deal’s Four-Frame conceptual framework (2008, p.14), the researcher conducted interviews and observations and collected artifacts to explain the infrastructure of a turnaround school, from “unsafe” to “safe.” “This approach of the data permitted themes to emerge and limit the imposition of the researcher’s bias or beliefs” (Moulden, 2010, p.81). The participants’ responses to the research interview questions were interpreted and analyzed, utilizing open coding techniques of the interviews and observational notes through the Structural, Human Resource, Political, and Symbolic lens as outlined in Bolman and Deal (2008).

This case study describes the first-hand knowledge, perceptions of the process and insights into the evolution and innovations that transformed a school once referred to as “Drive-by High” into “Turnaround High,” a safe school for learning to occur. Given the nature of the research focus and the specific research questions, a naturalistic research
method was used to conduct the study. According to Lincoln and Guba as cited in Doing Naturalistic Inquiry, naturalistic paradigm design is defined as “planning for certain broad contingencies without, however, indicating exactly what will be done in relation to each” (1985, p.44).

**Procedures for Collecting Data**

The researcher conducted the case study over two phases (Table 3.3) abstracted from Scheduled Phases of a High School Case Study (Erlandson et al.1993). Further explanation of the procedures-collecting data is listed in the narrative later on in this chapter.

Table 3.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheduled Phases of a High School Case Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PHASE I</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin daily or weekly journal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct prior ethnography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine interview questions for unstructured, exploratory interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collect critical incidents (data)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam referential materials and artifacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begin data analysis (categorizing data)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop preliminary grounded theories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine interview questions for structured interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct structured interviews and observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue member checking process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue collecting critical incidents and artifacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue data analysis through open coding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Procedures for Analyzing Data

The researcher developed an historical perspective based on the data and wrote the naturalistic case study based on the interviews and data. Open coding involves "breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 61). The examination of data in order to fracture it and generate codes could proceed "line by line," by sentence or paragraph, or by a holistic analysis of an entire document.

Coding of the Data

In order to fully analyze the data, the researcher began to code the data. According to Straus and Corbins (1998), there are three levels of coding: open coding, coding, and selective coding, and the development or visual picture of the theory is generated (Cresswell, 2008).

Open Coding

Open coding is conducted by line by line coding. This is grounded theorist initial categories of the information about the phenomenon being studied (2008). According to Straus and Corbin (1998), this can be done in any combination of the three ways listed; sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph, or/and the whole document.

Axial Coding

The second stage of coding is referred to as coding. Axial coding is where the researcher explores the relationships of the coding and makes connections between them. For instance, the researcher would think, “If these kinds of things were happening here, are they happening there? What are the relationships between them? What are the actions and interactions?”
Selective Coding

This is the third stage in coding the data. The researcher identified particular categories or codes that formed a core or essential activity or concept that has the power to reveal aspects of the context so a story can be developed around the data (Straus and Corbin, 1998).

Inductive Data Analysis

According to Erlandson et al. (1993), in a naturalistic research study, the researcher uses inductive data analysis because it is more likely to identify the multiple realities found in the data.

The naturalistic researcher negotiated the meanings and interpretations with the participants from which the data had been drawn. It is the participants’ perception of reality that the researcher attempts to reconstruct; therefore, the meaning of the data and the working hypotheses that apply to the context will be verified and confirmed by the participants in the school context. This kind of member checking (Erlandson et al. 1993) was conducted after each interview session, as well as throughout the study.

The study was conducted over a four-month period. Therefore, in this study, the interactions between researcher and participant(s) occurred primarily at the school site in order to achieve the fullest understanding possible. However, due to the preference of the participants, some interviews were conducted at a public location that was in close proximity of the school. A description of the school district, the school, and the participants involved in this study are provided in the following sections.
Phase I

The researcher began the study with interviewing the current principal of the school. During those interviews the principal recommended different people on current staff as well as individuals that were once associated with the school. The principal gave a variety of suggested participants and a little background as to why they may be a good participant in the study. After the initial interview with the current principal, the researcher contacted the various participants via e-mail. The participants were notified of the purpose of the interview as well as the option to voluntarily participate in the study. Participants were given contact information and were able to schedule interviews during a one-week period. The researcher confirmed appointments ahead of time with the individuals who responded.

The interview phase consisted of the researcher writing and maintaining a daily or weekly journal. Details that were included in the journal were experiences the researcher had in developing questions for the interviews. The researcher also collected data on the area of research of the community and the school in determining the interview questions.

Interviews

All participants volunteered to participate in a comprehensive way, allowing the researcher to uncover an information-rich collection of realities that were encountered in the research setting. The questions used in the interviews were formatted as a general reference. It is included as Appendix J. Not all questions were asked of each interviewee. The researcher used discretion for each situation. The factors used to determine which questions were asked included, but were not limited to, the comfortableness of the interviewee, their position, their seemingly willingness to share their opinions, as well as
other contributing situational factors. Additionally, the researcher asked follow-up questions, based on particular answers given. The researcher interviewed five current administrators at the school, two previous principals of the school, three teachers, six support staff, five external agents, and seven community members. These interviews were held with specific questions that were used to collect data and create a complete account of the school’s reform.

The interviewer conducted unstructured interviews based on the participants’ responses. All interviews began with participants completing a participant profile form (Appendix H). The participant form assisted the researcher in getting the participants’ arrival date at the location and their history in education. The researcher began the interview inquiry with the following prompt, “Please tell me about the school.” Questions were developed and expanded based on the participant’s responses and his/her trustworthiness in sharing his/her viewpoint. The researcher asked the participants questions such as: “Can you recall when you first arrived on Drive-by High’s campus, please tell me about the school’s environment?” “How would you compare the concerns of faculty then as compared to the current concerns?” “What do you see as the vision of this school?” “Where do you feel the school is headed?” “What factors do you attribute the school’s success or demise to?” The researcher also reviewed previous high school proficiency data for juniors, graduation rates, attendance rates, and discipline statistics of the school since its creation. The researcher looked for developing themes or patterns based on the Four-Frame conceptual framework and documented those in the journal to assist in determining the grounded theory. The participants were made aware that, based on the responses or ideas that emerged from the interview, the researcher reserved the
right to ask more probing questions at a further date. The researcher engaged in conversations with participants casually to allow the participants to respond in an informal manner; this approach allowed more clarity to the case study and also allowed the researcher to gain the trust of the participants.

The researcher used this as insight when collecting and analyzing the data to determine the findings. For example, one individual would continuously look around and see if anyone could hear him. Once he was reassured the room was secure, he would tell specific stories about what occurred. For example, “Now it is very calm, but four years ago during my first year I saw a lot of fights!” Another staff member whom the researcher attempted to interview and he declined to participate in the study became visibly upset with the researcher when the following questions were asked: “How long have you worked here?” “What was the school like?” This staff member was recommended to participate in the study because of his role on campus as well as the time that he spent employed there. However, the participant was interested in the study and wanted to know about the study but stated, “I don’t like to talk to people, why are you asking me questions?” The school’s information remains confidential as well as all of the participants’ identities. During the observations, the researcher documented cultural interactions, instructional decisions, fiscal decisions, and also student interactions. Furthermore, the researcher collected data on High School Proficiency data for Reading, Math, and Writing, graduation rates, attendance rates, and discipline statistics since the school opened in 1999.

During the interviews, the researcher reviewed the responses from the questions and allowed the participants to correct errors, question the researcher’s interpretations, or
provide additional details that were not included during the actual interview. The researcher provided her contact information if the participant wanted to share additional information or wanted to change the information that was shared during the interview. Figure 3.1 Participant Interview Cycle is a visual representation of the interviews and the order they were conducted in the study.

![Participant Interview Cycle](image)

Figure 3.1.

*Participant Interview Cycle.*

The researcher stated that there may need to be follow-up with stating the participant’s responses to assist in the clarification process. The researcher also participated in casual conversations with participants as the opportunity was available, which provided a rich and thick description of the school’s climate and evolution.
The purpose of this study was to understand and describe the indicators and factors encountered in turning around a high school from being unsafe to safe. By utilizing naturalistic inquiry and case study methodology, the researcher uncovered the indicators and factors in turning around a high school from being persistently unsafe to safer in a large urban school district.

**Phase II**

Phase II of the study consisted of the researcher continuing the journal writing and conducting peer debriefing sessions with the participants who were interviewed. The researcher gathered the findings and identified Turnaround High School themes through the Four-Frame lenses. The researcher followed up with additional interviews where clarification was necessary or additional participants were needed for a thick and rich analysis. The researcher continuously conducted member checking during each phase to ensure that the data was represented with validity and a high level of trustworthiness.

**Observations**

During this phase, observations were conducted. Observations were conducted in the following situations: pep rally assembly, dismissal, time with the principal, lunch times, passing times, administrative meeting, and after school. The first observations were with the principal prior to interviews conducted. Continuing with the topic of safety, a series of both interviews and ride-alongs were scheduled with the local police department. The purpose of the ride-alongs with the Local Police Department allowed the researcher to become in tune with the community as well as experiencing the life and limitations the students and families are encountered with. Additionally, it gave the researcher first-hand experience to understand the Police Department’s thinking of what
they consider unsafe and safe. The Local Police Department allowed unprecedented access to the researcher. Observations were collected about the neighborhood where the school was located. These included the number of students and adults roaming the streets to first-hand interviews with community members. The researcher was exposed to the understanding of why the community is the way that it is, as well as understanding different entities that create the community.

This chapter explained the methodology that was used in this naturalistic case study. Through the use of interviews and observations, data was gathered for analysis and to develop answers for the study’s research questions. Once all of the fieldwork was conducted, the researcher compiled the data, sorting and interpreting the results. The researcher used open coding to create the themes that assisted in determining the elements or characteristics in turning around a once unsafe school to a safer school. Open coding involves "breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 61). The examination of data in order to fracture it and generate codes could proceed "line by line", by sentence or paragraph, or by a holistic analysis of an entire document.

The open coding process, while procedurally guided, is fundamentally interpretive in nature, and grounded theory researchers "... must include the perspectives and voices of the people" whom they study (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 274).

Data, for open coding, is selected using a form of theoretical sampling known as "open sampling." Open sampling involves identifying situations/portions of the transcripts that lead to greater understanding of categories and their properties. This process allowed the researcher to fully be emerged in the data and have a clear
understanding of what the process of turning around an unsafe school was like. After an analysis of the material, the researcher began to write a narrative of the case study. The next chapter will discuss the findings from the research. The researcher will discuss the process that was conducted, along with the perceptions of the participants.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

The turnover of principals during the past eleven years was a critical component in turning around a school that was once unsafe. Developing the oral history as a result of the interviewees’ novel and unique perspectives allowed the process to reveal safe and unsafe characteristics of Turnaround High School. There have been three permanent principals at Turnaround High School since it opened in 1999. The data, tables, and charts are divided into three clusters, which are designated by the timeframe of each principal. The researcher used presidents’ names in place of the actual principals’ names. This was to represent them as leaders but with no identifying ties.

This chapter provides a contextual timeline that represents each principals’ assignment at Turnaround High School, which sets the stage for narrative descriptions for each principal noted as “Principal Profile.” Within the narrative for each principal a definition of safety is provided as well as a discussion on focus and priorities during their term. Additionally, supporting evidence from the perspective of the interviewees’, data collection and researcher’s journal regarding the factors of a safe school. The conclusion of each cluster will provide the principals’ perspective on the role of police on campus during their tenure.
Figure 4.1. *Timeline of Principals and Events in Transforming Turnaround High School from Unsafe to Safe.*

Figure 4.1 is a timeline that represents the continuum of principals of Turnaround High School as it was transformed from unsafe to safe. The top of the Figure 4.1 demonstrates two circles connected by a bridge. The image represents a large circle on the left-hand side of Turnaround High School in the beginning, an unsafe high school. The bridge is representative of the connections and timeline, or the process, that occurred to cross over to the other circle on the right-hand side of the Figure 4.1, a safe school. Figure 4.1 has a main line that connects the bridge to the timeline. The principal changes, incidents, or pivotal points in time are the events that led to a safe school based on the findings from the interviews, observations, document reviews, data, and researcher’s journal.
What was Turnaround High School like with Principal Washington?

“Magical and chaos” is how one participant described Turnaround High during the first three years. Principal Washington’s Principal Profile was difficult to explain because the participant’s requests to share responses were generally “off the record.” Some stories from participants regarding safety at THS during its first three years follow.

“Kids wouldn’t respect you,” “students wouldn’t have any fear with a bag of weed sitting out on their desk,” “had gang rivals in my classroom, no problems,” “problems were on campus,” “average amount of fights,” “We were vested, young, and did not have anything else to do with our time.” This is how one teacher stated he felt safe because teachers were mentors for the students. One incident that occurred on the first day of school was as students were being dismissed for the day, the front parking lot was filled with police officers who had their guns drawn as they were in the process of apprehending perpetrators in the school parking lot.

Student and Teacher Population

The school was opened in August 1999, and it served students in grades 9 through 11 with a total of 1,800 students. Principal Washington was promoted to THS the previous February as a first assignment. Some participants stated that Principal Washington’s placement at THS was “a political move placing her at that school.” Another employee, Ms. Business, stated the “previous administration was out of control.”

According to Principal Washington, the students that attended THS were “other principals’ students, kids that were credit deficient, students who were not interested in athletics, successful kids did not start over at a new At-Risk School.” “The school was 87 percent minority,” primarily Hispanic students. During the first year there were at least
“30-plus probationary teachers” at THS. Many teachers were brand new to the district, new teachers out of college, and teachers who needed to transfer to a different school for varying reasons. It was the same problem year after year, Principal Washington stated. “I hated the spring time;” they “did not want to fight the fight.” Another staff member stated, “It was just a revolving door.” Ms. Analogy stated, “Everything was so hard and nothing was easy.”

**Safe Defined by Principal Washington**

Principal Washington described a safe school as being one where people were “… not afraid to attend nor work in.” In describing the safety of Turnaround High School during Principal Washington’s tenure, Principal Washington stated, “I knew how bad it was but I would walk right in the middle of them in the quad, I was in the middle of everything, I was involved in it all.” Principal Washington referred to the students as “Bad Mouthed” and there was very little student interest in participating in athletics or activities. Principal Washington said there were only seven students willing to be in the leadership class, and there were “no leader students.”

**The Principal’s Priorities**

This section will describe Principal Washington’s priorities during her tenure at THS. Principal Washington’s priorities were: “1. Safety, 2. Cohesive Staff, and 3. Dealing with powerless community more important to open doors to open up good counseling programs.”

Principal Washington was attentive in creating a focus and identity for Turnaround High School. Many participants stated that the focus for Principal Washington was the external perceptions of the school. For example, one interviewee
said “Principal Washington focused on appearances, Principal Washington wanted them to look a certain way.” One participant, Ms. Analogy, stated, “I can only explain it by saying, if you looked at the campus as if it was a white carpet and there was a small red stain on the white carpet…Principal Washington would focus on that one red stain and nothing else. It was about the image.” It was also stated and noticeably visible that during Principal Washington’s time on campus there was much animosity and tension among the administrative team. Ms. Impatient stated that Principal Washington was concerned about the “… outside viewing the school as untarnished, she would do whatever needed to be done to protect the image of the school.”

**Relationship Building**

“A house divided against itself cannot stand” stated Abraham Lincoln (Brainy Quotes, 2011). “Principal Washington was not firm – did not take a firm stance on issues.” Ms. Analogy stated, “Everything I learned during my years at THS has taught me everything I needed to know as an educator… There was always fighting between the teams, they were inconsistent” stated Ms. Analogy. Principal Washington stated, “I did not have a cohesive group of an administrative team for many reasons, however, one reason is that some were promoted to principal positions.” “It was very difficult on the administrative team to continuously take on teacher responsibilities” at the same time due to the constant flux in teachers leaving the school year after year. Another teacher felt that Principal Washington demonstrated “favoritism with some staff and that caused problems amongst them on campus.”

Principal Washington focused on creating positive community connections as well as networking with powerful community stakeholders. Celebrations and recognitions
were extremely important to Principal Washington. This was demonstrated through her responses during the interview. Principal Washington highlighted the times of celebrations easily. For instance, “Dedication of the school…it was beautiful, the orchestra played music, choir sang an original song, and Oscar Goodman attended. It was a huge success.” Principal Washington was very worried about taking care of things and getting the best staff hired for the school. Principal Washington stated that during the time that she was the principal at THS she “received the Citizen of the Month” award and that she had a lot of “city support including the Mayor.” Principal Washington also “received a key to the city” for her accomplishments at THS.

**Principal’s Perception of Police**

There were contradictory and conflicting perceptions when the researcher interviewed others in regards to the police activity and campus safety. According to the police, they were present only when they were requested on campus. They felt that the administration did not want their presence on campus. The police during that time was visible in the community, but were only campus when needed.

**What was Turnaround High School like with Principal Adams?**

“You could feel the tension on campus, not being secretive – they got closer together and were a tight knit group.” “Turnaround High was a safe zone, they could be in a gang but nothing at school. We were successful.” “There was a lot of fights” when Principal Adams arrived as well as when he left. Principal Adams felt that a “strong line was taken when there were fights, the first fight a student was referred to Pop, there was no waiting for the second.”
Student and Teacher Population

The school during Principal Adams’s tenure was 65 percent Hispanic, 20-23 percent African-American, 3-5 percent Asian, and 2 percent or less other races. The community remained a lower socio-economic community. There were apartments and subsidized housing across the street and behind the school. According to Principal Adams, it was difficult to get teachers to teach at THS because of the reputation the school had now, the commute to the school in the middle of the city, and, lastly, there were a lot of schools opening at the same time and teachers had many options to choose from. Principal Adams spoke about that: “They typically would get mediocre teachers.”

The teachers would focus on teaching the basics and were required to have the language objective on the board. On particular moment that Principal Adams recalled was that their math scores increased significantly. Principal Adams attributes the spike in the scores due to the students and teachers working really hard. However, the gains were not large enough and the school did not achieve AYP and all were disappointed.

It was 2003, and Principal Adams was appointed to lead Turnaround High School into an era of success. This Principal Adams was a new principal, but brought his military background to the campus to assist in implementing change. He was described by one participant as a “people pleaser.” According to one participant speaking about Principal Adams, “He was not a pioneer, he had followed through, and he was respected.”

During Principal Adams’s beginning of tenure, NCLB was being implemented, which required school districts to inquire about and collect data about student discipline.
Safe Defined by Principal Adams

This principal never distinctly addressed what a safe school was. However, he provided numerous examples of what the school was like during his tenure at Turnaround High School.

The Principal’s Priorities

Principal Adams was a man who focused on building relationships with the staff and students from his perspective and, most importantly, instilling a sense of school pride. Ms. Impatient described “Principal Adams as a man who wanted to create a sense of pride in the school.” Principal Adams stated that one day the school was vandalized and large black graffiti letters were on the building saying “I AM BLACK.” He immediately contacted eight or nine district personnel and was unable to get assistance in removing the graffiti. Principal Adams then drove to a local paint store and purchased gallons of paint and repainted the area himself so that the student(s) would not get any satisfaction of defaming the school.

Principal Adams’s vision was to have a magnet program implemented and running successfully, while simultaneously increasing school pride. The school had been through much tumult the past three years. During Principal Adams’s time as the leader on campus in 2004, he was able to create and implement a magnet program on campus for students to come from other areas of the community. Additionally, during Principal Adams’s time, he was able to implement a fully functioning ROTC program.

Relationship Building

During the interview with Principal Adams, he referred to an article that was written in the Teacher Union flier about him having the highest amount of grievances from teachers; however, he continuously “tried to win them over and develop a sense of
trust… He was a soft and sensitive man that the staff became soft too.” The interviewee said the staff adored Principal Adams, and when she thought of him she thought of “flowers and rainbows.”

Principal Adams spoke about creating an administrative team that was frequently promoted to principalships at other schools, which resulted in a team with much turnover making it difficult to maintain consistency. According to Principal Adams, this was a cycle.

One day, Principal Adams began carrying a large trash can around during lunch duty and walked around to students in the quads, in their cliques, having small conversation and collecting their trash. A typical conversation would be:

Principal Adams: He would walk up to them and say, “What are you up to?
Student: “Nothing.”
Principal Adams: “Don’t do it, don’t bring it down here!”

He would go around to each little group, which at that time consisted of approximately eight gangs. Some of them were Sanchucos, Rolling 50s, Kingsman, Donna Street, 28th Street, THN (True Hard Niggas), South Side, and Locos; they were considered at that time to be small in size of approximately 10-20 members.

Principal’s Perception of Police

Principal Adams too did not discuss the need for police involvement or the desire to have them present during his tenure at Turnaround High School.
What was and is Turnaround High School like with Principal Jefferson?

Principal Jefferson said, “There were at least two fights a week and four verbal altercations a week in the beginning...a lock down once a week.” There was a minimum of six gangs on campus, ranging in sizes from three to four hundred members. These were just some descriptors that Principal Jefferson used to describe what Turnaround High School was like when he arrived.

Student and Teacher Population

Principal Jefferson arrived in May of 2006. He was the first principal of Turnaround High School who had previous experience in the position. He was an interim principal at one of the most dangerous middle schools in the district for a short period of time as well as an alternative school principal. For the remainder of the school year, there were not any changes. Principal Jefferson absorbed as much as he could through observations and conversations with staff, students, and community members. Many teachers left the campus over their discontent with the new principal coming into the school. One participant described the school when he arrived in 2007 as “loosely run.” Principal Jefferson said the “administration did well providing the kids with kindness and developed trust with the students.”

Over time, Principal Jefferson was admired by most of the staff. They were appreciative of his leadership style and non-tolerance of disruptive behavior on campus. Last year, there was a rumor that Principal Jefferson was going to be transferred. As a result, there was staff that decided to transfer to different schools because of the uncertainty of who the new leader would be.
Safe Defined by Principal Jefferson

Communication with the community was an important part in creating a safe school environment for the students and staff. One way that Principal Jefferson achieved this was by creating an alliance with the apartment complexes and providing them with his personal cell phone number. Also, Principal Jefferson created a map of the circumference of the area around the school. He monitored this area for students who were supposed to be at school and ensured that the students were attending or he informed the housing authorities that the students were not in school. There were also arrests of people trespassing on campus who were not supposed to be there.

One story Principal Jefferson recalled was a student who was being chased; he turned and looked at Principal Jefferson, blew him a kiss, and then ran. To the student’s surprise, he was caught by Principal Jefferson thirty minutes later.

The Principal’s Priorities

Things that were important to Principal Jefferson were “Attendance, safety, and academics.” “Not one thing comes first, it is multiple things” stated Mr. Dry. Ms. Friendly stated, “Principal Jefferson focuses on academics now, it used to be behavior.”

“Taking care of the small stuff” was what Mr. Know It All referred to when asked about Principal Jefferson. He stated that the direction the school was under was that it was important to address the little things because if the little things were eliminated, then they would not grow into big things and disrupt the flow of the day.

During the next few years major pivotal moments occurred and led to the school’s progress. During the first year, Principal Jefferson focused on student behavior and the environment of the campus. In year two, Principal Jefferson focused on the school
climate and implemented Standard Student Attire and a flexible schedule for the students and teachers on campus. Based on the responses from many participants in the study, this was the most critical event and the one most frequently referred to as key to creating a safe school. The participants referred to the Standard Student Attire as being a symbol of safety. Standard Student Attire made it possible to easily identify Turnaround High School students from non-students. The individuals stated that there were “… still gangs and stuff but there weren’t 30-something old men coming on campus to pick up 15-year-old girls.”

The flex schedule reduced the number of students on campus at any one time. It meant that the students’ coming and going was staggered. Also, the flexible schedule increased the number of classes offered on campus for students who were in need of credit retrieval or who were interested in enrichment.

Principal Jefferson had “a zero tolerance for weapons and drugs.” However, he “allowed students to return to the school after serving their consequence” at an alternative placement for a second chance at Turnaround High School. Discipline incidents continued; however, the violence decreased as students were clear of the expectations on campus. Initially, when Principal Jefferson started his first full school year in 2006, the discipline statistics for alternative placement recommendations and truancy soared higher than any other school in the district. However, this is what Principal Jefferson felt needed to be done in order to create a safe and orderly environment. In 2008, the school began to establish Professional Learning Communities (PLC’s). The next pivotal point was creating a Freshman Academy for all 9th graders.
Professional Learning Communities Emerge to Assist Student Engagement

The school evolved over time and created a configuration of PLC for an upper and lower school. The school implemented a professional learning community in grades 9 and 10, which was referred to as the lower school, and 11 and 12 as the upper school.

In 2010-2011 school year, one of the last pivotal points took place: the school created school-wide small learning communities (PLCs). This change in thinking allowed the students and staff to be working from the same systematic level of expectations, which created consistency across the campus. A major change in this thinking was the Pyramid Of Instruction (POI). The Pyramid of Instruction was targeted for the students. The thinking was that “All students will succeed.” The POI was an innovation that the staff welcomed but was hesitant in implementing. However, based on the responses from the interviews, even though it is a “learning curve and there are growing pains,” it is accepted.

Relationship Building

Another way to describe what was significant about Principal Jefferson was “he did not have any boundaries.” “He was always accessible to students, staff, parents, and community members.” According to Mr. Direct, “Principal Jefferson is sensitive to all the needs and he understands it.”

Principal Jefferson and his administrative team shared that they each gave students their personal cell phone number to contact them for anything they need. Initially, they would receive phone calls and tips about “What was going to be going down” or if students needed help. The school became safe and it was not a constant hotline situation – such calls turned into a rarity.
One day during his first year, Principal Jefferson was walking the campus, and he approached Mr. Head. Mr. Head admitted that the first time he spoke with Principal Jefferson he said, “I ain’t shaking no administrator’s f@#$ing hand!” Over time, Mr. Head stated, “I understood Principal Jefferson and he was not a bad guy, he’s helping kids.”

**Principal’s Perception of Police**

Principal Jefferson said, “Year one there was a lot of police presence, especially at the gate.”

According to the local police department, the current Principal wanted Police presence and assistance. Principal Jefferson provided his cell number to call police for assistance and to keep the lines of communication open. “We would call him and give him a heads up if something was going on in the community and he needed to keep an eye out.” Another comment was “He’d call us and inform us of issues found out or house parties and we would go and check it out.”

**Five Factors for a Safe School**

There were five factors that were generated to create a safe school. These factors were generated from the themes that emerged in the analysis and coding of the data. The graphic organizer, represented as Figure 4.2, is the five factors that are attributed to a safe school based on the findings from the research. Initial review of the data provided the themes that led the researcher to five factors represented as circles in Figure 4.2. The five factors were: Communication, Learning Environment, Non Violent, Principal, and Vision. The factors were listed in alphabetical order as result of themes that emerged through the data. The circle in the center of the graphic organizer represented a “Safe
School.” The five factors surrounding the safe school were all necessary to achieve a safe school. The arrows were pointing inward toward a safe school for the reason that the factors are what create the safe school. A safe school does not create the factors.

![Figure 4.2. Five Factors for a Safe School.](image)

In Chapter Five, the researcher provides the five factors that created a safe school, along with additional participants’ perspectives for the rest of the story of how a once unsafe urban high school came to be considered safe.

**Summary**

This chapter provided a contextual timeline that represented each principals’ assignment at Turnaround High School through a “Principal Profile.” Different perspectives of school safety were provided throughout the continuum of principals at Turnaround High School. The researcher attempted to provide a clear vision of what the
school was like during each principals’ leadership as well as providing their definition and perspective of safety and their priorities while they were the principal. Additionally, the principals’ perspective on the role of police during their tenure was provided. The chapter concluded with an introduction to the five factors necessary to create a safe school that emerged through the story.
CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS, ANALYSIS

In chapter five, the five factors for a safe school are identified through the lens of the participants. Additionally, the second section provides a police perspective on the external and internal factors for a safe school.

Each principal calibrated the safe school factors to generate results for their school during the time they were in a leadership role. Section Three presents these findings in the form of a visual display of the principals’ calibration process of the five factors that create a safe school.

This chapter concludes with a summary of the findings.

Figure 5.1. *Participants’ Perspective on the Five Factors Creating A Safe School.*
Based on the initial graphic organizer presented in Figure 4.2, data analyses revealed indicators of an unsafe and safe high school. That analysis led to a second organizer, which is presented in Figure 5.1. The factors in Figure 5.1 are circles presented with letters labeled in the center of the five circles. The smaller circles signify the participants’ perspectives in relation to the factors. There are six different circles that are considered the indicators, which assisted in creating a theme for each factor. The abbreviations for the labeling of the smaller circles are as follows: P is for Principal, A is for Administrators (internal and external), T is for Teachers, S is for Support Staff, C is for Community, and L is for Local Police. The data from the participants’ responses is listed by the factor and from their categorical perspective; for example, the factor is titled Principal, therefore under the principal heading, the responses from the participants about the principal are provided. This data is represented repeatedly for the following four factors. The reason that the data is provided in this format is due to sometimes varying perspectives of the school’s level of safety.

**Perspectives of the Factors that Led to a Safe School**

This section will provide the details of how this persistently unsafe high school evolved into a safe high school. The perspectives of the different constituents of the school, the principal(s), administrators, teachers, support staff, community members, and local police department are provided. It is the evolution of their perspectives and voices that lead to a conclusion that Turnaround High School is now a safe school. The following descriptions will provide the reader with explanations and indicators of how each perspective led to the creation of that category. It is important to note that at times
the conversations and reflections are in conflict with one another. Some people focused on positive memories while others perspectives focused on challenging moments.

The principals were the three principals who were or are currently at the school. Administrators included previous and current internal and external administrators; all have first-hand experience working with Turnaround High School. The teachers’ category is a collection of teacher statements from previous and current teachers. This category was more difficult to find willing interview participants. They demonstrated substantial resistance to sharing with the researcher as well as to acknowledging anything wrong or unsafe about the school. Support Staff included people in numerous supporting positions. Community members included previous students who are now adults, parents, and community members who are employed in the neighborhood. Local police department encompassed many views from special units that work with the specific populations in that neighborhood to a wide range of officers who have worked as patrol officers in various ranks between one and fifteen years.

**Definition of Safety**

Throughout the interviews, several contradictory trends emerged. Specifically, an area of ambiguity was revealed regarding the definition of safety. The viewpoints from the participants varied from a perception that the school was quite safe at the time to an opinion that there was, in essence, chaos each day. According to the researcher, a safe school is a combination of five factors revealed in this study: Principal, Vision, Communication, Learning Environment, and Non Violent. A safe school exists where a principal and the school vision converge to create the conditions of open communication, active student learning, and a culture embedded in non violent behavior.
Initial Reason for the Study

The reason for this study was to understand and describe the indicators and factors encountered in turning around a high school from being unsafe to safe. The literature, the media, and many communities are concerned about school safety. The school selected for this study was widely known and perceived by many as unsafe. At the time of this study, the general perception was that the school had turned around and was now safe. The researcher was able to gain access to this school and discover first-hand the perceptions and ideas of how and why this school was created and how the school transformed to its present safe state.

The next section of this chapter presents the pivotal points in time that through the turnaround process documents the events that changed the school from unsafe to safe.

Researcher’s Findings

In speaking with the different participants, both internal and external, one pattern was a tendency to refer to the previous administration in a negative tone. For example, Principal Washington was a soft-spoken individual who had dreams of making a difference in the students’ lives. Principal Adams was a strong individual with clear expectations of the students, wanting to create a sense of home and comfort on the campus. Principal Adams viewed himself “as the person to go in and set ground rules and put order into the school.” Principal Jefferson was the dreadful step-parent who came into the school and changed everything, creating house rules all had to live by. Eventually, the faculty came to adore Principal Jefferson; however, many did not approve of the previous leaders in the school.
Principal Jefferson was constantly involved in all aspects of the school, having a deep knowledge and commitment of time to fulfill his vision for the students’ success. It was evident in the data that Principal Jefferson was a manager principal. According to Hall and Hord, “manager principals try many things themselves rather than delegating to others” (2006, p.214). Principal Leadership philosophy prior to Principal Jefferson was difficult to change due to the lack of external supervisor support. A specific comment from Principal Adams was, “can not be successful without support.”

**Principal Sustainability**

Leadership is instrumental in a school’s success. If people believe in something or someone, they will do what is requested. The principal’s leadership and sustainability are the questions. In addition, it was a common theme to place new administrators with little or no experience at a comprehensive high school at this new, needy, at-risk school.

The next factor the research explains as a result of the findings is Non Violent. Non Violent is different than discipline. For purposes of this study, violence is defined as “The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation” (WHO Global Consultation on Violence and Health, 1996).

**Non Violent**

Non violent is a factor in creating a safe school. According to Thomas (2006), violence can be broken into different types of violence. “Deadly weapons violence involves the use of instruments that could cause severe physical harm to victims” (Thomas, 2006, p.4). The second type of violence is threats of violence. “Threats of
violence consists of any indications- physical, pictorial, spoken, or written- of a person or group intending to harm other individuals, groups or property” (Thomas, 2006, p.5). However, the researcher has provided a clear taxonomy based on the interviews and artifacts collected of the elements that are involved in violence and discipline. According to Spradley, a taxonomy reveals subsets and the way they are related to the whole (1980, p. 113).

**Non Violent Taxonomy**

The next taxonomy will provide a clear understanding of what non violent issues are in the context of the school campus. These non-violent indicators are detrimental to the safety of the school; however, they are in a category on their own which, for the purposes of this study, will be referred to as discipline issues. The information that was used to create the taxonomy was derived from the interviews, observations, and data collected by the school.

Figure 5.2. *Types of Non Violent Discipline Issues.*
Violence Taxonomy

To understand non-violence a clear understanding of violence is necessary. Utilizing the Teen Power and Control Wheel (see Appendix) as a point of reference along with the responses from the interviews and the literature review, a taxonomy on Violence (represented as Figure 5.3). Violence is broken down into physical and emotional. From those two categories, different types of violence are listed, as well as the specific indicators in each category. This information provides for a thick and rich understanding of the indicators that create the category of violence.

Figure 5.3. Violence Taxonomy.
After becoming familiar with the researcher’s interpretation of the data through taxonomies, Chart 5.1 refers to the number of discipline and violent incidents over the past eleven years. The asterisk represents a change in leadership. Chart 5.1 provides detailed figures based on the number of incidents for each indicator in the school that, collectively, creates an unsafe environment. The data provided represented in Chart 5.1 has a wealth of statistical information as well as some indicators that appear to be contradictory.

Chart 5.1.

Non Violent & Discipline Incidents for a Period of 10 Years at THS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infraction Type</th>
<th>99-00</th>
<th>00-01</th>
<th>01-02</th>
<th>02-03</th>
<th>03-04</th>
<th>04-05</th>
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<td>53</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battery/Assault Fighting</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>116</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Disruption/Insubordination</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>777</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>1876</td>
<td>1535</td>
<td>1238</td>
<td>751</td>
<td>755</td>
<td>415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlled Substance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dress Code</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>13151</td>
<td>4208</td>
<td>2653</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gang Related</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graffiti/Vandalism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>44</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Left Class w/o Permission</td>
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<td>127</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-Dress PE</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Profanity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Racial Remarks</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tardy</td>
<td>1339</td>
<td>2420</td>
<td>1919</td>
<td>2352</td>
<td>2481</td>
<td>7111</td>
<td>5848</td>
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<td>Threats</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>76</td>
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<td>54</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Truancy Cations</td>
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<td>1113</td>
<td>963</td>
<td>839</td>
<td>1157</td>
<td>982</td>
<td>8447</td>
<td>14903</td>
<td>2992</td>
<td>2354</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Altercations</td>
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<td>114</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>43</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gun</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knife</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The next sections of data represented in the findings are the perspectives from all the participants that collectively created the factors for a safe school.

**Principals’ Perspective on Non Violent**

Principal Washington stated there “were just bad-mouthed students at the school.”

Principal Washington stated, “There were Hispanic gangs in the quad but I would just walk through them.”

Principal Adams said he made sure that Turnaround High School was a “safe zone.” “Students could be in a gang but nothing at school.” He felt that “there was not any gang activity and [we] were successful.” During his time in leadership, he stated, “there were a lot of fights.” The frequency of fights on the school campus declined during his tenure and he took a strong line with the students, referring them for alternative placement after their first fight at school.

**Administrators’ Perspective on Non Violent**

Another difference between then and now at Turnaround High School is that there is no tolerance for violence now. The “new Sheriff’s” (Principal Jefferson) philosophy, according to a colleague, was “… kids no longer were here to mess up, they were referred for expulsion.” This led to students taking their fights from inside the campus to outside in the community. This fact was confirmed through an interview with Mr. Funny: “Turnaround High had the most expulsions than any other high school in the district the first year.” Mr. Direct stated that there were safety issues: “Uniforms were needed; a more business approach would lead to a serious approach.” Initially, the desire was to have students wear a collared shirt and tie; however, that evolved into the standard school
attire adopted by the school district. In order for the school to be 100 percent safe, Mr. Direct stated, “They would have to provide 10 police officers for that campus.” Ms. Friendly described the campus initially as the “land of misfit boys, big head of gang leaders, with cheerleaders.”

**Teachers’ Perspective on Non Violent**

Ms. Impatient, a teacher on campus throughout all the years, stated, “It was crazy to watch the kids... There were major issues on campus with discipline.” This was the first year (2007) that students were required to wear a uniform, standard student attire. This was initiated for the sole reason of safety. The school staff would know instantly if someone was to be on campus or not just by the clothes that they were wearing. The students initially protested the uniform, but quickly conformed and accepted the uniform policy.

**Support Staff’s Perspective on Non Violent**

Three people had vivid memories of a sporting event one evening when administrators were patrolling the areas for any unusual behavior and suddenly one student came up and punched the Principal in the face, swung again and missed. At another sporting event that year, one administrator looked over only to “… see 300 Hispanics and 100 Black students; it was so large and scary there were people everywhere!”

**Community Members’ Perspective on Non Violent**

A specific day that stood out in the beginning of the school year was December 9, 2005, according to the local paper:

Over the past few days, Samuel* sensed bad vibes brewing between two rival groups at his high school. The 15-year-old thought mounting tensions between
some Hispanic and black students at Turnaround High School* would climax into fistfights. But on Thursday, Samuel* left his school at 2 p.m., walked across the street and watched as brawling suddenly shifted into something far more dangerous. "Somebody screamed, 'don't shoot! Don't shoot!'" "I started running. I heard three shots. Boom. Boom. Boom." Those involved in the melee, perhaps 20 or more in number, immediately dispersed, leaving behind a 16-year-old student with a bullet wound to the leg. Samuel* said, "It's racial tension at school," claiming that such quarrels and gang-related beefs are staples of life at Turnaround High*.

Carmen*, a 15-year-old who attended Turnaround High School, recommended that the school add metal detectors to enhance student safety. But Samuel said he sees that solution as hopeless. "It's like real normal for everybody to hear shots," said the soft-spoken Samuel, who pondered what his parents would tell him when he got home. "They will probably want to move in the next month or so because it's getting really sickening to hear bullets every night. Another student stated in the local paper "I want to move, but that can not happen. Gangs are growing and growing every day. I don't think you can stop it." (retrieved on 2.3.11 from http://www.reviewjournal.com/lvrj_home/2005/Dec-09-Fri-2005/news/4704511.html).

In an interview with Ms. Beautiful, she states, “The worst experience I had on the campus was when I was called into the principal’s office and met with Homicide Officers that were accusing me of being involved with a murder.” She stated that they continuously accused her of being involved and present at the shooting. Then she said she thought, “I know I did not do it but they don’t believe me.” Then one officer stated, “We have you on camera,” and then Ms. Beautiful said she knew they did not have proof because she knew the camera did not work. From that moment on, she said, she became volatile and was disrespectful to the officers because they lied to her. Ms. Beautiful went on to discuss the process of being part of a gang and the importance that it had on
campus. She continued to state that when she was there five years ago, 20-year-olds would come and approach anyone on campus. She states she did not care about anyone or anything, and that she considered herself a “bad girl.” Ms. Beautiful very graphically was able to explain that she did not consider herself in a gang, but she hung out with gang members. She stated she did not like the lifestyle but she did “beef” and was with a “clique.” In the interview, she explained many terms that the researcher was not aware of and their purpose. Below are the terms that are significant to the study because it goes into detail the varying degrees that the students were involved in violence on campus or in the neighborhood, which resulted with issues being brought on campus.

Banging, I asked what the purpose of this is and she replied, “Why not?”

Hater- “Another clique member.”

Quoted on- “Put in a gang, either you were beaten up by other gang members when you were initiated into the gang.”

Big Homies- “They had been in the gang 8-12 years already and most are locked up in prison now. “

Little Homies- “12 year olds to 25 year olds.”

Clique - “A smaller group that branches off the main gang.” For example, Ms. Beautiful was explaining that the Little Riders were a click of eleven to thirteen members, which is a branch of THN. She continued to say, “Kids probably would say that they felt safe after that second year (2008) because there were so many gangs that there was nothing to be scared of.”

Mr. Head was a former student at Turnaround High School and a former gang member as well as the head of his gang at Turnaround High School. As an adult, removed
from the gang, he provided me with his perspective and insight of what the school was like in 2006-2007. When asked, “What was it like then?” he responded, “I was scared, scared of keeping safe at school. Half of the school was cool, but all of the kids were grouped up.” He explained, “I was ‘cool’ with the Crips sometimes, but was a click with the Blue.” When he arrived at Turnaround High School he was with two of his other friends from a previous high school who were involved in a major ”rumble” involving weapons. Mr. Head explained he was there for six months, hanging out with juniors and seniors. He connected with three other students and they agreed to take care of each other. From that time forward, Mr. Head would approach other leaders in campus and tell them “To stop their Bullshit.” From there, the other clicks, small groups, merged (East, South, North, and West) to create the Southside. As the year progressed, Mr. Head gained respect from others on campus. Generally they just “tagged” the campus, but nothing else. He stated, “We would stand in a big group together.” Then the administration wouldn’t like it so they would move from the theater, down a little more. Constantly he would be told it is a “Fire hazard” so they would all move for the purpose of just being there to have one another’s back if something went down. “Anytime someone was called to the office they would look for the cameras to figure out on campus where the cameras were located.” For those couple of years, Mr. Head tried to keep a low profile. When he became a junior, the gang’s size exploded and they went from a clique of 5-6 kids to 50-60 kids. Mr. Head stated that he would have girls be student aides in the offices so that he would have a head’s up when they were going to search them. He also said, “A lot of the times I would determine who would be involved in a rumble or take the blame for an
incident, depending upon what the agenda was at the time.” Mr. Head said, “I had
everything in order, I determined who did what, when, and what time, but I had order.”

However, Ms. Bossy “felt the biggest achievement on campus during the 3rd
cluster was a decrease in violence on campus and an increase in attendance.” She went on
to speak about “kids are more respectful now than before, you don’t hear kids cussing in
the hallways.”

Local Police Agency Perspective on Non Violent

“In regards to opening a new school, the district only looked at opening a school in that
zone they did not consider the repercussions of intermingling all of the different gang
entities at one place.” “The current administration wanted us on campus, they did not
have a problem with us walking around and being visible in the halls or on campus.”
After there was a shooting in the neighborhood, there would be activation and an
outreach function within 24 hours to prevent retaliation of any gang issues. During the
past five years … “We continued gathering as much information as possible.”

Researcher’s Findings

These incidents were common occurrences in the lives of these students outside of
school. They did not enjoy the freedom to think about what it would be like to play
basketball in the street and not have to look over their shoulders or duck for cover when
they heard a loud noise.

The next section of this chapter explains the factor “Communication” in a safe
school. The section is designed as the previous sections in explaining the factor and the
interviewees’ perspectives.
Communication

Principals’ Perspective on Communication

Principal Adams stated, “As a result of carrying around a trash can during the lunches it presented a natural opportunity for conversations with students. This helped me in developing relationships. It provided tips in how to build a collaborative team with the students.”

I observed the Principal Jefferson at his desk with parents and students sitting on the other side interacting. Principal Jefferson asked, “Why haven’t you been going to class?” “The student responded, “I am going now.” Principal Jefferson questioned Maria, “Does your dad know how much you have missed?” Maria responded, “No.” Principal Jefferson continued to speak to the parent via an interpreter in Spanish, who was a student aide, about the importance of the student to be at school and going to class. Principal Jefferson asked the parent, “How can I help you?” “What can I do here at school?” The father responded, “I don’t know what to do.” Principal Jefferson discussed with the parent some possible parenting solutions: “Take away her iPod, her fancy jewelry, the designer clothes, her make-up, etc.” The principal then explained to the father and the student that she missed numerous days of school last year and that already she had missed 20 classes this year. The student needed to make a decision about what was best for her future. The principal sat and discussed her options, the school’s expectations, as well as the alternative schools she could attend. The principal told the parent to go home and discuss the options and come back on Monday and inform him of the decision. The father stood up looked at his daughter with disgust and frustration. Then he looked at Principal Jefferson with despair, held his right hand out to the principal and said, “Gracias, I’m sorry.” “Principal Jefferson said, “You don’t have to be sorry, let’s
just get your daughter to school.” While the parent was leaving the office, a teacher came into discuss with Principal Jefferson an issue he was assisting her with the day previously. Just then, another staff member walked in for the Principal to sign a form and then the secretary came in to notify him he needed to sign a citation in the police station for a student who was truant. I sat at a large conference table, watching the teachers, the staff, and students come in and holler hello to Principal Jefferson. “I did not see you yesterday,” he said to one student; the student smiled and walked away. Communication patterns overlapped each other continuously throughout the day.

**Administrators’ Perspective on Communication**

The new principal was first notified in February 1999 that she would be promoted and become the new principal at Turnaround High School. Little did Principal Washington know that it was a political move by the school district. Principal Adams said that he worked on building trust with teachers and rapport with students. However, “Every time I had a complete administrative team, they would be promoted to schools which in turn would create a team not as strong.” Principal Adams said he “did not feel I had administrative support from my supervisor and that due to the reorganization of the division it was just bad timing for me.” Ms. Friendly said, “We built relationships, talked with them about what was good. There were things that we had to do that would show them they could trust us.” Today, “Kids at this school know what is expected of them and know what their consequences will be.” She also said, “Teachers want the same thing that the kids do, they want to feel important, included, valued.”
Teachers’ Perspective on Communication

Ms. Analogy referred to the community as “tough.” “The parents were demanding and tough, or absent.”

Support staffs’ Perspective on Communication

“I am able to connect with the kids; I have been here and grew up in this neighborhood.”

Community Members’ Perspective on Communication

Ms. Beautiful attributes her turnaround to one administrator on campus who took the time to work with her and teach her how to do things differently. She explained that Ms. Friendly practiced respect and positivity and that changed her life. One parent’s perspective regarding communication was that initially, when her son was accepted in the magnet program in 2007, and parents were responsible for checking an online system that provided student attendance, grades and discipline information as well as any specific notices of events on campus for families to be aware of. However, the parent stated, “By the time her son was a senior, the counselor communicated with her on campus when I had concerns.”

Local Police Agency’s Perspective on Communication

“Over the past years, we have worked with the apartment managers in the surrounding areas and explained to them their rights and addressing the police calls.” Additionally, there was a visible police presence in the surrounding areas. The police officers would communicate with apartment managers and support their decisions if they wanted to have certain individuals to move. The police were accessible to the community around and at the school at all times. “We just try to keep communication with the school now.” There is a specific division dedicated to working with the Hispanic population.
This special unit provides support to people in the community as well as providing them the knowledge and tools to be successful in the community. These officers work with the families in plain clothes because the elimination of the uniform assists with dissolving a barrier with the families and have created trust between the community members and police. A different officer stated that one problem with the communications is that there is a lack of knowledge and expectation with families. “Majority of people are too scared to contact us with details when there are shootings in the neighborhood in fear of retaliation.”

**Researcher’s Findings**

During an observation, the researcher observed the principal greeting student after student with a fist bump, as well as the Campus Security. At times, he would laugh with the kids and race quickly alongside them, walking and playing with them; they all showed they respected him by appropriately greeting him and following any requests he made.

Another observation that can clearly paint a picture regarding the current communication status on campus was during a meeting with the consultant, data coordinator, and administration team. During the meeting there was dialogue about the current innovation, Pyramid of Intervention, and the consultant was using the inquiry questioning technique about the practice with the implantation. The administrators became increasingly less patient with one another, at one point refusing to listen to the others and even raising voices in differences of opinion. One participant even stated to another individual, “Quit being a baby, grow up!” This lack of productive communication
transferred over to the lack of respect that they had for each other. Communication was definitely an issue all over campus from day one through the present.

The next factor in determining a safe school is learning environment. The researcher’s findings based on the indicators’ (participants’ perspectives) will present a macro view of the learning environment.

**Learning Environment**

In this section, “learning environment” is defined as the physical area where academia and social learning occurs on campus as well the academic atmosphere. This theme will be supported from specific quotations from the participants’ interviews and researcher’s journal entries to support this theme as one of the factors in turning around an unsafe high school.

**Principals’ and Administrators’ Perspective on Learning Environment**

It was August and Principal Washington was staying on campus until all hours of the day, arriving at 5:00 a.m. and leaving at midnight in order to staff her school with teachers for opening day. Principal Washington was hiring brand new inexperienced young teachers who recently graduated from college, with limited or no teaching experience, retired teachers who were able to “double dip” (collect retirement and their salary), poor quality teachers who weren’t successful in their previous placement for various reasons at different schools in the district. During her first year on campus, there were “30+ probationary teachers on campus.” “The school had to postpone their North West Accreditation due to the high turnover at the school.” According to one staff member, Ms. Friendly, coming to Turnaround High was like going to Cook County Triage Unit every day.”
Structural Environment

Principal Adams said it was important for students to “take pride in their school.” “There was trash all over the quad. He began carrying a trash can around during all lunches.” Principal Adams remembers one day when he picked up the intercom and stated, “School Pride, this is OUR HOUSE, I am not going to allow that vandalism!” and offered cash rewards for the students who provided information on the perpetrators. Within minutes, he went to Lowe’s and bought paint to cover up the graffiti.

Principal Jefferson stated that during the summer of 2006, all he did was paint and clear and fix broken things on campus. He tore down the bars on objects that resembled a prison environment. Principal Jefferson did these things the whole summer without any support from the maintenance division of the school district. Additionally, Principal Jefferson implemented a nine-period flexible schedule that allowed students to receive additional credits if they wanted to graduate early or if they needed to take additional credits for credit retrieval purposes. Ultimately, this change with the flexible scheduling provided relief on campus regarding the number of students on campus at one given time. This, in turn, prevented many issues from occurring and assisted with supervision duties.

Academic Environment

Principal Adams said he tried to work on relationships with the teachers. He remembered receiving the most union complaints in a newspaper once because he held so many teachers accountable for their behavior. Principal Adams stated repeatedly it was “… difficult to get staff that was more than mediocre due to the school’s reputation and the commute to the school.” Principal Adams also “… implemented an ROTC program on campus in hopes to create positive role models on campus.”
“The magnet program did nothing for years with the academy, TV Broadcasting,” said Mr. Direct. Based on the programming and the lack of resources in the classroom, Mr. Direct questioned, “Were students getting magnet certifications that shouldn’t have in previous years?” It was apparent that part of the problem with the magnet program not attracting higher achieving students was due to the interest in other comprehensive schools that had the interest of the students. So the magnet program revamped the curriculum and rebuilt the magnet program during 2007. During the first year, there were three areas of focus for academics: Magnet program, second language program, and comprehensive school. Through numerous hours sitting with different participants describing their perceptions of the school during the first few months on campus in 2006, the researcher collected comments that included these: “It was rougher,” “daily fights, almost always over gang affiliations,” and “the school was loosely run.”

The school began implementing Professional Learning Communities (PLC) during the last four years. Initially, they had two different schools: a lower school and an upper school. The model was based on DuFour’s work with professional learning communities. “The purpose was to focus on learning rather than teaching, work collaboratively, and hold individuals accountable for their results.” Every year adjustments were made with the programming, but progress was occurring and students were beginning to learn. According to Mr. Know it All, “The hiring philosophy changed to hiring a staff for the best interest of the students, not the school.” Currently the school has implemented a Pyramid of Intervention, which is a philosophy that students will not fail, the teacher has a responsibility and duty to make sure that the student learns. This innovation is based from DuFour’s work in professional learning communities (DuFour,
DuFour, Eaker & Karhanek, 2004). Students have an opportunity to retake tests if they receive a D or F until they master the material. The learning environment in today’s schools needs to address safety, respect, student responsibility for learning, intellectual rigor, ongoing support and concern for students’ welfare (Rose, 2010). Through the innovations and implementation over the past few years at Turnaround High School, it is evident that the seven previously stated qualities are becoming policy at Turnaround High School.

**Teachers’ Perspective on Learning Environment**

One teacher who worked at Turnaround High School for four years during clusters one and two stated, “We worked so hard there.” She went on to describe the school as “Magical and chaos.” “Everything I learned there taught me everything I know now; it made me refined and mature as a professional.” During this time, 2003-2005, the teachers mentored students on campus. There “was not a specific program in place, we were just involved in everything with the kids and took them under our wing.”

“Staggered start times” repeatedly was the response to the question of what made the difference at the school to now be considered different. The staggered start time started in the second year of Principal Jefferson’s tenure (2007-2008). Students were on different schedules, based on their year in school. For example, freshman students started later than seniors and finished later in the day. This unique master scheduling allowed the campus to have more capacity to shift students from place to place and have less bodies on campus at one time. The only time of day that the students were all on campus was during lunchtime.
Students in the past five years have had different priorities at school. Students have to worry about making a living for their families because of the economy. Many students have to miss school because they have to babysit siblings or their own children. A common phrase that was stated repeated about the school was ‘Diamond in the Ruff, there are good kids, just in a rough neighborhood.”

Support Staffs’ Perspective on Learning Environment

Ms. Business stated there was an “uneasy feeling” on campus. Additionally, the school was chaotic and there was a great deal of “teacher dissatisfaction.” Over the course of the second year with Principal Adams, there was a turning point that 40 staff left the campus due to his strict policies and expectations. However, it is significant to note that during the third year of Principal Adams’ time, the policy of teachers having to stay at their location for a minimum of three years went into effect. This meant that the teachers who transferred into Turnaround High or new teachers could not leave the school unless they resigned from the district altogether.

Community Members’ Perspective on Learning Environment

Ms. Bossy, parent, felt that the school needed to get back to basics; she felt the students did not need to know Spanish as a foreign language and that they should learn Sign Language. She felt that there was little proficiency preparation for the students on campus.

Local Police Agency’s Perspective on Learning Environment

One issue is that a large part of this population in this community is “… teens that are becoming Americanized quickly and they are rebelling. The kids are learning
different things in life through exposure do to the community that they reside in and results in them making bad choices.”

**Researcher’s Findings**

Staffing was another major obstacle on this campus. At first, to have a certified teacher was a challenge, let alone a teacher who could work successfully in the school. As interviews conducted with participants on campus stated, the philosophical focus shifted from “need to get a body in the room” to “finding the right knowledgeable body for the room.” This was another area of contention among administrators on campus. Since many administrators were supervising multiple teachers and different grade levels, there was a rift of what teacher would be hired for what position and by whom. This was a common thread throughout the interviews: that there was internal conflict with the administration and the internally with the faculty.

As time progressed, the principal approached and greeted me. The bell dismissed the students and they left the gym very appropriately and walked out with their belongings to go back to class or home, depending on their individual schedules. It was intriguing to the researcher to see how a campus of 2,200 students followed the dismissal process. The students went to their respectful places with no instance of inappropriate behavior and with very little prompting from adults to go to class or go home. Students inside the cafeteria were heterogeneously mixed with other students. There were still groupings but they were not racial groupings. Students who were athletes were in the center, eating or standing around the center area, the alternative students were over in the far right corner, the nerds were in the far back left corner playing Bakaguns, the severely disabled students were mid–left, and the rest of the population was wandering around.
Calm and compliant is how I would describe the environment, nothing at all of what I ever envisioned from hearing the stories about Turnaround High. This school was often referred to as “Drive-by High,” “Destined for Prison,” or “Dirty Panties.” The researcher entered the gym to see that a majority of the students were sitting in the bleachers by their graduating year. Student Council students were hosting the assembly, introducing the athletes for the fall as well as having a few activities for the teachers and students to participate in the festivities. As the researcher stood at the side of the bleachers next to a majority of the teachers, there was a sense of excitement and pride amongst the students and staff. There was laughter, cheering, and smiles from wall to wall. When the researcher looked in the dark gymnasium to the left and the right, there were banners from sport accomplishments hanging on the walls.

The biggest obstacle in the recent years at Turnaround High was the rumor that Principal Jefferson was going to be transferred to a different school. Everyone in the district heard the rumor and it was even in the local paper that the principal would need to be moved in order for the district to accept Race for the Top funds. This occurred right around testing time, so at one of the most important times of the year, when the school was measured for proficiency and academic success, the students and staff were devastated. In less than 2 ½ hours, the researcher was able to see the first rapport with individuals, and communication was essential in what made this campus safe. The symbolism of the cart that can roam the campus quickly is vivid, as well as the vision that the principal can be anywhere in anytime. The fist bumps with staff and the words exchanged with the students were not even measurable.

The next and final factor that contributes to a safe school is vision.
Vision

Principals’ Perspective on Vision

As we were swinging in and out of doors and posts on the campus, we approached approximately 35 busses. As we were driving to his specific duty station, Principal Jefferson said to me, “Do you know what a minimum F is?” Principal Jefferson discussed how it was a struggle to get the teachers on board with this philosophy, but it was one that he made school-wide this year due to their change in perspective to “All Students Will Succeed!”

Administrators’ Perspective on Vision

“There was no vision for the school prior to Principal Jefferson,” said Mr. Direct. Mr. Direct went on to explain, “It was difficult to maintain a vision and easier to accept the status quo. However, Turnaround High School had a Vision but it was encompassing politics, facility, zoning, and financial resources.”

Teachers’ Perspective on Vision

“The teachers believed that people were so vested and that the kids could do anything.”

Support Staffs’ Perspective on Vision

There did not appear to be a reference from the support staff as to what the school’s vision was during any of the interviews.

Community Members’ Perspective on Vision

There did not appear to be a reference from the community as to what the school’s vision was during any of the interviews.
Local Police Agency’s Perspective on Vision

Some officers explained there “isn’t a value system” in today’s youth, that the “cycle needs to be broken in order for things to change.” Another officer says that for some, “It is acceptable for kids to drop out of school and not have a plan for their future.”

Researcher’s Findings

The vision was unclear to the researcher for a majority of the timeframe for Turnaround High School. It was apparent and clear that the principal and the current administration were clear that they wanted to students to succeed academically. However, it was not clear that everyone on campus was supporting and reinforcing that vision. The researcher viewed the vision theme that without it, it is difficult to do anything substantial.

Police Perspective of External and Internal Factors of Safe Schools

In section two, the researcher will explain the purpose and significance of the police perspective on the external and internal factors that attributed to a safe school.

After the active research at the school was concluded, the researcher felt that there was an integral perspective missing in order for a trustworthy story of how this once unsafe school became safe. As the researcher began coding the data, a common theme emerged from the information: the community and violence. The researcher arranged and met with the local police department about the study. Instantly, there was access to the information and a desire to want to share their knowledge of the issue. A plan was devised of ride-alongs with a veteran patrol unit as well as an officer who was familiar with the Hispanic community, a meeting with an officer from the gang unit, and a ride-along with a special unit that works with educating individuals in the Hispanic community about their rights.
There were four different 8-10 hour shifts of ride-alongs with the officers. The shifts generally began in the conference room, debriefing about previous issues of importance that the officers needed to be familiar with or an information/educational session that ranged from topics about new ways criminals were breaking into and stealing vehicles to “big time” criminals that the police department was watching. After the dialogue and information session, the patrol began. This provided the researcher with the opportunity to understand first-hand where the children that attended Turnaround High School lived, played, and survived.

**Police perspective of the external factors affecting the safety of the school**

In order to be safe, “You need to understand the culture – where and how things operate,” was a quote by an officer in discussing what is safe.

**Officer Calls in the Community**

During the ride-alongs, there were calls made that the officer had to respond to in varying levels. The ones that stand out most are the ones where we went to the homes that involved kids. One night we responded to a call that there was an issue that with kids and parents. The situation was that there were a few boys between the ages of 8-10 years old that were throwing rocks and hit a woman’s windshield. The officer turned the situation around with ease. He was able to deescalate the mothers and have them come to an understanding with one another, as well as teaching the boys responsibility and good choices. It was common on weekend nights to drive through the neighborhoods and see the moms with the kids and the dads sitting on the porch together drinking, sometimes playing cards, smoking, and listening to music. The businesses in the area were predominately small family businesses. They were often tagged on the side of their
buildings and some had bars on their doors. There was a sense of calmness because, for
them, this appeared to be normal and they were rarely fazed by seeing a police car
patrolling in their neighborhood. It was shocking to hear the numerous stories of how the
officers are frequently called to report a shooting whether there are victims, casualties or
not, but that no one saw anything and rarely heard anything… out of fear of retaliation.
The officers the researcher rode along with were familiar with the area; one had been a
police officer for 15 years in that area and had seen it go through changes.

**Description of the Community**

The researcher created a map to maintain a visual of the community and the area
that the children lived in to have a better understanding of the boundary lines of different
gangs, races, and socio-economic classes in her journal. The researcher to maintain
consistency in the areas because they all had the same general “look” continuously
referred to this map. For example, the officer would take the researcher through the area
surrounding the school and there were four main apartment complexes in the immediate
area. All four complexes were light in color, were tagged significantly on the side of the
building, the parking lots, the parking posts, the dumpsters, and signs in the community.
The tagging was typically a gang’s moniker and gang name or symbol, usually in a color
that is representative of the gang. Each place had its own story of violence and usually it
was a gang violence story that resulted in, at minimum, bullets in the building or vehicles.
As we drove in and out of the areas, the officer pointed out the leftover bullet holes in the
walls, buildings, or broken windows. One community member remembers what the
community was like three years ago: “Horrible, there was a lot of police activity.” One
female remembers the specific apartment number, “1016, where the black man always
had drugs. They would chirp on their cell phones when Po was coming through.”

Typically, according to a community member, the Black people in the community targeted the Hispanic people. She reflected on numerous instances that she was threatened by people who lived in the community; all of the people were coincidentally black. These issues caused a major imbalance in the area and heightened the violence in the community. The police, specifically the Hispanic unit, worked in alliance with the people in the community, explaining and educating them of their rights. They also assisted in following up from calls that were placed over the weekend or at school. It was important to recognize that the community members as well as the police department attribute the success of changing the community to communication and building a relationship with one another. A community member stated, “I am not afraid to contact police, regardless I’ll call, it is documentation.” A finding that the police attribute to the community changing the over the past three years is that major leaders in the gangs, both Black and Hispanic, have been “Locked up in the Big Jail.” Another significant landmark in the community is that, at the end of the street the school is located on, there is a detention center as well as a large community park where the students and certain gangs claim their territory.

**Gangs Affecting Safety of the School**

The next section will provide statements that the officers, which the researcher was in contact with throughout the research time, made about the gang issue in the school and community that had an external and internal factor of the school’s safety. It is important to first note that there are numerous gangs, cliques, and groups in the city. An officer who is knowledgeable with gangs stated, “There are 530 documented gangs with
10,000 gang members.” A reason that this area is overcome with gang activity is that it is a city, of low socio-economic class, and that laws in the adjoining “… state are stricter than the laws in this state” regarding gang activity. However, the researcher will try to clarify the groups that had the greatest impact during this time, based on the data discovered during the research phase.

There were primarily Black gangs and Hispanic gangs in this community. What is the driving force for gangs? “Money, Power, and Violence.” Both gangs exhibited vastly different but sometimes similar traits in their leadership. Years ago, there was a hierarchy of “how things are done.” Now, that has all changed said a Police Officer who is very familiar with gangs; “They do things to do things, because they want to.” Some reasons provided as to why people in the community join gangs were: “accepted way of life,” “Nothing pushed them into anything else in life,” “Not going to college, their parents did not go to college,” and it is “expected” for them to join because that’s happened before them. One officer stated that now the gangs have lost structure, they have seen changes from the neighborhood regarding the structure of safety.

**Parental Issues Affecting the Safety of the School**

A common theme that emerged from the officers was that people were living in this community because it was all they could afford and were searching to “provide a better life” for their children. “Most families were working 2-3 jobs” to survive and put food on the table. As a result, “kids were raising themselves,” there was “no supervision,” “absenteeism at school,” and there was a “misrepresentation of the laws.” According to Johnson and Johnson (1995), “The family, neighborhood and community dynamics that once socialized young people into the norms of society are often extinct” (p.2).
Police Perspective of the Internal Factors Affecting the Safety of the School

Many different responses from the police department were provided to the researcher as to why things were changing or if Turnaround High School was becoming safe compared to 5 years prior. For instance, a detective said; “Worse before – they have been getting high marks the last 2 years.” Another officer stated, “Couple years ago there was a gun at the school,” “Kids are trusting information is not going to be leaked if they talk to teachers, police, school district, or administration.” Also, an officer stated, “We have a plan now and adjust it accordingly.”

Another significant reason the Police feel Turnaround High School is safer is due to “the administration.” “It makes a difference that the Principal knows what’s going on.” “We have his cell phone number and he has ours.” There is a “communication line” open now; “A few years ago we would be on the campus investigating, arresting kids and walking around, now there isn’t a need.” According to Bosher, Kaminski and Vacca (2004), a strong relationship between schools and law enforcement agencies does not begin with a call from the local precinct. Police have always been in and around schools, supervising athletics, activities, speaking to students about issues, and dealing with crises. However, this “dialogue and relationship between the two entities needs to include a community policing, shared responsibility on campus, prevention, “intelligence gathering,” joint community responses, and collaborative policies such as zero tolerance-based initiatives” (Bosher, Kaminski and Vacca, 2004, p.9).
Table 5.1.

**Summary of Indicators of the Characteristics of an Unsafe to Safe School**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1999-2002 (3 yrs)</th>
<th>2002-2006 (4 yrs)</th>
<th>2006-2010 (4 yrs)</th>
<th>NOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structurally</td>
<td>New, Graffiti</td>
<td>Disaster, Dirty,</td>
<td>Graffiti, Broken</td>
<td>Repaired, Kept,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trash everywhere,</td>
<td>bars and windows,</td>
<td>Dirty, Tagged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Graffiti</td>
<td>Trash</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Administration</strong></td>
<td>New, transient</td>
<td>New, managerial,</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Innovative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>transient</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curriculum</strong></td>
<td>Developing</td>
<td>Never Discussed</td>
<td>Behaviors</td>
<td>Standards, Pyramid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>of intervention,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Consistency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perceptions</strong></td>
<td>Unsafe, negative</td>
<td>Unsafe, negative</td>
<td>Unsafe, negative</td>
<td>Safe, Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Retention of</strong></td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principal’s</strong></td>
<td>Image of the</td>
<td>School Pride,</td>
<td>Safety, Physical</td>
<td>Safe campus,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priorities</strong></td>
<td>campus</td>
<td>Clean Campus</td>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Student Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community</strong></td>
<td>Rough, dangerous</td>
<td>Rough, dangerous</td>
<td>Very Rough</td>
<td>Average Low SES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Community, less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>racial issues with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>gangs, Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>External</strong></td>
<td>Some supervisor</td>
<td>Some region</td>
<td>Division, Financial</td>
<td>Division, financial,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support</strong></td>
<td>support</td>
<td>support</td>
<td>police</td>
<td>police, community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Violence on</strong></td>
<td>Not addressed,</td>
<td>Gang violence,</td>
<td>Gang violence,</td>
<td>Bullying, comparable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Campus</strong></td>
<td>let students</td>
<td>intimidation,</td>
<td>intimidation,</td>
<td>with other high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>manage issues</td>
<td>fights, threats,</td>
<td>fights, threats,</td>
<td>schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Changes</strong></td>
<td>Elementary/secondary division, creating a culture on campus</td>
<td>Created a magnet school, school pride, regions were created</td>
<td>Divisions were created, student standard attire, flexible scheduling, PLC’s</td>
<td>Pyramid of Intervention, PLC by grade levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Safe</strong></td>
<td>UNSAFE</td>
<td>UNSAFE</td>
<td>UNSAFE</td>
<td>SAFER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Obstacles</strong></td>
<td>Staff recruitment, student recruitment</td>
<td>Supervisor support, community support</td>
<td>District support, community support</td>
<td>Funding, Time, District Supporting Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AYP Status</strong></td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>In Need of Improvement (Y3)</td>
<td>In Need of Improvement (Y6)</td>
<td>Did not meet AYP (Y7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instruction</strong></td>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>Minimum - &gt;Compliant or Ritualistic</td>
<td>Engaged -&gt; Active Engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% of Teachers</strong></td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>43.3% - &gt;23.2%</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Highly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualified</td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td>$5175</td>
<td>$5418 -&gt; $6420</td>
<td>$7238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Per Pupil</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spending</strong></td>
<td>XXX</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In section three, the findings from the interviews, observations, and data that were collected and analyzed are categorized in Table 5.1 over the time period that Turnaround High School has been opened. The dates across the top of the table represent the time period of that principal. For example, 1999-2002 was during Principal Washington’s Leadership, 2002-2006 was during Principal Adams’s leadership, 2006-2010 was Principal Jefferson and now (which is still Principal Jefferson). The purpose of separating Principal Jefferson’s timeframe is due to the difference in the school over the past five years. The indicators along the left column were created through the interview responses, observations, reflective journal notations, and data through the Four Frame Model from Bolman and Deal (2008).

**Calibration of Principals’ Perspective**

The indicators of a unsafe and safe school that were developed based on the participants’ responses, data, and literature assisted in creating a figure that illustrated each Principal’s calibration of the factors that attributed to a safe school during their tenure of leadership at Turnaround High School. Through the calibration of the Principals’ perspectives of the factors for a safe school and the indicators, a graphic organizer of the three different principal tenures is provided. The figures allow the reader to understand which factor was the most significant to the leader during that timeframe, based on the size of the circle.
Figure 5.4. *Calibration of Principals’ Perspective of the Factors for a Safe School.*

**Summary**

The calibration of the Safe School factors during each Principal’s tenure remained constant; however, the level of importance for each factor varied between them.

During Principal Washington’s tenure, it appeared that “coalition members had enduring difference in values, beliefs, information, interests, and perceptions of reality” (Bolman and Deal, 2008, p. 194). This was supported by Principal Washington’s continuous efforts to believe and inspire others to believe there were no safety issues inside the campus walls. The reality was not the reality of the campus; it was Principal Washington’s perspective, which was through a biased lens. A majority of the focus during this tenure was the external communication with others: the Mayor, congressmen/women, and other political stakeholders in the community that could bring positive recognition to the school.
During Principal Adam’s tenure, the factor that was significant to him was the vision for the school. The school pride and everything that was done on campus revolved around that vision. According to Bolman and Deal, “What is most important is not what happens but what it means” (Bolman and Deal, 2008, p.253). The symbolic representation of Principal Adams constantly walking around picking up trash and ensuring that the building looked pristine was a symbol of hope and unity through appreciating one another and the campus.
During Principal Jefferson’s tenure, there were many factors the same size and larger, based on the participants’ reference of importance through the interviews. During Principal Jefferson’s time at Turnaround High School, it was evident that the structural and human resource frame was the set of ideas used in turning around the school from unsafe to safe. Regarding the structural frame, Principal Jefferson achieved and established goals and objectives by setting the clear and high expectation that violence will not be allowed, attendance is mandatory, and a consistent discipline policy was in place and implemented. Standard student attire and the flexible schedule initially were
structural ways of thinking to increase efficiency and enhance performance (Bolman and Deal, 2008, p. 47). Additionally, there were four core assumptions in the human resource frame that Principal Jefferson appeared to operate under (Bolman and Deal, 2008, p.122):

- Organizations exist to serve human needs rather than the converse.
- People and organizations need each other.
- When the fit between individual and system is poor, one or both suffer. Individuals are exploited or exploit the organization – or both become victims.
- A good fit benefits both.

These assumptions were achieved through “doing what was right for kids,” building relationships with the students, community, staff, and police. This frame allowed people’s attitudes to change and create an environment that was shifting from a negative atmosphere into a positive environment that is productive.

**Researcher’s Conclusion**

There were multiple ways the school was led during the past eleven years and there were multiple turning points in its transformation. Figure 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7 display the one-dimensional typology for each factor during each principal’s leadership in relationship to a safe school. However, it is clear to the researcher that the greatest change and most sustained changes occurred during Principal Jefferson’s duration as principal. Educational outcomes are always arrived at through complex circumstances, however; utilizing the best practices yield consistently powerful results.
Figure 5.7. Five Factors Typography during Principal Jefferson’s Tenure.
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a synopsis of the study, a summary of findings, and suggestions for future research. The conclusions here are situated in Bolman and Deal’s Four Frame Model that was presented in Chapters Two and Three. Their model is used as a guide for synthesizing what has been learned in evolving an unsafe school to a safe one (Bolman & Deal 2008). An analysis of this safe school revealed ways in which the conceptual framework of a safe school and practice may inform other educational and research contexts.

This case study formed a full collection of data that laid out a concrete definition of a safe school based on participants’ perceptions, feelings, and experiences at Turnaround High School. The data collected along with the participants’ perspectives provided a thick and rich history of the transformation of a once unsafe school to a safe school.

Utilizing the Four Frame conceptual framework, the proposed indicators of an unsafe and safe school are listed within Bolman and Deal’s four frames (Bolman and Deal, 2008).

Summary of Study

The literature pertaining to school reform and safe schools demonstrates the following: 1. Safe is defined in many different ways. 2. The problem of safety in schools is widespread in the U. S. and worldwide. 3. Over the past five hundred years, despite attempting multiple approaches to school reform, urban schools are still having difficulty
meeting the needs of all children and closing the achievement gaps. Additionally, the conceptual framework was also grounded in findings not exclusively from the literature.

Using the Bolman and Deal-Four Frame Lens as a point of reference, this qualitative case study inquired how a once persistently unsafe school evolved into a safe school (Bolman and Deal, 2008). Specifically, the researcher examined how principals, administrators, teachers, support staff, community members, and a local police agency described what a safe school was and what they perceived as characteristics of unsafe and safe schools through a series of interview questions. Participants’ perceptions and researcher observations of the school were compared for this naturalistic study, which produced a grounded theory for a safe school. The following sections summarize the research questions used to analyze the data through the Four Frame Lens conceptual framework (2008).

1. What were characteristics of a persistently unsafe high school?

   To avoid redundancy, this question is answered in research question number two.

2. What were the characteristics of a persistently unsafe high school that is now considered safe?

   The characteristics of a persistently unsafe high school ranged from “people not speaking to one another” to “a student being attacked on campus in the middle of the quad with a gun in his back.” Another characteristic was “feeling scared.” As individuals would walk through the campus there were invisible boundary lines that were, however, clearly defined by the individuals blocking a particular area or their clothing attire. Some people felt unsafe and had the feeling that something was about to happen or the need to never be alone on campus. Students and staff were intimidated by one another. The fear
of the unknown and the frustration of letting the behavior continue was evident. There was a lack of consistency on the administration’s part due to their limited knowledge of the position, a lack of support in the community, or for fear of retaliation because the student or teacher was involved.

According to Bolman and Deal (2008), “Multiframe thinking requires moving beyond narrow, mechanical approaches for understanding organizations” (p.19). The next three tables are based on the conceptual framework from Bolman and Deal’s Four Frame Model (2008). There are three tables displayed based on the three timeframes of each principal in the school. The left hand column lists the indicators of an unsafe school. The columns listed Structural, Human Resource, Political and Symbolic are the four lens that the data was viewed through in documenting the findings which ultimately created the Non Violent and Safe School grounded theory. The last column is the actual perception of the school based on the interviews in the final year of that principal’s time period.

Indicators of the Characteristics of an Unsafe to Safe School as listed in Table 6.1 was based on the researcher’s interpretation of the best descriptive word derived from the interviews regarding the transformation of the school. The words listed under the domain column were from Bolman and Deal (2008) and serve as the theoretical framework for this case study. It was through these four lenses that the researcher identified the internal and external indicators for the turnaround high school. According to Bolman and Deal, “some perspectives may seem clear and straightforward, while others seem puzzling. Applying all four deepens the appreciation and understanding of organizations (p.18).”
Unsafe Indicators during Principal Washington’s Leadership

Table 6.1, is titled *Indicators of an unsafe school*. The table is a culmination and representation of the data collected and the participants’ reality during Principal Washington’s leadership. The four frames provided words that described the domains through each specific lens during that timeframe, based on the participants’ reality or perception. The final column is the actual perception of the school as a whole from everyone’s combined perspective.

Utilizing the four frames, the researcher created the actual perception of the school in each domain. For instance, and most likely the most accurate was Drive By High. Drive By High was a common metaphor that individuals responded with when they were asked, “What is a slogan associate with the school?” Drive By High was the most frequent response from various participants. It was a name that fit the community as there were many shootings in the neighborhood surrounding the school.

Table 6.1.

*Unsafe Indicators During Principal Washington’s Leadership through Bolman and Deal Four Frame Model (Bolman and Deal, 2008).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metaphor for School</th>
<th>Structural</th>
<th>Human Resource</th>
<th>Political</th>
<th>Symbolic</th>
<th>Actual Perception</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Environment</td>
<td>Broken</td>
<td>They’re behind</td>
<td>Outside is clean, ritualistic</td>
<td>Prison Setting</td>
<td>Broken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image of Leadership Communication Style</td>
<td>Social, Directed</td>
<td>Pleasing</td>
<td>Procedure Oriented Off the record Everything is delightful</td>
<td>Frightened</td>
<td>Non existent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Through email</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Intimidation</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structural</th>
<th>Human Resource</th>
<th>Political</th>
<th>Symbolic</th>
<th>Actual Perception</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Machine</td>
<td>Poor Kids, Feel sorry for them</td>
<td>School in the ghetto</td>
<td>Penitentiary High</td>
<td>Drive By High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broken</td>
<td>They’re behind</td>
<td>Outside is clean, ritualistic</td>
<td>Prison Setting</td>
<td>Broken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social, Directed</td>
<td>Pleasing</td>
<td>Procedure Oriented Off the record Everything is delightful</td>
<td>Frightened</td>
<td>Non existent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through email</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Intimidation</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The next domain, learning environment, was "broken." Broken refers to the whole school and the systemic issues of not having certified and highly qualified individuals in key positions, whether it was a teacher, counselor, or administrator.

The third domain, Image of Leadership, was categorized as "nonexistent." Nonexistent referred to the absence of leadership. Teachers were not led by any specific vision or purpose other than to handle things "in house."

The last domain in this timeframe was communication style. Communication style encompassed teachers, staff, community members, students, and administration; the unanimous response was none. There was a lot of talking but no communication, no collaboration during the first cluster.

Unsafe Indicators during Principal Adam’s Leadership

Table 6.2 Unsafe Indicators during Principal Adam’s Leadership, during the timeframe of the second principal, Principal Adams. During his tenure, there was not much change in the process of creating a safe school. There were some innovations attempted; however, very few were successful or sustained. The metaphor of the school remained "Drive By High" and continued to be as valid, if not more so, than the previous couple of years. Crime and violence had escalated in the community and carried over onto the school campus. “Drive By High” was a metaphor that individuals were all instantly aware of when I questioned them about the metaphor.

The next domain, learning environment, was referred to as a "prision setting." The term prision setting referred to the way that the students placed themselves on the campus. They were typically segregated in the quad or in the parking lots based on their race. The physical building was broken, damaged, and uninviting. Additionally, there were
metal bars over many parts of the school from the windows to the beverage machines. There was tagging and graffiti everywhere on the campus because people were "claiming their territory" or "making their mark.”

The third domain according to the Four Frame model, Image of Leadership, was categorized as "friendly." The word friendly meant that leadership was not confrontational and the principal liked to talk to the kids. Principal Adams tried very hard to implement school pride on campus and achieved this on a small scale. He was friendly and the staff and students generally appreciated him. However, according to the statistics he was much more lenient than he thought he actually was. His words were, “I did not tolerate bad behavior.” “There was an expectation, they weren’t bringing anything on to the campus.” The reality according to other peoples’ perceptions was that he did not realize what was going on, nor he did not want to implement a consistent policy of zero tolerance for negative behaviors.

The last domain in this timeframe was communication style. Communication style encompassed teachers, staff, community members, students, and administration and the unanimous response was "go with the flow." Principal Adams was a man who had expectations for the students but did not ruffle too many feathers. He had ideas but they generally weren’t sustained. His calm demeanor and dedication to the students allowed him to do the best he could at the school with the support he was provided.
Table 6.2.

Unsafe Indicators during Principal Adam’s Leadership through Bolman and Deal Four Frame Model (Bolman and Deal, 2008).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metaphor for School</th>
<th>Structural</th>
<th>Human Resource</th>
<th>Political</th>
<th>Symbolic</th>
<th>Actual Perception</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional, Machine, Militant</td>
<td>Poor Kids, Feel sorry for them</td>
<td>School in the ghetto</td>
<td>Penitentiary High</td>
<td>Drive By High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Environment</td>
<td>Broken</td>
<td>They’re behind</td>
<td>Outside is clean, ritualistic</td>
<td>Prison Setting School Pride</td>
<td>Prison Setting/ Beginning of School Pride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image of Leadership</td>
<td>Orderly</td>
<td>Pleasing, Friendly</td>
<td>Procedure Oriented</td>
<td>Frightened</td>
<td>Friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Style</td>
<td>Directed</td>
<td>Sure, absolutely, go with the flow</td>
<td>I know best</td>
<td>Purpose (trash)</td>
<td>Intimidation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Safe Indicators during Principal Jefferson’s Leadership |

Table 6.3, refers to the timeframe of Principal Jefferson. During Principal Jefferson’s leadership, the school evolved from an unsafe high school to a safe high school. During cluster three, the school implemented numerous innovations, became a breakthrough school, transformed its image to the students, community and school district, and began to direct its focus to student learning. This process continues today. The change did not occur quickly, but it was gradual and constant. There were pivotal points throughout the era of the school that led to this major shift that assisted Principal Jefferson in leading the turnaround of this school. The metaphor of the school was a "Safe School, a place that I would bring my 4 year-old son." This was a significant finding for the school was finally associated with a positive tone and felt like a place people believed their own children would be safe. Was there one clear reason for the change? Was it simply because the school changed as all people, places, and things do
over time? Was it because the school experienced a shift in the demographics of its population? Was The researcher believes it is indeed a combination of the above factors, in alliance with the communication and cooperation that each entity had with the others.

The next domain, learning environment, was referred to as "compliant and engaged." On a physical level, the school transformed and looks welcoming. Tagging still exists and many floors across the campus are dirty. However, it progressed into a beautiful campus. There was not any noticable trash laying around, there was not gum stuck to the ground or the patio benches. Metal bars had been removed, it no longer felt like a prison; it was a well kept "home" for students and staff.

The third domain according to the Four Frame model, Image of Leadership, was categorized as "visionary and visible." The words that described the leadership were constant by the community, staff on campus, as well as the local police. A common thread that emerged was that Principal Jefferson was always visible, “He’s everywhere and knows what is going on.” Repeatedly, the theme was that Principal Jefferson believed in the kids and did what he thought needed to be done to prevent violence from occuring on campus. This was achieved through micromanaging all aspects of discipline - from truancy citations to custodial duties to placing cones in the parking lot. He did this so he would have first-hand knowledge of what was happening at his school. As time progressed, Principal Jefferson maintained his visibility with the students and staff, however, he enabled other staff to take on some of the duties and shifted his main focus to academic priorities to increase student achievement. However, would this school have evolved as much as it did, as quickly as it did, if Principal Jefferson was a managerial leader? The likley answer was no. Principal Jefferson’s vision of a safe school was
achieved through implementing strong, consistent discipline procedures and policies. These included: Standard Student Attire, a no tolerance discipline policy for fighting, drugs, or weapons, as well as a flexible bell schedule. However, the key to this turn around might have in fact been in the relationships that were built. The relationships that Principal Jefferson and other administrators created on campus had a strong impact on school safety. The knowledge and insight of the administrative team came from the information they received from the kids. This enabled school and local police to improve their targeted efforts to maintain a safe environment. The criticism of Principal Jefferson was that his vision did not extend beyond creating a non-violent school.

The last domain was communication style. Communication style encompassed teachers, staff, community members, students, and administration and the researcher chose, "Principal’s Office." This may appear odd, but it allowed the researcher to understand the organization better and ascertain a clearer vision of the reality of turning around this particular school. During the time the researcher spent on campus, the Principal’s office was "the" place to be. He always invited anyone into his office whether it was a parent, teacher, student, or researcher. People appeared to be at ease in his presence, having conversations with him or even conversations with others at his table while he was attending to various tasks. During the week of interviews, it was noted that the principal’s office was a common meeting place for many people. Was it that it was centrally located? Was it that most of the quad was easily visible from his window? Was it his style to be attentive to everyone at once? Or was it the sense of authority and safety he exuded? The communication had all these elements alive within it.
Table 6.3.

*Safe Indicators during Principal Jefferson's Leadership through Bolman and Deal Four Frame Model (Bolman and Deal, 2008).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metaphor for School</th>
<th>Structural</th>
<th>Human Resource</th>
<th>Political</th>
<th>Symbolic</th>
<th>Actual Perception</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Environment</td>
<td>Expectations</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Cell Phone</td>
<td>Safe School, where I’d bring my 4 year old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compliant</td>
<td>Pyramid of Intervention</td>
<td>Sports/ AYP</td>
<td>Pep Rally</td>
<td>Compliant, Engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image of Leadership</td>
<td>Firm but Fair</td>
<td>Respectful</td>
<td>Leave alone</td>
<td>Fist Bumps</td>
<td>Visionary, Visible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Style</td>
<td>Truancy Notices</td>
<td>Principal’s Office</td>
<td>Mr. or Ms. Student Name</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Principal’s Office</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The characteristics of a safe school were the opposite of the characteristics of an unsafe school. First and foremost, students, staff and community members were not afraid to walk around the campus. The principal had a vision and it was clear, respected, and supported throughout the school and community. The principal was visible and participated in student learning with the students and staff. Positive relationships were created and developed based on a shared interest to improve academically, not due to a need for protection. The school climate became calm, orderly, and enlightening. Laughter, smiles, and fun were visibly displayed in the quad, inside classrooms, and by the school community at sporting events. Students appeared to be actively engaged in learning. Parents and community members took an informed interest in the school and became partners in their children’s educations. The building appeared clean, neat, and fresh. The restrooms were clean and stocked with supplies. There was a large presence of people welcoming one another immediately on campus.; a sense of unity amongst one another, a shared respect for each other had been established. Few violent offenses
continue to occur and discipline problems have been minimized. Expectations for all remain high.

3. What are the internal and external factors that have contributed to a previously unsafe high school now being considered safe?

More than ever before, today's schools are serving children from dysfunctional homes, children living in poverty, children of young parents, limited English proficient speakers, and special education students (NCREL, 2011). Sadly, as a result of these circumstances, resources to properly serve the wide range of needs presented by these students are becoming increasingly scarce. “Adequate parental supervision and control of these children has weakened, and many students have diminished respect for all forms of authority, including the authority of school personnel” (NCREL, 2011, para.2). Consequently, schools are faced with students possessing weapons, students involved with gang recruitment and rivalry, and students engaged in drug trafficking, as possessors and distributors. These problems lead to primarily violent acts in and around schools (NCREL, 2011). There were many factors and indicators that school now being internally and externally safe.

Principal

A “principal that establishes and maintains a safe, orderly school environment has been identified as the most fundamental element of effectiveness” (Cotton, 2003). An effective principal is one who creates this type of environment through relationships, accessibility, ensuring that there is a consensus of student behavior, communicating high behavioral standards to students, seeking input from students about behavior polices, and applying rules consistently from day to day and student to student (Cotton, 2003).
Principal Jefferson has established a sense of purpose and vision on the campus that students and staff believe in and are working toward achieving. Also, Principal Jefferson has evolved from being a sole manager in managing all entities himself to building capacity and empowering other administrators and teachers on campus to focus on learning (Hatch, 2010). At Turnaround High School, the principal is the strong external leader as well as a spokesperson, negotiator, and champion for Turnaround High School’s best interests (Hatch, 2010).

**Vision**

According to Marzano’s School Effectiveness Factors, a safe and orderly environment is key for an effective school. Having a vision that encompasses the school as a whole and being willing to implement it with fidelity will only assist the school and students in achieving success. John Ash stated, "I don't allow students to beat one another up with their fists, and I'm not going to let them do it with their words either. If I don't provide an environment where students are safe emotionally, how much learning do you think will occur?" (Hale, Moorman, 2003). As a school leader, having the ability to distribute the work both outside and inside the school promotes shared knowledge of the school’s goals and vision (Hatch, 2011).

**Communication**

The relationship-building, both internally and externally, made a significant contribution to the transformation of the safety at the school. The external relationships that Principal Jefferson created with the community; apartment managers, local business owners, local police agency, and parents were a huge contribution to its improvement, because it allowed the lines of communication to remain open with trust.
The issue of trust is developed through relationships. According to Bryk et. al (2010), “The base level of trust at any given time point conditions a school’s capacity to undertake new reform initiatives” (p.141). Additionally, they claim, “A reciprocal dynamic operates between relational trust and the process of school change” (2010, p. 141). Students and staff feel a heightened sense of trust that has come through communication, and that is why there is a sense of safety.

**Non Violent**

The ability to have time for the staff to dialogue with one another is essential in building structures for student achievement. The figure represented as Figure 6.1 examines learning environment and discipline. The circles are joined by a circle in the middle that lists indicators of a non violent school. This process or sorting, coding and analyzing of the data allowed for a clear definition of what non violent means.

![Figure 6.1. Factors and Indicators that Define Non-Violent.](image-url)
Learning Environment

According to a study from National Conference of State Legislatures (2005), “Research shows that successful high schools that provide rigorous academic coursework, relevant learning opportunities, and meaningful relationships with instructors who are qualified to help students achieve high standards” (Kristin, 2005). Figure 6.2 represents two circles with a different indicator and factor in a safe school. According to this study Non Violent and Learning Environment are separate factors, however the researcher wanted to define the categories based on the literature and the participants’ responses to define what is considered Non Violent.

![Diagram of Safe School Ultimate Framework](image)

Figure 6.2. Safe School Ultimate Framework.

However, after further reflection and iteration with the findings, a conceptual framework of a safe school was developed with five internal and external factors. When
collectively put together, the following five internal and external factors with their indicators created a safe school. This Safe School grounded theory is represented in Figure 6.2.

The first and most significant factor of a safe school was the principal. This was the reason that the principal piece of the puzzle is the largest of the five pieces. Following the principal, vision was the second factor in contributing a safe school as well as in size the second largest factor. The third, fourth and fifth factors in determining a safe school were equal in size. The learning environment covered the physical structure of the learning environment as well as the academia portion of learning environment. Communication and sustainability of the relationships along with non-violent being the final factors in creating and sustaining a safe high school. The theory that was created as a result of this study is represented in Figure 6.2.

4. What strategies and events attributed to turning around a persistently unsafe high school?

According to the Center for Social and Emotional Education (January 2010), there are four essential areas of focus: safety, relationships, teaching and learning, and intuitional environment. As noted throughout this study, there were pivotal points and events in the history of Turnaround High School that led a once persistently unsafe high school to a safe school. However, the following strategies and events were instrumental in creating a non violent school; flexible bell schedule, standard student attire, no tolerance fighting, drugs and weapons policy, and ultimately the relationships and trust building between the administration, students, staff and community. The creation of professional learning communities lead the school from non-violent to safe.
5. What was the role of the principal in turning around a persistently unsafe high school?

As previously stated in chapter four, the principal was the main leader in turning around a persistently unsafe high school. Principal Jefferson’s role was not one that was easily defined nor was it one that remained the same year after year. The principal was the leader on campus and understood the triumphs and challenges. He was the manager that ensured everything was in place and done correctly. He was the man who was at “every function possible,” the one who provided his “personal cellular number to students, parents and local community members to keep the communication lines open.” He was the individual that advocated for additional monies, time, and resources to implement practices needed to create a safe school. The principal was the role model for the students, staff, and the community to set high expectations while grappling with the reality of the limitations of the school. The principal created a learning environment where he was willing to try new strategies to increase student engagement and entrusted the staff to do what was right for kids.

Limitations

As in every qualitative study, this study had its own limitations. The researcher recognized the limitations (a single-school case study) of the study and realized its conclusions must be considered only in terms of the specific research site. Conclusions of case studies, according to Locke (1998), “should be held as tentative or contingent on further study. In many cases, the reason for such reservations does not lie in the discovery of some technical flaw in methodology, but in concern about how well results might generalize (be applicable) to members of a wider population” (p. 89). It is important to note that this study only provides a “snapshot” of one place at one time. It marks the
journey of Turnaround High School from August 1999 until December 2010. Since the researcher's observations, the school has spent countless hours and dollars on consultants and analyzing classroom instruction and small learning communities. Nevertheless, the data and observations of that snapshot can be the springboard for future study.

A second limitation concerned the sample of the participants. Due to constraints at the research site, this study included only easily accessible staff at the school and district levels. The researcher was able to interview the two previous principals, however, it was difficult to locate and dialogue with individuals that no longer worked at the site. I understood the need to involve a diversity of participants (culture, race, sexual orientation, religion, current high school students) and a diversity of programs (core vs. elective courses, extra- and intra-curricular activities, etc.). Including more diversity would provide a more in-depth reading of Turnaround High School.

A third limitation of the study was that the researcher went into the study with a bias that the school had already made a turnaround in regards to safety. Consequently, the researcher did not spend enough time inquiring about the academic changes that occurred over time. These changes may have lead to a different outcome or additional perspective that were not gleaned from this set of data.

**Contributions**

Despite its limitations, this study contributes to the body of knowledge of safe schools and high school reform. In preparation for the study, the researcher was able to sift through school reform literature, school violence and discipline literature, and principal leadership literature. The researcher made a concerted effort to put theory and practice side by side and to examine how one can inform the other, not how one trumps
the other. Additionally, when the researcher began this endeavor, other empirical studies on the practice of school safety in high schools was extremely limited. Consequently, this study is foundational and particularly relevant to others seeking to turn around a school. This research may serve as a road map to schools, offering suggestions and recommendations regarding challenges they may face in this goal. The table, represented as Table 6.4, How Safe is Your School provides a continuum of variations of safe schools. The left column is the five factors that create a safe school. It is important to note that this is a work in progress; however, it is the beginning stages of a measurement or tool to determine how safe a school is. The column labeled “a” is considered the ideal variation of the innovation, which in this case is a safe school. As the columns progress to the left of the a variation on the continuum to the least desired or least ideal which in this case is a persistently dangerous school, the indicators are greater and negative in detail. It is the researcher’s desire that one day this measurement will be fully complete and utilized in assisting administrators and districts the knowledge to transform an unsafe school to a safe school.

The diagram represented in Figure 6.3 School Safety Needs Assessment is a possible way to represent the perspectives of the participants on a scale ranging from ideal to least ideal in determining where their school falls by simply placing an “X” on the line, utilizing the "How Safe Is Your School" Figure.
### Table 6.4. How Safe is Your School?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES</th>
<th>SAFE (a)</th>
<th>SOMEWHAT SAFE (b)</th>
<th>NOT SAFE (c)</th>
<th>PERSISTANTLY DANGEROUS (d)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRINCIPAL</td>
<td>Visible, clear, knowledgeable, respected, informed, attentive</td>
<td>Somewhat engaged</td>
<td>Isolated</td>
<td>Isolated, afraid, worried about image but not making any changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NON VIOLENT</td>
<td>Minimal disruptions, insubordination</td>
<td>Minimal disruptions, sporadic fights, truant, insubordination</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fights, weapons, fear, intimidation, non students on campus, lack of students attending campus, deviants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMUNICATION</td>
<td>Respect $S \leftrightarrow S$, $T, \leftrightarrow S$, $A \leftrightarrow C$, $P \leftrightarrow A$, $T \leftrightarrow P$, $F \leftrightarrow S$, $F \leftrightarrow F$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Excessive tagging, graffiti, blank walls, trash everywhere, broken doors, windows, fixtures, dirty restrooms, gum on the floor, animal droppings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Managerial or not involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VISION</td>
<td>Visionary</td>
<td>Managerial, Somewhat involved</td>
<td>Unaware, Managerial, status quo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.3. School Safety Needs Assessment.
Future Directions

The results of this study suggest three specific areas; more diversity in the research sample, how to define school climate through a safe school grounded theory, and how a safe school affects the community. Another area of future study would be to research an unsafe school and determine if prioritizing and focusing the vision on student learning and engagement over student violence and discipline would lead to transforming the school as well.

Examination of the Impact of the School on the Community and Investigation of Evidence of Sustainability

In order to create a safe environment that is conducive to learning, schools must implement safety plans and comprehensive prevention programs that address the root causes of violence. Do schools that have safety plans have less violence or discipline incidents? Do those schools have a greater sense of safety by staff, students and the community?

Student Perspective in the Research

One of the limitations of this study was the lack of student input. In order to get a more realistic vision of how school safety evolves throughout the school, the voices of students, staff from the beginning through now, additional parent interviews, and a variety of community members necessarily would be included. Students may provide a completely different approach on what is safety. What is a safe school? Unknown themes may be generated through the research and iteration of the data.
Exploration of the Meaning of School Climate

Further study could explore how high schools define school climate and whether definitions shift when a safe school grounded theory is applied. Follow-up with Turnaround High School could occur to determine what impact becoming a safer school has had on the psyche of the school. Is there a greater focus on academics and less on behaviors? Are there systems in place for sustainability once the current principal departs the school? What or how do current students perceive or define a safe school? How does that compare to the students six years ago? How do student perceptions compare with staff perceptions?

Examination of the Impact of the School on the Community

Further studies may wish to explore how Turnaround High School’s attempts to build a safe school have affected the surrounding community. Many of the programs and practices were implemented consistently at the school for the last four school years and therefore the school did not have the same obstacles it had in previous years. Additionally, a new school opened in the community and students have been rezoned. Is that school exhibiting the same characteristics as Turnaround High School once did?

Student Engagement and Student Learning

Further studies may wish to research the outcomes of student learning and active student engagement as the initial focus in creating a safe school. Research states that having high expectations for students is the way to turnaround a school. Is that strictly for achievement purposes? However, the researcher questions if it increases student achievement then by default, wouldn’t student violence decrease? How many schools
have you seen that have a large amount of structured active engagement producing meeting standards results having discipline issues?

**Investigation of Evidence of Sustainability**

Future study could entail returning in several years to examine whether any of the efforts Turnaround High School implemented during this study had become institutionalized and systemic. The effect of changes — a new superintendent, principal, and new faculty — could be assessed. A study could look at whether programs and practices continue and are sustainable when principle players — mostly teachers — come and go and whether parents remain committed to the vision after their own children have left the system.

**Final Thoughts**

Finally, the researcher has circled back to the original question that sparked the purpose for this study. The researcher wanted to know whether Turnaround High School was safe and if so, how safe? The conclusions of this study confirmed that it is safe according to the definition. In the future, researchers should consider the following questions: Can a school be safe with violence? Can the proposed definition of a safe school be applied in all schools with the same meaning? This study is about the status of safety in one urban high school in a large school district. Safety is a critical factor to all schools at the beginning of the twenty-first century. There needs to be more dialogue about safety in high schools, where they are heading, what plan is in place, what preventative measures educating students, staff and community members are happening. Finally, educators need to reflect on how students learn and, most importantly, focus on the relationships they can build with students to promote a safe school.
Significant Realizations of the Study

During the interview period the researcher was at the site, she did not consider what the participants were saying with their refusal to speak, their body language or their creative ways of not addressing the questions. The researcher has come to realize they were in fact saying they did not want to talk about the past.

Only by acknowledging that changes need to occur and contributing to that dialogue can schools become safe. Since Turnaround High School has evolved into a safe urban school, it has created a greater sense of community involvement, pride, and unity. The students have a stronger sense of purpose and most importantly, feel like they can pursue their purpose without fear. Turnaround High School is finally offering students the opportunity to learn.
APPENDIX A

TIME LINE OF WORLDWIDE SHOOTINGS

The following chart lists the worldwide school shootings from 1996 to the present. The left column is the date, location, and the right column is a short description of each incident.

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<td>32-year-old Carl Charles Roberts IV entered the one-room West Nickel Mines Amish School and shot 10 schoolgirls, ranging in age from 6 to 13 years old, and then himself. Five of the girls and Roberts died.</td>
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<td>Las Vegas, Nevada</td>
<td>January 9, 2007</td>
<td>Two students were shot outside Western High School due to road rage.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Blacksburg, Virginia</td>
<td>April 16, 2007</td>
<td>A 23-year-old Virginia Tech student, Cho Seung-Hui, killed two in a dorm, and then killed 30 more 2 hours later in a classroom building. His suicide brought the death toll to 33, making the shooting rampage the most deadly in U.S. history. Fifteen others were wounded.</td>
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<td>Dover, Delaware</td>
<td>Sept. 21, 2007</td>
<td>A Delaware State University Freshman, Loyer D. Brandon, shot and wounded two other Freshman students on the University campus. Brandon is being charged with attempted murder, assault, reckless engagement, as well as a gun charge.</td>
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<td>Cleveland, Ohio</td>
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<td>A 14-year-old student at a Cleveland high school, Asa H. Coon, shot and injured two students and two teachers before he shot and killed himself. The victims' injuries were not life-threatening.</td>
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<td>An 18-year-old student in southern Finland shot and killed five boys, two girls, and the female principal at Jokela High School. At least 10 others were injured. The gunman shot himself and died from his wounds in the hospital.</td>
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<td>A nursing student shot and killed two women and then herself in a classroom at Louisiana Technical College in Baton Rouge.</td>
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<td>A 14-year-old boy shot a student at E.O. Green Junior High School causing the 15-year-old victim to be brain dead.</td>
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<td>Feb. 14, 2008</td>
<td>DeKalb, Illinois</td>
<td>Gunman killed five students and then himself, and wounded 17 more when he opened fire on a classroom at Northern Illinois University. The gunman, Stephen P. Kazmierczak, was identified as a former graduate student at the university in 2007.</td>
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<td>Sept. 23, 2008</td>
<td>Kauhajoki, Finland</td>
<td>A 20-year-old male student shot and killed at least nine students and himself at a vocational college in Kauhajok, 330km (205 miles) north of the capital, Helsinki.</td>
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<td>Fort Lauderdale, Florida</td>
<td>A 15-year-old female student was shot and killed by a classmate at Dillard High School in Fort Lauderdale.</td>
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<td>Fifteen people were shot and killed at Albertville Technical High School in southwestern Germany by a 17-year-old boy who attended the same school.</td>
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<td>Cazenovia, Wisconsin</td>
<td>Oct. 3, 2006</td>
<td>32-year-old Carl Charles Roberts IV entered the one-room West Nickel Mines Amish School and shot 10 schoolgirls, ranging in age from 6 to 13 years old, and then himself. Five of the girls and Roberts died.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tacoma, Washington</td>
<td>January 9, 2007</td>
<td>Two students were shot outside Western High School due to road rage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Las Vegas, Nevada</td>
<td>April 16, 2007</td>
<td>A 23-year-old Virginia Tech student, Cho Seung-Hui, killed two in a dorm, then killed 30 more 2 hours later in a classroom building. His suicide brought the death toll to 33, making the shooting rampage the most deadly in U.S. history. Fifteen others were wounded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacksburg, Virginia</td>
<td>Sept. 21, 2007</td>
<td>A Delaware State University Freshman, Loyer D. Brandon, shot and wounded two other Freshman students on the University campus. Brandon is being charged with attempted murder, assault, reckless engagement, as well as a gun charge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dover, Delaware</td>
<td>Oct. 10, 2007</td>
<td>A 14-year-old student at a Cleveland high school, Asa H. Coon, shot and injured two students and two teachers before he shot and killed himself. The victims' injuries were not life-threatening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 7, 2007</td>
<td>Tuusula, Finland</td>
<td>An 18-year-old student in southern Finland shot and killed five boys, two girls, and the female principal at Jokela High School. At least 10 others were injured. The gunman shot himself and died from his wounds in the hospital.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 8, 2008</td>
<td>Baton Rouge, Louisiana</td>
<td>A nursing student shot and killed two women and then herself in a classroom at Louisiana Technical College in Baton Rouge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 11, 2008</td>
<td>Memphis, Tennessee</td>
<td>A 17-year-old student at Mitchell High School shot and wounded a classmate in gym class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 12, 2008</td>
<td>Oxnard, California</td>
<td>A 14-year-old boy shot a student at E.O. Green Junior High School causing the 15-year-old victim to be brain dead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 14, 2008</td>
<td>DeKalb, Illinois</td>
<td>Gunman killed five students and then himself, and wounded 17 more when he opened fire on a classroom at Northern Illinois University. The gunman, Stephen P. Kazmierczak, was identified as a former graduate student at the university in 2007.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 23, 2008</td>
<td>Kauhajoki, Finland</td>
<td>A 20-year-old male student shot and killed at least nine students and himself at a vocational college in Kauhajok, 330km (205 miles) north of the capital, Helsinki.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 12, 2008</td>
<td>Fort Lauderdale, Florida</td>
<td>A 15-year-old female student was shot and killed by a classmate at Dillard High School in Fort Lauderdale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 11, 2009</td>
<td>Winnenden, Germany</td>
<td>Fifteen people were shot and killed at Albertville Technical High School in southwestern Germany by a 17-year-old boy who attended the same school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

UNITED STATES AND WORLD MAPS SCHOOL ASSOCIATED SHOOTINGS
FROM 1996-2009

US MAP http://www.united-states-map.com/usa7244.htm
Argentina http://www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/samerica/ar.htm
APPENDIX C

SCANS REPORT

The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS, 1991) was appointed by the Secretary of Labor to determine the skills students need to succeed in the world of work. The Commission's fundamental purpose is to encourage a high-performance economy characterized by high-skill, high-wage employment.

**Resources:** Identifies, organizes, plans, and allocates resources

**Time** - Selects goal-relevant activities, allocates time, and prepares and follows schedules

**Money** - Uses or prepares budgets, keeps records, and makes adjustments to meet objectives

**Material and Facilities** - Acquires, stores, allocates, and uses materials

**Human Resources** - Assesses skills, distributes work accordingly, evaluates performance and provides feedback

**Interpersonal:** Works with others

**Participates as Member of a Team**—contributes to group effort

**Teaches Others New Skills**

**Serves Clients/Customers**—works to satisfy customers’ expectations

**Exercises Leadership**—communicates ideas to justify position, persuades, convinces others, and challenges existing procedures and policies

**Negotiates**—works toward agreements involving exchange of resources, resolves divergent interests
Works with Diversity—works well with men and women from diverse backgrounds

**Information:** Acquires and uses information

- Acquires and Evaluates Information
- Organizes and Maintains Information
- Interprets and Communicates Information
- Uses Computers to Process Information

**Systems:** Understands complex inter-relationships

- Understands Systems—knows how social, organizational, and technological systems work and operates effectively with them
- Monitors and Corrects Performance—distinguishes trends, predicts impacts on system operations, diagnoses deviations in systems' performance and corrects malfunctions
- Improves or Designs Systems—suggests modifications to existing systems and develops new or alternative systems to improve performance

**Technology:** Works with a variety of technologies

- Selects Technology—chooses procedures or equipment including computers and related technologies
- Applies Technology to Task—Understands overall intent and proper procedures for setup and operation of equipment
- Maintains and Troubleshoots Equipment—Prevents, identifies, or solves problems with equipment, including computers and other technologies
APPENDIX D

MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

- **Self-actualisation**
  - personal growth and fulfillment

- **Esteem needs**
  - achievement, status, responsibility, reputation

- **Belongingness and Love needs**
  - family, affection, relationships, work group, etc

- **Safety needs**
  - protection, security, order, law, limits, stability, etc

- **Biological and Physiological needs**
  - basic life needs - air, food, drink, shelter, warmth, sex, sleep, etc.
APPENDIX F

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM ENGLISH

INFORMED CONSENT

Department of Educational Leadership

TITLE OF STUDY: Turnaround High School: Unsafe to Safe

INVESTIGATOR(S): Monica Cortez, Student Researcher; Dr. Gene Hall, Faculty Advisor

CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: 702-743-7812 (Monica Cortez) or 702-895-3441 (Dr. Gene Hall)

Purpose of the Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is understand and describe the indicators and barriers a turnaround high school encountered in reforming a high school from unsafe to a safe school using a naturalistic inquiry resulting in a case study.

Participants

You are being asked to participate in the study because you fit this criteria: an adult that has either worked or is currently working at Turnaround High School, or you are currently or previously have worked with the Turnaround High School.

Procedures

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following: You will be interviewed at the most two times by myself, Monica Cortez, the investigator of the study, over a two month period from November, 2010 to December, 2010. The interviews will be conducted at a place of convenience and privacy based upon your preference and at times that are most convenient for you.
**Benefits of Participation**

There may not be direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. However, I hope that exploration of reflections may provide both a description and understanding of your experience while a high school turns around. Results may open the door to further research that may improve the quality of high school practices in the future.

**Risks of Participation**

There are risks involved in all research studies. This study may include only minimal risks. This study may include only minimal risks. During this study, you may experience strong emotions as a result of topics discussed during the interviews, which will include your perceptions of your quality of teaching and the impact of restructuring on your life. The investigator will be sensitive to those responses and will be prepared to provide you with the time and opportunity to discuss your responses. In addition, if you desire, you will be provided with a list of counselors in the community as a resource for addressing concerns.

**Cost /Compensation**

There will not be financial cost to you to participate in this study. The study will take no more than two hours of your time. You will not be compensated for your time.

**Contact Information**

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you may contact Monica Cortez at 702-743-7812 or Dr. Gene Hall at 702-895-3441. For questions regarding the rights of research subjects, any complaints or comments regarding the manner in which the study is being conducted you may contact the UNLV Office of Research Integrity – Human Subjects at 702-895-2794 or toll free at 877-895-2794 or via email at IRB@unlv.edu.
**Voluntary Participation**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice to your relations with the university. You are encouraged to ask questions about this study at the beginning or any time during the research study.

**Confidentiality**

All information gathered in this study will be kept completely confidential. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study. All records will be stored in a locked facility at UNLV for three years after completion of the study. After the storage time the information gathered will be shredded.

**Participant Consent:**

I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I am at least 18 years of age. A copy of this form has been given to me.

__________________________   ______________________
Signature of Participant                      Date

__________________________
Participant Name (Please Print)

*Participant Note: Please do not sign this document if the Approval Stamp is missing or is expired.*
APPENDIX G

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM SPANISH

Consentimiento Informado
Departamento de Educación de Liderazgo

TITULO DE ESTUDIO: Turnaround High School: Unsafe to Safe

INVESTIGADOR (ES): Mónica Cortez, Student Researcher; Dr. Gene Hall, Faculty Advisor

TELEFONOS DE CONTACTO: 702-743-7812 (Mónica Cortez) o 702-895-3441(Dr. Gene Hall)

PROPÓSITO DEL ESTUDIO
Se le invita a participar en un estudio de investigación. El propósito de este estudio es para comprender y describir los obstáculos e indicadores que una escuela secundaria que ha cambiado para bien encontró en la reforma de ser insegura a ser segura usando métodos realistas resultando en un estudio de caso.

PARTICIPANTES
Se le pide que participe en el estudio, ya que usted corresponde a los criterios; un adulto que ha trabajado o está trabajando en una escuela secundaria que ha cambiado para bien, o está trabajando o ha trabajado previamente en una escuela que ha cambiado para bien.
PROCEDIMIENTOS

Si usted decide ser voluntario y participa en este estudio, se le pedirá que haga lo siguiente: Usted será entrevistado por no más de dos veces por mí misma, Mónica Cortez, la investigadora del estudio, durante un período de dos meses entre Noviembre de 2010 a Diciembre 2010. Las entrevistas se llevarán a cabo en un lugar de comodidad y privacidad en base a su preferencia y en el horario que más le convenga.

BENEFICIOS DE PARTICIPACIÓN

Puede que no haya beneficios directos para usted como participante en este estudio. Sin embargo, espero que la exploración de los reflejos pueda proporcionar una descripción y la comprensión de que la experiencia, mientras que en una escuela secundaria que ha cambiado para bien. Los resultados pueden abrir la puerta a la investigación, además, que puede mejorar la calidad de las prácticas de la escuela secundaria en el futuro.

Iniciales de Participante______
Consentimiento Informado
Departamento de Educación de Liderazgo

TITULO DE ESTUDIO: Turnaround High School: Unsafe to Safe

INVESTIGADOR (ES): Mónica Cortez, Student Researcher; Dr. Gene Hall, Faculty Advisor

TELEFONOS DE CONTACTO: 702-743-7812 (Mónica Cortez) o 702-895-3441(Dr. Gene Hall)

RIESGOS DE PARTICIPACIÓN

Existen factores de riesgo involucrados en todos los estudios de investigación. En este estudio pueden incluir sólo riesgos mínimos. Durante este estudio, puede experimentar emociones fuertes como resultado de los temas tratados durante las entrevistas, que incluirá su percepción de la calidad de la enseñanza y el impacto de la reestructuración en su vida. La investigadora será sensible a las respuestas y estará preparada para ofrecerle el tiempo y la oportunidad de hablar acerca de su respuesta. Además, si lo desea, se le proporcionará con una lista de consejeros de la comunidad como un recurso para abordar las preocupaciones.

COSTO / COMPENSACION

No habrá costo financiero para que usted participe en este estudio. El estudio tomará no más de dos horas de su tiempo. No serán indemnizados por su tiempo.

INFORMACIÓN DE CONTACTO
Si usted tiene alguna pregunta o inquietud sobre el estudio, puede ponerse en contacto con Mónica Cortez al (702) 743-7812 ó con el Dr. Gene Hall al (702) 895-3441. Para preguntas relacionadas a los derechos de los sujetos de la investigación, cualquier queja o comentario acerca de la manera en que el estudio se lleva a cabo puede ponerse en contacto con la Oficina de Integridad de la Investigación-Sujetos Humanos en UNLV (UNLV Office of Research Integrity- Human Subjects) al 702- 895-2794 ó sin costo al 877-895-2794, ó por correo electrónico al IRB@unlv.edu

Iniciales de Participante_______
Consentimiento Informado
Departamento de Educación de Liderazgo

TITULO DE ESTUDIO: Turnaround High School: Unsafe to Safe
INVESTIGADOR (ES): Mónica Cortez, Student Researcher; Dr. Gene Hall, Faculty Advisor
TELEFONOS DE CONTACTO: 702-743-7812 (Mónica Cortez) ó 702-895-3441 (Dr. Gene Hall)

PARTICIPACIÓN VOLUNTARIA
Su participación en este estudio es voluntaria. Puede negarse a participar en este estudio o cualquier parte del estudio. Usted se puede retirar en cualquier momento y sin perjuicio de su relación con la universidad. Se le anima que haga preguntas al inicio o en cualquier momento durante el estudio.

CONFIDENCIALIDAD
Toda la información recopilada en este estudio se mantendrá completamente confidencial. No se hará referencia en los materiales escritos u orales que le podrían vincular a este estudio. Todos los registros se almacenarán en un sistema cerrado de la UNLV durante tres años tras la finalización del estudio. Después de que el tiempo de almacenamiento de la información termine, la información será destruida.

CONSENTIMIENTO DE LOS PARTICIPANTES
He leído la información y estoy de acuerdo en participar en este estudio. Yo tengo por lo menos 18 años de edad, y una copia de este formulario se me ha dado.
Firma del Participante
______________________________
Fecha
______________________________
Nombre del Participante
(En letra de imprenta)

Nota para los Participantes: Por favor no firme este documento si no tiene el sello de aprobación o ha expirado.

Iniciales de Participante_______
APPENDIX H

PARTICIPANT PROFILE FORM

Participant Form

Your Alias (or fictitious name) for use in this study in order to keep your data confidential:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender (please circle):</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>M</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>36-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-55</td>
<td>56-60</td>
<td>61-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56-60</td>
<td>61-65</td>
<td>66-70</td>
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<td>66-70</td>
<td>71-75</td>
<td>76-80</td>
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<td>71-75</td>
<td>76-80</td>
<td>81-85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76-80</td>
<td>81-85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Geographic place of birth:

Educational background - highest level (please circle one):

High School
Associate degree
Bachelor degree
Graduate degree

Current Profession (general):

Current Position: How long?

Past Professional Experience:

(Please turn paper over to give the researcher your real name (all information will be kept confidential.)
APPENDIX I

PARTICPATION LETTER

Participation Letter

Date:
To:
Re: Participation in Educational Leadership Research Project at UNLV

Hello, my name is Monica Cortez and I am conducting a research study of Desert Pines High School.

Specifically, I am interested in your perceptions of the success and challenges at the high school during the time you are/were affiliated with the school.

As a participant of this case study, you would be contributing significantly to the study by providing details, perceptions, of the school’s efforts.

I would like to be able to schedule a time to talk with you to do research during the months of November 2010 and December 2010. Your time commitment will be approximately a maximum of one hour. There may be two separate interviews.

I will be happy to meet with you at a place and time of convenience; in addition, I will keep your information and name in confidence. No one will see the data except for my Committee Chair and myself.

Please let me know if you are willing to be interviewed, or have more specific questions. You can reach me via email at MonicaJCortez@gmail.com.

If you have any questions, please email or call me, and I would be happy to discuss anything in detail with you.

I appreciate your time and thank you in advance for your consideration.

Monica Cortez

Doctoral Student, University of Las Vegas
MonicaJCortez@gmail.com
(702) 743-7812 (cell phone)
Dr. Gene HallProfessor of Educational Leadership, University of Las Vegas

gene.hall@unlv.edu
(702) 895-3441
APPENDIX J

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

Interview Questions for Internal and External Agents:

1. When you first arrived at Turnaround High, what was it like?
2. What was it like five years ago when Principal X arrived in 2006-2007 school year as the principal?
3. When you first arrived at Turnaround High’s campus, what was it like (Sub probe about students, community, role of the principal, safety.)?
4. How has the school evolved during your time here?
5. Please tell me about the school’s environment, and how it has changed over the years?
6. How would you characterize your school during a conversation with parents or community members?
7. What stories, expressions, or slogans, exist that are typically used to describe the school and what is considered to be very important?
8. What is important to the principal?
9. What do you feel was important to teachers/students/parents in the past?
10. What do you feel is important to teachers/students/parents today?
11. Would you consider Turnaround High School as a safe school?
12. When do you think you felt that the school became safe?
13. What made you feel safe?

External Questions:
APPENDIX K

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR EXTERNAL PARTICIPANTS

1. You had the opportunity to create the foundation of the school, what was that like?
2. You were an intricate part of this historical school, tell me about it?
3. How was your administrative team? Were you able to choose them?
4. What was the organizational structure of the school when you opened it?
5. What policies and procedures did you need to create?
6. What policies and procedures were in place?
7. Please define the word safe, would you say based on your definition of safe that THS was in the first year? Last year?
8. AYP was not the end all when you were at THS, so what were the pressures you had?
9. Are there any slogans, stories that you remember from the school?
10. If there was one word, what word would you use to describe the school?
11. Please share with me anything that you feel would be significant to add to this study.

Additional External Agent Questions:

1. What was the school like prior to Principal Buck arriving in 2006-2007 as the principal?
2. What were the priorities of the school prior to 2006-2007?
3. What was the vision of the school?
4. What stories, expressions, or slogans, exist were typically used to describe the school and what was considered to be very important?

5. Please tell me about the school’s environment, and how it has changed over the years?

6. How would you have characterized Turnaround High during a conversation with parents, district employees or community members?

7. What was important to the principal?

8. What do you feel was important to teachers/students/parents in the past?

9. What external support was/is provided to facilitate turning around this high school?
Interview Questions for the principal:

1. What was it like five years ago when you arrived in 2006-2007 as the principal of a school considered unsafe?
2. How has the school evolved during your time here?
3. Please tell me about the school’s environment, and how it has changed over the years?
4. What were the external agents that attributed to turning around the school?
5. What were the challenges that you encountered in the early stages?
6. How did you overcome them?
7. How did you get the stakeholders involved in your mission of turning around this high school to the school?
8. What do you see as being the key indicators of quality today?
9. What are your priorities for this school year?
10. What is important to you?
11. What would you categorize as your greatest accomplishment while you have been here the principal?
12. Why is that significant?
13. How would you characterize your school during a conversation with parents or community members?

What stories, expressions, or slogans, exist that are typically used to describe the school and what is considered to be very important
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Doi:10.1002/tea.3660200202.


VITA

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Monica Pufky Cortez

Degrees:

Bachelor of Arts, 1997
University of Buffalo
Buffalo, New York

Master of Science, 1999
LeMoyne College
Syracuse, New York

Master of Arts, 2003
University of Phoenix
Las Vegas, Nevada

Dissertation Title: The Road Traveled to Becoming a Safe High School

Dissertation Examination Committee:
Chairperson, Gene Hall, Ph.D.
Committee Member, James Crawford, Ph.D.
Committee Member, James Hager, Ph.D.
Graduate Faculty Representative, Linda Quinn, Ph.D.